
LEGAL-POLITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE CORFU DECLARATION AND ITS IMPACT ON MINORITY ISSUES

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Abstract: The thematic aspect of this paper is the analysis of diplomatic and political marketing of the Corfu Declaration, events in Bosnia and Herzegovina before the First World War, which preceded the declaration and then political situation in the region of the Balkan's between neighbors whom they aspired its territories, ex, between Austro-Hungarians and other west powers which they designed strategically programs and long-term aims. Since the year 1908, Austro-Hungary abolished Bosnian language in Bosnia and Herzegovina by affirming so-called, internal Serbo-Croatian language. Therefore, Bosnians were denied from the right of language, cultural identity and distinctiveness. Such political instability of Bosnians, including diplomatic level of its aspirations, was used by all parties of First World War, particularly Serbia. Through Corfu declaration, they formulated their great-aspirational program in overall the Balkan's, particularly in Bosnia and Herzegovina. From this aspect incurred all those political and diplomatic activities, leading to aggressive and total Serbianization of Bosnia and Herzegovina ethnical and cultural area.

Today's political and diplomatic activities are trying to overcome the cruelty of the last war, to declare it civil, the crimes were allegedly committed by everyone (including the one who defended himself on the doorstep!), reconciliation is demanded, but genocide over the seized territory. The right insists that Serbia is a factor of stabilization in the Balkans - and again the aspirations and the right to great power. With that, they want to enter Europe and make the new Corfu (European) declaration official.

Keywords: Corfu Declaration, The First World War, The Muslim Question, cultural identity, law, politics

1. INTRODUCTION

The topic of this paper is the diplomatic and political-legal marketing of the *Corfu Declaration* a document on the political and territorial organization of the *Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes*, created at the end of the First World War and verified at the delegate assembly in Corfu in 1917. Right at the beginning of the political and diplomatic considerations of this document, it can be affirmatively noted that this so-called *The Yugoslav declaration* was created as an international political and legal document to confirm the Greater Serbia aspirations for the creation of a large South Slavic state in which the leading and dominant role would be played by Serbs as an entity that participated in the war on the side of the Great Powers. Serbia used its war participation, so it dictated its conditions and decisions in the legal-political conception of this Declaration. It was also assumed that defeated Bulgaria would be included in this political marketing project, but that project was excommunicated at the insistence of the Great Powers. However, the Serbs had "free hands" to dictate the conditions for achieving their goals, which arose from the "myth of the resurrection of Dusan's empire". The creators of this Greater Serbia idea were politicians gathered around the Karadjordjevic dynasty, led by Nikola Pasic, S. Protic, A. Trumbić...The Karadževićs were confirmed as historical, political and legal bearers of the royal crown of the newly projected state, crowned with glory and merit about the "great victories" in the war, especially the one on Cer, on the "strategic" retreat through Albania, on the "glorious" victories on the Thessaloniki front, especially those over the Bulgarians on Bregalnica and Kajmakalan, and further, forcing the defeated Austro-Hungarian formations to Horgos and Triglav, although the Allies (French and English) are responsible for all these victories and the liberation of Belgrade [as a sign of gratitude, the celebrated General Lous Franchet d'Espèrey got a street in Belgrade].

King Peter I was proclaimed a liberator, *Crown Prince Alexander* a unifier. The big celebration was held in Zagreb, Sarajevo, Ljubljana - defying the "brothers" of Croats and those unrecognized and Serb-defined national communities - *minorities*.

The Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes included all territories from today's borders of Greece to Austria. There was an idea of the division of Albania between Greece and the newly created Kingdom, but this Greater Serbia project was also thwarted by the agreement of the Great Powers. The Republic of Albania was created, headed by an Austrian prince, then Fan Noli, and later, with the involvement of Belgrade, after a series of political and diplomatic occurrences, by King Ahmet Zogu.

The Kingdom included, among other countries, the so-called Old Serbia (today's Kosovo), Macedonia (as Southern Serbia), Vojvodina ("added" to the decisions of the Corfu Declaration) as a historical part (!) of Serbian lands.

Although the new state was formulated as a democratic "triune" Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, in fact it was not. Conflicts and disagreements among politicians, as well as between national communities emphasized by

the decisions of the Corfu Declaration, broke out immediately after the proclamation of the Kingdom. The situation was especially radical in Croatia, so there were riots, which were suppressed by the government and military force. It used cunning and cynicism, mobilizing even Albanians from Kosovo and sending them to Croatia to "calm down" disobedient Croats. It is known that the rebel Croats were deported to Peja as prisoners.

The Corfu Declaration completely ignored Bosniaks, Albanians, Montenegrins, Macedonians, Hungarians, Romanians, Bulgarians, Slovaks, Ruthenians, Roma - because the Kingdom became only a "triune" state creation (monarchy). It is territorially divided into banovinas, whose borders did not follow the isoglosses of national compactness, but broke all national communities, with special emphasis on the homogeneity of Serbs and those national communities defined as communities whose "roots" are Serbian (Montenegrins, Bosniaks, Macedonians, Bulgarians and Vlachs in the eastern parts of the Kingdom).

The consequences of the Greater Serbia provisions in the Corfu Declaration were dissatisfaction and revolts in the Kingdom (1918-1929), as well as the assassination of King Alexander in Marseilles in 1934.

Particular dissatisfaction culminated in the time of the so-called *Agrarian reform*, which is a blatant pressure on all non-Serbs and non-Orthodox, a special kind of legal plunder and looting of the most fertile estates and settlements of *Serbian colonists* on the estates of Albanians, Bosniaks, Macedonians, Hungarians, Germans... "The goal of establishing a system of this 'agrarian progression' and 'fair relations in agriculture' was shaped by national inequality, which, among other things, was reflected in the threat to the agrarian interests of Muslim landowners." (Čamo, 2019: 19).

The religious component had a great influence on the formation of national consciousness (since the Constitution of the Serbianized Principality of Montenegro from 1905). Thus, for example, the term *Serb* in Montenegro was used to mean Orthodox, where the Serbian Orthodox Church played a major role. In fact, after the collapse of the "medieval Serbian state", the Serbs under Turkish rule were united only by a privileged organization of the Serbian church, as a personal alliance of the Orthodox Serbian population (Grafenauer, 1966: 1-2).

The Corfu Declaration was the result of the defeat of American diplomacy, and promoted European colonial "democracy" and politics.

English democracy was programmed to focus all its activities on the Balkan natural resources, with the help of Serbia's dependent ally, which it supported in resolving its internal national and territorial policy, knowing that it was as such disastrous for oppressed national communities. As a concession for such diplomatic activity and support, they received the right to exploit large natural resources in the Kingdom (mines in the area of southern Kopaonik – Trepča, Zvečan etc.).

English diplomacy was based on the same colonial principles as non-European ones, with the aim of competing with other members of the Great Powers.

Germany and *Austria* were defeated on all fronts, even their political and diplomatic activity, at least for a while - until Hitler came to power, when the Germans ran into the European, and world, diplomatic stage in a diplomatic assault.

The French, as Serbia's political and military allies, especially directed and positioned their diplomatic activities, directing them to other economic resources, to cultural influences, when, immediately after the First World War, all Serbian and pro-Serbian intelligentsia rushed to Paris and London: writers, painters, snobs, the Yugoslav pro-Serbian bourgeoisie ... From the Paris-London "schools" grew all the pro-Serbian oriented elite, i.e. the Yugoslav diplomatic elite (Dučić, Rakić, Andrić, Crnjanski, S. Jovanović...). And even the entire royal house was educated in Paris-London *diplomatic universities* completely dependent on the policies and goals of Britain and France.

The Americans had longer-term goals in Europe, and in the world, latent and supreme - up to the one designed in the "superpower" program.

Italian diplomacy achieved its goals: it withdrew from the war, became an ally of the great powers, and as a historical right it received the northwestern areas of the Kingdom - Trieste, Istria, Fiuma (Rijeka), Kvarner, Zadar...

Other Balkan countries, formally independent, were still in the grossest sense dependent - on the policies and diplomatic activities of the Great Powers, which regulated all political life, economy, culture, education in the Balkan states...

From these diplomatic contents, those nationalist projects and programs arose, confirmed by the constitutions, most often with the approval of the Great Powers. Thus, the result of the *Corfu Declaration* and the so-called *Agrarian reform*, the "right" to emigrate national minorities to their home countries (if they had any), then various clubs with programs for the emigration of Muslims and Albanians from the Kingdom to Turkey and Albania, such as the Cultural Club of Ivo Andrić and Vaso Čubrilović. The massacre and robbery of Bosniaks in the Bileća district in 1920 and in Šahovići in 1924, in the Tara area, is a scenario from the Corfu Declaration - one of many genocides conceived in the texts of the Corfu Declaration, dictated by Stojan Protić - pursuing the policy and diplomacy of Dvor Karadordević and Nikola Pašić.

The genocide in Šahovići near Bijelo Polje was committed in peacetime, in the state of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, which formally possessed all the organized institutions of the modern state, which they had to determine according to their crimes. However, they chose silence, which for the state can only mean solidarity with criminals. The ethnic cleansing of this area from the Muslim population was carried out, condemned by the enlightenment to suffer the sins of the ages, deposited in the mythical guslar consciousness of the sacred duty of "investigating poturica." (Historija.info, 2018).

The Corfu Declaration, as one internationally recognized document, latently planned all *genocides* that will continuously and under the guise of "European democracy" and the fight against the actualization of the so-called "green transversals" later followed in the Balkans. This was followed by public persecution of Muslims and Albanians in the Kingdom, apparently Europe, and such activities, by analogy, were very drastic in neighboring countries: Bulgaria (persecution of Pomaks), Greece (persecution of Turks from Thessaloniki and the Greek part of Thrace).

The most monstrous, hidden and long-lasting genocidal activities have been legalized in the *Kingdom of Yugoslavia*:
- *Continuous economic genocide*, designed by the so-called *Agrarian reform* and other economic measures, impoverishment of the Muslim population (robberies and legal measures in the interest of the new state, specific taxes, kuluks, deliberate punishments);

- *Politicide* was a special kind of psychological and ideological pressure on the collective and individual consciousness of non-Serbs in the Triune Kingdom. Non-Serbs could not be in high state positions, neither military nor police, and if there were any - they were under the strict control of the regime, and they were often liquidated in assassinations, poisoning (Dr. Spaho), in "sačekusa" ["sačekuša" - waiting for an opponent to ambush], e.g. Jusuf-beg Ćorović, writer Ibrahim Pačarić Biočak et al. There were special groups, organized by the regime, for the liquidation of Bosniak, Albanian, Croat intellectuals and prominent individuals ("Black Hand", Chetnik formation of Kosta Milovanović Pećanac, Sava Lazarević - Sav-Batar, Vasojević Brigadier Avro Cemović etc.);

- *Culturocide*, which was specific and continuous, was carried out in all areas of culture and education: *in the non-recognition of the language* of national communities, in the officialization of the so-called "state language" of one, and only one, by applying the most severe punishments and physical torture against those who would speak or greet each other in their mother tongue (these quick and concrete measures were carried out by gendarmes, cops, and even civilians in public - on the street); and in particular genocidal measures are defined in *education, curricula and during teaching itself*; children of other national communities had to *study* and memorize works of nationalist and humiliating content and ideology (*Gorski vijenac, Smrt Smail-aga Čengića, Kolo, kolo, naokolo, Otadžbina, some of Zmaj's songs, Onam, 'namo, za brda ona, a lot of epic poems, novel Hajduk Stanko etc.*); children were humiliated and belittled in schools, ideologically exposed to assimilation, engaged in church and school celebrations and ceremonies; unification of all non-Serbian surnames, by law, that they must end with the patronymic formant *-ić*;

- *The religious genocide* was particularly drastic: mosques in Belgrade and other towns and villages were destroyed and set on fire, from which Muslims were expelled; religious rites were exposed to the most humiliating measures and agitation (pressure) for baptism; pressure on the traditional diet of Muslims; by inserting dead pigs into mosque rooms etc.; The Corfu Declaration was preceded by the famous *Twelve-Point Law* of the Vasojević priest Mojsije Zečević, according to which the bestial baptism, looting and burning in the area of Plav and Gusinje were carried out. In the period from February to the beginning of April 1913, group shootings of the Bosniak population were carried out almost daily. In just one day, March 5, 1913, at Racina, at the very entrance to Plav, 12 famous Bosniak champions from Plav, representatives of the most famous fraternities, who refused to be baptized, were shot dead. The Montenegrins beheaded the above-mentioned champions in front of the gathered mass, in order to instill fear in their bones and force them to become baptized en masse (Crnovršanin, 2020). A special religious genocide took place on July 11, 1922, in the village of *Starčeviče* in the Tutin municipality, when Kosta Milovanović Pećanac's Chetnik formations massacred thirty Bosniaks, including children and women, looting and setting fire to the village. Thus, the Corfu Declaration was a copy and extension of the nationalist principles of "Nachertanije" by Ilija Garašanin from 1849. All later programs originated from it, such as "Greater Serbia" by Stevan Moljević (1941), "War Goals of Serbia 1914" by Milorad Ekmedžić (1973), the Memorandum of SANU in the 1985s.

This document shows the preparation for the realization of the Greater Serbia goals, which included activities in the field of intellectual and cultural life, while at the same time, preparations for the Serbian takeover of the JNA were being carried out in the military field (Herceg, 2018).

2. NATIONAL PROBLEMS IN THE KINGDOM

At the *First Congress* of the CPY [Communist Party of Yugoslavia] in Vukovar in 1919, the Greater Serbia program of the Declaration was pointed out and it was said that the Kingdom was a "dungeon of the people". However, even the political elite of the CPY did not have a *clearposition* in solving national problems in the Kingdom. She did not

point to those nationalist projects in *the Corfu Declaration* at this Congress, but later in that "dungeon of the people", even during the Second World War, and at the *First Session* of AVNOJ [Anti-Fascist Council for the National Liberation of Yugoslavia] in Jajce, and not even at the *Second Session* in Belgrade, later, until 1983, when the right of Muslims to declare themselves as Bosniaks was "recognized", but also with great political and diplomatic sacrifices.³²

Some prominent members of the CPY also directed the assassination of Minister Drasković in *Delnice*. Minister was convinced that Alija Alijagić, a Muslim had done it, so after the assassination, all state and political forces turned not only against the communists but also against the Muslims. This was followed by the killing of prominent Muslims and the mass emigration to Turkey, with those generous *vasika* [*vasika* - immigrant visa]. Safet Bandžović, Šerbo Rastoder, Redžep Skrijelj, Hakija and Avdija Avdić, and many others wrote about the mass emigration of Bosniaks to Turkey.

However, the international community was indifferent to the decisions of *the Corfu Declaration* and their drastic implementation in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, after the Dictatorship renamed the Kingdom of Yugoslavia.

3. WHAT PRECEDED THE CORFU DECLARATION?

The First World War was coming to an end after 1915. This was felt on all fronts on which the Great Powers - the anti-Austro-Hungarian coalition - operated, both on the western fronts and on the southern (Balkan) fronts. A large number of Balkan emigrants arrived in France, especially intellectuals of South Slavic origin. Here they formed the *Yugoslav Board*, which included Dr. Ante Trumbić (as president), Radical MP of the *National Assembly of the Kingdom of Serbia* Stojan Protić, Croatian sculptor Ivan Meštrović... One indicative meeting of this Committee was held in Cannes to discuss the position of Muslims in the future state union.

The idea of Yugoslavism has been very topical since the time of *Josip Juraj Strossmayer*, and at the beginning of the 20th century it was represented by many Muslim politicians in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Many Croatian politicians and intellectuals have been particularly concerned with this idea. From that aspect, *the Yugoslav Academy of Sciences and Arts* was formed in Zagreb.

However, some Muslim politicians and intellectuals did not cope with the current events. Jahić sees the position of Safvet-beg Bašagić in several key events related to 1917 as the most controversial. In May of that year, the aforementioned writer advocated for an autonomous Bosnia and Herzegovina, as did other prominent individuals, such as Š. Arnautović. Safvet-beg Bašagić did not agree to a meeting with the president of the Yugoslav Club, Ante Korošac, in Vienna in May and June 1917. In September of the same year, he saw the unification of the Yugoslav countries as the only solution to the Yugoslav problem and the solution of the Bosnian-Herzegovinian state-legal issue as such, without Serbia and Montenegro, within the Habsburg monarchy with provincial autonomies and parliaments (Jahić, 2006: 96-97).

Miralem Dervišbegović and Sejfudin Huseinagić were among the prominent Bosniak intellectuals of the time who supported the May Declaration of the Yugoslav Club for the Unification of Countries in which Slovenes, Croats and Serbs were under the auspices of the Habsburg-Lothar dynasty. Such attitudes are also reflected in Mehmed Spaha's statement from 1918, which states that the harmony and unity of all Serbs, Croats and Slovenes is what the Bosniak intelligentsia, and even the broad masses, consider salvation. However, as Jahić recalls, Mustafa Golubović, Muhamed Mehmedbašić and Đulaga Vuković were in the inner circle of Young Bosnia (Jahić, 2006: 96).

The Yugoslav Board had several meetings and prepared a Declaration on the future structure of the new Balkan state. We find detailed information about these activities in the work *Bošnjaci i nastanak Kraljevstva Srba, Hrvata i Slovenaca* [Bosniacs and the Emerging of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes] by Dr. Adnan Jahić in the *Proceedings of the Faculty of Philosophy in Tuzla* (87-114).

In one part of this paper, Jahić presented the views of individual delegates, of which the following require special consideration, which we will interpret according to Jahić's information:

The statement of Stojan Protić is indicative: "When our army crosses the Drina, it will give the Turks twenty-four hours, even forty-eight, time to return to their ancestral faith, and what they would not like, they will cut down, as we did in our time in Serbia." (Jahić, 2006: 100).

Jahić commented on this as follows: "None of those present was allowed to respond to this eerie speech, which evoked the darkness of past centuries, except Mestrovic himself, who opposed Protić, citing several arguments against his 'solution'." (Jahić, 2006: 100). Mestrovic said that Bosnian Muslims were a "South Slavic people par excellence", wondering why they, as such, would have to embrace Christianity by leaving Islam. He sees this as violence against Muslims, linking such an act to a possible breach of the promises made by the king and his

³²Liquidation of Bosniak political cadres, death of Džemal Bijedić...

government to the South Slavic peoples at the beginning of the war. He also believes that the allies would be forced to intervene if crimes against Muslims occurred, by forcing the Serbian army to withdraw from the liberated territories (Jahić, 2006: 100). Protić's position and starting point were completely different, and his key message was that "there should be no more Turks" in Bosnia. He stated that not all Muslims have to convert to Orthodoxy, but that everyone must be baptized. Jahić gave Protić's statements, referring to Mestrovic. According to Meštrović, Protić "did not allow himself to be accommodated by his arguments" (Meštrović's arguments). He acted "coldly and rationally", distinguishing between what he called "ideas and sentiments" and "realpolitik" (Jahić, 2006: 100).

Jahić informs that "Mestrovic's second argument (...) would have weight if all Croats thought like Mestrovic, which, according to Protić's belief, is unlikely. The only serious argument is a possible negative allied reaction, and that should definitely be taken into account." (Jahić, 2006: 100).

As Jahić further states, Meštrović's memoirs do not provide any information about the results of these key talks, which focused on religions and provinces, especially those concerning Muslims. As he states, Meštrović became aware that among Serbs, religion is what is at the center of all political and national relations of Serbs and which governs those relations (Jahić, 2006: 100-101).

Jahić analyzes the whole situation through its actors and their positions. On the one hand, he sees in Protić an instance that advocates violence and genocide against a part of the community, using irrational myths and ancient politics. He describes Trumbić as a participant specific to the academicism of cultural observations, who also cares about the influences of inherited cultural differences on the processes of internal folk synthesis. Also, he considers only Meštrović consistent - an instance that embodies both - political reference on the one hand, and morality on the other (Jahić, 2006: 100-101).

Mestrovic's account of the conversations in his house in May 1917 is indicative. The talks also addressed the Muslim issue (as cited in Meštrović, 1969: 64).

4. REVIEW OF THE CORFU DECLARATION

The Corfu Declaration was formulated during negotiations on the Greek island of Corfu from June 15 to July 20, 1917. Representatives of the Serbian government and the Yugoslav Committee were gathered here, "for the purpose of agreeing on all issues ..." (Jahić, 2006: 101). After many disagreements, they finally came to a compromise in the form of the Corfu Declaration, endorsing the creation of a South Slav state, although the question of federal versus centralized state structure was still left unsettled (Cohen, 1996:11).

According to Jahić, the focus of the Corfu Declaration was on various issues related to the ways in which the hypothetical community could function. Among these issues, the one concerning faith from different angles stood out. There was talk of the king's religious affiliation and proselytism in the new state union. The issue of Muslims, ie the status of Islam in the future community, was not left out either (Jahić, 2006: 101).

The views of Nikola Pašić on the one hand, and the President of the Yugoslav Committee Ante Trumbić on the other, are completely opposite. While the former, in his capacity as Prime Minister of Serbia, initially advocated the equality of all religions in the future community, Trumbić had a different opinion, although he accepted the principle of Nikola Pašić in principle. An indicative example of the United States was given by Trubić, who said that the Constitution of that country knows only Christianity, despite the fact that there are other religions. He considered the people of the Balkans to be deeply Christian. He wondered if Islam could be treated in the same way as Catholicism and Orthodoxy, and he believed that the legality of the Muslim faith with the Christian one would not be a "good measure" (Jahić, 2006: 101-102).

Stojan Protić replied to Trumbić: 'As far as Muslims are concerned, our people would accept that equalization. With Catholics as it stands, I don't know. If it is different, it is because it is not that the people are, but that the Catholic Church is different'. 'Dr. Bogumil Vošnjak, also a member of the Yugoslav Committee, thought similarly to Trumbić. He believed that Christianity should have exclusivity and was convinced that Muslims would get used to it as a "social fact." (Jahić, 2006: 102).

These comparative analyzes of Jahić show the intentions and attitudes of the subjects who participated in the political activities that preceded the Corfu Declaration and in the final shaping of its decisions.

In further analysis, Jahić informs: According to Vasiljević, "a Muslim will become religiously indifferent if there are real freedoms." Participants, such as Vošnjak, increasingly discussed the role of Bosniaks. He stated that they are "religious materialists", explaining that instead of religiosity they have "fanaticism" at the core of which is "materiality" (Jahić, 2006: 102).

Vojislav Marinković's position in the debate is also interesting. He was the Minister of National Economy in the Serbian government, and he advocated that all religions be state, which, apart from the Muslim religion, also includes the Jewish religion. He believed that there could be more problems with Muslims than with Catholics, and

he was of the opinion that the religion was not nurtured among Muslims in all parts, that it was imposed, and he concluded that the national feeling of Muslims was not developed (Jahić, 2006: 102-103).

It can be seen from the presented text that the participants in the discussions did not have a clear idea of the national and religious feeling of Muslims, nor did they want to have it. All historical facts show that the acceptance of Islam was not an aspect of "loyalty" but a spontaneous good will, and as far as national consciousness was concerned - it was on the same level as with other nations that were part of the new state. The religious factor was dominant. In the consciousness of the Serbian ruling structures, the Serbian people, and especially the clergy, the ideology was established that religion and nation are the same, that Muslims are "Turks" and that as such they should be "exterminated". Subsequent events confirmed this: attitude towards Muslims, attitude towards Islamic culture, disregard for Islamic religious rites and the Qur'an and Arabic script, endowments and cemeteries in the new state, torture before and after elections - coercion by state authorities, intimidation, disparagement Muslim women and *zara* and *veils*, educating Muslim children and forcing program content into their consciousness, psychological pressures with the symbols of the cross with four S and a crown, even mocking Islamic hygiene (meals, bathing, home environment...).

So, the decisions of the Corfu Declaration were one thing, and the practice was quite another. The clergy were especially engaged in the realization of anti-Islamic projects with their ideology and aggression of the clerical-fascist program.

Although it is argued that the *King* and the *Court* did not know about the views of individual participants in shaping the Corfu Declaration and its decisions, and everything that happened later in the new state, it is not convincing, because what happened in Šahovići in 1924 would not have happened and the subsequent killings of prominent Muslims - in "*sačekusa*" organized by the government (ex. Kosta Milovanović Pećanac etc.). During the Second World War, Pećanac and his troops committed numerous crimes against the population of Kosovo and Sandzak (Šarac, 2017). According to that recipe, those monstrous murders took place at the beginning of the disintegration of the SFRY (Sjeverin, Štrpce, Srebrenica, Keraterm, Foča, Žepa, Bijeljina, building a church on the hearth of Fate Sokolović, slaughtering captured Muslims, raping Muslim women, planting large crosses on the hills where they are Muslims majority population - all as a strategy of ethnic cleansing, motivated by projects on a Greater and "clear" Serbia). However, even today we can hear the glorification of the Chetnik army by some politicians, according to whom the Chetniks allegedly protected the freedom of the people. Such a message was recently sent by Milorad Dodik (PSD, Slobodna Dalmacija, 2017).

Jahić further informs: "Serbian Minister of Education *Ljubomir Davidović* had a different opinion. 'In Serbia', Davidović points out, 'there were no problems with Muslims, they were completely accustomed to Serbian laws and the new order.'" (Jahić, 2006: 103).

This opinion of Davidović needs to be commented on. It cannot be taken as an argument that justifies everything that happened in the Principality of Serbia and the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, especially after the "*Nachertanija*" of *Ilija Garašanin*. What was happening in Belgrade during the incursion of Serbian insurgent formations, what about the conquest of Sabac, Semberija and Podrinje, Užice, Karanovac, Niš, Negotinska Krajina, Vranje?!... Such measures were also proposed by Stojan Protić.

Stojan Protić, the Serbian Minister of Finance, admitted that the Muslim problem is difficult, but he added that the solution of the agrarian issue will be reduced to a much lesser extent. The sensitivity of the Muslim issue, according to Nikola Pasić, is related to the application of Sharia in the new state system... (Jahić, 2006: 103).

"In his discussion, Pasić advocated that all religions be equated, 'even the Muslim one (...)'." (Jahić, 2006: 103).

"The final version of the Corfu Declaration, under item 7, stated:

'All recognized religions will be practiced freely and publicly. The Orthodox, Roman Catholic and Mohammedan religions, which are the strongest in our nation in terms of the number of followers, will be equal and equal to the state.'" (Jahić, 2006: 103).

That is what is written in *the Corfu Declaration*, in practice and life quite the opposite. Religious education was given the status of a compulsory subject in schools, but the study of Islam was reduced to a formality. The classes were conducted by insufficiently educated individuals, but also by them shyly and with a feeling of fear. All that Muslim children learned their religion from was *Ilmihal* - a twenty-page booklet. Religious right to a spoon.

The allies (allied diplomacy) were not really interested in what is written in the Corfu Declaration and how its decisions are implemented in practice. The gendarmes beat the citizens, especially the peasants, put Serbian and Montenegrin hats on their heads, rode them like horses, forced them to stand in the water in winter, raped women in front of their husbands, gathered peasants in the meadows to be baptized, and then named those meadows *John's Meadow*. Poets Radovan Zogović, Esad Mekuli, Mak Dizdar, Risto Ratković, the Humo brothers also sang about these tortures...

Jahić is of the opinion that the events leading up to the Corfu Declaration point to a latent political conflict over the political equality of Islam and Christian religions between representatives of the Yugoslav Committee on the one hand and the Serbian government on the other (Jahić, 2006: 103-104).

The press published statements by reis-l-ulema *Džemaludin ef. Čaušević*, former parliamentary speaker *Dr. Safvet-beg Bašagić*, and leaders of parliamentary clubs *Rifat-beg Sulejmanpašić (UMO)* and *Derviš-beg Miralem (MNO)* who expressed their commitment to the People's Program which they pointed out to represent the ideal of all Yugoslavs (...) (Jahić, 2006: 107-108).

Šerif Arnautović advocated the unification of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Hungary. He thanked Milan Nedić, who was the commander of the Serbian army, for sending his detachments to Rogatica. The goal was to establish order and peace in the place, as demanded by Bosniaks living in Rogatica. In his own name, and on behalf of the Muslims, Arnautović said that he was happy to be convinced that the Serbian army did not intend to take revenge, but, he believed, came as a brother (Jahić, 2006: 108).

He signed the Corfu Declaration on July 27, 1917, and reis-l-ulema J. Čaušević.

It is indicative, in this discourse, that "after the arrival of the Serbian army in Bosnia and Herzegovina, in Sarajevo (...) in mid-November 1918, a special banquet was organized in honor of Serbian soldiers and officers. The banquet was held in the premises of the officers' home and was prepared by Bosniaks – the flower of Muslim citizenship and intelligence. On that occasion, Reis-l-ulema *Džemaludin ef. Čaušević* gave a "welcome speech in honor of the Serbian army." (Jahić, 2006: 110), concluding with the words: "Dear heroic brothers! (...)" (Jahić, 2006: 110).

5. WHAT HAPPENED AFTER?

In this context, Bogumil Vošnjak, for example, was exposed, who "advocated not only religious but also political inequality between Muslims and Christians, stating that Muslims cannot be taken into account 'in creating state relations'. On the other hand, Protić's claim [*subsequent*; author's remark] that the Serbian people would not mind the equality of Islam and Orthodoxy, was questionable." (Jahić, 2006: 104). In that sense, it is worth paying attention to the letter from Trumbić's commissioner and Serbian government official in Corfu. It is about Mirko Pećar, who in the mentioned letter sent to Trumbić in 1917 stated that the declaration was received by Serbian priests in that area, as well as their like-minded people. However, it was different with the ethnic and national rights recognized only to Croats, Serbs and Slovenes, who, as it is stated, were "three-named people one and the same, by blood, by language, spoken and written, by feelings of their unity, by continuity and the whole territory." (Jahić, 2006: 104).

It can be seen from Mirko Pećar's letter that the Serbian clergy was categorically opposed to Islam and its legal and political inclusion in the text of the Corfu Declaration. The Orthodox clergy mobilized their ideological and paramilitary capacities (Chetnik and pro-Chetnik formations, in which monks and priests were leaders). The activity of the Orthodox Church became public and aggressive. Accelerated erection of new churches, use of religious ceremonies in all forms of people's life. (mandatory baptism of children, liturgies on rural estates and ataris, numerous celebrations among the naive population, intimidation of the people by the Last Judgment, obligatory study of Orthodoxy and Saint Sava in schools, aggressiveness of Saint Sava ideas and Saint Sava folklore...). The Church reincarnated the old hajduk companies - into new Chetnik formations (troikas, companies) - as protectors of Orthodoxy and Saint Sava, as bearers of the renewal of Dušan's empire, and even Byzantium under the Serbian crown. Hence those projects about Serbia from Thessaloniki to the Alps, and the idea that one day Constantinople will become the capital of Greater Serbia (according to the Creman prophecy, the Kosovo myth and ancient books). *Provisional heraldry* was also promoted (a two-headed white eagle with a Byzantine crown and a sword as a symbol of the conquest and shedding of the blood of those who stand in the way of this ideology).

It should be noted that the views of Dr. Bogumil Vošnjak regarding Muslims and their role in the creation of the new state were only partially realized in the political processes that preceded the formation of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. In a letter sent to Dr. Jozo Sunarić and Vojislav Šola in October 2018, the Preparatory Committee of the National Council of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs stated that the election of Bosniaks to the SHS National Council should result from an agreement between Bosnian Croats and Serbs. Bosniak representatives had to meet one condition to be included in the new representative bodies. Namely, they were obliged to sign the statement and confirm that they agreed with the content of the Zagreb resolution. It dates from March 2018, and orders unconditional national self-determination and unification of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes into an independent and democratic state. This implies denying the uniqueness of Bosniaks as a people. Despite that, it was impossible to bypass them in the political currents that preceded the creation of the new state union (Jahić, 2006: 104).

Contrary to Vošnjak's views, the Preparatory Committee of the National Council of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes envisaged, within 18 parliamentary seats for Bosnia and Herzegovina, 6 parliamentary seats for Bosniaks. The Preparatory Committee, of course, did not treat Bosniaks as a separate people (not did Bosniaks, in particular, insist

on their national identity), but did treat them as a community that could be specifically represented in the National Council (Jahić, 2006: 104-105).

"The National Council of SCS (plenum) includes only two Bosniaks, Dr. Mehmed Spaho and Hamid Svrzo." (Jahić, 2006: 105). No Bosniak was initially part of the Central Committee of the SCS National Council. Hanid Svrzo et al. Halid-beg Hrasnica was included later, after protests in Sarajevo. The formation of the Main Board of the National Council of the SCS for BiH and the National Government of the SCS for BiH implied further marginalization of Bosniaks. There were only five of them - Dr. Halid-beg Hrasnica, Hamid Svrzo, Dr. Mehmed Zečević, Smailaga Čemalović and Salih ef. All together they made up only a fifth of the said body (Jahić, 2006: 105).

In the extensive (undated) petition of Šerif Arnautović to Nikola Pašić, the absence of legitimacy of the Main Board of the National Council of the SCS for B&H, which was formed 'without the participation of the parliament in general and especially without us Muslims, is sharply criticized (Jahić, 2006: 105-106).

In the context of this legal-political and diplomatic analysis, it should be emphasized that the *main thesis of the Corfu Declaration was not to allow Bosniaks to constitute themselves nationally* but to reduce their ethnic existence to a religious option and thus define their Serbo-Montenegrin-Croatian origin they themselves returned to the Serbian and Christian "roots". The Orthodox clergy, educational institutions and their programs, the entire scientific elite were mobilized to explain *Islamization in the Balkans* as something created by violence and bribery, as *Turkification*, so the term "poturica" meaning *traitor and apostate* was coined, which created a complex of lower value for Bosniaks. The thesis that many Albanian tribes are of Serbian origin has even been affirmed, and a "scientific" thesis has been formulated for the population in the area of the Shar Mountains that they are "the oldest Serbs and preserve the oldest Serbian language". With this "thesis", the Vlach population in the areas of eastern Serbia was included in the Serbian ethnic corps.

These were the *diplomatic and political goals* of the Corfu Declaration. From its political contents are all later formulas that referred to the definition of national consciousness and feelings of this Balkan indigenous population, such as: Serb, Montenegrin, Croat, undecided, Muslim, Macedonian Muslim, Muslim-Sklav - to finally Bosniak.

Territories in which Bosniaks are the majority population have been redrawn and fragmented, such as the division of Sandzak between Serbia and Montenegro, the annexation of Herceg-Novi to Montenegro, some territories in Croatia in the area of Western Herzegovina, and some territories in the area of Semberija to Serbia. The borders of the banovinas and later the borders of the republics intersected the continuity and homogeneity of Bosniaks, as well as other non-Serb communities.

6. CONCLUDING DISCOURSE

The Corfu Declaration was created according to the concept of Greater Serbia politics and diplomacy, with the goals of creating a Greater Serbia from Thessaloniki to Horgos and Karlobag and establishing absolute Serbian hegemony. Western diplomacy contributed to the realization of this political project as long as their interests lasted and were the sphere of domination in the Balkan part of Europe. Later, these interests received new content and became the reason for interethnic conflicts in Southeast Europe - from Maček to Slobodan Milošević.

The decisions of the Corfu Declaration formulated the creation of a single Serbian political and Orthodox, ethnically pure, state union, in which democratic principles of self-determination and unification based on the right of self-determination and liberation and accession collided. Also, all later political, legal and diplomatic actions of the Yugoslav Serbian hegemony were based on its "democratic principles".

From the above content it follows that Bosniaks as a people are still deprived of administrative, cultural, national and other rights, but even after a hundred years since the Corfu Declaration it can be confirmed that this international document has greatly contributed to further exclusion and segregation of Bosniaks from the first and second Yugoslavia.

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