



# Whose Bosnia?: Nationalism and Political Imagination in the Balkans, 1840-1914

*Edin Hajdarasic*

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As the site of the assassination that triggered World War I and the place where the term "ethnic cleansing" was invented during the Yugoslav Wars of the 1990s, Bosnia has become a global symbol of nationalist conflict and ethnic division. But as Edin Hajdarasic shows, formative contestations over the region began well before 1914, emerging with the rise of new nineteenth-century forces—Serbian and Croatian nationalisms as well as Ottoman, Habsburg, Muslim, and Yugoslav political movements—that claimed this province as their own. *Whose Bosnia?* reveals the political pressures and moral arguments that made this land a prime target of escalating nationalist activity.

To explain the remarkable proliferation of national movements since the nineteenth century, Hajdarasic draws on a vast range of sources—records of secret societies, imperial surveillance files, poetry, paintings, personal correspondences—spanning Bosnia, Serbia, Croatia, Turkey, and Austria. Challenging conventional readings of Balkan histories, *Whose Bosnia?* provides new insight into central themes of modern politics, illuminating core subjects like "the people," state-building, and national suffering. Hajdarasic uses South Slavic debates over Bosnian Muslim identity to propose a new figure in the history of nationalism: the *(br)other*, a character signifying at the same time the potential of being both "brother" and "Other," containing the fantasy of both complete assimilation and insurmountable difference. By bringing such figures into focus, *Whose Bosnia?* shows nationalism to be an immensely dynamic and open-ended force, one that eludes any clear sense of historical closure.

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