

The Muslim National Question in Bosnia. An Historical Overview and an Analytical Reappraisal.

Major-general
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"...Bosnia is the country of hate...a fatal characteristic of that hate lies in the fact that the man from Bosnia is not aware of the hate that lives in him, he shrinks from analysing it and hates every one who tries to do it...those who believe and love, have a deadly hatred for those who do not believe and for those who believe differently and love something else. Unfortunately the main part of their belief and love is used up in hate..."

Ivo Andric

1. Introduction

This text aims at to understand what kind of country Bosnia-Herzegovina was in 1992 when the war broke-out, and to what extent the ethnic groups living in it identified themselves with the state and with each other. What did really mean to be a Bosnian? To answer those questions we decided to study the evolution of ethnic relations in Bosnia-Herzegovina and the role played by ethnic elites in different historical contexts from a historic sociological perspective, focusing our attention on: the relationship between ethnic groups and power holders; the impact of that relation in the ethnic groups relations; the development of group identity and its forms of expression; and on the evolution of the Muslim question, since the emergence during the Ottoman period of a Muslim community endowed with a separate and particular group identity.

2. Before Yugoslavia

The Origins

Slav tribes arrived in the Balkans during the 6th century. According to Byzantine sources,

Croatian and Serbian tribes occupied the lands that correspond today to Bosnia-Herzegovina. Croatians stayed in the Western and Central parts of the territory, while Serbians occupied the Southern and Eastern regions. The line separating their settlements is not known with precision. Croatians fell under the influence of Rome and embraced the Catholic faith, while Serbians, under the influence of Constantinople, adopted the Orthodox religion.

Since late 9th up to 14th century, in the regions known today as former Yugoslavia, emerged three short-lived sovereign Slav kingdoms.¹ The first one, of Croatian extraction, was born in late 9th century and reached its climax in the 11th century, controlling the regions of Croatia, Slavonia, Dalmatia and considerable portions of Western and Central Bosnia (as far east as the Vrbas river). This kingdom ended at the turn of the 11th century when the Croatian Crown, due to inheritance rights, passed to the Hungarian House, situation that remained until 1918 when the first Yugoslav state was founded.

A second kingdom was born in the late 12th century, with its centre of gravity in the Eastern Balkans, whose Orthodox elites identified themselves as Serbians. In its apogee, under the Nemanjic dynasty, this kingdom included, in general terms, what is known today as Serbia, Montenegro, Herzegovina and Macedonia. A part of Herzegovina and a strip of lands west of the Drina River, this Kingdom did not incorporate any other Bosnian lands.

Also by the late 12th century, emerged a third Slav kingdom with its centre of gravity in what is known today as Bosnia. After a brief interregnum, this kingdom had a re-birth in the 13th century under the Kotromanic dynasty, to acquire in the 14th century an extraordinary regional notoriety. During the reign of Tvrtko I Kotromanic, this kingdom included Dalmatia and its hinterland from the Velebit range to the Bay of Kotor. After the death of the last Nemanjic, Tvrtko I became, by inheritance rights, the head of the Serbian crown and the Serbian lands were incorporated in the Bosnian kingdom. In 1377, Tvrtko I was crowned at Milesevo, on the grave of St. Sava, the founder of the Serbian Orthodox Church, as the "King of the Serbs, Bosnia and the Littoral."²

By the late 14th century, the very existence of those Slav Christian kingdoms became seriously threatened by the westwards progression of the Ottoman troops. Bosnian and Serbian armies resisted military-wise to the Ottoman advance in joint initiatives,³ but by mid-15th century these states succumbed to the Turkish military power and ceased to exist. At this time, just before the Ottoman conquest of Bosnia, the Catholic religion was predominant in large parts of Western Bosnia, the Bogomil confession was predominant in Central Bosnia,⁴ and the Orthodox faith was prevalent in Herzegovina and in parts of Eastern Bosnia. In the Middle Ages, the terms Bosnia and Bosnian did not have any ethnic or religious contents; their meanings were just geographic and political,⁵ and even the later was not well defined.

The Ottoman Rule and Islamicization

By the late 15th century, when the Ottoman Order dominated already a substantial part of

the Balkans, a slow and protracted process of Islamicization started in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The way in which it was done changed along the centuries. In an initial phase, which corresponded to expansion of the Empire, Islamicization was achieved mainly through voluntary conversions motivated, in most of the cases, by economic and social ascension reasons.

As outlined by Banac, "...the economic and political advantages to be gained by joining the state religion were sufficiently compelling [to conversion]. The profession of Islam enabled the feudatory to enter into the new elite [and to keep their estates]; converted peasants' were exempted from the special poll tax (*cizye*)..."⁶ and acquired certain prerogatives, namely the property of the land. This process of voluntary conversion led to the creation of a consistent and sizable Muslim community, which embraced autochthon people from all ethnic and religious groups, and social strata.

When the Ottoman state, in the second half of the 17th century, started losing strength and entered into decadence, other factors than conversion of autochthon population acquired particular relevance in the process of Islamicization: the immigration into Bosnia and Herzegovina of Islamicised Slavs from other parts of the Empire, accompanying the retreat of the Turkish troops; the emigration of important segments of Christian population to Christian territories running away from the Ottoman repression; the *devshirme* system, especially in what concerns the construction of a local nobility; the converted slaves taken in war and brought to Bosnia.⁷ In the 19th century, a few historians advanced the theory that Islamicization resulted from the mass conversion of Bogomils, to escape from the persecution carried out by the Catholic and Orthodox Churches, with whom there was a very bad co-existence.⁸ As we will see, religion was transformed into an instrument of social differentiation and, simultaneously, as an element of group identification.

Religion and Social Differentiation

Religion functioned under the Ottoman rule as a factor of social differentiation. Thus, Bosnian society was divided into two different types of citizens, corresponding to two different social statuses: the believers (Muslims) and the non-believers (*Rayah*).⁹ Social status was not necessarily related to either ownership of the production means or wealth, but it was, first and foremost, linked to a privileged social situation only within reach of those who professed Islamism. The adoption of Islam permitted the converted Slav nobility, regardless of its previous religious background, to keep its feudal privileges, to control regional political affairs, and to administrate the province on behalf of the Porte. Actually, to be Muslim was a requirement to assume important positions in the territorial and political administration of the Empire. Islamicization was responsible for the creation of a Muslim community and, simultaneously, for the emergence of an autochthon Muslim elite, whose economic and social status was intimately dependent on the viability of the Ottoman Order.

Non-Muslims were denied a career in the territorial and political administration of the

Empire, and were subjected to a differentiated legal status. The *Rayah* was, thus, synonymous of second-class citizenship and object of social discrimination: they were not authorised either to ride horses or to carry weapons; they had to dress differently from the Muslims; they were forbidden to construct buildings, especially religious ones, higher than Muslim's; a non-Muslim could not legally sue a Muslim, etc.¹⁰ The most discriminatory measure was, perhaps, the *devshirme* system (blood tribute). Christian youths were forcedly taken from their parent homes, converted to Islam and prepared to be professional soldiers. Once finished their education, they were enlisted in the Janissary, an elite corps at the Sultan disposal. Once released from the military service, most of them came back to their original places as administrators, and joined local political and economical elites, as occurred in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Religion and Group identification

Peoples in the Ottoman Empire were classified according to their religious confessions. Beyond a decisive factor of social differentiation, religion turned into an element of group identification. The different communities of the Empire were identified not by their ethnic origin but by the religion they professed. The emergence of a collective consciousness among Bosnian Muslims resulted from the conjugation of several factors: the privileged social status (itself a consequence of religious option); the common Slav origin;¹¹ the language (a sub-dialect of the Stokavian) and the Cyrillic script;¹² the province's autonomic status; and the existence of a local and permanent elite, which incorporated all those values. Religion, however, would prove to be the most important attribute of collective identity, not only because it was the institutionalised norm, but due to the fact that unlikely Serbians and Croats, Muslims could not claim a common ethnic origin. For them, ethnicity as attribute of collective identity was senseless.

Religion also played a decisive role in the development of Serbian collective consciousness, thanks to the *Millet* system. To deal with the subject communities, organised by religious groups, the Ottomans created the *Millet* (Orthodox, Jewish, Armenian, etc.), which consisted in some sort of autonomous self-government of the non-Muslim communities exercised by their own clergies. While the exclusive interlocutors of these communities with the Porte, clergies assumed, simultaneously, the political and religious leadership of their communities.

In a certain way, the subject groups adopted a "theocratic" organisation analogous to that one of the Ottoman state. The political-religious prerogatives conceded by the *Millet*, permitted the Orthodox Clergy to promote a sense of collective identity among the Serbian community. A Serbian was an Orthodox and vice-versa. This political-religious double role of the Orthodox clergy in a society organised along religious cleavages explains the definition of Serbdom on religious attributes, overshadowing the ethnic argument. Religious affiliation among Serbians, far more than among other South Slavs, helped to shape national identity. Although this relation was not so evident among Croats, the fact is that the Franciscans were for centuries the keepers of the Catholic faith in Bosnia - the first to introduce the idea of nationality among their followers.¹³

The development of such a collective identity among Serbians was facilitated by the restoration of the Patriarchate of Pec, in 1557;¹⁴ an instance of religious tolerance towards subject groups that characterised the Porte during its phase of expansion (up to mid 17th century). National identity was developed mainly around religious confession having, however, permanently present - in the background - issues related to social status and control over economic and political assets. In this period, characterised by social stability, communities inter-course was not conflictive. Their coexistence, as we will see, was spoiled when the Porte entered in decadence.

Along the centuries religion turned into a decisive factor of group differentiation, perhaps even the single most important one. Religion became a badge of identity and guardian of traditions for Croats, Serbs and Muslims, as well as for other peoples in the region. This was particularly important for the preservation of identity and culture as various foreign empires dominated the region.¹⁵

The Decline of the Empire

The Ottoman Empire reached its apogee in the 16th century, during the reign of Süleyman I (1520-66). Shortly after his death the Empire started losing momentum, and its expansion stabilised a few decades later.¹⁶ The problems that would affect its future performance were already visible. In the second half of the 17th century, already in accentuated decline, the conjugation of external and internal problems gradually eroded the Porte's strength. Externally, the Turkish war machine lost much of its effectiveness and the era of invincibility had finished. Half successes followed by military setbacks pushed the Porte for a defensive posture.¹⁷ By late 17th century, the European border of the Empire retreated to a position that would coincide with the western border of the future Austrian province and Yugoslav Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina (fig I).¹⁸

Internally, the crisis was generalised to all sectors of society. The absence of strong leaderships and the degeneration of central authority strengthened the power of regional administrators, leading to the corrosion of social and institutional orders. Still in the 17th century, the Sultan tried to reverse the course of events implementing a set of reforms, whose primary aim was the reinforcement of the central authority. This meant reduction of excessive power in the hands of janissaries, *Ul-ulemas* and provincial administrators, and the replacement of these latter by people of Anatolian extraction. In 1622, the Janissaries resisted the reforms and carried out a *coup d'état*, murdering Sultan Osman II.

Also the relations between the Porte and the non-Muslim Bosnian communities worsened. Two major factors contributed to that: the aggravation of the *Rayah's* deplorable living conditions motivated by the increasing taxation necessary to fund the Ottoman war effort; and the despotic behaviour of local corrupt administrators. Social instability was accompanied by increasing banditry activity¹⁹ and insurrectional movements of Christian peasants openly challenged the Porte's authority, which became less tolerant with non-

Muslim groups, most notably Serbians. The Orthodox Church that until then had been loyal to the Porte changed its behaviour and turned into one of the most seditious elements of the Empire, spearheading the revolt among the peasantry.²⁰

Throughout the 17th and 18th centuries, Serbians had been very active against the Turks. In co-ordination with the Austro-Hungarians, the Orthodox clergy organised and led a series of (unsuccessful) revolts, most of them aiming at supporting the Habsburg's military incursions in the lands of the Empire. Escaping from the energetic repression that normally followed those setbacks, important migratory movements of Christian population, particularly Serbians, crossed the border looking for shelter in the territories under control of the Habsburgs. The most impressive mass migration was undertaken in 1699, after the withdrawal of the Austrian armies from Bosnia.²¹

The decline of the Empire accelerated during the 18th century. Due to constant pressure of Christian powers, the borders of the Ottoman state continued shrinking and internal conflicts aggravated. The Empire entered in a process of political chaos and economic anarchy, magnified by the administrative arbitrariness and religious intolerance of provincial rulers who saw their powers reinforced. Simultaneously, the fiscal system continued aggravating the burden on the Christian population. In retaliation against the civil disorder instigated by the Orthodox Church, the Porte authorities decided to close down the Patriarchate of Pec, in 1766.²²

By the late 18th century, the demographic picture of the region was already tremendously complex, with ethnic groups rather intermingled and without physical barriers separating or avoiding contact among themselves. It was the result of a protracted process of Islamicisation conjugated with a deliberate policy of repopulating the newly conquered regions devastated by the war and by the plague, carried out by the Turkish authorities throughout the 16th and 17th centuries. Orthodox population from Serbia and eastern parts of Bosnia was forced to migrate towards the western and the northern regions of the province where, in the pre-Ottoman period, the Orthodox Church was practically inexistent.

Bosnia and Herzegovina in the 19th Century

The 19th century in Bosnia and Herzegovina was a period of intense turmoil and social unrest. By this time the Porte had already lost much of its strength; and after successive peasantry uprisings there was not any other choice left than to concede autonomy to Serbia in 1815. Later, in 1876, also after a general rebellion of the Bosnian Serb peasantry, Turkey felt compelled to withdraw definitely from Bosnia and the adjacent province of Herzegovina. Shortly after the Austro-Hungarian army arrived and remained there until 1918. The 19th century was still time for the national awakening of Croats and Serbians, in which Bosnia and Herzegovina occupied an important place.

Attempting to Reform the Empire

By the late 18th century, leading sectors of the Ottoman political elites realised that the advanced state of deterioration the Empire had plunged into could only be reversed through the implementation of extensive reforms. After an initial period of internal struggles between reformers and conservatives, the reformers took the lead and started an ambitious project of structural changes. The concept of reform (*Tanzimat*, plural of the Arabian noun *tanzim*, which means reorganisation) became synonymous of modernisation in a wide spectrum of domains (administrative, social, political, military, economical and cultural), inspired on liberal and secular western ideas.

The Ottoman leaders understood that the technological gap separating the Empire from the European powers could only be surpassed with recurrence to the western innovations. Thus, reformers initiated a policy of friendly relations with European powers, and Selim III, one of the most enlightened Ottoman leaders, established permanent ambassadors in European capitals. The implementation of such reforms required both a strong central authority and the exclusion of potential saboteurs. Thus, the Janissary corps was abolished in 1826 and the military apparatus suffered an enormous re-organisation; the *kapetanate* system ended in 1837; the educational structure was secularised, removing from the *Ul-ulemas* educational responsibilities; and the power of regional and provincial administrators was substantially reduced, at least theoretically.

One of the most striking aspects of these reforms was carried out in the legal domain. In 1839, the legal system was unified and Muslims lost their privileged legal status. Since then, all citizens of the Empire, without distinction of race and religion, became equal before the law. The Porte tried to reconcile itself with the peoples of the Empire and, under a new philosophy, recuperated the *Millet* concept. Equality among the peoples of the Empire was extended to all domains, most notably to the fiscal and taxation systems. Under this new approach the concept of *Rayah* lost sense.

The implementation of such reforms faced virulent resistance of the most conservative elements of the political and economical elites, installed both in Istanbul and in the provinces. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the reforms were bitterly resented by the reactionary *Beys*,²³ who perceived the concessions to Christians as a threat to their privileged status. Their dissatisfaction with the Porte's policies was materialised in several feudal revolts (1821, 1828, 1838-50), which ended after extensive use of force by the central authorities.²⁴

The apparent ideological motivation of such movements led a few historians to epitomise the Bosnian nobility as intransigent and fanatical.²⁵ However, it seems that the reasons behind dissatisfaction were not exactly or exclusively the Sultan's allegedly deviation from the Islamic principles, as claimed, or the need "to re-conquer the Ottoman Empire for the truth," but the defence of their accustomed privileges. In the aftermath of those revolts the most active Bosnian ruling class was ousted, but local nobility, although shaken, managed to keep much of its power and continued resisting the reforms vigorously.

Bosnia and Herzegovina Under Austro-Hungarian's Rule

"...The Turkish Empire went from here [Bosnia] in 1878, but the Slav Muslims remained, and when Austria took control it was still their holiday..."

Rebecca West²⁶

The willingness of the modernised Ottoman administration to pacify the claims of the peoples in the Empire was in deep contradiction with the need of gathering additional financial resources to fund the war effort. Additional tax demands provoked violent reactions from the Christian peasants, suffocated by a heavy regime of taxation. These insurrectional movements suffered in the 19th century a qualitative evolution and acquired a political dimension; localised upsurges of violence were transformed into an integrated political movement aiming at the liberation from the Ottoman rule and the foundation of an independent Serbian state.

A small Serbian Principality was founded in 1815, after a prolonged insurrection - since 1804 up to 1813 - of the Serbian peasantry. However, the Bosnian Serbs, who participated actively in those insurrectional movements, were let outside of that Principality. Halfway through the century, Bosnia and Herzegovina had been transformed into places of permanent revolts and social disorder, where religious confession was frequently mixed up with political, economical and social arguments. As Burg and Shoup put it, largely Serb affairs, those uprisings were born of the desperate social conditions of the time and intertwined with the desires of the Serbs of Bosnia-Herzegovina to be united with Serbia.²⁷

The Bosnian Serb movement had two major objectives (political and economical): first, to get free from the Ottoman domination and to join Serbia and Montenegro in the same political unit; secondly, to finish with the repressive system of exploitation implemented by *Beys* and *Tchiftlik Sahibis*,²⁸ and to implement an agrarian reform. As Dogo remarked, "...the liberation of territory and the peasants' appropriation of the land were all part of a single process...the land question re-emerged in the revolutionary events of the Eastern Crisis of 1875-78...the principal factor underlying the Balkan national revolutions was the social antagonism between *kmet* and *bey*, between Christian peasant and Muslim landowner."²⁹

This generalised ambience of social disorder found Muslims and Christians mobilised in opposite sides of the barricade: Muslims acting as guardians of the Ottoman Order; non-Muslims trying to subvert it. While the Muslim community was interested in keeping the *status quo*, due to the privileged situation they enjoyed, non-Muslims were deeply concerned in destroying it. An immense antagonism was separating both communities. Since the 17th century that the Bosnian Muslim elites (and the Muslim community itself) played an important role in the containment of social disorder. Bosnian Muslim elites behaved both as managers and instruments of the repression against Christians; for instance, provincial corps of police relied mainly on the recruitment of local Muslims.³⁰

After a series of unsuccessful revolts, Herzegovinian Serbs, in 1875, and Bosnian Serbs, in 1876, with the support of Montenegro and Serbia defeated the Ottomans and drove them out of Bosnia and Herzegovina.³¹ Herzegovinian Serbs proclaimed their unification with Montenegro, and Bosnian Serbs with Serbia.³² The prospects of a strong Serbian state were extremely disturbing for the projects of the Habsburgs in the region. Thus, in the Congress of Berlin, in 1878, the great powers nullified the Bosnian and Herzegovinian Serbs declarations of independence and union with Serbia and Montenegro.

Serbia and Montenegro were indeed recognised as independent states but, in exchange, they should renounce to any pretension over Bosnia and over Herzegovina. It was also agreed to make Bosnia and Herzegovina a protectorate of Austria-Hungary. Mandated by the Congress, in August 1878, the Austro-Hungarian troops marched over Bosnia and Herzegovina to occupy and to administrate the province, which, formally, continued under Ottoman sovereignty.

Austria-Hungary installed a new Order in the region. The Bosnian Muslim elites were removed from the political and administrative posts and replaced by Austrians and Croats. The situation of Catholics improved considerably with the new Order. Due to new favourable conditions, between 1879 and 1910, the Catholic population in Sarajevo increased from 3.3 percent to 34.52 percent.³³ The only ethnic group who regarded the new settlement favourably...were the Croats.³⁴ With Catholics in the upper hand, the longstanding alliance between Christian communities collapsed.

For a short period of time, and despite striving for incompatible political goals, Muslims and Serbs co-operated against the new Catholic power: Muslims were interested in restoring the Ottoman sovereignty over Bosnia-Herzegovina, which they did not lose sight of, in order to retake their former power-holder status; Serbs wanted to deny Bosnia and Herzegovina to Vienna, and to prepare the ground for its incorporation into Serbia. But when it became obvious for Bosnian Muslim elites that the new rulers did not pose any major threat to their economic status and that co-operative behaviour could even be beneficial for them, the Muslim-Serb alliance broke-down; Muslim elites changed their minds and elected the Bosnian Croats as their preferred allies.

In the economic field Austria-Hungary opted for the preservation of the feudatory *status quo* in agrarian relationships.³⁵ Muslim leaders negotiated with the occupiers the protection of landowners' rights and the autonomy of the Islamic religious authorities.³⁶ This situation was well depicted by Francine Friedman:

"...Muslim landlords continued to receive their former incomes, and Austrian authorities assisted them in collecting overdue payments. In addition to feudal taxes, *kmets* were also forced to pay various state and local taxes...Bosnia Muslim military officers continued to collect the taxes of those Christian *kmets* who could not afford to purchase their land. Habsburg policy thus ensured a continual flow of taxes without interruption of the structures that were in place...it was in the interest of Austria-Hungary to perpetuate

feudalism in Bosnia and Herzegovina so the area could be more easily exploited...The South Slav discomfort caused by the maintenance of feudal social stratification diluted political activity against Habsburg administration of the area..."³⁷

The Habsburg government did not dispossess the Bosnian Muslim elites, allowing them to retain many of their former privileges, and indeed co-opting them...the Muslims of Bosnia quickly realised that their survival depended on maintaining good relations with the central authorities.³⁸ The priorities of Austria's policy for the region were evident in an official letter to Philipovic von Philippsberg, in 1878: "...besides the Catholic population attention needs to be directed also to the Muslim population and to give it special protection all the more since the Muslims not only have the largest land ownership but represent the relatively most progressive and most enlightened part of the population..."³⁹

Therefore, Sarajevo's Muslim leaders, who were largely landowners and were thus dependent on Austria-Hungary's agrarian policies, confined official protest to rather minor incidents of dissatisfaction.⁴⁰ Otherwise, Bosnian Serbs' hostility towards power holders did not change under Austria-Hungary rule. Beyond seeing their union with Serbia and Montenegro frustrated, the new Order did not bring them any benefits.

The Austrian efforts of nation building

The Conference of Berlin showed the incompatibility between the Serbian's *Nacertanije* and the Habsburg's *Drang Nach Osten*. If on one hand, the outcome of the Conference represented the failure of Bosnia's and Montenegro's unification with Serbia, marking an abrupt interruption in Serbia's policies based on the *Nacertanije*;⁴¹ on the other hand, it legalised and facilitated Austrian ambitions to expand eastwards. In line with the geo-strategic goals behind the *Drang nach Osten*, Austria started the pacification of the province, which meant, from a political perspective, the suppression of the Croatian and Serbian nationalism; and to hinder the alignment (or integration) of the Bosnian Muslims with either the Serbian or the Croatian national movements.

It was under Austrian auspices that the first rudiments of a Bosnian supranational ideology (*bosnjastvo*) were drawn, which endeavoured to impose the concept of a Bosnian nation upon the entire population of Bosnia-Herzegovina, including Serbs and Croats⁴² and, simultaneously, to compete with Croatian and Serbian national ideologies. This idea was materialised in the form of an ambitious programme of nation and state building, involving a series of administrative, political and educational measures:⁴³ A coat of arms for Bosnia-Herzegovina was adopted; a "Bosnian language" was proclaimed; the Cyrillic alphabet, a symbol of the Serbian identity was banned in Serbian schools; Bosnia was culturally and economically isolated from Serbia being, for instance, forbidden to import literature from Serbia;⁴⁴ the Orthodox metropolitans and bishops were appointed by Austria; and it was under the Austrian rule that Bosnia and the adjacent Herzegovina were incorporated in one sole political unit with a precise territorial configuration (similar to the one it had in the socialist period).

As Batakovic outlined, Kállay's administration managed to build a wall surrounding Bosnia to isolate it, politically, culturally, and economically, from all neighbouring provinces and states.⁴⁵ But the failure of such a policy on Croats and Serbs was absolute, and just a tiny group of the Bosnian Muslim intelligentsia adhered to the Bosnian concept.

It dates to this period the construction of an appealing theory, which depicted modern Bosnian Muslims as descendants of an authentic and heretical Bosnian Church (Bogomils) who converted to Islam not as an act of opportunism but to preserve their identity, as a gesture of defiance against their Christian persecutors.⁴⁶ The connection of the Bogomil religion with some sort of Bosnian identity permitted to endow Bosnian Muslims, as descendants of the Bogomil nobility and as bearers of the traditions of the medieval Bosnian kingdom, with an old historical legacy and a previous experience of nationhood, on equal footing with Serbs and Croats.⁴⁷

The Impact of National Awakening in Bosnia-Herzegovina

Croat and Serbian intellectuals did not escape the wave of national awakening that ravaged Europe in the course of the 19th century. As mentioned before, Serbs had developed a sense of collective consciousness long time ago thanks to the political intervention of the Orthodox clergy. But in the 19th century, the concept of Serbdom was reformulated and re-parameterised in linguistic terms;⁴⁸ a Serbian was no longer an Orthodox but a Stokavian speaker, the dialect spoken by the Serbian masses. The Stokavian dialect replaced the Orthodox faith as the attribute of national identity.

Therefore, non-Orthodox believers could also be Serbs, since they spoke Stokavian. Bosnian Muslims, for instance, whose dialect was a Stokavian sub-dialect, could be considered Serbs. The adoption of a different religion did not mean they had changed ethnic group; language was, thus, the evidence of their ethnic origin. Serbian intellectuals replaced the ethno-religious formulation of nation by an ethno-linguistic approach. This different perspective reflected a new concept of nationhood in line with the romantic and liberal ideas of the French revolution, taking the political leadership of the Serbian movement away from the hands of the clergy.⁴⁹

Once the national attributes had been established, the next step was the formulation of a political programme. That occurred in 1844, with the *Nacertanije* (draft), a document prepared by Ilija Garasanin, an influent Serbian Minister, which set, among other things, the territorial configuration of the Serbian nation-state; the territories of Bosnia-Herzegovina were included in it. If Bosnian Muslims, as Stokavian speakers, were Serbs of Muslim faith, then Bosnia-Herzegovina should also be a Serbian territory.⁵⁰

The concept of Croatdom developed by Croatian national ideologues was based on completely different premises.⁵¹ They asserted that the Croatian people had a legal and permanent right over certain territories, where only Croats could govern:

"...The conquest of the new homeland in the sixth and seventh centuries, the "primary

acquisition,” established the eternal and natural right to the ownership of the land...there could be only one political people in a given state, and the Croats, as the bearers of the indivisible Croat state right, were the sole political people on the territory of...Croatia...”⁵²

According to this approach neither Slovene nor Serbian peoples could exist in the Croat state, because their existence could only be expressed in the right to a separate political territory. The lands claimed for this state of right were those of the medieval Croatian state, when the right over the claimed lands was acquired. As in the Serbian nation-state established in the *Nacertanije*, the territories of Bosnia and Herzegovina were also included in the Croatian state of right. Bosnian Muslims living within the boundaries of this state could only be Croats of Muslim faith; in the same way, Serbians living in that very Croatian space could just be Croats of Orthodox confession.⁵³ However, Croatian national ideologues were very sympathetic towards Bosnian Muslims, whom they saw as the best Croats, as the “flower of Croats.”

With the territories of Bosnia and Herzegovina included in both Serbian and Croatian national projects, it is easy to understand the competition between Serbs and Croats for integrating Muslims in their national movements. Without a clear majority - in 1895, 43 percent of the population was Orthodox Christians (i.e. Serbs), 35 percent Muslims and 21 percent Catholics (i.e. Croats) - no one could advance majority claims over Bosnia-Herzegovina without winning the Muslims.⁵⁴ But Bosnian Muslim elites resisted to Serbian and Croatian influence, preferring to identify themselves along confessional rather than on national lines. Only a small number of Muslim intellectuals declared themselves either Serbs or Croats.

Such positioning did not mean that Slav Muslim elites had an equidistant behaviour towards Serbs and Croats. As mentioned above, the Muslim-Croat relations improved considerably after the clarification of Austria’s intentions over Bosnia-Herzegovina. Taking into account the privileged relation of Croats with the new power holders, the selection of Croats, by Muslim elites as allies, has to be understood as a question of rational choice. However, this good relation between Muslims and Croats should not be confused as an indicator of national choice. Bosnian Muslims neither adhered to the Croatian national ideology nor joined any particular ethnic group.

Contrasting with the positive mood of the Muslim-Croat relations, Muslim-Serb communication became very tense. Muslims perceived Serbia and Bosnian Serbs as their “greatest enemies.” Two major reasons explain Serbian difficulties in penetrating the Muslim intelligentsia: firstly, Muslims blamed Serbs as responsible for the retreat of Turkey from Bosnia-Herzegovina and, therefore, as responsible for the loss of their privileged situation. The defeat of Turkey in the first Balkan war by Serbia and its definitive retreat from the Balkans accentuated the anti-Serb emotions among Muslims. The hope of re-taking their former status became more distant; and secondly, the call for an agrarian reform by the Bosnian Serb peasantry, whose implementation would destroy the still untouched economic status of the Slav Muslim elites.

By the late 19th century, it was evident that Bosnian Muslims were more than just a mere confessional community. They had indeed developed a sense of collective identity, even a national consciousness, but they could not be considered a nation yet. They were missing a true national ideology and, first and foremost, they lacked a clear strategic national goal. It is true that Bosnian Muslims did not integrate any national projects but they did not develop an alternative one either.⁵⁵ After losing the political command of the society enjoyed during the Ottoman period, Bosnian elites preferred (or were obliged to that due to their reduced demographic dimension and exiguous political power) to coexist as best as they could with the new rulers, rather than struggling for a national project.

Bosnia-Herzegovina in the Early 20th Century

“...Your [Muslims] love for everything oriental is only a contemporary expression of your “will to power”; for you the eastern way of life and thought is very closely bound up with a social and legal order which was the basis of your centuries of lordship...for centuries you have enlarged, confirmed and defended your privileges by sworn and pen, legally, religiously and by force of arms; that has made of you typical warriors, administrators and landowners...”

Ivo Andric⁵⁶

Inter-communal relations did not suffer particular evolutions during the first decade of the century. In 1910 the first elections for the Bosnian parliament were held, which were dominated by national parties.⁵⁷ It was during this period that a Bosnian style of political life was born characterised by coalitions of interests between the political elites of different communities.⁵⁸ In the late years of the decade the rivalry between the Austrian and Serbian projects rose. In 1908, against the decisions agreed on at the Berlin Conference, Austria-Hungary unilaterally decided to abandon the protectorate system and to annex Bosnia-Herzegovina.

While the Franciscans and the Croatian party welcomed it, Bosnian Serbs saw the prospects of their unification with Serbia more distant, and felt the annexation with bitter resentment and hard to swallow. Initially, the Bosnian Muslims were adamantly opposed to annexation. However, as some Bosnian Muslim elites began to benefit from it, they changed their stance.⁵⁹

The second decade of the century was particularly turbulent. The outcome of the Balkan Wars (1912-1913) provoked a qualitative change in the regional balance of forces. On one hand, it evidenced the emergence of Serbia as a regional power; on the other, it represented an irreversible defeat for Turkey and its definitive withdrawal from the Balkans. In the aftermath of the Balkan Wars Serbia enlarged considerably its territory. After five centuries, the mythical lands of Kosovo and Macedonia were again part of Serbia. To block Serbia's access to the Adriatic Sea and to bar its progression towards South, Austria persuaded the great powers to recognise Albania as an independent state in 1912. The rivalry between Austria and Serbia was now more intense than ever.

The most dramatic demonstration of that rivalry occurred in Sarajevo, on 28 June 1914, when the heir of the Austro-Hungarian throne, Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife were shot dead by Gavrilo Princip, a Bosnian Serb activist.⁶⁰ Despite lacking evidence to support its allegations, Vienna accused Belgrade of mastering the murder of the Archduke.⁶¹ Once assured the support of its German ally, Austria issued an ultimatum demanding an investigation without restrictions of the murder to be carried out in Serbia, by Austrian civil servants. An evasive response to Austria's demands led Vienna to declare war on Serbia, triggering the First World War.

The murder of the Archduke caused violent anti-Serb demonstrations masterminded by the Bosnian Muslims and Croats, and the Bosnian parliament passed a resolution denouncing the Archduke's assassination. In several places, most particularly in Sarajevo, Serbs were persecuted and Serb property, businesses and institutions destroyed with the complicity of the authorities. Likewise, riots broke out during the next few days in every provincial town where the Croats outnumbered the Serbs,⁶² worsening the already bad Muslim-Serb relationship.⁶³ The World War that followed the murder of the archduke found Muslims, Croats and Serbians again divided into persecutors and persecuted.

Bosnian Muslims and Croats fought the war in the Austro-Hungarian army,⁶⁴ while many Bosnian Serbs fled to Serbia and joined the Serbian Army. The pre-war political alignment - Bosnian Muslims and Croats allied and loyal to Austria-Hungary in opposition to Bosnian Serbs - remained unchanged during the hostilities, and was materialised in appalling massacres of Serbs at the hands of Muslims and Austrian troops, in a mixture of religious with political feelings.

The widespread belief among Bosnian Muslims that Franz Joseph had struck a deal with the Turks, and that in case of victory Bosnia-Herzegovina would return to Turkey,⁶⁵ brought Muslims closer to Austria. This conviction was reinforced when Turkey entered the war on the side of the Central Powers. Four and a half years later, when the war ended and the relation of forces inverted, the Serbs took revenge: at the very beginning of the new Yugoslav kingdom, the Bosnian Serbs, with the consent of Belgrade, organised a veritable *pogrom* against the Muslims.⁶⁶ The attackers - who failed to distinguish among Muslim feudal landlords, small landowners, and free Muslim peasants - thus ironically, began the first days of South Slav union by demonstrating some leftover class and national-religious resentment of Orthodox peasants toward their Muslim landlords.⁶⁷

3. Bosnia-Herzegovina in the First Yugoslavia

"...It took some time for the crowd to realize that they were in fact...the Turkish Prime-Minister and...his War Minister. Even after the recognition had been established the cheers were not given. No great degree of disguise concealed the disfavour with which these two men in bowler hats looked on the thousands they saw before them, all wearing

the fez and veil, which their leader the Ataturk made it a crime to wear in Turkey. Their faces were blank yet not unexpressive. So might Englishmen look if, in some corner of the Empire, they had to meet as brothers the inhabitants of a colony that had been miraculously preserved from the action of time and had therefore kept to their road..."

Rebecca West⁶⁸

A new regional order was born in the Balkans after the end of the World War. The three Empires (Austro-Hungarian, Russian and Ottoman) disputing the control over the region collapsed and Serbia emerged in the region as the sole winner. It was within this context that, with the agreement of the United Kingdom and France, the First Yugoslavia was founded in December 1918, frustrating some movements among Muslim intelligentsia who wanted to apply the Wilsonian principle of national self-determination to themselves (fig. II). The post-war alignment of forces in Bosnia-Herzegovina reflected the overall balance of forces in Yugoslavia. Despite being dominated by the Serbs, a consequence of their performance in the war, all the ethnic groups in the new state were on equal footing before the law and all religions enjoyed the same status. The Bosnian Muslim elites had to look for new political alliances in the Yugoslav context.

In 1919, a group of middle-class urban Muslims⁶⁹ founded the Yugoslav Muslim Organisation (JMO), a Muslim political organisation that had three major goals:⁷⁰ first, to keep the Muslim community immune either to nationalist calls or struggle of classes. All Muslims, regardless their social standing, had to defend the rights of Muslim landlords, who were hard pressed by the terms of agrarian reform;⁷¹ Secondly, to prevent the partition of Bosnia-Herzegovina by different territorial units where Muslims would be tiny politically powerless minorities; and thirdly, if possible, to transform Bosnia-Herzegovina into an autonomous unit within the Yugoslav state.

The JMO did not present itself as representative of a national group. It was not its objective to promote a separate Bosnian Muslim nationhood. Its members were given freedom to choose their nationality.⁷² The notion of a separate Bosnian Muslim nationhood was not accepted only by Serbs and Croats, but also by the Muslim leaders themselves.⁷³ The JMO, in a party system dominated by ethnic formations, turned into the political voice of the Bosnian Muslim interests, as demonstrated by the 1920 elections (and successive ones) whose results resembled a census on the Bosnian population (Table VI-T-I). The predominant Serbian parties (DS/5.59%, NRS/17.96%, and Agrarians/16.65%) cast approximately 40 percent, the JMO won 33.50 percent,⁷⁴ and the Croat parties (National Club/11.60%, and SLS&HPS/6.28%) had approximately 17,80 percent.⁷⁵

Also in Yugoslavia, Muslim leaders continued choosing, as their ally, the group that could give them more guaranties.⁷⁶ As before, Muslims found a way to establish a privileged dialogue with the group with higher political leverage and to bargain concessions. That task was facilitated because Serbian parties needed the JMO and Cemiyet⁷⁷ votes to pass their centralist proposals in the parliament. Different ethnic preferences within the JMO top brass did not hinder its co-operation with the Serbian leadership, with whom they

sided against the Croats on several occasions.⁷⁸

The Serbian parties managed to approve the 1921 centralist Constitution thanks to the pivotal votes of the JMO and Cemiyet;⁷⁹ but in exchange, the JMO obtained two major guarantees: firstly, the preservation of Bosnia-Herzegovina's territorial integrity, as well as Islamic regulations and customs. The province was divided into various districts, but kept its outer Austrian configuration. Secondly, the agrarian reform would not be implemented. Ironically, the Bosnian Serb peasantry were the first victims of this political bargain and saw its longstanding aspiration to an agrarian reform frustrated.

By the late 20s, the endless Serbian-Croatian strife had plunged the country in a chaotic situation. In January 1929, in a desperate attempt to solve the deadlock that political life had brought, King Aleksandar dissolved the Parliament, renounced the Constitution, banned political parties and declared a royal dictatorship. He believed that with these measures political instability could be overcome and national sentiments appeased. Muslim representatives that had since the foundation of the country integrated all cabinets continued participating in the king governments.

Still in the course of 1929, the king re-organised the country into new administrative units (banovinas), cutting across historical lands. To avoid any ethnic/national connection, these units received the name of the major rivers crossing them. Bosnia-Herzegovina lost its outer configuration, and its lands were incorporated into four different banovinas. But also these initiatives failed to promote a supranational Yugoslav nationhood and to appease ethnic claims. Croatian elites, the most disturbing element of the Yugoslav political life, became particularly assertive in the second half of the 30s. By 1939, another solution was rehearsed for the Croatian question. Serbian and Croatian political elites agreed on in the constitution of a territorial unit - the Banovina of Croatia - with a special political status (Sporazum).

In this unit, thirteen (out of 51) Bosnian provinces (Fig.III) were incorporated. Yugoslavia started operating with two political regimes: as a Federation in its relations with the *Banovina* of Croatia; as a unitary state with the remaining units. The *Banovina* was entitled with extensive political powers,⁸⁰ while the other units kept their administrative prerogatives. The enlargement of the *Banovina* of Croatia was the compromise solution to the partition of Bosnia and Herzegovina that the negotiations and the disagreements between Cvetkovic and Macek were not able to solve.⁸¹

During the days that preceded the signature of the *Sporazum*, Mehmed Spaho and most of the Muslim leaders voiced their opposition to the partition of Bosnia and Herzegovina between Serbia and Croatia. Without assets to impose their views, they chose to align themselves with the supporters either of a Greater Serbia or a Greater Croatia, as a way to keep Bosnia and Herzegovina intact and to assure, at least, the indivisibility of the province. The JMO top brass leaned towards integration in Serbia. As Spaho remarked, "...if Bosnia and Herzegovina cannot get autonomy, then we cannot at any price allow the region to be divided, but let the whole of it go to Serbia..."⁸² However, with the death of

Spaho, in 1939, the faction favouring the alliance with Serbians lost influence and the group led by Dzafer Kulenovic, which privileged the alliance with the Croats, became the predominant one. Kulenovic supported the notion of a Croatian-sponsored "greater Bosnia" that would include the Sandjak.⁸³

The events that followed the adoption of the Sporazum showed that it was not yet the solution for the national question in Yugoslavia. It had the merit of upsetting all the concerned ethnic groups: it did not fulfil the Croatian aspirations of independence; displeased around 850,000 Serbs that were included in the territory of the new created *Banovina* of Croatia; and against Muslim wishes, the historical lands of Bosnia and Herzegovina lost their indivisibility and were split among three *banovinas*.

The viability of the Sporazum could not be tested because two years later, in April 1941, Yugoslavia ceased to exist after being invaded by the German Army and split into different areas of influence. Bosnia and Herzegovina were divided in two different areas of influence: Northern and Central parts of Bosnia, jointly with Croatia, Slavonia and part of Vojvodina, were integrated in the Croatian puppet state (NDH-Nezavisna Drzava Hrvatska) under the Ustasha nazi regime of Ante Pavelic; Herzegovina was put under Italian control.

Just as the most prominent personalities of the Croatian leadership, so the most visible elements of the JMO, such as Dzafer Kulenovic, joined the *Ustasha* government in Zagreb⁸⁴ and the Catholic and Islamic Churches welcomed the NDH. However, even under these circumstances the Bosnian Muslims tried to improve their situation. A few influent Muslims - especially those allied with Uzeiraga Hadzihasanovic, a JMO leader from Sarajevo - sought autonomy through a special relationship with the third Reich...[and] proposed that Bosnia-Herzegovina be made a German protectorate.⁸⁵ But Germany refused such a course of action. A few Muslims joined the *Chetniks* and the Partisans. However, the Bosnian Muslim elites and the Muslim community as a whole, closed ranks with the Croatian regime, and participated actively in the massacres of Serbs spearheaded by the *Ustashas*.⁸⁶ Once again, Bosnian Muslims were choosing as their ally the group with the upper hand.

The cruelties undertaken by the *Ustasha* regime against Croatian Serbs had continuation in the contiguous territories of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The civil war fought in Bosnia, not occupied by foreign forces, was, first and foremost, ethnic and confessional in character.⁸⁷ It caused victims in the ranks of all Bosnian groups but it seems that Serbs were the ones who suffered the most, including the Orthodox Church and clergy. In the anti-Serb actions became particularly notorious a unit trained by Germans that relied almost exclusively on Muslim recruitment - the 13th (*Handjar*) *Waffen* SS Division - which acted in the northwest and eastern regions of Bosnia.

4. The Muslim Question in the Second Yugoslavia

After the partisan's victory, Communists adopted a federal model for the new Yugoslav state born in 1945, but hesitated in incorporating the territories of Bosnia and Herzegovina in a sole Yugoslav Republic. Unlike the other republics and autonomous provinces, no ethnic group was numerically dominant and, thus, Bosnia and Herzegovina could not be considered a national state. Contrasting with the post-1995 situation, after the war the different ethnic groups continued living deeply intermingled (fig. VI-F-V). By 1948 figures, the population of Bosnia and Herzegovina was constituted by 44,7 percent of Serbs, 30,9 percent of Muslims and 23,9 percent of Croats, but just 30 percent of the *opstinas* could be considered ethnically homogeneous. Generally speaking, Muslims were the majority in the far northwest corner of the republic, around the cities of Bihac and Prijedor, as well as in the centre of the republic and eastward to the border with Serbia.

Serbs comprised majorities in many of the northwestern regions, in the far south around the city of Trebinje and the border with Montenegro, and in a few areas in the central and northeastern region of the Republic. Croats lived predominantly in the region along the southern border with Croatia between the towns of Livno and Neum, as well as in a few central areas and along the northern border with Croatia. If in urban areas the ethnic groups were rather mixed and inter-ethnic marriages occurred frequently, in rural areas the situation was substantially different.

The inclusion of Bosnia and Herzegovina either in Serbia or in Croatia would create an unbalanced situation within the Federation; and its division by Serbia and Croatia would be tremendously complex. Thus, to contain the Serbian and Croatian competition over the region, Tito copied the 19th century Austro-Hungarian solution and incorporated the territories of Bosnia and Herzegovina in a sole territorial and political unit, in the form of a separate Federal Republic on equal footing with the other Yugoslav republics.⁸⁸ However, while containing not a distinctive nation but merely fragments of two other nations and a non-nation, Bosnia-Herzegovina was somehow seen with a lower status compared to the other republics.

This perception was reinforced by the national policy established by the Communists. According to the 1946 Constitution, ethnic groups were classified in three groups with different national rights: the nations (*narod*), which were entitled to a Republic and to the right of self-determination; the nationalities (*narodnost*) - Hungarians and Albanians - without right to self-determination but politically organised in autonomous provinces; and other nationalities and ethnic groups (Jews, Vlachs, Greeks, Russians, etc.).⁸⁹

Rehabilitating a pre-war idea predominant among Serbian and Croatian intelligentsias, also Communists adopted the concept of ethnic origin as the attribute for nation. Slav Muslims were considered just a religious group and thus, were not included in any of the abovementioned groups, not even in the category of "other nationalities and ethnic-groups." It was inconceivable for Communists the notion of nationhood based on other criterion/attribute than ethnicity. Just as the JMO, the Muslim Religious Community (IVZ) also never ventured an opinion on any political aspect of the national question or on some form of autonomy.⁹⁰

After the war, the Bosnian Muslim community was found decapitated of political leadership, which, as explained before, had sided with the occupation authorities. The pre-war Muslim economic elites were not re-constructed, and their former estates were nationalised. Religious elites were the only ones who had survived the war, but with their power seriously depleted. The leadership of the IVZ offered resistance to the new authorities; in the fall of 1945, anti-Communists won elections for official posts in the community, and the following year a rapid growth of anti-Communist feeling was seen throughout the Moslem community.⁹¹

However, communists managed to control the situation and assured the support of the IZ after provoking its economic suffocation. Anti-communist elements in the IZ's leadership were sidelined and co-operative leaders took over. The election of the new Reis-Ul-ulema in 1947 was acquiesced by the LCY. By the late 1980s, it was necessary to be a Party member in order to have a good job in the IZ, and particular officials, including the Reis-Ul-ulema.⁹² A few tiny groups of enlightened intellectuals and activists of the Muslim cause also survived the war, such as the Young Muslims, which were suppressed by the regime in 1949; its leaders were either executed or imprisoned.

Two decades after the Communist takeover in the Bosnian society two nationalist Muslim groups with proposals for the Muslim question in Yugoslavia emerged: one constituted by Marxist intellectuals ideologically close or even belonging to the Bosnian Party, who wanted to transform Bosnia-Herzegovina into a Muslim Republic, within the context of socialist Yugoslavia; and another, clandestine and anti-communist, comprising intellectuals with their ideological roots in Islam, who aimed at making Bosnia-Herzegovina an Islamic state, outside the Yugoslav framework.⁹³ In reality, beyond proposing answers for the Muslim question, these groups formulated the firsts Muslim national ideologies and conceived their articulation into coherent political programmes.

The Legal Muslim National Ideology

The nationalist movement of Marxist Muslims identified two strategic political goals to be achieved: in an initial phase, to promote the Slav Muslim community to a Yugoslav nation on equal footing with the other Yugoslav nations; and then, once achieved the first goal, to transform Bosnia-Herzegovina into the republic of the Muslim nation. The development of the Muslim national question in the socialist Yugoslavia ought to be analysed in the context of national claims that started agitating Yugoslavia in the early 60s.

The movement that led to their recognition as a Yugoslav nation was initiated with the 1961 census, which provided a category for "ethnic Muslims." As Bringa outlined, "...in a socio-political climate where collective cultural identities based on such claims [ethnicity] become the only valid ones, the Muslims claim to nationality status on a different basis is seen by others competing within such a discourse as illegitimate."⁹⁴ Thus, to match the official doctrine that only ethnic groups could raise nations, Bosnian ideologues felt

compelled to present Muslims as an ethnic group; an obvious, but necessary, fallacy.

This new situation was codified in the 1963 Constitution of Bosnia-Herzegovina. One year later, the Bosnian Party assured Muslims the right for self-determination, a prerogative of nations, but not yet the so desired national status. In 1964, Atif Purivatra, a prominent Muslim and member of the Communist Party, wrote in a Sarajevo journal that “the overwhelming majority of the Bosnian-Herzegovinian Muslims have made clear their feeling of belonging to the Muslim community as an ethnic and not religious group.”⁹⁵ Further developments have shown that Purivatra did not want to talk of an ethnic group but of a nation; he was just preparing the ground for the acceptance of the Muslim nation's idea.

It would be after 1966, when Rankovic fell in disgrace, that the Bosnian Muslim movement, like other national movements, gained momentum. The emergence of nationalist sentiments among Yugoslav elites was, thus, the natural consequence of a new re-alignment of forces at Federation level, in which the Serbian element lost significant political influence.⁹⁶ However, it warrants mentioning that important differences were separating the Muslim movement from other national demands. While Croatian and Slovene elites, whose ethnic groups already enjoyed the nation status, were struggling for higher republican autonomy, Bosnian Muslim elites, likewise Albanians, were striving for the recognition of the nation category.

Bosnian Muslims were departing even behind Albanians, who were, as a nationality, a little bit ahead. In 1966, Tito declared that the national identity and national specificity of the Muslims should be recognised.⁹⁷ Explanations for Tito's engagement in the defence of the Muslim cause differ: some argue he used his own home Muslims to please Muslim and Arab countries, in order to obtain their support for the leadership of the non-aligned movement; others, see in such an engagement, an attempt to counter-balance the Serb-Croat historical competition for the Muslim loyalty. If this was the case, the idea was not original as Austrians had done the same seven decades before.

By the late 60s, important literary works written by Muslim intellectuals, ideologically connected to the Bosnian Party, contributed decisively to shape Muslim ideology. *The Bosnian Spirit in Literature* (Bosanski duh u knjizevnosti), a book written by Muhammed Filipovic, a prominent Muslim professor at Sarajevo, and published in 1967 played a crucial role in the awakening of the Bosnian Muslim consciousness. This Muslim ideology was eminently laic and secular and its national attributes were set through the synthesis of spiritual traditions and literary, political and cultural features,⁹⁸ not through the religious criterion; Islam could have only served as an initial stimulus in the genesis of this nation.⁹⁹ To be a Muslim meant to share a common cultural identity, whether or not one was a believer.¹⁰⁰

Under this perspective a differentiation between the concept of Muslim (with capital letter) in the national sense, and muslim in the religious sense was established. While separating both concepts, Marxist Muslims were minimising the decisive role that

religion had played in the creation of a Muslim distinctness; magnified by the fact that Muslims, unlike Serbs and Croats, could not identify themselves with a specific ethnic group. For Muslims, the meaning of blood and heritage, as symbols of identity, were very different from the one given by Serbians and Croatians.

Bosnian Muslim ideologues did not forget to include in their formulations a few essential elements present in the patrimony of "real nations," such as a distinct language and a certificate of ancient legacy. *Bosanski* should be recognized as separate and distinct Yugoslav language. Thus, old ideas sponsored by Austria-Hungary were recuperated and brought back to life. The most striking one was the rehabilitation of the assertion that modern Slav Bosnians were direct descendents of the Bogomils and, therefore, heirs of their medieval traditions of statehood.¹⁰¹

The successive censuses illustrate the evolution of the Communist thought on the Muslim question: in 1948, Muslims were given the possibility to declare themselves as "Muslims ethnically undeclared;" in 1953, they had the option of "Yugoslavs of undeclared nationality;" in 1961, they could select the possibility of "Muslims in the ethnic sense" (i.e. as *narodnost*); In 1968, the Bosnian Party recognised Muslims as a Yugoslav nation, which allowed for, in the 1971 census, Muslims finally had the alternative of "Muslim" in the national sense (i.e. as *narod*). In contrast with the Croatian and Albanian movements, the recognition of Bosnian Muslims as the 6th constituent nation of Yugoslavia did not result from mass mobilisation, but from concurrent efforts among Bosnian Muslim intellectuality, both within the party and society.

After achieving their first goal in 1971, they proceeded for the recognition of Bosnia-Herzegovina as the Muslim republic, that is, the national state of the Bosnian Muslim nation. The Muslim nationalists wished the Bosnian Constitution to read something like this: the Socialist Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina is a state based on the sovereignty of the Muslim nation, and the state of members of the Serbian and Croatian nation, which live in it.¹⁰² Muslim elites were convinced that this could happen since Muslims, by the 70s, became the largest "ethnic" group in the republic.

In practical terms, Bosnian Muslims were still not a nation like the others, since they had not a national state. But this goal was never achieved and Bosnia-Herzegovina never became associated to one sole nation. The provisions of the 1974 Bosnian Constitution, which established Bosnia-Herzegovina as the republic of Muslims, Serbs and Croats, frustrated that aspiration. However, Muslim elites were partially rewarded in their strife. The "simple" recognition of the national status gave them the right to be appointed for leading functions in the state apparatus and party bureaucracies, both on the federal and republican levels, in accordance with the principle of ethnic proportional representation.

The official sponsorship of Muslim nationalism and the promotion of Bosnian Muslims to a nation when, simultaneously, other nationalist manifestations were repressed was not welcomed by large sectors of the Croatian and the Serbian intelligentsias, who never accepted Muslims as a separate "nation." Many Serbs understood it as an attempt carried

out by non-Serb influential policy makers, placed in the state leadership, to prevent the development of national awareness among Bosnian Serbs, in order to deplete their importance in Yugoslavia. This perception was reinforced during the 70s by the growth of Islamic consciousness and organisational activity. The intense diplomatic relations held by Yugoslavia with Muslim and Arab countries, and the exchange of students put Bosnian Muslims in contact with the Muslim world and stimulated the study of Islamic theology in Bosnia.¹⁰³ In 1977, Saudi Arabia funded the foundation of a Faculty of Islamic Theology at the Sarajevo University.

The Muslim National Ideology of Islamic Inspiration

“...Turkey as an Islamic country ruled the world. Turkey as a copy of Europe is a third-rate country like hundred other around the world...”

Alija Izetbegovic¹⁰⁴

As suggested before, the formulation of national ideologies among Bosnian Muslims was not an exclusive of Bosnian intellectuals close to or belonging to the Communist Party. Also an anticommunist and clandestine net of Muslim intellectuals was working on the issue. One of the most notorious militants of these underground groups was Alija Izetbegovic and his old partners of the Young Muslims, an organization of elitist youth with ties to the Ustasha youth movement.¹⁰⁵ In 1949, this group rehearsed a revolt, which was duly cracked down by the regime. During subsequent trials held in Sarajevo four members of the group were sentenced to death and many were given prison sentences. Izetbegovic spent three years in jail. This setback led the remaining elements of the group to re-consider their form of political (and religious) intervention. By the late 60s, Izetbegovic and Omer Behman emerged as leaders of informal discussion groups consisting mainly of students of *medresa* (Muslim theological school) or seminaries.¹⁰⁶

While the secular Muslim nationalists just wanted to make Bosnia-Herzegovina a Muslim republic, within the Yugoslav context; Islamic Muslim nationalists were calling for an Islamic state outside the Yugoslav order. The document that better expresses the political views of this group is the *Islamic Declaration: A Programme of the Islamisation of Muslims and Muslim Peoples*, a book first published clandestinely in 1970, whose authorship is usually attributed to Izetbegovic.¹⁰⁷ The concepts articulated in it were ideologically aligned with the predominant thinking of the pan-Islamist movements of the 1970s, whose primary aim was the seizure of political power, in order to reshape society according to what they deemed to be God's ultimate will.¹⁰⁸ Achieving an Islamic society was predicated on establishing an Islamic state. As Izetbegovic put it:

*“...The Islamic movement must and can, take over political power as soon as it is morally and numerically so strong that it can not only destroy the existing non-Islamic power, but also to build up a new Islamic one...”*¹⁰⁹

When the book was written Muslims were already the largest group in Bosnia-Herzegovina, but not strong enough to impose their will on the other groups.¹¹⁰ The Declaration was just a long-term project to be implemented when conditions were ripe.

As a political programme, it identified a strategic goal (an Islamic State) and the way to achieve it (through an Islamic revolution). Power should be seized through an immense mass rebellion with participation of the different social strata, from peasantry to intellectuals:

"...A Muslim can die only with the name of Allah on his lips and for the glory of Islam, or he may run away from the battlefield¹¹¹ ...in the struggle for an Islamic order all methods are permitted¹¹² ...in this revolution all must participate under the guidance of an enlightened intelligence [that] would then raise the flag of the Islamic order and together with the Muslim masses embark into action to implement this order..."¹¹³

The Islamic state proposed in the *Declaration* reflected a theocratic conception of society where the rule of God should reign in place of the rule of human laws, and should encompass all fields of the individual's personal life.¹¹⁴ Thus, Islam should be implemented as a whole solution to political, social and economic problems.¹¹⁵ It was an authoritative project where multi-ethnic/religious coexistence, parliamentary democracy and political pluralism were seen with great suspicion.

"...The first and foremost of such conclusions is surely the one on the incompatibility of Islam and non-Islamic systems. There can be no peace or coexistence between the Islamic faith and non-Islamic societies and political institutions...Islam clearly excludes the right and possibility of activity of any strange ideology on its own turf. Therefore, there is no question of any laic principles, and the state should be an expression and should support...the religion..."¹¹⁶ no political party from the arsenal of the Western democracy [was necessary]; it is a movement based on Islamic ideology and with clear moral and ideological criteria of belonging..."¹¹⁷

The *Declaration* explicitly rejected those intellectual currents among Muslims, which have attempted to build modern secular nation-states on the Western model of separation between govern and religion.¹¹⁸

"...Islamic society without an Islamic government is incomplete and impotent...a Muslim, in general, does not exist as an individual...to live and exist as a Muslim, he must create an environment, a community, a social order...history does not know of a single truly Islamic movement which was not simultaneously a political movement..."¹¹⁹

The doctrinal arsenal of Bosnian Islamists was later enriched with the next book of Izetbegovic entitled *Islam between the East and the West* published in the United States, in 1984, when he was in prison. Beyond re-affirming the superiority of Islam over other religions and principles already expressed in the Islamic Declaration, it brought new important theoretical contributions to the Islamist ideology.¹²⁰ The book, as Johnstone wisely remarked, was an attempt to elaborate the ideological underpinnings of the central political argument of the Islamic Declaration. It was part of the intellectual preparation, which Izetbegovic considered necessary before proceeding to the next step of establishing an Islamic government,¹²¹ when the winds of the disintegration of Yugoslavia became perceptible.

Like the Marxist Muslim nationalists, also the Bosnian Islamists recuperated old ideas

sponsored by Austria-Hungary. In the early nineties, they revised and incorporated the concept of Bosniak in their lexicon. All Slav Muslims in the Balkans, not only in Bosnia-Herzegovina but also in Serbia (Kosovo and Sandjak), Montenegro and Macedonia should be called Bosniaks [...] like Croats living outside Croatia, or Serbs living outside Serbia.¹²² Thus, if Bosnia-Herzegovina was considered the national state of Bosniaks, then all the other non-Bosniak autochthonous groups living in it would be considered political minorities; if all Slav Muslims living in the Balkans were Bosniaks then, the Islamic power should protect all its people in a space well beyond Bosnia-Herzegovina borders.¹²³

5. Developments in the Eighties

Very sensitive to the malign repercussions that national disputes could have in the republic's political stability, Bosnian authorities tried at all costs to preserve it from the national agitation that ravaged Yugoslavia in the last years of the decade. While intransigent toward the Serb-Croat confrontation and very repressive of any anti-socialist manifestation, Bosnian authorities have shown a condescending behaviour towards the laic Muslim nationalism.

In 1983, a group of Islamic activists was uncovered; its members were accused of counter-revolutionary activities and of seeking to transform Bosnia-Herzegovina into an "ethnically pure Islamic state;"¹²⁴ thirteen of them were prosecuted and sentenced to 14 years imprisonment. Izetbegovic was one of them. The concluding evidence of their anti-socialist conspiracy was their trip to Iran, in 1982, to participate in the commemoration of the anniversary of the Islamic Revolution.¹²⁵

In May 1986, Hrvoje Istuk, a member of the LCBiH Presidium, criticized the fact that Muslim nationalism "recently has joined to its idea about the Muslims as the sole bearers of the statehood of Bosnia and Herzegovina a unitaristic thesis about annexing the Sandjak to such a Muslim state."¹²⁶ Actually, the eighties corresponded to a period in which the voice of the Marxist Muslims spoke louder, and their call for the transformation of Bosnia-Herzegovina into the national state of Slav Muslims was heard more insistently.

During the 80s, the importance of religion within the Bosnian Muslim community increased. Communists' conviction that it was possible to develop a Muslim ideology based upon non-religious attributes was, definitely, a huge mistake, since religion, reinforced by the tradition of the *millet* system, had always been the distinctive factor of identity among the Bosnian communities.¹²⁷ The attempt to develop a Muslim nationhood based upon other attributes than religion was, sooner or later, condemned to failure.

The association between a Muslim nation and a muslim religion was irresistibly attractive and, therefore...inevitable.¹²⁸ In the eighties, this association germinated and acquired adherents. The increased appeal of Islam to the Muslim masses from a religious and even a political point of view, according to Ramet, occurred "when a new generation, educated

to think of the Bosnian Muslims as a national group and encouraged by contacts with a renascent Middle East, began to look to Islam as a basis for political mobilization.¹²⁹ Ironically, Tito's foreign policy close to Arab and Muslim countries stimulated anti-Communist religious revival and facilitated the emergence of a sizable group of intellectuals educated in Muslim countries, far from the influence of Marxism who joined, in the early 90s, the anticommunist Muslim movement.

Such developments had little to do with Purivatra's strife.¹³⁰ Bosnian authorities were found trapped between two antagonist courses of action. If on the one hand, they were promoting the affirmation of a Muslim nation based upon a secular concept; on the other, Yugoslav foreign policy was sabotaging such efforts while stimulating the contacts with Arabs and Muslim countries and, therefore, contributing to the growth in popularity of the Islamic faith.

With the recognition of the nation status, the religious hierarchy began to pursue a more active role in the lives of Bosnian Muslims, seeking to play the role of intermediary between them and the rest of Yugoslav society and to be the spokesperson for the Muslim community and its interests.¹³¹ But the Bosnian leadership was not about to permit the Islamic religious hierarchy to adopt the role that such a hierarchy would normally play in a Muslim-dominated society.¹³²

The Bosnian Communist elites formed a restricted group of people who, profiting from a good performance during the war, acquired the eternal right to govern the republic. Their prolonged presence in power created a regime dominated by networks of personal patronage where corruption, generalised to all sectors of the society, became a trivial practice. By 1987, the prestige (and legitimacy) of that elite was seriously shaken by the uncover-up of a financial fraud involving an agro-industrial conglomerate (Agrokomerck) settled in Velika Kladusa, led by Fikret Abdic, a very creative entrepreneur member of the Bosnian Party Central Committee.

The scandal continued with the disclosure of more inconvenient information about the high lifestyle and nets of corruption these groups of families operated in.¹³³ The Muslim ecclesiastic hierarchy did not lose this opportunity to criticise the Communist system. Therefore, while political and economic elites were very close and in some cases even coincided, the Muslim clergy kept some (what it could) distance from the two. By the late eighties, as observed by Sorabji, the Islamska Zajednica (IZ) was devoting much energy to promoting the socialist brotherhood and unity of Yugoslavia's nations and nationalities...while, circumspectly was trying to strengthen the position of the Muslims vis-à-vis Serbs and Croats.¹³⁴

In the late 80s, the political debate in Yugoslavia was dominated by three crucial proposals advanced by Serbia: the change of status of the autonomous provinces; the election for the Chamber of Citizens based on the "one-man one-vote" system, rather than appointments made by the republics and autonomous provinces (replacing a power-sharing organisation of power by an integrative solution); and the strengthening of the

Federal government's powers. The change of status of the autonomous provinces, established by the 1974 Constitution, received the agreement of the republics, notwithstanding without hesitations and resistance. But the other two topics became object of political polarisation between Serbia, on the one side, Slovenia and Croatia, on the other. In what concerned the change of the voting formula, also fearing the domination of the Federation by Serbia, Bosnia-Herzegovina joined Slovenia and Croatia in the rejection of the "one-man one-vote" proposal.

In the last years of the decade, the political situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina suffered a deep transformation. As in the other republics, Bosnian authorities were also compelled to adopt a more relaxed mood towards political opposition. It was in this ambience of political overture towards non-communist dissidents that Izetbegovic was released in a general amnesty in 1988, and his forbidden books were published in Bosnia-Herzegovina.¹³⁵ This new mood of the regime is decisive to understanding the internal changes which occurred by the late 1980s in the IZ, when pro-regime officials were dismissed and others, who had been demoted or deposed under socialism, were rehabilitated.¹³⁶ In late 1988 and early 1989, a group of conservative imams ventured to call for the resignation of the *Reis-ul-Ulema*, and for the change of the IZ constitution;¹³⁷ the new elected IZ leadership took a more international stand but conceptually oriented towards the Islamic World.¹³⁸

Political agitation in Bosnia-Herzegovina was more anticommunist than nationalist. National agitation did not go beyond exchanges between intellectual activists. It never reached the form of a mass movement. The reality is that ethnic confrontation in Bosnia-Herzegovina was essentially a post-1990 elections phenomenon, where the importance of the ethnic issue surmounted the importance of the anticommunist struggle, once the regime had already been overthrown.

Three additional characteristics made nationalism in Bosnia-Herzegovina different from cases in the other republics: firstly, it was not sponsored by the Party and, therefore, it did not benefit from either party members activism or party blessing, as occurred in other republics; official media was not at the disposal of nationalist militants; secondly, nationalist activism (often mixed with anti-socialist conspiracy) was severely repressed; thirdly, it was more than anything an internal republican affair (rather than inter-republican). Bosnia-Herzegovina had not any particular national/republic claim.

6. The Dissolution of Yugoslavia. An Opportunity for the Muslim National Project

Following the example of Slovenia and Croatia, on 21 February 1990, the Bosnian parliament authorised the constitution of political parties. In a short period of time more than 40 parties were formed. To refrain nationalistic impetuses, the Bosnian parliament adopted a law prohibiting associations based on national and religious grounds,¹³⁹ which was later declared unconstitutional by the Constitutional Court.¹⁴⁰ Elections held in

November 1990 revealed three major parties with capacity to intervene and to condition Bosnian politics, all of national character.

The first to organise was a Muslim party, Party of Democratic Action (SDA), founded by Izetbegovic and his former Young Muslims partners.¹⁴¹ The overwhelming Muslim intelligentsia, regardless of their previous political background, adhered to the SDA, namely former members of the Communist Party, such as Fikret Abdic.¹⁴² Also the majority of the Slav Muslims in the Serbian and Montenegrin regions of the Sandjak joined the SDA. Initially, the SDA supported a united Yugoslavia;¹⁴³ but the progressive dismembering of the federation and the political evolution in the other republics led its leadership to embrace temporarily a confederal solution, and later to decide for secession and independence.

The other two constituent nations of Bosnia-Herzegovina - Croats and Serbs - organised themselves in Bosnian branches of Croatian parties. In July 1990 the Serbian Democratic Party (SDS) was born, led by Radovan Karadzic; and, in August 1990 the Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ) was founded, led by Stjepan Kljuic. Both the SDS and the HDZ were right wing and anti-communist parties. But while the SDS, already active in Croatia, represented an autonomous political initiative of the Serbs outside of Serbia, neither promoted nor sponsored by Belgrade; the HDZ in Bosnia-Herzegovina was just a local branch of the Tudjman's party.

Before evolving towards a radical nationalist line, the SDS's main political objective (both in Croatia and Bosnia) was to keep Yugoslavia together. In its turn, the HDZ envisaged independence for Bosnia-Herzegovina but with a certain degree of autonomy for the Croat community.¹⁴⁴ Reflecting its political heterogeneity, irreversible divergences on tactical and strategic options soon surfaced among the SDA top brass, which led to various defections. The first one occurred in October 1990, two months before the Bosnian elections. Incompatibilities with the openly Islamic and nationalist faction headed by Izetbegovic drove Adil Zulfikarpasic and Muhamed Filipovic, representatives of the secular Bosnian nationalist trend, to split and to found the Muslim Bosniak Organisation (MBO).¹⁴⁵ This group opposed the secession of Bosnia-Herzegovina and favoured an agreement with the Serbian leadership "...that would satisfy both sides..."¹⁴⁶

The most credible alternatives to national parties were the re-styled Bosnian Communist Party in the form of the League of Communists-Social Democratic Party (SK-SDP) led by Nijaz Durakovic, and ethnic Muslim communist, and the Bosnian branch of the Alliance of Reform Forces of Yugoslavia (SRSJ), founded in August 1991 by the Yugoslav Prime Minister Ante Markovic. Both parties supported the continuation of the Yugoslav Federation.

Multi-party democratic elections for the two Chambers of the Bosnian parliament (Citizens and Municipalities) and for the collective presidency were held in November 1990. Like previous elections held in Bosnia-Herzegovina since 1910, these ones were also dominated by national parties and the results resembled a census on national

identities. In a total of 240 seats in both Chambers the SDA won 86 seats, the SDS won 72 seats and the HDZ won 44 seats.¹⁴⁷ The elections delivered substantial power to the Muslims, but not enough for them to rule without support from another party.¹⁴⁸ One third of the eligible voters abstained and a very high number of votes cast were declared invalid.¹⁴⁹ Analysts considered that votes were cast on the anticommunist ticket rather than on national lines. The new polity that emerged from the elections and the events that occurred afterwards did not represent a substantial part of the Bosnian population.

The Party of Democratic Change and the Alliance of Reform, individually, showed very poorly. However, almost one quarter of the seats in the Chamber of the Citizens were won by non-nationalist formations. And as Burg & Shoup suggest, had a proportionality rule been adopted for the republic-level elections, the non-nationalist parties would have secured a significantly greater voice in Bosnian politics.¹⁵⁰ In the elections for the Presidency, most votes went to Fikret Abdic (200,000 votes ahead of Izetbegovic), who emerged as the main threat to Izetbegovic's leadership of the SDA and also as a potential new President of the country. For a while, the sensation that Abdic and his supporters would be able to impose their line over the SDA was given. But Abdic renounced the Presidential job and made himself available to continue only as a member of the Presidential Council. He realised that he was isolated and he would never have the backing either of the SDA heavyweights or the support of the Bosnian Serb members of the Presidency.¹⁵¹

Abdic recognized that he was never going to be admitted in the inner sanctum of the SDA,¹⁵² and resigned after a campaign orchestrated by the "tough" faction.¹⁵³ Also Alija Delimustafic, an Abdic's close ally in the Bosnian government, gave up on politics and went to live in Austria. The exclusion of the last moderates within the SDA leadership marked the end of any hope of peaceful reconciliation between the three communities; and the poor electoral showing of the MBO represented the lost of an opportunity of creating a valid alternative to the dominance of the SDA in the Muslim ranks.

By early 1991, Bosnian leaders were still talking about keeping Yugoslavia together. The three national parties formed a governmental coalition, and agreed to govern on a trilateral power-sharing arrangement, in line with the Yugoslav consociational practices: rotating presidency; a collective presidency of two members per each nation and one seat to be filled by a representative of minorities; decision-making based on consensus (on all major issues, namely on those involving national problems); distribution of cabinets and other top positions according to the parity principle of the socialist system, etc.. Izetbegovic, the Muslim representative, was appointed President of the Presidency; Krajisnik, the Serb representative, became President of the Bosnian National Assembly; and the Croat Jure Pelivan took over as Prime Minister. The co-operation lasted a few months.

In less than half-a-year inter-ethnic relations in Bosnia suffered a tremendous mutation. Bosnian population, which had in mid-1990 pronounced itself 74 percent in favour of a ban on nationality or confessionally based parties, voted, six months later, in the same

proportion for such parties.¹⁵⁴ This radical change was a direct consequence of the sentiments of collective fear and insecurity provoked in each community by the radical discourse of ethnic activists who, exacerbating the surrounding perils, used the uncertainties about the future of the country to wage the spectrum of groups' physical elimination.

Through the manipulation of old national prejudices, political memories and emotions, these political entrepreneurs magnified group anxieties, polarised the society and increased the distance among groups.¹⁵⁵ In a short space of time, each group found itself without a reliable safety net that could assure its collective protection.¹⁵⁶ For Bosnian Serbs, the breakdown of Yugoslavia represented the destruction of such a protective web; without Yugoslavia they would be at the mercy of the Muslim-Croat alliance, as had occurred before. For Muslims, the permanence in a Serbian dominated Yugoslavia would represent a second-class status.

A New Step Ahead

In early 1991, like in other moments of structural change in the regional order, Bosnian political elites were again confronted with the same question: What to do with Bosnia-Herzegovina? But if in previous situations Muslim elites did not feel confident enough to challenge their powerful neighbours, preferring to align either with Serbians or with Croatians; this time, Muslim elites believed the situation was ripe to fight for a political project in which, rather than playing a secondary role, they were going to be the protagonists and to dictate the rules, once for the first time in history Muslims were the majority.¹⁵⁷

While trying to negotiate peaceful solutions for the issues that separated them, Bosnian parties were, simultaneously, preparing themselves for war. The first months of 1991 were for Muslim decision makers a period of strategic expectation, hesitating between remaining in Yugoslavia or to proceed towards independence. Their decision depended on the evolution of the situation in Slovenia and Croatia. Kiro Gligorov was in the same dilemma and made public that Macedonia would secede, should Slovenia and Croatian breakaway from Yugoslavia. He was indirectly pushing the Muslims to do the same. But Izetbegovic had to play a more ambiguous game. At the same time that he publicly was declaring the need to preserve Yugoslavia,¹⁵⁸ Izetbegovic was stating that he would sacrifice peace for a sovereign Bosnia-Herzegovina, and for that peace he would not sacrifice its sovereignty.¹⁵⁹

Gligorov and Izetbegovic got involved in the mediation of the Yugoslav conflict; in a joint initiative they proposed a solution - the Platform on the Future Yugoslav Community - that could transform Yugoslavia into a commonwealth of sovereign republics.¹⁶⁰ In his turn Milosevic, while setting the partition of Bosnia-Herzegovina with Tudjman,¹⁶¹ was negotiating with Izetbegovic the possibility of keeping Bosnia-Herzegovina in a short version of Yugoslavia, in case of Slovenia and Croatia seceding.

In June, Zulfikarpasic and Filipovic, on behalf of Izetbegovic, in what was known as the “Belgrade initiative” met with Karadzic, Koljevic, and Krajcinisk and reached an agreement regarding the status of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Bosnia would remain in a Yugoslav confederation but sovereign and undivided, encompassing three constitutive nations of Muslims, Serbs, and Croats. The Sandjak would receive cultural and administrative autonomy; the Croatian and the Bosnian Krajinas were to abandon the idea of unification. Zulfikarpasic went to Belgrade to get the approval of Milosevic on the plan. Milosevic consented and also promised to give Bosnia 60 percent of Sandjak. Izetbegovic, who initially greeted the agreement with enthusiasm, subsequently changed his mind and abandoned it.¹⁶²

The political and social situation started deteriorating when the leadership of the SDA (and HDZ) started pressing for the separation of Bosnia-Herzegovina from Yugoslavia. The fragile co-operation ended when it became evident for Bosnian Serbs that Muslims and Bosnian Croats, encouraged by the evidence that the EC, sooner or later, would recognise the Slovene and Croatian declarations of independence, had irreversibly chosen secession. Tudjman and Izetbegovic, in another attempt to find a solution for the crisis, met on 12 June in Split, but Izetbegovic refused to discuss the cantonisation.

The SDA’s clerical flavour, the increasing energy and vocality of the IZ and a few decisions taken by Izetbegovic in his quality of President of the Presidency did not contribute to pacify the generalised ambience of mutual suspicion lived among political elites. In early July 1991, without informing his partners of the Presidential Council, Izetbegovic asked for the membership of Bosnia-Herzegovina in the Islamic Conference Organisation (ICO), which provoked an embittered reaction of Serbs and Croats.

On 11 July 1991, Karadzic announced that the SDS would not abide by any decisions of the Bosnian Parliament, and that it longer would no longer recognise its sovereignty.¹⁶³ Bosnian Serbs started preparing their counter-secession. Shortly after, following the example of the Croatian Serbs, the SDS declared several Serbian autonomous regions (SAO) in Bosnia-Herzegovina, in which governmental authorities were blocked from carrying out normal government functions and the SDS monopolised the top posts: economic, political and above all, military.¹⁶⁴ Karadzic left it clear that the SDS would begin to build the institutions of a Serb republic, which should remain in Yugoslavia, if Croats and Muslims insisted on the separation of Bosnia-Herzegovina from Yugoslavia and asked for EC recognition.

The political formula of a multi-ethnic, unitary and civic state based on a “one-man one-vote” proposed by the SDA did not convince Bosnian Serbs, who saw it as a Muslim manoeuvre to control the society. Bosnian Serbs were reacting exactly in the same way and with the same arguments that other ethnic groups had used to reject Milosevic’s identical proposal for Yugoslavia: it would lead to the hegemony of the most numerous nation. The scepticism of the Bosnian Serbs about Izetbegovic’s real intentions was reinforced by the demands of the SDA in the Sandjak.¹⁶⁵ At the same time that Bosnian Serbs were being asked to remain in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the SDA was calling for the

secession of Sandjak and its unification with Bosnia-Herzegovina. In a referendum held on 25-27 October 1991, the Slav Muslims in Sandjak voted overwhelmingly in favour of political and territorial autonomy.¹⁶⁶

By October 1991 the first formal steps towards the separation of Bosnia-Herzegovina from Yugoslavia were given. On the night of 14-15, a memorandum on sovereignty submitted by the SDA passed in the Parliament with the Muslim and Croat votes. The SDS deputies walked out and did not vote. Since then, Republican laws would take precedence over the Yugoslav ones. On 25 October, the Bosnian Serb leadership retaliated and decided to set up a parliament of the Bosnian Serb People. In continuation, on 9-10 November 1991, they organised a referendum in which the overwhelming majority of Bosnian Serbs voted for remaining in Yugoslavia.

On 20 December 1991, four days after the EC Declaration on Yugoslavia, the Presidency of Bosnia-Herzegovina, against the opinion of its Serb members, decided to ask the EC for recognition of independence. On 21 December, the Bosnian Parliament held one of its most dramatic sessions. Karadzic warned that it would be better to make Bosnia-Herzegovina a confederation of three states instead of having hundreds of thousands of dead people, hundreds and thousands of destroyed houses.¹⁶⁷ It became evident to all that Bosnian Serbs were going to resist the secession of Bosnia-Herzegovina. In a last attempt to discourage the Badinter commission of supporting independence, Bosnian Serbs threatened to declare a Bosnian Serb Republic, which was to incorporate Yugoslavia as a federal unit.

On 9 January 1992, Bosnian Serbs representatives insisting that the Bosnian government no longer represented them abandoned the parliament, proclaimed the Bosnian laws non-binding in the areas under Bosnian Serb jurisdiction and declared their autonomy. The Badinter Commission did not feel impressed with such a move and, on 11 January 1992, decided that the EC recognition of the independence required first a plebiscite on the opinion of the Bosnian people. This referendum was held on 29 February and 1 March 1992.

Boycotted by the Bosnian Serbs, only 63 percent of the elective voters cast their votes. 99.4 percent of those 63 percent voted for independence.¹⁶⁸ With the legitimacy provided by these results, Bosnian authorities (Muslims and Croats) declared on 3 March 1992 the independence of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Like Bosnian Serbs, Slav Muslims and Albanians in Sandjak boycotted on 1 March a similar referendum, which aimed at listening to people's opinion on the continuation of Montenegro in Yugoslavia.¹⁶⁹ With the political situation very degraded, impressive rallies against the war were held in Sarajevo and in other urban agglomerates, where rates of intermarriages were traditionally high. But without political organization, these anti-war demonstrations did not represent a credible alternative to nationalist groups. One month after the declaration of independence, on 7 April 1992, Bosnian Serb leaders proclaimed the Serb Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Understanding the Muslim Project

"...The fact of [Bosnia] being a European country does not mean that we have to open the door to the European luxury, to its alcohol, drugs and libertinism..."

Alijas Izetbegovic

Among the three factions involved in the conflict, the Muslim strategy and tactical behaviour is, devoid of any doubt, the most complex and difficult to analyse. As seen before, by early 1991, Izetbegovic was in favour of the preservation of Yugoslavia;¹⁷⁰ Together with Gligorov, he drafted a proposal to solve the political crisis in which the country had plunged. By contrast with winners of the elections in Slovenia and Croatia, who accelerated the secession process, in Bosnia the situation was relatively calm. Bosnian leaders implemented a power-sharing formula, in a Bosnian replica of the Yugoslav consociationalism. However, Izetbegovic was closely monitoring the evolution of the situation in Slovenia and Croatia and, not less important, scrutinizing international developments towards the crisis.

When it became clear that both Slovenia's and Croatia's departure were irreversible and for good, Izetbegovic swiftly reformulated his goal, and exploiting new opportunities provided by the conjuncture, especially the "decisions" of the "Badinter Commission," decided for independence of the country along the borders of the former federal republic. Izetbegovic was acting in tune with the EC (and international) political approach to the problem, which asserted the inviolability of the former republican borders.

Once the hypothesis of remaining in Yugoslavia had been abandoned, and despite acting under the legalist side of the question, Muslim leadership was confronted with the spectrum of partition agreed by Tudjman and Milosevic. In a pessimist hypothesis Muslims would be split up into two states where they would be a minority;¹⁷¹ in an optimistic case, they could found an ethnic Muslim tiny state squashed in between Serbia and Croatia, which would certainly face strong difficulties for surviving.¹⁷² Both solutions were bad, and Izetbegovic was very suspicious (probably with reason) that Tudjman and Milosevic were preparing the division of Bosnia even without reckoning the hypothesis of a Muslim state.

External developments were favouring Muslim stands: first, it was the contradiction in which was involved the formulation of Bosnian Croat strategic goals, imposing them the alignment with independence when they indeed wanted the partition of the country; second, it was the determination of the EC in recognizing the seceding republics. Muslim leadership masterfully exploited these two opportunities. Under these circumstances the formulation of one solution that could not only to circumvent the minority status that was waiting for them either incorporated in Serbia and Croatia, or in a tiny state; but that could also give them a major role became possible. They could benefit from the fact of being a relative majority in a unitary state,¹⁷³ and establish their political dominance over the whole republic.

A single integral government under their control was their aim. Muslim's grip on political

power thus appeared to depend on gaining control over most of Bosnia-Herzegovina and preserving the republic's territorial unity. Its insistence on the republic's independence and its rejection of solutions that could either imply either any territorial division of the country along national lines, or power-sharing solutions reflected this aim.¹⁷⁴ Bosnian Serbs perceived (rightly or wrongly) that an independent Bosnia-Herzegovina in which the Muslim party on its own commanded a relative majority and, in coalition with the Croat party, an absolute majority in parliament, would put them in a precarious situation.

Like the other ethnic groups, the Bosnian Muslim leadership was also playing a dual game. Internally, they were radical Muslims committed to theocracy and Islamisation. But externally, they were giving an image of moderation and tolerance. Izetbegovic's adherence to the politically correct principles of a non-ethnic, secular and democratic state has to be seen with suspicion, because such a formulation is in clear contradiction to the content of the Islamic Declaration, and other programmatic documents of the Muslim movement since the seventies. Moreover, truly modernist Muslims within the SDA had been purged and the party was left in full command of the pan-Islamic and theocratic faction headed by Izetbegovic.¹⁷⁵ Aware that western support could not be obtained without endorsing western concepts of tolerance¹⁷⁶ (at least formally), Izetbegovic's strategic pirouette should be seen as a necessary tactical move to justify its legitimacy towards western countries, rather than a genuine and convict option.¹⁷⁷

The sovereign, multiethnic, unitary and civic state solution under a centralised power suited, in the short-term, Izetbegovic's long-term political goals.¹⁷⁸ Also Muslims were travestying tactics with strategy. In its essence Muslim strategic goal was not qualitatively different from the Serb and Croat programmes,¹⁷⁹ which envisaged a dominant position over the other ethnic groups, avoiding a minority status. It is under this perspective that Muslim resistance should be seen to any solution involving a power sharing solution along ethnic lines.

With less military hardware than the other competing parties, at the beginning of the crisis, Muslim leadership soon realised that the viability of its project relied almost exclusively on the assistance of an international military intervention. Most of their tactical efforts were, therefore, oriented to provoke it. As Mackenzie remarked, "...it [was] in the interests of Izetbegovic to keep the fighting going, in the hope that the world will come to his rescue - provided he could make it look as if the Serbs are solely responsible for perpetrating the chaos..."¹⁸⁰ Unlike Serb, the Muslim (and the Croatian) leadership soon realised that an extra dimension had been added to war: international opinion as guided by television and the media.¹⁸¹ Taking into account that fact, Muslims concentrated a significant part of their resources in exploring this new vector of modern warfare, particularly important in intrastate conflicts.

Their tactical behaviour was permanently oriented to create political conditions for an international intervention using intensively the western mass media. To promote internationally their cause the Muslim leadership contracted, in 1992, the Walt Street public relations firms - Hill Knowlton and Rudder & Fin - and in what concerns the access

to western media they counted on the support and assistance of Washington.¹⁸² Much of the sympathetic international image towards the Muslim cause would result from organised work aimed at influencing mass media to pass on favourable information in which truth was not always the predominant endeavour.¹⁸³

For a comprehensive understanding the Muslim project, it is crucial to understand how power was distributed among the different elite groups. Contrasting with the Bosnian Serbs, the differentiation among political, military, religious and economic elites was not always evident in the Muslim side. With the outbreak of the war, the SDA shifted certain functions from the totally disorganized state apparatus to its own party controlled parallel network.¹⁸⁴ That facilitated the control not only of the state apparatus but also of the economy, as most of the companies were state-owned. After the 1990 elections, these companies remained for a while under the control of former communist managers; but not for a long time. With the progressive affirmation of the Pan-Islamist group in the SDA this situation changed radically. The old regime managers were fired and new ones, recruited in the ranks of the SDA, took over. In this way the economic power was transferred into the hands of the new political elite.¹⁸⁵

To the monopoly of power in the political and economical spheres the full control of the religious and military elites were added. The control of the religious elites was consummated in April 1993, when the Pan-Islamists organised a “coup” in the “Islamic Community” and deposed Jakub Selimoski, the Reis Ul-Ulema and, in the aftermath, set up an “Islamic Community” just restricted to Bosnia-Herzegovina and Sandzak, under the leadership of Mustafa Ceric, the newly appointed Reis Ul-Ulema.¹⁸⁶

The connection between religion and politics - especially with the Pan-Islamist group - had its natural continuation within the SDA itself. Many Ulemas were assigned important posts in the SDA structure, were included in the lists of the SDA and participated in elections campaign.¹⁸⁷ Like many Orthodox clergies, also many Ulemas had a seat in the all-Muslim Congress and in the Bosnian Parliament. Like their Bosnian Serb homologues, many of them actively participated in the rejection of the Union of the Three Republics Peace Plan (UTRPP).

A similar process occurred with the Muslim Armed Forces officially founded on 15 April 1992. The bulk of its first members came from the Green Berets and the Patriotic League.¹⁸⁸ Leaders of some formations with connections to the Patriotic League soon counterweighted the initial influence exerted by officers coming from the JNA or the TDF. Political affiliation would become decisive in the Bosnian Armed Forces (ABiH). Generals were strongly influential in the Muslim political decision making. Most of them were convinced that the war could end with an outright victory over the Bosnian Serbs. They believed that “...they could, if given the opportunity, reclaim all Muslim lands that had been lost...”¹⁸⁹

As O’Shea put it, “...It had now become clear - following the rejection of the Geneva Peace Plan - that for the moment at least the military held sway over the politicians...”¹⁹⁰

Izetbegovic was inclined to accept the Muslim state solution; however, within twenty-four hours, he reversed completely his position, after consulting the Generals.¹⁹¹ Generals apparently wanted to continue to fight, particularly against the Croats.¹⁹²

Without denying the great power that the Muslim Generals indeed had and their influence in the decision making process, they were not the decision-makers, as in the Bosnian Serb side. Whatever the importance they had, they were subordinated to the politicians and acted in accordance with the guidelines set up by them. The active participation of the military in the SDA structures and other political organisms made the difference between generals and politicians sometimes difficult;¹⁹³ only communists had more generals in their central committees.¹⁹⁴

The close relation between generals and Ulemas facilitated the religious indoctrination of the Army. Members of the Muslim clergy participated frequently in military ceremonies and quite often were present in the front lines to incite soldiers to fight. Muslim units, those comprising international fighters, had special treatment. They had their own logistic chain, separate from all the other ABiH units, the best uniforms, accommodation, food, weapons and ammunition. The major logistic centre of the ABiH, in Visoko, was under the direction of Halid Cengic who distributed financial and material assistance according to political criteria.¹⁹⁵

"...Led by this example, military commanders began to compete in building religious schools finding mentors in "proven Muslim circles". "*Selam*" was made into an official military greeting. During the commemorations of the Third Corps' anniversary, the Seventh Muslim Brigade stood in the first row marking the public promotion of the Bosniak Army. Everything that happened after is only a consequence of that action..."¹⁹⁶

The religious indoctrination of the Army was a topic of heated discussion in the Bosnian presidency with the non-SDA members of Presidency, who distanced themselves from the abuse of religion in some units of the Bosnian Army and even threatened to submit a collective resignation.¹⁹⁷ Silajdzic stated more than once that the cause of some military reverses was the politicisation of the ABiH, whose promotions were being based on political reliability rather than on military competence.

Notwithstanding being consistently installed in the different "sources of power" of the Muslim community, Pan-Islamists had to face several challenges to their power from moderate sectors of the Muslim political elites. The first one took place in 1990, still before the war broke out, two months before the Bosnian elections, when Adil Zulfikarpasic and Muhamed Filipovic split from the SDA and founded the MBO. The second one occurred in September 1993, when Fikret Abdic proclaimed the existence of the breakaway "Autonomous Province of Western Bosnia". In both cases, the protagonists wanted to negotiate and to compromise with the Bosnian Serbs in order to avert bloodshed.¹⁹⁸ Once the moderate elements were expelled, the international peacemakers' job became more difficult.

However, the most disturbing fact for peacemaking was the existence of an inner circle in the Muslim political leadership, which had an overwhelming control of the decision making process. Most of their members rarely ran for public office or participated in negotiations; however, their decisions were determinant. The positions taken by Izetbegovic at the negotiation table needed the approval of men like Ejup Ganic, Hasan Cengic, **Omer Behmen**, and **Edhem Bicakcic**.¹⁹⁹ As remarked by Filipovic, "...there was some authority above Izetbegovic...that was not at all in accordance with the fact that he was a president of a big political party and was responsible for his work only to Bosnian people who had elected..."²⁰⁰

Many of those who dealt directly with Izetbegovic epitomized him as hesitating and indecisive.²⁰¹ However, that hesitation and indecision has to be understood in light of that "informal" decision making group that ratified his decisions, and whose views conditioned his room of manoeuvre. In a certain way, he was acting on behalf of those prominent personalities. On several occasions, Izetbegovic seemed to be flexible and open to compromise; but this overture was apparent. After consulting the group of "wise" people he always reverted to his initial standpoints.

The most striking instance of that occurred during the UTRPP. Izetbegovic was attracted to the possibility of an independent Muslim state but, simultaneously, afraid of a backlash from some of his supporters at home.²⁰² It became obvious that Izetbegovic was not the sole one pulling the strings of the Muslim political decision making process. Once the "sages" constituted an effective centre of political decision - nonetheless being an informal group - peacemakers should have conceived some form of political action to influence them. But because peacemakers did not acknowledge their overwhelming importance, no strategy to involve them in the peacemaking process could be designed. Neither Owen nor Bildt made reference to this group of people or to the personalities that comprised it in their books.²⁰³

In the initial stage of his mandate as Prime-Minister, Silajdzic did not change the manner how the SDA was ruling in the territories under its control. He did not hinder the entry of members of the Pan-Islamist faction in the state apparatus and in the state-controlled economy. However, as time has gone by, he distanced from them and became a threat to their monopoly of power. By 1995, Silajdzic ended his coexistence with the Pan-Islamists;²⁰⁴ his courage to counter some of their undemocratic practices cost him his physical integrity. Unlike Pan-Islamists, he wanted to construct a truly secular state.²⁰⁵

However, two major reasons impeded peacemakers of using Silajdzic's dissidence in profit of the peace process: first, he did not constitute a credible alternative to Pan-Islamists; second, he advocated the same strategic goals. Like Pan-Islamists, also Silajdzic sponsored an outright military victory over the Bosnian Serbs through international military intervention. The simple fact of proposing a different political solution for BiH did not mean he was accepting a power-sharing solution different from that one asserted by the Pan-Islamists.

Just as he had done in the Serb camp, Owen also tried to find among the Muslims political alternatives to the dominant group approaching “civic” parties, which managed to obtain seats in the collective Presidency. However, their real political influence was close to zero, once the SDA managed to circumvent and marginalize the state institutions in order to establish a monopoly on power more efficiently.²⁰⁶

7. Concluding Remarks

“...As in the case of everything else that had happened in the world in recent years, they [the Balkan Wars] were looked...with diametrically opposed feelings by the Serbs and the Muslims; only in their intensity and depth were they perhaps equal. These events surpassed all the hopes of the one; all the fears of the other appeared justified...”

Ivo Andrić²⁰⁷

Bosnia-Herzegovina, as a political entity, never corresponded to a nation-state. It was a geographical and political concept; not a state, much less as a nation. Different cultural, historical and political experiences led Croats, Slav Muslims and Serbs - inhabiting its territory to develop separate identities. While Bosnian Serbs and Bosnian Croats were fragments of contiguous nations, whose settlements were not exclusively confined to Serbia and Croatia and spilt into Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bosnian Slav Muslims constituted the core of the Slav Muslim nation, which had no parental relation with any neighbouring state, but had some fragments of its settlement in Serbia and Montenegro (in the region of Sandjak).

In the 19th century, Bosnian Muslim elites were permanently flirited by the Serbian and Croatian movements. To oppose the integration of Muslims in those movements, Austria promoted a Bosnian nation and state-building programme apparently oriented to all Bosnian ethnic groups, but directed mainly at Muslims. Bosnian Muslim elites resisted all sorts of influences, preferring to identify themselves along confessional rather than on national lines. They developed their own sense of collective identity, even a national consciousness, which initially was not transformed into a national ideology or a political programme.

After the Ottoman withdrawal from Bosnia, in 1878, Bosnian Muslims were compelled to live outside the Islamic polity. Since then political pragmatism led Bosnian Muslim elites to co-operate with their non-Muslim rulers and to abdicate of autonomy, postponing it for better conjunctures, when the demographic balance turns favourable to their ranks.²⁰⁸ But whenever the regional order was shaken, the idea of autonomy was remembered, although never taken as a realistic alternative due to the obvious lack of resources for its implementation.²⁰⁹ Thus, unlike Serbians and Croatians, Muslims never expressed their sense of collective identity in terms of a national project. Muslim elites preferred to coexist with the dominant power in order: to safeguard their wealth and ownership of the economic assets; to preserve the territorial integrity of Bosnia-Herzegovina; and to keep cultural and religious autonomy.

It was during the communist regime that Muslims articulated, for the first time, a national programme and identified a political strategic goal. In fact, not one but two national concepts were developed: one laic and secular, supported and stimulated by the regime, defining Muslim identity as a synthesis of spiritual traditions, literary, political and cultural features, which aimed at transforming Bosnia-Herzegovina into a secular Muslim Republic, within the framework of the Socialist Yugoslavia; another, clandestine and of theocratic inspiration, which defined a Muslim by his religious option, and envisaged the transformation of Bosnia-Herzegovina into an independent Islamic state, outside the Yugoslav context. The promoters of the former ideology, the Marxist Muslims, were not able to transform Bosnia-Herzegovina into a Muslim republic; but thanks to the power-sharing arrangements made available by the Yugoslav consociational formula, managed to have a great deal of influence on the Republican political decision making process.

With the 1990 democratic elections, the secular communist elites lost the political control of the Republic, and were replaced by ethnic anticommunist activists. A canny fundamentalist group, apparently led by Izetbegovic, seized the Muslim movement's leadership. At eyes of this group the fragmentation of Yugoslavia turned into an historical opportunity for seizing power²¹⁰ and making Bosnia an Islamic republic. Today, we can say it was a miscalculation. Anxiety drove them to a premature assault to power, but time was not yet ripe.

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1 Although of short duration, the Croatian and Serbian medieval kingdoms created traditions of nationhood and turned into powerful references in the formation of national consciousnesses. In the 19th century, national ideologues used these medieval kingdoms to construct national ideologies. Bulgaria was the first South Slav medieval kingdom in the Balkans, reaching the climax of its power during the 8th century.

2 Batakovic, Dusan, *The Serbs of Bosnia & Herzegovina. History and Politics*, Dialogue, Paris, 1996, pp. 22-23.

3 Ottoman's military manoeuvre consisted in encircling Constantinople before attacking it directly. It was within this context that the Bosnian and Serbian Armies fought the Turkish Army, in 1389, in the battle of Kosovo Polje.

4 Bogomil was a religious creed with origins in Asia Minor that spread to Bulgaria, parts of Serbia, Macedonia and also to Western Europe where it was known as Albigensianism. Using Singleton words, "...Manichaeism is a dualistic faith which believes in the

existence, from the time of creation, of two opposed and independent principles - God and Matter, Light and Darkness, Soul and Body. The liberation of the soul from the body, the separation of the light from the darkness...it involves an attitude of extreme asceticism and a hatred of all worldly things - especially the flesh..." in Singleton, Fred, *A Short History of the Yugoslav Peoples*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1991, p. 19. The Bogomil theory is not universally accepted. Fine, for instance, says that "...many scholars have depicted the Bosnian Church as dualist, calling it neo-Manichean or Bogomil. Domestic sources about the Church...do not suggest this...if they wanted a major label, they called themselves Bosnians", in Fine John V. A., *The Medieval and Ottoman Roots of Modern Bosnian Society*, in Pinson, Mark, ed., *The Muslims of Bosnia-Herzegovina* (second edition), Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1996, p. 8. Another theory, very popular among Croatian writers, considers the Bosnian Church essentially a branch of the Catholic Church, probably a monastic order, which receded into schism and acquired some heretical tendencies. See Malcolm, Noel, *Bosnia: A Short History*, Papermac, updated edition, London, 1996. 28-29.

5 Batakovic, op. cit., pp. 21.

6 Banac, *The National Question in Yugoslavia*, p. 41.

7 Slavs could apply for freedom since converted to Islam. For a comprehensive view on the reasons that motivated people to convert to Islam, see Malcolm, Noel, *Bosnia: A Short History* (Chapter 5 - The Islamicization of Bosnia), where the author discusses different perspectives of Islamicization in Bosnia.

8 Such a theory was discredited by modern scholarship. On this issue, and among others, see Norris, H.T., *Islam in the Balkans*, Hurst & Company, London, 1993, p. 43-48.

9 Rayah is a term adopted from the Arabic, which means subjected people.

10 Veinstein, Gilles, *Les Provinces Balkaniques (1606-1774)*, in Mantran, Robert (sous la direction), *Histoire de L'Empire Ottoman*, Librairie Arthème Fayard, 1989, p. 299-300.

11 They called themselves either Turci, as opposed to Turkuse (Anatolian Turks), or Bosnjaci (Bosnians).

12 Reputable historians, among others Banac and Malcolm, challenge this point of view arguing that Turkish, Arabic and Persian became the most used languages, particularly in literary works.

13 Pirjevec, Joze, *Muslim, Serbs and Croats in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The Burden of a Tragic History*, in Bianchini, Stefano and Dogo, Marco, *The Balkans. National Identities in a Historical Perspective*, Longo Editore Ravenna, Ravenna, 1998, p. 108.

14 The restoration of the Patriarchate of Pec was possible thanks to the initiative of the third Grand-Vizier at the Porte, Mehmed Pasha Sokolovic, himself recruited through the Devshirme system, who did not forget his Bosnian and Orthodox origins. He chose his brother to become the first Patriarch of the Orthodox Church.

15 Ramet, Pedro, *Religion and Nationalism in Yugoslavia*, in *Religion and Nationalism in Soviet and East European Politics*, ed., by Ramet, Pedro, Duke University Press, Durham, 1989, pp. 299-311.

16 For detailed information on the problems affecting the performance of the Porte during this period see, among others, Chapter VII (*L'Etat Ottoman au XVII Siècle: Stabilisation ou Déclin?*) in Mantran, Robert (sous la direction), *Histoire de L'Empire Ottoman*, Librairie Arthème Fayard, 1989.

17 Veinstein, Gilles, op. cit., p. 301.

18 In 1699, Habsburgs and Ottomans signed the Carlowitz Treaty, in which Turks gave nearly all Croatia, Slavonia and a substantial chunk of Hungary to the Habsburgs.

19 Groups of bandits known as Hajduks, which in certain occasions managed to control large regions, confronted the Ottoman authority. "...These outlaws operated in bands of up to a hundred men and often had the full co-operation of the local inhabitants...over the years the bandits came to enjoy a high reputation among the Christian peasantry, for some of whom they became a symbol of resistance to political and social repression..." in Jelavich, Barbara, *History of the Balkans, Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*, Vol. I, Cambridge University Press, 1987, p. 61.

20 The first Serbian revolts against the Porte date to the late 16th century when the Porte started behaving less tolerantly towards its subjects. The retaliatory burning and desecration of the Saint Sava's relics, the founder of the Serbian Orthodox Church, carried out by the Ottomans in 1594 marked of the collapse of the co-operation between the Porte and the political/religious Serbian elites.

21 In the last incursion of Prince Eugene of Savoy into Bosnia, in 1697, the Austrian troops seized Sarajevo and set fire to the city. When they left Bosnia, a significant number of autochthon Christian population accompanied them.

22 When the Patriarchate of Pec was abolished, the centre of the Serbian spiritual life had already been transferred to the newly Serbian communities settled in the Habsburg lands. The logic of the *Millet* system was transplanted to those settlements, and the Orthodox clergy continued playing a leading role in the formation of Serbian national consciousness.

23 Bey, in the strict sense of the word, was a title given to a military chief. But in this case, as frequently used, the term Bey has an extended meaning, including various categories of local administrators (both in cities and province).

24 For further information on rebellions undertaken by the Bosnian Muslim aristocracy against the Ottoman authority see, for instance, Darby, H.C., *Bosnia-Herzegovina*, in *Breve Historia de Yugoslavia*, Espasa-Calpe, S.A., Madrid, 1972, pp. 77-80; and Batakovic, *The Serbs of Bosnia & Herzegovina*, p. 45.

25 Darby wrote that the conservative landlord [Muslim] aristocracy was more fanatic than the central Ottoman authorities in Istanbul, op. cit, p. 77. The relaxed mood of Islamic practices and costumes followed by ordinary people is often used to depict Bosnian Muslims as tolerant and receptive to western ideas. In general terms, this is true but it should not be confused with the conservative ideology followed by the Bosnian Muslim elites.

26 West, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, p. 312.

27 Burg & Shoup, *The War in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Ethnic Conflict and International Intervention*, M.E. Sharpe. New York, 1999, p. 34.

28 *Tchiftlik Sahibis* were the owners of the *Tchiftliks*, that is, large private estates. For an enlightened view of the problem of the land property and related matters in the Balkan provinces of the Empire see Veinstein, op. cit., pp. 323-28.

29 Dogo, Marco, *The Balkan Nation-States and the Muslim Question*, in Bianchini, Stefano and Dogo, Marco, *The Balkans. National Identities in a Historical Perspective*, Longo Editore Ravenna, Ravenna, pp. 61-62.

30 On this issue, and among other literature, see Hickok, Michael R., *The Ottoman*

Military Administration in Eighteenth-Century Bosnia, Brill, New York, 1997, chapter II (*The Bosnian Militia*), pp. 40-112.

31 The first uprising of Bosnian Serbs in the 19th century occurred in 1807, along the Drina River, but others followed: 1809, in Herzegovina; 1834, in the areas surrounding Banja Luka, Bijelina and Tuzla; 1852-1862, again in Herzegovina; 1857, in the Bosnian Krajina and Posavina. All these revolts were severely crushed.

32 Serbia and Montenegro were two distinct political entities that unified in a sole state, shortly before the foundation of the kingdom of Serbians, Croats and Slovenes, in December 1918.

33 Donia, Robert J., *Islam under the Double Eagle*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1981, p. 39.

34 Pirjevec, Joze, op. cit., p. 109.

35 Karcic, Fikret, *The Bosniaks and the Challenges of Modernity (Late Ottoman and Hapsburg Times)*, El-Kalem, Sarajevo, 1999, p. 156.

36 Sorabji, *Islam and Bosnia's Muslim Nation*, in Carter, F.W., and Norris, H. T. (ed), *The Changing Shape of the Balkans*, UCL Press, London, 1996, p. 52.

37 Friedman, Francine, *The Bosnian Muslims. Denial of a Nation*, Westview Press, Colorado, 1996, p. 63.

38 Poulton, Hugh, *Islam, Ethnicity and State in the Contemporary Balkans*, in *Muslim identity and the Balkan state* (Poulton, Hugh, and Taji-Farouki, Suha, eds.), New York University Press, 1997, New York, p. 22.

39 Friedman, op. cit., 1996, p. 60, quoting Enver Redzic, *Prilozi o nacionalnom pitanju* (Sarajevo: Svjetlost, 1963), p. 28.

40 Friedman, ibid, p. 65. On the social hierarchy under the Habsburgs and the Ottomans, see Allcock, John B., *Explaining Yugoslavia*, Columbia University Press, N.Y., 2000, pp. 170-173.

41 Batakovic, *The Serbs of Bosnia & Herzegovina*, p. 62.

42 Purivatra, A., *On the National Phenomenon of the Moslems of Bosnia-Herzegovina*, in *Nations and Nationalities of Yugoslavia* (Belgrade: Medjunarodna Politika, 1974), p. 321.

43 The leading mentor of such idea was Benjámín Kállay, a Hungarian nobleman appointed by Austria to govern the province who, for several years, had been Consul-General in Belgrade.

44 Ironically, even Kállay's own book entitled *A History of the Serbian People* was banned.

45 Batakovic, *The Serbs of Bosnia & Herzegovina*, p. 66.

46 Malcolm, *Bosnia a Short History*, p. 29.

47 Modern scholarship does not support the theory that modern-days Muslims of Bosnia-Herzegovina are descendent of converted Bogomils. There is a relatively large consensus among scholars

that their origins lay in Islamicized Serbians and Croats. According to Nedim Filipovic, "...in the available historical resources there is not a single datum showing that the estates of the Moslem nobility on Bosnia and Herzegovina had been inherited from the pre-Ottoman period and that they served as such until the end of the Turkish rule..." in *Ocaklik Timars in Bosnian and Herzegovina* (Prizoli za orientalnu filologiju I istoriju Jugoslovenskih naroda pod Turkskom vladavinom XXX), Sarajevo, 1986, p. 149, quoted by

Hickok, Michael R., in *The Ottoman Military Administration in Eighteenth-Century Bosnia*, Brill, New York, 1997, p. 43. Also Popovic asserts that is impossible to establish a relation between modern Bosnian Muslims and Bogomils. Even without mentioning the lack of sources to do it, Popovic refers that three major factors contribute to render such conclusion impossible: the existence of various groups of Muslim, each one with a well identified past and identities; the insurmountable late irruption of a certain number of modern European concepts such as nation and homeland, which did not exist within the Ottoman society where lived the Muslim populations in question; and finally, the permanent falsification, after the formation of national states in the Balkans, of their pasts and identities, falsification that reached unbelievable dimensions after their inclusion under totalitarian governments. See Popovic, Alexandre, *Représentation du Passé et Transmission de l'identité chez les Musulmans des Balkans. Mythes et Réalités*, in *Les Balkans à L'époque Ottomane* (sous la responsabilité de Panzac, Daniel), Revue du Monde Musulman et de la Méditerranée, n° 66, 1992/4, Aix-en-Provence, pp. 139-144.

48 The great reformer of the Stokavian language was Vuk Karadzic (1787-1864). The Orthodox clergy did not welcome Karadzic initiatives. The re-formulation of Serbdom in linguistic terms meant that the Orthodox clergy could easily lose a great deal of influence over the Serbian movement. On these disagreements see Singleton, *A Short History of the Yugoslav Peoples*, pp. 87-90.

49 Both Dositej Obradovic (1743-1811) and Vuj Karadzic (1787-1864), considered respectively as the grandfather and the father of the Serbian literature were, first and foremost, anticlerical. Their ideas inspired by the European enlightenment aroused the suspicion of the Orthodox Church's high dignitaries, who tried to prevent Karadzic from publishing his grammar.

50 From an ethno-linguistic perspective Albanian Muslims were not considered Serbians because they were not Stokavian speakers.

51 The most notorious Croatian national ideologues were Ante Starcevic (1823-1896) and Eugen Kvaternik (1825-1871).

52 Banac, op. cit., p. 86.

53 Kvaternik inclusively considered the idea of an autocephalous Croatian Orthodox Church. See Banac, *The National Question in Yugoslavia*, p.161.

54 Banac, *The National Question in Yugoslavia*, p. 361.

55 This assertion is quite well illustrated by the Bosnian Muslim literature of the late 19th / early 20th centuries, oriented to the discussion of cultural issues. A literary movement is not a national ideology. Moreover, much of the early 20th century Muslim publications and cultural (not political) societies, such as the *Behar* (a journal) and the *Gajret* (a cultural society) espoused, respectively, an explicit Croatian and Serbian line.

56 Andric, Ivo, *The Bridge Over the Drina*, The Harvill Press, London, 1995, p. 242/3.

57 National parties dominated the Bosnian party system that was born in the first years of the century. During this period were founded the Muslim National Organisation (MNO), the Serbian National Organisation (SNO) and the Croatian National Society (HND).

58 Bougarel, op. cit., p. 90.

59 Friedman, Francine, op. cit., p. 75.

60 The reasons why the Archduke chose to visit Sarajevo on 28 June, a Serb mourning

day, and the careless behaviour of his security guard were not properly explained so far. In Chapter 23 (Mr. Pfeffer of Sarajevo) of *Escape from the Anthill*, Butler, Hubert provides an interesting insight on the issue.

61 Today we know that the murder was an individual initiative without the complicity or involvement of the Serbian Government. The Black Hand, a Serbian organization for the liberation of the Austro-Hungarian Empire's Southern Slavs, gave to the young Bosnian Serb activists the bombs they used in the murder.

62 West, Rebecca, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, p. 373.

63 For an overview of the anti-Serb rioting that followed the murder of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand, see the section *Sarajevo VII*, of the chapter dedicated to Bosnia, in *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, by Rebecca West, pp. 371-382.

64 Most notably Josip Broz (Tito). "...his [Tito] first military experience was as an NCO in the Austro-Hungarian army which invaded Serbia in 1914 when the idea of Yugoslavia was already widely propagated: the first people he killed must have certainly been those who, had they survived, might have become his compatriots..." in Beloff, *the Flawed Legacy*, p. 29.

65 Burg & Shoup, *The War in Bosnia-Herzegovina*, p. 36.

66 Pirjevec, Joze, op. cit., p. 109.

67 Friedman, op. cit., p. 97. On this issue, Banac wrote, "...It is clear, therefore, that the anti-Muslim violence of Christian peasantry in 1918-1919 was only partly due to class antagonism. But it was unmistakably confessional/national in character, directed not just against the Muslim landlords but against all Muslims, including the Muslim smallholders who represented half of Bosnia's free peasants. In addition, since most of the excesses were committed by Orthodox Serbs, who made up three-quarters of all *kmets*, rural stirrings were viewed as a Serb anti-Muslim movement..." *The National Question in Yugoslavia*, p. 368.

68 West, Rebecca, op. cit., p. 317. West was referring to a Muslim crowd prepared to receive high dignitaries of Turkey, at the railway station, in Sarajevo.

69 The Muslim landlords had their own political parties: the Muslim Farm Laborer's Party and the Muslim People's Party. Representing the interests of a numerically tiny class, these Muslim parties showed poorly in the 1920 parliamentary elections.

70 The JMO and the Muslim clergy had very close relations. The Reis-ul-Ulema Hadji Hafiz Ibrahim efendi Maglajlic, the mufti of Tuzla, was the JMO's first president. Also other Reis-ul-Ulemas headed the JMO.

71 Banac, *The National Question in Yugoslavia*, p. 368.

72 Banac, op. cit., p. 371. Ibrahim Maglajlic, Reis-ul-ulema (head of the religious Muslim community) for the whole Yugoslavia and president of the JMO, declared himself as a Serb. The family of Mehmed Spaho, the leader of the JMO, was an example of the intricate interaction between ethnic and religious options among the Muslims: Mehmed Spaho refused to declare an ethnic or national identity; his brother Fehim, who became Reis-ul-ulema, declared himself as Croat and his brother Mustafa as a Serb.

73 Banac, *The National Question in Yugoslavia*, p. 371.

74 The electoral expression of other Muslim parties was despicable and did not counter-balance the electoral strength of the JMO.

75 In the 1920 elections, the Croat People's Peasant Party (HPSS - Hrvatska Pucka Seljacka Stranka) of Radic did not run for seats in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The remaining

votes were distributed by the KPJ/5.46%, the JMP/33.50%, the Social Democrats/0.84%, and 2.12% by minuscule parties.

76 The JMO suggested that Muslims would come along with the group that treated them better: "...should the Muslims feel that they have their fair chance at economic development, that they can enjoy the same material culture as the Serbs, they will unconditionally and certainly choose the Serb nationhood. But should they continue to observe, as they have hitherto, that chances at economic development are allotted unequally and that in their inequality they are being equated with the Croats, they will as before continue to choose Croat nationality..." in *Jesmo li Srbi ili Hrvati*, Pradva, Dec. 30, 1920, p. 1, quoted by Banac, in *The National Question in Yugoslavia*, p. 374.

77 The Cemiyet was the party that represented the interests of Slav, Albanian, and Turkish Muslims of the Sandjak, Kosovo, Metohija, and Macedonia.

78 Even after the assassination of Radic by a deputy of the Radical Party, the JMO continued allied with it against Macek (Radic's successor).

79 The Constitution was approved by 223 votes, only 13 votes over the required 210 (the assembly comprised a total of 419 seats). 35 deputies voted against the Constitution and 161 deputies boycotted the procedures. The Constitution could have still been approved without the 8 votes of the Cemiyet but never without the 24 votes of the JMO.

80 In accordance with the *Sporazum* the central government would keep the control of the Foreign Affairs, Defence, Communications and Transports. The *Banovina* would have its own Parliament and a governor appointed by the King. A considerable power, including fiscal, would be transferred to the authorities of the *Banovina*. A Constitutional tribunal should be created to decide over jurisdictional problems. Many issues were left without solution and, therefore, were not implemented. On the *Sporazum* see, for instance, Dragnich, *Serbs and Croats*, p. 105-111.

81 Cvetkovic was the Serbian prime minister, and Macek was representing the Croatian interests as the leader of both the Croat Peasants Party and the Peasant-Democratic Coalition.

82 Vucinich, *Yugoslav of Muslim Faith*, p. 271, in Burg & Shoup, *The War in Bosnia-Herzegovina*, p. 37.

83 Idem.

84 Batakovic, *The Serbs of Bosnia & Herzegovina*, p. 102. Beyond participating in the Ustasha government, eleven former JMO politicians were invited to join a pseudo-parliament in Zagreb.

85 Francine, Friedman, op. cit., p. 124.

86 The alignment of Croats and Muslims with the Nazis has been subject of discord among historians and scholars. A few have tried to minimise such collaboration and, simultaneously, to accuse Chetniks of connivance with the Nazis, putting Ustashas and Chetniks on equal footing. This was inclusively the official argument advanced by the communists to discredit the Chetnik movement. That line of reasoning was masterfully dismantled by Nora Beloff in the *Flawed Legacy* and by Michael Lees in *the Rape of Serbia*, where they explained how Tito deceived western intelligence and Mihailovic lost the western support. Actually, a few units relying largely on Muslim recruitment joined the partisans (the "Mujina Ceta, the first Muslim unit born in August 1941; the Legija Kempler, which operated in the Sandjak) and a few notorious Muslim leaders (such as Nurija Pozderac) as well. But these were exceptions and as such, they should not be used

to minimize the political significance of Muslim elites' preferences during the WWII.

87 Many Bosnian Serbs run into the southern areas of Herzegovina under Italian control to escape from the Ustasha atrocities.

88 For a presentation of the different proposals advanced for Bosnia and Herzegovina see, among others, *Nationalism and Federalism in Yugoslavia 1962-1991 (Second Edition)*, p. 177.

89 Including those who classified themselves as "Yugoslavs" (cf. Petrovic, 1987 and Poulton, 1991).

90 Shoup, *Communism and the Yugoslav National Question*, p. 109.

91 Idem, p. 107.

92 Sorabji, p. 56.

93 Pavkovic asserts very similar points of view. See Pavkovic, *The Fragmentation of Yugoslavia (Second Edition)*, pp. 94-97.

94 Bringa, Tone R., *Nationality Categories, National Identification and Identity Formation in "Multinational" Bosnia*, in *Anthropology of East Europe Review*, Vol. 11, Nos. 1-2 Autumn, 1993.

95 Purivatra, *Prilog proucavanju Konceptije o nacionalnom "opredjeljivanju*, *Pregled*, XVI (October, 1964), 331, quoted from Shoup, *Communism and the Yugoslav National Question*, p. 216.

96 That trend had started in the late 50s with the abandonment of the "integral Yugoslavism." It was a clear indicator that the things were changing, and the Yugoslav idea was being discarded within the party inner group.

97 In my first tenure in Bosnia, I noticed that almost all Muslim homes had a portrait of Tito hanging on the walls. Ordinary Muslims were deeply grateful to Tito for his support to their cause.

98 Purivatra, *On the National Phenomenon of the Muslims of Bosnia-Herzegovina (O Nacionalnom Fenomenu Bosansko-Hercegovackih Muslimana*, translation Hrgovic, Milica), in *Nations and Nationalities of Yugoslavia*, *Medjunarodna Politika*, Belgrade, 1974, p. 311.

99 Pavkovic, *The Fragmentation of Yugoslavia*, p. 95. Also Purivatra recognizes that "...it was primarily through Islam that part of the population of central Bosnia accepted and developed a corresponding religious-social and spiritual structure on the basis of which, and under the influence of specific factors, a separate ethnic individuality was established as a separate socio-ethnic formation..." Purivatra, *Atif*, p. 308.

100 Popovic remarked that the movement of radical laic Muslims (in opposition to the radical religious Islamic) which emerged among Communist intelligentsia, needed a political and cultural revision of local history, with the necessity of re-valorising Muslim own cultural past, under evaluated or deformed on purpose by non-Muslims. But this movement that was just looking for a simple recognition of the Slav Muslims in the framework of Yugoslavia, easily slipped towards the over valorisation of their culture, mystification and falsification of local history, assuming a chauvinist character. The way this group dealt with the religious phenomenon was in certain occasions rather ambiguous. Popovic accused this laic Muslim nationalism of being inextricably linked, in the one or the other way, to a religious component. He illustrated the idea with those high rank Muslim intellectuals who expressed a "guilty tenderness" to the "eternal values of the Islam, who looked for approaching Marxism and Islam, in line with the ideas of

Kadhafi's "Green book," as did Purivatra, one of the major Muslim Marxist theorists. On this issue, see Popovic, Alexandre, *Les Musulmans Yougoslaves, 1945-1989. Médiateurs et Métaphores*, L'Âge d'Homme, Lausanne, 1990, pp. 35-38.

101 "...it was the Bogomils or members of the so-called Bosnian church who were the nucleus and who played the dominant role in the national development of the Moslems of Bosnia-Herzegovina..." Purivatra, op. cit., p. 308.

102 Ramet, op. cit., p. 184.

103 A significant contingent of Bosnian students attended Arab universities. Haris Silajdzic is a good example of people belonging to the generation who, during the 70s, studied in Muslim and Arab countries and later joined the anti-Communist movement.

104 Quoted from Johnstone, Diana, *Alija Izetbegovic: Islamic Hero of the Western World*, Dialogue, Summer 1998, vol. 7, n° 26, p. 36.

105 Burg, Steven L. & Shoup, Paul S., *The War in Bosnia-Herzegovina-Herzegovina: Ethnic Conflict and International Intervention*, M.E. Sharpe. New York. 1999, p. 67.

106 Pavkovic, *The fragmentation of Yugoslavia*, p. 95.

107 According to some sources, the *Islamic Declaration* was a collective work. Obvious political reasons prohibited the authors of establishing an explicit link between the Muslim question in Bosnia-Herzegovina and the Islamic state solution asserted in the *Declaration*. However, the book was written in such evident terms that the analogy with Bosnia-Herzegovina was inevitable. It would be unthinkable to believe that Izetbegovic was proposing an Islamic revolution to any other place in the world but Bosnia-Herzegovina.

108 Karawan, Ibrahim A., *The Islamist Impasse*, Adelphi Paper n. 314, p. 9.

109 Izetbegovic, Alija, *Islamska Deklaracija: Jedan Program Islamizacije Muslimana I Muslimanskih narodno*, 2nd edition, Sarajevo, 1990, p. 43.

110 While Serb and Croat population in Bosnia was diminishing, Muslim's was growing. Serbia and Croatia, where life was better and more opportunities were available, became attractive poles for their Bosnian brothers. While Serbs and Croats emigrated from Bosnia, Muslims from other parts of Yugoslavia immigrated to Bosnia. Serbs had ever since been the major ethnic group in Bosnia. But during the 80's the ethnic balance changed and Muslims became the largest group. In the 1981 census, Muslims formed around 39.5 percent of the republic population, while in 1991 their share increased to 43.5 percent. Muslims expected to be the majority by the end of the century.

111 Izetbegovic, op. cit., p. 4.

112 Idem, p. 37.

113 Ibid, p. 18. The similitude between the Leninist concept of the proletariat as an enlightened vanguard, materialised in the Communist Party, and the concepts developed by the theoreticians of the Islamic revolution is striking. According to the Islamist ideologue Sayyid Qutb, this vanguard should comprise the select few "who know what nobody else knows", in Karawan, op. cit.

114 Izetbegovic, op. cit., p. 3.

115 Karawan, op. cit.

116 Izetbegovic, op. cit., p. 22.

117 Idem, pp. 45-46.

118 Izetbegovic was very critical about the reform process that led to the secularisation

of Turkey, most notably that one carried out under the leadership of Ataturk. When he visited Turkey he refused to visit Ataturk's tomb.

119 Izetbegovic, op. cit., p. 19.

120 For a critical analysis of the *Islamic Declaration* and *Islam between East and West*, see, for instance, Johnstone, Diana, *Alija Izetbegovic: Islamic Hero of the Western World*; and Kent, R., *Which Islam?* both in *Dialogue*, Volume 7, Nº 26, summer 1998.

121 *Islam between the East and the West's* core thesis is the assertion that Islam is the only alternative and valid way to the religious and materialist views of the world, which *per se* have insufficient explanatory power. The first book takes as starting point the existence of the spirit, the second the existence of matter. Islam synthesises simultaneous the existence of both (spirit and matter). Izetbegovic organises (or reduces, if we prefer) the world to a bipolar approach: atheism on the one side, religion on the other. Is man able to overcome this dilemma between heaven and earth? The answer is yes, if seen within the framework of Islam. Islam is not only a religion or a way of life but also and primarily a principle of organisation of the universe, a middle ground where those opposed sides are synthesised. Thus, he argues that there are only three integral views of the world: the religious, the materialistic, and the Islamic, which reflect three elemental possibilities, respectively conscience, nature, and man. So, if Islam is like man, i.e., a unity of spirit and body, then Islam will have to be a unity of religion and social order, a unity foreign both to Christianity and materialism. Izetbegovic tells that only Islam can create a man harmonious in his soul and body and a society whose laws and socio-political institutions will maintain and not violate this harmony. "...If the political component of Islam is disregarded, we silently admit dependence and slavery. On the contrary, if we ignore the religious component, we cease to be any moral force. Thus, every true Islamic movement is also [has to be] a political movement..." (p. 196). In the last chapter of *Islam between the East and the West* ("The Third Way" outside Islam), Izetbegovic discovered that in Europe someone "...has been looking for and has found a middle road, bearing from the outside some resemblance to the third way of Islam. The country we have in mind is England, but also, to a certain extent, the Anglo-Saxon world in general..." (p. 271).

122 Izetbegovic, Alijas. *Mi nismo Turci*, *Start*, Zagreb, July 7, 1990, quoted in *O Vírus Balcânico* (the Balkanic Virus), by Rodrigues, Pedro C. and Stevan Niksic, Assírio & Alvim, Lisbon, 1996, p. 75.

123 Ganic confessed this intention to General Sir Michael Rose. See General Sir Rose, Michael, *Fighting for Peace*, The Harvill Press, London, 1998, p. 26.

124 Popovic, *Islamic Movements in Yugoslavia*, in Andreas Kappeler, Gerhard Simon, Georg Brunner & Edward Allworth, *Muslim Communities Re-emerge: Historical Perspectives on Nationality, Politics and Opposition in the Former Soviet Union and Yugoslavia*, Duke University Press, Durham & London, 1994, p. 335.

125 Actually, Izetbegovic missed the plane in Istanbul and was not present in the ceremony held in Teheran.

126 Cited in Mila Stula, *Licem u lice s partijom*, *Danas* (20May 1986), p. 21, and quoted by Friedman, op. cit., p. 192.

127 Yugoslav sociologist Esad Cemic studied religious manifestations in Herzegovina and concluded that in contrast to Herzegovinian Serbs and Croats, Muslims have a consciousness in which the national and the religious are often intertwined and

complement each other (more explicitly than with the other groups), in Cimic, Esad, *socijalisticko drustvo I religija* (Sarajevo: Svjetlost, 1970), p. 258, quoted by Friedman, op. cit., p. 186.

128 Prominent scholars and experts misunderstood this key matter (Ramet and Malcolm, for instance). Ramet underlined the fact that "...the LCY that feared the identification of religion and nationalism, wanted to have it in both ways: namely to derive a new nationality from a religion, but yet to deny that derivation and suppress demands based on it..." in *Nationalism and Federalism in Yugoslavia, 1961-1992*, p. 186. On the contrary, the Bosnian Party never tried to associate a Muslim nation with the muslim religion. That association occurred outside the Party and was a protracted process with the active participation of the Muslim clergy and the anticommunist Muslim movement.

129 Ramet, op. cit., p. 185.

130 Malcolm did a similar remark on this issue. See Malcolm, op. cit., p. 201.

131 Friedman, op. cit., p. 163.

132 Idem, p. 164.

133 In the aftermath of the uncover-up Pozderac and Abdic, among others, were ousted from their positions in the Party, despite being soon rehabilitated.

134 Sorabji, op. cit., p. 56.

135 *Islam Between East and West* was published in the course of 1988, and the *Islamic Declaration* in 1990. Still in 1990, the Islamic Declaration was translated into English and re-edited in London, with a new preface where Alija Izetbegovic re-affirms his intention to continue battling for the same principles.

136 Sorabji, op. cit., p. 57.

137 In November 1989, Jakub effendi Selimoski was elected the new *Reis-ul-Ulema*.

138 We are aware of the immense controversy this issue provokes. We support the view that Bosnian Muslim political and religious elites embraced modernisation selectively, by pragmatic reasons, just when they had no other chance. For instance, the ban of veils and Sheriat courts, in 1946, was imposed from the outside; it was not a Muslim elite initiative. Many believe that the Bosnian Muslim Church is European oriented and in line with the secular principles of the western democracy. A correct interpretation of this issue is crucial to understand the events held in 1992 and afterwards. This applies to the Muslim political elites that arrived in power after the elections held in 1990. Interventions in other domains than the political one raise serious doubts about the true ideological preferences of those elites. A telling illustration was the discussion carried out by Karic, Enes, the Bosnian Minister

of Education, Science and Culture during 1994-6, in an article entitled *A Responsibility of Mind and Irresponsibility of Modern Science*, published in *Essays (on behalf) of Bosnia*. In line with the most conservative and anti-western discourse, Karic disqualifies modern science and retaking much of Izetbegovic anti-western argumentation in the *Islam between East and West*, he accuses the western civilization of not being prepared to accept responsibility towards anyone, not even itself (p. 273). He points the finger at the modern scientific mind both in the humanities and social sciences and natural sciences; and at a powerful circle of scientists from the humanities and social sciences, particularly historians and philosophers of history, formed in the West, mostly in the US, but also at many forces in Europe, who he accuses of an irresponsibility of planetary proportions. See *Essays (on behalf) of Bosnia*, pp. 263-264.

139 Article 4, paragraph 2, of the Law on Associations.

140 The President of the Constitutional Court was a Muslim that later joined the list of the SDA candidates.

141 Due to the constraints imposed by the Law on Associations, the promoters of the Muslim party dropped the initial idea of calling it Yugoslav Muslim Party, avoiding a name that could hinder registration, and adopted Party of Democratic Action. See *1990-2000 Press Release, SDA Program Declaration and Statute*, Sarajevo, May 2000, Introduction, p. 13.

142 One observer described the SDA as "a movement of religious dissidents, former apparatchiks, communist entrepreneurs and intellectuals who all agreed that Bosnia must be indivisible", Friedman, *op. cit.* p. 212.

143 See, for instance, the Press Release issued by the SDA at the moment of its foundation in May 1991: "...We [the founders of the SDA]...are interested in the preservation of Yugoslavia as a community of nations and nationalities..."

144 Initially, the leaders of the Bosnian Croat community did not openly assume their major goal of joining Croatia. The HDZ leadership was divided about the way ahead: one radical group - the Herzegovinians - wanted the partition of Bosnia-Herzegovina and to join Croatia; while a moderate faction, with its roots in Central Bosnia and core group in Sarajevo intellectuals, favoured an independent and integral Bosnia, with a certain degree of autonomy for the Bosnian Croats. This latter faction was initially in the upper hand.

145 Zulfikarpasic and Filipovic denounced the fact that "...the party [SDA] is ruled by eleven people - of conservative and generally religious orientation - and is run by a closed and privatised council, held together by family ties..." in *Oslobodjenje*, 20 September 1990, quoted by Bougarel, Xavier, *Bosnia and Herzegovina - State and Communitarianism*, p. 86.

146 "...Adil Zulfikarpasic saw in an independent Bosnia a dangerous fiction...Udovicki, Jasminka and Stitkovic, Ejub, *Bosnia and Hercegovina: the Second War*, in *Burn This House*, p. 175.

147 In terms of percentage those seats corresponded to 42,6 (SDA), 35,7 (SDS), and 21,7 (HDZ). According to 1991 census, the ethnic composition of Bosnia-Herzegovina was approximately of 44 percent Muslims, 33 percent Serbs and 18 percent Croats.

148 See Burg & Shoup, *op. cit.*, pp. 52.

149 For detailed information on the elections' results, see Burg & Shoup, *op. cit.*, pp. 46-56. For Serbo-Croat readers see *Arnautovic, Suad, Izbori u Bosni I Hercegovini 90*, Sarajevo, Promocult, 1996.

150 Burg & Shoup, *op. cit.*, pp. 51.

151 O'Shea, Brendan, *Crisis at Bihac*, Sutton Publishing Limited, Gloucestershire, 1998, p. 16.

152 *Idem*, p. 20.

153 The facts behind Abdic's resignation in favour of Izetbegovic have not been properly explained. O'Shea, in *Crisis at Bihac*, sheds some light on the issue, and provides abundant evidence in support of this hypothesis.

154 According to a public opinion poll published in *Danas*, 22 May 1990, quoted by Bougarel, Xavier, *Bosnia and Herzegovina - State and Communitarianism*, in Dyker D.A., and Vejvoda, I., *Yugoslavia and After. A Study in Fragmentation, Despair and Rebirth*,

Longman, London and New York, 1996, p. 99. This view was confirmed by other similar surveys. Burg & Shoup, for instance, refer to a survey carried out in June 1990, which identified the preference for the conservation of the Yugoslav Federation supported by over 69 percent of the respondents (Burg & Shoup, op. cit., p. 49).

155 Mustafa Ceric, a Bosnian Muslim religious leader, stated "...We are "Muslims" now, because they did not allow us to be Bosnian. And now that we are Muslims, they all say "that is a religious category, not a nationality...I feel like screaming to the Serbs and Croats: why are you so scared of us? Why are you so obsessed by us? Why are you incapable of leaving us alone? Why do you need to exterminate our culture and us? Why does our culture offend you so much that you need to do these things to us? Quoted by Friedman, op. cit., p. 249. On this very same issue Mladic remarked that "...Fate has connected the Serbs and the Jews. We cannot lose a battle too because it would mean our extinction. You have asked yourselves the question as I have: "Do I have the right to my own country? ...Moslem bias against Serbs did not start in 1992. It is the continuation of a hatred that developed since the Second World War..." in Sherman, Arnold, *Perfidy in the Balkans: the Rape of Yugoslavia*. Psychogios Publications, Athens, 1993, pp. 257-277.

156 For an outstanding explanation of the role that fear and collective security play in the origins and management of ethnic conflict see, for instance, Lake David A., and Rothchild, Donald, *Containing Fear. The Origins and Management of Ethnic Conflict*, in *Theories of War and Peace* (ed. By Brown, Michael; Coté, Owen R. Jr.; Lynn-Jones, Sean M., and Miller, Steven E.), the MIT Press, London, England, 1998, pp. 292-326; and Posen, Barry, *The Security Dilemma and Ethnic Conflict*, *Survival*, vol.35, no.1 (Spring 1993), pp.27-47.

157 The importance of the demographic factor in the SDA political decisions is illustrated by the attempt of increasing the number of Muslim voters to over fifty percent. Part of this effort was directed at Muslims who had registered as Serbs, Croats or Yugoslavs during the previous census. But the other part was the approval, by the parliament of Bosnia and Herzegovina, of a declaration entitled "The Program of the Resettlement of the Bosnians from Turkey," through which four million Muslims could come to Bosnia. Steele, David A., *Former Yugoslavia: Religion as a Fount of Ethnic Hostility or an Agent of Reconciliation?* In *Religion in Eastern Europe*, Vol. 14, no 2 (October 1994), pp. 7-8.

158 In the early 1991, Izetbegovic made several public declarations on his commitment to preserve Yugoslavia. For instance, on 22 January, in a joint declaration with Milosevic; on 30 January, with Kiro Gligorov.

159 Words of Izetbegovic addressing both chambers of the Bosnian Parliament, on 27 February 1991.

160 On 3 June, at the sixth YU Summit. Kovacevic, *Chronology of the Yugoslav Crisis*, p.37.

161 Milosevic and Tudjman met in Karadjordjevo, on 25 March, to settle the partition of Bosnia.

162 In *Okovana Bosna: Razgovor*/Adil Zulfikarpasic, Vlado Gotovac, Mika Tripalo, Ivo Banac, ed. Vlado Pavlinic (Zurich: Bosnjacki Institut, 1995), pp. 80-102, quoted by Udovicki, Jasminka and Stitkovac, Ejub, *Bosnia and Hercegovina: the Second War*, in *Burn This House*, p. 203.

163 See Tanjug, 11 July 1991.

164 Bougarel, Xavier, op. cit., p. 100.

165 Among its partisans and away from the TV cameras, Izetbegovic was used to speaking with great enthusiasm about the need to transform Bosnia-Herzegovina into a Muslim state.

166 Sandjak Muslims were asked whether they were in favour of the region's full political and territorial autonomy and its right to [integration with] one of the sovereign republics, in *Vecernji list*, Zagreb, 25 October 1991, quoted by Andrejevich, Milan, *The Sandjak: A Perspective of Serb-Muslim Relations*, in *Muslim Identity and the Balkan State* (Poulton, Hugh, and Taji-Farouki, Suha, eds.), New York University Press, 1997, New York, p. 175. The brackets were in the original text.

167 *Oslobodjenje*, 21 December 1991.

168 This issue turned into one of the most controversial matters of the Bosnian crisis. The Bosnian Constitution called for minority veto in crucial decisions, namely those ones involving national issues; in certain circumstances a 2/3 majority was required. However, this criterion was explicitly abandoned in the referendum held on 29 March - 01 February, in favour of a simple majority. Pro-Serb stands argue that the referendum recommended by the Badinter Commission should have required a 2/3 majority. The Badinter Commission was, thus, superseding the then valid Bosnian Constitution. Pro-Muslim partisans argue otherwise. Bosnia-Herzegovina was already in dissolution (the establishment of the "Serbian autonomous regions", the SDS abandonment of the Parliament, the "collapse" of the government, etc.) and, therefore, the 1990 Bosnian Constitution could no longer be regarded as valid. Under these conditions, the simple majority required by the Badinter Commission turned into a valid criterion.

169 On 19 March 1992, a delegation of the SDA in Montenegro met in London with Lord Carrington, claiming that the problem of the Sandjak Muslims is identical to that of the Serbs in Croatia and should be treated and solved accordingly.

170 That stand certainly contributed to convince Milosevic that the short version of Yugoslavia he was proposing could be a viable project.

171 "...A colonial feudal status within Greater Serbia... we are not against Greater Serbia, only it cannot be achieved at our expense..." Judah, *The Serbs: History, Myth*. p. 201. Izetbegovic forgot to mention that Muslims' situation in Croatia would not certainly be much different.

172 Koljevic said that, roughly speaking, Muslim territory would lie within a small central Bosnian triangle bounded by the three cities of Tuzla, Zenica and Sarajevo. Judah. *The Serbs: History, Myth*. This is in conformity with the map shown by Shoup and Burg, in *The war in Bosnia-Herzegovina*, p. 192, which appeared following talks in the first week of May 1992, in Graz, Austria, between Karadzic and Mate Boban, as the Bosnian Serb perspective.

173 The Muslim strife for political affirmation within the Yugoslav establishment, surrounded by competing Slav Christian groups engaged in seducing Muslims, has its origin in the foundation of Yugoslavia. Ivo Banac, in *The National Question in Yugoslavia* (Part IV - The Muslims of Bosnia-Herzegovina), comprehensively studied this matter. The major strategic goal of the JMO (Yugoslav Muslim Organisation), the political organisation of the Bosnian Muslims, was to prevent, at all cost, the partition of Bosnia-Herzegovina, which would reduce Muslims to the status of a permanent minority. The JMO manage to negotiate with Pasic its pivotal votes of the Constitution in exchange for numerous concessions, namely: the protection of Islamic regulations and customs, and

the guarantee of Bosnia-Herzegovina's territorial integrity (the division of the province into districts, but without violating its historically determined external frontiers) preserving the compactness of the province.

174 Pavkovic. *The Fragmentation of Yugoslavia*. p. 157. We are aware that this view is controversial and is challenged by many students of the Yugoslav question. Sabrina Ramet and James Gow (among many others) are just a few of them. Tim Judah, for instance, in *The Serbs: History, Myth* illustrates supports the opposing view, as follows: Although Izetbegovic had shown some initial intent in reaching an agreement with Belgrade, this became ever harder to realise because, with Tudjman making public statements like this, any agreement would begin to seem like a surrender without a fight. It also looked as though the price of peace, even on Belgrade's terms, would be partition anyway. With the Serbs already beginning to arm, he dithered but finally opted for seeking "sovereignty" whatever the cost. (p. 198) Supporters of this view assert that Muslims trapped between the sword and the wall, had no other chance than proceed ahead towards independence. This is our major point of disagreement. We do understand Izetbegovic's call for independence, especially if we take into account historical factors. This is out of question. What that argumentation does not explain is the Muslim leadership's refusal to accept a compromise power-sharing solution with the other ethnic groups, permitting Muslims (and the other groups) to keep their "national" identity.

175 About the ostracising of moderates within the SDA see, for instance, O'Shea, Brendan, *Crisis at Bihac*, Sutton Publishing Limited, Gloucestershire. 1998. Chapter Two (Enter Fikret Abdic).

176 Haris Silajdzic, extraordinary endowed of diplomatic talent, was the most effective and the most engaged Muslim leader in this task. However, his anti-moderniser tendencies were well known in academic circles.

177 Nora Beloff gives in his book *Yugoslavia: an Avoidable War*, a quite illustrative story about the predominant thinking in Sarajevo: "...Some liberals pleaded in vain with Izetbegovic to repudiate the *fatwa* against Salman Rushdie, himself blissfully ignorant of the realities in Sarajevo...took it into his own head to declare his total emotional dedication to the cause of the Bosnian Muslims. But within three days of an article by Rushdie in the Guardian (ed. 25 April 1994), a member of Izetbegovic's government denounced him as a traitor...Cehajic, Rusmir Mahmud in an article translated into English and published in the London based Muslim News (ed. 27 April 1994), the Bosnian Minister...denounced Rushdie and his friends as the incarnation of the evil: "Through careful reading of even this small Rushdie essay about Sarajevo, it is possible to conclude that he is one of the advocates of Satanic forces that turn to dust and ashes all they can in this country. He speaks the same words so often spoken by Milosevic, Karadzic, Tudjman, and Boban." p. 99 -100.

178 However, Izetbegovic conservative ideas did not escape to the observation of western top diplomats who dealt with him. Richard Holbrooke, for instance, noted that Izetbegovic "is not a governmental leader so much as a movement leader. He has little understanding of, or interest in, economic development or modernisation. Haris, on the other hand, is more modern and focused heavily on economic reconstruction, something Izetbegovic never mentions," in *To End a War*. p. 285. Likewise, but more acute in his observation was Lord David Owen who commented that Silajdzic was "the only politician in Bosnia-Herzegovina who had a genuinely European attitude or offered any hope for

the future of the country ... who actually believed in a multi-party democracy...he was genuinely trying to counter some of the undemocratic practices that had grown up during the war; in *The Balkan Odyssey*, excluding, thus, Izetbegovic from his judgment. The preferential relations of Izetbegovic with Iran and other autocratic Muslim regimes, allied to a substantial presence of Mujahedines freedom fighters within the ranks of

the Muslim Army may shed some light about Izetbegovic intentions. On this issue and among other documentation available see, for instance, Robert Fox, *Albanians and Afghans Fight for the Heirs of Bosnia-Herzegovina's SS Past*, Daily Telegraph, 29 December 1993, from Fojnica.

179 There is also one aspect of the Muslim ideology that had not been subject of appreciation but that deserves particular attention: the concept of Bosniac rather than Muslim. In its essence it corroborates an expansionist approach within the deemed acceptable limits, not excluding as essential premise the foundation of a state incorporating all ethnic brothers scattered in the Balkans.

180 Mackenzie. *Peacekeeper: The Road to Sarajevo*. p. 255.

181 Judah. *The Serbs: History, Myth*. p. 184.

182 Writing about his meeting with Haris Silajdzic, on 14th April 1992, at the very beginning of the civil war in Bosnia-Herzegovina, James Baker, US Secretary of State, revealed how western media was set into action: "...after the meeting, I had Larry Eagleburger take Silajdzic to see the EC troika political directors (who happened to be visiting the Department) and asked Margaret Tutwiler to talk to the Foreign Minister about the importance of using western mass media to build support in Europe and North America for the Bosnian cause. I also had her talk to her contacts at the four television network, the "Washington Post," and the "New York Times" to get more attention focused on the story..." James Baker III with Thomas M. De Frank. *The politics of Diplomacy: Revolution, War and Peace, 1989-1992*. G.P. Putnam's Sons. pp. 634-644.

183 On this issue read the interview given to Jacques Merlino by James Harff, director of Ruder & Finn Global Public Affairs, in October 1993, and published in *Les Verites Yougoslaves ne Sont pas Toutes Bonnes a Dire* (Yugoslav truths are not all good for telling), Albin Michel, Paris, 1993, which sheds some light on how this process was dealt. According to Harff, "...Speed is vital, because items favourable to us must be settled in public opinion. The first statements counts. The retractions have no effect...the essential tools in our work are a card file, a computer, and a fax. The card file contains a few hundred names of journalists, politicians, academicians, and representatives of humanitarian organisations...in this way we can disseminate information in a few minutes to those we think will react (positively). Our job is to assure that the arguments for our side will be the first to be expressed..." When asked what achievement was he must proud of, Harff answered in this way: "...to have managed to put Jewish opinion on our side. This was a sensitive matter, as the dossier was dangerous...President Tudjman was very careless in his book "Wastelands of Historical Reality." Reading his writings, one could accuse him of anti-Semitism. In Bosnia the situation was no better: President Izetbegovic strongly supported the creation of a fundamentalist Islamic state in his book "The Islamic Declaration." Besides, a real and cruel anti-Semitism marked the Croatian and Bosnian past. Tens of thousands of Jews perished in Croatian camps. So there was every reason for intellectuals and Jewish organisations to be hostile towards the Croats

and Bosnians. Our challenge was to reverse this attitude. And we succeeded masterfully. At the beginning of August 1992, the New York Newsday came out with the affair of [Serb] concentration camps. We jumped at the opportunity immediately. We outwitted three big Jewish organisations - B'Nai Brith Anti-Defamation League, the Jewish Committee, and the American Jewish Congress. We suggested to them to publish an advertisement in the New York Times and to organise demonstrations outside the UN. This was a tremendous coup. When the Jewish organisations entered the game on the side of the [Muslim] Bosnian, we could promptly equate the Serbs with the Nazis in the public mind...by a single move, we were able to present a simple story of good guys and bad guys, which would hereafter play itself. We won by targeting Jewish audience...The emotional charge was so powerful that nobody could go against it...our work is not to verify information...our work is to accelerate the circulation of the information favourable to us, to aim judiciously chosen targets...we had a job to do and we did it. We are not paid to be moral..." pp. 127-129.

184 Bougarel, Xavier, *Bosniaks Under the Control of Pan-Islamists (Part 1)*, in Dani, 18 June 1999.

185 The control of the state owned companies passed to prominent personalities of the Pan-Islamist group. For instance, Edhem Bicakic, one of the closest associates of Izetbegovic, became the director of the Electrical Generation and Distribution Company of BiH.

186 On this matter see Bougarel, Xavier, *How Pan-Islamism Replaced Communism (Part 3)*, in Dani, 2 July 1999. Mustafa Ceric had taught and preached for five years in the USA.

187 On the political connivance between Izetbegovic and Reis Ul-ulema **Mustafa Cerić see, as an example, Price of Fatherly Love** by Senad Pecanin, Dani, 7 January 2000.

188 Both the Green Berets and the Patriotic League emerged from the SDA. The first members of the Green Berets were recruited among the bodyguards of Alija Izetbegovic, while the Patriotic League was some sort of military wing of the SDA, where its first military commanders were recruited. Both organizations were armed by the SDA.

189 O'Shea, op. cit., p. 24. The confidence of the Muslim Generals resulted from the sustainable military support they were getting from abroad. "...For the very first time ammunition had become available for live fire training exercises with all of their limited range of weapons..."

190 O'Shea, op. cit., p. 26.

191 As it turned out later, the meeting of Izetbegovic with the Bosnian military, on 26 September, proved crucial in the shift of the Muslim stand.

192 Owen, op. cit., p. 220.

193 The close relations between generals and politicians should not be confused with the relations or the unavoidable alliances between the Muslim government and the chiefs of paramilitary groups that, in the initial phase of the war; both defended and thoroughly looted Sarajevo. We are not including in the Muslim military elite people like Jusuf-Juka Prazina or Musan Topalovic Caco (commander of the **Tenth Mountain Brigade of the First Corps of the ABiH**) who were given a rank of general by the state Presidency. Juka, at the peak of his power, could have, if he wanted, arrested both the government and the Presidency, including Mr. Izetbegovic. "...they were all afraid of Juka; that's why they made him a general..." *in the Army and a State*.

194 This process continued after 1996. Atif Dudakovic and Mehmed Alagic, commanders of the 5th and of the disbanded 7th Corps were elected, in July 1996, to the Central Council of the SDA. Generals Fikret Muslimovic and Sakib Mahmuljin, the former a member of the Army Staff and the latter the commander of the 3rd Corps, were already in the leadership of the SDA. For more details see *A Party or a State?* by Gojko Beric, in *Oslobodenje-Svijet*, Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina, 2 August 1996.

195 Some claim that they were even better paid than "ordinary" soldiers.

196 **Senad Pecanin, Vildana Selimbegovic and Jasmin Durakovic**, *Requiem for Bosnia*, Dani, 28 May 1999.

197 In the spring 1995, after having already broken ranks with the Pan-Islamist group, Silajdzic boycotted a ceremony in which prominent Muslim political leaders paid homage to the 7th Muslim Brigade, the most overtly Islamic unit in the ABiH. For further details on this issue, see Beric, Gojko, *A Party or a State?* in *Oslobodenje-Svijet*, 2 August 1996.

198 The third serious defection occurred after Dayton, when Silajdzic found the SBiH. On this matter see, for instance, Pecanin, Senad, *Quietest Divorce of Alija and Haris*, in Dani, 12 November 1999.

199 Beyond the ideological affinities and longstanding complicities with Izetbegovic, the power of these men also came out of control namely when we talk about the donations gathered in Muslim countries. Omer Behmen was the Bosnian ambassador in Teheran, a critical source of funds and military equipment for the ABiH. In addition to that, **Omer Behmen was an old Izetbegovic's compaignon de route. Behmen had** also been a former "Mladi Muslimani" and one of those accused of anti-socialist conspiracy in 1983. During a certain period he was also president of the powerful cadre commission; on his turn, Hasan Cengic was in charge of the Third World Relief Agency (TWRA), settled in Vienna, through which flowed into BiH many of the weapons and much of the money donated by Muslim countries and by the Bosnian Diaspora. The USA tried but without success to dismiss **Hasan Cengic**. Others, such as **Orucevic and Bakir Alispahic, were also tremendously influential.**

200 Filipovic, Muhamed, *Hasan Cengic's Conspiratorial Logic*, in Dani, 4 August 2000.

201 Lewis Mackenzie, David Owen, Carl Bildt, Michael Rose and Richard Holbrooke are unanimous on this matter.

202 Owen, op. cit., p. 214.

203 Owen expressed in several occasions, throughout his book, his views on Ganic and Silajdzic personality, character and political standpoints (they were both involved in the peace process. No references about the others were available). Owen classified Ganic a hard-liner. But about Silajdzic he made a more respectable appreciation.

204 The split followed the appointment of Edhem Bicakcic as vice-President of Bosnia. The gap between Silajdzic and Izetbegovic (and his closest associates) widened to the point of abandoning the SDA and founding his own party, the Party of Bosnia-Herzegovina (SBiH). On the divisions within the Muslim leadership see, for instance, Gallagher, Tom, *Serb Defeats Expose Discord in Sarajevo*, The Glasgow Herald, Tuesday, 12 September 1995. During a certain period the SDA and the SBiH cooperated and run for elections in coalition. But by November 1999 a definitive split was evident and the coalition was dissolved.

205 The difference between both projects could be well understood if we read carefully

the words of Zlatko Dizdarevic: "...Izetbegovic and Silajdzic represent two very different futures for an independent Bosnia: a return to the absolute power of a single-party state under the control of a party that is out-dated, increasingly representative and is taking over the country in the name of a factitious patriotism; or the western-looking, democratic country its troops have been fighting for. The hard-liners in the Izetbegovic's SDA want a population totally subordinate to the state; in return, they promise a genuinely Muslim country, however, small, in which the well-off moneymen and sycophants around the ruling party can have a free hand. In the name of their "patriotism", young men have been mobilised for the army while others have found a new prosperity thanks to the parallel economy, the "private" business that feed on the misery of the population, and those who have the privilege of access to the funds brought in by a variety of foreign humanitarian organisations..." Owen, op. cit., p. 338, quoting Zlatko Dizdarevic, *Divided We Stand*, INDEX on Censorship, vol. 24, no. 5, September-October 1995, p. 55. That cleavage in the Muslim political elites had expression in several domains, namely in the written media: while the *Liljian*, a newspaper financed by Muslim radicals, was close to the SDA and voiced the views of the Pan-Islamist faction; the *Oslobodenje*, funded by George Soros, was a supporter of Silajdzic standpoints.

206 Bougarel, Xavier, *Bosniaks Under the Control of Pan-Islamists (Part 1)*, in Dani, 18 June 1999.

207 Andric, op. cit., p. 227.

208 This perception of opportunity was very well illustrated in the text of *the Political Platform of the Moslem National Council*, published in the Bosnian magazine Vox (October 1991), "...Our *agas* and *beys* kept telling us: "It is not yet time. Have patience brother Moslems". How much longer, brother Moslems? If we hold the same view that truth is eternal and unchangeable and the truth is, brothers, that every fifth man in the world is a Moslem, then this applies to the Balkans as well..."

209 It is worth to remind Spaho's reaction to the Cvetkovic-Macek agreement, and Uzeiraga Hadzihasanovic's attempt to negotiate autonomy with the Germans, and to avoid integration of Bosnia-Herzegovina in Croatia.

210 Using Izetbegovic own words, while addressing a Muslim audience, "...Free elections are coming, and with them the day that the Muslim nation has been waiting for for more than a hundred years. This is a historical moment, in which there can be no "don't knows" or neutrals...that is why I am asking you to help on that day, by voting for the SDA, for liberty, and for Muslims..." in *Muslimanski Glas*, vol. 1, no. 1, quoted by Bougarel, Xavier, *Bosnia and Herzegovina - State and Communitarianism*, in Dyker D.A., and Vejvoda, I., *Yugoslavia and After. A Study in Fragmentation, Despair and Rebirth*, Longman, London and New York, 1996, p. 99.