

prove to be useful for them. Hopefully, the Atlas will find them – however, this scenario is most likely to happen in Poland, since the Atlas itself is Polish, and therefore deeply centred around Polish perspectives and opinions. For instance, a Hungarian reader, who would like to learn more about Czechia, will hardly find useful information about that country, however, they will clearly discover how Poland sees the rest of the Visegrad Group countries; and that has key advantages. Thus, I would urge the wide audience who have the smallest flick of interest in these four countries about who have formed the political Central Europe, just after exiting the Soviet sphere of influence, to take a seat and get through this huge amount of facts and figures, presented by the *Polish Geographical Society*. It is worth reading.

Bence Biró

Stipe Kljaić, *Nikada više Jugoslavija. Intelektualci i hrvatsko nacionalno pitanje, 1929–1945.*

[Never more Yugoslavia: Croatian Intellectuals and the National Question, 1929–1945] Hrvatski institut za povijest, Zagreb 2017. 436 pages

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.51918/ceh.2021.2.6>

Stipe Kljaić, a member of the younger generation of Croatian historians, published his first book in 2017 titled as, *Nikada više Jugoslavija: Intelektualci i hrvatsko nacionalno pitanje (1929. – 1945.)* [Never more Yugoslavia: Croatian Intellectuals and the National Question, 1929-1945]. The publisher was his home institution, the Croatian Institute of History (HIP) in Zagreb, where he is employed as a research associate. The book is based on Kljaić's doctoral dissertation that he defended at the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Zagreb in 2015. The dissertation was notably improved and expanded before the researcher decided to publish his book, which is the result of eight years of research.

Kljaić's book is a remarkable work on the intellectual history of the Croatian intelligentsia in the first half of the 20th century. The author considers *intellectual history* as the main social and political ideas of the era and their appropriation in the Croatian intellectual public, the different interpretations of Croatian identity, as well

as the various views on the Croatian language, culture and race.

The work with an extensive bibliography was the first attempt in Croatian historiography to deeply analyze the ideas of Croat intellectuals on the national question from the late 1920s until the collapse of the Nazi-allied Independent State of Croatia (NDH) in 1945. The author offers an interpretation of the changes in the Croatian national ideology caused by the 6th January Dictatorship established by King Alexander I, trying to end the chaotic era, which evolved after the assassination of the Croatian Peasant Party (HSS) leader Stjepan Radić in the Parliament of Yugoslavia and with the intention to create a Yugoslav nation.

The book is divided into seven chapters in chronological order from 1929 up to 1945, even though the author emphasizes that being a work of intellectual history, chronological limitations are relative.

In the introduction, Kljaić offers a brief survey of different understandings of the role of intellectuals throughout history. The author makes it clear that his focus is on the Croatian intellectuals who opposed the Yugoslav regime and advocated the idea of an independent Croatian state. Although the work provides a wider picture of the intelligentsia between 1929 and 1945, he managed to outline the key tendencies of intellectual currents. In addition to the writings published in books, newspapers and journals, the author's research extended to the speeches, recorded discussions and lecture texts of various meetings, which shed light on many details.

Kljaić presents the views of the key Croatian intellectual groups of the 1930s, emphasizing the heterogeneity of the Croatian nationalist movement. The author demonstrates the different views and analyzes the internal disagreements among the members of the Croatian Catholic movement, presenting how the Catholic intelligentsia received the Croatian state-building, despite the fact that the Catholic leadership mainly welcomed the Yugoslav state at the initial phase. He also explains the process how the Croatian nationalism found a place of resistance to Yugoslav unitary in Catholicism. Furthermore, the author points out the criticism of Catholic circles against the Independent State of Croatia (NDH), which was established with their support.

Kljaić analyzes the views of the agrarian movement, the intellectuals of the Croatian Peasant Party, their leaders, Stjepan Radić and Vladko Maček as well as their colleagues and followers. A valuable part of the book presents the ideological foundations of the main Croatian political force of the interwar period and the parallels with other similar European movements.

The book also offers a summary of the Marxist interpretation of the national question, the ambivalent views of the different fractions of communists in Yugoslavia. Kljaić introduces the concept of “left wing nationalism”, presenting how some notable Croatian communists became interested in national history, emphasizing that it was not only skilful tactics of the party but also a personal belief of some communists that did not refer to the significant weakening of the international component in their ideology.

Stipe Kljaić discusses how the part of Croatian intellectuals rejected the Yugoslav idea, their views on differences between Croatian and Serbian culture after the 6th January Dictatorship was established. The author of the book emphasizes the key role of the leader of the oldest Croatian national institution *Matica hrvatska*. It was Filip Lukas who claimed that culture and history are the key elements of a nation, not race and language, as the official Yugoslav ideology stated. Lukas referred, among others, to the French historian Ernest Renan, and the Austrian sociologist Othmar Spann. His life is truly symbolic, as the leaders of the royal Yugoslavia wanted to assassinate him and he was threatened with death by the ustaša regime as well, while the communists sentenced him to death in absentia.

Kljaić analyzes how the pro-Western intellectuals and the supporters of Croatian Catholicism opposed the Balkanization of the Croats and also describes various views on the “dinaric race”, which were for some superior, while for others barbarian. Kljaić highlights that the glorifiers and critics all believed that human nature was exclusively determined by history, geography and biology. The book deals with the different approaches to regionalism, ranging from the Marxist Miroslav Krleža who thought that the national integration of all Croatian lands was an impossible fantasy, to the ustaša Ante Pavelić who rejected every form of regionalism, which made differences among Croats on the basis of the regions of their habitat.

The book contains a subchapter about the case of Dalmatia, whose attachment was sought by every Croatian policy of the 19th century. However, in the interwar period and in the Second World War, the region (especially its urban population) showed the greatest restraint towards Croatian national integration. Kljaić analyzes Dalmatian elites, how their representatives became mostly the followers of integral Yugoslavism and the process of their joining the communist and the četnik movements, too.

In the interwar period, mostly Catholic-oriented intellectuals were looking for a “third way” between capitalism and communism. Many of them criticized the concept of a totalitarian state by advocating ideas such as Catholic corporatism with the argumentation that it suits the spirit of the Croatian people better than the National Socialism and fascism. The author points out that the Ustaša movement never developed a consistent ideology of social order, which caused their main problems, leading to a spontaneous way of governing. Kljaić quotes the criticism of Filip Lukas and Stjepan Zimmermann, who agreed that Pavelić’s personality was the biggest obstacle of establishing a stable state.

Kljaić deals with Marxism in a separate chapter, emphasizing that the criticism against its representatives, Miroslav Krleža, August Cesarec and others, arose from the Catholic and conservative circles, much less from liberal positions, which he learned by analyzing the anti-communist discourse of the Matica hrvatska cultural organization. However, Marxist thoughts were also present in the organization until the establishment of the Independent State of Croatia.

The book provides a summary on the criticism of the Marxist “national nihilism” and deals in a distinguished sub-chapter with political converts who subsequently rejected communism.

The process of the weakening of the liberal idea in the interwar period is presented with an international outlook by showing the Yugoslav liberal nationalism of the Yugoslav-oriented Croatian liberals. The author describes the vision on the establishment of a united Yugoslav nation, emphasizing that many liberals accepted the Croatian national ideology turning to Croatian nationalism. Marxism took the place of the “primary enemy” of Christian morality for Catholic intellectuals and the Croatian nationalists from the 1930s. Kljaić points out that the mainstay of the philosophical approach to liberalism was Catholic anti-modernism and he underlines that the emerging Croatian Catholic movement challenged the earlier position of the Church, which at the time of Strossmayer was more biased towards liberalism and the French Revolution, believing that it could be reconciled with the Christian religion. The book touches on the influence of Masaryk’s realism, which was thanks to Croatian intellectuals studying in Prague. Kljaić also analyzes the position of the liberal idea in the Independent State of Croatia.

Kljaić wrote a new chapter about the Croatian Question in the war, analyzing how Croatian intellectuals saw the issue of the sovereignty of the ustaša-led Croatia.

Kljaić cites numerous intellectuals who criticized the way the Independent State of Croatia was run and he points out that it was more similar to the Nazi Germany than to the Fascist Italy, claiming that the idea of a “totalitarian state” was absent from the ustaša ideology. The author decided to deal with the status of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as with the questions of Muslims and the followers of the Orthodox Church in special subchapters. He explains how the ustaša-led Independent State of Croatia tried to fit the Muslim population into the Croatian nation, creating a hybrid of Western and Oriental influences, the way the entire territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina was claimed, and how it became the “heart” of the Croatian nationalist state. In this context, the author highlights the importance of the adoption of the “German geopolitical logic” by the Croatian intellectuals studying at German-speaking universities. Kljaić describes the circumstances of the establishment of the Croatian Orthodox Church and the disagreements of the Ustasha over the conversion of the Serbian population to Catholicism. More emphasis should have been given to the ideological background of the crimes committed against the Serbian Orthodox population during the Second World War. In this chapter, the case of Istria would have deserved perhaps a little more attention.

The final chapter of the book deals with the development of the partisan and četnik concepts of Yugoslavia and outlines the basic principles of their leaders. The author tries to explain the motivations of the Croatian intellectuals who joined these movements and presents their plans on how they intended to rebuilt the Yugoslav state after the war, the way the new Yugoslavia announced with its federalist drafts the death sentence for Croatian nationalism and its aspirations for the Croatian state.

Despite its somewhat tendentious title, Kljaić’s book is certainly a major contribution to Croatian historiography. The work illuminates the rich Croatian intellectual life in the discussed period with an interdisciplinary approach. Since the Croatian national question was one of the key issues of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, the book offers deep knowledge to understand some of the main reasons of its collapse. The work can be very useful not only for those who are interested in the topic, but also it can help understand the roots of the debates of our days.

György Lukács B.