

Danijel Dzino: “Some thoughts on fashion culture and racial discourses. The review of Simončič, *Kultura odijevanja* and Bartulin, *The Racial Idea in the Independent State of Croatia*”

Danijel Dzino

Department of Ancient History
Macquarie University
Sydney, Australia
danijel.dzino@mq.edu.au

Katarina Nina Simončič, *Kultura odijevanja u Zagrebu na prijelazu iz 19. u 20. stoljeće*. Zagreb: Plejada, 2012; pp. 223; index; bibliography; hb; 195 HRK; ISBN 9789537782153.

Nevenko Bartulin, *The Racial Idea in the Independent State of Croatia: Origins and Theory*. Regional Perspectives in Global Context 4. Brill: Leiden and Boston, 2014, pp. 244; index; bibliography; hb; £99/US\$128; ISBN 9789004262836

Kultura odijevanja u Zagrebu na prijelazu iz 19. u 20. stoljeće (*The Fashion Culture in Zagreb in the late 19th and early 20th Century*) is the first monograph of Katarina Nina Simončič, senior lecturer at the Faculty of Textile Technology, University of Zagreb. It is an adapted version of her PhD thesis awarded at the University of Zagreb in 2010. The book explores urban, mostly elite and middle-class fashion culture in Zagreb in the later 19th and early 20th centuries, focusing on several different social aspects such as identity, social significance, the relation of fashion and art, fashion and tradition, etc.

The book is structured chronologically, starting with the introductory chapter (pp. 9-28). The author defines her research of fashion culture in Zagreb very precisely at the beginning (pp. 1-2). Fashion culture is a complex way of codifying messages about cultural *habitus* and socio-political narratives of a particular period, through employing visual language which is understandable in dominating local and global paradigms. The choice of Zagreb as a case-study for research is rather obvious, as it develops into an important urban centre in this period. At the same time Zagreb exists within two overlapping social paradigms, which affect the development of urban culture and heavily impact on fashion culture at the time. The first paradigm is centrality and focalisation in relation to the ongoing processes of the construction of a Croatian nation. The other is one of ultimate peripherality, as Zagreb was positioned on the imperial periphery of the Habsburg Empire, which was itself becoming peripheral to the major imperial powers of the time: the British Empire, France and Germany. The chapter further discusses basic terminology and the concepts employed in the book, including the terms ‘fashion culture’,

‘confection’, ‘anti-fashion’, etc. (pp. 11-14). The introduction also provides a literature review of major works dealing with the history of clothing, as well as the overview of the sources used in the study. The author has used a variety of relevant sources such as historical photography, contemporary fashion journals, visual arts (especially contemporary prints, paintings, caricatures), and preserved clothing objects (pp. 14-28).

Chapter 2: *Fashion in the 19th century* (pp. 29-68) provides comprehensive coverage of urban fashion culture in Zagreb during this period. Simončić sets the stage by presenting and describing global changes in clothing fashion throughout imperial centres of the time, especially Britain and France. Structural changes in the architecture of power and the beginning of global processes, amongst other things, also result in a slow but certain standardisation of clothes within the Western world and even further (pp. 29-33).¹ Focus then shifts to local aspects, paying particular attention to the fashion culture of the ‘Illyrian movement’, a prominent political movement in 1830s and 1840s Croatia (pp. 35-46). The ‘Illyrians’ were attempting to articulate the construction of a Croatian nation through the reappropriation of the pre-Slavic past and within a supra-national framework shaped by shared political interests of the South Slavs.²

It is quite fascinating to see the different ways in which the affiliation with the Illyrian movement was codified through contemporary clothes in mid-19th century Zagreb. The crucial object of clothing, appropriated for ‘Illyrian fashion’ in both male and female clothing, was the *surka*. It was a short coat inspired by the uniforms of the *serežani* – troops from the Croatian military frontier of the Habsburg Empire facing the Ottoman Empire.³ While the *surka* came from a recognisable local context, another clothing object, reappropriated as a symbol for display of affiliation with the Illyrian movement, came from a more global perspective. It was the so-called Illyrian red cap, which was inspired by the liberty cap (*bonnet rouge*) – an ancient symbol of liberated slaves appropriated in the context of American and French revolutions. The Illyrian red cap was usually adorned with the ‘Illyrian’ coat of arms – a crescent moon with a six-pointed star. Simončić also notices the prominent display of red, white and blue on Zagreb streets at the time – these were the Croatian tricolours which began to be used around 1848 on the standard of the ban (*viceroi*) Josip Jelačić, but became adopted as the colours of the national flag.

Political changes in the post-revolutionary 1850s and political pressure from the Habsburg imperial centres of Vienna and Budapest suppressed Illyrian fashion and the expression of Croatianness for some time. The neo-Illyrian style appears in the 1860s in a more relaxed political atmosphere, so the *surka* shortly returns into use in the Zagreb fashion culture. This local clothing style, however, did not last long because it could not compete with global fashion trends coming from Vienna

¹ See Ferguson (2012): 215-27, who shows patterns of early globalisation and impacts of Western dominance on the power superstructure of this period through the standardization of clothing.

² The Illyrian movement, recently Maissen (1998); Baric (2002), while in English the standard work is still Despalatovic (1975). See also n.7 below.

³ The military frontier (*Vojna krajina* or *Militärgrenze*) was organised as a separate administrative region within the Habsburg Empire.

and Budapest: it finally died out in the early 1870s. At this time Zagreb fashion started to be dominated by conservative trends in global clothing - in particular crinoline amongst females and the fuscous colours of male suits (pp. 46-68). It is indeed a paradox that when the construction of national discourses was the dominating discourse amongst most of Europe's intellectual communities, the mode of dress throughout the western world actually became more standardized.⁴

Chapter 3 is entitled *Reform movements at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century – from female clothes without corsets to reform clothes* (pp. 69-86). It follows a new social climate, in particular the process of women's liberation, codified in fashion culture through the simplification of female clothes and the development of new shapes and models of dress (pp. 69-75). The author also devotes some attention to attempts to merge art and fashion culture through so-called 'reform clothes'. This movement started in Germany but was also very popular in the heart of the Habsburg Empire - Vienna (the painter Gustav Klimt and *Wiener Werstätte*). 'Reform clothes' left their trace in Zagreb too. Especially prominent was the painter Bela Čikoš Sesija, who experimented with reform clothes, and Tomislav Krizman, who designed textile patterns in the spirit of *Wiener Werstätte* (pp. 75-86).

Chapter 4: *Zagreb fashion from 1900 to the beginning of World War I* (pp. 87-132) continues the historical narrative of Zagreb fashion culture in the last decades of the Habsburg Empire. The chapter discusses different topics, such as the relation of fashion and social gatherings, especially through public dances (pp. 92-97), the relationship between Zagreb newspapers and fashion (pp. 98-99), and contemporary arguments for and against the wearing of corsets at the time (pp. 99-103). The largest section of the chapter is devoted to two distinct fashion styles in Zagreb, existing during the time of Art Nouveau. The first is what the author calls a more restrictive or conservative style, which dominated the period between 1900 and 1909 (pp. 103-126). This style had 'orientalising' influences, in particular from Asian (especially Japanese) traditional clothes, as well as inspiration from clothing from the past, especially the Biedermeier and Rococo periods, and large decorated female hats. A more liberal Art Nouveau-era style dominated the last years before World War I (1909-1914) (pp. 126-132). Fashion culture engages in more exotic experiments, which were merging secession with art deco, probably with some influence from reform clothes.

Chapter 5: *Croatian heritage (anti-fashion) in the service of orientalising fashion in the era of Art Nouveau* (pp. 133-158) looks at the local impact of orientalising fashion. While Zagreb fashion culture looked primarily to imperial centres of the time for influences, as shown in the previous chapter, it drew some local influences from the Croatian countryside, and also Herzegovina and Bosnia. The rural elements came from all Croatian regions, and patterns and especially colour became somewhat more accepted in Zagreb fashion newspapers of the time. A greater fascination with influences from Bosnia and Herzegovina is visible, especially after the influx of refugees following the Habsburg annexation in 1908. Part of the chapter is devoted to the industry of Salomon Berger, a Slovakian-born

⁴ Ferguson (2012): 215-16.

Jewish industrialist from Zagreb (pp. 140-158). Berger developed the textile industry in Zagreb, inspired by patterns and colours from Croatian traditional clothes but adapted to the urban fashion culture. He achieved significant success on the world stage by exhibiting and selling his designs outside Croatia. Paradoxically, Berger did not have significant success at home, as Zagreb fashion culture was not interested in incorporating the local, but rather in adopting global orientalising patterns, especially Japanese.

Chapter 6: *Confection and fashion tailoring in Zagreb at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century* (pp. 159-164). This chapter briefly explores the development of the clothing industry, as either mass-produced confection or fashion tailoring. The contemporary Zagreb fashion press recognized high fashion (*velika moda – haute couture*) for the richest circles of the Zagreb elite who were buying clothes from Paris, Vienna, Budapest and London, and clothes purchased and sewn locally (*mala moda*). Zagreb fashion tailors developed in numbers and importance at the beginning of the 20th century, concentrating their shops on the main street of Ilica. The Conclusion (pp. 165-166) restates major points of the book.

Simončić manages to reconcile intellectualizing scholarship with an engaging style of narration, opening a completely new chapter in the research of Croatian history and ethnography.⁵ She strikes the right balance between documentary and scholarly. At first sight, this is an incredibly informative and entertaining work, which brings to light many forgotten elements of the recent past in Croatia and Zagreb. It is splendidly illustrated with 157 pictures and 37 tables - mostly reproductions from contemporary newspapers - a large bibliography and index. However, the paradigms of local and global, central and peripheral actually represent a key for understanding deeper layers of this book. This is an important case study of the interaction between the early stages of globalisation and its local receptions in Zagreb, focusing on the narrative of fashion culture. Simončić exposes the different strategies used by Zagreb elites and middle classes, revealing how they used clothes to position themselves between imperial allegiances and the development of Croatian national discourse. Even more, the book provides a case study which shows how late 19th and early 20th century urban Central Europeans adjusted their strictly locally defined settings according to globalising and standardising cultural impulses, originating from imperial centres of the time.

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The Racial Idea in the Independent State of Croatia: Origins and Theory is the second monograph of Nevenko Bartulin, graduate of the University of NSW, former lecturer at the University of Split and soon-to-be affiliate of the Centre of Croatian Studies at Macquarie University in Sydney. This study discusses the intellectual origins and theory behind racial theories in the Independent State of Croatia (NDH) 1941-1945. It is a very sensitive topic taking into account, on one side, the widespread discrimination and killing of Serbs, Jews and Gypsies in the NDH, and on

⁵ This field is in its very beginnings in Croatia, e.g. Bartlett (1999); Černelić Cvitan *et al.* (2002); Paić (2007). There is also the academic journal *TEDI: International Interdisciplinary Journal of Young Scientists from the Faculty of Textile Technology*, published in Zagreb, of which Simončić is co-editor.

the other side, the use and over-exaggeration of these crimes in later Yugoslav and Serbian propaganda to impose collective guilt on the Croats. The main point of the book is that the racial theories employed in the NDH used as their foundation theories of ethnolinguistic origin and racial anthropology, which were also used in the construction of Croatian nationhood in the 19th and 20th century. The racial ideologists of the NDH governed by the Ustasha regime⁶ also reacted to dominating discourses in racial anthropology of the time, especially those discourses developed in the period of the Yugoslav kingdom (1918-1941).

In the Introduction (pp. 1-19) Bartulin underlines the problem of researching the NDH, which in the past has led either to the vilification or apologist defence of the Ustasha regime. More popular examples of vilification saw the NDH as a Nazi-Fascist puppet state, characterised by rabid political Catholicism, or it was viewed through the paradigms of integral nationalism and/or fascism and fascist collaboration. In the author's opinion these views are either misleading or at best represent very limited interpretations of questions concerning the issue of race in the NDH. In his opinion, the Ustasha regime was part of its zeitgeist, drawing upon the existing tradition of racial discourse in world (especially German) scholarship, but also following the traditions of Croatian scholarship and political thought.

The first chapter, *Language and race: Croats, Illyrians, Slavs and Aryans* (pp. 20-32), discusses the foundations of later racial discourses in the NDH. In Bartulin's opinion the most relevant early influences were the ideology of Pan-Slavism and the Illyrian movement. Discourses on race in the Illyrian movement⁷ were positioned strategically towards the Hungarians and Serbs. The former were considered as political opponents and the latter as allies in the fight for improving the Croats' position within the Habsburg Empire. The Hungarians were denigrated as 'Asiatics', since their origin myths in the 19th century stressed that medieval Magyars originated from the ancient Huns. Hungarian intellectuals were thus 'justifying' their right to rule over non-Magyar peoples in the Carpathian basin, the core of the Hunnic Empire in the 5th century. Croatian writers and intellectuals responded to these claims, 'proving' that the Hungarians, as descendants of the 'Asiatic' and 'barbarian' Huns, did not truly belong to Europe. The Serbs were perceived in this paradigm as Slavic 'brethren', also reflecting the intellectual and political influences of Pan-Slavism. Croatian Yugoslavism emerged from the Illyrian movement, integrating most of the Illyrian ideas into a new political program which developed in intellectual circles around the archbishop of Đakovo, Josip Juraj Strossmayer. Croatian Yugoslavism denied the distinct ethnocultural identity of the Croats, as it was more interested to promote the authenticity of the

⁶ The Ustasha Organisation was a right-wing, anti-Yugoslav group established by Ante Pavelić (1889-1959), former secretary of the Croatian Party of Right, who enjoyed the protection provided by Mussolini in Italy from 1930. After the disintegration of the Yugoslav kingdom in 1941, the Ustashes established a government in Croatia with the help of victorious Axis forces.

⁷ The Illyrian movement traced its roots to ideas of Slav indigenoussness, developed within the networks of intellectual communities of Dalmatian and Croatian humanists (rather than Renaissance writers, as in Bartulin, p.26), see Blažević (2007a) and (2007b) in English.

South Slav ‘nation’ and Slavic ‘race’.⁸ The works of scholars such as Natko Nodilo (1834-1912) asserted the antiquity of the Slavs, but did not define Croat authenticity within this discourse.

The next chapter, *Ante Starčević: Historic State Right and Croat Blood* (pp. 33-43), focuses on the thought of the Croatian politician Ante Starčević, the founder of the Croatian Party of Right (1823-1896). Bartulin views Starčević as the first Croat ideologist who began to resolve the confusion emanating from issues of language and racial origins. Starčević rejected Yugoslavism and pan-Slavism similarly as he rejected Slavs as a distinct unit in an ethnic, racial or anthropological sense. He defined the Croats as a specific nation rather than a part of the ‘Slav ethnicum’, and defined belonging to the Croatian nation through ‘shared blood’, yet without defining the characteristics of a ‘true’ Croat. Starčević’s Croats are vaguely portrayed as a conquering people with a characteristic ‘ruling spirit’ inherited through ‘blood’. He distinguished the Croats from the Serbs (‘Orthodox *Slavoserbs*’) who are described as a heterogeneous *pasmina* (breed), rather than a people or nation sharing the same ‘blood’ as the Croats. Starčević, the son of an Orthodox mother who converted to Catholicism, unsurprisingly felt that Serbs could be assimilated through intermarriage with the Croatian nation. He minimized comparative linguistics, which included Croats in the pan-Slavist/Yugoslav circle, and instead resorted to history to prove that Croats and Serbs have different origins, or to claim that Bosnian Muslims are ethnic Croats.

The third chapter, *Race Theory in Habsburg Croatia 1900-1918* (pp. 44-70), focuses on the works of archaeologist Ćiro Truhelka (1865-1942) and historian Ivo Pilar (1874-1933). Truhelka and Pilar followed Starčević in his attempts to construct a strict barrier between the Croats and Serbs; yet they both recognised that it was impossible to dispute the ‘Aryan-Slav’ origins of the Croats, which was an established ethnolinguistic and anthropological ‘fact’. Truhelka was the first Croatian intellectual to study the question of racial anthropology, locating the ‘Nordic-Dinaric’ racial type in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. In his anonymously published work, *Hrvatska Bosna* (Croatian Bosnia)⁹, Truhelka argued that Bosnia and Herzegovina belonged to the Croatian kingdom by historic state rights, also employing Starčević’s arguments in order to appropriate the Bosnian Muslims as ethnic Croats. In *Hrvatska Bosna* Truhelka also placed significant emphasis on the apparent physical racial differences between the Croats and Muslims on one side and the Serbs on the other in both Herzegovina and Bosnia. Bartulin recognizes Truhelka as someone who provided anti-Yugoslav, Croatian nationalism with a foundation for the further elaboration of an anthropological

⁸ Bartulin does not mention the historian Franjo Rački or linguist Vatroslav Jagić, who were an important part of Strossmayer’s circle, see Ančić (2008) on Rački and Dzino (2010): 18-19 in English.

⁹ Anonym. (1907). It is important to mention that this work was written in the specific circumstances of the Habsburg colonial project in Bosnia and Herzegovina (1878-1918), which attempted to construct a Bosnian nation and suppress the national determination of the Serbs and Croats in these territories, see Okey (2007) and Dzino (2012): 180-83. In his published scholarly works before 1918, Truhelka was not able to express his real views as he could easily have lost his job in the Provincial (Zemaljski) Museum in Sarajevo, so this work was published anonymously. On Truhelka see the papers in Majnarić Pandžić (1994).

theory on the question of racial identity and the origins of the Croats and other South Slavs. Ivo Pilar, for his part, (pp. 57-63) argued along similar lines, that the Croats preserved their 'Nordic-Aryan' racial and cultural heritage. Pilar also appropriated Bosnian Muslims for the Croatian nation, and defined the Serbs as the 'Other' by assigning them racial impurity, as they were 'exposed to the corrupt Vlach blood'.¹⁰ The origins of racial Yugoslavism (pp. 63-66) are also touched upon through its two early exponents: Serbian geographer Jovan Cvijić (1865-1927) and Slovenian anthropologist Niko Županič (1876-1961).¹¹ Cvijić described and defined the Dinaric 'patriarchal' racial type and saw it as dominant in the Balkans, while Županič was keen to show that all South Slavs had Aryan origins, thus justifying their political dominance over non-Aryan Greeks and Albanians. Truhelka and Pilar did not represent a majority opinion – racial Yugoslavism continued to be dominant in Croatian political and public discourses, in particular through the activities of the Radić brothers – the leaders of the Croatian Peasant Party (pp. 66-69). Yet, the Yugoslavism of the Radić brothers was different from that of both Cvijić and Županič as it continued in the footsteps of Illyrianism and Yugoslavism (although with a visible anti-Semitic note), defending political Croatian interests but arguing for cultural Yugoslavism.

The fourth chapter, *Yugoslavist and Serbian racial theories in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia* (pp. 71-92), looks into new discourses on race and historical origins which developed after the establishment of the South Slav kingdom in 1918. The Kingdom was conceived as a new political creation, so it needed to justify its existence by reconciling ethnic heterogeneity with the dominating political position of the Serbs. Political discourse emphasised the idea of the trinomial South Slavic 'nation' whereby the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes were considered three equal 'tribes' of one 'people' - basing Yugoslav homogeneity on a racial concept of nationhood. Cvijić and his concept of the patriarchal Serbian/Yugoslav Dinaric type came to significant prominence in this period. He developed a complex ethnographic and anthropogeographic theory in order to explain the peculiarities of the South Slav way of life and culture.¹² The Dinaric 'race' of Cvijić is defined by soil, not by its origins, and it is embodied in the persona of the Dinaric 'noble savage': simple, brave, violent, honorable and freedom-loving. While the Dinaric 'race' encompasses most of the South Slavs, Cvijić presents it as still heavily dominated by its 'Serb component'. Cvijić's ideas resonated in the works of some pro-Yugoslav Croats - authors such as Vladimir Dvorniković, Branimir Maleš or Boris Zarnik, who described and defined the 'Dinaric-Nordic race'. Bartulin concludes that Yugoslavist racial theories at this time placed emphasis on the Serbian Dinaric type and its ability to assimilate other racial types, thus reflecting the expansionist and assimilationist policies in a Serb dominated Yugoslavia.

Chapter 5 *Interwar Croatian Ethnolinguistic-Racial Theories* (pp. 93-126), deals with anti-Yugoslav ethnolinguistic and racial theories. These theories

¹⁰ 'Vlach' is a generalised term covering several modern peoples descended from the Latinized population in the present-day territory of Romania and Moldova, as well as the southern part of the Balkan Peninsula and south and west of the Danube. See Winnifrieth (1987) and Mirdita (2009).

¹¹ On Županič and his works recently Milosavljević (2012); (2013).

¹² Especially in Cvijić (1918).

developed as a reaction to Yugoslav racial discourse, in particular the work of Cvijić. There are different approaches, for example the Croatian geographer Filip Lukas (1871-1958) appropriated Cvijić's Dinaric race while pointing out that its 'core' was actually found amongst the Croats along the Adriatic coast. The historian Milan Šufflay (1879-1931) defined differences between the Croats and Serbs as a religious-civilisational divide, rather than an ethnic-racial distinction, seeing Croatia as a frontier of the white West. Different theories of the non-Slavic origins of the Croats, in particular the 'Gothic' and 'Iranian' theory (pp. 109-120), also came to prominence in this time; these theories aimed to de-Slavicise Croat origins and thus distance them from the Serbs.¹³ Another important aspect of this anti-Yugoslavist Croatian racial discourse was the appropriation of the Muslims in Bosnia and Herzegovina (pp. 120-124), developed by Truhelka in his paper on the origins of Bosnian Muslims (this time under his own name) as a continuation of his earlier ideas.¹⁴ Bartulin sees these Croatian theories placing great emphasis on the question of the ethnolinguistic and anthropological-racial origins of the Croats, attempting to prove the ethnic and national individuality of the Croatians. They were influential in the development of Ustasha racial theories, but it is important to note that the Ustasha regime selectively adopted aspects of these theories, rather than taking them as a full package.

Chapter 6, *The Interwar Ustasha movement and ethnolinguistic-racial identity* (pp. 127-143), looks at the early development of Ustasha ideology. In the author's opinion, interwar Ustasha racialism was both biological and cultural. The Croats in this discourse were presented as the successors of the martial qualities of their ancestors, but were also regarded as a cultured warrior people, which corresponded with German race theories. While the Ustasha leader Ante Pavelić was more concerned with defining the political aims of the movement – the individuality of the Croatian nation and the right to independent statehood – the question of race in Croatian history was explored by the writer Mile Budak (1889-1945) and political scientist Mladen Lorković (1909-1945). They both followed in the footsteps of Starčević – Budak defined belonging to the Croatian nation as something which is defined by 'blood'. The Croats are juxtaposed with the Serbs, who are seen as a racial potpourri – a Serbianised mixture of various 'Balkan-Asian' peoples. Lorković on the other hand, revisits the issue of historical rights, emphasising the antiquity and greatness of the Croatian nation. He utilises the theories of Hauptmann and Sakač on the Iranian origins of the Croats, seeing the ancient Croats as Slavicised Iranians who moved from Iran via White Croatia, becoming infused with an 'Illyrian-Celtic blood admixture' when arriving in Dalmatia and Pannonia. Lorković also constructs the Serbs in Croatia as a Balkan-Vlach-Asiatic racial admixture, and claims Bosnian Muslims as Croats (pp. 131-137). This chapter also looks at the place of Jews in the Ustasha racial discourse. The Jews were 'identified' as a 'foreign racial element' from the time of the Radić brothers. Truhelka, but also Budak, identified the Jews as a racial rather than

¹³ On the 'Gothic' and 'Iranian' theory of Croat origins see, in English, Katičić (1999): 160-63 and Dzino (2012): 20-21.

¹⁴ Truhelka (1934).

religious group. Bartulin concludes that Ustasha anti-Semitism was also strongly influenced by their anti-communism, which linked the Jews with communism (pp. 138-140).

Chapter 7: *The Ustasha Racial State* (pp. 144-159), discusses the racial legal discourses within the NDH, which defined the ‘Others’, in particular the Jews and Gypsies. The racial laws of the NDH were modelled upon the Nuremberg racial laws, but were also consistent with pre-war Ustasha ideological principles (pp. 148-158). Bartulin sees the Ustasha state conferring legal rights on members of Croatian national community, rather than on individuals. The NDH was based on a racial world view, legally and ideologically, while nation and race were positioned above religion, which created tensions between the regime and the Catholic Church in Croatia.

Chapter 8, *The Ideal Racial Type: Aryan Croat* (pp. 160-202), looks at the self-definition of the Croats within racial discourses in the NDH. The Croats were presented as a unique and special outcome of the evolution of the Dinaric racial type, which possessed the strongest Nordic racial strain. Different theories of Croat origins were merged into the ‘historical’ narrative in which the Croats could trace their origins to the Nordic heartland (White Croatia), the homeland of the Nordic race in the Caucasus and the first great centre of Aryan civilisation – ancient Iran. Although emphasis was placed on the conquering nature of the Croats, they were still constructed as an ethnogenetic blend of conquerors and conquered with a Slavic-Gothic-Iranian ‘racial core’, which had a significant Illyrian-Celtic admixture.

Chapter 9, *The Racial-Counter-type: The Near Eastern Race* (pp. 203-233), discusses non-Aryans within racial discourses in the NDH. The Serbs in the NDH were in Bartulin’s view not seen as a homogeneous nation, not even as a truly Serbian entity. A theoretical distinction was established between the ‘authentic’ Slavic-Aryan Serbs in Serbia and Serbianised descendents of the pre-Aryan Vlachs and Near Eastern immigrants in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Official terminology emphasised the Asian-Balkan ‘racial component’ of the Serbs in the NDH. They were called ‘Greek-Easterners’, while the Orthodox Church was termed the ‘Greek-Eastern Faith’. This racial ideology in theory did not see ethnic Serbs as a racial threat needing to be eradicated – but rather, saw them as a nomadic, antisocial entity which was the fifth column of the Belgrade regime.

The overall argument of Bartulin that the racial ideas of the Ustasha state cannot be examined without exploring their intellectual and ideological roots appears very acceptable. The conception of the Croats as an example of an ethnogenetic racial blend of the Aryan race with autochthonous ancient Balkan peoples, and as a conquering but cultured race, is deeply embedded within racial ideas of Yugoslavism, Greater Serbianism and anti-Yugoslav Croatian nationalism. The racial arguments were invoked to establish the Croats as a separate people, using them against ethnolinguistic arguments that were employed in the construction of the Yugoslav people. This is a well written book which debates a very sensitive and overlooked subject in the best scholarly way, and will hopefully stimulate further discussions on racial discourse in Croatian and South Slavic intellectual traditions.

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