

Evolution and Condition of the Elites in Bosnia-Herzegovina – A Personal View

Ivo Lučić

History taught us that Medieval Hum and Bosnia were represented by its noble rulers: from Prince Miroslav to Herzog Stipan, from Ban Kulin to Stipan Tomašević. A numerous lower gentry were active too. The Turkish occupation changed radically the society of Herzegovina and Bosnia. The power was handed in to Turkish pashas, bays, and 'aga's, whilst the Christian millets had their own noblemen who acted as guardians of spirit and identity of their communities. The latter included mainly the Orthodox and Catholic priests, but also the local, popular princes of whose presence and activity we find a witness in a 1551 letter from Pope Julius to two principals of Duvno (*Dilecti filiis Comiti*), Grga Lučić and Pavle Vučković; the Pope informs them that he has acknowledged their recommendations and appointed Fr Danijel Glasnović from Split a bishop of Duvno Diocese. The conquered Herzegovinan and Bosnian land turned into an Ottoman (Sultan) property and was ruled by vezirs, bays, and agas. The Christian landsmen cultivated the land they could not own, and were not allowed to build on it, except for wall-stones. They lived hard by cultivating the piece of land they could plough by a pair of oxen. They paid high tax and were not allowed to leave the land without permission. However, they could have been ordered to move, and 'their' land confiscated, at once. The Christians were allowed to work in mining and as artisans serving the needs of the empire. Depending on their significance and the (im)possibility of finding a replacement for them, they could have earned some

privilege. Some of them could have a church-bell or put crosses on their graves. In the literatures we find that 'ćurčije', the Catholics from Dolac near Travnik, were amongst the most trusted by the Ottoman rulers; their job was to mummify the chopped heads of 'rebels and disorder-makers' before the heads were posted to Istanbul. Such was the ultimate artistic achievement of Bosnian Catholic artisans of the time. Bosnian friars exerted the principal influence on Catholics. They shaped the mentality of the population of which they were guardians. As Fr Andrija Zirdum writes, friars did not have a strict organisation, or hierarchy. The Franciscan province 'Bosna Srebrena' was functioning as a community of monasteries headed by guardians. As the Ottoman rulers did not allow new arrivals of friars from abroad into Bosnia, only domestic priests were included into a province. Moreover, for security reasons, the visitors, who used to supervise the province every third year, were not being sent from Rome, but from within the very communities, which were left to themselves to build a highly specific *modus vivendi* and their own microcosms.

Bosnian friar's *modus vivendi* had its origins in Fr Andjelo Zvizdović's plea to the Sultan to remain in his homeland and preach his faith, to which the Sultan responded by an act of grace. It has its origins also in the cult of Queen Katarina, who was expelled from Bosnia to die in Rome where by her testament she transferred her rights over the land to the Pope; and its origins are also in the last Bosnian King Stipan about whom the poet Nikola Šop said that he became so thin in front of a 'padishaha' [an Ottoman ruler] that he 'melted through shackles into freedom.' Such a way of living was based on a continuous search for compromise and 'thin'-making for freedom, and was promoted in Franciscan monasteries and their surroundings, which required a lot of strength and wisdom but was nonetheless the condition of survival. The survival of monasteries, churches, friars, and people, depended on their relationship with Turks. However, 'Bosna Srebrena' could not have survived without many a sacrifice after which it always managed to recover and survive. As the poet in Bosnia wrote, 'Human being will not survive because s/he is strong; s/he will survive because of its thinness, weakness, and the fear from passing away.'

A large part of Christian population subsisted on a nomadic economy, and by fleeing to mountains (or staying there) and poverty they managed to preserve a kind of freedom and identity. They carried all their belongings with them, preaching the faith in the open or in secluded spaces under the beech-trees. Artisans followed them: metalworkers,

builders, and all those who were making the necessities for daily living. Such a modus of living created a special, individualist mentality, which did not develop a sense of common work and was resistant to all kinds of community. There was no a strong form of organisation, or leadership. If a leader showed up that was merely due to a pressure, which is why, when such a pressure was no more, his role became superfluous. The leaders were also the first ones to pay the bills of those they were leading: by decapitation, a prison sentence, or a property. Instead of putting forward the best, the community used to put forward the worst to make their losses tolerable, and sometimes also for the sake of making mockery with the powerful by pressing on them some inconvenient partners; this is how they signalled their low opinion about the government as well as about some potential agreements.

In such a world, one relied on, and highly appreciated, property, strength, and youth; stone-throwers, runners, grass-cutters, and wrestlers were highly respected. Elderly was cared for, women were judged both by their beauty and strength. Mila of Gojsalić and Diva of Grabovac represented the ideal of female heroines and female saints. That is how, in Herzegovina and in the Venetian-Turkish boundary area stretching from Livno to Trebinje, a different mentality was generated that was nothing alike the Bosnian-friar mentality. Such a mentality was formed in a continuous struggle, with the church, monasteries, and other forms of a long-term association, absent. Turks have destroyed all the churches and monasteries in Herzegovina, whilst the friars fled together with the people to Dalmatia where new churches were built. The friars who served those few remaining Christians were coming from Živogošće, Zaoštrog, and Poljice. Soon they requested from Rome to disassociate them with the Bosnian province because such an enslaved province should not rule over them who were free.

Such were the origins of the mentality which never came to terms with a foreign rule (it was always a foreign one). Repetitive wars, military incursions, and city-siege shaped such mentality too. All were engaged in such wars including the herdsmen and the brightest friars. Andrija Kačić wrote poems about the wars and the warriors who were also accounted by Fr Pavle Šilobadović in his *Libretin*; one of the latter's typical lines goes as follows: 'Year 1666, month August 22 – Marko Sovićanin, supported by no more than 12 comrades, brought 6 Turk prisoners and cut 3 in Rama. Ours are well, Th(ank) G(od)!' Fr Lovre Šitović nicknamed 'Ljubušak' took an active part in the struggles for the liberation of Ljubuški in the first half of the 18th century; he then felt a bit-

ter sorrow when his mother, who was a Moslem, refused both to join him on his way to Dalmatia and to convert to Christianity. As much he was strong in his faith so much was she strong in her own; hence maternal love was itself insufficient to pull down the walls that stood between them. Fr Lovre knew that such walls were getting harder and bigger by the folk songs that glorified rebels and outcasts, which is why he fiercely opposed them. However, glorification of Mijat Tomić and Andrijica Šimić, the heroes who fought the foreigners, robbed the rich, and helped the poor, encouraged the poor to survive and raised some hopes about a better future.

Such Herzegovinian kind of life implied a continuous struggle and non-submissiveness, and helped to create a mentality of distrust and steadfast resistance to any change and anything that comes from without the narrow community. In contrast to Catholics whose seat was in Rome, whilst for Herzegovinians both friars and monasteries remained in the Venetian lands for a long time, the Orthodox Christians of Bosnia-Herzegovina enjoyed a more favourable position. In 1557 Ottomans allowed them to restore their patriarchy, which led to their increased self-awareness giving rise to an increase in the number of official titles they were putting on themselves. Patriarch Makarije Sokolović, the first cousin of Mehmed-Pasha Sokolović, declared himself 'the Arch-bishop and patriarch of the entire Serb land, of the Western Coastal Area and of Northern Realms.' The Orthodox priests made use of their favourable position and tried to suppress Catholics against which the latter resisted unswervingly. However, the relationships between the Orthodox Christians and Turks deteriorated in 18th and especially 19th century after the former endorsed an anti-Turkish policy of both Russia and Austria.

The 19th century saw an accelerated decline of the Ottoman Empire. After a series of uprisings, Serbia restored its independent statehood in the form of a vassal principality, and its newly established elite started drawing plans about the expansion of its influence to Herzegovina and Bosnia. In fall of 1844 one of the Serb noblemen and politicians, Ilija Garašanin, forecast a further decline of the Ottoman Empire, and, influenced by the Polish and Bohemian political thought, drew a Serb national program called 'Načertanije' [A Project]. Garašanin counted on sympathies that the Christians of Herzegovina and Bosnia had towards the Serb political and military success; his aim was to exploit such sympathies to expand the principality to the territories of Herzegovina and Bosnia. One of Garašanin's key principles was that the principal privileges should be hereditary because that would ensure

an enduring and firm bond between Serbia and the Serbs who lived in the neighbourhood of Serbia. Otherwise, Serbs would be internally divided into many small principalities ruled by the families susceptible to a foreign influence that would envy, and compete with, each other.

Garašanin also counted on full freedom of faiths, and sought an agreement with Catholics concerning the popular politics. He also figured out a way to sever the attachments Catholics in Herzegovina and Bosnia had towards Austria and to ally them instead with Serbia. In his opinion, one could have done it by influencing the Catholic friars whose books would be published in Belgrade, and some of them would be appointed to the Belgrade University to act as intermediaries between Serbs and Catholics of Bosnia. As he proposed, it would be good to build a chapel or two for them that would stand under auspices of the French consul, which would prevent Austria's influence. The Serb principality managed to evoke some sympathies in a part of the Bosnian friars. They saw in it a hope of liberation from Turks, and, politically speaking, the first precursors of modernisation were coming from it to Bosnia. Approximately at the same time, Fr Ivan Frano Jukić wrote a letter to Port on behalf of all the Christians, and demanded that they be not called or considered 'raya' [plebs] anymore, but the citizens of the empire. This was one of the first public attempts to leave the Sultan's embrace. A bit later, Don Ivan Musić organised an uprising against Turks in Gabela, which spread along the border and marked the end of the Ottoman Empire. Following the failure of the uprising, the Serbian influence diminished, and the bonds with the West were re-established. In addition to friars, the first representatives of the citizenry started appearing on the scene. However, both the former and the latter orientated themselves towards Zagreb, Pest, and Vienna.

Unhappy with the condition of the neighbourhood, and convinced that the empire was getting increasingly weak, the Bosnian Moslem noblemen stood up against the Ottoman reforms that were supposed to place the Christian rights on an equal footing with the Moslem rights. A mystic and poet from Žepa, Abdulvehbab Ilhamija, wrote the following verses to depict the conditions of his society: *Strange troubles occurred, all have into baddies turned, and a herd of enemy up-turned: What one wants, for God's sake?* The Moslem elite started re-positioning. Those firmer and more determined to defend their positions came to the forefront. Many refugees from Serbia, and other lost territories, closed ranks with them to acquire more secure positions in a new surrounding by an emphatic radicalism. The new elite was also coming into being during

the struggle between the proponents of autonomy, on the one hand, and the advocates of Sultan, on the other: family Gradašćević in Posavina, family Glodje in Sarajevo, and family Rizvanbegović in Herzegovina.

By a military retribution of Omer-pasha Latas, Bosnia remained without its strong men, and Herzegovina lost its status of an independent 'pashaluk' [pasha-dom], or a province of the Empire. Reforms did not work, the condition of the state was deteriorating, and violence and poverty were on increase. The then 'international community' headed by England decided at 1878 Vienna Congress to authorise the Austria-Hungarian army to move into Bosnia to restore the peace and order. The Moslem population experienced a shock as, by the will of the others, it turned from a dominant and ruling people into a minority within a Christian state, as Šaćir Filandra points out. Following a failed resistance, a part of the Moslem elite fled to Turkey, whilst those who remained tried to adapt themselves to the new circumstance and the life within a circle of the Christian civilisation. The new situation implies a loss of the largest part of privileges enjoyed within the former feudal system that was based on a state-religion and the Sultan's grace. Knowledge, or property that took place of oriental titularity, became a new value that secured positions within the state administration. Austria-Hungarian government retained the feudal ownership rights, but transformed them into the modern property rights. The new government also calculated that the 'Mohammad-an' population had the best sense for the state affairs, and was therefore the most suitable for the positions within the state administration. Hence the new elite was being created from the domestic and the newly arrived employees of the state administration which served the 'K and K' monarchy. Mehmed Bay Kapetanović - 'Ljubušak' was its foremost representatives. Dr Srećko Džaja has explored and described in detail the creation of the new elite, and especially of the BiH intelligentsia during the Austria-Hungarian age.

In 1881, in addition to both Bosnian and Herzegovinian friars, who have just seceded from the Bosnian friars, the Catholics have seen the establishment of Diocese headed by 'Vrh-Bosna' Archbishop Josip Stadler. Fr Marijan Markovic was appointed the head of the newly established Banja Luka Diocese, whilst Fr Paskal Buconjic was appointed the head of Mostar-Duvno Diocese. This marked a beginning of a rejuvenated influence of the Universal Catholic Church that was absent over the previous four centuries; it also marked a true beginning of modernisation and development of a civil society. Despite all the problems the monarchy faced, or generated itself, this age was the age of prosperity and of re-europeani-

sation of Herzegovina and Bosnia that the then Austria-Hungarian government decided to unite in the form of a unique Austria-Hungarian province 'Bosna i Hercegovina' to be ruled by the Parliament and the Lands-Government. However, wherever there is a monarch, there are also those who wish to dethrone him. Assassination of the Austrian prince-regent Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo marked a beginning of the war in the course of which the monarchy disintegrated, whilst Bosnia-Herzegovina was consigned to the newly established Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes (Yugoslavia) whose throne was occupied by the 'king unifier' Alexander Karadjordjević.

The new Yugoslav elite was built on the ruins of the Austria-Hungarian. Like erstwhile Polish, Czech, Slovene, Slavonian, Dalmatian and other 'single-bag holding immigrants and settlers' from the monarchy, such immigrants and settlers this time massively moved from Serbia to Bosnia-Herzegovina. This time the number of physicians, museum supervisors, and engineers decreased and their place was taken by an increased number of military, gendarmes, and financial police officers who quickly spread their net over the 'extended homeland' founding the new Yugoslav state elite. By a nationalisation a largest part of the land property was taken from the Moslem Beys. A part of them has adopted the modernisation processes during the Austria-Hungarian age; they or their children graduated from the schools in Vienna and other royal universities, and thus kept their social positions regardless of their previous financial and economic situation. Another part was in financial ruins, but it managed to retain some influence over the society by invoking 'the glorious past', occupying thus the element of public opinion and influence we colloquially call 'čaršija' [small urban element]. During this period Serbs have formed an elite who was running Yugoslavia: beginning with the royal house who established links with the European royal courts, and including also civic politicians educated at the European centres. Many merchants, military, state administration officers, university and high school professors, writers, journalists, and village teachers were included too. A part of Croat and Moslem elite took part in the creation of Yugoslavia. Convinced about the strength of the Serb nationalism, they attempted to soften such nationalism by Yugoslav-hood as well as to bridge the differences and create the conditions for both political and cultural association with Serbs. Otherwise, they simply endorsed the newly formed government together with its ideas at least until the government ceases to exist. A part of them remained attached throughout the Yugoslav period to the royal house,

whilst a part of them was dissatisfied with both their own and their people's position, and consequently took an opportunity offered by the multi-party parliamentary system and initiated their national projects including Radić's republicanism and Spaho's project of autonomy. Many have paid by their lives or imprisonment their struggle for redistribution of power that was sometimes taking more cooperative forms and was sometimes giving rise to an open confrontation.

The returnees from the Russian prisons, too, took part in the struggles for the positions within the Yugoslav Kingdom; they were stuffed with the Bolshevik ideas and well paid by the Communist International Movement. They let the government know that they would fight by all the means available including primarily the revolutionary terror; they organised attempts at royal ministers, but also fought and killed each other struggling for the functions to which Moscow would assign them after they managed to demonstrate their full commitment, devotion, and brutality. Crime was, of course, the best demonstration, and a partnership in crime was strengthening the bonds of the Bolshevik organisation. Protected by the USSR, and taking opportunity of the civil war that lasted for four years, in which the Yugoslav elites evinced fully their miserable character, at the end of the war the Communists turned up well organised and in possession of a huge military power. In the aftermath of the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina the Communists have killed all their political enemies, primarily and especially those of the Croat origin, including the individuals who have not been, but could have become, an enemy: friars, priests, civic politicians, professors, merchants, guest-house owners, kulaks...all the reactionaries and those who the reactionaries may rely on. Some have managed to escape the terror by emigrating. A large community of Croat emigrants, who retained the memories of the homeland as it was left behind, was formed abroad. A part of the community was politically active in a large number of emigrant political parties and organisations.

Serbs were a majority of the leading communists of the BiH to whom the largest portion of the Moslem elite joined; Croats were given a secondary role to keep up the appearance of national balance. The twenty years of post-war dictatorship saw the formation of a new communist elite composed mainly of the rural and poor people with a minimum of education that was supplemented with night schools and party courses. They occupied various positions and moved into 'nationalised' apartments of the 'liberated' cities; they also defended their new positions by showing an utter contempt for their tradition, faith, fellow nationals and the village they came

from. They emphasised time and again that there would be no return to the old ages, referred to their rule as 'the present', and labelled all those outside their ranks as 'reactionaries.' However, the party leadership realised that the road they have taken does not lead to socialism. Reforms were required, and reforms started with the 8th Congress of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia held in December 1964. The first condition of the reforms was to condemn, and bring an end to, sectarianism, which was an euphemism for 'national chauvinism.' That is how a number of Croats from Bosnia-Herzegovina was given a permission to join the revolutionary society of the elite. A group around Franjo Herljević gained in strength at the federal level, whilst a group around Branko Mikulić did the same at the level of the republic [of BiH]; the party municipal portfolios were assigned to numerous careerists with poor CVs, with no revolutionary record, and an experience of a few weeks of lying beneath a pine in an ambush against a desperate neighbour who was hiding from 'the present' in all kinds of cliffs.

After the fall of Ranković, the Mostar congress, and as a part of overall social processes, the party terror was receding, and an increased number of Croats came to terms with the softened hand of the communist power, held the extended hand, and accepted a party membership and participation in the government. Something like an excuse, or apology, was heard amongst Croats often those days, that one needs to join the party because 'our people' should be there, that all the positions will be otherwise occupied by 'theirs', and similar. Communists, however, showed a lot of skill in managing the processes of differentiation and of separating the 'healthy potential' from 'the reactionaries'. They were leaving no space for a political mimicry, emphasising very clearly that those who were not with them were against them; and that is how 'ours' have quickly become 'theirs.' Following the death of Tito, his followers were pledging that Tito would remain even after Tito, meaning that nothing would change. But, the changes taking place in Europe, the weakening and the ultimate fall of the communist system, led to the fall of Yugoslav communism too.

Despite a hard struggle for political monopoly, the BiH communists' faith in their political strength and influence has not receded, and they readily decided to comply with the calls for democratic, multi-party elections. In 1991 they suffered such a landslide defeat that their political and parliamentary representation carried no weight or relevance. But, who has defeated them so convincingly, and which force has managed to annul the half of the century devoted to a systematic construction of the system that enjoyed monopoly over ideas, politics, science, military, police, and media; the system that pen-

etrated all the layers of the society and seemed both unbreakable and irreplaceable? It seems that there was not any huge force. The system spent itself and self-collapsed; nationalism arose as an alternative with enough force to bring the communist totalitarianism to an end. It will be interesting to see who assumed the leadership positions in the national movements within the BiH, how the national elite was formed, and which path did they take.

The Serb national elite grouped around 'Srpska Demokratska Stranka' [Serb Democratic Party] (SDS). Its leadership was composed of an elected part of the Serb elite that was formed in the communist system and recruited amongst the professors of Sarajevo University, especially the Faculty of Philosophy, and also amongst the members of the Academy of Sciences and Arts of the BiH, the Union of Writers...Dr. Radovan Karadžić was elected the President of SDS, whilst professors Dr Nikola Koljević and Dr Biljana Plavšić were elected into the BiH Presidency. Within the SDS system, various roles were performed by professors Dr Aleksa Buha, Dr Milorad Ekmečić, Dr Vojo Maksimović, academy member Slavko Leovac...

The Croat elite grouped around 'Hrvatska Demokratska Zajednica BiH' [Croat Democratic Union of the BiH] (HDZ BiH), which had a very colourful composition and was gathered from a variety of sources. It included general practitioners, home construction entrepreneurs, retired higher school professors, and people with fresh bachelor degrees. Dr Davor Perinović, an orthopaedist and Sarajevo physician, was the first president of the party; as he himself later announced in an interview, he was 'the only Serb elected for a president of a Croat party.' In a Zagreb weekly he publicly accused the Bosnian friars of being worse than communists, and thereby seriously undermined his own position. Such a misplaced remark gave the first indication that Perinović was a disturbed and confrontational personality, and subsequently he was removed from the leadership position. Stjepan Kljujić, sports-journalists from Sarajevo (and a secondary school degree), was appointed an acting president of the party. Ivan Markešić, a cousin of Fr Luka Markešić, who was a former Head of the Franciscan Province of 'Bosna Srebrena', was appointed General Secretary of HDZ. Kljujić was also elected into the BiH Presidency, whilst Franjo Boras, a former political prisoner, pensioner, and by then an absolute outsider for the electorate, was another Croat elected into the BiH Presidency. In addition to the two, the leadership positions of the party were taken by Ivan Bender, Abid Hodžić, Anto Baković, and others who the general public was unfamiliar with; they had poor, if

any, political experience at local levels, had no ability to think strategically, and had no public influence.

The Moslem elite grouped around 'Stranka Demokratske Akcije' [The Party of Democratic Action] (SDA) with Alija Izetbegović, a former convict, a member of *Young Moslems*, and the major defendant in so-called 'Sarajevo 1983 proceedings', elected as the president of the party. Adil Zulfikarpašić, a long term émigré and wealthy man, and Dr Muhamed Filipović were elected the vice-presidents of the party; the latter has been a professor at Sarajevo University, a founder of *Moslem Forum*, an human right organisation for Moslems, and a popular nationalist at least since the 1960s. Fikret Abdić, a former member of the BiH Communist Party Central Committee and a former *Agrokomerc* Director who was just released from a prison, has taken a leadership position of the party, together with professor Dr Rusmir Mahmutćehajić, professor Dr Ejup Ganić and others. Today's 'rais' of the Islamic Community of the BiH, Dr Mustafa Cerić, was sitting in the initial executive board of the party too. After the elections, Abdić, Ganić, and Izetbegović were elected into the BiH Presidency; Izetbegović was also elected the Chair of the BiH Presidency. It is interesting to note that the Presidency was composed of seven members, two for each constituent people, and one from 'others'; 'others' were in this case represented by Dr Ejup Ganić who was born in Sandžak, in Serbia/Monte Negro, and was a representative of Yugoslavs. Soon after the elections, it became clear that Ganić was one of the most radical leaders of SDA.

A very brief and superficial insight into the leadership profiles of the parties reveals that the HDZ was both politically and intellectually inferior to the other two. Since the very founding of the party, it was clear that the then leading intellectuals, with the exception of Dr Vitimir Lukić, did not wish to join the HDZ. Inferiority of the HDZ became also manifest through continuous dismissals, and replacements, of its presidents: Perinović, Kljujić, Brkić, Boban, Kordić, Rajić, Jelavić, and Čolak. Whilst the HDZ changed seven presidents within the period of eight years, throughout that same period Izetbegović remained the president of SDA, and Karadžić remained the SDS president up until his enforced removal.

The only continuity in the work of HDZ of that time was their connection with the official Zagreb and the latter's influence over it, which should not be overestimated. Following the 5th Congress of the Party, and death of both Gojko Šušak and Franjo Tuđman, Zagreb's influence was significantly diminished; however, following the January 2000 elections in Croatia, and the opposition's rise to power, such influence

became negligible. The 5th Congress of HDZ was convened in Mostar in May 1998, which represented another juncture in the politics of the party. In a very loaded atmosphere of a coup d'état, Ante Jelavić, a former JNA sergeant and wartime Head of HVO [Croat Defence Council] for military logistics, who in 1998 served as a defence minister of the BiH Federation Government, was elected the HDZ president with a huge support of parts of HVO professional brigades and a number of friars. During his reign, the party was fully cleansed of those who have not sided with 'the new leadership.' The then BiH Presidency member and a former BiH Federation President, Krešimir Zubak, founded 'Nova Hrvatska Inicijativa' [New Croat Initiative] (NHI), a party which, in coalition with former communists, the party of SDP (Social-Democratic Party), formed a government and governed for some time; however, for the reason of such coalition-making NHI soon lost the remains of trust that electorate had in it, and subsequently was fragmented and marginalised.

After a period of time, Dr Jadranko Prlić and Neven Tomić, together with a few other members of HDZ-techno-managerial circle, were removed from the HDZ too; they started playing on the card of civility, which bought for them a temporary support of the international community, but also contributed to their loss of credibility. The Croat public and electorate saw in their vague and unconvincing statements a mere assistant-voice to SDP, or an echo of the voice of various international organisations; the same destiny befell 'Hrvatska Seljačka Stranka' (HSS) and 'Hrvatsko Nacionalno Vijeće' (HNV).

The politics represented by Jelavić boiled down to two verbs: to appropriate and to take over. They were appropriating institutions and material goods; and they were taking over (corrupting) people. They founded the Herzegovina Bank and insurance company, whilst over a very short period of time a bunch of former lower officers, policemen, qualified workers and minor managers, managed to occupy all the major political and economic positions including the management of Mostar *Croat National Theatre* that was then being set up. The same people automatically occupied the leading positions within the HDZ. One should not have waited too long to see how the new apparatchiks bring an already extremely weak Croat political position within the BiH to ruins.

After the adventure with Croat 'self-rule', the tanks and special troops of the International Force broke into the premises of the Herzegovina bank in such a way that it is still difficult to say whether they have robbed it, or tried to prevent its abuse and 'gather the evidence' to confirm their assumptions. Jelavić and his associates were then indicted and put in prison

in the way of which Ranković of his best years would be envious. The process of removing of Jelavić's (or God knows whose) cadre is today being brought to completion by an indictment launched against a former director of Mostar military industry company Soko and a former BiH Presidency member, Dragan Čović. His removal, which coincided with the Christmas days, motivated Čović to compare himself with Jesus and to promise that he would be resurrected at least for the sake of Bosnia that the powerful would try to dismantle in his absence.

Following the removals and dismissals, the HDZ was left with old, exhausted, tired, and spent members, on the one hand, and with inexperienced, incapable, ignorant, and poor minded, on the other; the latter are unable to solve problems and used to obey, not to take responsibility. Their politics is all about retaining the acquired positions at any price, and perhaps move a bit up the ladder, and waiting for a Messiah who would show up, take over the party, and solve all the problems. A large part of them also look for a diploma to get a cover for keeping their jobs. Those who were employed as early as yesterday, to get whatever source of financial support, are now supposed to respond to increasingly complex social problems and challenges? Their common response is weeping, seeking and designating 'the enemies of the Croat people' who are to be blamed for 'our position which is worse than ever before.' Not knowing what to do with them or with themselves, their political and other mentors are now swearing and weeping together with them. A journalist and writer, Petar Miloš writes, with sarcasm, that until recently people were trying to find a charismatic individual to inspire them and give them hope: priests, rebels, politicians...nowadays, those supposed to give them a comfort, or consolation, are weeping together with the people. Politicians, journalists, intellectuals, academics, priests, bishops, even cardinal, are all weeping. And the confused people asked the question about the nature of our age: the people were weeping, whilst you have provided some consolation? This may be the best illustration of the present condition of the Croat (political) elite in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Bosniac-Moslem elite is divided into three big a series of smaller parties. SDA is the biggest and the most influential, and it currently in power. Following the death of Alija Izetbegović, the party is led by a group of his most devoted followers including his son Bakir. '*Stranka za BiH*' [Party for the BiH] is the second biggest Bosniac-Moslem party founded by Haris Silajdžić, a former secretary of the 'rais' of the Islamic Community and one of the closest Izetbegović's associates of

the wartime. Burdened by many affairs, including a multi-million debt to the Pakistani government and various finance-related and media controversies, Silajdžić intended to portray himself as a modern European politician. However, oftentimes the true Silajdžić appeared through his mask, for instance when he stated that the Croats in Mostar have themselves planted the terror bomb just to make it hard for Bosniacs. As a majority of Bosniac-Moslem politicians, he takes upon himself the right to judge the patriotism of the others, to give 'credentials' for Bosnian-hood, and to judge who loves Bosnia and who does not. He on his part manifests his love of Bosnia from Turkey where he has been living ever since the international community pressed him to step down from the position of the president of his party.

The politics of his party relies on a civic-liberal rhetoric, but in reality it is emphatically nationalistic; its goal is to 'take over' as many companies as possible and place them into Bosniac hands, and to destroy whatever is left over. One of SDA founders, and the leader of the party's right wing, Omer Behmen stated that 'Stranka za BiH' is the party of calculators and profiteers.

However, one thing is common to all the major Bosniac-Moslem parties – they advocate a 'civic' Bosnia (normally they do not refer to Hercegovina, but they say that they mean it too by 'Bosnia'). Political profile of such 'civic politics' is best illustrated by the statement of two members of the Bosniac-Moslem elite. In a April 1993 weekly issue of the daily *Oslobodjenje*, Adil Zulfikarpašić tried to justify his politics of 'a historical agreement between Moslems and Serbs', and claimed that such an agreement represented a solution of the dilemma of 'peace or war', and that such a peace with Karadžić and Milošević gave Moslems the chance to solve all their problems peacefully: they were, according to Zulfikarpašić, on a road to become a 60% majority in the BiH within the period of ten year after which they would become sovereign rulers of the state.

A writer Abdulah Sidran has issued the second illustrative statement; in his recollections about Alija Izetbegović he stated that Alija managed to return the name to his people; now they should return the name to their land/country. In other words, Bosniac people programmed to live in its Bosniac country where they would have a 60% majority. Of course, this narrative programme is wrapped into a liberal rhetoric referring to all kinds of human rights; and entities, cantons, or any other nation-based, or ethnically marked, institutions, are an impediment to such a programme. Today's Sarajevo gives a good example of the imagined, unitary, and multi-ethnic

Bosnia of tomorrow; the city is ruled by Bosniacs and Moslems represent some multi-ethnic ingredient.

Apart from the few aforementioned Bosniac-Moslems politicians from the first ranks of the SDA, some of them are operating in a different way, outside of the party political agenda. Rusmir Mahmutćehajić was one of the closest associates of Alija Izetbegović for the first years of the latter's rule; he was a kind of 'Josip Manolić of Bosniac-Moslem politics' who left the party (just like Manolić and Mesić), and turned into a critic of Izetbegović's politics. Mahmutćehajić turned from a militant Islamist and Bosniac nationalist into an advocate of a civic form of the BiH political constitution the essence of which consists in the principle of 'single voter single vote.' He has been articulating his ideas through an organisation *Forum Bosna* cooperating with a number of Croat intellectuals.

Muhamed Filipović advocates similar ideas, but in a less intelligent or successful ways. Adil Zulfikarpašić took a different direction. A couple of years ago his *Bosniac Institute*, founded in Switzerland, moved to freshly built premises in Sarajevo. Zulfikarpašić recently took the title of 'Bey', and in April 2005 founded a Senate as a special body composed of 100 Bosniac-Moslem senators who will take care of the Bosniac culture, politics, identity...A feudal discourse practiced by Adil Bey indicates the direction in which such efforts go; but such a direction is also indicated by the fact that Zlatko Lagumdžija, the leader of the avant-garde of the proletariat and the SDP president, joined Adil, the representative and personification of the Bosniac Turkophile elite, and was appointed the vice-president of the Bey's Senate.

Lagumdžija is the president of the third party in which Bosniac-Moslems play the key role. His party too is trying to portray itself as a civic party, as a party that, by its programmatic goals and politics, stands opposed to the nationalist parties. However, SDP is a successor of the Communist Union that disintegrated along the ethnic lines and failed both to overcome the national differences and resolve the national issue; the same destiny befell SDP that failed to transform its leadership, or membership, into truly civic democrats. This is pertinently illustrated by the fact that the first president of the party, Nijaz Duraković, after his resignation from the position of the leader of 'the avant-garde of all our peoples', continued his career as a columnist in a pro-Bosniac, nationalistic weekly that has by now lost all its influence. Due to his historical contributions, he too was let by Adil Bey to join the Bosniac senators. In harmony with the Marxist philosophy that represents a composition of the best elements of human history, SDP draws its political legitimacy from the fragments of

'national liberation war' mixed with the elements of 'the struggle against aggression [against the BiH].' SDP declared itself to be a successor of all the historical values and a sympathiser of all the victims of the last two wars. They offered their sacrifice in Sutjeska, Neretva, Markale, Ahmići, and Tuzla; their humanism and love of democracy has no ends, whilst the responsibility for Bleiburg, Kazani, Srebrenica, or Grabovica, must be taken by the others.

An ideological foundation for this part of social and political scene was provided by the faculties of political science, and various Marxist centres, that were in fact denouncing science and selling an ideological 'mist' that, unopposed by fresh winds of change, increasingly turned into a thick fog. It would be difficult to explain to all the experts for a self-managing socialism, to the analysts of the first and second 5-year plan, to all the experts from self-managing interest-communities, communities of the associated labour, the combatants against anti-socialist activities and anti-communist ideologies, to the censors whose greatest virtue was alertness, that their knowledge and skill was of no use, but one should try to do so. But, who will do so? Definitely not their 'nationally awaken' and 'now sober' comrades grouped around Vijeće Kongresa Bošnjackih Intelektualaca [The Council of the Congregation of Bosniac Intellectuals] (VKBI), because VKBI-members,¹ like the members of non-existent Croat academy or the Serb academics, offer nothing new; with the persistence and determination, which is characteristic of the elderly, they do nothing but repeat the 'old and for us useful stories'.

It is regrettable when VKBI claim that *Young Moslems* were the fighters for religious freedoms (in plural), or that Bosnia does not need a European democracy, because the age of the Ottoman Empire provided an ultimate paradigm of democracy and multiculturalism that Europe will not reach for a long time. By way of a joke, one could say that the political part of the Bosniac elite can be divided into three groups: 'Vahabiti' who operate within the SDP and the 99 Circle (in 1934, in Sremska Mitrovica prison, Moša Pijade called 'vahabiti' a radical group within the Yugoslav Communist Party led by Petko Miletić-Šepo); 'VeKaBI' who represent the Bosniac national intellectuals engaged in VKBI; and 'Vekhabi' who operate from the position of a radical political Islam. The three have one thing in common – their love of Bosnia has no

1. The author plays with the sound of 'VKBI-members', which is similar to "Vekhabi"-members' who represent one of the most extreme Islamic sects founded in Saudi Arabia; it is impossible to find a good equivalent for this pun in English language [the translator].

limits, and they have the exclusive right to judge to what extent 'the others love or do not love Bosnia', that is, to what extent the others are Bosnia-oriented.

This is fine, but one should emphatically emphasise that Bosnia-Herzegovina is best loved when one lives in it and works for it, which would not deprive those who live in Zagreb, Belgrade, London etc., of the right to love Bosnia; however, one would thus dispense with an unnecessary caricature, pathetic, and abuse. Namely, it has become too obvious that there are too many 'cosmopolitans' who 'love Bosnia' and its poor people very much, and love it more than their own countries in which they 'live well;' but, they live on Bosnia and by searching in it for fascism, fascists, terror and terrorists, and by making of it a good testing ground for all kinds of theories.

Disintegration of the communist camp marked the end of the Cold War and led to dismemberment of the communist empires into a number of new states. As a part of a new redistribution of political forces, West-European leftist intellectuals have reanimated fascism as an old-new menace to the global order and democracy. In place of the red menace the black one was rekindled. This has made meaningful the presence of those determined to 'fight it' on the political scene; and has also given the opportunity to the East-European communists to re-occupy the pre-Cold War positions within the alliance. Such a return of the struggle between fascists and anti-fascists contributed to an abolition of the latter's crimes committed during the era of their communist dictatorships, and provided a legitimate frame for their political agency. In return, the European Left has found an ally in promotion of its own interest as well as in the struggle against the uprising and strengthening of the nation-states. If fascism was absent somewhere, it should have been invented, because there is no anti-fascism without fascism. Without questioning the worth of the Yugoslav anti-fascist movement from July 1941 till April 1945, it is necessary to warn about an invented anti-fascism the purpose of which is to realise the national (wartime) goals. Such a quasi-antifascism was promoted especially in Serbia, but also in many parts of the BiH. The Serb political and military leadership tried to justify their war-conquests by an alleged struggle against 'Croatian and Slovenian fascists and separatists.' In 1991 autumn, in the surroundings of Knin, a JNA officer, Ratko Mladic, with a red star on his beret, was threatening the ultimate struggle against 'Ustashas and other fascists'. He ended his 'anti-fascist' struggle five years later in Srebrenica where he replaced the red star with a 'skull and crossbones' [a Chetnick mark]. Similarly, in Drvar on 27 July 1941 the Serb nationalists wearing 'skull

and crossbones' on their berets killed a hundred of Croat pilgrims returning from Knin. That date was later officially declared the day of antifascist uprising that ended with the massacre of prisoners of war and civilians in May 1945; again they just replaced their 'skull and crossbones' with 'red stars.' Such historical facts can in no way excuse or relativise the atrocities committed by Ustashas, or the fascist regime that Ustashas established.

Such facts, however, can pertinently illustrate both the ideology that Pascal Bruckner calls 'the ideology of antifascism' and inconsistency of the communist 'antifascists' who have never distanced themselves, let alone regretted, the crimes committed in the name of communism, or 'antifascism.' This also substantiates Istvan Bibó's view that, on the Southeast of Europe, there was not a nation who managed to place their own politics above one's own territorial aspirations and narrow national interests; no nation was fascist or antifascist in itself and all the nations were embracing either fascism or democracy according to some potential benefits.

Leaning on the previous claim, the Serb elite is investing a maximum effort to maintain Republika Srpska (RS). Their estimate is that, under the circumstance, the best way of achieving such a goal is to insist on 'consistent implementation' of the Dayton Peace Agreement, which turned from a 'devilish plan of destruction of the Serb people' into a Holy Writ that can't be changed without a consent of all. The Serb elite would not want to change a bit, especially not if such a change jeopardised their current position. A good part of the Serb ruling elite, which is grouped around SDS, has no sympathies or respect for the victims of both their politics and the ethnically cleansed RS. Even if they have not taken an active part in the crime, they nonetheless embraced it as the means to solve their however rightfully raised national question, and the crime marks both the elite and the republic they represent.

The roots of both the crime that reached its most brutal peak in Srebrenica, and of the Serb ruling elite, date back to the World War Two. The contrast between Maribor 1945 death rows, on the one hand, and Srebrenica 1995 death rows, on the other, parallels the contrast between Milan Basto, or Simo Dubajić in 1945, on the one hand, and Ratko Mladić, or Simo Dubajić in 1991, on the other; the contrast parallels the contrast between Simo the antifascist and Simo the fascist. Antifascism as practiced by the RS implies rehabilitation of Draža Mihailović and the Chetnick movement, and their renewed identification with partisans and continuity with the RS war veterans. That is how the things are being put in their natural place, and the differences are decreasingly important.

Foreigners help such a process; for instance, an American delegation is supposed to come soon to Belgrade to give 'the legion of merit' to the respected 'antifascist' Draža Mihailović executed by a shooting squad composed of the other antifascists. At the same time Christian Amanpour, CNN's correspondent and a spouse of a former Clinton's spokesman, opposed the beatification by Pope John Paul II of cardinal Alojzije Stepinac on the ground that the cardinal was allegedly 'close to the Ustasha regime.' It is fascinating to see the amount of effort invested into restoration of the state of mind characteristic of 'the golden Yugoslav age' in this region (which is a synonym for Yugoslavia).

A part of Bosniac, and even Croat, intelligentsia that was born during that 'golden age' frequently interprets certain processes and phenomena as 'fascism.' One can only guess whether such an interpretation betrays a special sensitivity for democracy and human rights, or just replicates a jargon and implies labelling of an opponent to disqualify him/her. In any case, such labelling also implies relativisation of the name of the evil, which diminishes its true significance and suppresses its essence. Croats and Serbs from within the so-called civic political elite of Sarajevo represent a special relict of such a 'golden age' and a unique social and political phenomenon of 'our region.' They are best exemplified by the SDA nominee for the 'Serb' vice-president of the BiH Federation, Desnica Radivojević, or for the 'Croat' deputy mayor of SDA's 'multi-ethnic' administration of Sarajevo, Josip Jurišić, or by some earlier 'japonica'-politicians like Ivo Komšić or Miro Lazović who had no political or social influence. In the 1980s and 1990s they were able to see the direction of political developments, but decided to remain 'deaf and blind', because certain disclosures would have jeopardised their 'flowery' positions. Even when they disclosed something, that was only post facto, too late to change anything, but enough to free them from any responsibility. Hence they should not wonder why they have been dismissed or considered unimportant. The Croats and Serbs who advocate a unitary BiH believe that, within such a state, they would take the role of a chosen elite to represent the Serb and Croat 'masses', the way they did in Yugoslavia or Socialist Republic of BiH, which would subsequently secure both their social positions and a source of finance.

The small urban population rewarded their political engagement by calling them 'honourable citizens', whilst the Constitution stipulated the need for their service (through an ethnic key). That is how the Bosnian feudal system was enriched by a component of serfdom. Through a recent suc-

cession of government in Sarajevo, Ivo Komšić, the president or vice-president of the BiH Communist Union, of HSS, HNV, SDP, SDU...has probably lost his office; the public says about him that he moves from one to another political track so fast that they fear that a car will strike him. And, perhaps, following an initiative to replace the rotating BiH Presidency with a single BiH President, Miljenko Brkić, a former president or a high-ranked official of BiH Communist Union, of HDZ and HNZ...could take the office. He adopted as his own the idea of such a replacement that was voiced forty days ago by Sulejman Tihić, and now keeps promoting it wholeheartedly. It is difficult not to be mean and to think that Brkić's calculation is as follows: as he cannot run for the Presidency members, perhaps by promotion of such an idea he could grab a position within the office of the next president; or, if the powers to elect the president are allocated to the Parliament, then, being acceptable by Bosniacs, he might have the chance of being elected...?

Perhaps such thinking is flawed; perhaps this is a noble and wise idea that evades a common man's understanding; however, with such cases in mind, one should not find it strange that the gap between 'a common man' and a BiH Croat politician is increasingly wide. Whereas in mid-19th century Fr Ivan Frano Jukić, on behalf of all the Bosnian Christians, requested from Port to stop calling them 'raya', today's Croat and Serb 'civic' elite requests from the public to treat them as 'raya', not as dummies. To illustrate their current position, one can use a passage from Ivo Andrić's 'Travnička Hronika' [translated into English as 'Bosnian Chronicle' or 'The days of consuls'], which narrates about the day when the Travnik urban population makes up a drunk Bekri-Mustapha and dresses him as a noble and honourable Moslem just to do a nasty thing to Mehmed Brka, an employee in the French Consulate, because he 'was in service of an infidel and eating pork.'

In contrast to the 19th century's French and Austrian consuls, today Europe is represented in Bosnia through an English lord Paddy Ashdown, a High Representative who is a sovereign ruler of Bosnia. The lord has not become a celebrity in Bosnia through the many affairs in which he was involved in his country, as Herzegovinians and Bosnians then had much more important things their minds were occupied with. The BiH public opinion did not mind his comradeship with Radovan Karadzic in 1992 either, as Karadzic's HQs were a normal destination of Ashdown's predecessors, lords Carrington and Owen. Ashdown came into the focus of public opinion in August 1995, immediately after the Croatian mili-

tary-police action 'Storm', when he organised a press conference at which he was frenetically waving with a serviette that contained a quasi-draw of division of the BiH of which he alleged that, three months before the press conference, the Croatian President Franjo Tudjman drew it himself. It was through such a low, spy-mastered and deceitful forgery that Ashdown became an idol of a part of both BiH and Croatian public. Hence a part of the public welcomed his engagement in the BiH with enthusiasm.

As time was passing by, it became increasingly clear that a small cheat was turning into a big one, and that the lord would not solve any of the BiH problems; on the contrary, they were about to grow bigger and bigger. Perhaps today, in April 2005, ten years after the show of 'serviette', when in Belgrade Ashdown states that 'nobody will dismantle Republika Srpska', some will get a clear picture about what is going on here. Whatever happens next, as soon as this fall Ashdown will be visiting London clubs, or various commissions, foundations, and Stiftungs, like his predecessor Wolfgang Petritsch or his Principal Deputy Donald Hays, to advance the claims that the Dayton Agreement is a straitjacket, that the BiH is just a façade of a state, and that 'there in Balkans' it is impossible to bring an order.

It is interesting to note that Hays' analysis is not bad, that he has succeeded to diagnose the main problems of the BiH. He also claims that responsibility for such a situation should be taken by the BiH political elite (with small 'e') who aims to retain both economic and overall social power in their hands. Such elite preserve themselves by preserving the existing relationships and by conserving the current division and isolation of the country. However, it remains unclear why Hays did not say such things whilst he was working in the BiH, and why he, with all his powers, did not do something to change the situation. At the same time, the designer of the 'straitjacket', Richard Holbrooke, claims that Balkans is facing a danger of another war. The CIA is making the same prediction, expecting that another war will break out within the next fifteen years. Let us hope that this will not happen, but if it happens, this time nobody should be caught by surprise; nobody would have the right, first, to say that the peoples and citizens of Bosnia-Herzegovina have gone mad, and, secondly, to flee the country and return after the madness is over in order to teach a lesson about morality, humanity, or whatever.

If another war breaks out, the Bosnian-Herzegovinian elites will have to take blame for it, no matter how small 'e' in 'elites' be; English lords, American retired generals, and Austrian bureaucrats will take only an indirect responsibility.

Those who refuse to solve the problems so clearly identified, or who do not see the problems so identified, will have to take blame. The responsibility and guilt will be on those who are dismantling themselves, who are dismantling the Federation, the RS, the BiH Presidency, cantons...with an awareness that, once they dismantle themselves, the others will fall too, or that, when they win, the others necessarily lose and vice versa.

The guilt will be on them, as it is, when it comes to the last war, on the pre-war elites: **the communist leaders** who have managed to destroy an embryo of civil society and of civil elite, without creating a new one, **the communist politicians** who were more nationalists than communists, and more opportunists and demagogues than anything else, **those who were stealing** from the working class the avant-garde of which they portrayed themselves to be, **those who were building** summer-houses in Neum and Pale, **those who cared only** about their own comfort instead of tackling the problems of the society, **the scholars** who were wasting their intellects on the study of an influence of Marx's philosophy on traffic or on cotton-growth without being able to see the coming end of the Marxist Utopia; **the journalists** who were poisoning the public opinion with the committees' absurdities, **the Croat, the Moslem and the Orthodox priests** who have (however temporarily) neglected 'The Kingdom of Heaven' and adhered to the communist-atheist Princedom, having thought that it would be better to both themselves and the people. And, then, the guilt is on them all together, because, after the fall of the communist system, they have all overnight turned into radical anti-communists, and tried to place all the blame for past sins on 'the others', multiplying thus the evil itself.

The key question that needs to be posed today in Bosnia-Herzegovina was posed two centuries ago in the verses of Abdulvehabib Ilhamija: *What one wants, for God's sake?* If one wants to change the condition of the BiH then it is necessary to change its elite because they feed on lies and have the goals that differ from those publicly stated. But, as the workers in shipyards, mines, and factories, were the only ones with the power to dethrone both communism and the communist elite who ruled on behalf of the workers, by shattering the foundations of their legitimacy, the same applies today – today's criminal and non-democratic, quasi-national elites of Bosnia-Herzegovina could be dethroned only by those on whose foundations such elites rely to portray themselves as 'legitimate' defenders of the national interests, that is, by true nation-oriented democrats, by us!

How to achieve such a goal? First, we should stop lying to each other, stop lying to Europe, and stop talking only things that the others like to hear. The need to introduce the Truth into political and public discourse in the BiH, without minding about political correctness, or about dominant theories and trends, was never more pressing than today. An open and honest debate, through which a general consensus about fundamental social values will be achieved, is needed. Interests need to be clearly defined within the frame of such values, and political goals should then be set on the foundation of such interests. In the course of such a debate, the people able to develop mutual trust, and to solve their problems, will come to the forefront. Otherwise, we will be growing increasingly mad and the straitjacket will be getting increasingly tight.

Ivo Lučić

Evolution and Condition of the Elites in Bosnia-Herzegovina – A Personal View

Abstract

Who is today's elite in Bosnia-Herzegovina? Who are the chosen, the principals and the most influential and dignified ones? Who has got the power? Who is the crème of the society? Numerous authors offer theoretical lenses through which an answer to such questions can be sought, including Wright Mills, Vilfred Pareto, Mirko Kus Nikolajev, and Djuro Kovačević. One can also internalise the theory of a new post-capitalist elite proposed by Alexander Bard and Ian Söderqvist, the key point of which is that 'the submissive ones shall not inherit the Earth;' the power and glory are belonging to those who are working hard, who are recognising the changes and promoting their own interests, but who are also lucky enough to be blessed by a particular direction of historical developments. We can perhaps choose one of the many definitions of elite, for instance: elite is the part of society in possession of power, the part able to realise its will and impose it on the others. Hence elite has the power, government, and authority. In this paper I will not refer to all those men and women who have selflessly contributed to the community, the people, or the state. I will not refer to the many cases of sacrifice and courage either. I will only try to sketch briefly the issues pertaining to the origins and evolution of the elite in Bosnia-Herzegovina and to point to causal pathways of such issues.