

## *'Greater Serbia' and 'Greater Croatia': the Moslem question in Bosnia-Hercegovina*

We live in the borderland between two worlds, on the border between nations, within everybody's reach, always someone's scapegoat. Against us the waves of history break, as if against a cliff. (Meša Selimović: *Dervish and Death*)<sup>1</sup>

I can see that the situation is far more complicated and more difficult than other problems I have seen, even Cambodia. It is the peculiar three-sided nature of the struggle here that makes it so difficult. Everyone says that most people do not want this to happen. Yet it does. Everybody says it must stop. Yet it doesn't. (Richard Holbrooke: *To End a War*)<sup>2</sup>

WHILE THIS STUDY has focused on the continuous and vitriolic debate over history and current events pursued by Serbian and Croatian politicians, historians, and journalists, another aspect of the war of words and images deserves special consideration. The debate over Bosnia-Hercegovina was of immense importance throughout the crisis. Both Milošević and Tudjman, together with their nationalist supporters, dreamed of creating their respective 'Greater Serbias' and 'Greater Croatias'. In the Bosnian crisis, Serbs and Croats often worked together, and, as early as 1991, Milošević and Tudjman had carved up Bosnia on paper. At a diplomatic cocktail party with Western leaders in London, Tudjman was the first to boast of his geopolitical ambitions, famously drawing a detailed map on a napkin.<sup>3</sup> In Bosnia, the Moslems were seen as the primary threat to the creating of larger national states. Serbian and Croatian machinations, including the production of propaganda, thus followed very similar strategies.

Incorporating chunks of Bosnia-Hercegovina into Croatia and Serbia became central to the legitimacy of both governments, who had pledged to unite Diaspora nationals throughout the region. In line with a cyclical view of history, Serbian and Croatian leaders argued that many of the Falls suffered by their peoples could be rectified once the size and power of the nation-state had been expanded. Then, and only then, could all co-nationals be safe from

the threat of genocide. Such political ends were buttressed by distinctly military objectives. For Croatia, the addition of Bosnian and Herzegovinian lands would have substantially reduced its eastern border with Serbia, creating an important buffer zone between Dalmatia and Serbia proper. The Serbs likewise saw the merits of incorporating this geo-strategic region into their smaller rump-Yugoslavia, giving them a much larger common border with Croatia. Each regime thus had political and military objectives in mind, which made the annexation of Bosnian territory paramount.

However, both nations had had historic claims to Bosnia-Herzegovina – Milošević and Tudjman were hardly original. In 1908, Jovan Cvijić produced 'The Annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina and the Serb Issue', claiming this territory as the 'central region and core' of an imagined expanded Serbian state. Similarly, Stjepan Radić, a short time after, published his own study: 'The Live Croatian Rights to Bosnia-Herzegovina', arguing that Bosnia had only flourished when Austria-Hungary had been in control. Thus, logically, Croatia could and should claim the region for itself, as the only agent capable of insuring 'peace, legal order and progress'. The fact that Bosnia-Herzegovina was surrounded on three sides by Croatia, and thus formed (echoing Cvijić) 'the core of the old Croatian state', only sweetened the argument.<sup>4</sup> However, while some contemporary claims reflected the older musings of Cvijić and Radić, much of the discourse would be entirely new.

### **Primordial and constructed nations: the case of the Bosnian Moslems**

Myths of victimisation and persecution were of central importance in legitimating the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina, a war that today evokes images of mass rape, torture, indiscriminate killing, and 'collection centres' – purportedly the first functional concentration camps in Europe since the Second World War. In delineating the use of such propaganda, it will be useful to focus on several specific themes:

- 1 Firstly, the idea of Moslems as either ethnic Croats or Serbs; and Moslem nationalism as invented or constructed;
- 2 Secondly, the notion that Bosnia-Herzegovina had historically been either Serbian or Croatian;
- 3 Thirdly, that claims to Moslem national identity and autonomy concealed an Islamic conspiracy to take over Europe.

While the third theme will be discussed later, it is useful to understand the first one clearly. To summarise this argument: while the Moslems of Bosnia had been forced to convert to Islam, certain linguistic and cultural attributes still marked them as either Serb or Croat. Bosnian Moslems were seen to be members of one religious community, while at the same time belonging to an

altogether different ethnic group. Because of these highly contested ethnic and historical 'facts', Serbian and Croatian leaders both argued that Moslems were Fallen members of their own nation, who had been forced to abandon their true identity after Ottoman invasion. Military leaders argued that they were simply 'liberating' parts of their ethnic homeland that had long been submerged under foreign rule, while 'freeing' Moslems from their artificial attachments.

Such arguments were possible only because Moslem identity was not taken seriously by either side. While both Serbs and Croats shared a view of their nations as having precise racial and national origins, complete with national myths and legends, Bosnian Moslem nationalism de-emphasised ethnicity, preferring to focus on shared cultural practices, social traditions, common experiences, and religious faith. Such forms of collective identity were condemned as weaker and therefore illegitimate when compared with more 'concrete' nationalist assertions. While Serbs and Croats saw themselves as primordial nations, the Moslem nation was denounced as constructed, an artificial creation fabricated by the Moslems and Josip Broz Tito.

One major debate over the status of the Moslems, carried out in the summer of 1990 in the Sarajevo daily *Oslobodenje*, concluded that while the Serbs and Croats were 'natural' nations, based on 'unambiguous and common ethnic origin', Moslem identity was based on 'psychological identification', subject to self-observation. They were therefore seen as an 'invented nation' – not to be considered relevant in the more important dispute between 'natural' Serbs and Croats.<sup>5</sup> Thus the Croatian writer Vladimir Mrkoci could argue a year after the Dayton Accords that the division of Bosnia was perfectly understandable, 'a process that appeared with the absence of external force, a natural, although belated process, of national enlightenment and unification, because Bosnia-Herzegovina is one of the last national knots of Europe that will sooner or later have to be untied to the end'. Multicultural Bosnia, at least for this author, was nothing more than a 'meaningless phrase'.<sup>6</sup> For Serbian and Croatian policy-makers, invented nations had no real histories, and could not claim to have ever been chosen, divine, or even to have suffered a Fall. Fortunately, outside powers did not see the importance of such distinctions.<sup>7</sup>

The 'naturalness' of Serbian and Croatian claims to territory was privileged over the artificial and constructed nature of Moslem identity. Gone was the narcissism of minor differences, and the myths of 'counteridentification', as Serbs and Croats worked towards a common goal. Since the Moslems were not an ethnic nation, they logically belonged to another ethnic group. Serbs would thus claim the Moslems as their own, and Croats would do the same. The idealised presentation of a multicultural, tolerant Bosnia-Herzegovina, long favoured in Titoist Yugoslavia, was summarily rejected. While Serbs constituted some 31.1 per cent of the population and the Croats some 17.3 per

cent, the Moslems (43.7 per cent) could now be operationalised as a group of ethnic 'undecideds'. Their population would provide an ethnic 'swing vote' – badly needed by both sides in their attempts to expand national boundaries.<sup>8</sup> The key problem of course, was that Serbs, Croats and Moslems were found throughout the republic – there were few homogeneous enclaves. According to the 1991 census, Serbs could be found in 94.5 per cent of the republic's territory, Moslems in 94 per cent, and Croats in 70 per cent. Clearly, any carve-up would be messy and dangerous.<sup>9</sup>

Serbian and Croatian reactions to the Bosnian Moslems presented clear examples of how a cyclical view of time was represented. Moslems had abandoned their 'true' identity; they represented the historic Fall of both the Serb and Croat nations. Now, with the disintegration of Yugoslavia, both groups had a golden opportunity to right the wrongs of history, to join former national lands and people to an enlarged national state. Kečmanović's themes of 'watershed' and 'turning-point' are useful here.<sup>10</sup> Both of these types of myth suggest a change in the historical destiny of the nation, when the nation is at last able to correct the injustices of the past. In this case, the historic injustice was the conversion of Serbs, or Croats, to Islam, and the loss of these people and their lands.

### **Denouncing constructed nationalism and Islam**

While their nationalism was publicly denounced, Bosnian Moslems did consider themselves to be a defined national group. While they were willing to share power with Serbs and Croats within the country, they had no intention of being incorporated into an expanded Serbian or Croatian state. When Alija Izetbegović formed his Party of Democratic Action (SDA) in May 1990, it became clear to Serbian and Croatian leaders that the Moslems would not be so easily assimilated, or relinquish their desire to preserve a multinational, multiconfessional republic. While appealing to Moslems with its green banners and crescents, the official policy of the SDA was the preservation of a tolerant and unitary Bosnia, with national and religious rights for all.<sup>11</sup> Most of the SDA's actions, as well as the uncontroversial Bosnian flag (with its Kotromanić fleur-de-lis from the medieval period) seemed to support this claim.<sup>12</sup>

Nevertheless, the presence of a Moslem ruling party, even one committed to multiculturalism, was anathema to Serbian and Croatian interests, who in turn, formed their own nationalist parties. The Serbian Democratic Party (SDS) was founded two months after the SDA. Radovan Karadžić, long a favourite of Dobrica Ćosić, was seen as the best man to represent the Serbian cause. Similarly, a Bosnian branch of the Croatian HDZ was formed under Stjepan Kljuić. This party would initially support the Bosnian government,

but then later seek to undermine it.<sup>13</sup> Events in 1991 were to prove crucial to later developments. By April, Serbs had established a regional Bosanska Krajina parliament at Banja Luka. By July, the SDS had announced their boycott of the Bosnian Parliament, amid denunciations of Izetbegović's rule. They reacted particularly harshly to Izetbegović's call for a referendum on the future status of Bosnia-Hercegovina. Soon after the Bosnian referendum in August, four autonomous Serbian units had sprung up in the republic. Walking out of the Bosnian Parliament in October, the Bosnian Serbs held their own referendum in November, which resulted in near-unanimous support for separation from Bosnia-Hercegovina and union with the SFRY.<sup>14</sup>

At the same time, the Croatian side were also working towards their autonomy. Only one day after the results of the Bosnian Serb referendum, the Croats established a *Posavina* community of eight units, forming an autonomous area in northern Bosnia. This was followed scarcely a week later by the formation of Herceg-Bosna (with 18 units) in western Hercegovina. In retaliation, the SDS in December announced the creation of the Serbian Republic of Bosnia-Hercegovina. In the same month, the Croats founded the Republic of Herceg-Bosna.<sup>15</sup> It was clear that both Serbs and Croats were preparing for the eventual dismemberment of the Bosnian republic. Nationalist myths were operationalised within this context of ethnic polarisation – myths that spoke of ancient national territory and peoples legitimated the creation of ethnic enclaves. Myths were also necessary to justify the presence of the JNA and a wide range of paramilitary groups, such as the Tigers and White Eagles (Serbian), and Autumn Rain and the Croatian Defence Forces-HOS (Croatian). The violent seizing of territory necessitated a barrage of propaganda, to prove that the Bosnian Moslems had somehow brought the horrors of ethnic cleansing on themselves.

### **The Moslems as 'fallen' Serbs: ethnic and territorial dimensions**

Of extreme importance in the war in Bosnia-Hercegovina was the legitimisation of land-grabbing activities, as well as some of the more insalubrious acts of Serbian statecraft: rape, ethnic cleansing, looting, and physical destruction. Serbian propagandists advanced two key arguments during this time: that Bosnian Moslems were ethnically Serbian, and that Bosnian territory was part of ancient Serbia.

Serbian geographer Jovan Ilić's geopolitical plans for Bosnia-Hercegovina had, by 1992, taken into account the agreements reached between Milošević and Tudjman. His strategy for the dismemberment of the republic thus exuded a tinge of 'impartiality', whereby both nationalist regimes would receive their proper reward. Western Hercegovina and part of Posavina were to be annexed to Croatia, with Eastern Hercegovina joined with Montenegro. Serbia would

then take all of Bosnia, as well as the Neretva Valley and Mostar, which would be joined with it. In this early stage of the conflict, Ilić remained convinced that the Moslems would be quite happy under Serbian rule, since 'As regards psychic construction, Muslims and Serbs are much closer to each other than Muslims and Croats.' This tune may well have changed when Izetbegović decided to take Bosnia-Herzegovina in its entirety out of the Federation.<sup>16</sup>

Often, official Serbian propaganda focused on Serbia's historic claim to the republic in its entirety, deriving much of its support from the supposed ethnic identity of the people. Owing to either persecution or opportunism, Serbs held that their own people had converted to Islam in mass numbers during the Ottoman occupation. The Serbian Ministry of Information, for example, concluded that 'most of today's Bosnian Moslems are descended from Serbs', declaring Bosnian Moslems to be 'Serbs of Moslem faith'.<sup>17</sup> The Serbian government blamed Communism for the spread of an 'artificial' Moslem identity. Further, since Communism was itself a major suppresser of authentic forms of nationalism, it was clear that Moslem 'nationality' was simply a political tool, nothing more.<sup>18</sup>

One could also trace the rule of historic Serbian kings to prove the case, and for some, Bosnia-Herzegovina had always been a part of Serbia, from the rule of Serbian king Chaslav in 927 until 1918.<sup>19</sup> Most Serbian historians pointed to the long history of a Serbian majority in the region, positing that Serbian values and culture had influenced the region's character and traditions. In reviewing the history of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Dušan Bataković described how large portions of the republic were populated by Serbs. As he explained: 'Bosnian and Herzegovinian rulers, themselves of Serbian origin, were naturally drawn to Serbian civilization and culture as it unfolded in neighbouring Serbia, irrespective of whether they professed the Roman Catholic, the Orthodox or the Dualist faith.'<sup>20</sup> Part of Bataković's claim, as it was for many others, was that Serbian nationality could be ascertained by a variety of features, including linguistic criteria, which betrayed an unconscious or primordial Serbian identity. Such views were common. One historian concluded: 'The Moslem power brokers and the oppressed common people spoke the same Serbian language', while another writer claimed hopefully: '[One could find] Serbs as polytheists as Serbian Orthodox, as Bogomils, therefore they remained Serbs even as Moslems, their ethnic character is also their language.'<sup>21</sup> Serbian archaeologists employed other forms of historical evidence. The use of the Cyrillic script on tombstones, rather than the 'Croatian' Glagolitic script, also proved that Bosnia's ancient inhabitants had been Serbs.<sup>22</sup>

Moslems were denied the luxury of a separate ethnic, national, and religious identity. Further, Serbian writers advanced dubious linguistic and historical 'proof' that the Serbs had a right to most of the land in Bosnia-

Hercegovina. In practice, Bosnian Serb General Ratko Mladić used such ideas to legitimate his army's conduct, explaining in one interview, 'I have not conquered anything in this war. I only liberated that which was always Serbian, although I am far from liberating all that really is Serbian.'<sup>23</sup> Militia leaders, such as the warlord Vojislav Šešelj, advanced similar theories, claiming that Bosnian Moslems were 'Islamicized Serbs', while many 'so-called Croats' were in fact 'Catholic Serbs'.<sup>24</sup> Again, the theme of the 'watershed' was important here. While, for centuries, Moslem 'Serbs' had been submerged under a variety of despotic empires and false identities, the Serbs were now coming back to free their own ethnic brothers from centuries of misguided loyalty. This was seen to be a great era in Serbian history.

Converting ethnic Serbs from Islam to Orthodoxy became a top priority for the Bosnian Serb political leadership. Moslems would also have the 'opportunity' to abandon their constructed identity, embracing their 'natural' ethnicity – that of Serbdom. In one domestic radio broadcast, Radovan Karadžić urged Bosnian Moslems to abandon Islam, claiming hopefully that 'many Moslems who are well educated and sensible are being baptized and are becoming Christian in Europe as a way of reacting against fundamentalism and the introduction of militant Islam into Bosnia . . . it is clear that we must cross the Rubicon since we are dealing with exceptional people in whom the memory of their Serbian origin is alive'.<sup>25</sup> On another occasion, he had argued: 'the Croats and Moslems, in falsifying history, in using our literature and our culture have created the bases for their future states, on lands which are ethnically and historically Serb'.<sup>26</sup> The implications were clear. The Serbs were going to liberate the Moslems whether they liked it or not.

Of central importance was the argument that Serbs were improving the lives of the Bosnian Moslems. Their nationalism was somehow positive, because it was freeing Moslem 'Serbs' from a false identity and religion, while allowing them to become more Western and more civilised. Images of a return to historic soil and national liberation justified the irredentist ambitions of Serbs in Bosnia and Serbia. The need to convert the Moslems was based on the dangerous assumption that Moslem national identity was irrelevant in a blood-based ethnic conflict. While a fraternal discourse was promoted officially, Serbian forces were busy shelling villages and committing ethnic cleansing against their former 'brothers'.

### **Bosnian Moslems and their Croatian heritage**

Many of the primordial themes found in Serbian writings were, not surprisingly, echoed in the Croatian media. Croats also had historic claims to Bosnia-Hercegovina, and, like the Serbs, saw the Moslems as part of their

nation. In some respects, the Croatian claim seemed to be stronger, as evidenced by the willingness of Moslems and Croats to enter into coalitions and military alliances. Nevertheless, while alliances existed, demographic balance was often the primary consideration. After all, there were more than twice as many Serbs as there were Croats in the region. This explains why the Croats were so keen to forge strategic alliances with the Moslems. During key periods, demographics also informed Moslem decisions.

The idea that Croats and Bosnian Moslems were of the same ethnic stock was certainly not new, nor was the portrayal of Moslems as fallen Croats. Such ideas were common during the nineteenth century, and were exploited during the Second World War, when Ustaša propaganda described Catholicism and Islam as the two founding religions of the NDH. Such imagery allowed Croatian forces to justify the takeover of Bosnian Moslem lands in the 1900s. Like the Serbs, Croatian propagandists held that one could not commit 'ethnic cleansing' against one's own nation. The first stirring of this idea after the Second World War came from the Nobel laureate Ivo Andrić, perhaps the first in Tito's Yugoslavia to describe the Bosnian Moslems as part of the Croatian nation. 'Having fallen to Islam,' he claimed, Croatian Bosnia 'lost the possibility of fulfilling its natural role of participating in the cultural development of Christian Europe. Instead, Bosnia became a mighty fortress against the Christian West.'<sup>27</sup> This theme of the fallen Croat nation was to re-emerge with Tadjman's regime in Croatia.

Earlier writers, such as Abdulaf Dizdarević, had also asserted this claim, employing a mixture of racial and linguistic criteria to dismiss Moslem nationalism: 'The uniformity of the physical features of our Croatian nation which, along with its language is one of the dominant characteristics of the same racial group ... They preserved [the Croatian] language in its purest form and as a dialect of clear and undeniable Croatian origin.'<sup>28</sup> The presence of these national traits constituted proof, as it did for the Serbs, that the Moslems were co-nationals. Dizdarević's dramatic description of the Fall of the Croats to Islam is worth reviewing:

The religious wars that broke out when foreign religions mixed in with our common ancestral Slavic paganism, raged in the midst of our nation for centuries, destroying its most powerful forces, erased that unique national image which reflected the uniformity of national traditions ... The historical moment of converting to Islam was without a doubt the most decisive moment in the history of the Croatian nation ... Thus began the long era in the history of Bosnia, cut off from its mother country ... Never in history was there such a case of injustice as this one. It oppressed a handful of people who, it seems, were condemned by God himself to bathe in the blood of their own children.<sup>29</sup>

Thus Moslems were long-suffering Croats, desperately in need of 'rediscovering' their true ethnicity. Paul Tvrtković, who claims linear descent from

the medieval King Tvrtko, similarly saw Bosnian Moslems as 'Islamicised Croats'. Like Andrić and Dizdarević, he asserted that Moslems had no choice in the matter: they were 'by ethnic origin, predominantly Croatian, whether one likes it or not'.<sup>30</sup> Tvrtković also argued that 'Croat Catholics and Moslems' were ethnically identical, and thus of the same nation, while the Serbs were ethnically different.<sup>31</sup>

Mirroring Serbian views, Tvrtković charted the renewal of Croatian consciousness among the Moslems after the occupation of Bosnia-Herzegovina by the Austro-Hungarians in 1878. It was during this time, he claimed, that Moslems once again became proud of their Croatian origin. It was also during 'apocalyptic moments', presumably times when both nations feared the onslaught of 'Greater Serbia', that a common 'Croat–Moslem consciousness' was expressed.<sup>32</sup> In this way, a seemingly natural and lengthy history of Croatian–Moslem alliances was drawn out. Paradoxically, this argument did not imply that the Bosnian Moslems should be treated with respect. Rather, it proved that, since Moslems had historically sided with Croats, they had an obligation to do so during the 1990s, whether or not it was in their own best interest.

Using a mixture of historical facts, Croatian writers used history in very much the same way as their Serbian counterparts, drawing out racial and linguistic similarities between Moslems and Croats. Because of their conversion to Islam, Moslems were forced to fight against their ethnic brothers, a situation that could now be reversed once Croatia was able to 'liberate' Bosnia-Herzegovina. Again, the same theme of 'watershed' was reiterated. In what could almost be a paraphrase of Karadžić's views, Tudjman claimed with pride, after his troops took control of the Herzegovina in September 1995: 'Croatia accepts the task of Europeanisation of Bosnian Moslems at the behest of the Western European powers.'<sup>33</sup>

### **Bosnia-Herzegovina as a Croatian land**

Like the Serbs, Croatian politicians and intellectuals employed historic arguments to buttress their claims to Bosnian territory. Since Moslems were ethnic Croats, it was uncontroversial to suggest that Bosnia-Herzegovina was Croatian. Tudjman included the Moslems in his 1991 affirmation of Croatian sovereignty, hinting that 'territorial adjustments' to existing borders might eventually be required, since 'Croatia and Bosnia constitute a geographical and political unity and have always formed a joint state in history.'<sup>34</sup> Defence Minister Šušak was similarly lucid on the status of Bosnia-Herzegovina in one 1996 interview: '[F]or me Bosnia-Herzegovina is also the state of Croatian people and for me it is Croatia. For a Bosniak it can be Bosnia, and for a Serb whatever, but according to its constitution it is also the state of Croatian

people and as such I consider it to be my homeland.'<sup>35</sup> Father Bataković, vice president of the Bosnian HDZ, also described Bosnia as 'an old Croat land', as opposed to 'an old Serb land'.<sup>36</sup> Unsurprisingly, none of these political leaders saw Bosnia as an autonomous region that deserved to be left on its own.

Annexing Bosnia was also a popular theme in academic circles. Even before the breakdown of Yugoslavia, Ante Beljo had described Bosnia-Hercegovina as an integral part of 'Croatian ethnic territory', with both republics constituting 'an entity historically, culturally, linguistically, and economically'.<sup>37</sup> Tvrtković also contrasted the 'artificial' borders between the two countries with the 'natural' linkages between Hercegovina and Dalmatia and south-western Bosnia with Croatia.<sup>38</sup> Other academics contributed to the war effort by inventing spurious statistics to buttress these irredentist claims. Sime Dodan's unambiguously titled book, *Bosnia and Hercegovina: A Croatian Land*, claimed that 95 per cent of Moslems and 30 per cent of Serbians were ethnically Croat, using the somewhat speculative argument that all surnames ending in '-an' were of Iranian origin, and were therefore Croatian.<sup>39</sup>

Even glossy Croatian travel books printed by the government included photographs of Sarajevo and other Bosnian cities. Ante Čuvalo's *Croatia and the Croatians* described Croatia's eastern border as being Serbia, Kosovo and Montenegro. As was stated in the introduction: 'further reference to the Croatians and Croatia in this book encompasses the territory of today's Republic of Croatia and the Republic of Bosnia-Hercegovina'. To this end, the territory of this 'joint' state was added together, as was the population.<sup>40</sup> Such tourist books aimed at attracting foreign visitors were meant to familiarise travellers with the idea of Bosnia-Hercegovina and Croatia being the same state, and expressed clear designs on the region well before the war had even begun. Before a single shot had been fired, libraries throughout the world received free copies of Čuvalo's book, attesting to the indivisibility of these two separate countries.<sup>41</sup>

### **Analysing Serbian and Croatian arguments**

Conflicting national claims are often difficult to deconstruct. Historical revisionism is always a mixture of fact and interpretation, relying on a highly biased interpretation of historical reality. At various times in history, parts of Bosnia-Hercegovina's territory were under Serbian and Croatian rule, thus making it impossible to assert that Bosnia was either Croatian or Serbian. Bosnia proper was under Serbian rule from the mid-tenth century to the end of the eleventh, although while the 'Serbs' ruled Bosnia they controlled very little of what today is considered Serbia. However, their control over Hercegovina, today a Croatian stronghold, was more extensive. Bosnia proper

was more closely linked to Croatia for much of its history, notably during the medieval period.<sup>42</sup>

The first time the region was united was under King Stephen II Kotromanić in 1326. His national identity was perhaps 'ambiguous' by the standards of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, as he was born Orthodox, but converted to Catholicism in 1340.<sup>43</sup> King Tvrtko, the heir and nephew of Stephen II (crowned in 1367), was, according to Noel Malcolm, both a Catholic and a descendant of the Serbian Nemanjić dynasty, leading to claims that he was both a historic Serbian *and* Croatian leader. Steven Runciman, by contrast, argued that Tvrtko was 'Orthodox by conviction and a friend of the Patarenes [the heretical church of Bosnia] from policy'.<sup>44</sup> There was a similar confusion over later figures. The ethnic identity of one sixteenth century vizier in the Sultan's court, Mehmed Paša Sokolović, was hotly contested. Paul Tvrtković claimed him for the Croats, while Radovan Simardzić asserted his Serbian origin.<sup>45</sup> These are but three of many examples of how different aspects of history – religious affiliation versus lineage – were used to assert competing claims.

While it is true that much of Bosnia-Herzegovina had once been ruled by 'Serbian' rulers and 'Croatian' rulers, these rulers had little sense of nationalism or ethnic identity. It seems, from a reading of Runciman at least, that from the mid-twelfth century until the Ottoman conquest in the fifteenth century many of the local Slavonic rulers of Bosnia and Herzegovina attempted to maintain some form of independence by playing off the West (Hungary, Austria-Hungary) against the East (Byzantium for a short while, followed by Serbia). The only real constant in this pattern of shifting alliances between the Catholic West and the Orthodox East appears to have been a steady alliance with the dualist 'Bosnian Church', a distinct religious organisation, which existed until the fifteenth century. Thus, making exclusive claims to such figures as Tvrtko or Sokolović for one's own national history is deliberately misleading. Such attempts to impose a twentieth-century re-interpretation of mediaeval history were obviously at variance with the facts, as was the rather futile project of insisting that Bosnia-Herzegovina's early populations could themselves be neatly divided into Serb and Croat.<sup>46</sup> Bosnia-Herzegovina had been subject to Turkish, French, German, Austrian, Italian, and Hungarian administration. Historic rule, even if provable, in no way constituted a justification for invasion in the late twentieth century.

Another aspect of Bosnian history that Serbs, Croats, and Moslems co-opted was the rise and fall of the 'Bosnian Church'. Moslems were the first to identify themselves as the descendants of Bosnian Church members, claiming that they converted *en masse* to Islam, and had therefore never been Orthodox or Catholic (and by extension, neither Serb nor Croat).<sup>47</sup> Some historians, like Runciman, have also insisted that such conversions were often the result of a

distinct hatred of 'the arrogant Hungarians and the greedy Dalmatians and their Latin church and culture'. In this sense, those who converted did so as a means of asserting their own religious and cultural autonomy – they were not the hapless pawns that later Serb and Croat ideologues would make them out to be. Rather, such people may well have made a positive pro-active choice in order to bring a better future for themselves, taking up, as Runciman further describes it, 'a new faith that was sufficiently sympathetic and that brought great material advantages'. Predictably, both Serbs and Croats proclaimed the Bosnian Church as merely an offshoot of their own faith. Croatian writers, such as Leo Petrović and Jaroslav Šidak, argued that the Bosnian Church was a heretical Catholic monastic order. Serbian writers, such as Božidar Petranović, argued that the Bosnian Church was an offshoot of the Orthodox Church.<sup>48</sup> Needless to say, there was little convincing evidence given for such assertions, which seem to fly in the face of historical reality.

Problematically for nationalists, there was simply no standardised 'national' consciousness before the nineteenth century, and therefore no means of accurately identifying an authentic Serbian or Croatian 'ethnic' consciousness. In many ways, Tito's Moslem nationality was no more artificial than the arbitrary division of the Slavs into Serb and Croat. John Fine has suggested that, owing to the weakness of Church authority, there were many cases of multiple conversions, to Islam from either Orthodoxy or Catholicism, Catholicism to Orthodoxy, and Orthodoxy to Catholicism.<sup>49</sup> Tone Brंगा has described numerous families who tried to 'cover all bases' – where one brother would be Orthodox or Catholic, the other Moslem.<sup>50</sup>

It is clear from historical accounts that the Islamic faith espoused in Bosnia-Herzegovina was rather liberal, what the historian Peter Sugar has described as a 'variety of European or rather Balkan folk-Islam', which included baptism, icons to prevent mental illness and other non-Moslem characteristics. As he explained: 'There were mountaineers who called themselves Constantin in front of Christians and Sulayman in front of Moslems. The dead would be given a service by the Orthodox Church and a subsequent burial in a Moslem cemetery. The religious boundaries were easily and frequently transgressed.'<sup>51</sup> That one-third of the contemporary Sarajevo population were in 'mixed' marriages cements the fact that, even in the twentieth century, religion was not seen as an exclusive category.<sup>52</sup> Clearly, the notion that Bosnian Moslems were simply ethnic Croats or ethnic Serbs was untenable. There was no proof that any of Bosnia's three national groups had any strong sense of exclusive national identity before the nineteenth century, nor, more importantly, that these groups were static and unchanging. Moreover, Moslems would not have been the only ones with a loose interpretation of 'national' labels. Many 'Serbs' and 'Croats' may well have changed their own labels as different political masters dominated the region. Becoming

Catholic (and therefore 'Croat') would certainly have had its advantages during the four decades when Austria-Hungary controlled Bosnia, while classifying oneself as Orthodox (and therefore 'Serb') would have been a useful means of self-preservation during the earlier Ottoman era. Orthodoxy at this time was interpreted as a far weaker and less threatening force than Catholicism – the religion of the Ottomans' Western enemies. Thus, national identity in Bosnia, as elsewhere, can also be interpreted as a political choice, not one derived from any ethnic absolutes or a sense of primordial identity.

### **The Moslems as 'traitors': the Islamic conspiracy theory**

Contrary to Serbian and Croatian desires, Bosnian Moslems had their own sense of identity, their own political parties, and their own military forces to back up their autonomy. It became apparent throughout the conflict that another form of propaganda would be needed to legitimate military intervention in the region. Another soon emerged. If the Moslems rejected their 'true' ethnicity, and continued to promote their own form of identity, it followed logically that they had betrayed their Croatian or Serbian brothers. They had betrayed the nation because of their adherence to Islam. The theme of the Bosnian Moslems as traitors became influential in nationalist circles early on in the conflict. Islam was caricatured as a fundamentalist, exclusivist and thoroughly dangerous religion, bent on the destruction of ethnic nations in the Balkans.

Serbs and Croats would portray themselves as victims of an Islamic conspiracy. Rather than attacking a relatively defenceless minority group, they were defending Europe against the onslaught of an Islamic invasion, comparable only to the Ottoman invasion some five centuries before. Here, Kečmanović's 'plot' theme was often cited, as Serbs and Croats argued that outside powers were going to use the Bosnian Moslems as an 'Islamic Springboard', to penetrate into the heart of Europe. Serbs and Croats were saving their own nations from assimilation and potential genocide, while reliving their historic role – defending the *Antemurale Christianitatis* against a renewed Ottoman invasion.

### **Serbs and the 'Moslem traitors' in Bosnia-Hercegovina**

The theory of Moslems as 'fallen Serbs' was often mixed with a view of the Moslems as traitors to the Serbian nation. Kosovo, as indicated earlier, had elevated the Serbs to the status of a divine and chosen nation, while reducing the Moslems or 'Turks' to the status of 'Christ killers'. Serbs who converted to Islam were seen to have renounced their chosen status, embracing the religion and culture of the invader. Converts were likened to Vuk Branković, and

were seen to constitute the worst of Serbia's enemies. While certain propaganda focused on the need to 'save' the Moslems, another more virulent strain called for the Serbs to 'save' themselves and the Western world from Islamic invasion. Of course, anti-Moslem rhetoric had been popular in Serbia for many centuries. Karadžić's popularisation of the Kosovo myth, Cvijić's 'Dinaric Man', and Njegoš's 'Mountain Wreath' were but three early examples of anti-Moslem, anti-Turkish writings that were popular in nineteenth-century Serbia.

Anti-Moslem rhetoric was extensively used in Serbian literature during the 1990s. Miroljub Jevtić, an Islamic specialist at Belgrade University, argued unequivocally that:

Those who accepted Islam accepted the conquerors *de facto* as their brothers, and the crimes of the latter are their own. That means that their own hands are also covered with the blood of their own ancestors, the former Bosnian non-Muslim population. By converting to Islam, they destroyed Christian Bosnia and caused the Ottomans to rule over Christian Bosnia for a long time.<sup>53</sup>

Jevtić was in many ways typical of the Serbian establishment. For him, as for many of his colleagues, the antipathy between Serbs and Moslems was centuries-old, 'Serbophobia [being] highly developed among fundamentalist Muslims.'<sup>54</sup> Thus, while Serbs may have been the aggressors in Bosnia, they were simply responding to centuries of Moslem aggression. Novelists also picked up on similar themes. Drasković's *Noz* (discussed in Chapter 5) featured a number of Moslem characters, who appeared primarily as treacherous, cold-blooded murderers – ethnic Serbs who had abandoned the 'lessons of Kosovo'.<sup>55</sup> This novel revolves around a massacre of Orthodox Serbs by Moslems on Christmas Day, 1942. The only survivor, a Serbian baby, is raised by Moslems, and taught to hate the Serbs. By some twist of fate, he later discovers his own Serbian identity, and further discovers that his 'Moslem' family is also ethnically Serbian.<sup>56</sup> With its depictions of Moslem violence and wanton acts of cruelty, Moslems were presented in it as misguided traitors, who need to be carefully controlled.

Another novel of this stripe was Vojislav Lubarda's *The Ascension* (1990) with its negative descriptions of Serbian–Moslem relations in Bosnia. Set after the assassination of the Austrian Archduke Franz Ferdinand in 1914, the central action in the story once again consists of a massacre of Serbs by Moslems. Lubarda's work was a typical expression of Serbian 'counteridentification'. The Serbs were presented as noble and heroic, always willing to fight for others, and always willing to forgive and forget. These positive qualities were contrasted with those of the Moslems, who continuously hated the Serbs and massacred them whenever possible.<sup>57</sup> Lubarda thus drew out stereotypical characterisations of the Moslems – their supposedly treacherous and

warlike dispositions, making them little different from their mythical ancestor, Vuk Branković.

Novelists reinforced this anti-Moslem paranoia. So did politicians. In one collection of essays, Dobrica Ćosić warned of a 'pan-Islamic internationalization of war in Bosnia', seeing this as 'the greatest danger looming over both the Balkans and south east Europe'.<sup>58</sup> While Croatian writers almost always spoke of Serbs as part of the East, Ćosić placed the Serbs solidly in the West, with the Moslems as little better than the Asian hordes and Vandals to whom Croats compared the Serbs. Serbs had to continue their historic role, to defend the West against the evils of Islam. According to Ćosić: '[It was] the Serbian people who consented, from the 14th century, to the greatest sacrifices for the defense of Europe and its civilization.'<sup>59</sup>

Other Serbian politicians, including Slobodan Milošević, continued to hammer out the theme of Serbia standing alone against the forces of Islam, Serbia as the plucky 'David' against an Islamic 'Goliath'. While he did not fear Islam, he saw the necessity of controlling it. This 'plot' was extremely popular among Serbian leaders, who enjoyed the symbolism of fighting against a powerful Islamic menace.<sup>60</sup> Radovan Karadžić also saw his role in world-historic proportions. He claimed that his mission as leader of the Bosnian Serbs was to insure that Islamic fundamentalism did not 'infect Europe from the south'. For Karadžić and many of his colleagues, Middle Eastern countries, such as Saudi Arabia, Iran, and Turkey were trying to use Bosnia as a 'spring-board for Islamic penetration of Europe'.<sup>61</sup> Serbian leaders enjoyed portraying themselves as self-sacrificing warriors, waging war in Bosnia in order to defend the West against a new Ottoman invasion.

### **Imagining the Islamic state: Serbian perspectives**

While general ideas of Moslem treachery and cruelty were important, many Serbian academics amused themselves by imagining how horrible an Islamic state could be, what it would look like, how it would operate, and what features would distinguish it from other state forms. Certainly, a great deal of creative licence was allowed, as long as this dystopian state was sufficiently horrific to deter the Serbian public from siding with the Moslems in Bosnia. Serbian views on what the Moslems were trying to create would have been laughable, had the authors not been serious.

For Serbian writers, the key to understanding Moslem objectives in Bosnia was Alija Izetbegović's now infamous tract, *Islamic Declaration* (1972). This publication, which earned him a prison sentence under the Communist regime, was touted by Serbs and Croats alike as a blueprint for an expansionist Islamic empire. One quote in particular always caught the eye of Serbian propagandists. Izetbegović supposedly affirmed in his *Declaration* that 'there

can be no coexistence between the Islamic religion and non-Muslim social and political institutions' in countries where Muslims represent the majority of the population.<sup>62</sup> This passage became an obvious favourite of both Serb and Croat writers, being one of the few that alluded to Izetbegović's plans for a utopian Islamic state.

However, contrary to Serbian and Croatian claims, Izetbegović had never called for an Islamic state in Bosnia. In fact, he had concluded that such a state was impossible, owing to the multiconfessional nature of the republic. Nevertheless, interpretations of the *Declaration* gave a clear indication of Serbian paranoia about a resurgent Islam in the Balkans. Izetbegović's writing was often portrayed as a blueprint for an 'Islamic renaissance', followed by a 'holy war (jihad)' against non-Moslems. Serbs also feared that Izetbegović was trying to create an expanded state, a 'great Islamic federation from Morocco to Indonesia in which the Koran would be the supreme law'.<sup>63</sup> One 1993 Serbian Ministry of Information pamphlet, intended for English-speaking audiences abroad, used a strong form of Orientalism laced with Islamic conspiracy theories. One of the contributors, an Orthodox priest and member of the Bosnian Serb Parliament, stressed the immorality and perfidy of the Moslems and their religion, predicting that:

They want for the second time to create a Turkish Bosnia or a Bosnia in Turkey ... with the Shariatic law and other life norms unacceptable in the twenty-first century. Behind this century-old dream of a primitive man to live off the backs of a subjugated people, to have his own harem, dreaming of Istanbul, where according to him there was a paradise of earth, where 'fairies are bathing in sherbet' ... They [the Moslems] invited to this bloody feast all other worldly bums, murderers and dogs of war, Mujahadins and jihad fanatics from the Islamic countries came to *fulfil their sacred duty and to exterminate us*. This unscrupulousness completely fits their religion and tradition and culture.<sup>64</sup>

For this particular writer, the Moslem utopia would be a reversion to some species of oriental despotism, where loose morals and low standards of behaviour would prevail. Sexual depravity and the subjugation of women were also common themes, as if to arouse in Serbian males the fear that their wives, mothers, or sisters could be defiled by a Moslem. Thus Serbs objected to the possibility of an alternative society, where 'Eastern' customs and manners would prevail. For them, the fear of another Ottoman empire was too horrible to contemplate. Another article in a similar vein, entitled 'Lying [*sic*] Hands on The Serbian Women', written by a Bosnian Serb official, once more defined the conflict in terms of a Moslem holy war against Serbs. This document described a sort of 'race crime' being committed against Serbs living in and around Sarajevo. Here the image of rape as a weapon of war was stressed:

By order of the Islamic fundamentalists from Sarajevo, healthy Serbian women

from 17 to 40 years of age are being separated out and subjected to special treatment. According to their sick plans going back many years, these women have to be impregnated by orthodox Islamic seed in order to raise a generation of janissaries on the territories they surely consider to be theirs, the Islamic republic.<sup>65</sup>

Again, the threat of Serbian women being raped was articulated. While some Serbian women were being raped, and perhaps not only by non-Serbs, rape was not described as an individual act, but as a weapon of war. This document was first brought to light by Roy Gutman in 1993, during his journalistic forays in Bosnia. It was at this time that the world first became exposed to the so-called 'Serbian rape camps', and the Bosnian Serbs were accused of systematically raping some 20,000 Moslem women. While such statistics were later proved to be unrealistically high, Serbian propagandists had a vested interest in deflecting criticism of any Serbian-inspired rape policy. Thus it made perfect sense to accuse the Bosnian Moslems of religiously inspired mass rape, which in many ways was seen to be much worse than any Serbian rapes, since women would have been impregnated in order to raise 'janissaries'.

While such anecdotal evidence was extremely interesting, so too were the many compilations put out by the Serbian government. These featured testimony from Serbian women who claimed to have been raped by Bosnian Moslems. No doubt many of the stories were true, although they were nearly impossible to verify. Nikola Marinović's evocatively titled *Stories from Hell* continued the popular Serbian theme of stereotyping Moslems as sexually depraved Ottomans:

The greatest humiliation suffered by Serbian women happens whenever a Moslem commander proclaims himself 'bey', 'agha' or 'vizier' (a frequent occurrence) and decides to have a harem. The 'right to sleep' with the 'master' is then brutally applied. Young Serbian women are thus brought to the bottom of human dignity. Such atrocities have particularly been registered in central Bosnia, in the towns of Zenica, Gornji Vakuf, Travnik, Jajce . . . In these same zones, Serbian boys have undergone circumcision (the 'sunneth'), and have been forcibly Islamicised.<sup>66</sup>

Once again, the fear of Serbian women being forced into harems was promoted, as well as the fear that Serbian boys would be forcibly converted to Islam, if the Serbs did not act quickly to take over strategic areas. After more than four decades of living side by side with Bosnia's largely secularised Moslem populations, Bosnian Serbs surely knew that such dystopian visions were pure nonsense. The most interesting aspect of this quotation was Marinović's listing of the towns and cities where these harems and forced conversions supposedly took place. Most of these places were those where a form of defensive ethnic cleansing had either taken place, or would take place shortly.

### **The Moslems as genocidal killers**

Another general theme in propaganda circles was to compare an exaggerated view of an Islamic conspiracy with the horrors of Nazi Germany. As with the Croats, Serbs could confidently claim to be defending themselves against a Moslem-inspired genocide. Such a view was clearly stated by the Bosnian Serb leader Milorad Ekmečić's oft-quoted speech to the last Congress of Serbian Intellectuals, in Sarajevo:

In the history of the world only the Jews have paid a higher price for their freedom than the Serbs. Because of their losses in the war, and because of massacres, the most numerous people in Yugoslavia, the Serbs, have, in Bosnia Herzegovina, fallen to second place, and today our policy and our general behaviour carry within themselves the invisible stamp of a struggle for biological survival.<sup>67</sup>

Ekmečić's writings and public statements generally focused on Bosnia-Herzegovina as the target of Eastern and Western expansionism. Sandwiched between two opposing and equally dangerous forces, Serbs were portrayed as Jewish like victims of an attempted genocide. This link figured prominently in many Serbian accounts.

Similarly, the fear of a Moslem-inspired genocide was linked to the Bosnian youth magazine, *Novi Vox*, which supposedly encouraged its readers to participate in an anti-Serbian game – to collect as many Serbian heads as possible.<sup>68</sup> Another recent Bosnian Serb publication drew out similar themes. Here, the authors claimed to have uncovered a Moslem plan to kill 100 Serbs for every Moslem killed, and between 10 and 15 for every wounded. These figures echoed the ratio of Serb to German deaths during the Nazi occupation of Serbia during the Second World War. Mixed with this imagery were reports of Moslem plans to establish an Islamic state, in which all women would be forced to wear veils, while all men would be forced to attend the mosque.<sup>69</sup> Clearly, such imagery was important in creating the impression that Serbs were merely reacting in self-defence to a planned genocide on the part of the Moslems. More recently, Milošević would regale judges and prosecutors alike at the Hague with stories of 'Mujahideen' coming from Saudi Arabia with sabres in hand, solely for the purpose of cutting off Serbian heads in order to 'help Alija Izetbegović'.<sup>70</sup>

Another aspect of this self-defensive posture was the theory that the Moslems had shelled their own people to court sympathy from the West. The most publicised examples were two instances of shelling in Sarajevo, the first in February 1994, where a marketplace was shelled on its busiest day. The second shelling occurred in August 1995, when another marketplace was bombed, killing 37 civilians and wounding another 85.<sup>71</sup> For Serbian writers, Izetbegović, the skilful 'dictator-impostor', was guilty of having staged the shellings himself, in order to falsely portray the Moslems as victims of Serbian

aggression.<sup>72</sup> Another theory held that the Moslems shelled their own people in order to deflect Western attention from their extermination campaign against Serbian civilians. Risto Tubić dismissed the marketplace bombings as a cover for a Moslem 'Holocaust' against the Serbs in the 1990s, a 'third genocide', which was to be 'the culmination of all historically known forms of physical and psychological persecution'.<sup>73</sup> Turning the truth completely upside down, Tubić compared the Bosnian Moslems to Nazis, victimising themselves in order to exterminate Serbs. Thus by denying that the Serbs had shelled Sarajevo, he was able to make overt parallels between Serbs and Jews:

Ever since Hitler organised the Crystal Night, this most cynical and filthiest weapon also became an instrument of modern warfare. Among many, suffice it to mention the massacres in Vasa Miskin Street and at the Markdale market-place. The aim was twofold: first to publicise reports on atrocities in order to arouse the desire for revenge among the public and draw world public support for one side against the other, and secondly, to alarm the world with such reports that would force governments to take action, to intervene militarily.<sup>74</sup>

References such as these were all the more ludicrous in light of the fact that Serbs had been shelling Sarajevo from their mountain positions continually during this time. The Sarajevo Olympic Stadium became a huge cemetery for Moslem casualties, while most Sarajevans were terrified to stray from their homes, lest they be gunned down by Serbian snipers. Even in such an atmosphere, while Moslems were dodging bullets down 'sniper alley' in Sarajevo, the Serbs maintained that Bosnian Moslems were playing the victim to cover up their own genocide against the Serbs.

From a practical standpoint, it was clear that the image of warlike, fanatical Moslems was a key ingredient in activating Serbian violence in many regions of Bosnia. Images of Moslems as traitors and 'Christ-killers' were repeated time and time again in the Serbian media, in an attempt to encourage and justify Serbian aggression. Constantly repeated in the Serbian press, such imagery was often used as a pretext for ethnic cleansing.<sup>75</sup> Serbian writers seem to have used reports of atrocities as a precursor to attacks on strategically important towns and cities. Thus Serbs were reported tortured and killed in Livno, Jajce, Slavonski Brod, Konjic, Travnik, Vitez, Mostar, and even Sarajevo.<sup>76</sup> Such patterns occurred throughout the conflict, suggesting that anti-Moslem propaganda had very practical and negative consequences.

### **Croatian views of the Bosnian Moslems**

While there were many historical instances of co-operation between Croats and Bosnian Moslems, Croatian attitudes were strikingly similar to those of the Serbs. Persecution imagery performed an important role, as did the

argument that Moslems were fallen nationals who had to be brought back to the fold. Again like the Serbs, Croatian politicians and academics saw the merits of casting themselves as the victims of a Moslem onslaught as part of their mission to liberate former Croatian territory. An emphasis on victimhood prevented domestic criticism of Croatian actions, in particular by the opposition media. Both Serbian and Croatian government media were issued strict instructions not to report on the negative activities of their own side in the conflict, thus rendering a skewed representation of Moslems as the sole aggressors. The Serbian media were keen to portray the conflict as a 'civil war', and media references to the Moslems described them constantly as 'attackers'.<sup>77</sup>

Similar views were promoted on the Croatian side, even during periods of Croatian–Moslem alliances. This was due to the fact that such alliances were often brokered by the Croatian government, with little regard for the views of Bosnian Croats (Mate Boban was removed by Tudjman during one such alliance). Thus, it was common for the Croatian media to promote messages of goodwill and friendship with the Moslems, while newsrooms in Herceg-Bosna were condemning Moslems as 'enemies' and genocidal killers.<sup>78</sup> As with the Serbs, Croatian propagandists accused the Moslems of trying to take over the Balkans and Europe. Such imagery began in the official media by late 1992. At this stage, it focused primarily on Moslem collaboration with KOS, the Yugoslav military intelligence, and by extension, the Serbs. This soon changed to specific attacks on Islam, with regular news reports decrying the dangers of fundamentalist extremism. By early November 1992, Gojko Šušak, in a bid for Israeli military support, tried to drum up fears of an Islamic conspiracy, alleging that there were 11,000 Bosnian Muslims studying in Cairo alone. He appealed to one Israeli audience by asking: 'Can you imagine a fundamentalist state in the heart of Europe?'<sup>79</sup>

Tudjman likewise referred often to a threat of Islamic Fundamentalism and to an Islamic holy war. He justified intervention in Bosnia by maintaining that Izetbegović's government aimed to 'set up an Islamic state in Europe, which was part of a conflict between the Islamic and Catholic worlds, and of a confrontation between the Islamic world and the West'.<sup>80</sup> For Tudjman, the Islamic threat was real. In a 1992 meeting with ambassador Warren Zimmermann, he outlined the dimensions of the Islamic conspiracy:

The Muslims want to establish an Islamic fundamentalist state. They plan to do this by flooding Bosnia with 500,000 Turks. Izetbegović has also launched a demographic threat. He has a secret policy to reward large families so that in a few years the Muslims will be a majority in Bosnia (at the time they were 44 per cent). The influence of an Islamic Bosnia will then spread through the Sandzak and Kosovo to Turkey and to Libya. Izetbegović is just a fundamentalist frontman for Turkey; together they're conspiring to create a Greater Bosnia. Catholics and Orthodox alike will be eradicated.<sup>81</sup>

Tudjman's unsubstantiated theories typified official Croatian views: the Moslems could not be trusted, and were plotting to create an Islamic state in Europe. Croatian writers used such fears to legitimise the establishment of Bosnian Croatian autonomous units, such Herceg-Bosna. As with the Serbian side, Izetbegović's *Islamic Declaration* was frequently cited as proof of the Moslems' plan to overrun the region. Croatian journalists, like their Serbian counterparts, often quoted Izetbegović's claim that there could be 'no peace and coexistence between the Islamic faith and non-Islamic social and political institutions.'<sup>82</sup> The *Declaration* was also linked to specific genocidal crimes perpetrated by Moslems against Croats. Like the Serbs, Croatian writers portrayed Izetbegović's work as a blueprint for genocide.

One journalist described how the Bosnian Moslems in 1993, through a certain Operation 'Tito', had begun attacking Croatian settlements in central Bosnia, laying the foundations for a Moslem-instigated genocide against Bosnia's Croatian population. Izetbegović supposedly had plans to make Sarajevo a European Islamic capital, housing some 15 million European Moslems. As for the Bosnian Croats, they were nothing more than an obstacle for Izetbegović, who wanted to construct an Islamic empire from 'Teheran to Slavonski Brod'.<sup>83</sup> One must ask ironically if this would fit inside the Islamic empire that the Serbs envisaged for Izetbegović, destined to stretch from Indonesia to Morocco. Needless to say, there was no documentary evidence of an 'Operation Tito'. The theory that Sarajevo was to become a world Islamic capital was also pure conjecture. More important were the overt accusations of genocide levelled against the Moslems. As in the Serbian case, such writings were useful in obscuring the reality of Croatian ethnic cleansing operations, which were ongoing in Bosnia at that time.

Even when Croats and Moslems formed Tudjman-brokered alliances, the local press continued to condemn the Moslems for trying to destroy their national distinctiveness with multinational federalism. One recent article, written well after the Dayton Accords, accused the Bosnian Moslems of trying to turn the Croats into 'Bosnian Croats', which they interpreted as an attempt to 'eradicate from their life and consciousness national symbols, tradition and language, to destroy their identity'.<sup>84</sup> For many Croatian nationalists, even the prefix 'Bosnian' implied a Moslem identity rather than the former regional appellation it used to signify. When forced into an alliance with the Moslems in 1995, the Bosnian Croats had an extremely difficult time abandoning their hopes for an internationally recognised Greater Croatia.

### **Assigning blame in Bosnia-Herzegovina**

Both Serbian and Croatian academics, journalists, military leaders and politicians consistently used the fear of Islamic expansion and violence to

legitimate their own nationalist expansion and violence. Both Serbs and Croats ran 'detention centres' and 'collection camps' where prisoners were housed, fed little to no food, frequently beaten and terrorised, sometimes sexually violated, and often killed. While one should note clearly that the majority of camps were Serb-controlled (13 major camps), the Croats maintained 4 main camps as well. These, however, were only the largest. The International Red Cross, by August, 1994, had documented a total of 51, many small and impromptu – located in camp grounds, schools, even movie theatres. Serbian camps were exposed during 1992, and figured prominently in the famous ITN-Channel 4 series on Bosnia. Roy Gutman's prize-winning dispatches also exposed Serbian crimes, while notably omitting references to Croatian violence.<sup>85</sup> Tudjman publicly admitted to the existence of Croatian 'collection centres', which housed, by 1993, an estimated 20,000 inmates in the territory of Herceg-Bosna. That 'others had them too' was enough of an excuse for Tudjman, who did not seem to deny, nor regret, that such camps existed.<sup>86</sup>

While organised militia groups instigated much of the ethnic cleansing in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Serbian Orthodox and Croatian Catholic Churches also proved their complicity in many of the violent activities of their supporters. The Serbian warlord Vojislav Šešelj and his militia were blessed by an Orthodox priest after having cleansed several Moslem towns near Sarajevo. In Trebinje, one Orthodox priest led a group of Serbs in expelling several Moslem families from their homes. The town's 500-year-old mosque was later destroyed during celebrations for the feast day of St Sava. Even outside the region, Metropolitan Christopher in the United States described Bosnia's Moslems as slavish followers of the Ayatollah Khomeini, while the Orthodox bishop of Zvornik described how Moslems killed 'unbelievers' as a way of getting closer to heaven.<sup>87</sup> The Church's involvement often lent crucial moral and spiritual support to Serbian nationalists. Rather than speaking out against war, the Church sometimes became a willing collaborator.

The Croatian Catholic Church also proved instrumental in encouraging many of the more violent aspects of Croatian nationalism. While the Cardinal of Zagreb and the Archbishop of Sarajevo bravely condemned the escalation of violence, local branches of the Church were often supporters, particularly in Herzegovina. In Mostar, the local clergy and 250 Franciscan friars lent their support to the HVO, arguing that 'Islamic states don't have free speech, democracy or freedom of religion.' Priests often compared the Bosnian government to 'Turkish occupiers', while portraits of Ustaša leaders such as Ante Pavelić and Ranko Boban were frequent adornments on the walls of Herzegovinian priests, according to Michael Sells.<sup>88</sup>

In the Serbian and Croatian cases, both sides used the myths of assimilation and Islamic conspiracy to sanction the ethnic cleansing and mass destruction that so characterised the Bosnian war. Myths were employed as

part of a political agenda, in order to legitimate violence, and in some cases, to instigate it. While the Churches could have prevented the escalation of violence, they did little to discourage it. Unfortunately, their complicity in mass murder and the forced expulsion of populations will remain one of the most enduring and disheartening aspects of the conflict.

### **The Bosnian Moslem perspective**

Serbian and Croatian designs and overall strategies for Bosnia-Herzegovina were often starkly similar, as were the themes and attitudes expressed in their national writings. Unsurprisingly, the Moslem leadership also used images of victimisation and persecution. The fact that the Moslems were the chief victims obviously had much to do with this. Gow and Tisley put it well when they rightly noted: 'If Croatia was weak, but played the victim to emphasise its position, Bosnia was generally a victim.'<sup>89</sup> The Bosnian Moslems, like the Serbs and Croats, found victim-centred imagery useful in articulating their case. The Bosnian conflict was perhaps the only one that saw Moslem leaders comparing themselves to Jews, in order to court Western European support against a Christian-instigated genocide. Clerics such as Mustafa Spahlić were quick to claim that Bosnian Moslems were 'the new Jews of Europe'.<sup>90</sup>

Bosnian Prime Minister Haris Siladzić, amid fears that violence would escalate if the arms embargo was lifted by the United States, used Second World War imagery to advance his case, compared lifting the arms embargo to bombing the railway lines leading to Auschwitz. As far as he was concerned, this alone would save tens of thousands of lives. During the Geneva negotiations, Izetbegović used the same imagery, likening the agreements to those reached between Germany and Czechoslovakia in 1938, except that 'Instead of Munich this is Geneva. Instead of little Czechoslovakia, this is little Bosnia. Instead of Beneš, it is me.'<sup>91</sup>

The purpose of using this imagery for the Moslems was similar, yet different to its use by the Serbs and Croats. The Moslem side was largely fighting a war of self-defence; theirs was clearly the weakest position, and the use of such imagery was not meant to mask their own atrocities, but figured as a public relations tactic, to encourage Western support for a united Bosnia. In the Moslem case, the imagery of persecution and genocide was used in the same manner as it was by the Armenians, the Romani, the Ukrainians, and other groups seeking national rights and international recognition in the face of overwhelming oppression.

Nevertheless, this should not be taken to imply that the Bosnian Moslems were entirely blameless. True to Serbian and Croatian accounts, the Bosnian Moslems had indeed received military support from the Middle East – although as a last resort, and long after war had broken out. Furthermore, the token

support offered by Middle Eastern countries was more symbolic and political than practical. Algerian and Saudi veterans of the Afghan wars came to participate in 'Jihad' against the Serbs and Croats, but were alarmed by the 'liberal' or folk-Islam practices in Bosnia, particularly the fact that men and women were fighting side by side. Bosnian Moslems, by contrast, were often angered by the hardline stance of their newfound allies.<sup>92</sup> There was little financial support from the oil-rich countries of the Middle East, except for some government funding from Saudi Arabia and a variety of private contributions.<sup>93</sup> What was given, and primarily from Iran, were offers of fuel, arms, and at one stage 10,000 'peace-keepers' (these were refused by the UN).

Rather than trying to help the Bosnian Moslems, the Iranians seem to have been motivated by a desire to provoke the United States, while antagonising their Saudi rivals. Shi'ite Iranian relief aid was primarily targeted at areas that were being helped by similar Sunni Saudi agencies, suggesting that Middle Eastern politics was being played out in Bosnia, at the expense of the local population.<sup>94</sup> Saudi and Iranian aid was simply too little too late, and had little effect on the outcome of the war. Contrary to Serbian and Croatian claims, Bosnia was never a springboard for Islamic penetration into Europe, and Islamic countries hardly seemed to care at all what happened in Bosnia. While author Salman Rushdie was hiding for his life from an Iranian *fatwah* after the publication of his *Satanic Verses*, no Islamic regime incited aggression against Serbian or Croatian leaders.<sup>95</sup>

By 1994, some 80 per cent of non-Serbs had been expelled from Serbian-controlled territory. After most of the brutal ethnic cleansing took place, there were signs that the Bosnian government, feeling that it now had nothing to lose, began imposing a distinctly Islamic morality on the territory it still controlled. Several officials in the Bosnian government spoke out against mixed marriages, arguing that they were doomed to failure and should be opposed. Mustafa Cerić, the Grand Mufti of Bosnia, opined that while the policy of systematic rape was 'horrible and incomprehensible', it was 'less painful and easier to accept than all those mixed marriages and all those children born of mixed marriages'.<sup>96</sup> The Culture and Education minister Enes Karić initiated new reforms to make what remained of Moslem Bosnia more Islamic, throwing away 'European trash' – such as drugs, alcohol, and prostitution, while banning Croatian and Serbian music from radio stations in favour of more Arab-sounding music. He also encouraged changes in the 'Bosnian' language (including the addition of Turkish words) to reflect an Islamic heritage.<sup>97</sup>

Curiously, there was a backlash against these reforms, largely from Moslems themselves, including members of the SDA government. Events came to a head in early 1995, when Izetbegović met with members of the Seventh Muslim Brigade, whose banner bore Arabic writings. His official

endorsement of Islamic over multiconfessional forces was highly criticised. His reference to one dead Moslem soldier as a *shahid* (martyr), brought open criticism from the boy's family, angered by the fact that their son was described using Arabic words, while being the focus of Arabic prayers. This was a language which neither he nor his family understood.<sup>98</sup> What was obvious among Bosnian Moslems was their continued support for a multiconfessional Bosnia, even among those Moslems who were the obvious victims of Serbian and Croatian aggression. For some reason, a strong sense of nationalism, or even religious conviction, failed to take hold among the population, even during the bloodiest periods of the war.<sup>99</sup>

### Conclusions

Serbian and Croatian nationalists advanced startlingly similar ideas and images in their understanding of the Bosnian Moslems. Both claimed Bosnian Moslems as their ethnic kin, while similarly claiming the territory of Bosnia-Herzegovina as historically part of their respective countries. At the same time, negative myths were used to attack the Moslems as an expansionist and dangerous religious group – with different cultural practices and sexual mores. Negative myths of identification, such as ‘counteridentification’, themes of ‘plot’, ‘threat’, ‘damage’, and ‘universal culprit’, were common, as well as themes of ‘redemption and suffering’, and ‘unjust treatment’. Both sides portrayed the Moslems as the vanguard of a dangerous Islamic conspiracy, resorting to crude stereotypes and rabid orientalist discourse to assert their false claims. These similarities are best explained by the fact that both Serbs and Croats had similar objectives – to legitimate the force necessary to create autonomous regions of their own, even when this included ethnic cleansing against the Moslem population.

While there were assertions of Moslem nationalism by the Bosnian government, these were certainly mild, and largely in reaction to the atrocities Moslems were forced to endure. The same held for foreign support, which seemed to have been motivated by Iranian–Saudi rivalry more than anything else. The Moslem population at large, even by the end of the conflict, still favoured a multiconfessional society. It remains unclear what the future will bring, even though the Dayton Accords (1995) seem to have brought about a type of peaceful co-existence. The legacies of ethnic cleansing, however, still remain. Around 60 per cent of Bosnia's inhabitants were forced from their homes, and more than 1.3 million people (some 30 per cent of the population) were dispersed in 63 countries.<sup>100</sup> There could be no doubt that Serbs and Croats had been the aggressors throughout the conflict. Their use of victim-centred propaganda proved to be the most effective means of legitimating their conduct, which, while not necessarily genocidal, was extremely brutal.

While there was never any proof that the Moslems wanted to spread Islam throughout Yugoslavia, or even to make Bosnia an Islamic state, Serbian and Croatian propagandists worked tirelessly to promote the Moslems as genocidal *mujahadeen*. In both the Serbian and Croatian cases, the threat of genocide, from each other or the Bosnian Moslems, was the key to Redemption in an expanded nation-state. Greater Serbian and Greater Croatian ambitions were premised on the need to protect one's fellow co-nationals throughout the region when Yugoslavia was in the final stages of its life.

NOTES

- 1 Quoted in Tone Bringa, *Being Muslim the Bosnian Way: Identity and Community in a Central Bosnian Village* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995) p. 12.
- 2 Holbrooke, *To End a War* (New York: Random House, 1998) p. 36.
- 3 This surreal situation is described in Slavenka Drakulić, *Cafe Europa: Life After Communism* (London: Little, Brown and Company, 1996) pp. 188–94. For an excellent discussion of the Milošević-Tudjman accord, see Florence Hartmann, *Milosevic: la diagonale du fou* (Paris: Denoel-Imacts, 1999) pp. 127–31.
- 4 Dušan Bilandžić, 'Termination and Aftermath of the War in Croatia', in Branka Magaš and Ivo Žanić (eds), *The War in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina 1991–1995* (London: Frank Cass, 2001) pp. 85–6.
- 5 Bringa, *Being Muslim the Bosnian Way*, p. 31.
- 6 Vladimir Mrkoci, 'Historical Guilt of Alain Finkelkraut', *Hrvatski Obzor*, 17 August 1996 (translated on 5 October 2001) <http://free.freespeech.org/ex-yupress/hrobzor/hrobzor12.html> (accessed 10 January 2001).
- 7 Richard Holbrooke, for example, saw all three as 'ethnic groups' during the Dayton negotiations in 1995. However, it is open to dispute whether any of them constitute a stable 'ethnic' given, as Holbrooke suggests: Holbrooke, *To End a War*, p. 97.
- 8 Bringa, *Being Muslim the Bosnian Way*, p. 26.
- 9 Rusmir Mahmutćehanjić, 'The Road to War', in Magaš and Žanić (eds), *The War in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina*, p. 144.
- 10 Dušan Kečmanović, *The Mass Psychology of Ethnonationalism* (New York: Plenum Press, 1996) p. 62.
- 11 Noel Malcolm, *Bosnia: A Short History* (London: New York University Press/Macmillan, 1994) p. 218.
- 12 Ivo Banac, *The National Question in Yugoslavia: Orgins, History, Politics* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1992) p. 147.
- 13 Laura Silber and Alan Little, *The Death of Yugoslavia* (London: BBC Books, 1993) pp. 230–1.
- 14 David Campbell, *National Deconstruction: Violence, Identity, and Justice in Bosnia* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1998) pp. 58–9.
- 15 *Ibid.* p. 59.
- 16 Jovan Ilić, 'Possible Borders of New Yugoslavia', in Stanoje Ivanović (ed.), *The Creation and Changes of the Internal Borders of Yugoslavia* (Belgrade: Ministry of Information of the Republic of Serbia, 1992) p. 100.
- 17 Serbian Ministry of Information, 'Facts About The Republic of Serbia' (Helsinki: Embassy of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, February 1996) p. 24.
- 18 Melina Spasovski, Dragica Živković, and Milomir Stepić, 'The Ethnic Structure of the Population in Bosnia Herzegovina', in Dušanka Hadži-Jovančić (ed.), *The Serbian*

- Question in the Balkans: Geographical and Historical Aspects* (Belgrade: University of Belgrade Faculty of Geography, 1995) p. 264.
- 19 Serbian Ministry of Information, 'Facts About The Republic of Serbia', p. 22.
- 20 See Dušan T. Bataković, 'The Serbs of Bosnia & Herzegovina: History and Politics' (Belgrade: Dušan T. Bataković Web site, 1997) <http://www.bglink.com/personal/batakovic/k-serbih.html> (accessed 18 June 1998).
- 21 See Aleksa Djilas, 'A House Divided', in Nader Mousavizadeh (ed.), *The Black Book of Bosnia: The Consequences of Appeasement* (New York: New Republic Books, 1996) p. 20. See also Ilić, 'The Serbs in the Former SR of Croatia', in Hadži Jovančić (ed.), *The Serbian in the Balkans*, p. 232; and Vera Vratusa-Zunjić, 'The Intrinsic Connection Between Endogenous and Exogenous Factors of Social (Dis)integration: a Sketch of the Yugoslav Case', *Dialogue*, 22–23 (June/September 1997) <http://www.bglink.com/business/dialogue/vratusa.html> (accessed 18 June 1998).
- 22 Djordje Janković, 'The Serbs in the Balkans in the Light of Archeological Findings', in Hadži-Jovančić (ed.), *The Serbian Question in the Balkans*, p. 137. The primordialness of Serbian claims was often contrasted with the constructed nature of Moslem identity. Ilić paradoxically claimed that Moslems were Serbs precisely because of their rejection of Serbian ethnicity. He argued that the Moslems possessed the 'psychological and ethical handicap of converts', and that their 'great aversion towards the ethnicity they come from' constituted further proof that they were in fact Serbian. Ilić's psychobabble revealed that the Moslems were merely engaging in a species of psychological projection. Like those suffering from addiction or disease, they were in denial, perhaps needing Serbian 'liberation' as a cure. See Jovan Ilić, 'The Balkan Geopolitical Knot and the Serbian Question', (pp. 3–37) in Hadži-Jovančić (ed.), *The Serbian Question in the Balkans*, p. 16.
- 23 Quoted in Norman Cigar, *Genocide in Bosnia: The Policy of 'Ethnic Cleansing'* (College Station, TX: Texas A & M University Press, 1995) p. 81.
- 24 Malcolm, *Bosnia: A Short History*, pp. 226–7.
- 25 Cigar, *Genocide in Bosnia*, p. 59. Summarily rejecting Moslem claims to national identity, he described how Arabs viewed the Bosnian Moslems with disgust, since they were not really 'Islamic'. See Radovan Karadžić, 'Beginnings of a Secular Battle', in Patrick Barriot and Eve Crépin (eds), *On assassine un peuple: Les serbes de Krajina* (Lausanne: L'Age D'Homme, 1995) pp. 111; 117.
- 26 Karadžić, 'Beginnings of a Secular Battle', p. 117.
- 27 Zaljka Corak, 'Croatian Monuments: Wounds Suffered From Other People's Illnesses' in Zvonimir-Separović (ed.), *Documenta Croatica* (Zagreb: VIGRAM-Zagrebi VIDEM Krsko, 1992) p. 38.
- 28 Quoted in Ante Beljo (ed.), *War Pictures 1991–1993* (Zagreb: Croatian Information Center/Hrvatska Matica Iseljenika, 1993) p. 115.
- 29 *Ibid.* pp. 115–16.
- 30 Paul Tvrković, *Bosnia Hercegovina: Back to the Future* (London: Paul Tvrković, 1993) p. 36.
- 31 *Ibid.* p. 17.
- 32 Tvrković cited four examples: 1910–14 (Bosnian Parliament); 1914–18 (First World War); 1941–45 (Second World War); and 1991–93, the 'present aggression by Serbia': *ibid.* p. 24.
- 33 Michael A. Sells, *The Bridge Betrayed: Religion and Genocide in Bosnia* (London: Routledge, 1996) p. 95.
- 34 Lenard Cohen, *Broken Bonds: Yugoslavia's Disintegration and Balkan Politics in Transition* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press) p. 97.

*The Moslem question in Bosnia-Herzegovina*

- 35 Dubravko Horvatić and Stjepan Šešelj, 'Croatian Culture and Croatian Army: Interview with Croatian Defense Minister Gojko Šušak', *Hrvatsko Slovo* (27 December 1996) [www.cdsp.neu.edu/info/students/marko/hrsluvo/hrsluvo7.html](http://www.cdsp.neu.edu/info/students/marko/hrsluvo/hrsluvo7.html) (accessed 18 June 1998).
- 36 Mark Thompson, *Forging War: The Media in Serbia, Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina* (London: Article 19/International Center Against Censorship, 1994) pp. 97–8. Croatian nationalists denied Serbs any right to be considered an indigenous people of Bosnia-Herzegovina. According to most accounts, Serbian presence was the result of immigration, which came after the Ottoman conquest: Ante Čuvalo (ed.), *Croatia and the Croats* (Zagreb: Northern Tribune Publishing, 1991) p. 75.
- 37 Ante Beljo, *Genocide in Yugoslavia: A Documentary Analysis* (Sudbury, ON: Northern Tribune Publishing, 1985) p. 12.
- 38 Tvrtković, *Bosnia Herzegovina*, p. 6.
- 39 'Review of Sime Dodan, *Bosnia and Herzegovina, a Croatian Land* (Zagreb: Meditor, 1994)', *Feral Tribune* (29 December 1997).
- 40 Čuvalo, *Croatia and the Croats*, pp. 19–20.
- 41 The first time I encountered this book, for example, was in the Regina Public Library in Saskatchewan, Canada.
- 42 Malcolm, *Bosnia: A Short History*, pp. 11–12.
- 43 *Ibid.* p. 17.
- 44 *Ibid.* p. 17. According to Steven Runciman, *The Medieval Manichee* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1947) p. 110, Kotromanić appears to have converted for political reasons, in an effort to secure an alliance with Hungary in order to protect Bosnia's independence against the threat of annexation by Serbia's Stephen Dušan. I am indebted to David Phelps for his advice and suggestions here. See Runciman, *ibid.*, and Malcolm: *Bosnia: A Short History*, pp. 18–19.
- 45 Bringa, *Being Muslim the Bosnian Way*, p. 13; see also Tvrtković, *Bosnia Herzegovina*, p. 8.
- 46 See Runciman, *The Medieval Manichee*, pp. 100–15 *passim*.
- 47 For a discussion, see Francine Friedman, *The Bosnian Muslims: Denial of a Nation* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1996) p. 21. Malcolm (*Bosnia: A Short History*, pp. 53–5) has controverted the Moslem claim, arguing that conversion took several centuries. Further, he argues that a direct link between the Bosnian Church and the Moslems cannot be proved. Runciman's arguments however contradict those of Malcolm. He posits that mass conversions were common, particularly amongst the Bosnian nobility, since the Sultan had decreed that only those who converted could retain possession of their estates. Furthermore, Runciman writes that, 'The people followed their nobles' lead. By the end of the fifteenth century Bosnia was a predominantly Mohammedan province.' See Runciman, *The Medieval Manichee*, pp. 114–15.
- 48 Malcolm, *ibid.*, pp. 28–9.
- 49 Bringa, *Being Muslim the Bosnian Way*, p. 16.
- 50 *Ibid.* p. 18.
- 51 Quoted in Fouad Ajami, 'In Europe's Shadows', in Nader Mousavizadeh (ed.), *The Black Book of Bosnia: The Consequences of Appeasement* (New York: Basic Books, 1995) p. 41.
- 52 Adam Lebor, *A Heart Turned East: Among The Muslims of Europe and America* (London: Little, Brown, 1997) p. 20.
- 53 His theories are discussed in Cigar, *Genocide in Bosnia*, p. 29.
- 54 *Ibid.* p. 29.
- 55 *Ibid.* p. 25.

- 56 See Andrew Baruch: Wachtel, *Making a Nation Breaking a Nation: Literature and Cultural Politics in Yugoslavia* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998) pp. 203–8.
- 57 Discussed in Sells, *The Bridge Betrayed*, pp. 223–5.
- 58 Dobrica Ćosić, *L'effondrement de la Yougoslavie: positions d'un résistant* (Paris: L'Age D'Homme, 1994) p. 76.
- 59 *Ibid.* p. 76.
- 60 Kečmanović, *The Mass Psychology of Ethnonationalism*, pp. 63–4.
- 61 Quoted in: Cigar, *Genocide in Bosnia*, pp. 99–100.
- 62 Vratuša-Zunjić, 'The Intrinsic Connection Between Endogenous and Exogenous Factors of Social (Dis)integration', p. 15.
- 63 *Ibid.* p. 15.
- 64 Quoted in Cigar, *Genocide in Bosnia*, p. 99.
- 65 Major Milovan Milutinović was responsible for this document, which also boasted lurid accounts of Moslem atrocities, such as, 'necklaces have been strung of human eyes and ears, skulls have been halved, brains have been split, bowels have been torn out, human spits and children's bodies have been pierced by bayonets ...': quoted in Roy Gutman, *A Witness to Genocide* (New York: Macmillan, 1993) pp. ix–x.
- 66 Nikola Marinović, *Stories from Hell: Confessions of Serbs, Tortured in the Concentration Camps in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1991 and 1992* (Belgrade: Serbian Ministry of Information, 1993) p. 60.
- 67 Quoted in Christopher Hitchens, 'Appointment in Sarajevo: Why Bosnia Matters', in Rabia Ali and Lawrence Lifschutz (eds), *Why Bosnia? Writings on the Balkan Wars* (Stoney Creek, CT: Pamphleteer's Press, 1993) p. 9.
- 68 Drago Jovanović, Gordana Bundalo, and Miloš Govedarica (eds), *The Eradication of Serbs in Bosnia and Hercegovina 1992–1993* (Belgrade: RAD, 1994) p. 14.
- 69 Lebor, *A Heart Turned East*, p. 18.
- 70 See page 270 of Milošević's testimony at the Hague Tribunal or ICTY. Full transcripts are available at [www.un.org/icty](http://www.un.org/icty).
- 71 For a description of the February 1994 bombing, see David Gompert, 'The United States and Yugoslavia's Wars', p. 138; for August 1995, see Richard Ullman, 'Introduction', p. 4; both in Richard Ullman (ed.), *The World and Yugoslavia's Wars* (New York: The Council on Foreign Relations, 1996).
- 72 Boris Delić, 'Power Without Political Legitimacy or Moral Credibility', *Serbia: News, Comments, Documents, Facts, Analysis*, 41 (1995) p. 51. Much of the ammunition against Izetbegović in Serbian discourse stems from a reading of Alija Izetbegović's book, *Islam Between East and West*, published in 1980, which was supposedly a fundamentalist tract and a political programme for on Islamic expansionism into Western Europe. However, as Ajami counters: 'Izetbegović's book should have been a defense lawyer's dream. An amateurish work, an intellectual hodge-podge, it is the product of an anxious *assimilé*, a child of the Western tradition reassuring himself that all the sources of his mind add up to a coherent whole, a man of our messy world born at the crossroads of cultures. The index alone is sufficient proof of the man's eclecticism. This must be the only book on Islam with nine references to Dostoevski, seven to Albert Camus, eleven to Engels, nine to Hegel, three to Malraux, two to Rembrandt, ten to Bertrand Russell, eight to Kenneth Clark and so on. This is not the work of a Moslem fundamentalist or a traditional apologist': Ajami, 'In Europe's Shadows', p. 51.
- 73 See Risto Tubić, 'Encyclopaedia of Evil and Crime' (pp. 6–13). in Jovanović, Bundalo, and Govedarica (eds), *The Eradication of Serbs in Bosnia and Hercegovina*, p. 7.
- 74 *Ibid.* p. 9. (Italics his.)
- 75 As Michael Sells described the process: 'A massacre would follow local media broad-

- casting Croat and Moslem plans to exterminate the Serbs. Once such broadcasts were out, then the inevitable occurred as various Serb groups hurried to “defend” themselves against attack’: Michael A. Sells, ‘Religion, History and Genocide in Bosnia-Herzegovina’, in G. Scott Davis (ed.), *Religion and Justice in the War Over Bosnia* (London: University of California Press, 1996) pp. 36–7.
- 76 Marinović, *Stories from Hell*, pp. 56–65. The need to shell Sarajevo was further promoted through long ‘testimonials’ published by the Commissariat for Refugees in Belgrade, describing the horrors of life under Moslem rule. See the Commissariat’s volume of testimonies, *Suffering of the Serbs in Sarajevo* (Belgrade: Commissariat for Refugees, 1995).
- 77 Zdenka Milivojević, ‘Serbia’, in James Gow, Richard Paterson, and Alison Preston (eds), *Bosnia By Television* (London: BFI, 1996). See p. 152.
- 78 Sandra Bašić-Hrvatín, ‘Television and National/Public Memory’, in Gow, Paterson, and Preston (eds), *Bosnia By Television*, pp. 62–3.
- 79 Cigar, *Genocide in Bosnia*, p. 124.
- 80 *Ibid.*
- 81 Warren Zimmermann, *Origins of a Catastrophe: Yugoslavia and its Destroyers – America’s Last Ambassador Tells What Happened and Why* (New York: Random House, 1996) pp. 181–2.
- 82 Dubravko Horvatić, ‘Our Existence is a Crime’, *Hrvatsko Slovo* (22 March 1996) [www.cdsp.neu.edu/info/students/marko/hrslovo/hrslovo5.html](http://www.cdsp.neu.edu/info/students/marko/hrslovo/hrslovo5.html) (accessed 18 June 1998).
- 83 *Ibid.*
- 84 Marko Vidić, ‘Croats an Obstacle to the Creation of the New Bosnian Nation’, *Slobodna Dalmacija* (28 April 1998) [www.cdsp.neu.edu/info/students/marko/slodal/slodal9.html](http://www.cdsp.neu.edu/info/students/marko/slodal/slodal9.html) (accessed 18 June 1998).
- 85 Gutman, *Witness to Genocide*, p. 23.
- 86 Gordan Malić, ‘Herceg Camp’, *Feral Tribune* (29 April 1996) [www.cdsp.neu.edu/info/students/marko/feral/feral31.html](http://www.cdsp.neu.edu/info/students/marko/feral/feral31.html) (accessed 18 June 1998).
- 87 See Sells, *The Bridge Betrayed*, pp. 80–1.
- 88 *Ibid.* p. 106.
- 89 James Gow and James Tisley, ‘The Strategic Imperative for Media Management’, in Gow, Paterson, and Preston (eds), *Bosnia By Television*, p. 108.
- 90 David Campbell, *National Deconstruction; Violence, Identity, and Justice in Bosnia* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1998) p. 8.
- 91 Quoted in *ibid.* p. 8.
- 92 Lebor, *A Heart Turned East*, p. 40.
- 93 *Ibid.* p. 55.
- 94 *Ibid.* pp. 56–7.
- 95 In this regard, one curious example of Serbian hypocrisy deserves mention. One of the accusations against the Moslems was that Siladžić and other Bosnian Moslem notables had visited Libya in the hope of setting up their own *Jamhariyya* (Momar Qadafi’s ‘People’s State’) in Bosnia. While there was no evidence to support this claim, Qadafi was actually an enthusiastic supporter of Milošević’s Serbia. By December 1994, Tanjug reported that high-level Serbian diplomats were regularly visiting Libya. In this case, it is clear that the Serbs’ accusations were a direct screen for their own actions. Throughout this conflict, the idea of accusing someone of various activities while you are in fact engaged in doing them yourself has been a recurring pattern – a theme. As discussed in Sells, *The Bridge Betrayed*, p. 120.
- 96 Campbell, *National Deconstruction*, pp. 112–13.

*Balkan holocausts?*

97 *Ibid.* p. 113.

98 *Ibid.*

99 A sociological overview to this effect can be found in Brigitte Hipfl, Klaus Hipfl, and Jan Jagodzinski, 'Documentary Films and the Bosnia-Herzegovina Conflict: From Production to Reception', in Gow, Paterson, and Preston (eds), *Bosnia By Television*, p. 45.

100 Campbell, *National Deconstruction*, p. 221.