

A brief historical overview of the position of Germans and Austrians in Bosnia and Herzegovina, with particular reference to the period during and after World War II

Summary

Based on numerous and valuable historiographic, fictional and demographic articles as well as published and archived sources, the paper reflects on the history and the destiny of Germans and Austrians in Bosnia and Herzegovina since the time of the Austro-Hungarian occupation and their settling here in the late 19th century, through the period of the Kingdom of SHS / Yugoslavia, when although a small ethnic group of about twenty thousand they became an important economic and cultural factor, to World War II and immediate post-war time, when they suffered significant demographic and real losses, and 'disappeared' from the Bosnian-Herzegovinian ground. Yugoslav and Bosnian-Herzegovinian socialist historiography unilaterally depicted and in many ways unfoundedly satanized Germans and Austrians in Bosnia and Herzegovina, especially during World War II. Those with such standpoints on Yugoslav and Bosnian-Herzegovinian Germans did not stop even after the dissolution of Yugoslavia. Many people remained silent and forgot about the economic and cultural work and merits of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and immigrant Germans and Austrians in the progress of Bosnia and Herzegovina. This paper, however, offers a different approach to the history of Germans and Austrians in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Keywords: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Germans, Austrians.