

Under Two Dinasties. An Inquiry into the Historical Roots of a Bosniak National Identity

GIUSEPPE MOTTA

Introduction

“SOME PEOPLE or nationalities were thus destined never to become full nations. Others had attained, or would attain, full nationhood. But which had a future and which did not?”¹

Only time could give an answer to the question asked by E.J. Hobsbawm, whose suggestion proved its effectiveness not only at the beginning of his “Short Twentieth Century”, but also during the final years of the 20th century. At that time many new nations were founded and obtained a travailed independence, taking the last step towards the acknowledgement of their national dignity. Independence, thus, meant final recognition of a nation, the existence of a population, which identifies itself in some specific “national” characters. The idea of ‘nation’ has been the topic of many studies and papers, which have tried to clarify and point out the leading features of the *longue durée* process of nation building. This phenomenon was experienced by the Europeans in different ways and at different times, even in recent history, when newborn countries have been engaged in defining their ancestral and historical past. The shaping of European society among national lines is rooted in the whole of European history and, sometimes, even in ancient times where many modern nations sought their origins. Authors who studied and investigated this topic focused on the different features expressed by the phenomenon from time to time and, altogether, contributed to clear up a complex and articulated idea of nation. Since Ernst Renan asked *Qu’est ce qu’une nation?* (What is a nation?) in 1882, many have tried to give a complete and exhaustive answer aimed at explaining the various steps of the constructional process of a nation. They approached the question from different points of view, focusing on cultural, religious, historical, economic and political causes and consequences of the spread of national ideals.

Conventionally, they analysed the historical path followed by the European nations since the French Revolution, which united national aspirations with hopes of democratic and social reforms. This process involved European peoples in different ways. Some showed a national consciousness right from the beginning, appealing to their historical past. That is the case of the Italians and the Poles, who both took pride in their ancient and glorious past. Others started an “invention of tradition” process chasing the basis of their national ascent (language, religion, culture, ethnicity). This process has been discussed at length by authors in numerous works dedicated to the historical and cultural conditions of nineteenth century Europe, which saw the birth and growth of contemporary nations (among these are Ernest Gellner, Eric Hobsbawm, Benedict Anderson, Anthony Smith, Guy Hermet, James Kellas, Hugh Seton-Watson, John Breuilly and Roger Brubaker). Many authors pointed out that the building of nations is the result of the cultural influences of Romanticism (Jean Plumyène), others pointed out the cultural implications of this process and international solidarity ties which accompanied the nations during the first stages of their existence (A.M. Thiesse). Some linked the development of national doctrines to the transformation of rural societies into industrial ones (Gellner, Hobsbawm), others distinguished a western romantic nationalism from an eastern mystical one (Plamenatz, Gellner), focusing on the contribution of state policies imposed from the top and defining nations as imaginary communities (Benedict Anderson); others described a triadic nexus between national minorities, nationalising states and external national homelands (Brubaker). Kellas distinguishes nationalisms in the First, Second and Third Worlds; Hans Kohn, instead, focuses on the difference between civic and ethnic nationalism. All reported the historical steps taken by the people who were nationalizing themselves following different ways and counting on different supports (history, language, religion). The sum of these factors, which carry different weights in each case, led to the same result: the formation of a national consciousness. Every nation is the strange mixture of different features: some stressed their cultural and idiomatic particularities, others their faith or their economic skills; certain nations pointed out their ethnic uniqueness, others had all these elements as the result of historical dynamics that, through diplomacy and the violence of wars, accompanied the birth of new nations.

Albeit considered to be a historical phenomenon and studied in this sense, the process of nation building proved not to be a dead phenomenon. As a matter of fact, it still affects the political setting of the global scenario and, on a minor scale, also that of Europe. In the last few years, Europe has witnessed not only the European integration process and the sovranational construction of common institutions, but also the fragmentation of her old *status quo*, especially in the former Soviet Union and in the south-eastern and Balkan area, where the wars of the

nineties accelerated the decline and collapse of Yugoslavia, on whose ruins new national identities rose side by side with the appearance of new countries. The example of Croatia and Slovenia was followed by Bosnia-Herzegovina (BiH), Macedonia (FYROM, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia), Montenegro and Kosovo, which became independent states. In this context, they all rediscovered their historical evolution and focused on the special features of their culture, to find their uniqueness, which has to be sought in religion, language and ethnicity. In search of an identity, these new states based their existence on what they were defining as their national heritage. That is the case of Bosnia-Herzegovina created by the Dayton peace agreement in 1995, after the tragic period of the war.

During these troubled years, Bosnia experienced the definitive consolidation of a national Bosniak identity.² This process, which had already begun during the communist regime, was speeded up by the war and, after the Dayton agreement, by the formation of a new state with a new and fragile cultural perspective. Consequently, the last decade was helpful in broadening the historical dimension of the new state, recovering its heritage starting from the Bogumil heresy, throughout Islamic, Habsburg and Yugoslav times. Its entire past is viewed from a new “national” perspective, evaluating certain features which can be considered the milestones of every nation-building process: religious affiliation, a particular social and economic reality, a special cultural dimension, relations with others and the perception of the people themselves. This process involved an improvement in the studies on the Bosniak language, which gained its own dignity from the other Serbian and Croatian branches of Slavic roots (A. Kasumović, M. Rizvić, Š. Filandra, S. Halilović, M. Ridžanović, A. Peco, A. Kasumović, A. Isaković). The recovery of Bosnian literature of authors such as Ahmed Efendi Beyadi-zeda Boshnaq, Hasan bin Nesuh ad-Dumnawi, Ahmed Bejazić, Hafiz Sejid Zenunović, Mustafa Ejubović, Salih Trako and Hafiz Abdullah Ajni-ef Bušatić went side by side with that of other different characters of Bosniak culture. These works do not put aside other features such as the Ottoman legacy in art (B. Nilević) and society (M. A. Mujić, F. Karčić, A. Handžić, H. Buljina), or the institutional framework of historical Bosnia, whose integrity survived under Turkish, Austrian and Slav dominion (M. Imamović). Generally, Bosniak culture is undergoing a process of self-construction and is questioning the past to interpret the present, starting from a general reevaluation of the Habsburg rule, which was thought to be discriminatory and oppressive, at least until it became one of the points for the definition of the Bosniak nation-building process, which followed the same steps taken by other Europeans, to which it can be compared. All these studies have proved to be an essential tool with which the Muslim population presents itself as a new nation that deserves to be recognized along with the other historical ethnic groups of the region, the Serbs and the Croats.

The first steps of a national path

IN BOSNIA, twentieth century historiography joined the constant recalling of some historical events like the Bogumilism to the new interpretations of the old Habsburg and Yugoslav regimes, whose evaluation radically changed during the last years. The debate put the Habsburg and Yugoslav contributions under question and overturned the interpretations and perception of both. At the same time, the classical basis of Bosniak culture, which always related its Muslim identity to the medieval Bogumil heresy developed in the Balkan regions during the Middle Ages, was not abandoned. This theory stresses the continuity between the disciples of this sect and the adoption of Islam after the Turkish conquest of the fifteenth century. This connection, however, proved to be a quite a subtle argument and, in fact, it has been discussed and criticized more than once. At any rate, it represented one of the first attempts made to find and justify the historical roots of the Bosniak nation or, at least, to describe its own features. Truly, the Bogumil heritage is not a new topic of research; yet in 1912 a first bibliography was edited in Sarajevo and many works appeared during the interwar period, although without taking into consideration the national aspects of this investigation.³ Alongside this religious autonomy, the historical research rediscovered the medieval past of Bosnian Reign, whose roots are related to the Ban Kulin (1163-1204). In 1189 he issued the first written Bosnian document, a trade agreement between Bosnia and the republic of Dubrovnik, known as *Povelja Kulina Bana*, the Charter of Kulin Ban. Later, from the late thirteenth to the mid-fifteenth centuries, the Reign was ruled by the Kotromanić dynasty that converted the Banate into a Kingdom and preserved the uniqueness of religious confession of its inhabitants.

After Bogumils, for a long time Bosnia hosted one of the most consistent Muslim communities in Europe and this religious affiliation remarked concretely the definition of a distinct group, at least from the confessional point of view. The Ottoman period is fundamental to understand the evolution of Balkan Muslim communities, who preserved their special cultural features and combined them with the Balkan ones. Bosniak contemporary historians pointed out the continuity between ancient Bosnian freedom and the Ottoman period, which meant the “acceptance” of a religion but not of the language.⁴ Nor was it a period of serfdom, dominance and stagnation; under Ottoman rulers Bosnia developed as many other regions did, for example under Gazi Husrev Bey (1480–1541) who is described by Christians as a conqueror but is remembered by Muslims as a benefactor who left tangible signs of his activity on Bosnia and Sarajevo.⁵

It is only during the eighteenth century and especially after the Berlin Congress of 1878 and the beginning of the Habsburg occupation that the seeds of the

future national partition of Bosnia were sowed. The Islamic religious consciousness constituted a factor of distinction between the Muslims and the other groups who were all discovering their national roots. In the case of the Bosniaks, this “affiliation” had appeared evidently for the first time with the rebellion of 1830-32, when the Muslims revolted against the Sultan and his decision to cede some Bosnian territories to Serbia. Some decades later, the Habsburg administration retook the project of the Ottoman period to create a precise Bosnian identity, aiming at breaking the relations between the Slavs of Bosnia and those of Serbia and Croatia, who were defining their national culture and combining it with the demand of certain political concessions.

Following the difficult conquest of the region, which had faced a fierce armed resistance to the Habsburg troops, Bosnia-Herzegovina was assigned to a joint Austrian-Hungarian commission at the Common Finance Ministry. Béni Kállay, who directed Bosnian policy from 1882 to 1903, tried to reintroduce the idea of *bošnjaštvo* to define all the people of Bosnia, regardless of their religion and culture. This attempt, however, was unsuccessful: as a matter of fact Bosnian Croats and Serbs had already tied with their respective populations outside the borders of Bosnia-Herzegovina, while the Muslims did not consider their confessional difference as a decisive tool to distinguish themselves from their Christian brothers. At any rate, they started an integration process, which affected them more than it was generally thought. Although the times were not ripe for a national awakening of the Bosnian Muslims, Habsburg domination fed it with considerable, even if unintentional, efforts.

The period between 1878 and 1918 is today at the centre of a complex process of re-evaluation. The Habsburg contribution to the development of Bosnia has always been a questioned matter, even from an economic point of view. While the Habsburg dominion had generally been presented in negative tones, Vienna’s policies were at least seen and interpreted as modernization attempts made to adapt the values and habits of the region and its population to the climate of European *Mitteleuropa*. The results of these policies left space for different views. Many authors rediscovered the Habsburg legacy and evaluated positively the drastic reforms introduced between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (Karčić). Thanks to this contribution, Bosnia began to evolve industrially and began a process of cultural and social renewal, shaping her character and deepening her multiculturalism. Many others, on the contrary, focused on Habsburg failures—for the example in the field of nationality policies (G. Castellan), and wondered about the effective results of the Austrian rule, which was not considered as essential and important as generally argued (J. R. Lampe, R. Donia).⁶ Even the railway between Sarajevo and Uvac, which is remembered as the most outstanding example of Austrian labour, mirrors this ambiguity. The line was opened

in 1906 but in 1908 it was said that there were “since the first day many inconveniences.... Further, considering the narrow gauge, steep inclines, numerous bends, single track, and shortage of the interchanges, the productivity of the line could not be unlimited”.⁷

While the Habsburg regime was studied generally for its firm rule and the repressive measures taken against the subversive and day by day more exasperated nationalities, this period is not only seen as an age of oppression. As many authors have pointed out (among them Noel Malcolm in his *History of Bosnia*), during the Habsburg administration the region underwent a period of unquestionable growth. Bosnia preserved her political autonomy and her historical borders and did not suffer for fast and revolutionary changes due to the new administration. The latter favoured the development of a regional administration, improving the bureaucracy and state control over certain issues. Several infrastructure projects were accomplished and many roads and railways were completed. This enabled the institutions to adopt a new economic policy aiming at reforming the region according to a western model of industrial development. The first industries were created mainly in Sarajevo, the capital city, while other activities such as agriculture and farming were sponsored with the creation of factories and special institutions. In 1895 in Sarajevo, electric trams replaced the old horse-drawn carriages and, generally, during these years the city became the theatre of the reforming policies of the new rulers. “*De fait, c’est de cette époque que datent le premiers chemins de fer, souvent à voies étroites, la création d’un véritable réseau routier, la construction d’hospitaux, de musées...*”⁸

This process was not totally peaceful but it had many consequences among the Bosnian population, who disliked excessive renewals; it caused the emigration of many Muslims who did not want to live in a Christian state and many other measures were not well accepted. For example, compulsory military enlistment was followed by a general uprising in 1883.⁹ Habsburg policies also had important implications, for instance in the way Bosniaks related to religion. The cultural sphere was not so much affected by the new regime, which sponsored the growth of the Catholic community but proved to be quite tolerant in religious affairs. One of the main questions that animated the relationship between Muslims and Christians was the conversion of some Muslims, especially girls. The Catholic Bishop Josef Stadler favoured these conversions which obviously caused protests on behalf of many Muslims who sent their grievances to Vienna. They obtained a satisfactory statute for the conversions but not the final solution of the problem, which in 1899 was once again exasperated because of the abduction of a girl by her Catholic suitor’s family.

Even under strict control from above, each community had the opportunity to keep its culture intact and to benefit from the new educational policies of

the Habsburg – for example, the opening of *mektebs*, Islamic elementary schools for Muslims. Muslims defended their right to use traditional Islamic law, *Sharia*, and to have their own schools and state funds for them. In 1882, the office of *Re'is al-ulama* was established; it was assisted by a council made up of four *qadi* to govern Muslim religious and spiritual affairs. In 1883 a special commission for the administration of *Vakuf* was appointed; this enabled the Muslims to manage their important economic capital quite freely. *Vakuf*, in fact, was the result of private initiatives and served for the benefit of religious, educational and humanitarian institutions. In Ottoman times, while public authorities provided for the building of the mosque, proceeds from solidarity and charitable events of the community went to the activity of *Vakuf*, which were created throughout the centuries by individuals and families who showed “a numerous state and economic force of about thirty *Vakufs*” by the end of the nineteenth century.¹⁰

Muslim economic interests were not damaged by any radical agrarian reform while their traditions were protected thanks to the survival of their law, which in 1887 led to the creation of a special school for *Sharia* judges. While Serbs and Croats were suspected of having national sympathies for Yugoslav ideology, Muslims were generally treated as loyal citizens and the strange alliance between them and the Habsburg administration allowed the Muslim communities to maintain their social role and position. The mayors of Sarajevo and other important cities were almost all Muslims, and Islamic institutions were preserved and remained in the hands of Muslim intellectuals: *ulema-medžlis*, *reis al-ulema*, *vakuf-mearif*..

Moreover, thanks to this approach, the cooperation with the Habsburg authorities allowed the Muslim groups to broaden their political dimension, defending and promoting their interests as a separate confessional group. The impact with the western civil model, at the same time, triggered the birth of a new perspective among the Bosniaks, who developed a new political and cultural sphere. To promote Bosnian identity, the Habsburg sustained a Regional Museum with its own publication, “*Glasnik Zemaljskog Muzeja*”, opened new schools and gave the opportunity to many students to study in big universities in Vienna or Zagreb. Reading societies began to appear in the principal cities of Bosnia so as to promote a new approach towards the state and authorities.

The integration of Muslim communities within the Habsburg reality was not easy and was extremely conditioned by some religious creeds, which *de facto* represented an obstacle towards multi-confessional coexistence. Muslim reformists had to face the problem of life inside a non-Islamic State, which was thought to be impossible for a true believer. In 1886 the *mufti* of Tuzla, Mehmed Teufik Azapagić, published the treatise “*Risala fi al-hidjra*” in which he stated that migration (*hidjra*) after the capture by a Christian State was not a religious obligation.¹¹ Although many Islamic authorities did not appreciate this

“revolutionary” view especially by Ottoman *ulama*, it gained relevancy and inaugurated a new season. While the predominant voices of the religious world continued to consider invalid the life under a Christian State and all the acts carried out under it, some scholars tried to adapt their faith to the new reality and followed Azapagić’s path. In 1909 the journal “Al-Manar” published an article by Muhammad Rashid Rida who wanted to reply to the questions proposed by a *medrasa* student, Muhamed Zahirudin Tarabar. Rida concluded that migration was compulsory only in case of *djihad* and when Muslims were prevented from exercising their faith freely. This work had a very important impact on the religious authorities of Bosnia and their approach to Islamic law. But it was not the only one. The mufti of Sarajevo, Mustafa Himi Hadžiomerović, and other Bosniak dignitaries took other steps towards gradual cooperation with the new authorities as Mehmed beg Kapetanović and Mustafa beg Fadilpašić, who both admitted that Muslims could obey the military law imposed by the Habsburg in 1881, which meant the conscription of young Bosniaks. Through tensions and misunderstandings, Muslims experienced cultural and social emancipation and a gradual move towards western models. The city of Sarajevo was, and still is, the perfect example of this strange combination of Islamic presence and modernity. In one part of the city, there were electric tramways, elegant women driving coaches, neon lights, big hotels and offices of large international companies; in another, there were mosques, bazaars, coffee shops and cemeteries deep within the inner city which reflected its Islamic influence. Travellers described the city and the pacific coexistence of the different ethnic and religious groups as well as the signs of Habsburg administration. The latter developed the economy of the region (the salt mines, the coal found for the first time in 1884, the vineyards, the model farms) and the signs of this change were evident in Austrian Sarajevo - “a modern European city, with fine public buildings, good shops, and electric trams” - and in the industries, such as the tobacco factory “in which hundreds of women and girls are employed, the carpet factory, and the schools in which the native art of inlaying wood and metal with gold and silver has been brought to great perfection”.¹²

While the beginnings of integration were on the way towards consolidation, the agrarian question, the defence of traditions in religious but also economic affairs and the first clashes with the authorities and other ethnic groups allowed the Muslims to strengthen their cultural and political clout. This process was accelerated by the adoption of western social models and involved a small part of the Muslim population. These efforts were sustained thanks to publications like the “Sarajevski Cvjetnik” (the Garden of Sarajevo) and other magazines that received the legacy of the old “Bosnia”. Since the end of the nineteenth century several have appeared: “Muslimanska Svijest” and the “Bosniak” direct-

ed by the poet Safvet-beg Bašagić were followed by “Behar” (The Blossom) and “Biser” (The Pearl). All expressed a tendency towards integration; they were printed and no longer handwritten and combined modernity and pan-Islamism, which was also considered as a means of identification.¹³ At the same time they showed great attention to European culture by translating many French, German and Russian texts on local traditions, including many ballads and poems (Jovan Sterija Popović, Matja Ban) and on Islamic heritage (Fehim Spaho, Mirza Safvet, Hamdija Kreševljaković, Musa Ćazim Ćatić).

In 1900 the first Bosniak political delegation headed by mufti Džabić set off for Budapest, while Czech journalist Josef Holecek presented the Muslim cause to the press. This period was extremely lively because of the “revival” of Bosnian heritage, which led to the creation of many reading societies, organizations, and student and sport associations like *El-Kamer*. In 1903 the organization *Gajret* was founded; in 1904 a printing shop (*Islamske Štamparije*) was opened in Sarajevo, where in 1905 Safet-bey Bagašić founded the Islamic Youth Organization, later the Islamic Club of Sarajevo.

This network represented the avant-garde of a new secularised Islamic doctrine, which no longer focused on traditional Muslim dogmas and broke the last ties the Bosniaks had with their ancient capital Istanbul. These first steps were characterized by a sort of dualism between the intransigent Mostar faction and the Sarajevo elite who showed a very cooperative approach towards the new authorities. Besides this internal concurrence, Muslims found the conditions for establishing their own political platform. When the breach within Islam finally opened, Muslims began to be really interested in the political life of Bosnia. In 1906, they put an end to the rift between the reformists and the old Mufti Mustafa Džabić, who in 1902 left for Istanbul and was exiled there because of his unauthorized departure. In December they created the Muslim’s People Organization (*Muslimanska Narodna Organizacija*, Mno) which was soon challenged by the Muslim Progressive Party (*Muslimanska napredna stranka*) formed by Sarajevo’s mayor Esad Kulović, by the *Ujedinjena Muslimanska Organizacija* and by *Muslimanska Demokratska Stranka*.¹⁴

Of course, Muslims were not the only ones involved in the creation of a network of cultural and political organizations. Serbs had their National Serb Organization (other associations were *Prosvjeta*, *Dušan Silni*, *Sloga* and *Sokol*), the Croats had their National Croatian Society, Croat’s People Union, *Napredak* and many others. Workers could benefit from the activity of the first workers’ association, *Glavni radnički savez*, and in 1906 they organized a first massive strike.

Following the annexation of Bosnia in 1908 and the creation of a Parliament in 1910 (24 Muslims, 31 Orthodox, 16 Catholics and 1 Jew, among them some gained their post in virtue of their position, *Reis al-ulema*, *vakuf-mearif* direc-

tor, mufti of Sarajevo and Mostar...), these organizations evolved and became real political parties. Muslims with their Muslim National Organization tried to call the Sultan's attention to Bosnia but finally had to accept the Habsburg regime and pay loyalty to the new Emperor in 1910. Muslims were granted religious and educational autonomy and generally followed the policies of their representatives towards friendly cooperation with the new rulers. But a rift between the elders and a young generation of activists and radicals soon surfaced within the political groups of the region, which held the first elections in 1910 and 1913. The context was changing and nationalisms were asserting themselves and improving their consensus, even among Muslims who perceived their particularity to be simply a confessional matter and were confused about their Croatian or Serbian nationality. This position also had many positive consequences, as it allowed the MNO to increase its political appeal. "With the increasing emphasis on national origin, the great question in Bosnian politics was the nationality of the Muslims, who were Slavic and Serbo-Croatian speaking. Both Serbs and Croats put forth claims to these people".¹⁵ Even if many Muslims leaned towards a national idea or 'Yugoslavism', which was shared by all the Slavic components of the Balkan people, it did not mean that a Muslim group was not clearly detectable. On the contrary, the rise of modern political parties made the Muslims move together towards the MNO, which proved to be the first and only political means of representation for Muslim economic, cultural and social interests. Among its ranks, Mehmed Spaho soon emerged as one of the most active and promising leaders, representing the interests of the Muslim population, even the poorest who lived in the crumbling boroughs of Sarajevo.¹⁶

The Great War and Integration into Yugoslavia

FOLLOWING THE annexation of 1908, Bosnia became a tinderbox. The region was the theatre of the birth and development of different "subversive" organizations such as Ivo Andrić's Croatian Progressive Organisation or the notorious Young Bosnia (*Mlada Bosna*), which cooperated with the Serb Black Hand (*Crna Ruka*) and Unification or Death (*Ujedinjenje ili smrt*). The Young Bosnians debuted the new era with the attempted murder of Bosnia's governor in 1910 by a student, Bogdan Žerajić, who after five shots had to use the sixth one to commit suicide.

These organizations recruited a great number of students and, although they started from a national affiliation, they adopted a Yugoslav attitude capturing the sympathies also of Muslims like Muhamed Mehmedbašić, one of future Sarajevo's assassins. Other violent actions marked the years following the Habsburg

annexation such as an attempt in 1912 to burn down Catholic Archbishop Stadler's home; ending with the 28 June 1914 assassination of Duke Franz Ferdinand and Sophie, Duchess of Hohenberg.¹⁷ It was the fuse for the explosion of the war, which saw the Slovenes, Croats and Bosnians enlisted in the Habsburg army against their Serb brothers. Many passed to the Belgrade side, but Muslims generally remained loyal to their ruler. In fact, after the Balkan Wars (1912-1913) "the gains of the Christian Balkan powers understandably pushed Muslim opinion in the direction of loyalty to Austria-Hungary".¹⁸

In addition, the news from the other Balkan territories did not help the Bosnian Muslims to approach the Belgrade side. The war brought to the Balkans a wave of violence and brutality, and constituted the occasion for the fulfillment of historical revenge, often characterized also by religious hatred. The breaking out of the conflict made the Serbians initiate a general enlistment of Muslims within their army, causing the first problems between the different communities. In the territories taken over by Belgrade during the Balkan wars, many Muslims refused to serve the Christian army opposing this act with the provisions of the Constantinople treaty signed by Serbia and the Ottoman Empire in 1914. All along the borders between the two states, "Muslims escape in great number abandoning their houses, their land and their cattle" while those who stayed and tried to get the help of the Italian Consulate "were later arrested and beaten".¹⁹ Muslims experienced the attitude of the new Slav dominion by running away from their villages and seeking shelter in the mountains, while in the centres Serbian authorities "execute arbitrary visits and searches in the Turkish houses, while subordinate agents often take possession of the valuables they find".²⁰

Muslims from other Balkan regions eventually experimented what Bosniaks found out only some years later: "the regime introduced by Serbs in the new territories is very hard... impossibility of mail and telegraphic communications, virtual ban of non-Orthodox confession and non Serb schools; persecutions, threats and arrests (with possible suppression) for simple suspects; unconditional military enlistment, unbearable situation for the Catholics".²¹

Bosnian Muslims could hardly comprehend this brutal conquering attitude of the new authorities but reacted to the war by showing loyalty to the Habsburg government and diffidence towards the new Yugoslav Idea. Serbs could enlist only a few Muslims from the lands of the Kingdom and even fewer from Bosnia. Here many Slavs continued to fight against Belgrade and serve in the Austrian army, which was often involved in strong and forceful combat against the Serbs of Bosnia. Princip was "a villain in the eyes of many contemporary Bosnians, particularly Muslims, who see the transfer of their country from Austria-Hungary to Yugoslavia as a wrong turn that brought disaster" and this approach also caused a great deal of violence against Serbs during the war years.²²

Exactly as under Habsburg dominion, the unconditional adhesion of Bosniaks to the Yugoslav Idea is now under question. Slav solidarity was not the only factor that led them towards the union of Serbs, Slovenes and Croats. Indeed, there were several possible solutions for the future Balkan reassessment: *status quo*, Yugoslavia, Big Serbia, Trialism. Different positions were represented among Muslim representatives and within the Muslim National Organization, where a clash occurred between the old and the young members led by Mehmed Spaho. In 1917 Šerif Arnautović and Safvet Beg Bağašić declared to prefer autonomy under Austria-Hungary, while *reis al-ulema* Ćaušević was more in favour of the Yugoslav solution. The latter finally prevailed in 1918, when war had finished toning down the divergences inside the Muslim community.²³ In 1918, Arnautović judged favourably the Habsburg autonomy and called for incorporation into Hungary. He was opposed by many, such as Derviš-beg Miralem, Sejfudin Huseinagić, *reis al-ulema* Ćaušević and the secretary of the Sarajevo Chamber of Commerce, Mehmed Spaho. This group had no clear idea about the future of Bosnia and came to take a pro-Yugoslav position only gradually. For instance, Spaho, one of the most active persons in favour of Yugoslavia, decisively made up his mind only in September. The debates inside the Muslim community were heated and even violent, as in the case of Mehmed Spaho and Hakija Hadžić, who resolved their personal conflicts with a duel.²⁴

Finally, events led to the Austro-Hungarian break-up and to the birth of new nations. The first mutiny in February 1918 started off a period of constant chaos and disaffection among Slav subjects of Habsburg monarchy. Desertions and strikes marked the last month of hostilities, while an agreement for the constitution of a unitary state was only reached at the end of the year.²⁵

More than one year after the Declaration of Corfu (20 July 1917), in October 1918 the Council of Zagreb was established for the supreme political representation of Slavs inside Austria-Hungary. A national Council of Bosnia-Herzegovina was also created in November; slightly earlier on 29 October the new state seceded from Austria-Hungary. Then Austrian military chief General Stjepan Sarkotić surrendered his functions to the General Council for Bosnia-Herzegovina and so the first national government was created on 3 November. On 1 December 1918 the Nation of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes including BIH were united with the Kingdom of Serbia (*Kraljevstvo Srba, Hrvata i Slovenaca*, Shs). The administrative continuity was preserved and Atanasije Šola's government allowed the Austrian general to leave the country and tried to take emergency measures to protect Muslims from the violent attacks of many Serb peasants. Šola even came into conflict with the Serbian Army, which entered Bosnia-Herzegovina after the appeal launched on 3 November by the Bosnian government to restore order in the region animated by a full-blown peasant revolt.

Despite efforts on behalf of the government, chaos ruled the region, already affected by many growing tensions, which found rich soil in the lack of stability and in the contrasts between the authorities and those (especially Croats and Muslims) who did not appreciate the new regime and who shared a common desire for autonomy.

On 31 January the Bosnian government was replaced with a new body (*Zemaljska vlada*) appointed by Belgrade and the departments for Bosnia were reduced from ten to four. The Serb government started a purge against Muslim and Croatian officials who served the Habsburg authorities especially within the army and the public administration. On 7 June 1921 the central government was replaced by a provincial administration, which remained in force until the beginning of 1924. During this period, Muslims had to find a new political dimension in the new state and started to organize their own parties and associations.

In 1918, *Jugoslavenska Muslimanska Demokracija* (JMO) was created in Sarajevo; the following year saw the birth of *Muslimanska Zajednica* in Banja and *Muslimanska Organizacija* in Sarajevo. The most important of these parties was undoubtedly the *Jugoslavenska Muslimanska Organizacija* (JMO). Many tried to break its monopoly of Muslim votes but they failed one after another, starting from *Muslimanska Tezačka Stranka* which appeared for the elections of 1920 in opposition to JMO, followed by *Muslimanska Narodna Stranka*, *Muslimanska Radikalna Stranka*, then, from 1922 to 1924, *Jugoslavenska Muslimanska Narodna Organizacija* (derived from some JMO dissidents) and ending with *Organizacija Narednih Muslimana* in 1928.²⁶ Inside JMO, Mehmed Spaho gradually took a leading role. During 1914, this young Muslim politician had displayed an ardent opposition to Sarajevo's mayor Fehim Čurčić, challenging almost all the decisions taken by the City Council. Sparring repeatedly with vice-mayor Vancaš, Spaho had tried to focus on the conditions of Muslim *mahala* and succeeded in rising quickly to the top of the party. He made it at the end of the war, when the role of Muslim politics was not easy, at least if it was accompanied by a climate of violence and intimidation. From the last months of the conflict, Bosnia staged a play of terror and anarchy and a peasant uprising quickly became an anti-Muslim campaign. Noel Malcolm talked about *jacqueries* and Serb triumphalism against Muslims, others observed that new Serb officials often took violent actions against the Muslims in an attempt to get revenge for the hundreds of years of Muslim supremacy.²⁷

The climate was very tense and it was overheated by voices of Bolshevik unrest and national revolts, which justified forceful measures by the army. In fact, from the very beginning the relationships between Serbs and other nationalities were marked by hostility and diffidence.²⁸ In Bosnia, this had appeared

since the 31 December 1918, when representatives of the different Bosnian parties met in Sarajevo to discuss the situation of the region within the new state. These meetings were held in the name of “Yugoslavism”, but were also marked by the existence of many clashes between the Serbs and the other nationalities.

Muslims complained of being victims of prejudice and hatred, as they were reprimanded with the slogan “Bosnia is Serbian, Bosnia does not want autonomy” and their religion was mistreated by the Orthodox hierarchies. From November 1918, a repressive season opened with the arrival of the army, which did not succeed in restoring order. The power was in the hands of the military authorities, while the Council did not have a great influence on them. Many complaints were made by the Muslims; on 21 January 1919, for example, the mayor of Rogatica, Svetozar Zrnić, accused the Serb officials in front of the People’s Council and concluded “people cannot stand them any more”.

The frailty of the Yugoslav project, in the way it was pursued by the Serb army, was obvious also abroad. Although there were strange initiatives like Miloch de Zelitch’s, who was an heir of the Bosnian ruling dynasty, also a former officer in the Russian army, who asked for an independent state for the region and for Fiume, all the diplomats were informed about the news coming from the Balkans.²⁹ Italian Prime Minister Orlando had reported on incidents between Serbian officials and the citizens of Zagreb and Sarajevo, and on the situation in Montenegro as well, which appeared to be extremely scorching.³⁰

A report from Venezia Giulia to the Foreign Affairs Minister Sonnino, (Paris 14 May 1919), described the Croatian reality, where 115,000 signatures for the liberation of the Croatian soil from the Serbian army were confiscated by the Serb troops, who acted with violence and arrests. New military authorities had to start collecting taxes for the People’s Government but found a general resistance in the population. The document added that Bosnia “*dopo due tentativi di minore importanza, è dai primi di maggio in completa aperta rivolta antiserba. Il comando serbo, dopo aver proclamato lo stato di assedio nelle regioni di Sarajevo e di Mostar, tenta in un proclama riprodotto anche dalla nostra stampa di far passare questa rivolta per bolscevica. Le dimostrazioni sono però esclusivamente dirette contro comandi e Governo serbo, e non contro le proprietà o contro le classi sociali bosniache più elevate. A Sarajevo è riunita una petizione appoggiata da 120.000 firme, pure invocante la liberazione della Bosnia dai serbi: spero riuscire ad averla nelle mani*” (after two less important attempts, from the first days of May the region saw an open anti-Serb rebellion. The Serb Command proclaimed siege to the state in Sarajevo and Mostar and tried to define the revolt as Bolshevik. Protests were exclusively addressed against Serb troops and not against the property or the Bosnian highest social classes. In Sarajevo a petition signed by more than 120,000 people also claimed the liberation of Bosnia from the Serbs: I hope I can have it). It was final-

ly calculated that the number of people arrested in the four regions (Croatia, Slovenia, Slavonia, Bosnia) reached “*un totale superiore alle tremila persone*” (a total of more than 3000 individuals).³¹

On 1 April 1919 an interesting article on Bosnia was published in the French newspaper “Le Temps”. The author, Charles Rivet, made an inquiry on Bosnian political parties and focused on Muslim conditions, reporting the interview released with the *Reis-al-ulema* Djemaluddin (Mehmed Džemaludin Čaušević): “*c’est sur un ton d’infinie tristesse que ce vieillard me confia ce qu’on va lire*” (It’s with a great sadness that this old man confessed to me what he said). *In primis*, Rivet described the main Croatian and Serbian parties of Bosnia, filtering out some voices of dissent, like the former Bosnian parliamentarian M. Sounaritch, who declared “*Je me declare adversaire irréductible de la manière de voir et de faire des Serbes*”.³² Moreover, he made some considerations about the Muslims of Bosnia and their attitude towards Serbian government: “*Le musulmans de Bosnie formaient un clan. Les conjonctures politiques, une serbisation qui n’est pas, dans leur esprit, sans presenter de dangers pour eux, leur ont fait constituer maintenant un veritable parti politique*” (The Muslims of Bosnia formed a clan. The political conditions and a “Serbization” which does not exist in their spirit, without representing a danger, make them constitute a real political party). Other parties shared a similar view on Serbian centrality, for example the Progressive view, and this tendency led the author to foresee future cooperation between Croats and Muslims in the new institutions: “*se préparant, en vue des elections à la Constituante, à reconstruire à nouveau la coalition qu’ils formaient à l’ancienne Diète de Bosnie*” (Approaching the elections for the Constituent Assembly, they are preparing to build once again the coalition formed in the ancient Diet of Bosnia).

But the most interesting part of this article concerns considerations on *Reis al-ulema*, expressed in front of two Islamic personalities and an official of the French General Staff. Čaušević talked about a thousand men sentenced to death, 76 burnt houses, 270 villages ransacked with the active or passive help of the Serbian troops (*un millier d’hommes mis à mort, 76 femmes brûlées, 270 villages pillés et détruits*), sadly concluding: “*voilà le bilan, pour nous mahométans, des fêtes de joyeux avènement de cette Yougo-Slavie que nous nous apprêtons à server de toute notre âme*” (here is the balance for us Muslims of the feasts for the happy event of this Yugoslavia that we are going to serve with all our soul). This tragic balance of the celebration of Yugoslavia is flavoured with “*l’hostilité sourde que nous marquaient nos compatriotes orthodoxes s’est transformée en haine agissante*” (the blind hostility of our Orthodox compatriots turned into strong hate).

Čaušević stressed the difficult relationship with the Serbs who took power and wielded it by removing the other ethnic components of the region, especially the Muslims: “*mais les Serbes se refusent à nous regarder comme tels. On nous considère*

comme des intrus....Depuis que les Serbes sont devenus maîtres de la situation, jamais nous ne sommes admis dans les réunions politiques, dans les délibérations" (Serbs refuse to consider us as them. They treat us like intruders... After Serbs became the masters of the situation, we never have been admitted inside political meetings and deliberations). Before the arrival of the Serb army, Muslims had always had a recognized status: Sarajevo's mayor was a Muslim and all the political bodies had an adequate and proportional percentage of Muslims. On the contrary, when integration into the new state began, the situation worsened and at that moment Muslims could only expect to have two or three members in the Constituent Assembly.

All the first phases of post-war assessment were characterized by violence and disorder and the atmosphere was further exasperated by the spread of a Turkish threat: an anonymous person wrote in 1920 that Skopje hosted a meeting with many representatives of Muslim communities in Yugoslavia who adopted an intransigent resolution.

Troops increased their presence in Bosnia because of the lack of security but did not always contribute to accomplish their duty. On the contrary, they were often accomplices to atrocities, burning and sacking houses, raping women and killing men. A general sense of insecurity reigned over the region, which was also affected by a strict censorship of any kind of communications (printing, media, letters, telephone) and by a firm control for those who came back from the Russian front. This climate was not lightened and even if these measures were soon revoked, they continued to be enforced over the following months. In March, for example, D.A. Mursal was sentenced to fourteen years of prison because he refused to play in a theatre bearing an icon of King Peter, while in 1920 a telegram from the People's Council still ordered officials to punish all persons who said anything against Serbia or the dynasty (*Sve osobe, koje kliču Srbiji ili dinastiji...*).³³ In spite of the frailty of the situation, Muslims could count at least on their solidarity and on international support coming from Versailles.³⁴ Here, the minority issue was discussed and regulated with a network of international treaties. Article 51 of the Saint-Germain Treaty, signed between Austria and Yugoslavia in 1919, stated: "The Serb-Croat-Slovene State accepts and agrees to embody in a Treaty with the Principal Allied and Associated Powers such provisions as may be deemed necessary by these Powers to protect the interests of inhabitants of that State who differ from the majority of the population in race, language or religion. The Serb-Croat-Slovene State further accepts and agrees to embody in a Treaty with the Principal Allied and Associated Powers such provisions as these Powers may deem necessary to protect freedom of transit and equitable treatment of the commerce of other nations".³⁵

The interwar period

AS MANY authors have suggested, “if there was a moment when the nineteenth-century principle of nationality triumphed it was at the end of World War I, even though it was neither predictable nor the intention of the future victors”.³⁶ In the case of Yugoslavia, the state born after 1918 was taken as a successful example of integration, at least until the eighties. The Balkan wars and the collapse of this union opened a process of general historical revision, which was also aimed at reconsidering the effectiveness of the Yugoslav glue. This was true for the Croats, whose independent spirit is described in many historical works, and for the Bosniaks as well. The integration inside SHS meant for them the start of a difficult political struggle with Belgrade and the dynasty for the preservation of their economic, religious and cultural traditions. Although Muslims did not perceive these elements as the source of a different national identity, they started from the latter to reorganize their political life in the new Yugoslav State.

After the success in the 1920 elections, relations between the Muslims of Bosnia and Belgrade became a prerogative of the Yugoslav Muslim Organization. The organization included Ibrahim Maglajlić’s group, which had a centralized approach towards the future structure of the nation and Mehmed Spaho’s group, which instead claimed a form of autonomy within the Reign, negotiating with Belgrade the terms of an agreement. After assuring the Constituent Assembly about their autonomist will (not asking for federal basis), Spaho and others, such as Fehim Kurgbegović, insisted on concrete concessions, for example regarding land reform conditions. An agreement between the JMO and the Radical-Democrats was reached for the recognition of Bosnian historical borders inside the new state, while for religious matters the question of autonomy had already been settled, also thanks to the ratification of the Saint-Germain minority provisions, which were recognized through art. 12 of the Constitution and art. 109, known as the “Turkish chapter”, for the preservation of Islamic tribunals.

Bosniaks obtained their minimal demands: a softening in the application of the agrarian reforms, preservation of their religious autonomy (Islamic judges, *Vakuf* administration), religious equality in front of the law, and the territorial integrity of their historical borders around the six Bosnian districts (Sarajevo, Tuzla, Mostar, Travnik, Vrbas and Bihać). The price was the assumption of a centre-addressed constitution, which was left almost as a compulsive choice because of the Croats’ abstention. The Croatian Peasant Party led by Stjepan Radić chose isolation and this policy had permitted the government to devise “cynical tactics of buying the support of a number of weak and scattered groups (such as the Moslem landowners)”.³⁷

After the vote for the *Vidovdan* (St. Vitus day) Constitution on 28 June 1921 (passed with 223 votes out of more than 400), the following year the law regulating the administrative division was passed. JMO was once again animated by an inner debate: Spaho wanted to leave the government and cooperate with the Croats, whereas Hafiz Ibrahim Effendi Maglaljić, mufti of Tuzla, preferred to rely on Belgrade executive. In February 1922, Spaho resigned from the Industry and Commerce Ministry and formed a federalist bloc with Anton Korošec's Slovenes and Stjepan Radić's Croats, returning to government in 1924. This experience lasted but a short time and was commented with bitterness; "The Turks have come back to power", it was said. Generally, the situation was far from being optimal. The condition of Muslims was extremely vulnerable and the increasing "Serbian hegemony" in interwar years (Pinson p. 134) caused "*une pauperisation généralisée de la population musulmane*" (Mudry p. 163).³⁸

The first and most outstanding problem that affected Muslims in Yugoslavia concerned land reform. The agrarian question had its origins in the secular structure that Bosnian territory had under Ottoman rule. The majority of the land was not divided into small properties but was partitioned into large estates, which were left in the hands of Muslim landlords. Statistics from 1910 show how Serbs were in a position of "agrarian inferiority", because the Muslim nobles (*begovi, age, spahije*) owned more or less 3/5 of the cultivated land while Serbs were a small minority of the opposite *kmetovi* colonists group.³⁹

During the war, the Serbian government promised to assign hectares of land to each combatant at the end of the conflict in an attempt to attract volunteers from the peasantry. These hopes took hold when the fate of the conflict was brightening up in favour of the Serbs. Christian peasants started to take over the land without waiting for the legal measures and so "physical attacks against Muslims increased". The situation was not even affected by the entry of the Serbian army into Bosnia, because "individual Bosnian Serbs continued to attack Muslims and seize their property".⁴⁰ After the King's Manifesto of 24 December 1918, an Interim Decree on 25 February 1919 abolished serfdom throughout Yugoslavia, decided the division of the large estates and the compensation for this reform. The transfer of land in BIH was issued on 21 July while the compulsory purchase of the *beglik* holdings began on 14 February 1920. The latter decree was modified on 12 May 1921 softening the worst conditions imposed on Muslim landlords. They experienced an important shift from their pre-war conditions. Besides the loss of their functions inside the central Administration, the landlords were generally compensated with prices below the market value while their indemnities paid in government bonds suffered from the currency inflation.

A. Zulfikarpašić, who is considered the father of *Bošnjačka* ideology, remembered the effects of the agrarian reform: “the 1919 reforms were fundamentally flawed because they destroyed large estates thereby decreasing production capacity. Obviously, the underlying intention was to wipe out the Muslim population, since those agrarian reforms were carried out exclusively in areas where there were Muslims landowners and nowhere else.... Their aim was to take away their property and their rights and to break them”. He further added “after the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy...property was confiscated and the Muslim element in Bosnia suffered complete impoverishment”.⁴¹

As it deeply affected Muslim economic interests, the agrarian reform had an important place in the politics of the JMO during the twenties. JMO negotiated more moderate conditions and liberal terms of compensation and the agreement reached on these points was essential for the support given to the *Vidovdan* Constitution.

Generally, the twenties were marked by a gradual “Serbization” of the country and by the worsening of the relationships between the Serbs and the other nationalities of the Kingdom. Great Serbia nationalism spread quickly during the new Yugoslav experience. In fact, it was the official policy of the Belgrade government, which recovered the national spirit of the nineteenth century and the suggestions of the *Načertanije* treatise formulated by Ilija Garašanin in 1844.⁴² This attitude accompanied all the debates around the new constitution and the juridical protection of Muslim customs, which were strongly attacked and blamed as being backward and primitive, for example by the socialist Milan Korun.

As many studies have pointed out, the improvement of Serbian influence was clear in the institutions and army and it was sometimes accompanied by a radical increase in violence.⁴³ If the principal opponent of Serbian dominion was undoubtedly constituted by the revolutionaries of Macedonia and by the fierce Croats of *Hrvatska Seljačka Stranka*, HSS, who lost their leader in the notorious assassination in the Belgrade parliament in 1928, the Muslims were not exempted from these “troubles”. As a matter of fact, Muslims were “admired” neither by many conservative Orthodox Serbs nor by the king and his councilors.⁴⁴ Also, intellectuals like Ivo Andrić, who would become famous by describing Bosnian historical multiculturalism, were accused of having gradually turned towards a great Serb perspective. His 1924 dissertation entitled “*Die Entwicklung des geistigen Lebens in Bosnien unter der Einwirkung der Türkischen Herrschaft*” (The Development of Spiritual Life in Bosnia Under the Influence of Turkish Rule) is at the centre of this criticism .

The climate began once again to heat up and some incidents occurred along the border regions with Montenegro (Šahovići, Bahori and Vilogorac). In early November 1924, Šahovići and Pavino Polje were railed by a pogrom against

Muslims, who were accused of the death of the former county prefect, Boško Bošković, who was killed for revenge by the relatives of his wife on 7th November. At the funeral, the crowd was incited to bloody reprisals which lasted until the 10th and left on the field about six hundred dead Bosnian Muslims.⁴⁵ Paramilitary organizations like *Orjuna* (*Organizacija Jugoslavenskih Omladina*), Serbian Chetnik organizations, Osman Ūikić and *Srnao* (*Srpska Nacionalna Omladina*) were gaining ground with their virulent attacks, which in 1927 led to an attempt on Spaho's life. These groups clashed regularly with Hanao (*Hrvatska Narodna Omladina*), the youth army of the Croatian Party of Rights (HSP, *Hrvatska Stranka Prava*) as well as with JMO members. The ethnically mixed areas of Bosnia-Herzegovina and Vojvodina were the sites of the worst political violence in interwar Yugoslavia. During this period brutality increased day by day and it was stopped neither by the 1929 dictatorship nor by the assassination of King Alexander in 1934.

Besides the appointment of Maglajić as *Reis al-ulema*, the royal dictatorship had other consequences. The law of January 31 1930 regarding the Islamic Religious Community deprived the Muslims of their autonomy in religious affairs, now controlled by the Ministry of Justice, and the *Reis-al-ulema* was moved to Belgrade. The king dissolved Parliament and forbade political parties based on confessional and tribal features. Moreover, after the Law of October 1929, Bosnia and Herzegovina ceased to be a single territorial unit and was broken up as a historical entity; its territory was divided into four Banates (*banovina*) named after rivers and ethnically addressed towards a Serbian majority (Drinska, Vrbaska, Primorska and Zetska).

The signs of an unconscious nationality

THE CONDITIONS of the Bosniaks inside interwar Yugoslavia, marked by violence of post-war anarchy, worsened with the general impoverishment caused by the land reform, and the Bosniaks were finally surrounded by a climate which also saw occasional episodes of intolerance. The Belgrade government did not contribute to ease the general feeling of isolation and insecurity that characterized those years; on the contrary, in many cases it increased further. If the inauguration of Karadjordjević rule was not as enthusiastic as the Yugoslavian supporters imagined, the problems between the centre and the periphery did not get better over the years. The isolation experienced by Bosniaks became stronger and stronger and was well focused on in many works, for instance those by Ahmed Murad-Begoviæ, who questioned the cost of integration and emphasized the distance that separated Muslims from Christians.⁴⁶ Therefore, the violence of the post-war years, the economic decline and the political and cultural

isolation that marked the integration into Yugoslavia pooled the Bosniaks towards an inner closure, as a form of reaction “against the world outside”. In fact, many reasons for complaint deteriorated the already distrustful approach that Muslims had with their new compatriots. As a consequence of the agrarian reform and the 1929 crisis, their economic status got even worse. Also, religious autonomy was limited over the years. Even before 1929, some provisions had compelled Muslims to “westernise” their social habits and traditions. In 1926 a new law was passed on the status of women, while since 1923 having more than one wife meant payment of a special tax and the husband had to have the permission of the first wife.

Bosniaks, however, obtained some important, if not extraordinary, results in assuring certain continuity from the previous years. Bosnian administrative unity was more or less preserved through the six SHS districts, autonomy in religious and family affairs continued and, on the whole, Bosniaks could continue developing their own identity.

Muslims had their own religious authorities, like *Reis al-ulema*, who was called to regulate religious affairs- for example, the interrogations proposed by believers and authorities, giving *fatwa* which had an important influence on ordinary social and economic life.⁴⁷ They continued to manage schools and educational matters, and to apply Islamic family and inheritance law in front of special judges. They could manage their economic interests through the *Vakuf* system, which owned land and buildings of many kinds, from cemeteries to schools. Even under the political point of view, Bosniaks behaved exactly as a cohesive ethnic group giving their consensus to JMO, a party that in 1928, although under attack from both Croatian and Serbian politicians, still polled 97% of Bosnia’s Muslim vote. Since the beginning, the target of the Muslims was the defence of their economic position and the preservation of their religious freedom and these two elements were not so distant as may appear. The political activity of the most representative Muslim party consisted in finding a place inside the government coalitions of the moment, and also thanks to this, it enabled the party to effectively defend, as far as it could, the economic and religious sphere of Bosniaks. Thanks to the coalition policy followed during the twenties, JMO succeeded in granting a certain level of autonomy, which vanished with Alexander’s dictatorship. But even though the guarantees given to Muslims soon vaporized, they helped their integration into the new western society and the deepening of that reformist view which had started during the Habsburg domination and continued under Karadjordjevic. For example, thanks to the reviews “Reforma”, “Novi Behar” and “Hikjmet” which appeared between 1928-1930.⁴⁸ At that time there was the first woman, Bahrija Nuri Hadžić, singing at the Opera in Belgrade, and also local relationships were generally peaceful. Spaho became a very impor-

tant and respected politician, to the point that there were many legends about his importance in Belgrade.⁴⁹

JMO was also the centre of debates and discussions about the cultural path of Muslims and represented a means of integration into the new State. If JMO leaders sometimes clashed with the conservative perspective of religious authorities, they led a process of modernization in culture and politics.⁵⁰ During the 1923 campaign and the following ones, the party again appealed to Islamic solidarity, warning that the “existence” of Bosnia’s Muslims was at stake. JMO was the only salvation and those who did not vote for it committed an “unpardonable sin before God and before the nation”. Few Muslims sinned, and the JMO was able to form the short-lived *prečani* front, with Croats and Slovenes.

The efforts made in all fields of social, economic and political life converged towards the same direction- the strengthening of a Muslim Slavic identity, different and separate from the other ones. Moreover, Serbs and Croats could identify themselves simply through their religious faith, and in Bosnia “Muslims acted yet in the same way as other communities who defended their own identity; on the contrary, they did it more effectively than any other Bosnian political group”.⁵¹ At the end of the interwar period, Bosniaks had achieved a solid identity and expressed it even in very particular ways, for example when in 1943 a group of Muslims submitted a memorandum to the *Führer* declaring their Gothic origins.⁵²

Violence, unfortunately, seemed to be the sad constant of the development of Bosniak identity. The Second World War was even more brutal than the first as it was accompanied by plans and operations that nearly became the tragic practise of genocide. In this sense, many consider Vaso Cubrilovic and Andric’s thesis on the expulsion of Albanians (in 1937 and in 1939) the warning signs of a second genocide aimed at Muslims.⁵³

But to see the final achievement of a Bosniak nationality, the world would have to wait for another terrible war. In 1958 the “Encyclopaedia Americana” stated that “The population of Bosnia and Herzegovina is made up almost exclusively of Serbs and Croats, since the insignificant German minority left the country before World War II” and wondered that “the problem arises as to what the Muslims are to be considered ethnically?”⁵⁴

In 1963 the Bosniak nationality obtained its first legal recognition - under the term of “Muslim in a national sense” - which for some, like the jurist Prof. Hamdija Čemerlić, was not to be interpreted simply in a religious sense. In 1969 Wayne Vucinić saw Muslims as something similar to a nation and in 1971 Hamdija Pozderac, a communist politician, defined the government’s Muslim-hood as an alternative idea of Bosnian-hood.

Tito viewed Islam as a tool of ideological warfare against the West, and Bogumilism a historical legacy to remember the old battle against *cesaropapis-*

mo. Moreover, his attempts to solve Yugoslav interethnic relations led him to adopt a conciliatory attitude towards the national question. It made possible the further development that Muslims knew under socialism, with the Islamic Declaration and the first clashes in the eighties.⁵⁵

The Balkan wars signified the final stages of the violence against Muslims throughout the twentieth century. But unlike the past, in 1995 the Dayton agreement proclaimed the independence of Bosnia-Herzegovina: "With this terrible and dirty war the process revved up once again and improved. Officially the Bosniak nation (*bošnjačka*) was proclaimed as well as the language (*bosanski ili bošnjački jezik*)".⁵⁶ When Bosniak nationality openly realized its own process of self-determination, only at the end of the twentieth century, after much strife and violence, historians started focusing on the Muslim past from a new perspective. The classical South-Slavic brotherhood theme was replaced by a new "national" vision of Bosniaks and Bosnia-Herzegovina and it helped to reconsider the main phases of Bosnian contemporary history. These studies emphasized with new interest the path followed by the Muslims of Bosnia, pointing out the particularity of their experience within the Hapsburg and Yugoslav States. Consequently, we now have a more thorough knowledge of multicultural Bosnia with a full understanding of her national features.

Bosniaks, as well as Croats and Serbs, inherited from the nineteenth century a precise cultural and religious identity, which took one century to bloom. Reviewing Bosnian history from the nineteenth to the twentieth centuries, it is possible to find out the first signs of what are generally taken as the features of a national identity. Habsburg support in the field of economic development and the western climate that was giving a new shape to the region were the symptoms of a new reality. The impact of the Habsburg rule was not a simple change of government, but it triggered many outstanding changes in Bosnian reality (printing of newspapers and editions, new associative experiences, new social relationships, etc). Under Austrian rule, Bosnia experienced meaningful reforms, which set traditions and methods of Islam side-by-side to a western social model, in which the national aspirations were flourishing just like industrial and economic development. Bosniaks guarded their historical legacy and preserved it into a Christian State adapting their old dogmas to their new situation. Thanks to this, they gained a strong and compact political representation, which supported their interests in Vienna and later in Belgrade and succeeded in assuring Bosnian administrative continuity. Considering that economy is also a useful tool to determine a certain level of identity, Bosniaks always distinguished themselves for their economic skills and interests and addressed their policies towards the combination of the defence of their religious autonomy and of their economic space. From a political point of view, they behaved exactly like

a minority ethnic group, giving their votes massively to JMO. Even during the first stages of the Karadjordjevic State, Bosniaks could count on certain regulations contained in international treaties and on certain constitutional guarantees which assured them a certain autonomy for the management of religious affairs, family and heritage law. Although this protection was gradually reduced during the thirties and the Second World War, they continued to develop a singular form of western Islam and, facing different stages of violence and hostility, strengthened their national solidarity and cohesion. Time and mainly violence converted this core of community values into a real national identity, achieved only after a gradual process of identity construction, which was accelerated by the hatred shown against the Bosniaks. The 20th century wars marked an escalation of violence against the Muslims of Bosnia and accompanied their path towards a full perception of themselves as a nation. All this alongside ethnically addressed electoral behaviour, historical continuity and religious speciality, which were all present from the beginning of the twentieth century. At that time, Bosniaks viewed their particularity as a religious one, preferring to stress other elements of similarity among Slavs; at the same time, they had already proved to have all the cards to play to gain the official status of nationality. Perhaps it was violence that made this target more urgent and turned this consciousness into something more concrete, than at the end of World War I. From that moment, *Bošnjaka* remained a “sleeping nation” until she finally and tragically demonstrated her existence.⁵⁷



Notes

1. E. J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780. Programme, myth, reality*, Cambridge 1990, p. 36.
2. While the term Bosnian includes all the ethnic groups of the region, in this article the term Bosniak (*Bošnjak*) is used referring to Muslim groups of Bosnia-Herzegovina and the surrounding zones, Sanjak, Kosovo and Macedonia. M. Imamovic, *The Bosniaks* in *Who's Who among Bosniacs*, Sarajevo 2001, pp. 13 ss.
3. J. Milaković, *Knjižveni pupoljci učiteljskih pripravnika u Sarajevo 1887-1912*, Sarajevo 1912. Many studies were dedicated to this interesting topic throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, even during the socialist period (Clanak, Sidak). D. Kamber, *Kardinal torquemada i ri bosanska bogomila*, Zagreb 1932; I. Loprenović, *Umutarnja zemlja*, Zagreb 1999; M. M. Petrović, *Pomen Bogomila-babuna u Zakonopravlu svetoga Save i "crnka bosanska"*, Belgrade 1995.
4. Also Safet-bey Bagašić in 1900 stated that Bosnia had lost her independency not in the fifteenth century but in the nineteenth. S. S. Hadžihuseinović Muvekkit, *Povijest Bosna*, Sarajevo 1999; J. Mulić, *O nekim posebnostina vezanim za postupak prihvatanja Islama u Bosni i netačnostivna koje mu se pripisaju*, in “Anali Gazi Husrev-Begove Biblioteke”, XXIII-XXIV (2005), pp. 179-202.

5. "Dolaskom Gazi-Husrev Begana na èelo Bosne nastaju nove ekonomske, društvene, pa i političke promjene, koje će usvom daljem toku dovesti do daljeg svestranog razvoja Sarajeva, koje od malog provincijskijskog grada (kasabe) prerasta u veliki grad (šeber)". D. Salih Spahić, *Sarajevo do Gazi Husrev-Bega*, in "Anali Gazi Husrev-Begove Biblioteke", Knjiga XIX-X, 1990, p. 204.
6. "Le plus grave échec de Kallay fut sa politique des nationalités". G. Castellan (1991) p. 349; J. R. Lampe, *Balkan Economic History. 1550-1950. From Imperial Borderlands to Developing Nations*, Bloomington 1982. Yet in 1922 this evaluation was shared by some, who talked about spare results obtained by Austria-Hungary. A. Filipic, *La Jugoslavia economica*, Milano 1922, p. 44. Donia considered the result of the Habsburg educational efforts as modest, something similar to a "Pyrric victory". R. Donia. *Sarajevo. A Biography*, London 2009, p. 88.
7. Report from the Colonial office, March 1908, Stato Maggiore dell'Esercito historical Archive, Ausme, G33, b. 9, 92.
8. Generally the Habsburg dominion is considered positively, but this consideration was questioned by authors who stressed the growth of the taxes and the failure of a nationality policy. "Le plus grave échec de Kallay fut sa politique des nationalités". G. Castellan, *Histoire des Balkans. XIVe-XXe Siècle*, Paris 1991, p. 349; J. R. Lampe, *Balkan Economic History. 1550-1950. From Imperial Borderlands to Developing Nations*, Bloomington 1982. Donia considered the result of the Habsburg educational efforts as modest, something similar to a "Pyrric victory", while yet in 1922 the economic performances were thought to have given just spare results. R. Donia. *Sarajevo. A Biography*, London 2009, p. 88; A. Filipic, *La Jugoslavia economica*, Milano 1922, p. 44.
9. This process has been interpreted quite critically by some authors who pointed out that "all through the nineteenth century, Muslim peoples of Anatolia, the Crimea, the Balkans, and the Caucasus had suffered overwhelming mortality". J. McCarthy, *Death and Exile. The Ethnic Cleansing of Ottoman Muslims. 1821- 1922*, Princeton 1995, p. xv.
10. *Vakuf* were the main expression of Muslim solidarity and for many centuries proved to be particularly important for the development of urban centres, until the start of the Christian Balkan *reconquista*, which later would mean the start of their nationalization. M. A. Mujić, *Neke Vakufname iz Bosne i Hercegovine (XV-XVII) – forme, jezik i stil*; A. Handžić, *Vakuf kao Nosilac određenim državnih i društvenih funkcija u osmanskom carstvu*; F. Karčić, *Medunarodnopravno regulisanje vakufskih pitanja u jugoslavenskih zemljana*, in "Anali Gazi Husrev-Begove Biblioteke", Knjiga IX-X, 1990 pp. 17-24, pp. 113-120, 141-153.
11. O. Lavić, *Iseljavanje Bošnjaka muslimana iz Bosne i Hercegovine vrijeme austro-ugarske vladavine i risala Mehmeda teufika Azapagića*, in "Anali Gazi Husrev-Begove Biblioteke", Knjiga XVII-XVIII, 1996, pp. 123 ss.
12. M.M. Holbach, *Bosnia and Herzegovina. Some wayside wanderings*, San Diego 1909, pp. 91-92. The author also added some historical considerations on the Austrian contribution and the religion "adopted not from compulsion but to enjoy the greater privileges of the ruling race". In fact, "In spite of the fact that all of Europe has heard of the persecutions of Christians in Mohameddan land, one-half of the population here remained Christian". Even though the Muslims of Bosnia had a leading role in Sarajevo, autonomy movements started in Mostar where many associations were set up with the aim of questioning Sarajevo's centrality. For other historical descriptions of Sarajevo see: G. Perrot, *Gli slavi meridionali: Bosnia, Erzegovina, Croazia, Slavonia, confini militari: ricordi di un viaggio*, Milano 1875, G. Bertolini, *Tra musulmani e slavi: in automobile a traverso Bosnia ed Erzegovina, Dalmazia e Croazia*, Milano 1909.
13. Pan-Islamic orientation was central in "Biser" editions and in the ones promoted by the new Muslim printing house, among which Abd al-Aziz Djawish's treatise *al-Khilafah al-Islamiya*, Halil Halid's *Borba polumjeseca i krsta*, Azmzade Rafik-beg's and Djelal Nuri Ileri's *Ittibad-I Islam*. F. Karčić, *The Bosniaks and challenges of modernity: late Ottoman and Hapsburg times*,

- Sarajevo 1999; M. A. Hoare, *History of Bosnia. From the Middle Ages to the Present Day*, London 2007, p. 49.
14. All these movements used the press to spread their programs. In 1906 *Muslimanska Narodna Organizacija* (a.k.a. *Muslimanska Narodna Stranka*) began publishing "Musavat" (equality); in 1908 *Muslimanska Napredna Stranka* published the antiserb and trialist "Svjest". In 1910, *Muslimanska Samostalna Stranka* activated "Muslimanska Sloga". From 1911 until 1914 *Ujedinjena Muslimanska Organizacija* published "Zeman"; in 1910 *Muslimanska Demokratska Stranka* published "Samouprava" (self-management). In 1914 the pro Austro-Hungarian newspaper "Vukat" appeared in Sarajevo. There was no Muslim independent policy and the newspapers and organizations rarely had a long life. A. Popovic, *Les musulmans de Bosnie-Herzégovine. Histoire et politique*, in "Dialogue" vol. 5, Mars 1996, no. 17, pp. 7-15.
 15. B. Jelavich, *History of the Balkans. Vol. 2. The Twentieth Century*, Cambridge 1983, p. 62 .
 16. "In 1910 the Bosniak Parliament was convened. The Bosniak representatives entered it and showed that they had mastered the art of modern politics". F. Karčić, p. 105.
 17. After the annexation of 1908 "*i numerosi attentati perpetrati da giovani o giovanissimi, in Croazia e in Bosnia, dal 1910 al 1914, crearono il clima che culminò nell'uccisione di Francesco Ferdinando, alla cui camarilla militare la voce pubblica attribuiva la paternità delle accuse e delle persecuzioni*". L. Valiani, *La dissoluzione dell' Austria-Ungheria*, Milano 1966, p. 51.
 18. M. Pinson (ed. by), *The Muslims of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Their Historical Development from the Middle Ages to the Dissolution of Yugoslavia*, Cambridge Massachusetts 1994, p. 111.
 19. From the Italian military attaché, Galanti, from Uskub to the Foreign Affairs Minister in Rome, 16th January 1915, no. 34/3, Stato Maggiore dell'Esercito Historical Archive (Aussme), Rome, G33, b. 35, 320. "*lungo tutte le frontiere albanesi e bulgare i musulmani fuggono in gran numero abbandonando le loro case, le terre, il bestiame... il nostro consolato è giorno e notte sorvegliato da agenti di polizia e da spie e mi consta che tutti i musulmani che vi si sono recati in questi giorni sono poi stati tratti in arresto e bastonati*".
 20. "*Procedono ora ad arbitrarie visite e perquisizioni nelle case di turchi, mentre agenti subalterni non di rado si impadroniscono degli oggetti di valore che trovano*". The Italian Consul at Monastir and Nisch, Monastir 27th January 1915, no. 23/6, Aussme, G33, b. 35, 320.
 21. Comando del Corpo di Stato Maggiore, Roma 13rd March 1915, "News from Serbia", No. 310, Aussme, G33, b. 35, 332.
 22. M. Hoare, pp. 89-90.
 23. T. Mudry, *Histoire de la Bosnie-Herzégovine. Faits et controverses*, Paris 1999, p. 152.
 24. Hadžić was injured. For the debates in 1918, H. Kamberović, *Projugoslavenska struja među muslimanskib političarima 1918 godine*, in "Historijska traganja, 3, 2009, pp. 58, 100-101.
 25. This also affected Bosnia, where General Šarkotić complained about the deserters' activity. 683 deserters, 2170 soldiers who exceeded the terms of their license and 670 war invalids were recovered. As the emperor's manifesto did not appeal directly to Muslims and Bosnians, they lost their last energy to fight. Out of 298,000 soldiers recruited in Bosnia, during the first war 51,815 were injured, 12,726 remained disabled. Z. Šehić, *Bosanci I Hercegovci vojnoj organizaciji austro-ugarske monarhije u posljednjoj ratnoj godini*, in "Historijska traganja, 3, 2009, pp. 39-40, 47.
 26. Although there were also other parties outside Bosnia: *Cemiyet, Dzemijet, Demokratska Zajednica* and *Socijalistička Radnika Partija*, during the interwar period the JMO proved to be the most influential one. A. Purivatra, *Nacionalni i politički razvitak Muslimana*, Sarajevo 1969.
 27. N. Malcolm, *Storia della Bosnia, Dalle origini ai giorni nostri*, Milano 2000, p. 223. Bosniaks had served the Austrian army and sometimes they have participated in the rude and repressive measures taken against Serbs during the war. M. Klemenčič - M. Žagar, *The former Yugoslavia's diverse peoples: a reference sourcebook*, 2004, Santa Barbara 2004, p. 132.

28. Bianchini suggests that it was absolutely understandable that Croatian and Slovene politicians, coming from the old imperial structure, aspired to a more articulated and modern State. S. Bianchini, *Sarajevo. Le radici dell'odio. Identità e destino dei popoli balcanici*, Roma 1993, pp. 30-31.
29. *Une Reclamation du dernier prince de Bosnie*, in "Le Temps" 19 August 1919, p. 2. During those months, the same newspaper followed carefully the situation in Montenegro, which also seemed to be affected by a difficult attitude towards Belgrade.
30. Capo di gabinetto del presidente del Consiglio Battioni al presidente del consiglio, Orlando, Parigi 27 febbraio 1919 t. 536. *I documenti diplomatici italiani*, Sesta serie, 1918-1922, Vol. I, Roma 1955. Il comandante supremo delle forze armate Diaz al presidente del consiglio, Orlando, Italia 1 gennaio 1919, Tel. 3148/35908: "*in questi ultimi tempi sono corse voci di probabili perturbamenti ordine pubblico in Montenegro*"; nota del ministro degli Esteri, Sonnino, agli ambasciatori a Parigi Bonin Longare e Londra Imperiali, Roma 4 gennaio 1919 t. 14: "*insurrezione Montenegro scoppiata 2 corrente, insorti chiedono occupazione alleati con esclusione serbi, onde mettere il paese in condizione di decidere liberamente propria sorte*". *I documenti diplomatici italiani*, Sesta serie, 1918-1922, Vol. III, Roma 1980.
31. The director of the "ufficio I.T.O della Venezia Giulia" tenente colonnello Finzi, also talked about a "*bluff serbo balcanico*". *I documenti diplomatici italiani*, Sesta serie, 1918-1922, vol. III, Roma 2007.
32. C. Rivet, *Les Partis Bosniaques*, in "Le Temps", 1st April 1919, p. 3.
33. Many documents show how censorship and military controls were systematically applied and over time they became a part of the scenario. "*Jer su jedinstavno dio folklore na ovim prostorima*". E. S. Omerović, *Elementi represije u radu Narodnog Vijeća Slovenaca, Hrvata i Srba za Bosnu i Hercegovinu i Narodne Vlade za Bosnu i Hercegovinu*, in "Histojska traganja", 3, 2009, pp. 200-211.
34. Even if this point of view was not shared by everyone; for example the Foreign Affairs Minister, Sonnino, said that the "alto commissario a Costantinopoli, Sforza, Paris 27 febbraio 1919 t. 183: "*in genere delegati italiani si adoperano in favore punto di vista maomettano...sosteniamo garanzie per istituzioni religiose Adrianopoli e per popolazione musulmana ivi e altrove. Delegazioni altri Stati non secondano nostro punto di vista*". *I documenti diplomatici italiani*, Sesta serie, 1918-1922, Vol. III, Roma 1980.
35. Other provisions regarding Bosnia-Herzegovina were art. 204 c.2 2. about the public debt of Bosnia and Herzegovina and article 263 about the condition "...of the individuals and juridical persons previously nationals of the former Austrian Empire, including Bosnia-Herzegovinians". Belgrade also had to sign a treaty (10 September 1919) for the protection of minorities, whose art. 10 granted "to the Muslims in the matter of family law and personal status provisions for regulating these matters in accordance with Muslim usage", the nomination of a Reiss-al-Ulema and the protection of mosques, cemeteries and other religious establishments. For the history of the minority issue during Versailles peace negotiations, H.W. Temperley (edited by), *A History of the Peace Conference of Paris*, Vol. V, "Economic Reconstruction and Protection of Minorities", London 1921; C. A. Macartney, *National States and National Minorities*, New York 1934.
36. E.J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalisms*, p. 131.
37. The result was a new Constitution with "far more centralistic lines than would have been possible if its critics had taken part in the debates". H.C. Darby – R. W. Seton-Watson – P. Auty – S. Clissold – R. G. D Laffin, *A Short History of Yugoslavia. From Early Times to 1966*, Cambridge 1966, pp. 170-171. Beside the Hss Peasant Party, the hardliners were the *frankovci* (Croatian Party of Rights), *zelenasi* (users) from Montenegro, Albanian *kaçaci* (renegades), the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization and the communists.

38. An interesting study on the economic integration of the new State shows how the efforts made by Belgrade, moreover, did not have good results on the economy of Bosnia and of the whole State. Financial law of 1922-1923 did not reach its targets and many times the funds given by *Zemljanska Banka* were not well spent. S. Brkljača, *Neke karakteristike integracijskih procesa Bosne i Hercegovine novu državu kraljevinu Srba, Hrvata i Slovenaca/Jugoslaviju*, in "Historijska traganja", 3, 2009, pp. 140-142, 158, 172.
39. H.C. Darby – R. W. Seton-Watson, p. 71. There were 9,537 Muslim landlords against 633 Serbs and 267 Croats, while Muslim *kmetovi* were only 3,653 against 58,920 Serbs and 17,115 Croats. This division had important roots in the Ottoman period, when "for the Muslim religion and law, all the land owned by the State, that is to say by the caliph, shadow and substitute of God on earth". A. Filipic, pp. 90-92.
40. R.J. Donia, *Bosnia and Herzegovina. A Tradition Betrayed*, London 1994, pp. 122-123.
41. In Bosnia the distribution of the land especially affected Muslims, "after the reforms, there was a systematic colonization of the confiscated lands in which non-Muslim families from Montenegro, Serbia and Lika took part as well as Serb families from Bosnia", A. Zulfikarpašić, *The Bosniak*, London 1968, p. 15-16, 90. The role of Bosniak emigration was particularly important for the development of the Bosniak idea, Š. Filandra – E. Karić. *Bošnjačka ideja*, Zagreb 2002.
42. It was the "continuation of the Great Serbian project originating from the 19th century". S. Lavić, *The Dictatorship of Nationalism. Great Serbian Expansionism, Ethnic Perversion and The Will of People*, in "Survey. Periodical for Social Studies" 3-4, 2007 p. 95
43. The great increase in Serbs in the army could be found in single institutions like the Military Academy, where the Serbs accounted for 60% in 1919 and became 84% in 1928; and generally Serbs were "retaining their dominant role in the officer corps". *The Troubled Balkans. History's dangerous legacy* in "Understanding Global Issues", 96/1.
44. Later, Stojadinovic would point out that Alexander had a dislike for the Muslims. On this question, at any rate, there is a debate between the supporters, like Ivan Meštrović, and the historiography that contrasts this theory. I. Meštrović, *Uspomene na političke ljude i događaje*, Zagreb 1969; A. S. Konjuhović, *Muslimani prema hrvatskom nacionalizmu i borbenom katolicizmu*, in B. Miljuš (ed. by), *Ivan Meštrović i antisrpska klevetnička propaganda*, Windsor 1970.
45. If until September 1920 there were approximately 2000 Muslim victims, by July 1926, 126 Muslims had been killed and about 500 Bosnian village cooperatives were set on fire. Many families, fearing for their life, left for Turkey and abandoned their property. M. Imamović, *Historija Bosanska*, p. 490; *Bosnia and Herzegovina. Evolution of its Legal and Political Institutions*, Sarajevo 2006, p.252.
46. Ahmed Murad-Begović, *Karakter i život jugoslavenskih muslimana*, in "Mlada Jugoslavija" I/1922, 2 pp. 39-41; *Izolacija naših muslimana*, in "Slobodna Tribuna" II/1922, 2, p.122; *Jugoslavenstvo i naših muslimana*, in "Riječ" XXV/1929, 38, p. 7-8; *Problem Jugoslavenske muslimanske izolacije*, in "Nova Europa" III/1921, 4, pp. 107-116; *O karakteru i psihi naših muslimana*, in "Gajret" X/1926 1926; Ć. Mitrović, *Naši muslimani*, Sarajevo 1926. The bitter conclusion was that "emancipacija ili još bolje abdicacija od svijr starih vrijednost nije ni potrebna ni korisna" (emancipation or even worse abdication from old values was neither correct nor useful). U. Bavčić, *Determinante etničke posebnosti Bosanskih Muslimana u eweima*, in "Anali Gazi Husrev-Begove Biblioteke" XVII-XVIII, p. 402.
47. A number of these *fatwa* from 1918 to 1945 are housed in the Gazi Husrev-beg Archives in Sarajevo, which also have an interesting space on the Islamic *Riyasat* written mostly in Bosniak. It includes acts from many religious and political bodies like *Vakuf, Mufti...* from 1882 to 1970 and represents an unquestionable source to study the inner cultural and religious life of the Muslim community during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

48. X. Bougarel, *Farewell to the Ottoman Legacy? Islamic Reformism and Revivalism in Interwar Bosnia-Herzegovina*, in N. Clayer-E. Germain, *Islam in inter-war Europe*, New York 2008, p. 313
49. It was said that there was a special train, *Mad Sarajlija* ready to take Spaho quickly to the capital, A. Lopasic, *Bosnian Muslims: A Search for Identity*, in "Bulletin of the British Society for Middle Eastern Studies", Vol. 8, no. 2, 1981, p. 120. During the twenties, JMO obtained 24 seats in 1920, 18 in 1923, 15 in 1925 and 18 in 1927. For JMO history, A. Purivatra *Jugoslavenska muslimanska organizacija u političkom životu Kraljevina Srba, Hrvata i Slovenaca*, Sarajevo, 1974.
50. In 1927 Čaušević caused a great scandal with statements about *Vakuf* city lands, and provoked the criticism of the clergy who was still conservative and opposed to the reforming view inspired by Afghani's work. Some inner clashes affected JMO as well, where the results obtained by the leadership were strongly criticized. M. Pelesić, *Drijemanje na ramenu vremena ili žudna vlašću predvodnika iznad nada i strahova sunarodnjaka*, in "historijska rtaganja", 3, 2009, pp. 78-80.
51. N. Malcolm, pp. 227-228.
52. R. Petrović, *Il fallito modello federale della ex Jugoslavia*, Soveria Mannelli 2005, pp.317-319.
53. For some, many documents describing the atrocities that Muslims suffered justify the term genocide. V. Dedijer – A. Miletić, *Genocid na Muslimanima 1941-45: Zbornik dokumenata I sredočenja*, Sarajevo 1990; M. Imamović – R. Mahmutćehajić, *Bosnia and the Bosnian Muslims*, Sarajevo 1991.
54. *Encyclopedia Americana* Vol 4, 1958, pp. 287-289.
55. "Le nationalisme musulman est désormais une réalité et cette réalité traduit l'ancrage des Bosniaques islamisés à la modernité". Mudry, p. 329.
56. R. Petrović, *Il fallito modello federale*, p. 96. The war was also helpful to recover the old Bosniak values: *Pobratimstvo* (brotherhood), *Kumstvo* (patronage), *komsiluk* (good neighbourhood).
57. "The true birth of a nation is the moment when a handful of people declares that it exists and tries to prove it". A.M. Thiesse, *La creazione delle identità nazionali in Europa*, Bologna 2001, p. 7.

Bibliography

S. Balic, *Bosnian Muslims: Historical Background and Present Conflicts*, Istanbul 1995; S. Balic, *Religion, ethnicity and laicism of Bosnian Muslims*, Zagreb 1995; I. Banac, *The National Question in Yugoslavia: Origins, History, Politics*, Ithaca N.Y, 1984; H.C. Darby – R. W. Seton-Watson – P. Auty – S. Clissold – R. G. D Laffin, *A Short History of Yugoslavia. From Early Times to 1966*, Cambridge 1966; R. J. Donia, *Bosnia and Herzegovina. A Tradition Betrayed*, London 1994; R. J. Donia, *Islam under the Double-Eagle: The Muslims of Bosnia-Herzegovina. 1878-1914*, New York 1981; R. J. Donia. *Sarajevo. A Biography*, London 2009; A. Filipic, *La Jugoslavia economica*, Milano 1922; F. Karčić, *The Bosniaks and challenges of modernity: late Ottoman and Hapsburg times*, Sarajevo 1999; M. A. Hoare, *History of Bosnia. From the Middle Ages to the Present Day*, London 2007; M. Imamović, *Bosnia and Herzegovina. Evolution of its Legal and Political Institutions*, Sarajevo 2006; M. Imamović – I. Lovrenović, *Bosnia and its People. Bosnia and Herzegovina. A Millennium of Continuity*, Sarajevo 1992; M. Imamović – R. Mahmutćehajić, *Bosnia and the Bosnian Muslims*, Sarajevo 1991; B. Jelavich, *History of the Balkans. Vol. 2. The Twentieth Century*, Cambridge 1983; T. Mudry, *Histoire de la Bosnie-Herzégovine. Faits et controerses*, Paris 1999; E. S. Omerović, *Elementi represije u radu Narodnog Vijeća Slovenaca, Hrvata i Srba za Bosnu i Hercegovinu i Narodne Vlade za Bosnu i Hercegovinu*,

in “Historijska traganja”, 3, 2009; M. Pinson (ed. By), *The Muslims of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Their Historical Development from the Middle Ages to the Dissolution of Yugoslavia*, Cambridge Massachusetts 1994; A. Popovic – S. Balić - M. Begić, *La Bosnie. Carrefour d’identités culturelles*, Paris 1994; R. Petrović, *Il fallito modello federale della ex Jugoslavia*, Soveria Mannelli 2005; F. Schevill, *The History of the Balkan Peninsula. From the earliest times to the present day*, New York 1922; M. Yovanovitch, *La réforme administrative en Yougoslavie*, Paris 1932; P. G. Yovanovitch, *La réforme agrarie en Bosnie et Herzegovine*, Paris 1927; A. Zulfikarpašić, *The Bosniak*, London 1968.

Abstract

Under Two Dinasties. An Inquiry into the Historical Roots of a Bosniak National Identity

Every nation is the strange mixture of different features: some stressed their cultural and idiomatic particularities, others their faith or their economic skills; certain nations pointed out their ethnic uniqueness, others had all these elements as the result of historical dynamics that, through diplomacy and the violence of wars, accompanied the birth of new nations. In the last few years, Europe has witnessed not only the European integration process and the sovranational construction of common institutions, but also the fragmentation of her old status quo, especially in the former Soviet Union and in the south-eastern and Balkan area, where the wars of the nineties accelerated the decline and collapse of Yugoslavia, on whose ruins new national identities rose side by side with the appearance of new countries.

During these troubled years, Bosnia experienced the definitive consolidation of a national Bosniak identity. This process, which had already begun during the communist regime, was speeded up by the war and, after the Dayton agreement, by the formation of a new state with a new and fragile cultural perspective.

Keywords

nationalism, Bosnia, Balkans, Habsburg, world wars, national identity, Bosniak culture, Muslims, Jugoslavenska Muslimanska Demokratija