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THE POSITION OF NATIONAL MINORITIES IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA BEFORE AND AFTER THE BREAKUP OF YUGOSLAVIA

“Where a single minority has no right or ability to express himself or confirmed, were at stake and the right and freedom itself¹.”

Keywords: Yugoslavia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, national minorities

Introduction

Writing about minorities, human rights, democracy, international protection of human and ethnic rights and national issues through history is a very complex issue. According to the most theorists, “(...) the literature states that the first attempts for the international protection of minorities were made in the 13th century by the pope, namely the Catholic Church. The historical period can be divided into three stages. The first stage extends to the First World War, the second is characterized by the so-called League of Nations, which was in effect between the two world wars, and the third began after the Second World War². In addition, “It is very difficult, if not impossible, to establish a universally valid definition of a minority, namely a social reality that is dynamic and not a static category and which is therefore influenced by different circumstances³”. The demographic composition of the population of a particular country or region is not something that cannot be

¹ P. Matvejević, *Politički esej: Opaske o manjinama – Najčešće plaćaju račun nakon tuče u kafani*, Oslobođenje, Sarajevo, 2.10. 2004, p. 29.

² S. Devetak, *Manjine, ljudska prava, demokratija – međunarodna zaštita ljudskih i etničkih prava*, Sarajevo 1989, p. 71.

³ *Ibidem*, p. 200, footnote 595.



changed, but it is constantly changing for various reasons, especially in modern economic and technological conditions. In this article, the national minorities will be researched according to the terminology of political science to designate communities – ethnic, linguistic, cultural or religious – but in all cases it is a community of national type. According to the already established practice of Yugoslav historiography, national minorities will be presented as minority ethnic communities not belonging to South Slavic peoples, that is, they belong to “classical” national minorities within the population of Yugoslavia – the minorities that for various reasons have moved to Yugoslavia, and also to Bosnia and Herzegovina, in different historical periods. In order to understand the fate of the multi-ethnic society in Bosnia and Herzegovina committed by the war between 1992 and 1995, the paper will present a brief review of the number of national minorities until the early 1990s.

Multi-ethnic Bosnia and Herzegovina up to 1945

Once upon a time, after the expulsion of the Jews from Spain and Portugal, in the context of their displacement across Europe, including in the territory of the Ottoman Empire, they were also settled in the Bosnian Eyalet (the official name of the Ottoman province), in the early 16th century⁴. According to the results of previous studies, they are gradually blended into the former Ottoman society, according to their abilities, lifestyle, religion, customs, and to this day their few descendants live in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In addition to the Jews – the Sephardic came and other foreigners, but in much smaller numbers, and some of them stayed and, depending on the service, commerce, transit and diplomatic mission.

The largest number of foreigners arrived in time of inclusion of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy (after 1878). According to the census of 1910, in Bosnia and Herzegovina came Jews – the Ashkenazi, the locals called them *German Jews*, distinguishing them from the *Spanola*, as they called Jews – the Sephardic. In addition to them, many nations settled during the Austro-Hungarian rule in Bosnia and Herzegovina: Germans, Hungarians, Poles, Czechs, Slovaks, Slovenes, Ukrainians, Italians, and many other from the countries of the Monarchy, but also Russians, Bulgarians, Romanians, English, French, Vlachs, Turks, Arabs, Greeks and other⁵. They were from the South-Slav peoples and differed according to their language, religion, nationality/ethnicity or origin, and their way of life brought the charm of Europe in the oriental Bosnian-Herzegovinian society. In addition to the already existing religious communities in Bosnia and Herzegovina – Catholic, Orthodox, Islamic and Jewish, additional immigrants with diverse religious entered, such as those from the: Evangelical Church, Reformed Helvetia Church, the Croatian Old Catholic Church and some other religious communities with fewer associated believers. According to the social structure, they were soldiers, officers, servants, traders, artisans, craftsmen, skilled workers, farmers, intellectuals, scientists, artists and so on.

After World War I, after the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and the creation of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (in 1929 renamed the Kingdom

⁴ *Sefard 92*, M. Nežirović, B. Nilević and M. Rizvić (eds.), Sarajevo 1995.

⁵ Đ. Pejanović, *Stanovništvo Bosne i Hercegovine*, Beograd 1955, p. 49.

of Yugoslavia), there was an exodus of *foreigners* from Yugoslavia, including the number of national minorities significantly reduced in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In the period between the two world wars (1918–1941), in the context of the Bosnian-Herzegovinian population, according to the census of 1921 and 1931, members of the following national communities: Germans, Poles, Ruthenians, Walachians, Ukrainians, Jews, Gypsies (Roma), Czechs, Slovaks, Russians, Hungarians, Italians, Romanians, Albanians, Turks, French, English, Greek, Arabs, Bulgarians, Norwegians, Danes and Dutch were residing there, apart from those who belonged to the Yugoslav peoples (Slovenes, Croats, Serbs)⁶. Censuses of the population were conducted according to the languages they spoke, so the Austrians were lost because of the German language they spoke, although they were present since the Austro-Hungarian role in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Therefore, regardless of emigration during the interwar period, the Bosnian-Herzegovinian society preserved its multinationalism, although in much smaller numbers.

After twenty years of a peaceful period, World War II took the new victims. According to the suffering of the population in Bosnia and Herzegovina during the Second World War, and members of ethnic minorities have experienced huge demographic losses compared to their number in the total population. Thus, for example, the number of Poles decreased by 15,000; Germans by 14,000; Jews by 12,000, and most other national minorities lost at least 1,000 of their members⁷.

If these numbers accompany the numerous emigration immediately over a few years after the war, the participation of national minorities in the Bosnian-Herzegovinian population is significantly reduced. In addition to the deportation of Germans, where work camps in Yugoslavia/Bosnia and Herzegovina were set up for them, the most drastic example of organized collective emigration was recorded for the Poles. According to the summary report of the Yugoslav Commission for the repatriation of Poles, a total of 15,301 Poles emigrated from the territory of Yugoslavia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and 14,088 of them left, which meant over 92% of the total number of displaced Poles from Yugoslavia, which significantly impoverished the multinational structure of the population in Bosnia and Herzegovina⁸. Basically, the Poles emigrated without compensation for their property and went, in poverty, on a long journey in cattle cars of freight trains in a new uncertainty to the war-torn country from which they came once upon a time.

Multi-ethnic Bosnia and Herzegovina during the period of socialism

During the six post-war census in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the national minorities were registered to a greater or lesser extent. Although the census during socialism was flawed, it is possible to conclude from them that in addition to the three most numerous nations (Muslims, Serbs and Croats), followed by people those from other Yugoslav republics (Slovenes, Montenegrins and Macedonians), who during socialism were not counted

⁶ Ibidem, pp. 53–55.

⁷ V. Žerjavić, *Gubici stanovništva u Jugoslaviji u Drugom svjetskom ratu*, Zagreb 1989, p. 19.

⁸ H. Kamberović, *Prema modernom društvu – Bosna i Hercegovina od 1945. do 1953. godine*, Tešanj 2000, pp. 42–61.

as national minorities, a larger or smaller number of 18 national minorities: Albanians, Austrians, Bulgarians, Czechs, Germans, Greeks, Hungarians, Italians, Jews, Poles, Roma (until 1971 under the name Gypsies), Romanians, Russians, Ruthenians, Slovaks, Ukrainians, Turks and Vlachs lived in Bosnia and Herzegovina. All of them had an equal status as the constituent peoples of the Yugoslav federation according to all federal and republican constitutions from 1946 to the 1990s. For example, in the first Constitutions of the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia of 1946 their rights regulated as follows: "National minorities in the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia enjoy the rights and protection of their cultural development and the free use of their language"⁹. The same Constitutions prescribes:

All citizens of the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia are equal to the law and they are equal regardless of nationality, race and religion. (...) It opposes the Constitution and is punishable by any act that gives citizens privileges or restricts their rights based on differences in nationality, race and religion, as well as any preaching of national, racial and religious hatred and disagreement¹⁰.

Also, all the later constitutions in Yugoslavia and Bosnia and Herzegovina followed the same model of protection of rights to national minorities.

Unlike other republics in Yugoslavia (Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, Macedonia and Montenegro) that had status on the national principle of the majority nation in each of them, Bosnia and Herzegovina got republic status in Yugoslavia on the basis of existence of historical rights, recognized by the revolutionary authorities even during World War II (in 1943), – in other words, Bosnia and Herzegovina does not have a fundamental nation whose name the republic would have been named. Among other things, this was the reason why Bosnia and Herzegovina repeatedly replied that the national issue was resolved and that *brotherhood and unity* among its peoples had been achieved, emphasizing that all citizens are equal in their rights and obligations. In order to preserve proclaimed multinational equality, in the opinion of many historians, the state-party radicalism was much more pronounced in Bosnia and Herzegovina than in other Yugoslav republics, in other words, the Communist Party of Bosnia and Herzegovina exercised its political and ideological course the hardest, but every hint of nationalism and the threat to equality was harshly sanctioned. In presenting the harmonious coexistence in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Communist Party and state leadership inevitably emphasized multi-nationality as the most positive side of this society.

The issue of national minorities is very complex for research. When one focuses on their abundance in statistical censuses that open many unknowns. First, the understanding of the public about the presence of national minorities in Bosnian and Herzegovinian society was significantly higher compared to their real number. In addition, fluctuations of their participation varies considerably from one census to the next census, but this explanation requires a lot of research of much broader archival materials, which exceed the framework of this article. It would be wrong to look for members of national minorities

⁹ *Ustav Federativne Narodne Republike Jugoslavije*, Službeni list FNRJ (posebno izdanje), br. 22/1946, Beograd 1946, p. 9.

¹⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 12.

Graph 1. To some extent the impression of the number of national minorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina are presented in the following table (1948–1991)¹¹:

Year	1948	1953	1961	1971	1981	1991
The total population of B&H,	2 565 277	2 847 790	3 277 948	3 746 111	4 124 256	4 377 033
Montenegrins	3 094	7 366	12 828	13 021	14 114	10 048
Macedonians	675	1 884	2 391	1 773	1 892	1 596
Slovenes	4 338	6 300	5 939	4 053	2 755	2 190
Albanians	755	1 578	3 642	3 764	4 396	4 922
Austrians	–	87	42	44	52	66
Bulgarians	94	108	231	284	180	142
Czechs	1 978	1 638	1 083	871	690	590
Greeks	–	26	77	48	36	71
Italians	964	909	717	673	616	732
Jews	–	310	381	708	343	426
Hungarians	532	1 140	1 415	1 262	945	893
Germans	1 174	1 111	347	300	460	470
Poles	–	1 161	801	757	609	526
Gypsies/Roma	442	2 297	588	1 456	7 251	8 864
Romanians	71	91	113	189	302	162
Russians	1 316	951	934	507	295	297
Ruthenians & Ukrainians	7 883	7 473	6 136	–	–	–
Ruthenians	–	–	–	141	111	133
Ukrainians	–	–	–	5 333	4 502	3 929
Slovaks	274	314	272	279	350	297
Turks	80	435	1 812	477	277	267
Vlachs	1	2	8	52	49	17

¹¹ *Statistički godišnjak SRBiH 1989, XXIII*, Sarajevo, Republički zavod za statistiku SRBiH, 1989, pp. 354–355; *Etnička obilježja stanovništva, Rezultati za Republiku i općine*, Statistički bilten 233, Zavod za statistiku Bosne i Hercegovine, 1993, p. 10.

in other sections of census materials, such as: *Uncommitted or decided under Article 41 of the Constitution of Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia*, or *Commitment to regional affiliation*, etc., because every individual had the right to make a statement according to their will. The only controversial section in the census *Other*, in which the statistician in the final publication of census some of the ethnic minorities totalled in this category. This is evidenced by archival material, such as, the following excerpt from a discussion on the matter:

(...) If we know that around Prnjavor Ruthenians live then we will take their Questionnaires in all places, we will take as a separate category and we will process them, but we cannot give the same attention to seven million Serbs and 30–40,000 Ruthenians because it costs a lot. I think we have 12 to 14 large groups of ethnic minorities living in Yugoslavia, and the rest of them are considered as ‘Other’, although the specific needs can be processed and smaller groups¹².

Based on the numbers in absolute terms relative share of national minorities in the total population of Bosnia and Herzegovina during the period of the census from 1948 to 1991 can be seen in the above table.

Graph 2. Participation of national minorities in the total population of Bosnia and Herzegovina, in percentages (%):

Year	1948	1953	1961	1971	1981	1991
The total population of B&H	2 565 277	2 847 790	3 277 948	3 746 111	4 127 256	4 377 033
The total number of national minorities in B&H	23 671	35 181	39 757	35 992	40 225	36 638
Participation in %	0,92%	1,24%	1,21%	0,96%	0,98%	0,84%

The census in 1948 did not include Austrians, Greeks, Jews and Poles, and therefore according to the census in 1953 the number of national minorities increased by 0,32%. Since 1953 recorded a decrease in the number of persons belonging to national minorities, and the largest drop was recorded between the two censuses (1981–1991) to 0,14%. Reducing the number of members of national minorities in the total population of Bosnia and Herzegovina is the result of various processes, such as the deaths in wars, emigration and assimilation.

¹² Arhiv Jugoslavije (hereinafter „AJ“), Fond: Arhiv Centralnog komiteta Saveza komunista Jugoslavije (hereinafter: „ACKSKJ“), XXIIIC-K.4/12, Stenografske beleške, informacija i materijal razmatran na sastanku radne grupe Komisije Predsedništva SKJ za razvoj društveno-političkih zajednica i međunacionalne odnose, Beograd, 16 January 1970, pp. 89–90.

However, the existence of long-standing awareness of the multi-ethnic, the multi-national and multi-religious Bosnian and Herzegovinian society were brought to an end during the war in the early 1990s by some of the Bosnian and Herzegovinian people, when the national and religious homogenization about three mono-national parties was completed (Party of Democratic Action, the Serbian Democratic Party and the Croatian Democratic Union) and when all others were side-lined.

The situation of national minorities after 1995

After the breakup of Yugoslavia and the war of 1992–1995, which in Bosnia and Herzegovina called an aggression or homeland war or civil war, depending on the national environment in which this war is classified, a procedure to regulate the legal status of national minorities started only in 2002, and more pressure of international factors was placed on political subjects in Bosnia and Herzegovina – but because of self-interest. The Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina at the session of the House of Representatives, held on 20 June 2002, and of the House of Peoples, held on 1 April 2003, adopted the Law on the Protection of National Minorities, which according to Article IV 4) a) of the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina, defines:

Article 3. A national minority, in accordance with this Law, part of the population – citizens of B&H that do not belong to any of the three constituent peoples, and it shall include people of the same or similar ethnic origin, same or similar tradition, customs, religion, language, culture and spirituality and close or similar related history and other features. Bosnia and Herzegovina protects the position and equality of members of national minorities: Albanians, Montenegrins, Czechs, Italians, Jews, Hungarians, Macedonians, Germans, Poles, Roma, Romanians, Ruthenians, Russians, Slovaks, Slovenes, Turks and other who meet conditions referred to in paragraph 1 of this Article¹³.

Due to the fact that until the adoption of this law was not designed for the census after the war, the names of national minorities are overwritten in the law from the census in 1991. The fact that this law is the only one formally adopted the document without actually applying it confirms the judgement of the Grand Chamber of the European Parliament for Human Rights in Strasbourg in the *Sejdic-Finci vs. Bosnia and Herzegovina* of 22 December 2009, which has not been implemented to this day¹⁴. Dervo Sejdic i Jakob Finci the 2006 complained that they were prevented from running in the elections for the House of Peoples and the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina because of their Roma and Jewish origin. This is the most famous example of the violation of minorities rights. From time to time the Bosnian-Herzegovinian politicians introduce this issue into public debate, but without trying to solve it. This judgment is recognized by the other members of national minorities, but also of part of the constituent peoples who are minorities in two Bosnian and Herzegovinian entities (the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Republika Srpska).

¹³ *Službeni glasnik Bosne i Hercegovine*, year VII, No 12/2003, p. 3.

¹⁴ *Sejdic i Finci protiv Bosne i Hercegovine*, http://www.mhrr.gov.ba/ured_zastupnika/novosti/pdf. (date accessed: 8.12.2016).

National minorities in the 2013 census

Census of Population, Households and Dwellings in Bosnia and Herzegovina was carried in October 2013, twenty-two years after the previous census¹⁵. However, the census released the final results in June 2016, which means that at the time of publication, after almost three years, the census did not reflect the real state of the population, and no real economic base of the Bosnian and Herzegovinian society. According to the census, Bosnia and Herzegovina had 3,531,159 inhabitants, i.e. 845,874 less than in the 1991 census. The total demographic loss, according to estimates of the average population growth rate, was up to 1.2 million people, because of the war many were killed, displaced around the world and the unborn. 2,219,220 (or 62,85%) lived in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, 1,228,423 (or 34,79%) in Republika Srpska and 83,516 (or 2,36%) inhabitants in the Brcko District¹⁶. Unlike the pre-war census (1991), distribution of the Bosnian-Herzegovinian population was quite different because the war has brought to the homogenization of the majority of nations within their own ethnicity borders.

Graph 3. Population by national affiliation, Level Bosnia and Herzegovina (B&H), Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FB&H), Republika Srpska (RS) and Brcko District (BD), in percentages (%)¹⁷:

	Bosnian	Croat	Serb	Not declared	Other	No answer
B&H (100.00%)	50,11%	15,43%	30,78%	0,77%	2,73%	0,18%
FB&H (100.00%)	70,40%	22,44%	2,55%	0,82%	3,6%	0,19%
RS (100.00%)	13,99%	2,41%	81,51%	0,67%	1,25%	0,17%
BD (100.00)	42,36%	20,66%	34,58%	0,63%	1,65%	0,12%

In the census of 2013 the individual nomination of members of national minorities was omitted and this was the first time since the beginning of the enumeration of the population in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Accordingly, the number of national minorities is contained within 3,68% of the population of Bosnia and Herzegovina, together with those who are *Not declared* or did not respond to the question of ethnicity – *No answer* and those who are pleaded differently when compared to those of three constituent peoples (Bosnians, Croats and Serbs) are categorized as *Other*. Before the war (1992–1995), demographers compared the ethnic map of Bosnia and Herzegovina with a *leopard skin*, but the ethnic map in 2013 is mainly given the appearance of large mono-ethnic surfaced according to the entity division of Bosnia and Herzegovina's territory, resulting in a war exercise

¹⁵ Census of Population, Households and Dwellings in Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2013 (hereinafter the "BHC2013"), Agency for Statistics of Bosnia and Herzegovina (hereinafter the "BHAS"), Sarajevo June 2016, <http://www.bhas.ba> (date accessed 10.12.2016.)

¹⁶ BHC2013, BHAS, p. 25.

¹⁷ BHC2013, BHAS, p. 54.

murder, emigration, ethnic cleansing, inhumane relocation and intimidation. According to the national composition, Bosnians are the majority population in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbs in the Republika Srpska, the Croats, as a constituent people, are a minority in both entities, and the Brcko District is the only preserved more prominent multinational structure of the population. Thus, the last census showed the realization of the program of national parties on national homogenization of their national communities within the entity borders. After the release of the census, mainly in the public debate about the number of constituent peoples while data that was 2,82% illiterate population, or close to 100,000 people; 0,86% more than in Serbia (1,96%), and 2,02% more than in Croatia (0,8%) is completely absent. In addition, in 2013, 4,9% of the population was without any education, 12,7% was highly-educated at least in the region, and about 6,2% held a doctoral degree. All issues in Bosnian and Herzegovinian society are discussed in the national matrix, from those important for state policy, through inter-entity unsolved problems to some banal questions at the level of local communities. The 2013 census showed the existence of many villages without permanent residents, a high unemployment rate, a high average age of the population, the decline in birth rates, emigration of highly educated young people and many more negative aspects for a society. The election campaign for local elections in 2016 ignored economic issues and the national factor has played a major role similar to the 1990s at the time of the breakup of Yugoslavia, even in some irresponsible statements and alluded to the possibility of the renewal of war. The division according to nationality is still deepened, national minorities have fewer rights in the Bosnian-Herzegovinian society, a new generation knows less about the ethnic minorities living in their country.

On national minorities in history textbooks

What do we teach our children in Bosnian and Herzegovinian schools? On national minorities certainly do not learn, if we continue the past practice of writing textbooks for the teaching of history, in which the national history of three peoples (Bosniak, Croat and Serb) prevails. After 1995, main three national communities had their own history textbooks. The Dayton Peace Agreement (1995) ended the war and education was organized in accordance with the government and political system of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which is to say, through thirteen ministries of education and science – the Ministry of the Bosnian Serb Republic (Republika Srpska), the (Federal) Ministry of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, ten cantonal/county ministries, and the Ministry of the Brcko District of Bosnia and Herzegovina. All these ministries decided, independently, upon the curricula to be taught and on authorization of textbooks.

The authors of most of the existing textbooks encourage positive prejudice among children in favour of their own people. Bosnians: portrayed as pan-Bosnian oriented, having a constant need to prove, to themselves and the others, the legitimacy of their own identity; characterized by an elevated sense of morality which in different historical periods has manifested itself as passive suffering. Croats: always aspired to statehood; their identity is the oldest and they have been present on the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina for the longest time, which makes them politically superior to all other peoples.

Serbs: a small nation, but what makes it great is its heroism, love and freedom, resistance to those who have tried to subjugate it; Serbs are the embodiment of the principle of Christ's sacrifice, but others often do not understand them, just as they did not understand Christ; although very progressive, they are not seen as such by others¹⁸.

In addition to the history textbooks, there is no place for other and different ones, as in the textbooks of the mother languages (Bosnian, Croatian and Serbian) and their corresponding literatures, and in textbooks of geography, music and visual arts, or in the group of so-called *national subjects*. Twenty years after the war, textbooks are still overcrowded with their own national facilities, which may result in that future generation being deprived of knowledge of many other peoples who lived in Bosnia-Herzegovina's territory over the past century and were part of the multinational society, in which they have left a significant mark on its historical heritage. In light of the content of the textbooks and *what we teach our children*, it is rather unlikely that future generation will embark on a path towards understanding the past and building mutual trust with their neighbours in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the region, including against national minorities.

Conclusion

Since the beginning of the 16th century Bosnian-Herzegovinian society had a tendency towards the creation of a multi-religious, and multi-national society. As the western most province of the Ottoman Empire and the most-southeast of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Bosnia-Herzegovina's territory was the meeting place of many nations, culture, religious and other differences enrich the historical heritage of the society. Members of national minorities shared the fate of the area in which they lived, and during the wars some of them were victims of monstrous idea of anti-Semitism and undesirable peoples, as well as emigration, and even expulsion.

The position of national minorities is regulated in different ways. During socialism in Yugoslavia/Bosnia and Herzegovina national minorities had full national and civic rights. The breakup of Yugoslavia and the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina 1992–1995 brought great injustice to national minorities. For a long time after the war, the status of national minorities was not legally regulated. In the spring of 2003, the Law on the Protection of National Minorities was adopted. In the census of Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2013, the first census after the war, the names of peoples belonging to national minorities are not listed are included as *Other*. This happened for the first time since the enumeration of the population in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and members of national minorities cannot exercise all its rights. Regardless of the fact that they left a large impact on the historical heritage in Bosnia-Herzegovina's society, in today's history textbooks they do not have adequate representation. Future generations will not know much about the history of a multicultural society in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as it will mainly live in the communities of one nation, one religion, one culture, what is quite the opposite of the life in Bosnia and Herzegovina to the war in the 1990s.

¹⁸ V. K a t z, *Analysis of History Textbooks in Bosnia and Herzegovina*, [in:] *Forum for Transitional Justice, Humanitarian Law Center*, Belgrade, December 2015, p. 155, footnote 183.

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Vera Katz

The Position of National Minorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina before and after the Breakup of Yugoslavia

Summary

The main characteristic of the Bosnia-Herzegovinian population to the 1992–1995 war was multinationalism, which accounted for three of the most numerous nations (Muslims, Croats and Serbs), than the nations of the former Yugoslav republics (Slovenes, Montenegrins and Macedonians) and 18 national minorities (Albanians, Austrians, Bulgarians, Czechs, Germans, Greeks,

Hungarians, Italians, Jews, Poles, Romanians, Roma, Russians, Ruthenians, Slovaks, Ukrainians, Turks and Vlachs). Although their share in total the Bosnian-Herzegovinian population was about one percent, but during the communist period of their civil and national rights were guaranteed in all the Yugoslav and Bosnian-Herzegovinian constitutions after 1946. After the 1992–1995 war, the rights of national minorities were regulated in the spring of 2003 under the Law of Protection of National Minorities. However, in everyday life, they are not able to realize all their national and civic rights. In contrast to the communist period, according to the census of 2013, the national minorities are not specifically stated, but are classified as “Other”. So today, we have no information about the many ethnic minorities that recorded the census of 1991.

Keywords: Yugoslavia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, national minorities.