

**Research Project: New and Ambiguous Nation-Building Processes
in South-Eastern Europe**

Working Paper Series

**BETWEEN MUSLIMDOM, BOSNIANDOM, YUGOSLAVDOM AND BOSNIAK-
DOM: POLITICAL ELITE IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA IN THE MID-
1960s AND BY THE BEGINNING OF THE 1970s**

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The project is funded by the Volkswagen Foundation and the Austrian Science Fund (FWF).



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Between Muslimdom, Bosniandom, Yugoslavdom and Bosniakdom: Political Elite in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the Mid-1960s and by the Beginning of the 1970s

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Abstract

This paper consists of two parts: the first follows the emergence of a new generation of ruling elite in BiH by mid-1960s and the beginning of 1970s, when the debates on national status of Muslims in BiH was intensified. The second part analyses various debates, including those at the Communist Party fora, as well as in academic circles and in the media about the name of Bosniaks, that were present by the end of 1960s and the beginning of 1970s.

The emergence of a new generation of political elite in Bosnia and Herzegovina began by the mid-1960s, the years that were marked also by the beginning of major social changes not only in Bosnia and Herzegovina, but throughout Yugoslavia. After the Eighth Congress of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia, held on 7-13 December 1964, the beginning of implementation of economic reforms as changes that followed after the Fourth Plenary Session of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia, and the ousting of Aleksandar Ranković in 1966, the process of controlled strengthening of “political peripheries” in Yugoslavia commenced, that did not aim at inciting separatist intentions, but rather to create a counterweight to the centralist political tendencies that were very strong in that era. Namely, towards the end of the 1960s, due to political relations in Yugoslavia, Josip Broz Tito promoted the process of strengthening of the so-called “political periphery” in Yugoslavia (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Kosovo and Vojvodina) in order to strike some equilibrium vis à vis Serbia and Croatia. Thus, he promoted the leaders of Bosnia and Herzegovina and inspired them to take a more independent position for their republic vis à vis political centres in Serbia and Croatia. To strengthen the Yugoslav political periphery (i.e. Bosnia and Herzegovina), it was necessary to integrate some of its regions within that periphery first. Thus, we discover two circles of centre-periphery relations: the first, a wider circle that sees Yugoslavia as its

centre, and Bosnia and Herzegovina as its periphery; and second, a narrower circle, where Bosnia and Herzegovina is the centre, while its regions (Herzegovina, Bosnian Krajina, Eastern Bosnia) are its peripheries. Here, the model of strengthening the peripheries (in both circles) occurred with the aim of maintaining the centre. An important segment of the strengthening of BiH as a political periphery within Yugoslav Federation was reflected through the affirmation of the Bosniak national identity.

Political elite in Bosnia and Herzegovina in mid-1960s

By mid-1960, a new generation of ruling elite emerged on the political scene of Bosnia and Herzegovina. This new generation partly relied on the old generation of the Second World War veterans, yet it partly opposed it, while carrying out the process of strengthening the particularities and individuality of Bosnia and Herzegovina within the Yugoslav federation. At the Fourth Congress of the League of Communists of Bosnia and Herzegovina, held from 2 to 5 March 1965, Branko Mikulić was elected as one of the secretaries for its Central Committee. Mikulić would soon gain strong Tito's support and would grow into one of the key leaders of BiH in the years to come. In 1967, Mikulić became the President of the Government, i.e. the Executive Council of the Socialist Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina. At the same time, Džemal Bijedić became the Speaker of the Assembly of the Socialist Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, while Hamdija Pozderac already had a very strong position within the ruling elite. Still relying on the older generation, they gradually changed the age structure of the ruling elite. On 9 April 1969, Branko Mikulić was elected as the President of the Central Committee of the League of Communists of BiH, while Hamdija Pozderac was elected as the Secretary of the Central Committee's Secretariat. With Mikulić, Bijedić (who became the President of Federal Executive Council in 1971), and Pozderac (who was elected for the Speaker of the Assembly of the Socialist Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina), the key positions within the BiH ruling elite were held also by Rato Dugonjić, Dragutin Kosovac, Todo Kurtović, Milanko Renovica and others. In the 1960s, this leadership, relying at the beginning on the authority of the older generation of leaders (Đuro Pucar, Cvijetin Mijatović), started raising the issue of the position of Bosnia and Herzegovina within Yugoslavia.¹ A number of questions was raised (e.g. the problems with investments,

¹ Aziz Hadžihasanović, *1968-1974. Vrijeme prvih nasrtaja na Bosnu i Hercegovinu. Kako su srastali birokratizam i nacionalizam (The time of first assaults on BiH: How Bureaucratism and Nationalism Have Coalesced)*, Sarajevo: Kult B, 2005.

prices, development of aluminium industry, the problem of construction of roads and hydro-power plants), while a particularly heightened issue was that of the failure of federal authorities to meet its obligations regarding the budgets of individual republics (the relevant legislation envisaged that funds were to be allocated from the federal budget to those republics whose revenues were not sufficient to reach the Yugoslav average of budgetary expenditures per capita). Due to the Federation's failure to make these allocations, BiH was unable to develop the budget-funded branches of economy. After an unsuccessful meeting between the BiH and SFRY delegations led by the President of Federal Executive Council, Petar Stambolić and Boris Kraiger - where Kraiger even stated that the allocation of funds to the budget of BiH would not even be considered, since it would cause «unrest in Slovenia», and Stambolić pointed out that that could cause unrest in Serbia as well - a delegation from BiH went to discuss the issue with Tito, where they expressed their view that Bosnia and Herzegovina was deliberately kept in an unequal position. Bosnian delegation complained to Tito about the intentions of the Federal Executive Council to build an aluminium factory in Montenegro and not in BiH, which was confirmed by Tito who then informed the delegation that both Kraiger and Petar Stambolić had discussed the idea with him. «Once informed by us, comrade Tito said that he had not been aware that the situation was so serious and wondered aloud how it could happen.² After this meeting with Tito, the leadership of BiH raised officially the issue of unequal position of BiH in Yugoslavia. First, it was done in a letter sent by the Executive Committee of the Central Committee of the League of Communists of BiH to the Executive Committee of the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia on 16 April 1966.³ In that letter, the issue of BiH's lagging behind the rest of Yugoslavia was raised, and key causes of such the situation were detected very precisely. The letter opened up the problems of relations between the federal administration and political leadership of BiH that would become very complex in the years to come. One must mention that the BiH political elite sought, and mainly received, support for their demands from Josip Broz Tito. Bosnia and Herzegovina raised this issue of unequal position before the House of Peoples of the Federal Assembly, stating that they only wanted to continue to build the Federation, as «the union of equal nations and nationalities».

² Archives of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Branko Mikulić's Holdings (hereinafter, the Holdings is referred to as: AFBiH, MB)

³ This letter was quoted extensively in Šaćir Filandra, *Bošnjačka politika u XX. stoljeću*. Sarajevo : Sejtarija, 1998, pp. 232-234. This work quotes the original that is held by the Archives of the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia, Vol. IV-k16/4.

The 1966 Conference in Mostar

By mid-1966, BiH leadership emphatically raised the issue about the different levels of development in the different regions of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as their opinion «that there was not enough sensitivity in the Republic for the problems of underdeveloped regions, nor were there any consistent studies or programming of their development (...) In those circumstances, there was, among other things, a threat of the rise of chauvinism caused by suspicion that there were differences in the real potentials of different republics.» Various stories were spread about the fact that this republic paid much more attention to its more developed parts than to those that were underdeveloped. This was discussed at the June 1966 session of the Central Committee of the League of Communists of BiH, and a special commission was established in those days to make an inquiry into the situation in Herzegovina, given that on several occasions the issue of inequality of Western Herzegovina within Bosnia and Herzegovina was raised. In the document entitled *Basic socio-economic characteristics of the County of Mostar, with special emphasis on some ideological and political problems of Western Herzegovina* (Mostar, September 1966), there is a rather precise statement on the need to integrate this region into BiH, by strengthening the influence of the League of Communists in the Croat-majority regions, and by applying a more flexible attitude towards the local population.⁴ This document also stated that, for some time after the Second World War, there were many wrong actions taken there. «Exaggeration and rigid methods in political work were used by hostile elements and enemy-oriented circles in their propaganda against our policy. The issue of providing scholarships has caused different reactions and comments in this region. The mistakes related to scholarships led to misunderstandings between students and their local governments. There were cases where young men and women were not granted the scholarship they applied for, due to that reason, that their parents or relatives used to go to the church masses or other religious ceremonies instead of turning to the civil authorities. We have encountered these phenomena in several municipalities of this region. The truth is, this does not occur so often any more, yet, we should reconsider the whole policy of scholarships and seek to find other ways and possibilities of providing stipends for secondary and high schools, as well as for university - for as many young people from

⁴ Š. Filandra, *Bošnjačka politika*, pp. 229-230. In this work, I am using the original material from the Archives of Herzegovina in Mostar. I would like to thank to my colleague Ivo Lučić, who has made this material available to me.

this region as possible (...) In previous times, professionals from other parts of the country used to work in this region (...) Most of the posts in local schools were held by the professors or teachers of other nationalities. We had the same case in relation to the members of the People's Police, as well as to the personnel of local branches of the Ministry of Interior. That was the case with places such as Ljubuški, Lištica, Grude, Posušje, whereby hostile propaganda interpreted it as our political position relating this region. Even among the ordinary people, there was this perception that the cadres of other ethnicities had been imposed on them».

This document emphasises that even «among our younger political cadres (...) there are (...) different views about the political orientation of students at some universities. Sometimes, one can hear that most of our students are hostile to our society and that we are educating our own opponents, as well as that many of them should not be allowed to study. Earlier, there was an opinion among socio-political activists and professionals in this country and in particular, in some municipalities, that students from this region should be sent to study in Belgrade, Sarajevo, and Skopje so that they do not opt for studying in Zagreb. This shows that we have failed to understand that their education in Zagreb, which would be under our influence may produce greater results than if they go to other centres, and that our attention should be focused in that direction. We should not be concerned about the places they go to study, yet we cannot be indifferent to their orientation and to the degree of their inclusion in the socio-political life of universities». It is also emphasised that in some student circles in Zagreb there were discussions about this part of BiH being «underdeveloped and abandoned, that the wrong investment policy is carried out, etc. Students expressed these views in their communities as well (...). In terms of their enrolment with the military schools and academies there were also similar comments heard. Claims are made that these schools should not accept too many students from this region because they are perceived as the young people that should not be recruited in the military. The response of these youth to public announcements calling them to apply for the posts of non-commissioned officers and to study at military academies was rather strong in the municipalities of Posušje, Lištica, and Čitluk, yet very few of them were recruited». The explanation given was that there were candidates who were, once local authorities demanded an explanation for their rejection, «eventually admitted to military schools. »

This Mostar conference is important because it shows the model in which the policy of integration of BiH was implemented by its leaders. Tito's supported their policy and their

method of opposing centralistic ideas, whereby by the term “centralist” I do not mean the centre of Yugoslav Federation, but rather centres in Belgrade and Zagreb, whose actions were perceived by the leaders of BiH as over-paternalistic. It is exactly in these years that Tito tried to bring into the Federal Government key political figures from Serbia and Croatia in order to weaken these two republics, which he deemed as the ones that could threaten the stability of Yugoslavia. As early as by the beginning of 1967, he made such an attempt by proposing a Slovenian, Stane Kavčič for the Prime-Minister designee, and asked him to form the Federal Executive Council. Trying to complete the Federal Government, Kavčič intended to bring in Savka Dabčević, from Croatia, and Marko Nikezić, from Serbia. Savka rejected Kavčič’s offer stating a number of reasons, and in her private talk with him, she said that by bringing key political figures from Serbia and Croatia into the Federal Government he was weakening these republics and changing the balance between the centre and the periphery. After this failed attempt with Kavčič, several years later, Tito even offered this mandate to Savka Dapčević, and then even to Mika Tripalo. Yet, after their refusal, he appointed Džemal Bijedić from Bosnia and Herzegovina to the position of the President of the Federal Executive Council.

In those years, the political leadership of BiH implemented the policy of integration of its regions mainly into the economy of the Republic. By mid-November 1969, at a session of the Central Committee of the League of Communists of BiH, there was a debate about tendencies that did to seek integration of economy within BiH, but solely at the level of Yugoslavia. However, the key conclusions of that session were that the integration could not be carried out at the level of Yugoslavia, if it was done at the expense of the economic unity of BiH, because “it is not possible to achieve the unity in Yugoslavia by weakening the unity of its constituent republics. On the contrary, those who are against the integration and unity of federal parts can not possibly be in favour of the integration and unity of the whole».

The 1969 earthquake in Krajina

While, after the Mostar conference the process of integration of Western Herzegovina in Bosnia and Herzegovina began, Bosnian Krajina’s integration occurred after the 1969 earthquake. Namely, on 26 and 27 October 1969, Krajina was struck by a devastating earthquake and the situation with the rebuilding of Bosnian Krajina was a good example of the endeavours of the then BiH political elite to fully integrate all the regions of Bos-

nia and Herzegovina. During Tito's visit to Bosnia and Herzegovina, at the beginning of April 1970, Bosnian leaders informed him about the Federal Administration's attitude towards the rebuilding of Bosnian Krajina. During his visit to Banja Luka, Tito showed an interest in the dynamics of the rebuilding of Krajina. «... If we are not able to solve this problem permanently and generally, we will do what we have done until now, and works should go on without any obstructions». «I do not want Banja Luka to suffer any longer», Tito said. In these talks, the issue was raised of the 1970 advance allocation of budgetary fund, while waiting for a systemic solution to be found. «Comrade Tito said that we should not wait for a comprehensive solution and all procedures to be completed. If we do not start acting quickly, winter will begin (...). Tito was particularly interested in urban development plans for Banja Luka, and he emphasised that the planning of micro-regions where pre-fabricated houses (barracks) are to be built should begin because the living conditions in such constructions is far better than in the wagons or trailers, for example. He also added, «Do not let this people go into the next winter in these trailers».

Crucial talk between Tito and the leaders of BiH regarding the reconstruction of Bosnian Krajina was the one of 26 June 1970 on the island of Brioni. The BiH delegation consisted of Branko Mikulić, Džemal Bijedić, Dragutin Kosovac and Osman Karabegović. This was around the time when a series of debates began between the ruling elite of BiH and the Federation leadership, which would result in further changes in the ruling elite of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Namely, after long hours of debate that was occasionally so aggressive that it could have caused great crisis in the functioning of Yugoslav Federation, the ruling elite of BiH accepted the assistance that the Federation was willing to provide for the reconstruction of Bosnian Krajina, even though it was much less than expected.

At the session of the Central Committee of the League of Communists of BiH, held on 9 October 1970, the prevailing view was that the opening of constitutional crisis on the problems related to Bosnian Krajina would be detrimental, because Bosnia and Herzegovina would be held responsible for it. «We should not deny the solidarity of our peoples. What would the reaction be of our citizens if we acted like that (...). This treatment of our Republic is not a failure. Particularly appreciated was the opinion expressed by Tito that we should agree on 500 billion dinars. This should be respected and built into our behaviour. We need to oppose the attempts of some individuals to underrate what has been done so far...» Hamdija Pozderac spoke about the fact that the communists from BiH

had been very active. «Were it not for our activity, we would have received 200 – 300 billion dinars. Thanks to our strong advocacy, we have rehabilitated the principles of solidarity among the peoples of Yugoslavia. With 454 billion dinars without valorisation, pressure is exerted on us. However, there is readiness to reach an agreement on 500 billion with valorisation. That is the limit that should be understood as such and assessed realistically and as our huge success».

Osman Karabegović then said, «We are confronted with the situation where this must be brought to an end, and in the structures as they are now we can not move further. There are also warnings from Tito that we must be flexible to avoid conflicts and that we need to seek joint solutions. We have led this action wisely and politically moderately. Thus, we have moved things forward (...), thanks to our policy, our tolerance and because we have prevented the crowd from taking to the streets (...), we have strived for the most favourable solutions (...). Nevertheless, we cannot accept the 7:1 dictate*! Tito seeks flexibility from all, not only from us (...). We have loans. However, let us not fail to differentiate things here (...) A credit is not assistance. This is not the compensation for damages. Yet, it does have an effect of aiding people». Karabegović continued by saying that it would not be good to accept 500 billion dinars without discussion. «He disagrees with the assessment that others had the same treatment before. We have been treated in this way for 18 years now. We were always warned that we would cause crisis. It has become a habit - acting towards us in this way». He stated that Bosnia was denied its due rights. In his discussion, Avdo Humo said, «The issue of solidarity can not be used to raise the issue of equality. Other peoples are not happy with their position either and they also strive for equality. On many issues, we used to have an opportunistic stance in our struggle for equality. However, that is not the case when this issue is concerned. Solidarity has reached a certain level. We are not satisfied with it. The question is whether this is a strategic point where we can win our battle for equality. This is the maximum we could achieve at the given situation. Tomorrow, when we constitute our relations on differently ground, we will talk differently. Not today, though. Today, the Federation cannot solve the problems as it did in 1963. We also fought against centralism and we need to continue fighting... We gave to Skopje more than we should have given. Yet, to raise that issue today would be immoral». Humo proposed to try to move the amount up, and to try to do it in the Assembly, because in the Federal Executive Council it could not be

* This refers to the five republics and two autonomous provinces vis à vis one Republic – that of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

done. «If we start from the fact that this is the issue of equality, we would only raise tensions between republics.... This is not 1963, when the Federation took its decisions without ever asking republics for their opinion. If we fail to see this reality, the future will only bring new shocks to us». Osman Karabegović emphasised that it was justified to compare Krajina with Skopje, because the two disasters were similar and the treatment consequently should have been similar. «Isn't it the case of inequality if we fail to do it?» he said that the society should now show a greater sense for brotherhood than in 1963, whereas «today, it behaves as our step-mother more than ever before (...) How could the autonomous republics do what has never been done even by the centralist Yugoslavia. It is not something that should stem from our society. Some political structures in some of the republic pronounce judgement on us, and we say that it is not inequality. (...) Yes, primarily it is about solidarity, but also about equality».

At this session, there were some very critical discussions. Branko Bosnić was the most resolute of all: «In Split, they are rallying because of a football match, and here we do not do anything like that, although these people have no place to go when winter comes (...). I would rather opt for stirring political crisis and causing scandals, in order to contribute to the victory of the forces of self-management in our society ».

Eventually, the solution to the issue of the reconstruction of Bosnian Krajina caused negative reactions even among some members of the political leadership of BiH. One of the leading politicians from Bosnian Krajina, Osman Karabegović, began criticising the Bosnian leadership, particularly Branko Mikulić, and that led to a new political crisis and political break-up with a group of senior leaders. It all resulted in further rejuvenation of BiH leadership and the strengthening of new political elite in Bosnia and Herzegovina. All their development had certain impacts on the process of affirmation of the Muslim national identity.

The 1971 break-up within the political leadership of BiH

In 1972, the process of generational change of BiH political elite entered a new phase marked by the break-up of leadership some of the older political cadres. It was the break-up with Osman Karabegović, Avdo Humo, Hajro Kapetanović and Čedo Kapor. Prior to this break-up there were several similar ones, but which did not have such a political echo (e.g. break-up with Rade Hamović, Radovan Stijačić, Selim Numić). This one was very complex, and we will elaborate on it here only in the context of generational change and in relation to the affirmation of Bosniak national identity.

From my talks with some of the political leaders of that era (e.g. Nikola Stojanović and Milanko Renovica), I have learnt that it was just about generational change, and that the older generation of leaders, at that moment personified by Humo and Karabegović, simply could not accept the natural process of generational change. However, in those days there was a tendency of refusal to treat this process as one of generational change, i.e. as “generational clash”. In the notes prepared by Branko Mikulić for the 44th Session of the Central Committee of the League of Communists of BiH (September 1972), he wrote that the sessions of the Central Committee had shown that «in BiH there is no reason whatsoever to think that there was what they call «generational clash. On the contrary, one could say that there were attempts to concentrate the clash, however, not by the leadership, but by those comrades who have forced this kind of discussion upon us».⁵

Mikulić writes that the leadership of BiH was criticised for «causing this generational divide and for the fact that we have pushed aside the older generation. Why would we do that, in the name of what political reason? Is not it true that every leadership, this Central Committee included, wants to keep the support of renowned and experienced revolutionaries? One should not have doubts about that». That is why, Mikulić continues, «we have practised frequent meetings of the BiH leadership with the cadres from Bosnia and Herzegovina serving in the federal institutions. This work of ours, no doubt, needs to be developed further. That is an obligation for us who are currently working as the leaders of our Republic. We, however, have other obligations and responsibilities as well - to secure the full functioning of all the political leaderships and all the representative bodies and to secure the affirmation of their responsibility for the formulation and implementation of our policies. It is in the work of the leadership and around it, and not in some super-structures, that all our comrades should engage themselves. That is where the permeation between older and younger cadres should occur, in order to secure the bridging of generational gaps. One condition for this to happen is to overcome the division to the more or less meritorious revolutionaries, and to cherish the spirit of equality and mutual respect. Younger cadres are very sensitive to that, they do not tolerate being treated as politically immature, to be taught lessons about the things they are very well aware of; they do not tolerate being subordinated, just like the older comrades are rightly intolerant when they are not respected enough and when they are unjustifiably by-passed. Otherwise, I am convinced that this is not about clash of generations, but about confrontation of positions and of different, and totally opposed, views even about major issues of the

⁵ ABiH. BM, No. 167/72.

future development of our society. In that, there are no «clean» generations, because in each of them, there are progressive people and the conservatives. If things were different, no revolution, ours included, would ever continue, their sources would dry out with the passage of the generation that fought the armed revolution and led it to victory ».⁶

Mikulić continues writing about the same meeting on 6 September 1972, when a number of other issues were raised. There were attempts to discredit some comrades morally, even the entire leadership of BiH.⁷ «This Central Committee knows very well how much we have engaged ourselves in resolving the problems related to the earthquake in Bosnian Krajina and its consequences. In this specific case, again what we saw was the solidarity of our working people and all the peoples of Yugoslavia. The agreement has been reached. Should we question all that? We can freely go public with everything we have done about it, and with all the efforts we have put into it, and let the public at large judge whether we have given up the fight for the interests of BiH».

Osman Karabegović stated that the older revolutionaries were concerned about BiH, «what would happen with BiH, once we are gone. We should not leave it with all its ailments. As for Bosnian Krajina – I am disappointed with the position of some of our comrades on this issue». In his notes, Mikulić wrote, «There are insinuations that we have stopped insisting on the solution for Bosnian Krajina. Hamdija and Branko have caused damage to Krajina (obviously, this is also the opinion of Karabegović, the author's remark). Why did we give up the same solutions that had been used when the earthquake in Skopje had occurred? Because many things have changed since then».

In his discussion, Avdo Humo blamed Mikulić for his opinions related to some the unauthorised minutes (of the Central Committee's session held on 6 September, the author's remark). He spoke about the fact that federal centralism had been destroyed, and, that, instead, it had been drawn down to the republics and turned into republican etatism. Some unavoidable conclusions should be drawn from it. «Otherwise, we would be taking a step backwards. We saw what had happened in Croatia, where the leadership embraced the nationalistic positions». Humo spoke about the situation in the League of Commu-

⁶ 44th, 45th, 46th, 48th and 49th sessions of the Central Committee of the Communist League of Bosnia and Herzegovina (September – November 1972), Vol. I, Sarajevo 1977, pp. 18-19.,

⁷ This meeting, held on 6 September 1972, was important because the break-up with Karabegović and Humo began there. The meeting brought together the BiH members of the Federation Council, a delegation of SRBiH in the Council of Peoples of the Federal Assembly and the BiH members of the Federal Executive Council and was chaired by Mićo Rakić, while the keynote speaker was the Speaker of the Assembly of BiH Hamdija Pozderac. Karabegović's and Humo's interventions relating the political and economic situation in BiH prompted immediately the summoning of a session of the Central Committee that resulted in their excommunication. However, this political break-up had begun before the 6 September 1972 meeting.

nists. «There are different tendencies: etatist, self-management oriented. There are different groups as well. The base of our party is pretty paralysed. Basic units of our party organisation are not the carriers of policies. Instead, the policies are formulated solely in the party fora (...). Nobody wants the establishment of some super-structures, yet the existing ones do not function. It is not by accident that the Head of State and of the leader of our party says that he is left alone...»⁸. Humo then emphasised that there was the problem of old revolutionaries. «Nobody has invited me to visit Mostar for two years now. Why? Am I in opposition to the Party (?), or have I become senile? For two years, I have not been given access to TV, to public debates in my own republic. Why? The same goes with the newspapers. On the other hand, there are new leaders emerging. Some of them make public statements that are covered in all the press with six photographs of theirs in addition to the coverage... there are only five, six people who are opening all the factories, who are omnipresent. There is a tendency on their part to get publicity and affirmation at all costs. This is what the public can see and judge about, not just the fora».

The views of the political elite relating national identity: Between Muslimdom, Bosniandom-Yugoslavdom and Bosniakdom

In this part of the paper, I analyse various debates, including those from the party fora, academic circles and the media, about the name of the Bosniak nation at the end of the 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s. My point of departure is the political debate about Yugoslavdom that occurred in mid-1960s. These debates were opened at the same time as when the decision to recognise the national identity of Bosniaks had matured. In Mikulić's notes dated 3 February 1966, he refers to the topic entitled «Bosnia and Herzegovina in Yugoslavia (Paternalism and Regionalism)». One can conclude from these notes that they are related to a gathering attended by Rato (Dugonjić ?), Rudi (Kolak ?), Blažo (?) and Nijaz (Dizdarević ?). Mikulić wrote, «Distance needs to be taken from an abstract Yugoslavdom». He wrote, «Solve the Muslim issue, so that Serbs and Croats may feel free to declare themselves».

At that time, debates about inter-ethnic relations were rather strong. The Commission for Relations between Nations of the Central Committee of the League of Communists of BiH issued special information on 10 May 1967 on inter-ethnic relations, entitled *On Some Issues of Inter-ethnic Relations*. This information mainly deals with cultural development

⁸ Here, Humo refers to Josip Broz Tito.

in BiH and points out that «there is a prevalent view that the culture produced by authors in BiH is an organic part of Yugoslav and even of a geographically broader culture, and vice versa. Still, there are views that, just like there is a certain particularity of other social structures in the Republic, there is a need to develop the culture of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as a distinct and separate factor of our social reality. Awareness of such a need stems partly from the logic of mediocrity that prevails among some cultural workers, but also because of discrimination against a part of those cultural workers, primarily those of Muslim background. Namely, the requests put before cultural workers in BiH to declare that they are the part of Serb or Croat cultural life, because their works were published in Serbia and Croatia respectively, led to the tendency of isolation within the boundaries of BiH that was seen not only among the Muslims, but also among some members of other nationalities. In the evaluation of some other elements of our culture, there are differences in opinions emerging. Thus, for example, there are those - particularly among our intelligentsia, even the members of the League of Communists - who think that some works of Ivo Andrić, because of the way he treats the Turks do not contribute to harmonious development of inter-ethnic relations in our Republic, that the case of Njegoš's «The Mountain Wreath» is quite similar, and that there is discrimination and undervaluation of Muslim folklore, their epic poetry, etc. Comparisons were made of the number of cultural monuments included into the list of national heritage, and, consequently, there were opinions that there was an unequal treatment and uneven approach to the protection of both secular and sacral monuments that were still in use (e.g. Stolac, Mostar, Sarajevo, Foča)».

In the beginning of 1968, the Central Committee of the League of Communists of BiH adopted a political decision that meant the acknowledgement that their position relating the issue of Muslims national identity as either Croat or Serb, because, «Muslim are a distinct, separate people». Still, debates on national identity of Muslims continued and even at the highest political level. In the White Villa on the Island on Brioni, on 23 January 1969, a delegation of BiH talked to Josip Broz Tito. This delegation consisted of President of Central Committee of the League of Communists Cvijetin Mijatović, President of Assembly Džemal Bijedić, President of Executive Council Branko Mikulić, Secretary of Secretariat of Central Committee of the League of Communists of BiH Nijaz Dizdarević, President of Conference of Socialist Union of Working People Esad Cerić, Vice-President of Executive Council Todo Kurtović, Director-General of Zenica Steelworks Stanko Tomić, President of the City Council of Sarajevo, Džemal Muminagić, the candi-

date for the member of the Presidency of the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia, Hamdija Pozderac, and others. Secretary of Executive Committee of Central Committee of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia, Mijalko Todorović was also present. The meeting was organised as one in the series of talks Tito held with the delegations of Yugoslav republics in the course of preparations for the 9th Congress of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia. At the meeting, Cvijetin Mijatović said that BiH had good relations with the leadership of Serbia, although in the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Serbia there were some members who had different ideas about co-operation with Bosnia and Herzegovina, and that the Belgrade press sometimes attacked Bosnia and Herzegovina, although not as harshly as it was the case with the press in Croatia. «To some extent this issue of Bosnia seems to be an open issue. A very renowned comrade from Belgrade asked me, ‘What do you want to achieve with all this fuss about Muslims. Things are clear, science has had its word, and now you are raising the issue again, everyone knows that Muslims have to declare themselves either as Serbs or as Croats. For us, this is a major problem, while some of just throwing it on the table». Tito asked how many Muslims have declared themselves as Yugoslavs, and Mijatović said, «Very few. Most of them say that they are Muslims. If they say that they are Yugoslavs, they do due to pressure and because they do not want to look less worthy if they declare themselves as Muslims. However, this is a distinct group and we recognised them as such during the war. We have solved it and there are no problems with it any more. Tito’s response was that «It would be very good for us because we have relations with some Arab countries. Mijatović said, «It is a group that is equal with the other two and that’ the only thing that matters. This meant an affirmation of the solution of the national problem, and it is a very difficult problem. »⁹ From this exchange, one can see how the affirmation of Muslim national identity served the foreign-policy goals, which is an issue that deserves a detailed research.

A much more important issue is how the affirmation of the Muslim nation evolved within the political circles and among ordinary people. In the political circles, this issue was usually related to the functioning of the state and to relations between the republics and central government. At the session of the Central Committee of the League of Communists of BiH held on 13 November 1969, Branko Mikulić said, «I am convinced

⁹ *Historical Museum of Yugoslavia – the Office of the President of SFRY – Društveno-politička pitanja (KPR – II). - the notes taken during the talks with the leadership of SR Bosnia and Herzegovina at the White Villa, Brioni on 23 January 1969.*

that I would not be exaggerating if I say that this never-ending debate about Yugoslavdom causes confusion and misinterpretations - both in Yugoslavia and among the citizens of BiH about the position of the League of Communists of BiH relating national question. Some people draw the conclusion from this debate that there are strong unitaristic tendencies, while others think that it is the consequence of complex inter-ethnic relations in BiH, and that - since we are unable to resolve them, we simply insist on Yugoslavdom as a national and supra-national category. However, all of them are wrong because the League of Communists of BiH has a crystal-clear position on this issue». Mikulić quotes here the conclusions of Central Committee's 17th session related to the guarantees for the freedom of expression of one's national feelings and belonging, and goes on by saying that it is wrong to insist on the national determination of Muslims, «because we saw already, and the today's socialist practice shows it clearly, that Muslims are a separate and distinct people ».

In the course of 1970 and 1971, political debates about this issue were particularly heightened during the preparation for the population Census. Mikulić's notes, dated 18 February 1970 and taken at a meeting on ideological and political problems related to the forthcoming Census, refer to the need to ensure to the citizens full freedom of national determination and non-determination. Muslims should have the opportunity to express themselves as a nationality, so that their national identity is separated from their religious affiliation to Islam. As for Yugoslavdom, he wrote.: «a) It relates to all of us, in the sense of belonging to the self-governance community of nations and nationalities, and not only to those who are nationally undetermined and undeclared; b) we need to emphasise that those citizens of SFRY who are nationally undeclared are not more progressive and better citizens of the community of Yugoslav peoples than those who are nationally declared and determined (referring to the cases of avant-gardism). On the other hand, they can't be qualified as less nationally conscious citizens, and particularly not as unitarists, and the like. This is also the issue of human freedom. Citizens who declare themselves as Yugoslavs may be treated only as nationally undetermined and undeclared or as a-national, since Yugoslavdom is not a national category. We should remove this dilemma from our discourse.

As for the question of language, the mother tongue should remain, but it will not provide an answer to the question of who has not declared himself or herself nationally. On the other hand, we need to explain clearly what the mother tongue is in the Serbo-Croat linguistic area. Namely, it is the right of the Serbs to speak the Serbian language, of Croats

to speak Croatian, etc. However, the same languages are spoken by the peoples in BiH and Montenegro, for whom it is neither Serbian nor Croatian, but Serbo-Croatian. If we fail to explain that, it may cause considerable negative consequences, because some people may insist on national determination in relation to language as well. We know what the consequences would be. In any case, in BiH and in Montenegro, neither Serb nor Croat variant of the Serbo-Croatian is spoken. When processing data gathered in the Census, they will do it so that everyone speaks the same - Serbo-Croatian language. In BiH and Montenegro, that should be emphasised in the Census because there is no such thing as the Yugoslav language».

In the letter of the Presidency of the Association of the Second World War Veterans sent on 14 July 1970 to the Presidency of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia relating the document entitled «Some ideological and political issues of the forthcoming Census», it is pointed out that in the Census, ethnic and national affiliation of citizens is political by character, which is the reasons why the war veterans require that everyone should have the freedom to declare his or her national affiliation, which also implies the respect of the right not to declare oneself ethnically or nationally. The war veterans also consider that in the Census, the term «Yugoslav» cannot be treated in the national sense, and even less so as denoting national affiliation. However, since it is a sensitive political issue, the veterans consider that the term «Yugoslav» cannot be considered as national determination, since «it would not be appropriate to include such an option in the section where different denominations might appear, such as «Krajišnik», «Ličanin», «Sremac», «Šumadinac» etc., because they are still different determinations», given the fact that they indicate regional affiliation and show the misunderstanding of the question that will be asked by interviewers. Another case relates to the citizens who want to declare themselves as Yugoslavs, not in the meaning of nation, but in terms of declaring their affiliation to the Yugoslav socialist community. That is why the veterans proposed to introduce a special section «Nationally undetermined», instead of «the Yugoslav – nationally undetermined». The war veterans also stated that with regard to the term «Muslim – in terms of nationality», it is not clear enough why we refer to the Muslims «living in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in Sanjak. Principally speaking, this term should relate to all the citizens of the country who want to declare themselves as such. Otherwise, it would indicate that, in other parts of the country, we do not want people to declare themselves as Muslims». Some members of the communist elite who were not supportive of the official position of the League of Communists relating the Muslims as distinct and separate na-

tionality, emphasised that ethnic determination of Muslim communists is a sign of their “backwardness”, i.e. an attempt to impose the position whereby those Muslim communists who declare their national non-affiliation are more progressive than others. On the other hand, even Prof. Muhamed Filipović, responding to the question of a reader of the daily «Oslobođenje», emphasised that it was necessary for Muslim communists to declare themselves nationally as Muslims, because otherwise we would have «divisions within this ethnic group (Muslims, the author’s remark) to its elite and its backward popular masses, that would be thrown into the hands of conservative elements who want to identify the modern and socialist content of Muslim national feelings with their religion (...). For that reason alone, i.e. in order for Muslims not to become what they shouldn’t become, (i.e. a mere religious community, the author’s remark), the Muslim communists must, following evident logic of the issue, stand by their people and take a lead » (i.e. declare themselves nationally as Muslims, the author’s remark).

In January 1971, the Commission of the Central Committee of the League of Communists of BiH for Activities of the League of Communists on Further Strengthening of Inter-ethnic Relations and Co-operation between Republics submitted a document to the similar Commission of the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia, in which they wrote, among other things, that the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the League of Communists of BIH took into consideration the issues related to the forthcoming Census, and that, «Given that religious affiliation is a significant factor of determination for a lot of people, it may happen that some members of the Islamic religious community declare themselves as Muslims, although their true origin is Albanian, Turkish, Gipsy, Macedonian, Serb, Croat, Montenegrin, etc. Thus, we would get unrealistic figures and, probably, the political repercussions that would be used by Muslim chauvinists who would want all the Muslims to unite». Since Muslims mainly live in Bosnia and Herzegovina, that could reach the point where that Republic would become the ‘centre of the Muslim (Islamic) world’. We have to be particularly politically sensitive to that and we would have to react to such a phenomenon in a timely manner». The letter continues by pointing at different variants offered in the forms prepared for Census under the heading “National affiliation”. The letter also mentions that there were discussions about it and that the conclusion was that, «it is not disputed at all that Yugoslavdom as a national category should not be accepted, irrespective of what individuals who declares themselves as Yugoslavs might think of it. However, we need to enable our citizens to declare themselves as Yugoslavs; not as «national determination», since it

seems that it would be better to “label” them as ‘nationally undetermined’ or some similar expression that would better explain the term itself». In the case of those who declare themselves as “Yugoslavs”, there was a proposal to add one more heading for them – ‘social community of origin». However, mother tongue would also be helpful in terms of distinguishing between Muslims and other followers of the Islamic faith.

In his discussion at the session of Central Committee of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia held on 14 May 1971, Branko Mikulić spoke about the period immediately prior to the Census scheduled for the end of that year, and about different interpretations of the national question in the Census documents and forms. He pointed out that there were malicious interpretations of the positions held by the political leadership of the League of Communists of Bosnia and Herzegovina. »Thus, for example, one reaction to our opinion that Yugoslavdom is neither a national nor supra-national category, but rather a sense of belonging to the community of free and equal nations and nationalities, was the thesis that we are against the Yugoslav socialist patriotism and unity! A similar response is related to the issue of the national individuality of the Muslims; they say that we have unnecessarily focused on that issue, thus giving impetus to Muslim nationalism, and that we should have done it all quietly and without such a great political engagement from the League of Communists, etc. It is indicative and probably significant to know that all these questions were raised mainly or prevailingly by Serb and Croat nationalists. Respecting the fact that Muslims are neither Serbs nor Croats, they criticise our engagement that is aimed at enabling the Muslims to freely declare themselves as they wish, as the members of other nations are able to do, since at the previous Census many Muslims declared themselves as Yugoslavs, which is, according to them, better and more progressive stance than declaring one’s national affiliation». It is in this traditional vs. modern, i.e. backward vs. progressive debate, that the issue of national affirmation of Bosniaks under the name of Muslims occurred by the end of the 1960s and in the beginning of the 1970s. There were political and economical debates, whereby a particularly important one was led in the academic periodicals and daily newspapers between Enver Redžić and Salim Ćerić.

It is indicative that even after the political recognition of the national individuality of Bosniaks and clear expression of that individuality as recorded in the 1971 Census, there were debates whether such political stance was justified or not. On the other hand, the political elite, defending their political decisions, began the process of a controlled strengthening of Muslim national individuality so that every accelerated instance of af-

firmation of that individuality was characterised as the nationalist action and sanctioned as such. Such actions were in line with the political context of Yugoslav society in those days. Preparing for the session of the Central Committee scheduled for 31 March 1972, Mikulić wrote in his notes about the talks of the leadership of the League of Communists of BiH with the leaders from Croatia, Macedonia, Kosovo and Montenegro. He wrote that the comrades from Croatia pointed out that «we have not used the opportunity to wage a decisive battle after the 21st session against other nationalisms in Yugoslavia as well. Thus, they expressed their dissatisfaction with the fact that the energetic struggle against nationalism was not waged in other parts of the country, because that, among other things, had negative repercussions in Croatia. Furthermore, they said that everybody in Yugoslavia «should lay their cards on the table» and have an open discussion about our joint future (at the time when comrade Tito will not be holding the executive positions any longer (...)). They also emphasised that they fear of the re-emergence of the ideas about Greater Croatia, if the economic power of one centre continues and gets even stronger, since this would be the basis for the hegemony over others. In this context, they spoke about the tendencies of «Serbianisation» of the former federal banks. We have a feeling that they would insist on an equally decisive battle against nationalism and chauvinism in other parts of Yugoslavia – as the one that was fought in Croatia. That would make their struggle easier and prevent those forces in Croatia who criticise them, claiming that they have begun the fight against Croat nationalism in the interest of the ‘Greater Serbian’ hegemony». Mikulić asserts that it could be helpful for the comrades from Croatia (who are faced even with the misunderstanding from some war veteran organisations that were calling for massive gathering of their members in order to express their lack of confidence in some local leaders of the League of Communists there), if we continue our fight against nationalism and chauvinism, as well as against dogmatic forces and other anti self-government forces...». He wrote that this was the reason why «attention should be paid to the emergence of Serb and Muslim nationalisms that have been greatly underrated and ignored. Special attention should be paid also to the tendency of some communists to boycott the policies of the League of Communists of BiH related to the national question (i.e. the national identity of Muslims, insistence of one’s progressiveness because one has not declared his or her belonging to one or the other nation, i.e. attempts to ‘label’ those communists who have declared themselves nationally as conservative, the revival of debates on Yugoslavdom from the unitaristic positions, the emergence of national leaderships who are driven by national and bureaucratic motives, etc.).»

After 1972, there were no serious political debates denying the national individuality of Muslims, yet such debates continued in public discourse. One example we would mention here is a map of the ethnic structure of the population in SFRY, published by the Belgrade weekly 'NIN' at the beginning of 1973, where Muslims were defined as «Muslims in the sense of nationality». On 1 February 1973, there was a reaction to this map published in the Sarajevo daily «Oslobođenje» in the article entitled «A New Variation of the Old Theme». This article asserts that the aim behind such articles as the one in 'NIN' was to deny the national identity of the Muslims living in the Socialist Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina. «We, who live and work in the Socialist Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina; we, who observe the laws and the Constitution of this Republic; we, who embrace the principles and positions of the League of Communists of BiH and the League of Communists of Yugoslavia, we do not recognise the phrase «Muslims in terms of nationality». Since we do not recognise the Muslims in any other sense or any other terms, for us, Muslims are the people, just like the Croats, just like the Serbs, just like any other people belonging to our community. It has never occurred to us, and probably it has not occurred to the comrades in NIN, that we should write, for example, that the Serbs or Croats are «the Serbs, or the Croats - in terms of nationality». For those who belong to these peoples it would quite certainly be an offence to call them that way. And they would be quite right to feel offended». This article states that 'NIN' is alone in its attitude and that the book entitled 'The Post-War Serbian Literature' written by Predrag Palavestra, is a blatant denial of the Muslim national question. He included about 15 Muslim authors in his anthology. «For Palavestra, the word 'Muslim' does not exist». Nevertheless, this and similar debates could not slow down the process of Muslim national affirmation any longer.

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