

Political Process in the Formation of the New State of Yugoslavia 1918

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Received: 09/09/2022

Accepted: 25/09/2023

<https://doi.org/10.22034/igq.2024.180181>

Abstract

This article discusses the consequences of World War I towards the struggle for independence for the Balkan States. It argues that the formational process of the state of Yugoslavia was a political compromise among the Slav nations, namely the Serbs, the Croats and the Muslims in the Balkans consisting of the former Austria-Hungarian territories. The research method was based on the content analysis of declassified documents from the Public Record Office, London and the personal collection of Seton Watson documents at the University of London. This article finds that the idea of Greater Serbia is at odds with the idea of Yugoslav. This is the threat to the unification of a new state. Pressure from outside, such as Italy wanting to take advantage of the Austrian-Hungarian place in the Balkans, has alarmed Yugoslav and Serbian leaders. The Italian threat forced the Slav political leaders to immediately agree to form a Yugoslav government, even if not wholeheartedly.

Keywords: Politics, Yugoslavia, Britain, Muslim, Slav.

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1. Introduction

The new state of Yugoslavia was formed in 1918 after World War I and was officially known as the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes from 1918-1929 (Chomsky,2018). The state's official name was changed to "Kingdom of Yugoslavia" on 3 October 1929. The realisation of Southern Slavic political unity in 1918 gave a new significance to many of the antagonisms and contrast of culture, creed and regional consciousness that had existed for centuries among the constituent groups of the new state (Calic,2018). Not the least important of these differences was the inequality of experience in government responsibility, which provided a significant difficulty when facing the constitutional problem of the Kingdom (Naseri,2019). Moreover, the defeat of the German, Austria-Hungarian and Ottoman armies at the hands of Britain, France, Italy and its allies made Britain and its allies one of the most influential great powers after the war.

Furthermore, the state of revolution that took place in Russia in 1917 weakened Russian power. Indirectly Britain's influence in the Balkans also became more dominant than its other European counterparts (Enh,2014). Serbia, an ally of the British during the war, used this opportunity to shape the Balkans as it had been in the idea of Greater Serbia. Serbia has long wanted to form a Slavic government since the Ottoman Empire ruled Bosnia-Herzegovina after the defeat of Serbia in the Kosovo War at the hands of the Ottoman Empire in the 15th century. Serbia wants to combine Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro, Croatia, Dalmatia and Slovenia under Serbia and Belgrade as the seat of its government. The significance of the clash between the great powers in World War 1 was a personal success for Serbia, giving them hope in realising that desire (Enh,2010b). Thus, this article analyses the political process between Serbs, Croats and Muslims that took place in the efforts to form a Yugoslav state in 1918.

2. The Formation of the Bosnia-Herzegovina Government

During the outbreak of war among the great powers, Bosnia-Herzegovina was placed under the control of the Austria-Hungarian Minister of War, General Potiorek. Potiorek had sent his troops from Bosnia-Herzegovina to Serbia. The armed forces consist of Muslims, Croats and Serbs (Pehar, 2021). The army was led by himself, who was also a Serb. This caused the Serbs in Bosnia-Herzegovina to fight with their Serb brothers from Serbia. The total number of Austria-Hungarian troops fighting Serbia is over 50 thousand troops (Graz,1918b). During the war, Serbia could no longer face

the Austria-Hungarian army. Even the spirit and morale of the Serbian military had faded, and Serbia could only survive until January 1915. On 7 December 1914, Pasich called for the Slav states of the Balkan Peninsula to join Serbia in war with Austria-Germany. Furthermore, Pasich had called for the three Slavs to unite as one tribe. Moreover, this weak Serbian situation also caused them to seek the help of the great powers to fight the enemy army. "We have done enough unless we are helped"(Graz,1918b).

This was especially the case when Austria-Hungary joined forces with Germany and Bulgaria against Serbia. As a result, Serbia has suffered heavy casualties, and many Serbian soldiers have died. The Austro-German army had successfully destroyed the Serbian military by December 1915 (Graz,1917). Even then, Serbia was assisted by 5,000 Slav volunteers, especially Serbs from Bosnia-Herzegovina who joined the Serbian army. The action, in addition to responding to Pasich's call, was also due to pressure from the Serbs in Bosnia-Herzegovina during the war between Austria-Hungary and Serbia. Many Serbs have fled to seek refuge in Serbia. In addition, many Austria-Hungarian prisoners of war in Bosnia-Herzegovina are of Serbian descent. Those arrested were sent to military detention camps in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Hungary for sentencing (Enh, 2010a). Most of them were hanged by the Austria-Hungarian government. The army and prisoners of war from Serbia and the Serbs received the worst treatment from the Austria-Hungarian government (Graz,1918a).

As for the Muslim community, most of them have continued their allegiance to the Austria-Hungarian government, even though they are uncertain about the future of Bosnia-Herzegovina. There are also several Muslim communities serving in the Serbian army. Their purpose was not to allow the expansion of Serbian power over Bosnia-Herzegovina after the war era but to gain independence for Bosnia-Herzegovina. On the other hand, the Croatian community in Bosnia-Herzegovina is divided into two groups. Although most Croats wanted to remain under Austrian-Hungarian rule, most intellectuals wished to ally with Serbia to form a Slavic state. This is because they have ties to the Croatian leaders from Croatia.¹ Many of these

1.Croatia is located in the midwestern part of the Balkan Peninsula and the Croats began to occupy Croatia since the 7th century. Croatia began to form a kingdom in the 10th century under the reign of Ladislav I of Hungary. This kingdom ruled Croatia for 8 centuries until Hungary was defeated by the Ottoman Empire in 1526 in the war in the Mohacs and parts of Croatia became Ottoman conquered territories until 1699. While the inhabitants of the rest of the territory of Croatia had sought protection under the protection of the Austrian government in 1527. After 1699, the whole of Croatia was placed under the protection of the Hungarian government and became part of the Austria-Hungarian Empire since 1867, that is, after the union of Austria and Hungary in that year.

Croat leaders have joined the Yugoslav Community established abroad. Their goal was to form a Slav state by preserving the identity of Croats in the future, although they had to join Serbia to achieve that ambition.

These Croat leaders also had doubts about the idea of Greater Serbia. Doubts about Greater Serbia became clearer when Serbia handed over parts of Dalmatia, Istria and Slovenia¹ to Italy (Glenny,2000). This was in return for Italy has joined the war on behalf of Serbia. The situation has sparked controversy among Croatian politicians. Before the end of 1917, the majority of Croats and Slavs in Bosnia-Herzegovina and other Austria-Hungarian territories in the Balkans wanted to form an autonomous Slavic state under the protection of the Austria-Hungarian Empire.

“Croatian and other Southern Slavs in particular whether, if large promises of autonomy were held out to them by Emperor Karl, they would prefer remaining subject to the Austria-Hungary empire, rather than join with men of their own race to make a Greater Serbia” (Graz,1917).

In addition, Croat leaders in the Balkans also plan to demand the implementation of Trialist policies under the protection of the Austria-Hungarian government in the Balkans. Through this Trialist policy, everyone in the Austria-Hungarian Empire had the same rights whether in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia or Slovenia. All nations in the Austria-Hungarian territories will be recognised as Austrian-Hungarian citizens and enjoy the same privileges as the people of Austria-Hungary. The idea of Slav unification through this Trialist policy has been well-received among the Slav community in the Austria-Hungarian territories in the Balkans.

In response, on May 30, 1917, Dr Ante Korosec, one of Croatia's political leaders from Croatia, declared and called for the unification of all Austria-Hungarian territories consisting of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs (Malcolm, 1996). The declaration has had a profound effect on the Bosnian-Herzegovina community. The majority of the Christian population welcomed the idea of Slav unification under this Trialist policy, including Serbs. The Serbs who agreed with the concept saw that the unification under

1.Slovenia is located in the northwestern part of the Balkan Peninsula. Slovenia is bordered by Italy to the west and Austria to the north. The southern and southeastern parts are bordered by Croatia. The Slovenes first settled in Slovenia in the 6th century. In 627, they had their own government until the 9th century, Slovenia was ruled by the German government. While since the 13th century, Slovenia has been colonized by the Austria-Hungarian government.

this Trialist policy would not place them as second-class citizens of Austria-Hungary while seeing the unification as more geared towards a perfect Slav state formation under the protection of the Austrian-Hungarian government. Catholic priests also accepted the idea because they saw the declaration as towards forming Great Croatia. However, many Muslims disagree with the unification under this Trialist policy; instead, they are more interested in developing an autonomous government. Thus, two Muslim political leaders, Serif Arnautovic and Safvetbeg Basagic, met with the Emperor of Hungary. In the meeting, they demanded granting an autonomous state to Bosnia-Herzegovina under the protection of Hungary. The purpose of the appeal made by these Muslim leaders was to prevent Croatia from having dominant power over Bosnia-Herzegovina later. This is what the Muslim community in Bosnia-Herzegovina wants to avoid even though its leaders, like Bagasiv, are firmly pro-Croat but unwilling to see Bosnia-Herzegovina dominated by a Catholic Croatia (Saleh,2013).

On the Austria-Hungarian side, they had seen proposals from their territories but did not take any action then. However, by the spring of 1918, on the eve of its defeat, the government began to pay attention to the proposals that had been received before. However, at that time, the situation was delayed. Austria-Hungary is weakening in Bosnia-Herzegovina, in addition to the Austria-Hungarian naval mutiny in Montenegro. Almost every day, its army had fled, and there was a strike among its soldiers. This shows that the war marked the defeat on the Austria-Hungarian side of the Balkans. This raised concerns among the Austria-Hungarian governor of Bosnia, Baron Sarkotic. He held talks with political leaders in Bosnia-Herzegovina to prevent them from forming a Slav government.

Instead, try to influence them to remain under the Habsburg Empire. In March 1918, he initiated submitting a proposal to the Emperor of Hungary that Bosnia-Herzegovina is merged with Croatia under the Habsburg Empire (Saleh,2013). The proposal did not last long when he later proposed that Bosnia-Herzegovina be given autonomous territory. However, in May 1918, when the Bosnian-Herzegovina issue was being debated and refined in the Hungarian palace, he returned with a proposal for Bosnia-Herzegovina to be merged with Croatia. During this period, Korosec arranged meetings and discussions with the political leaders of the Austria-Hungarian territories. These political leaders had dropped the idea of forming a Slavic state under the protection of Austria-Hungary. Instead, they agreed to create a union of a free and independent Slavic nation. This result was achieved following the

defeat of Austria-Hungary in the day-to-day war. Therefore, they are convinced that the empire will not last long. However, the Austria-Hungarian government wants to survey to ensure the wishes of the people in Bosnia-Herzegovina. In September 1918, the emperor of Hungary sent Count Tisza to Sarajevo and Zagreb to negotiate and persuade political leaders in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia to accept the constitution being drafted by Hungary and remain under the sovereignty of the Hungarian empire. But Count Tisza's response disappointed Hungary. In Bosnia-Herzegovina, these three Slavs unanimously refused to take refuge under Hungarian sovereignty (Foreign Office, 1918a).

The Croat and Serb leaders have jointly submitted a memorandum to Count Tisza. They consist of Slav party leaders who represent their respective parties, namely Dr Ante Korosec of the 'Slovens National Council', Dr Gajo Bulat from the 'National Council of Dalmatia', Dr Ante Pavelic from 'Party of The Right', Stjepan Radic from 'Croat Land Party', Dr Gyorje Kranojevic of the 'Serb Radical Party' and a representative of Croats and Serbs from Bosnia-Herzegovina. All of them had sent memoranda to the emperor demanding that they be given independence to form the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (Foreign Office, 1918a).

3. Problem Statement

The main agenda that became the focus of the Balkan countries after the First World War was the independence of the Slavic Balkan countries. This is because the success of the formation of the Slavic nation can only be achieved if there is agreement, tolerance, and cooperation between all Slavic peoples. It is not easy for the three Slavic nations consisting of Bosnians, Croats, and Serbs, to realise an independent Slavic state. At the same time, they needed to act quickly because their delay in reaching an agreement allowed Austria-Hungary to return to colonising them. The main problem of this study is how they negotiate the issue of power-sharing and political compromise among the Slavs towards forming an independent Slav kingdom.

4. Methodology

This research employed a historical research method. The research method was based on the content analysis of declassified documents from the Public Record Office (PRO), London and the personal collection of Seton Watson from the School of Slavonic and East European Studies Archives at the

University of London, which consists of a collection of discussions between the British government and Slav politicians. The documents at PRO consist of Foreign Office (FO) 371 reports of British embassies abroad, including letters, minutes of meetings and memoranda. In addition, this study utilised the personal letters in Seton-Watson's possession to obtain information about Slavic political parties and leaders regarding the idea of forming a Slavic state. The content analysis of these documents involved extracting, evaluating, and interpreting accordingly to build the historical narrative.

5. Discussion and Result

5-1. Transfer of Power from Austria-Hungary to the 'National Council' in Bosnia-Herzegovina

Shortly after receiving a mandate from the political leaders of the former Slavs of the former Austria-Hungarian territory, Korosec held a conference on the 'National Council' with the delegates in October 1918 in Zagreb. When these delegates returned from Zagreb to Sarajevo, they formed a 'National Council' for Bosnia-Herzegovina. In addition, these delegations reached an agreement. They decided to hand over power to the Prime Minister of Serbia, Nicola Pasich, to represent them in making demands on forming this new government from Britain (Evan, 1918).

In Croatia, its Parliament declared the acquisition of political power from the Austria-Hungarian government, subsequently abolishing Habsburgh's right to rule in Croatia. Instead, the power of government has been handed over to the 'National Council'. At the same time, the Croatian parliamentarians announced the formation of a Slav government consisting of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. The announcement covers all former Austrian-Hungarian territories in the Balkans. In Bosnia-Herzegovina, the announcement brought joy to the Serbs. In Sarajevo, the Serbs were overjoyed to celebrate their happiness. For the Serb community, the announcement clearly showed that the goal towards forming a Slavic government was almost to achieve the goal of their struggle. This is because they have been close to uniting with the Serbian government through the formation. At the same time, the Serbian army had begun to enter the Bosnia-Herzegovina border in preparation for taking over Bosnia-Herzegovina. The Muslim community and Croats only accepted the announcement calmly.

On 29 October 1918, local leaders met with the Austria-Hungarian governor of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Baron Sarkotic. The purpose of the meeting was to

request the government to stop the collection of revenue from Bosnia-Herzegovina. However, this delegation did not ask to take over power from Austria-Hungary. During the meeting, Baron Sarkotic confirmed that he had received instructions from the Defense Minister in Vienna to hand over all troops in Bosnia-Herzegovina to the 'National Council'. On 1 November 1918, he summoned the chiefs of the armed forces and informed them that he had been deported from Bosnia-Herzegovina by order from Vienna. When he was asked by the Croatian leader Josip Sunaric to release political prisoners during the war, he announced that power was in their hands to release the prisoners. Shortly after the meeting, two days later Bosnian-Herzegovina political leaders formed the first Federal Government in Bosnia-Herzegovina (Malcolm,1996).

5-2.Towards the Establishment of the Serb, Croat and Slovene Government of 1918

Preparations to take over the administration in the Slavic states were carried out shortly after Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia. On 29 July 1914, Serbian Prime Minister Nikola Pasich issued a manifesto calling on all Serbs to defend their homeland. This, in particular, involves Bosnia-Herzegovina (Stavrianos,2001). Thus, Serbia deployed its troops in Bosnia-Herzegovina after the defeat and withdrawal of Austria-Hungary from Bosnia-Herzegovina in October 1918. This follows the eruption of a small uprising in Bosnia-Herzegovina shortly after the Austria-Hungarian withdrawal (Rumbold,1918b). The rebellion was between Muslims and Serbs in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The Muslims, mostly landlords, had to deal with Serb farmers who refused to pay rent to the landlords. In addition to refusing to pay these landlords, they have attacked the landlords and Muslims physically and verbally. Most of these Bosnian Serbs had joined their relatives from Serbia and had experience in the war against Austria-Hungary. Therefore, they did not hesitate to act violently against the Muslims in Bosnia-Herzegovina and make the Bosnian Muslims the victims of their atrocities. On the other hand, this Serbian policy benefited Slav Christians towards forming a new government (Crampton,2000).

Among the policies implemented by Serbia to resolve the uprising was to hand over the lands owned by Muslim landlords to the Serbs. This Serbian move gave many privileges to the Serbs, and instead, it oppressed the Muslims. In addition, the people of Bosnia-Herzegovina have been forced to accept their union with Serbia. Serbia's intervention in the Bosnian-

Herzegovina uprising was in preparation for Serbia's takeover of Bosnia-Herzegovina. This is so that Bosnia-Herzegovina can be united with Serbia to form Greater Serbia under the central government in Belgrade. Later, Serbia gradually planned to take control of other Slavic states, such as Croatia and Slovenia, to be ruled by Serbia. Furthermore, Serbia has confidence that Britain will support the formation of the Greater Serbia government. This makes them more eager to fulfil those ideals (Rumbold, 1918a).

This idea of Greater Serbia contradicts the ideas fought by the leaders of the Slavic group from the former territories of the Habsburg Empire (Foreign Office, 1918a). The primary purpose of this Committee was to carry out the propaganda of the unification of the Slavs and to be ready to unite with Serbia and Montenegro through the formation of a federal government under the sovereignty of the Karageovitch Dynasty. The propaganda was addressed to all the Slavic brothers under the protection of the Habsburg empire (Foreign Office, 1918a). This committee comprised a group of Slavic leaders who had migrated abroad, such as to Rome, Britain and the United States, during the outbreak of war among the great powers in 1914. This Yugoslav committee was, for the first time, registered in 1914 in Rome, and then another Yugoslav committee was formally established in London (Foreign Office, 1917). This committee is headed by Dr Ante Trumbic from Dalmatia.

However, differences of opinion on the future pattern of governing the new government have created conflicts and competition between Serbia and the Yugoslav Committee. The idea of Greater Serbia, supported by Nikola Pasich, had garnered protests from Slavs all over the Austria-Hungarian empire. This is because the idea of Greater Serbia highlights the dominance of Serbian rule over other Slavic states. Meanwhile, they are the prominent supporters of forming an inclusive Yugoslav government. They could not accept Serbian domination over them. They were willing to be under the suzerainty of King Peter Karageorgevich Dynasty, but they did not want to be ruled by Serbia alone. They want a federal government represented by all groups in the new government to be formed and not the central government as Serbia intends to implement. The Yugoslav government should have considered them all to be of the same Slavic ethnic stock without distinguishing them from the Serbs (Balfour, 1918a). In 1917, Dr Trumbic presented his manifesto to Britain about their ambitions for the unification of the Slav states, known as the Yugoslav. They expect help from their allies

to defend a small country's rights and realise the existence of an independent and united nation. The Yugoslav idea championed by Trumbic has garnered sympathy from the international community (Balfour,1918a).

As such, this situation has put pressure on Pasich. He had to agree to Yugoslav's idea. Thus, on July 20, 1917, Pasich representing the Serbian government and Trumbic, representing the Yugoslav Committee, signed an agreement in Corfu, Greece, on Serbia's support to combine and form a Yugoslav government (Burdett,1995).

5-3. Corfu Declaration 1917

The meeting in Corfu between Pasich and Trumbic, among others, was to discuss the future of the Slavic government to be formed. Among the understandings reached by the two leaders was the establishment of a government named Serb, Croat and Slovene or known as the free and independent Yugoslav (Burdett,1995). This state will not have a dividing border between the three states. Instead, they will be united and pledge allegiance under the suzerainty of the Karageogevitch Dynasty. In addition, they will form Parliament and the Constitution of Democracy elected from the Austria-Hungarian and Serbian Yugoslav representatives. They will also be under one Yugoslav flag as a symbol of their unification. Next, each has the freedom to practice their religion and culture. This agreement in Corfu was signed on 20 July 1917 (Burdett,1995).

5-4. Competition between the Yugoslav and Greater Serbia Ideas

The agreement reached in Corfu shows their willingness to work democratically to form a coalition government. However, the cooperation that Pasich highlighted at the conference in Corfu was due to pressure from the international community. One of the crucial factors that led Pasich to give in to this Yugoslav idea was the Revolution in Russia. Tsarists who strongly supported the concept of Greater Serbia fell on 16 March 1917 (Buchanan,1917). In that situation, Pasich felt pressured to accept the agreement to form a constitution, democratic system and the Yugoslav Parliament under the Karageogevich Dynasty.

On the other hand, Pasich was unwilling to compromise with the Yugoslav, as this new state would thwart the long-awaited Serbian ambitions of the formation of Greater Serbia which highlighted Serbia as the only dominant power in the Balkan Peninsula. This is mainly related to the new constitution to be enacted. The Constitution to be formed must be prepared

by the Constitutional Assembly, which will be appointed after the war and through a voting system represented by all factions. For Serbia, this will eliminate the homogeneity of the Serb nation (Seton Watson Collection, 1918).

This left Serbia and the Yugoslav Committee unable to unite and had to postpone the independence process. Finally, on 7 October 1918, when Austria-Hungary officially signed a truce and ended the war, the Yugoslav Committee declared independence from the new government. Still, the declaration was not recognised by their ally, Britain. British Foreign Secretary Sir Arthur James Balfour said that Yugoslav could not achieve independence because they were not united. Pasic did not recognise Yugoslav as the representative of Serbia. Between the two, there was no union and no cooperation reached an agreement in determining the new government's direction. On the other hand, this Austria-Hungarian withdrawal only created competition among the Slavs.

This British notion is justified and undeniable. Among the factors that can be disputed are military and fanatical attitudes towards tribes (Cecil, 1918). For example, the Slavs under the former Austrian-Hungarian empire (Croatia, Slovenia and Dalmatia) and the Serbian Slavs never united in war on behalf of Jugoslav; instead, each had their forces and military units against Germany and Austria-Hungary. Moreover, the consensus was challenging not only to reach between the leaders of Serbia and Jugoslav but also the people of the former Habsburg empire, not unanimously supporting the government to be formed. They are more inclined to unite according to their cultural and geographical characteristics. Among them, the Muslim and Catholic communities are more prone to collaborate with Croatia, while Orthodox followers in Dalmatia and Croatia want to unite with Serbia (Seton Watson Collection, 1918).

In Serbia, the government was unwilling to accept Catholics from Slovenia and Croatia into Serbia. If Serbia joins Slovenia, this means Serbia will bring in a total of 250,000 to 300,000 Catholic Christians into its country, which will compete with Orthodox believers in Serbia. This number does not yet cover the vast majority of the Croatian population who practice Catholic Christianity. As much as possible, Serbia wants to let Croatia and Slovenia decide their destiny (Seton Watson Collection, 1918). This is because Pasic's primary goal is to ensure Bosnia-Herzegovina and Montenegro merge with Serbia. A sense of fanaticism drives this Pasic stance. Pasic fears the merger between Catholics and Orthodox will loosen

their ties with Serbs in Russia and the Orthodox Church (Seton Watson Collection,1918).

In addition, Serbia also refused to recognise the involvement of Yugoslav volunteers under the protection of Austria-Hungary involved in the war as its war allies. In addition, Pasich did not want to receive delegates from the Yugoslav Committee and the 'National Council of Yugoslav' established in August 1918 in Zagreb (Agram) under its head Dr Korosec. The 'National Council of Yugoslav' includes representatives and delegates from all Yugoslav associations, including Dalmatia and Slovenia, as legal representatives of the whole of Yugoslav under Austria-Hungary (Foreign Office,1918a). On the other hand, Serbia appealed to its allies among the great powers to recognise Serbia as a liberator to its Slavic brothers. This is all because Serbia wants to unite with them as a free and independent government under the suzerainty of the Serbian government. The aim was for political power to be dominated by Serbia alone and to position Yugoslav Austria-Hungary as a second-class citizen in Serbia with no political privileges. This conflict caused Britain to think that establishing the Serb, Croat and Slovene governments was difficult to recognise as an independent country. This is because they do not reach an agreement, are not united and do not have a strong spirit of nationalism to take refuge under one government (Nourbakhsh and et al,2022). Instead, they competed for power in the new government.

Britain's refusal to confirm the formation of the government of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes as an independent and sovereign nation allowed Italy to move its troops into several territories in Dalmatia and Croatia. This is because Italy was not confident that Slav Habsburg could unite with Serbia. The Italian position bordering the Slav Habsburg states allowed Italy to dominate them after Austria-Hungary (Balfour,1918b). This situation alarmed Yugoslav leaders for fear that Italy would conquer the two states. As for the Serbian problem, his government cannot join Bosnia-Herzegovina without international consent and acceptance. Although the British government did not reject the addition of Serbian territory to merge with Bosnia-Herzegovina, the decision must have the consent of the people and the recognition of the great powers (Enh,2016). Without such an agreement, the merger of Serbia with Bosnia-Herzegovina would tarnish the dignity of Serbia as an independent government and place the people of Bosnia-Herzegovina as a pawn after the war (Seton Watson Collection,1918).

Moreover, the actions of Serbians who are only satisfied with Bosnia-Herzegovina and allow other Slav states, such as Croatia and Slovenia, to determine their destiny will face opposition from the international community sympathetic to the struggle of the Yugoslav Committee.

In Britain's opinion, Serbia in any way must agree to form a Yugoslav government recognised by the great powers. In addition, Britain also stressed that the Serbian government should announce its agreement on establishing the Yugoslav government to the rest of the world. Britain promised that only then would Serbia get moral support from Britain. In addition, they also needed to act immediately, before the start of the Peace Conference, that is, the conference of the great powers that would take place on 6 November 1918 in Geneva. This conference was crucial in determining the new world order after the end of World War 1. This was the best opportunity for them to announce Yugoslav independence while gaining international support and recognition of the new government of Serb, Croat and Slovene.

5-5. The 1918 Geneva Conference and the Union of the Slavic States with Serbia

The formation of this Slavic government has received attention from Britain and the United States. Its President, W. Wilson, gave his full support to the formation of self-government after the war, including the Balkan Peninsula. He has presented fourteen articles related to the resolution of the war, including the necessary systems and guidelines for a new government formed after the war. These articles are also known as 'Wilson's fourteen points'.¹ These articles, in principle, need to be applied to shape the future of the Serb, Croat and Slovene governments. Pasich has agreed with the guidelines put forward by President Wilson. For Pasich, the articles would not threaten Serbia's interest in the Serb, Croat and Slovene governments to be formed. Among others is Article 5, which is about the division of borders. The disadvantage of the article is that it does not precisely explain the principle of division of autonomous units of the Serb, Croat and Slovene

1. America was involved in World War 1 in October 1917. The American army had joined the British army against Germany. Woodrow Wilson was the President of the United States of America from 1913 to 1921. He was a supporter of the formation of self-government. Therefore, he also supported the formation of the Slavic government in the Balkans. He has put forward a proposal known as 'Wilson's 14 points' which is related to the basics and goals of post-war settlement.

provinces. This gives Serbia an advantage in deciding on independent territories for Croatia and Slovenia (Lamp,2005). This allowed Serbia to change the boundaries of Serb territory in those states to merge with Serbia while enabling Serbia to maintain the homogeneity of the Serb nation as it wished in the idea of Greater Serbia. This weakness, too, has given Serbia the freedom to expand and determine the size of the territory desired by Serbia without disturbing the homogeneity of the Serb nation.

In addition, due to the lack of clear guidelines on autonomous territories between Serbia, Croatia and Slovenia, Serbs from other provinces were merged to represent Serbia and win a 2/5 majority vote (Lamp,2005). This victory of the Serb majority has brought success and satisfaction to Pasich. This is because it allows Pasich to introduce a central government controlled by Belgrade as he wishes. This means that Serbia will also be able to monitor and control the political power of the Slavs from other regions. At the same time, Pasich used this method to fulfilling the purpose and conditions as suggested by Wilson in Article 14, namely political freedom and rights in the autonomous territories of other nations. Pasich is also happy that the new government that will be formed later will use the existing Serbian constitution. The current Serbian constitution was found to be inconsistent with Wilson's article, as it contained the rights of other nations in the government. Therefore, they do not need to draft a new constitution for the Serb, Croat and Slovene governments. Therefore, Serbia does not have to comply with the request of the Yugoslav leaders in Corfu. Instead, they demanded that the three nations' leaders should represent the new constitution to be drafted.

Moreover, Serbia's ambition to place other Slavic nations under its suzerainty was fulfilled. This is because the Serb, Croat and Slovene governments formed will be under the rule of the Serbian king of the Karageogevitch Dynasty. This gave Serbia a unique position to dominate the other Slavs in this new government. In addition, Pasich was also satisfied that the formation of the Yugoslav government began with the Serbian government, which was later followed by other Slavic states. This gives an advantage and priority to the Serbs and the Serbian government (Lamp,2005).

Finally, article 11 in 'Wilson's fourteen points' also gives way and freedom to Serbia in the Adriatic Sea. This is something that Serbia has been demanding for the sake of the Serbian economy. Thus, on these factors,

Pasich has accepted the conditions put forward by President Wilson as the basis for the formation of the Serb, Croat and Slovene governments and expressed the Serbian agreement to work with Trumbic and other Yugoslav leaders. Pasich, who represented the Serbian government, felt that the formation of the new Slav government was a success for Serbia. This is because it is the moment that Serbia has been waiting for 600 years to achieve the inspiration of Greater Serbia that he has been dreaming of for so long.

The leaders of the Yugoslav Committee are also in a critical situation. This is because they were worried about the Italian advance in the Balkans, especially when the Italian army entered Croatia after the Austria-Hungarian withdrawal. The delay in forming the Slavic government with Serbia would cause Croatia to be colonised by Italy. If Italy had no threats in the Balkans, they would disagree with Belgrade's actions. This is because Pasich's free move to form the autonomous borders of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes has allowed Serbia to determine the boundaries of Serbian territory. The move has allowed Serbia to get a majority vote to implement the central government as it wishes. They know this is a step towards the formation of Serbia, which Serbia plans. However, during Pasich's call on 7 December 1914, which called for all Slavs to unite as one faction and for the independence of the Slavic states, Pasich did not mention or touch on Serbia. However, due to concerns over the progress of Italy in the Balkan Peninsula, these Yugoslav community leaders were forced to accept and agree with Belgrade. Trumbic, who represents the Yugoslav Committee, decided that Pasich, who would represent the Yugoslav Committee at the Peace Conference in Geneva, would speak on behalf of the Austria-Hungarian Yugoslav (Balfour, 1918a). On 8 November 1918 in Geneva, Pasich confirmed the Serbian acceptance of the Trumbic-led Yugoslav Committee to Britain, France and the United States. In addition, Pasich has also recognised the roles and powers of the 'London Yugoslav Committee and the 'National Council of Yugoslav'.

Serbia's recognition of the Yugoslav Committee and the 'National Council of Yugoslav' is vital to enable Serbia and the 'Habsburg Yugoslav' to work together. Therefore, on 11 November 1918, representatives from the Serb, Croat and Slovene governments made an announcement in Geneva about the formation of the new government. Nikolic Pasich represented the Serbian government, the 'National Council of Yugoslav' was represented by Dr Anton Korosec and the 'Yugoslav London' Committee were represented

by Dr Ante Trumbic. They have officially, emphatically and unanimously declared to the world community their union under a government called the Serb, Croat and Slovene (Burdett, 1995). Moreover, in the conference, they also reiterated the declaration in Corfu that they agreed and decided that this new government would form a constitution that would use the Serbian constitution, which would be shared.

Moreover, there will be no more political and cultural boundaries between Serbia and the Yugoslav states. This new government organisation and administration will also exist in all Serbia-based Yugoslav states. Meanwhile, on 1 December 1918, the King of Serbia, Peter Karageogevitch, made another official announcement on the formation of the Serb, Croat and Slovene governments after his official merger with Bosnia-Herzegovina and Montenegro. The people of Montenegro, who had long aspired to be under the sovereignty of Serbia, declared their unification with Serbia on 26 November 1918 after overthrowing their king, King Nicholas (Burdett, 1995).

6. Conclusion

World War 1, which ended in 1918, brought changes to Bosnia-Herzegovina's position in the Balkans and Europe in general. This is due to the defeat of the great powers that once ruled Bosnia-Herzegovina, such as the Ottoman and Austria-Hungarian governments. Their defeat at the hands of the allied forces has allowed Serbia to realise the idea of Greater Serbia that it has been fighting for. However, some leaders from the Croats and Slovenes hoped for the establishment of a Yugoslav government that united all Slavs under the former Austria-Hungarian colony instead of a new Serbian-dominated country. Other Slav leaders made efforts to establish an independent Austria-Hungarian-occupied Slavic state. Although, initially, it was observed in Bosnia-Herzegovina, there were two characteristics of the struggle of political leaders in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Croat leaders were more comfortable being under Austria-Hungarian rule through the Trialist policy. Meanwhile, Muslim leaders are fighting for autonomy for Bosnia-Herzegovina from Austria-Hungary.

Moreover, the guidelines for forming a new Serb, Croat and Slovene government made by the President of the United States do not state the boundaries of each state. This again gives Serbia the advantage of setting its borders based on the interests of the Serb nation. Therefore, this will not eliminate the Serbian culture and homogeneity that Serbia wants to

preserve. Thus, at a conference in Geneva, the two leaders agreed to cooperate to form a government named Serb, Croat and Slovene on 1 December 1918. One of the effects of this First World War was the existence of an independent Slavic state called Serb, Croat and Slovene on 1 December 1918. With the formation of this government, Serbia's ambition to obtain Bosnia-Herzegovina as part of the Serbian empire was successful. Moreover, more importantly, after the end of this war, Serbia succeeded in realising Serbia's ambition to unite all the Slavic countries under the suzerainty of Greater Serbia which it had been fighting for.

7. Acknowledgement

The Ministry of Higher Education funds this research under the FRGS grant: FRGS/1/2021/SSI0/UKM/02/1).

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