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A WAR OVER DIFFERENCES
The Religious Dimensions of Conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina, 1992–95

The people of Bosnia-Herzegovina can be proud of their achievements. They have overcome mutual conflict and tension.

—MARSHAL JOSIP BROZ TITO, NOVEMBER 25, 1979

Less than ten years later, Tito's rapturous words seemed almost forgotten. In Yugoslavia as a whole and in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the catastrophe in the 1990s was in large part a logical consequence of the processes taking place in the second half of the 1980s: the deterioration of national relations within the federation and the party, growing economic crisis, gradual decomposition of the legitimacy of the Socialist political system, and media wars.[1] It would be wrong to understand the last Bosnian war in terms of a religious, civil, or ethnic war, or as the result of ancient hatreds or some specific Balkan mentality, or even as an internal Bosnian affair. It would also be wrong to adopt the explanation that all sides are equally to blame, as was often publicly proclaimed by some foreign diplomats and some in the international media, who were merely recapitulating the course of events as interpreted by the aggressors' spin doctors and mythmakers. Of course, some dimensions of that sort cannot be neglected, but they "cannot mask the external causes and the dimensions of this conflict, its dimension of the war of aggression and the territorial conquests."[2] In my opinion, the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina was first of all a classical example of expansionist war for a Greater Serbia instigated by the Milošević's régime in Belgrade. But it was also—during the Croat-Muslim clashes from the autumn of 1992 to March, 1994—a war for a Greater Croatia instigated by the Zagreb regime, which seized the opportunity presented by a weak and inefficient Bosnian army and the re-

TABLE 9-1 ***National composition of cities in Bosnia-Herzegovina, 1991***

	Muslims	*Serbs*	*Croats*	*Others*
Sarajevo	49.3%	29.9%	6.6%	14.2%
Banja Luka	14.6%	54.8%	14.9%	15.7%
Zenica	55.2%	15.5%	15.6%	13.7%
Tuzla	47.6%	15.5%	15.6%	21.3%
Mostar	34.8%	19%	33.8%	12.4%

luctance of the West to intervene in Bosnia-Herzegovina to carve up a piece of territory for itself.

Discussions on the future of the country began even before the outbreak of hostilities. An analysis of the national composition of Bosnia-Herzegovina's 100 municipalities reveals some interesting facts: the Muslims had an absolute majority in 31 municipalities and a relative majority in 14; the Croats had an absolute majority in 13 municipalities and a relative majority in 6.[3] The national composition of Bosnia-Herzegovina's five largest cities is shown in table 9-1.

Franjo Tudjman and Slobodan Milošević met in Karađorđevo in March, 1991, to discuss plans for partitioning Bosnia-Herzegovina. Their meeting was followed by meetings in Austria involving Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadžić, Milošević, and Tudjman in February, 1992, and by Bosnian Croat leader Mate Boban and Karadžić in May, 1992.[4]

The late 1980s saw Yugoslavia's decomposition as a federal state. After the elections in Slovenia and Croatia in the spring of 1990, which clearly pointed toward complete national emancipation, Milošević 's political orientation and actions turned from seeking Yugoslavian unity to promoting a Greater Serbia. Meanwhile, the face of political pluralism in Bosnia-Herzegovina began assuming a national and increasingly religious profile when the first multiparty elections there were held six months after those in Slovenia and Croatia. The Muslim Party for Democratic Action *(Stranka demokratske akcije* [SDA]), which advocated a pluralistic society and was led by Alija Izetbegović, adopted traditional Muslim rhetoric and symbolism. Like their brethren in Croatia, the Bosnian Serbs founded a Serbian Democratic Party *(Srpska demokratska stranka* [SDS]), whose declared objective was to fight for Serb rights. Led by Radovan Karadžić, an immigrant from Montenegro, its first course was one of cooperation. The Croatian Democratic Community (HDZ), the "authentic defender of Croat interests," was originally opposed to

any changes to Bosnia's borders. It was headed Stjepan Kljuić, a moderate politician from central Bosnia and an advocate of Bosnia-Herzegovina's integrity and autonomy as an independent state. There was also another but smaller Muslim party, the secularist Muslim Bosniak Organization *(Muslimanska bošnjačka organizacija* [MBO]), founded by Adil Zulfikarpašić after he fell out with Izetbegović. However, despite warnings about the consequences of nationality profiling, any party that was not nationally based suffered total defeat.

Before concentrating on the religious and mythological dimensions of the Bosnian war, we should first consider the balance of political power in Bosnia's democratically elected parliament, the escalation of tension, and the dramatic events that took place in Bosnia from December, 1990, to April, 6, 1992—the day it achieved its independence and war broke out. I shall also discuss the scenarios drawn up by Western diplomats and opposing parties during the war for partitioning the country.[5] Of the 240 parliamentary seats being contested in the 1990 general elections, 86 were won by the SDA, 70 by the SDS, 45 by the HDZ, and 8 by the MBO. The winners, therefore, were the three biggest national parties, whereas leftist and pro-Yugoslav parties were the big losers—the reformed Communists won 14 seats and Yugoslav prime minister Ante Marković's party took only 12.[6] The assembly's composition roughly corresponded to Bosnia-Herzegovina's national composition (44:33:17). At the beginning of 1991—six hundred years after the death of Tvrtko Kotromanić, Bosnia's greatest medieval ruler—Bosnia-Herzegovina replaced its state symbols (coat of arms and flag) with new ones that implied it had ties with that period in Bosnia's history.

Influenced by events in Croatia and supported by Serbia, Bosnian Serb extremists consciously decided to increase tension within Bosnia-Herzegovina. In September, 1991, they established six "Serbian Autonomous Regions," founded their own Parliament the following month, and SDS delegates and politicians adjourned to attend state functions. They opted in a November plebiscite to form the Serbian Republic (*Republika Srpska* [RS]), a Serb state within Bosnia-Herzegovina, which would remain in Yugoslavia. In December, the Bosnian Serb Parliament declared that the RS would be annexed to Yugoslavia. In response to the Bosnian Serbs' unilateral policy, the European Union (EU) called on Bosnian authorities to seek a referendum on the state's independence. The question asked was: "Are you in favor of a sovereign and independent Bosnia-Herzegovina, a state of equal citizens and nations of Muslims, Serbs, Croats, and others who live in it?" Voters cast their ballots on February 29 and March 1, 1992, and, despite a boycott by the Serbian parties,

the referendum succeeded with the help of Muslim and Croats. A total of 62.7 percent of the eligible electorate—"including," according to Malcolm, "many thousands of Serbs in the major cities"—voted for Bosnian independence.[7] The newly born state, however, was already marked for death.

The former Yugoslav People's Army (*Jugoslovenska narodna armija* [JNA]), which until recently had considered itself to be the only remaining unifying force, the "last link" between the Yugoslav nations, was driven from Slovenia and most of Croatia. Its ostensible role in Bosnia-Herzegovina was to preserve the peace between national groups, but it gradually took sides with the Serbs, further strengthening the well-equipped illegal Serb paramilitary groups operating on both sides of the Drina River.[8] After several incidents in the second half of 1991, war broke out on April 6, 1992, the same day Bosnia-Herzegovina was officially and internationally recognized. The Serbian Republic, presided over by Radovan Karadžić, was proclaimed on April 7 in Pale, a village above Sarajevo.

The proposal to partition Bosnia-Herzegovina was made at a conference in Lisbon in February, 1992. It was to be divided into three parts: a Muslim canton (in which Muslims would have a 56.5 percent majority), a Serb canton (in which Serbs would have a 61.5 percent majority), and a Croat canton (in which Croats would have a 65.7 percent majority). The cantons would vary in size: the Muslim canton would have a population of about 2.8 million citizens, the Serb canton more than a million, and the Croat canton less than five hundred thousand.[9] The plan was rejected the next month, first by the Serb delegation, while the second draft, which included some Serbian supplements, was also rejected by the Croatians and Muslims.

A second conference convened in London six months later, presided over by UN ambassador Cyrus Vance and EU mediator Lord David Owen. The Serbs already had control of more than two-thirds of Bosnia-Herzegovina's territory by then. In January, 1993, Owen and Thorwald Stoltenberg, who replaced Vance that month, proposed that Bosnia be parceled into nine ethnic cantons (three each), plus the multiethnic canton of Sarajevo. The Bosnian Serbs, who at the time were at their strongest, rejected the proposal in May, and it was finally abandoned in August. According to the proposal, the "three-partite" Muslim canton would have a Muslim majority of 67.6 percent, the Serb canton a Serb majority of 65.2 percent, and the Croat canton a Croat majority of 77.8 percent. The fourth and largest canton (Sarajevo), would include two-fifths of the entire population and have the following composition: Mus-

lims, 42 percent; Serbs, 27.6 percent; Croats, 19.8 percent; and others, 10.6 percent.[10]

The Bosnian peace initiative was taken over by the United States in 1994. An agreement signed in Washington in March of that year ended the conflict between the Bosnian (mostly Muslim) government and Bosnian Croats, and created a Croat-Muslim federation within Bosnia-Herzegovina. A new federal constitution was adopted the same month, and cooperation was further bolstered by a meeting between Izetbegović and Tudjman in July, 1995.

PREPARATION FOR WAR: IDEOLOGIZING ANCIENT SERBIAN MYTHS

One of the most important indicators and dimensions of mythical reasoning is timelessness: the past, present, and future arbitrarily interchange, complement, and supplement each other. The myth abolishes historical, linear time: the future becomes the new past; what is perceived as progression is, in fact, regression; and that which has been is experienced again. The catastrophes that occurred in the former Yugoslavia have in many ways been the result of the extreme ideologizing of ancient mythical stories and the abuse of the people's religious identity. However, even after the painful establishment of a "new order" in the central Balkans, myth and tradition remain an important inspiration for the future. As Tismaneanu presumes, "the post-communist political and intellectual world will remain a battlefield between different, often incompatible myths."[11]

Serb nationalism was articulated in its most obvious form in the notorious "Memorandum" of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts (SANU), written in 1985 and partly published in September, 1986, in which twenty-three authors (leading intellectuals, academicians, artists) strongly attacked—among other things—the "anti-Serb" Yugoslav régime, its "discrimination," and "neo-Fascist aggression" in Kosovo.[12] Their demands were clear: the annulment of the 1974 "confederal" constitution (that is, the subjugation of the autonomous provinces of Vojvodina and Kosovo to Serbia), an end to their "economic subjection" to the northern republics, a renewal of the "complete national and cultural integrity" of the Serbs in all parts of Yugoslavia, and the rejection of "artificially created, new, regional literature" (for example, Bosnian literature). Banac notes that this memorandum is "usually regarded as the intellectual justification of and the prodromus to contemporary Serbian

nationalism."[13] It's masterminds were Mihajlo Marković, a Marxist philosopher and former member of the Praxis group, Prof. Kosta Mihajlović, and writers Antonije Isaković and Dobrica Ćosić, who became the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia's first president in May, 1992.

The memorandum's main points were aptly exploited by the new Serb ruler, Slobodan Milošević, who became the leader of the Serbian League of Communists in September, 1987, and later president of Serbia. A sly and unscrupulous politician, he turned the complicated circumstances facing Yugoslavia and Serbia—loss of the legitimacy of the Socialist regime, national tensions (most explicit in Kosovo), growing economic crisis, and social instabilities—to his own benefit. Milošević used time-tested populist methods to portray himself as the only authentic representative of Serb interests and as the invincible leader of all Serbs dispersed across Yugoslavia.[14] In a 1991 interview, Dobrica Ćosić stated that Milošević "has done more for the Serbs in the last four years than any other Serb politician in the last fifty." He made a similar statement for the newspaper *Borba* in November, 1989. The Episcopal Synod of the Serbian Orthodox Church also supported Milošević's maxim that "all Serbs must live in one country."

The spellbound and overheated atmosphere in Serbia in the late 1980s and early 1990s, the obsession with internal and external enemies, the treason syndrome, and the impending danger in the political, national, religious, and cultural fields are best expressed by media headlines. Several Serb historians and representatives of the sciences, culture, sport, and public life were also involved in Serb military endeavors and in forging the impressive Serb national solidarity.[15] Many who had previously had an ardent pro-Yugoslav and Communist orientation slowly or dramatically turned toward Greater Serbian nationalism. In 1993, for example, Bosnian Serb general Ratko Mladić said, "through this war I broke as a Communist and a Yugoslav to become the greatest Serb."[16]

It is disturbing to note that a number of the most respectable literary magazines, authors, and university professors fell to the level of profane political agitation. The new Serbian leadership and the academy "successfully harmonized their activities" from 1988 until the mass anti-Milošević demonstrations in March, 1991. Later, Great Serbian rhetoric and hatred against "the enemies of the Serbs and Serbianism" were common in the public appearances of some Serbian intellectuals. Miroljub Jeftić stated that "Balkan Muslims have the blood of the martyrs of Kosovo on their hands," and advocated the defensive and righteous nature of Serb military endeavors. For him, "international Islamic planners, aided by domestic fellow-thinkers, have as their objective to Is-

lamize all of Serbia, but only as the first step of a breakthrough into Europe." He was convinced that "Islam is an enemy religion today, as it was yesterday." Modern Bosnian Muslim Slavs, according to him, were converted Serbs, and it is because of "this strong awareness that they so despise the Serbs." Aleksandar Popović spoke of Islam's "totalitarianism," and an other prominent Serbian Orientalist, Darko Tanasković, saw the Bosnian war as "a struggle between fundamentalist Muslims on the one hand and Serbs" dedicated to keeping "Church and State separate on the other."[17]

In August, 1991, Vojislav Šešelj, a Chetnik duke and president of the Radical Party, stated that the Bosnian Muslims were "actually Islamized Serbs," and that many of the Croats were "Catholicized Serbs." Radoslav Unković, director of the Institute for the Preservation of the Cultural, Historical, and Natural Heritage of the Republika Srpska, shared this opinion. The Bosnian *balija* (a pejorative name for Muslims) were, according to Unković, descended from the Serbs but seemed to be ashamed of that fact and tried to suppress it. Catholics who had recently become Croats were likewise accused of suppressing their Orthodox and Serb identity. Šešelj's program also included the unification of all Serbian lands, which for them are "Serbia proper, Montenegro, Serbian Bosnia, Serbian Herzegovina, Serbian Dubrovnik, Serbian Dalmatia, Serbian Lika, Serbian Kordun, Serbian Banija, Serbian Slavonia, Serbian Western Srem, Serbian Baranja, and Serbian Macedonia." At the congress of the ruling Serbian Socialist Party, Mihajlo Marković anticipated the creation of a new Yugoslavia consisting of Serbia, Montenegro and the *Serbian parts* of Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina.[18] The plan was even acclaimed in songs from the production line of "military-propaganda folklorism," to borrow an expression from the Belgrade ethnologist Ivan Čolović.

Kordun, Lika and Banija,
Orthodox Dalmatia,
Herzeg-Bosnia, Slavonia,
All these are Western Serbia.[19]

Academician Veselin Djuretić also believed that Bosnian Muslims were "Islamized Serbs," and writer Momo Kapor was renowned for his anti-Muslim and anti-Western statements.[20] In the summer of 1998, Radmilo Marojević, dean of the Faculty of Philology at the University of Belgrade, declared that Croatian literature may be considered the "literature of Catholic Serbs." The only true Croatian literature, according to Marojević, was that written in the Chakavian dialect. Belgrade Univer-

sity professor Kosta Čavoški, a member of the RS senate, publicly defended Karadžić's leadership of the Bosnian Serbs during the last war.

Motifs from the Kosovo myths were worn to dilapidation: "Beam, bright sun of Kosovo, we shall not give up great Dušan's land."[21] Newspaper headlines shouted familiar aphorisms about the "battle for Christ and Europe," "holy Serbs," and "Asian despotism." Academician Radomir Lukić stated—and the Belgrade daily *Politika* quoted him—that: "Although the act of choosing the Heavenly Kingdom is religiously toned because Heaven and Earth are connected, that's not the apotheosis of suicide but the indication toward the way of Salvation. Heavenly Kingdom is the soul of the nation." Addressing a crowd of two million celebrating in Kosovo (which was persistently called the "heart of Serb nationhood" and the "cradle of the Serb nation" by the media) on the six hundredth anniversary of the Battle of Kosovo, Milošević declared that Serbia was defending European culture and religion from the advance of Islam. He even foretold future battles (*Politika* alleged that Lazar's words "it is better to die honorable than to live in shame" were repeated).[22]

The celebration included a "secular" and a "religious" ceremony conducted by senior dignitaries of the Serbian Orthodox Church, which was represented by Archbishop Lavrentij (in charge of western Europe), Patriarch German, and all the archbishops. Archbishops Vladislav, Pavle, and Simeon read the sermons. Motifs from the Battle of Kosovo were everywhere: on posters, cartoons, calendars, and badges; in movies and music. Several books on the subject also were published. The six hundredth anniversary celebration—like the demonstrations in front of Parliament in Belgrade on February 28, 1989, when more than a million people protested against the "separatism" of the Albanians and Slovenians (the strike at the Stari Trg colliery and the "Slovenian betrayal" at the rally in the *Cankarjev dom* cultural center in Ljubljana)—represented the culmination of Serb political populism and "happenings of the people," and was a harbinger of the destructive powers the newly ideologized myths from the past were about to unleash.

During the euphoria of the Battle of Kosovo's six hundredth anniversary celebration, several high-profile Serb theologians and church dignitaries—including Jevtić, Radović, and Mijać—wrote and spoke about the Serbs' heavenly nature and revived other similar Christoslavic myths. Bishop Jovan of Šabac-Valjevo stated that Prince Lazar and the Kosovo Serbs "primarily created a heavenly Serbia which by today surely grew into the greatest heavenly state." Serb leaders and Orthodox priests in Bosnia-Herzegovina held a similar celebration at the same time, but were

criticized by high-ranking leaders of the Bosnian League of Communists.[23]

Belgrade sociologist Nebojša Popov sees "war as a part of the Serbian way of life and not only as a myth, legend, or epics."[24] It is therefore not surprising that the ensuing war in Bosnia was also often interpreted with pathetic mythological categories: there was "a new Battle of Kosovo" going on, and Serbs loyal to the Sarajevo government were branded "traitors of the Branković kind," and Milošević was proclaimed the "new great leader and military commander." The following poem provides an illustrative example of this:

Slobodan, our keenest saber,
Will there be war on Kosovo?
Shall we summon Strahinjić,
Old Jug, the nine Jugovići,
Or should Boško bear our banner
And scythe his saber through Kosovo?
Will red burning blood be shed
Where the peonies bloom blood red?
If there is need, just say the word,
We shall fly, like bullets from guns.[25]

Old tales about heroic *hajduk* bandits, Chetniks, dukes, and so forth were infused with a spirit of romantic barbarism. Parliament of *Republika Srpska* awarded the Order of Nemanjić to the most deserving, including Montenegro's president, Momir Bulatović. Against such a mythical backdrop, the advent of Murat, the ancient archenemy, was inevitable. Indeed, there were two candidates for the role, Alija Izetbegović and Franjo Tudjman, as illustrated by the following verses:

Oh, Alija and Tudjman,
You are to blame for the war,
The fate of Murat
Awaits you both.[26]

The persecution complex that results in seeking and identifying "local" traitors—from the so-called armchair traitors *(foteljaši),* bureaucrats, and autonomists to Ustasha or irredentist Croats, separatist Slovenes, and degenerate Muslims—became an important element of the renewed Serbian political mythology and rhetoric. Another important

source was undoubtedly the myth of foreign conspiracy. During the war, the religious press published articles claiming that "Serbia is threatened by the entire West," and about the "Pope's lackeys in Italy, Austria, and Germany." Socialist Yugoslavia was said to be "a 'Trojan horse' for the penetration of the Vatican, Germany, Austria to the South, and East and 'Jihad' to the North and West." According to the Orthodox metropolite of Zagreb-Ljubljana, Pope John Paul II, with his alleged anti-Serb stance, was behind the war in Croatia. From the perspective of political myths, therefore, the international conspiracy by "eternal" enemies was one of the essential explanations of local developments. According to Swiss publicist and historian Viktor Meier, "the majority of the Serbs blame the ostensible antipathy of the West, rather than Slobodan Milošević, for their hardships."[27]

The most popular myths were those about local and foreign Muslim conspiracies. Balkanologist Harry T. Norris lists the main elements of the attack by Serb "experts" on Islam and Yugoslav Muslims. First, the rise of Islamic fundamentalism in Yugoslavia is "a result of the firm relations established by Tito with the Arab and the Islamic countries." Second, "Arab Muslims have a strategy to enable them to dominate the world and form a single world-wide state." Third, "by its very nature, Islam allows the extermination of others who are not in agreement with it." Finally, "Bosnian Muslims have betrayed their race."[28]

Ankara's alleged political objective was to create a "Turkish empire that would extend from the Adriatic Sea to the Great Wall of China." Haris Silajdžić was accused of being a triple agent in the employ of the CIA, the Mossad, and Libyan intelligence. "Conspiracies by Islamic fundamentalists" ("the Sarajevo-Istanbul Green Transversal") were "uncovered," as were conspiracies by the Vatican or a "German-Catholic alliance" or a "Catholic and German clique." Jeftić wrote about "the natural anti-Serbian alliance between Turkey and Albania." Some Serbian sources saw "conspiracies by various combinations of Germany, NATO, the Masons, the Vatican, the CIA, 'American Generals,' Saudi Arabia, and even by a 'Bonn-Vienna-Zagreb-Sofia-Tirana-Rome axis,' among others."[29] Dragoš Kalajić, a nationalist journalist, painter, and the "mentor" of the "White Eagles" Serb paramilitary organization, wrote in 1994: "The Muslim assault on western Europe through peaceful means, i.e. mass immigration, which threatens to transform European nations into national minorities in their own countries, only serves to confirm the significance of the Serb struggle to defend the integrity of Europe, its culture and civilization."[30] Equating the Serbian situation with that of Israel, Vuk Drašković in September, 1988, concluded that "Israel and the Serbs live

in a hellish siege where the sworn goal is to seize, and then cover with mosques or Vaticanize, the lands of Moses and the people of Saint Sava."[31]

The Bosnian war was, therefore, preceded and accompanied by an unprecedented and aggressive political propaganda campaign targeted at different elements of the Serb population. Much of it was based on adapting ancient myths to current ideology. Laboratories of hate renewed ancient atrocities and evidence about the widespread anti-Serb conspiracies, and fabricated new ones. They claimed that Muslims "were plotting to put Serb women in harems."[32] They reported that the Croats, especially their new leaders, were all Ustasha. They spread rumors of Muslim and Albanian conspiracies ("a demographic atomic bomb for the Serbs"). They accused Tito's regime of promoting anti-Serb policies and referred to Tito as the "Serb Slayer" or "Serb Eater."[33] They trumpeted the invincibility and superhuman strength of Serb warriors, and replayed the horrors of the Ottoman period. The Serbs in Foča were told that Muslims planned to transform their town into a new Mecca. Serb forces eventually occupied the town, ethnically "cleansed" it, and renamed it Srbinje. The radicalization of national sentiments reached its peak during this period, which scholars refer to as the "frenzy of myth" or "furor Serbicus."

It would be difficult to explain the events taking place in Serbia in the late 1980s and 1990s without mentioning the myth of the new leader and his cult. The Serbs looked to the past to find legitimacy for their "anti-bureaucratic revolutions" and "manifestations of the people": the deceased, charismatic, pan-Yugoslav leader Tito was to be replaced by a—as he was initially called by his followers—"new Tito" in the person of Slobodan Milošević.[34] His supporters rearranged old and invented new slogans in his praise, such as "Comrade Slobo, we pledge ourselves to you" and "Serbia keeps on asking: when will Slobo replace Tito? "[35] He was called the "Tsar of Dedinje," the "Savior of the Serbhood," and the "Balkan Napoleon." The new Serb leader was portrayed as a savior, the initiator of a new era who would "finally bring order." These views were reflected in poems dedicated to Milošević, as illustrated by the following excerpts:

Slobodan, majestic name,
Whatever is wrong, change it from the roots.

Or:

Dear brothers, see a new age dawn,
Slobodan Milošević is born![36]

"Sloba" is a man who "works up to twenty hours a day, including Saturdays and Sundays."[37] The political myth portrays him as stalwart, fair, and resolute; a uniter, protector, and savior; a brother, father, and mother ("Help us, Slobo, brother/you are our father and mother"). The following verses are also revealing:

Slobodan, son of Serbian faith,
When your eyes pierce alien aims,
Bright lightning flashes from them,
When you speak, honey flows,
Before your beauty, the springtime
Will conceal the sun and flowers.[38]

Paramilitary units modeled on historical military formations were also created. One example is that of the Chetnik duke Šešelj. The title was bestowed on Šešelj in 1989 by the self-declared Chetnik duke, Father Momčilo Đujić, who emigrated to the United States after the Second World War. Đujić ordered him "to expel all Croats, Albanians, and other foreign elements from holy Serbian soil," adding that he would return to Serbia only when Šešelj succeeded in cleansing "Serbia of the last Jew, Albanian, and Croat."[39]

As was the case in other post-Socialist countries, cults of ambiguous and contestable personalities from recent history began reemerging.[40] In Serbia, for example, that of Draža Mihajlović, Second World War Chetnik commander, of Milan Nedić, Nikolaj Velimirović, and the Karađorđe dynasty. In 1993, Vuk Drašković, a Herzegovina-born Serbian writer and politician, unveiled a monument to Mihajlović, the "holy warrior,"at Ravna gora. A poem dedicated to Mihajlović was entitled "Draža Lives, He Has Not Died!"[41] We also find such slogans as:

Dražo, we pledge ourselves to you,
We shall not swerve from your path.

And:

Return, noble Duke,
Once more to the Dinaric mountains.[42]

Anyplace with Serb graves or where Serb soldiers set foot was said to be part of Serbia. Politicians and military commanders alike skillfully built their strategies on the rich tradition of ancient Serb mythopoesis:

Milošević became the *vožd* (leader), "protector of the Serb nation," and "Tsar from Dedinje." General Mladić, the Bosnian Serb military commander, became the "greatest warrior for the liberation of the Serb nation," and the "Liberator-General." There was also Captain Dragan, the "invincible warrior"; the Kninjas (warriors from Knin, analogous to the Japanese Ninja), and the "Serb Sparta." In the ethnically "cleansed" town of Bijeljina, RS vice president Biljana Plavšić emotionally declared the infamous Serb paramilitary commander Arkan a "Serb hero" and a "true Serb who was prepared to give his life for his people," and added: "We need such people!"

Dragoš Kalajić saw in Mladić the "radiance of the unhesitating determination of a fighting spirit," and in Karadžić, "a personality forged of the finest highland material of the Serbian ethos and ethnos" whose strength emanated "holy dread." Plavšić stated that Karadžić was a "great figure of the living legend of the Serb struggle."[43] Plavšić herself has been referred to as the "Iron Lady" and "Tsarina Biljana." Arkan returned her kind words by declaring her the "Serb Empress," and several Serb armored vehicles were christened with her name. In a documentary film, Radovan Karadžić poses in a house in Tršić that belonged to his more famous namesake, Vuk S. Karadžić, to whom he claimed to be related (finding evidence of this in the dimple in his chin), and plays the *gusle,* a traditional musical instrument.[44] A second mythical reference to Radovan Karadžić is military, emancipating, and nationally integrationist, as seen in the following verse: "Oh, Radovan, man of steel/The first leader since Karadjordje."

Against such a backdrop—the obsessive and ethnocentric argumentation of their own superiority—Serb metaphysical myths (Serbs as the "heavenly nation") and myths about Serb military superiority (Serbs as a "warrior nation") were followed by "scientific" myths about the Serbs and their enemies. The mythical discourse becomes "naturalized," according to Roland Barthes. Specific situations or facts are "presumed naturally," "objectively," and are, therefore, "scientifically provable." The situations or facts are thus depoliticized and lose their historicalness. In 1989, Jovan Rašković, a psychiatrist and later leader of the Croatian Serbs, told an interviewer the Muslims were stuck in the anal phase of their psycho-socio development, which, he said, explains their aggressiveness and obsession with precision and morality. Moreover, he said the Croats were suffering from a castration complex.[45] Commenting on his own people, the Serbs, he said that they "have always been a nation characterized by tragic fate, God's chosen people in a sense."

Another example: Biljana Plavšić—a biology professor who defended

her doctoral thesis in Zagreb, former Fulbright Scholar, and dean at Sarajevo University—told the newspaper *Borba* in July, 1993, that Bosnian Serbs were not only ethnically and racially superior to Muslims but to Serbs from Serbia proper as well because they had developed special defensive mechanisms in the course of their evolution. "I know as a biologist," she added, "that species that are surrounded and threatened by other species develop a higher level of adaptation and survival." In September of the same year, while arguing in favor of the theory that Muslim Slavs are actually descended from Serbs, she explained that "genetically damaged Serb material passed over to Islam." She said she believed this gene became condensed over the centuries and "continued to degenerate." The two newly created Serb states in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina (Republika Srpska Krajina and Republika Srpska) were seen as the fresh energy or "blood" that would invigorate the existing Serbian states (Serbia and Montenegro), which were showing clear signs of aging. "Beyond the Drina, Serbdom is being tempered and toughened. I do not see that here."[46] For some Orthodox thinkers, the only real Serbian states were those in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina because of the religiosity of their leaders and because they adopted Orthodoxy in their national symbols.

As in many countries, the countryside is the heartland of nationalism and religious and political intolerance. In the case of the Serbs, traditional and conservative parts of rural population joined the nationalist intellectuals. Ramet notes that the modernization and secularization of Serb society under socialism suppressed rural conservatism, which reemerged in the late 1980s. Collective loyalty and so-called traditional values were sacralized by aggressive rural mobilization ("When countrymen take up arms") and religious revival.[47] The simple rural folk were said to posses the "true values," those virtues that preserve national and religious purity. However, it also nurtured other "qualities," such as xenophobia, anti-intellectualism, anti-Western, and antiurban sentiments, belligerent religiousness, and gender discrimination. Ramet therefore concludes that Milošević's rise to power signified the victory of the rural over the urban.

Economic and rural backwardness became in mythical interpretation the proof of messianism, uniqueness, and election. A large proportion of Serbia's population is rural (27.6 percent in 1981, well above the Yugoslav average of 19.9 percent; in comparison, Slovenia's rural population accounted for just 9.4 percent of the population). More than half of all Serbs worked in the agricultural sector.[48] Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, and Serbia were also the least urbanized republics in Yugoslavia. It therefore came as no surprise that the new Serb nationalist ideas found the most

support in the countryside, as they had throughout history. Towns and cities were seen as a thorn in the side of the warlords and as a unique form of degeneration and artificiality: a suspicious coexistence of different cultures, religions, and races; mixed marriages; democracy; cosmopolitanism; and pacifism. An eloquent example comes from an RS parliamentary session in 1994. One of the deputies is quoted as having said that he was for "Serbianizing those who are not Serb enough. I am thinking of the capital city, Belgrade. "[49]

Čolović cites specific examples of such cognizance in his analysis of the poetry of Božidar Vučurović, a folk poet and truck driver from Trebinje who became the political and military leader of the Serbs there during the last war, and finds similar examples in Dragoš Kalajić's and publicist Momčilo Selić's statements.[50] The result is the systematic destruction of towns (regardless of their strategic significance) or "urbicide" as the next characteristic of the Bosnian war, in the spirit of the ancient proverb "God created villages, but people created towns." According to such logic, the path to the future would be to return to the past: the nation will be redeemed of its bygone conceptual and political errors. An illustration of this is the postwar (July, 1998) statement by Draško Radusinović, president of the Montenegrin national community in Croatia: "In the coming century, Montenegrins and their national essence will be liberated from these ideologies [the great ideologies of the twentieth century] and we shall return to our traditions."

The Serb nation, its religion, and culture were ostensibly threatened. Excerpts from Izetbegović's Islamic Declaration were maliciously interpreted. The media, including Belgrade television, announced that Muslims and Croats (a "fundamentalist-Ustasha coalition") were planning to create a unitary Bosnia-Herzegovina. They justified their military preparations as being "defensive" in nature. Historian Kržišnik-Bukić cites an interesting example that contradicts one of the myths about neglecting the Serbs in Bosnia-Herzegovina. In 1992, she says, there were in the center of Sarajevo "over sixty streets and squares that bore names from Serbian medieval history, but none—for example—of the rulers of the independent Bosnian medieval state."[51]

Indeed, there were even proposals for the creation of a so-called Orthodox Creed Circle, an association of countries that once included the Byzantine cultural sphere, as a counterweight to the European Union. Such an association "would comprise the Russian Federation, Ukraine, Byelorussia, Serbia, Montenegro, Greece, Bulgaria, Rumania, and Cyprus."[52] On the other hand, a "Balkan Orthodox Alliance" would unite only the Balkan "Orthodox" countries. The Serbian Orthodox Church,

however, never officially supported these initiatives formulated by lay circles.

NEW AND OLD CROATIAN NATIONAL MYTHS

Croatia was also drawing plans for a "permanent solution" to the Croat national issue, as it was called. Franjo Tudjman, in the December 31, 1991, edition of *Slobodna Dalmacija,* called Bosnia-Herzegovina a "colonial formation" and said it would soon be partitioned between Serbia and Croatia, with a small Muslim state in between. He considered Bosnia a "creation of the Ottoman invasion of Europe." In September, 1995, he asserted that "Croatia accepts the task of Europeanizing Bosnian Muslims," who, according to Tudjman, were part of the Croat ethnic body. He also declared "Bosnia was naturally in the Croatian sphere of interest."[53]

During these years, Croatia was going through a phase of "national revival" and reorientation into "thinking in a Croatian way" (an expression coined by retired priest Ante Baković) in the sense of mythic exaggerations, reinterpretations of mythical figures, and the invention of new ones. Myths began to spread about an "uninterrupted thousand-year Croatian statehood," about the "Croatian nation being the oldest," about the affliction of the Croatian nation in "Serboslavia," and about the "eternal Croatian nation." They complained about their servitude under monarchic and socialist Yugoslavia, and the unceasing violence being committed against them (for example, the postwar "Bleiburg victims," "death marches," and the "Way of the Cross" of Croatian collaborators). The sense of self-victimization was particularly strong: books and brochures about Croatian martyrs were published for several decades.[54] The following comment by A. Bakić sheds some light on the policy of arousing a sense of peril and danger from all quarters as a means of homogenizing the population and luring it toward specific goals: "the Croatian individual must be liberated from communist totalitarianism, the fallacy of Yugoslavism, the practice of Serbian pillage, and venality and corruption inherited from an Ottoman way of thinking in the sense of 'don't worry, we'll do it tomorrow,' as well as our new slavery to Western European currency."[55]

The cult of President Tudjman—referred to as the "Croatian Giant," the "Architect of Croatian Defense," and the "Greatest Croatian of All Time"—grew steadily. He stated several times that he drew inspiration from Stjepan Radić. Judging from a statement he made in 1998, his sec-

ond historical model was Spain's fascist dictator Francisco Franco: "History shall place me abreast of Franco as a savior of Western civilization."[56] Like Milošević, he was panegyrized in lyrics and song, which referred to him as a "prince" and "knight." In 1992, at an exhibition of the work of Croatian sculptor Kruno Bošnjak entitled "People for All Croatian Time," seven bronze busts of prominent figures who helped realize "Croatia's thousand-year dream" were on display: Hans-Dietrich Genscher, Helmut Kohl, Margaret Thatcher, Alois Mock, Pope John Paul II, an unknown Croat soldier holding a child, and—of course—Franjo Tudjman. There was often no distinction between Tudjman's personality, *his* party, and *his* nation and people. Indeed, in an interview for *Hrvatski vojnik* in April, 1992, he said that "the program for Croatia's statehood did not simply emerge overnight but is the result of my practical and theoretical experience, historical thinking, and theological research into the creation of a state, of which the military is one of the primary elements."[57] His speeches are characterized by egocentricity and conceit, littered with phrases like "I knew," "I sent," and "I believed."

I believe the new Croatian state should have more clearly and unambiguously distanced itself from the quisling Second World War Ustasha state, and that it failed to take appropriate and assiduous measures against those groups and individuals who directly associated themselves with and attempted to revive this tragic period in Croatian history. The following example went beyond Croatia's borders: streets in several Croatian cities, including Dubrovnik, Zadar, Knin, Gračac, Benkovac, Udbina, Vinkovci and Korenica, bear the name of Mile Budak, one of the darkest figures of the NDH. When one of the streets in the city of Split, located near Roman emperor Diocletian's palace, was named after him, representatives of Beith Shemesh, Split's associated city from Israel, and the Wiesenthal Center protested. The excuse of the local authorities was that Budak was an important writer before he became a minister in the Ustasha government. The *pravaši* recently staged a march in Vukovar. They carried pictures of the Poglavnik and the black flag of the HOS, their former militia, and made Nazi salutes. The police reaction to the march was tepid at best, and failed to prevent some partisan monuments from being desecrated. On the other hand, a monument to one of the most brutal Ustasha commanders, Jure Francetić, leader of the infamous "Black Legion," was erected on private initiative.

In February, 1992, an extremist Herzegovinian faction led by Mate Boban, whose goal was partitioning the country, seized control of the HDZ in Bosnia-Herzegovina. At first they fought alongside the Muslims

against the Serbs and achieved significant successes. The Bosnian Croats had learned a lesson from the clashes in Croatia the previous year and were better prepared for the Serbs than the Muslims. However, in July, 1993, the Croats announced the creation of "Herceg-Bosna" in Grude. The move was expected to unite the Croats, who were the most dispersed ethnic group in Bosnia-Herzegovina, around a center based in Herzegovina. The first clashes with government forces occurred in October, 1992, and lasted for eighteen months. The Croatian media in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina began a merciless anti-Muslim campaign, and leaders like Boban began considering the emigration of Croats from central Bosnia-Herzegovina to Herceg-Bosna. The situation in Herzegovina was very complicated: in addition to the fighting between ethnic groups, there were clashes between various local Croat factions that were trying to monopolize the lucrative religious tourism business in Medjugorje, which continued to thrive despite the war.

The Croatian army in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the so-called Croat Defense Council *(Hrvatsko vijeće obrane* [HVO]), like the Serbian army, was involved not only in military operations, but the persecution of non-Croats, massacres, brutalities of all kinds, and the destruction of religious and national monuments and symbols of other ethnic groups. Military units were often named after infamous Second World War commanders, and military iconography, symbols, and salutes were borrowed from that period. The Ustasha military slogan "For our home, prepared!"[58] was adopted by the Croat paramilitary unit *Hrvatske oružane snage* (HOS). As in Serbia, a new imagery in the form of comic strips and stories began to emerge *(Superhrvoje).* Cults of "new old" heroes from Croatian history were revived, including the cults of Stepinac, Radić ("a martyr," the "Croat Gandhi"), and even Pavelić. Radić is panegyrized in the following verses written in 1989:

As Stjepan Radić lay dying,
He called his Croatian brothers:
Oh, Croats, my dearest brothers,
Our mother, Croatia, is alive.[59]

A personality cult similar to Karadžić's developed around Mate Boban, the president of Herceg-Bosnia, the HVO, and the Bosnian HDZ. Following another unexpected turnaround in Croatian policy—the normalization of relations with the Bosniaks in March, 1994—Krešimir Zubak, a moderate politician, replaced Boban, who died as a political pensioner on

July 7, 1997. The obituaries and condolences on this occasion make interesting reading. This "Croatian knight" was "our light and inspiration on the path to the goal"; he was "the hope"; "the teacher"; "the symbol of resistance and victory"; "the founder and leader of the Croat national entity in Herceg-Bosna"; "the lightning rod that absorbed the destructive energy of anti-Croat assaults"; the "herald and deliverer of the passion for freedom that had been suppressed for centuries"; "the man who liberated us from fear and gave us the right to fight"; "the usherer in of the new age"; "the great uniter of our aspirations and truths"; "our fellow combatant"; "the right man for hard times"; "the resolute and true defender of the right of the Croat nation to Bosnia-Herzegovina and freedom"; "the torchbearer"; "the important son of the Croatian nation"; and "the helm of the national argosy of freedom."

He had far more than the confidence of the people ("The stars shone on his efforts to create Croatian statehood on this soil"), and more than the people mourned for him ("When people like Mate Boban die, all things on Earth weep"). Under his leadership they "defended their hearths against Serb, then Muslim aggression." His life's work is "an eternal inspiration for the perseverance and future of the Croat nation"; "his strength, ideas, and work are our eternal guide"; "he fought, lived, and suffered for the eternal ideals of Croatian freedom." He was buried on "holy Croatian soil." His death is overpowered by his "living soul," for "even in death you assemble and unite all who have Croatia at heart." Finally, there were the pledges of loyalty: people pledged to continue along his "path in the battle for the freedom and independence of the entire Croat nation"; "his departure did not take away his ideals because his followers remain behind."

BOSNIAKS: IN THE VISE AGAIN

The Bosnian Muslim tragedy in the last war lies in the fact that they were too Muslim for the West and not Muslim enough for the Islamic world. Once again caught between the vise of nationalist interests, the Bosniaks strengthened their own Bosniak nationalism "by giving greater emphasis to the most distinctive thing about it, its religious component" on one hand, while emphasizing "that they stood for the preservation of Bosnia's unique character as a multi-national, multi-religious republic" on the other.[60] In general, Bosniaks had no political goals such as "one nation in one state" like the extremists among their adversaries, the Serbs and Croats.[61] Because of an incorrect political evaluation by the leadership,

its naïve optimism in respect to reaching an agreement with the Serbs and the Croats, the sanctimonious policy of the superpowers, and the embargo on arms sales to the Balkans, the Bosniaks were isolated and helpless. They were also disappointed by the response and assistance of the Muslim states, which they found insufficient.

However, the support of the Muslim world to the war efforts of the Bosniak side was many-sided. Despite the embargo, Iran and other Muslim states sent arms and military advisers to the Bosniaks. Saudi Arabia and other Persian Gulf states provided financial aid. Finally, nongovernmental organizations and institutions offered everything from humanitarian help to recruiting Muslim volunteers for the fighting in Bosnia.[62]

Radovan Karadžic said that forcing Serbs and non-Serbs to live together would be like doing the same to "cats and dogs" and added that "Bosnia had never existed and it never will exist." In order to prove this, historical recollection had to be erased first. So, the initial targets of Serb (and later other) militant nationalists were historical, cultural, and religious monuments and signs and symbols of coexistence, collective memory, and the hundreds of years of peaceful coexistence of different ethnic groups, religions, and cultures. The first buildings in Sarajevo to be destroyed were the National Library, the Oriental Institute, and the National Museum. Croat forces in Mostar destroyed the famous Mostar bridge. Furthermore, two of the Bosnian towns that were the most ethnically mixed before the war—Sarajevo and Mostar—were among those that suffered the most. In addition to the liquidation of the Muslim elite, the first targets of Serb aggression in Bosnia-Herzegovina were Muslim clergymen: fifty-four had been killed by mid-June, 1992. According to the president of the Bosnian Ilmija, Halil Mehtić, 107 (10.7 percent) of them were killed, including seventy-seven active imams, and about two hundred were interned in Serbian and Croatian camps for prisoners.[63]

At the founding session of the Bosniak Assembly *(Bošnjački sabor)* in late September, 1993, the name of the Bosnian Muslim nation was changed in what Alija Isaković referred to as a "restoration of the name" of the nation: they became the "Bosniak nation," the "Bosniaks" *(Bošnjaci)*. However, internal discord and even conflicts also appeared on the Bosniak side. In the summer of 1991, Zulfikarpašić's MBO Party, hoping to prevent bloodshed, signed the so-called Serbian-Muslim historic agreement with Karadžić's SDS. According to the agreement's terms, Bosnia's territorial integrity would be preserved within the frame of the reduced Yugoslavia. However, the SDA rejected this initiative. In 1994, fighting broke out between government forces and Muslim supporters of Fikret Abdić, the charismatic leader of the "Autonomous Province" or "Repub-

lic of Western Bosnia," which had been established in September, 1993.[65] The rebels in Cazin Province were supported by Croatia and the Serb republics in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina. The rebels even fought with Serbs against government forces. Abdić, affectionately known as "Babo," also developed a personality cult. Kržišnik-Bukić refers to him as "possibly the last feudal lord in Europe."[66] Abdić's followers remained fanatically loyal to their leader even after their defeat at the hands of government forces and their mass exodus in August, 1995.

National and religious homogenization was least pronounced in areas under government control. In February, 1993, there were eight Bosniaks, six Serbs, and five Croats in the *Muslim* government (as the Western and Croatian and Serbian nationalist media insisted on calling it). There were also many Serb and Croat soldiers in the government's army (one-third of the defenders of Sarajevo were Serb, including the second in command), although Muslim influence (including the arrival of mujahideen from Islamic countries and creation of exclusively Muslim military units) and the Bosniaks' prevalence gradually began to increase until they nearly monopolized the power. A number of atrocities, ethnic cleansing, and the destruction of churches and monuments committed by the Bosnian army were recorded. However, according to Bougarel, "for strategic and ideological reasons at the same time," they did not act in the systematic manner of Serbian and Croatian forces.[66] The religious aspects of these events on all sides—Serbian, Croatian, and Bosniak—will be discussed in the following pages.

"THAT PART OF THE WORLD" IN THE EYES OF THE WEST

The archaic misunderstanding and generalization that has characterized the West's view of dramatic events in "that part of the world" since the Middle Ages resurfaced during the Bosnian war. These views varied widely and changed over time. They can generally be categorized in two interrelated types. First are those that were based on the ambiguous attitude of the West toward Bosnia-Herzegovina as an independent state: from initial support for its independence and diplomatic recognition of its statehood that was expected to guarantee the integrity of its borders, to thwarting any form of effective military defense by the legally constituted government by banning the sale of arms; from its indifference to the suffering of the population, justified by excuses of equitable equidistance, to a belated and only partially successful threat of military intervention, which resulted in, at best, the limited use of force.

Western diplomats sought to conceal and justify their passivity with

the pretext that Bosnia-Herzegovina is an incurable and chaotic part of the world, a land of savage warriors. Centuries-old myths abound about the Balkan lust for blood, which is occasionally interrupted by brief periods of calm followed by even bloodier wars. This was supposed to create the illusion that nothing could be done to solve the situation. British prime minister John Major spoke of the "ancient hatreds that reappeared." President Bill Clinton was convinced that "their hatreds were five hundred years old," while Sen. John Warren said he believed "these people have fought each other for not hundreds of years, but thousands of years for religious, ethnic, cultural differences." Equally ignorant and rooted in the past were statements by Rep. William Goodling of Pennsylvania, who announced that it "all began in the fourth-century split of the Roman Empire," and British politician Sir Crispin Tickell, who claimed that the hatreds among Yugoslav peoples extend back "thousands of years."[67]

The second characteristic of the view of Western media and diplomats regarding the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina was that they uncritically accepted and reproduced previously discussed mainly Serb ideological myths. The most common of these was the allegation that all parties involved in the war were equally to blame for the situation. This moral equalizing was originally Milošević's position. He repeated this allegation several times and—as many examples show—succeeded in convincing the West of its veracity. European Union negotiators Lord Peter Carrington and Carl Bildt insisted that "everybody is to blame" for the events in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Lord D. Owen was sure that "it's become more apparent that there's civil war."[68] Secretary of State Warren Christopher told the U.S. Congress in June, 1993, the "responsibility for the crimes is shared by all three sides."

The Serb army's open aggression—and to a lesser extent the Croat army's—against an independent, internationally recognized state was officially treated as an internal Bosnian affair when the UN secretary-general, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, accepted Milošević's claim that Bosnian Serb forces were totally independent of Belgrade. James Hogue, editor of *Foreign Affairs,* then wrote that the fighting was a "civil war" in which no side was "impartial." British foreign secretary Douglas Hurd called the conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina a civil war from the very beginning.[69] Proof of the sheer ignorance regarding the situation abounds. In April, 1995, for example, peace negotiator Thorwald Stoltenberg still maintained that the Muslims were descended from the Serbs, and the media were fond of referring to the Sarajevo government as the "Muslim government."

Some of the following statements speak for themselves. One of the

commanders of UN peacekeeping forces in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Lt. Gen. Michael Rose, ostracized the defenders of the surrounded and "protected" enclave of Goražde for "not fighting courageously enough." A second commander, Canadian general Mackenzie, stated that the Muslims were killing their own civilians in order to gain the sympathy of the international public. Len Hamilton, the chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, cynically noted that "unfortunately, the Bosnians do not have oil on their land, like Kuwait."

The response of the Orthodox world—Serbia's "traditional" allies (especially Russia, Ukraine, and Greece)—to the war was diverse, ranging from political support for the regimes in Belgrade, Knin, and Pale to the participation of enthusiastic volunteers and trained mercenaries in Serb military units; from supporting to breaching UN Security Council resolutions such as sanctions against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (fuel and supplies were smuggled into Serbia by way of the Danube River); from participation in the UN peacekeeping mission to favoring Serb forces (as was the case with Russian colonel Viktor Loginov, who said there was a conspiracy by the Vatican and others against Orthodoxy and used his position to smuggle fuel and supplies to Serb forces);[70] from opposing Western military intervention in Bosnia-Herzegovina to bowing to the will of the international community under U.S. leadership with the signing of a peace treaty in 1995. On the other hand, uncritical support in favor of Croats and Bosniaks appeared in some Western media, neglecting clear evidence of violence against non-Croats and non-Bosniaks, as well as cases of discrimination and persecution.

WARTIME NEWSPEAK

An obsessive paranoia of being surrounded by enemies triumphed. As Eric Hobsbawm wrote, "there is no more effective way of bonding together the disparate sections of restless peoples than to unite them against outsiders."[71] The Bosnian war introduced a whole range of stigmatic labels for entire nations ("Halt, pashas and Ustasha!").[72] Derisive epithets and pejorative colloquial and historical connotations were used in reference to the enemy, including Chetniks, Ustasha, Janissaries, Turks, *balije* and their brothers in fez, the mujahideen, green berets, and Jihad warriors. They would insult each other with names such as foreign mercenaries, Muslim (or Chetnik or Ustasha) hordes or butchers, criminals, fanatics, extremists, and killers of different sorts. The rhetoric of self-victimization—"nation of martyrs"—was changed as circumstances

required. Karadžić claimed that the Serbs were a "nation of warriors," and Plavšić emphasized "traditional Serb pride" on several occasions. Soldiers and military units perceived of and called themselves Croatian knights, dukes, Hajduks, and new Obilićes. Units were given the names of ferocious beasts (dragons, tigers, eagles, and wolves) or of historic personalities, such as the Karadjordje unit. Belgrade linguist Ranko Bugarski speaks of the "language of war," in which even the most absurd neologisms are acceptable, as in "Yugounitarist-serbochetnik-bandit groups" or "Vatican-Kominterna conspiracies." In this new rhetoric, "barehanded defenders" merely defend their "eternal firesides" or their "graveyards and churches," or at times "ardently retaliate or liberate."[73] Linguistic archaisms also returned.

The prevalent obsession was that of distinguishing the "true and patriotic" members of the community from the "traitors, nonnational oriented, and uprooted." Opponents to the new authorities in Croatia were labeled as remnants of the previous regime, careerists, social climbers, sycophants, robbers, hypocrites, "Yugobolsheviks," "cryptocommunists," "torpid Yugonostalgics," "fetid Yugoslav offal," informants, *udbaši* (members of the former Yugoslav secret police UDBa), spies for international Bolshevism, false prophets, "Hejsloveni" (from the first words of the Yugoslav anthem, "Hej, Sloveni"), and "Chetnik scum." The word *miraculous* was used frequently, especially in reference to military victories and weapons (Karadžić warned that the Serbs would use a "miraculous weapon" if the West launched air strikes against their positions, and sometimes the "glory of Serbian weapons" was exposed), independence (perceived as a miracle or the "fulfillment of a thousand-year dream") or self-preservation, and economic success (the *superdinar).* Different sides shared similar jargon: "Gather Serbs/Croats together!" (*Srbi/Hrvati na okup!),* "holy or inviolable Serb/Croat borders," "the glorious medieval Serb/Croat/Bosnian state," or "I hate him like a Serb/Croat," "spirit of Branković/Obilić," "Croatian/Serbian Golgotha," and "largest Serbian/Croatian/Bosniak town under the ground" (respectively, Jasenovac, Vukovar, Srebrenica).

Serbian and Croatian literary language and everyday vocabulary were cleansed of Turkish and Arabic derivatives or derivatives from the language of the "enemy." The choice of alphabet, Cyrillic or Latin, became an important issue. For example, Serb textbooks and passports were printed only in the Cyrillic alphabet in the two *western* Serbian states. The same was true of the *ekavski* and *ijekavski* dialects. Journalists in the RS, a traditionally *ijekavski* region, suddenly began speaking in the "Serb" *ekavski* dialect. Both the RSK and RS introduced textbooks from

Serbia in the *ekavski* dialect. In some places, Serb names replaced Bosnian names, which are "associated with evil and where the Serb tradition had been wiped out," to paraphrase Radoslav Unković. Bosanska Krupa was renamed Krupa na Uni, Bosanski Novi became Novi Grad, and Bosanska Dubica became Kozarska Dubica. The prefixes "Bosanski" and "Bosanska" were removed from the names of Bosanski Brod, Bosanska Gradiška, Bosansko Grahovo, Bosanski Petrovac, Bosanski Šamac and Bosanska Kostajnica. Other places were simply renamed: Donji Vakuf (Srbobran), Skender-Vakuf (Kneževo) and Foča (Srbinje).[74] Republika Srpska did indeed become "the most Serb of all Serb lands," as Biljana Plavšić predicted. A similar purge of the prefix "Serbian" *(Srpski/Srpska)* took place in many localities on Croatian territory that had once been settled by Serbs.

BRUTALITIES IN THE NAME OF RELIGION

The collapse of socialist and Yugoslav myths opened room for the deprivatization of religion and various religio-nationalist mythical constructs that were embedded in the minds of the people. The most important were those of the "chosen" people; the suitability of the dominant religion/church for the nation; the mythologizing of important religio-national figures from the past and present; the demonization of the enemy church/nation; the condemnation of the preceding period of history; and visions of the future infused with religious integrism.[75] The following is a discussion of the processes as well as individual examples of them on all three warring sides.

Pope John Paul II in his public appearances in Rome and Prague in 1990 said "God won in the East." Indeed, in the atmosphere of religious triumphalism, churches emerged—as their religious dignitaries were fond of calling it—from the catacombs of the "Socialist antiecclesiastic regime" and returned not only to the social scene but the political scene as well.[76] A number of religious leaders gave their backing to certain political options and even to specific political parties, sacralized their goals, demonized the opponents of the church (hence also of the country and nation), condemned the laity of the social and political life, which was allegedly opposed to the state and majority nation, and even supported military endeavors. Church organizations relied on the fact that the post-Socialist "thaw" would reinstate the former religious structure. On the other hand, politicians and military commanders were well aware of the power of their people's religious identity and exploited it to their own ends.

Sociologist of religion Srdjan Vrcan notes that the result of desecularizing society was the radical delaicizing of politics, which was accompanied with the process of ethnifying the political and politicizing the ethnic. The return of religious and nationalist militants and integrationists to the social and political quotidian brought with it interreligious tensions and intolerance, and the exclusion of the considerable atheistic population within each nation. The three main religious hierarchies in Bosnia-Herzegovina were sending "open or veiled appeals to religious people of their denomination to support the respective party" of their nation (that is, to SDS, HDZ, and SDA), and vice-versa: the strongest political parties of the Bosnian Serbs and Croats, the SDS and HDZ, tried to exploit the Orthodox and Roman Catholic churches as a means of garnering support and legitimacy.[77] Program direction, not to mention rallies, symbols (green color, crescent, Qur'anic inscriptions), and the rhetoric of SDA leaders were also strongly influenced by Islam and the Bosnian Muslim heritage (for example, images of Mujo Hrnjica, an epic hero of the seventeenth century).

The three main religions and ecclesiastic organizations were voluntarily involved in the war, but in different ways and to different degrees. For Michael Sells, what was going on was a "religious genocide in several senses: the people destroyed were chosen on the basis of their religious identity; those carrying out the killings acted with the blessing and support of Christian church leaders; the violence was grounded in a religious mythology that characterized the targeted people as race traitors and the extermination of them as a sacred act; and the perpetrators of the violence were protected by the policy makers of a Western world that is culturally dominated by Christianity."[78]

If our faith is "the only right and righteous," then the enemy's (or of religious minorities within their own nations) is scorned as being false, foreign, heretical, superstitious, and even sacrilegious.[79] According to this logic of symbolic diades, the elimination of other faiths—religious and ethnic cleansing—became a religious duty; killing is no longer considered "homicide," but "malicide," the liquidation of evil. In an atmosphere of religious alarmism, fear of the dangers posed by other religious communities and atheists becomes diffused. A common practice was the justification or minimization of war crimes committed by one's own side or their interpretation as excesses, and the exposure or even invention of those committed by the enemy.

The military sees victory as complete when it is accompanied by symbolic triumph over the enemy. The buildings that were most often systematically destroyed throughout the wars in Croatia and Bosnia-

Herzegovina—either in military operations or following conquest—were religious objects: mosques, churches, chapels, and monasteries. According to some estimates, between one thousand and fifteen hundred mosques, about two-fifths of all, were destroyed. The most beautiful of them were the Aladža in Foča and the Ferhadija in Banja Luka. Some sources state that 450 Roman Catholic and 154 Orthodox churches were also destroyed during the first two and one-half years of fighting. According to Serbian data, 340 Orthodox churches and monasteries were destroyed in the wars in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina.[80] As has been the case throughout history, the conquerors' religious symbols were built over the ruins of the sanctuaries of the vanquished. Territory must be symbolically appropriated and the sign of victory "engraved in stone." First to raze, first to erect: it is also very symptomatic that sacral buildings were among the first objects to be restored or rebuilt after the war.[81]

Religious nationalists on all three sides often condemned non-integrist political parties and individuals as atheistic, nihilistic, antinational, foreign, modernist, pro-Western, liberal, and left-oriented. Similarly, the Socialist regime was perceived as being responsible for the outbreak of hatred and violence because of its "desertion" of the Bible/Qur'an and because of its "immorality" and "Godless, soulless, secularist, and anti-Serb/Croat/Muslim" orientation.[82] The false and dangerous logic that there exists only one type of conflict, namely, between faith and nihilism, and that extra ecclesiam nulla salus, reappeared.

Next, the sites of dramatic historic and religious events became the destinations and sites of religio-national pilgrimages and rituals: Medjugorje for the Croats, Ajvatovica for the Bosniaks,[83] and the tombs of Ustasha victims for the Serbs. Religious feasts were turned into national holidays—Easter, Assumption, Christmas, St. Vitus's Day, the Bajram, commemoration of the Battle of Badr, and "the night of the Might"[84]—and celebrated in public buildings.

In Bosnia-Herzegovina, the result of such collective politics and activities on a largely secularized population soon became evident. Public opinion polls in Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1988 showed that only 55.8 percent of Croats, 37.3 percent of Muslims, 18.6 percent of Serbs and 2.3 percent of Yugoslavs declared themselves to be believers. The situation completely changed a decade later: 89.5 percent of Croats and 78.3 percent of Bosniaks in the Bosnian Federation declared themselves to be "religious persons." Research in the Doboj region in 2000 showed that 88 percent of Croats, 84.8 percent of Bosniaks, 81.6 percent of Serbs and 16.7 percent of those nationally undefined declared themselves "very religious" or "medium religious."[85]

The wars in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia were, of course, not religious, but the religious factor was influential. In short, religion and ancient myths gradually and intentionally became an important means of national and political mobilization for the three Bosnian national communities, as has been demonstrated in previous chapters. The foreign media, copying the proregime media, soon adopted the habit of referring to the conflicts as interreligious. This helps us understand Spanish diplomat Carlos Westendorph's harsh statement for the *New York Times* in April, 1998, when he said the churches were partly responsible for the war.

THE THREE-FINGER SALUTE: MILITANT SERBIAN RELIGIO-NATIONAL MYTHOLOGY

First, a few words about the renaissance of Serb religious nationalism. The second Yugoslavia's final years were characterized by an Orthodox renaissance and growing nationalism in the Serb community. The views the Serbian Orthodox Church published "in its media were in accord with many of those of [the Serbian] Academy."[86] And, of course, with the new direction in Serbian politics. When Miloševič assumed power he broadened and deepened cooperation and improved relations with the Orthodox Church and held meetings with its highest representatives. Its role in establishing Serb national identity was acknowledged, a program for the construction of churches was initiated, the Orthodox press was released into public circulation, and religious feast days became public holidays. During the Croatian and Bosnian wars, the church acted like a background for—and at the same time like the prolongation of—Serb nationalism, supporting it in an ancient manner characteristic to nationalist clericalism and the politicization of religion and the religionization of politics.[87]

Patriarch German noted at that time "the current changes in the attitude of the Serbian leadership to the Serb Church and to its people marks the beginning of cooperation to the benefit of all." Also, the "Proposal for the Serb Ecclesiastic and National Program," published in a 1989 edition of the *Glas Crkve (Voice of the Church),* contained a number of proposals for improving state-church relations, including the observation: "There is no strong state without a strong Church." The aging and ailing German, who died in August, 1991, had been patriarch since 1958. He was replaced in 1990 by Pavle Stojčević. Many Orthodox worshippers consider Pavle, a former monk and bishop of the Raška-Prizren diocese, "a living saint."[88]

According to Paul Mojzes, an American expert on East European religious dynamics, the leadership of the Serbian Orthodox Church seem to have played "the most harmful role as compared to the other two major religious communities."[89] Their first step was to reject the "unlawful AVNOJ borders" in Yugoslavia (or "an AVNOJ graveyard"). Parts of Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina with a Serbian majority were known simply as the "Serbian Western territories." The church's *sabor* then officially sanctioned an "exclusively defensive war of liberation that has been forced on them" and rejected the Vance-Owen plan. Patriarch Pavle visited Knin, Pale, and even the troops laying siege to Goražde. The church's apparent antimodernist stance was reflected in statements made by individual religious dignitaries, including Amfilohije Radović, the nationalist and controversial Montenegrin metropolite (since 1990), and Bishop Atanasije Jevtić. The church also opposed Pope John Paul II's visit to Belgrade in September, 1994.

A number of senior priests started causing alarm and spreading extremist paranoia, claiming that fiendish forces were conspiring against Orthodoxy. They rejected Westernism, European "atheism, anarchism, and nihilism," and denied the existence of Serb concentration camps. In 1992, Jeftić declared that "militant Islam is using the conflicts to establish a foothold in the Balkans." Speaking about the Serbs, against whom the entire world had apparently turned, Orthodox theologian Božidar Mijač stated that it is "possible that a certain nation, at a specific point in history, becomes the carrier of truth and Divine justice against a multitude of the unrighteous attacking the nation." For the Serbs, Kosovo was "not only a physical domicile but also a metaphysical creation," because it "includes heaven and earth." Serbs bound to Kosovo are "becoming the nation of God, Christ's New Testament nation, heavenly Serbia, part of the new chosen nation."[90] But not only did "God protect the Serbs"—he actually *is* a Serb in a song of turbo-folk star Baja-Mali Knińđa, who sings, "God is a Serb, so do not be afraid you Serb."[91]

The popular strategy of victimhood, which was often applied by all religious groups when they found themselves in a difficult situation and which served as a basis of their mobilization, was revived. In 1992, Bishop Amfilohije Radović wrote a book that rekindled the tales about the "martyrdom of the Serb nation," whose historical fate it is to "suffer" and to be "continually assaulted and butchered"—as in this instance—by others. During a funeral for Serb victims in eastern Bosnia in March, 1993, one local religious dignitary reportedly said: "Not the standards of God but the standards of the devil—these are the criteria that the international public applies to the Orthodox Serbs today."[92] In June, 1998, a

number of Orthodox martyrs, Serb clerics killed by the Ustasha regime, attained sainthood, including Zagreb metropolite Dositej Vasić, Bishops Petar Zimonjić, Sava Trljajić, and Platon Jovanović, and Fathers Branko Dobrosavljević and Đorđe Bogić.

Oaths made in front of newly opened graves became the guarantee for the "right" path forward. An example of this happened in June, 1996, when a procession carrying the mortal remains of Saint Vasilij (Saint Basil), led by Patriarch Pavle and Bishops Amfilohije and Atanasije, passed through the "Serb" part of Herzegovina. The Bosnian Serb newspaper described the event passionately: "Birds, flowers and animals rejoiced as the procession passed them. We all noticed the delight of the horse following the column of vehicles, as if to display how very happy it was to live to see the day when Herzegovina's greatest Serbian son returned to his biblical homeland." According to Bishop Atanasije, a "divine fragrance" emanated from the saint's bones. Of course, the lesson learned from all this came when Atanasije urged those present to make a pledge to Saint Vasilij to vanquish the enemy and fight to the last man.

An editorial in *Pravoslavje* served as a source of religio-nationalist incitement and supported extremists in other ways as well. It enthusiastically celebrated Serb victories in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1991–92.[93] At the beginning of the war, it stated that the Bosnian Serbs did not want to live in a *jamahiriyah* like the one in Libya, nor as slaves under the authority of the mujahideen.[94] A similar statement was made by D. Ćosić, who added that there was a "near-metaphysical fear" among the Bosnian Serbs that "two-fifths of them would have to live under Muslim domination." Patriarch Pavle openly referred to the Republic of Croatia as the "new Independent State of Croatia," and justified the fighting as a "righteous" Serb war.[95] Some new religious-national slogans also emerged, including "All the way to Serb Banja Luka with three raised fingers of one hand."

The myth of the defensive wall portrays the Serbs and Montenegrins in two ways: as the shield of Christian Europe against the advance of Islam, and as the protectors of the Orthodox world from Western and Vatican appetites. Orthodox "religious apprehension" was not caused only by Muslims and Catholics, but by Western religious missionaries as well. Bishop Atanasije condemned the work of the Adventist sect in eastern Herzegovina because he considered it a "well-known Western aggressive, extremely Protestant, fanaticized and anti-Orthodox and anti-Christian sect."[96]

A number of senior Orthodox dignitaries praised Serb nationalist leaders, ostensibly because they were a fine example of "true St. Sava Serbs."

Metropolite Nikolaj Mrđa of Dabar-Bosnia, who spent the duration of the war on the Serb side, stated that the Serbs, under the leadership of Karadžić and Mladić, were "following the thorny path of Jesus Christ." In an encouraging speech to a Serbian unit, he said: "we have always won the wars. God will not abandon us this time either." The Greek Orthodox Church declared Karadžić "one of the most prominent sons of our Lord Jesus Christ working for peace" and decorated him with the nine-hundred-year-old Knights' Order of the First Rank of Saint Dionysius of Xanthe. Ecumenical patriarch Bartholomew declared, "the Serbian people have been chosen by God to protect the western frontiers of Orthodoxy."[97] Such strong support helps us understand the position of the Serbian Orthodox Church's Episcopal Conference when it condemned the "partiality" of the International War Crimes Tribunal in The Hague.

Another example of the church's blatant support for Serb extremists and war crimes in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina is the relationship between a number of senior dignitaries and the international felon and war criminal Željko Ražnatović Arkan. He met with Patriarch Pavle, who justified his actions and presented him with an autographed icon of Saint Nicholas, and with Metropolite Amfilohije. Atanasije Jevtić, the bishop of "Serb Herzegovina of St. Sava," said that Arkan "defends the Serbs." Indeed, Arkan considered himself a favorite of the patriarchate. He stated that his commander was Patriarch Pavle and that "we are fighting for our religion, the Serbian Orthodox Church." Bishop Lukijan blessed his military units, the notorious Tigers. According to some sources, the church was helping him with "organizing, financing, and arming his militia."[98] Bishop Vasilij personally traveled from his diocese (Tuzla-Zvornik) to Belgrade to attend Arkan's wedding in February, 1995. Incidentally, the bridegroom's chest was festooned with a large and magnificent cross.[99] However, Arkan's criminal activity seems to have gone too far: RS authorities turned against his units because of the theft, violence, and arrogance they directed against the Serb people.

The more militant clerics maintained "close and supportive ties to Bosnian Serb President Karadžić and the leadership of the Republika Srpska." The synod's public statements emphasized that the Serb nation and church were once again threatened, as they had been during the Second World War and by the Ottoman Empire, and that the Serbs were merely protecting what was theirs. Myths about Orthodoxy being the "spiritual refuge of the Serbs" began to reemerge, as did old slogans about the "sacred Serbs," the "heavenly Serbs," about how "God protects the Serbs," that the Serbs are "bearers of the truth and Divine justice," and that "there can be no Serbianism without Orthodox Christianity."[100] Bishop

Artemije repeated the ancient belief that the church is the "mother of the nation." *Vox populi* becomes *Vox Dei,* and the will of the nation—their nation—is portrayed as the will of God. It would seem that anti-clericalism—an important characteristic of modern society—bypassed the Serbs at that moment.

Other clergymen talked about traitors to the religion and allowed soldiers to decorate their uniforms with Christian iconography. They blessed military criminals, spread and justified ancient stereotypes about Muslims and Croats, condemned those who dared protest against the persecution of Muslims, exposed the Serb (or—as circumstances required—Turkish) origin of the Bosniaks, and denied indisputable evidence of Serb crimes, persecution, and concentration camps. There are even reports of forced conversions of Muslims to Orthodoxy: group baptisms took place, for example, in Bijeljina.[101] A number of Orthodox priests took up arms, including Nikodin Čavić, who was to be found "wherever Serbs and Serb nationhood were threatened," and who condemned the religious fanaticism and atrocities of his Muslim adversaries. In September, 1993, Metropolite Nikolaj publicly declared his opposition to mixed marriages.[102]

The nationalist part of the church supported Milošević's expansionist Greater Serbia policy, although it never fully trusted him because of his Communist background. It did, however, find him to be a suitable partner: Patriarch Pavle visited him several times during the war. This evident support began to falter in the first half of 1992. Senior Orthodox clerics began condemning Belgrade's "leftist regime," claiming that the third Yugoslavia apparently was also prejudiced toward the Serbs, and praised those from Knin and Pale. They claimed that the hardships faced by the entire Serb nation originated from the fact that the Milošević regime had renounced Saint Sava's Orthodoxy, that the government was not working with the church, and that its functionaries never made the sign of the cross, consecrated water, or celebrated baptismal feasts.

Patriarch Pavle and Bishop Amfilohije "openly came out in support of the Bosnian Serb leadership's rejection of the Vance-Owen Plan."[103] When Serbia began to feel the weight of international sanctions, which forced Milošević to abandon his expansionist plans, and especially after the Dayton Peace Agreement (DPA) in November, 1995, the church intensified its condemnation of Milošević and his regime as traitors to Serbs living in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina. The DPA allegedly demanded the "surrender" of the Republika Srpska, and that "Mother" Serbia renounce its "daughter" and behave like a "stepmother." In December, 1995, the church synod defected to the side of Bosnian Serb leader Karadžić and

Serb radical Šešelj, who remained loyal to the policy of uniting all Serbs in one country, and emphasized the "Piedmont role of Pale in uniting all Serbs."

However, there was a split at the very top of the church hierarchy. Although Patriarch Pavle initially supported the DPA, a number of bishops (including Amfilohije and Artemije), under the leadership of the militant Herzegovinian bishop Atanasije, rejected the agreement and harshly criticized Pavle. Atanasije went so far as to urge the Serbs not to "capitulate to the world as Milošević has."[104] Patriarch Pavle and the senior church leadership later changed their position and urged the Serbs to resist the "rule of a dismal ideology and a single individual." In his 1995 Christmas letter, Pavle made no attempt to conceal his disappointment with the DPA and its partitioning of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

War criminals and a number of Serb politicians who had severely compromised themselves in the war made similar sanctimonious statements. They often attempted to hide their actions behind a façade of religion. Mirko Jović, one of the most fanatical Serb nationalists and anti-Semites and commander of the "White Eagles," demanded a "Christian, Orthodox Serbia with no mosques or unbelievers."[105] War songs portrayed the clashes as battles for the Orthodox cause. The following are two good examples:

The Serbian army, that is ourselves
All believers in God.

And:

We have lions' hearts,
We defend Orthodoxy.[106]

Karadžić issued a messianic statement in which he declared that the Serbs were the avant-garde of Orthodoxy and that the Slavs were protecting Europe from the "advance of Islam on the West," that is, from the creation of an "Islamic fundamentalist state in Europe." He described himself as the defender "of the Serb tribe and our Church." In May, 1993, he sent a letter to Patriarch Pavle thanking him for his "advice and support" in the Bosnian Serbs' "just battle." According to Karadžić, the church is the "only spiritual force capable of uniting the Serb nation, regardless of borders." The Orthodox magazine *Svetigora* quotes him as saying that the former Communist authorities were discriminating against the Serbs "while elsewhere the national and religious programs of the

Roman Catholic Church and Islam were being promoted," and "that God probably brought us freedom because he taught us what to do."[107]

Karadžić's position regarding the church is best illustrated in the following statements: "I have profited very much from my firm connections with the Church"; "Not a single important decision was made without the Church"; "Our clergy is present in all of our deliberations and decisions"; and "our deaths, suffering, and endurance we accept as God's grace." Church dignitaries made similar statements. According to Bishop Nikolaj, the war "Orthodoxizes" Serbian soldiers in Bosnia, and "General Mladić accepts all the suggestions of the Metropolitan."[108]

On the other hand, many Orthodox clergymen and believers refused to be engulfed by nationalist euphoria. They realized that it was harmful, not advantageous, to the Serb nation—Orthodox Church organizations in Dalmatia, Gornji Karlovac, Slavonia, and Bihać-Petrovac were already experiencing its negative effects. But the condemnations of violence and persecution (for which "godlessness" and even the "devil" were to blame) were too general. In 1992, Orthodox leaders in Istanbul declared, "the leaders of the Roman Catholic Church and all of us must display a particular attentiveness, pastoral duty, and Divine wisdom in order to prevent the exploitation of religious sentiments for political or nationalist ends." Other Orthodox clergymen were more concrete. Bishop Hrizostom in northeastern Bosnia raised his voice against the Bosnian Serb nationalist campaign, rejected the appeal by the Pale regime urging the withdrawal of all Serbs still outside the RS's borders, and sharply criticized its leadership. Others—like Ignatije Midić and Prof. Vladeta Jerotić of the Belgrade Theological Faculty—rejected war as a means of achieving "higher objectives."[109]

Many of those who ignited international and interreligious hatred were fully aware of the consequences of their actions only during the war and attempted to distance themselves from them. The defeat of the Serbs and their withdrawal from western Slavonia in May, 1995, was followed by "retaliatory action" in which extremists torched Catholic churches in Banja Luka in addition to expelling several thousand Muslims and Croats. Patriarch Pavle condemned such persecution, as well as the killing of non-Serbs in Banja Luka. In the winter of 1993, Dobrica Ćosić and Vuk Drašković (the tendentious writings of the latter in the 1980s can be treated as one of the sources for the anti-Muslim and nationalistic climate) condemned the Serb crimes in Trebinje and Gacko, inviting harsh criticism from Bishop Atanasije.[110] The Serbian Orthodox Church's nationalist policy the was strongly condemned by the World Council of

Churches (WCC), of which the Serbian Orthodox Church is a member, and proposed its expulsion from the organization.

However, even such open support by the church for Serb nationalist aspirations failed to satisfy a number of the most extreme circles (for example, Chetnik leader Đujić, residing in the United States). They ostracized Patriarch Pavle for not consecrating Serb weapons and victories, for not taking a stronger position, for not asking for the assistance of "brotherly Orthodox churches," and for making no effort to create an alliance of Orthodox states, which the Serbian regime, because of its atheistic orientation, was incapable of accomplishing.[111]

This section can be summarized by Vrcan's classification of the most important religio-national mythical constructs of Serb Orthodoxy: that Orthodoxy is the essence of the Serb nation; that the church must always be linked to and in harmony with the Serbian state (the "state church"); that the Serbs are inclined toward spiritual values, such as the hallowed Kingdom of God; that they are, because of this, God's chosen nation, suffering and tormented throughout history; that the church is the defender of Orthodoxy from Catholicism and Islam; that Serb Orthodoxy was the main victim of godless Bolshevism; that the Serb nation was the most affected in AVNOJ-Yugoslavia; and the Serbs' latent anti-Western orientation. All these examples show how the Serbian Orthodox Church became "a servant of religious nationalist militancy."[112] At best, it was symptomatically silent and failed to openly condemn the criminals who were involved in ethnic cleansing and destruction in its name.

"GOD AND THE CROATS": THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH IN THE BOSNIA WAR

Despite Cardinal Kuharić's announcement in December, 1990, that the Roman Catholic Church would "guard its autonomy, and respect the autonomy of 'state' authority," and reject "Cæsaro-papism," renewed Croat nationalism accommodated many of the religious characteristics of the Croats, who were probably the least secularized of all nations in the former Yugoslavia. Church or lay religio-national extremists reestablished the link between Croat national and religious identity. An illustrative example can be found in the autumn, 1992, issue of the Catholic publication *Veritas:* "The cross of Christ stands next to the Croatian flag, [and the] Croatian bishop next to the Croatian minister of state. Croatian priests and teachers are together again in the schools. . . . Guardsmen wear rosaries around their necks. . . . The Church is glad for the return of

its people 'from the twofold' slavery: Serbian and Communist."[113] A Croatian march includes the following verses:

May our unified voice be heard,
There is one God for us all.
A Croatian battle is being waged,
Attention, all your criminals![114]

In many ways, the church tried to pursue a path of Roman Catholic integration: demands began to emerge—for the "spiritual revival of the nation," for the necessity of a Roman Catholic identity for the Croats, and for the church's spiritual domination in society. The Croats' rich religious history was emphasized, as was their glagolitic tradition ("proof that they did not release the pen even when they raised the sword") and loyalty to the Vatican. Sister Marija (Ana Petričević), a nun from Split, dedicated one of the poems in her anthology to Franjo Tudjman and admitted in a 1994 interview that she believed him to be "supernatural," that he is the "carrier of all our aspirations, especially our yearning for freedom." At a symposium on spiritual revival in Croatia, Ante Baković, zealous advocate of the policies of Croatia's ruling party, the HDZ, referred to "people without souls" who were "still alive and scheming after the fall of Communism, St. Sava and Yugoslavia," and added: "These weeds must be uprooted from the new Croatia!"[115]

Such speeches support the opinion of Paul Mojzes, who believes that there were close contacts between the leading Croatian political party and the Catholic Church in Croatia at that time. According to him, Cardinal Kuharić (and other Catholic bishops) "massively supported the activities of the HDZ" in the prewar years and thus contributed to interreligious and international tension. Croatian leader Franjo Tudjman admitted in a 1990 interview that the church molded the Croats' national consciousness, and that it was the only organized force in Croatia capable of continually resisting the Socialist regime. He repeated this position two years later when speaking about the need for "spiritual revival" as an essential element for "general national revival." He said one of his successes was the "alliance between Croatian politics and the Croatian Catholic Church, which has played a important historical role in preserving Croat nationhood."[116]

Let us now return to events in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The Bosnian Catholics were divided into three dioceses: Mostar-Duvno, Banja Luka, and the archdiocese of Vrhbosna-Sarajevo. As Petar Anđelović, the superior of the Franciscan province of Bosna Srebrena, admits, the church ini-

tially supported the HDZ, but later reversed its politics and became critical of it.[117] Clergy reacted in different ways to the outbreak and course of the war, and to "cleansing" the occupied territory of members of other ethnic groups or religions. On one hand, the church's most senior representatives—Cardinal Puljić, Provincial Andjelović, Bishop Franjo Komarica of Banja Luka, and Croatia's Cardinal Kuhavić—"have specifically and courageously condemned the crimes of Croat religious nationalists" and supported a nationally and religiously pluralist country.[118] In this respect they operated very independently of the dominant Croat policy of the time: they opposed the partitioning of the country, the exploitation of religion for military ends, and the policies of hardliners from western Herzegovina. Mate Boban's and Gojko Šušak's impetuous reply to Kuharić's accusations in the summer of 1993 warned the church leadership to stay out of matters that did not concern them. There are some opinions that "Boban's counterattack was actually prepared by Herzegovinian Catholic clerics who were pursuing their own differences with the Catholic hierarchy in Zagreb." Franciscan superior Andjelović also criticized Boban's extremist policy.[119]

Cardinal Puljić publicly and unambiguously repeated his demands for a multireligious Bosnia-Herzegovina on several occasions and rejected unofficial appeals by Croat political and military leaders of the divided state to seek refuge in territory under their control.[120] Cardinal Kuharić spoke out against nationalism's "pious egotism," stating in May, 1993, that the collective fate of Bosnia-Herzegovina lay in a congenial coexistence between the Muslims, Serbs, and Croats. He also sent an open letter expressing his views to Bosnia-Herzegovina's Croat leaders. Jozo Zovko, by then the superior of the Franciscan monastery in Široki brijeg (which had come to be known as the "spiritual center of Herzegovina") publicly stated that the fighting in Bosnia was a political conflict and not a religious war.

Similar statements were made by Ratko Perić, the new bishop of Mostar, otherwise known for his nationalist stands. It came as no surprise, then, that the Catholic Church in Bosnia-Herzegovina supported the peace agreement and the federation of the Croats and the Bosniaks in 1994, and condemned the Croat nationalists' violence against Bosniaks in Mostar in February, 1997. Indeed, Pope John Paul II personally spoke about the suffering on all threes sides, especially on the Muslim side. He did not, however, explicitly condemn religious nationalists from the ranks of the Roman Catholic Church.

There were many of these on the Croat side, too. If, on one hand, we can establish that most of the Catholic clergy in Croatia and Bosnia-

Herzegovina maintained a relatively neutral position to the fighting, we must also point out that a number of Catholic clergymen saw matters from a different perspective, which consequently led to action. Some junior Catholic clergymen and Franciscans, especially in western Herzegovina, acted on their own, spreading anti-Muslim hatred and advocating a Greater Croatia: they wanted the "Shrine of the Queen of Peace" (Medjugorje) and Marian ideology to become the focal points of the Croat community and national identity. Their tribalist stance and militant nationalist clericalism was criticized by senior church representatives, who viewed Catholicism from a more universal perspective and according to the principles of the Second Vatican Council (1962–65).

Herzegovinian Franciscan provincial Tomislav Pervan from Mostar accused the Bosnian Muslims of planning to create an "Islamic state"; Franciscan Vinko Mikolić from Bobani compared the Bosnian government to the "Turkish occupiers"; and Rev. Ante Marić from the Mostar vicinity accused the Muslims of waging a "holy war" against the Croats.[121] Popular mythic belief, advocated—among others—also by the mid-nineteenth century Franciscan monk Franjo Jukić, that the Muslims were the descendants of "weak Christians, who accepted Islam in order to save their estates," reappeared. Roman Catholic iconography frequently emblazoned Croat military equipment and uniforms (a rosary winding around a knife, for example), often alongside Ustasha and Nazi symbols. The following are some verses from a song from that period:

The Yugo army has to know:
Croatia will win the war.
All the saints are on our side,
While the damned are all on theirs.

The song was accompanied by a video portraying bearded men wearing Chetnik fur caps as the "damned."[122]

The church's position regarding events in Bosnia-Herzegovina was related to events in Croatia. Mojzes is more direct in his condemnation of the Roman Catholic Church in Croatia than other observers, accusing it of being linked to Croat nationalism and contributing to the outbreak of the war while its bishops "initiated the process of national-religious confrontation." The struggle against the previous regime and the Orthodox Serbs was portrayed "as a war between good and evil, Christianity and communism, culture and barbarity, civilization and primitivism, democracy and dictatorship, love and hatred."[123] In a pastoral letter issued shortly before the multiparty elections in 1990, two bishops from Bosnia-

Herzegovina indirectly, but very clearly, instructed their parishioners to vote for the HDZ. In April of the following year, just before the last Yugoslav population census, they instructed their parishioners to register themselves as Croats and Catholics. Finally, in February, 1992, they urged the very same people to vote for an independent Bosnia-Herzegovina.[124] The pro-HDZ stance of the Catholic Church and its media in Croatia was also criticized by representatives of the Serbian Orthodox Church.

Slogans about a "hallowed Croatia," "God and the Croats," and the "Golgotha of the Croat nation" began to reemerge. The Croatian military's triumphant Operation Tempest in August, 1995, was seen as "testimony that this nation is at certain times touched by God."[125] The war with the Bosniaks rekindled Croatian anti-Muslim sentiments among some extremists.[126] Croatian politicians also made anti-Muslim statements. Tudjman repeatedly referred to the threat of "Islamic fundamentalism" and to the prospect of an "Islamic holy war." His defense minister also spoke of "Islamic fundamentalism."[127]

One of the most vocal admirers of Ante Pavelić and the Ustasha era today is Croat priest Luka Prcela, who caused much commotion in Croatia and abroad in 1997 when he held a requiem mass for Pavelić in the Church of Saint Dominic in Split on the thirty-eighth anniversary of his death.[128] The mass was paid for by the pro-Ustasha "Croatian Liberation Movement." The ceremony was transformed into an enthusiastic political vindication of the war criminal and ended with the Croatian national anthem. Vjekoslav Lasić, a Dominican from Zagreb, is also known for his sympathies for the Ustasha and the NDH. Cardinal Kuharić immediately distanced the Catholic Church in Croatia from Lasić in the statement he made in May, 1997.

The Catholic Church was greatly affected by the last warfare. Its human and material losses were particularly severe in areas under Serb control and during clashes with the Bosniaks. The Catholic population was reduced by half, and the number of killed and tortured priests and monks remains unknown. Auxiliary bishop Pero Sudar of Sarajevo claims that ten clergymen were killed, but other sources place the figure at seven. The Franciscan order in Bosnia-Herzegovina alone suffered the destruction of four monasteries, twenty presbyteries, twenty-five parish churches, and a number of smaller ones. The most difficult situation was in Bishop Franjo Komarica's Banja Luka diocese, where 40 percent of the churches were destroyed and 110,000–120,000 Catholics fled their homes in the first year of the war, leaving only five of the original forty-seven parishes functional. Only 35,000 Catholics were left by December, 1994, and 70 percent of the churches had been destroyed by February,

1995, although there were no military operations in the area. In the end, only 5,000 Catholics remained in the Banja Luka area. The bishop, who stubbornly refused to bow to Serb pressure and leave town, spent eight months under house arrest.[129]

The persistent "Herzegovinian syndrome," that is, the long-lasting conflict between the parish clergy and the Franciscans, intensified, as illustrated by the following event, which took place in Čapljina in October, 1997. A mass was to be conducted there by an unnamed dark-skinned bishop who had enjoyed good relations with the local Medjugorje Franciscans for several years. Bishop Perić of Mostar proscribed the mass, and on the day it was to be held the parishioners found the door to the Church of Saint Francis of Assisi had been walled in. Nevertheless, the "visiting" bishop, referred to only as monsignor, went ahead and conducted the mass with the support of a Franciscan association known as "Peace and Good" (Saint Francis's motto). This was a breach of canonical law, which requires that a visiting bishop seek the assent of the local bishop before conducting a mass. The incident caused strong reactions and debates among the Roman Catholic public.

The church's popularity among Catholics increased when the Vatican became one of the first states to recognize Croatia's and Bosnia's independence. Its popularity was further boosted by the pope's visit to Croatia in September, 1994, and October, 1998. He had been invited to Bosnia-Herzegovina as early as in January, 1993, by President Izetbegović and the Roman Catholic bishops. That visit was planned for September, 1994, but it had to be canceled because of Karadžić's warning that the pontiff might be assassinated by Muslims and the blame laid on the Serbs. In November, 1996, members of the Bosnian presidium invited him to visit Bosnia-Herzegovina in the spring of 1997.

A new head of the Roman Catholic Church in Croatia was appointed in September, 1997. In his farewell speech, Cardinal Kuharić praised the HDZ regime and its relationship with the church. The new archbishop was Josip Bozanić. The first question to emerge was whether the pope had selected him because he was less political than his predecessor. In his first Christmas message, Bozanić made it clear that the church in Croatia was distancing itself from politics by criticizing the Croatian authorities. He talked about the "sins of the [political] structures" and warned against the pauperization of the population, the amassing of wealth by the privileged, and uncontrolled capitalism.

In his Easter address in 1998, he "humbled" the boasts about military, political, and economic success, saying: "It seems to us that the spiritual vacuum is a consequence of aspirations that ascribe religious dimensions

to some worldly phenomena, as well as of irresponsible promises and unwarranted trust." In May, 1998, he emphasized the difference between "political and ecclesiastic Catholicism." The latter, he said, "has been blinded by ideology and, as such, has no place in our Church and religion." Such positions were strongly criticized by progovernment circles and right-wing intellectuals from the Croatian Forum association (under the leadership of lawyer Željko Olujić, a Tudjman sympathizer), who accused Bozanić of "anationality," of "spreading teachings that were pernicious to the Church and the state," and of unfairly criticizing the government. He urged believers to ignore the archbishop's example.[130]

A number of other clergymen were also critical of the exploitation of religious sentiments for nationalist or political ends. In interviews and newspaper articles, Father Luka Vincentić, for example, relentlessly attacked contemporary clericalism and the undemocratic Croatian government. He compared "Tudjman, the nation, and the HDZ" to the myths of the previous regime, namely "Tito, the Working Class, and the Communist Party." Father Tomislav Luka, a member of the Croatian Parliament, became known for advocating Croatian-Muslim cooperation in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Critics of the relationship between religion and politics were particularly strong in Bosnia-Herzegovina because of the iniquitous actions of political and religious extremists in recent years. In statements made to the public in the spring of 1998, Bishop Komarica and Archbishop Puljić cautioned the clergy and the church to avoid party politics. The archbishop mentioned the "false promises" and bad moves made by the authorities during and after the war. In an interview for the *Novi list* in July, 1998, the auxiliary bishop of Sarajevo, Pero Sudar, indirectly criticized the HDZ as the strongest Bosnian Croat party and said that he was not sorry to see it break up. Franciscan Bono Zvonimir Šagi, a renowned theologian, admitted that "the Church is presently [January, 2001] more severe toward the state authorities" because before it was "loaded with 'patriotic blockade,' respected the great idea of creation of the state, and did not expose mistakes in this process."[131] In short, there were signs of a distancing between Great Croatian nationalist policies and the stands and behavior of the majority of Croatian and Bosnian Roman Catholic clergy.

Recent years have witnessed a revival of Stepinac's martyr cult, *fama martyrii.* Cardinal Kuharić held a special mass every February 10, the anniversary of Stepinac's death in 1960. The 1946 sentence was repealed in 1992. The Croats, like the Serbs, exhumed their "religious hero" at a critical period in their history. The ceremony took place on June 21, 1993, and an autopsy was conducted the next day. The findings revealed that

Stepinac had posthumously been desecrated. His "martyr's death" has been emphasized in recent times, although there is no official proof that the Communists poisoned him, then wrenched his heart from his chest and burned it. Nevertheless, some of his mortal remains (relics with his blood, made by Carmelite nuns, for example) have become "our priceless relic."[132] To complete the procedure of his beatification, a miracle allegedly "performed" by Stepinac had to be identified. One was found in the healing of a young disabled girl from Dubrovnik. The healing was ostensibly related to her pilgrimage to his tomb in the Zagreb Cathedral.

Pope John Paul II beatified Stepinac on October 3, 1998, in—what is now referred to as the national Marian center, Marija Bistrica. According to Cardinal Bozanić, Stepinac's beatification was an "acknowledgment of the Croat nation." Stepinac has formally become that which the Croatian Catholic clergy and religious nationalists have long been aspiring for: "a national saint"; "a great martyr"; "he proved his saintliness through his heroic virtues, martyr's death, exemplary saintly life, his charitable and pastoral activities, his concern for the material and spiritual well-being of his nation and state"; "a modern-age Saint Paul"; "a slave because of the Gospel"; "a shackled apostle"; and "a just man, a heroic victim of Communist persecution," to quote but a few of the most popular slogans from the Croatian religious press and the statements of senior religious figures. According to this logic, Stepinac becomes an actual "victor," as implicated by his second name (Alojzije *Viktor* Stepinac). On the other hand, Strossmayer is not as fondly remembered in Croatia because of his pro-Yugoslav position and his attitude toward the Vatican. The new authorities changed the name of the institute he founded from the Yugoslav to the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts.

SHADES OF GREEN: MUSLIM RELIGIOUS NATIONALISM

Vrcan refers to the Muslim religion in Bosnia-Herzegovina as "peaceful Islam," far removed from the Islamic fundamentalism portrayed by the Serbian and Croatian nationalistic media. Data show that only 37.3 percent of Bosnian Muslims in 1988 declared themselves to be believers: the secularized majority was Muslim only in terms of culture and tradition. These cultural and traditional characteristics included Muslim names, circumcision, characteristic food, the celebration of feast days, and a number of other traditional practices. Both Austria-Hungary and Yugoslavia had supported the nonreligious dimensions of Bosnia-Herzegovina's Muslim Slavs. Yet while the Catholic Church in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina slowly distanced itself from Croatian nationalism in the last Bosnian war

and became increasingly critical toward it, developments on the Bosniak side were exactly the opposite. The fact remains that the religious component of Bosniak national identity was strengthened during the Bosnian war. There were also some clear signs and excesses of pan-Islamic fundamentalism and extremism—a phenomenon less known to Bosnia-Herzegovina before.[133] The invigorated religiousness of the Bosniaks was, therefore, more a consequence and than a cause of the war.

Indeed, the SDA itself was accused of gradually transforming into a religio-nationalist party as its founders and leaders included advocates of all the pan-Muslim options found in the Muslim community's religious structure.[134] At least eight out of forty members of its initiating committee once belonged to the Young Muslims group. As Bougarel points out, "*lay* militants of this party have been tempted to use Islam to promote a policy of national homogeneity" while "the *religious* ones expected that an aggravation of tension would favor the re-Islamization of a largely secularized population."[135] In other words, several religious dignitaries and laymen openly pressed for the Bosniaks' "re-Islamization through the war."[136] Just as national affiliation was equated with religious affiliation in the case of the Serbs and Croats, advocates of the Bosniak religio-national integration mythology believed all Bosniaks were inevitably Muslims and the oldest population of the country.[137]

Džemaludin Latić, editor of the journal *Preporod* in the 1980s and later editor of the *Muslimanski glas (Muslim Voice),* warned against secularized Muslim intellectuals who, he said, were "more dangerous to the Muslim believers than the Chetniks. We must change people," say in the organization Active Islamic Youth (*Aktiv Islamske Omladine* [AIO]). A group of people who rallied around Salih efendi Čolaković also advocated gradual Islamization. Some considered Izetbegović the "father of the homeland," "fighter for Islam," and "our only leader." Others believed he was the hidden thirteenth imam sent by God to lead the Bosniaks along the true path.[138] The following verse illustrates the manner in which he was revered:

The Green Flag is fluttering,
long live SDA,
Herceg-Bosna is joyful,
our leader is Alija.[139]

Local mythmakers distorted the original Shiah messianic prophesy (the Bosnian Muslims belong to the Sunni version of Islam) about the reappearance of the twelfth imam (the so-called hidden imam, Muham-

mad al-Mahdi al-Hujjah), who has been concealed by God since the third century of the Islamic calendar. The imam reveals himself only to the select, such as the ayatollahs in Iran. The Bosniaks were said to be making sacrifices to save Islam by pointing out its enemies. A number of local imams spread rumors that "Izetbegović is the next after Muhammad, who will tell and realise final truth." These claims were ostensibly confirmed when Saudi Arabia's King Fahd awarded Izetbegović with a medal for his contribution to the spread of Islam.[140] These stands and practices of SDA, its leadership, and the Muslim religious community was criticized and rejected by some of Izetbegović's former close collaborators, including Adil Zulfikarpašić; Sefer Halilović, former commander of the Bosnian army; and another Bosnian army high commander, Jovan Divjak, a Bosnian Serb.

Such inflammatory statements and activities prompted Bosniak religious extremists to raise some fundamentalist notions, including the undesirability of mixed marriages (although they approved marriages between Muslim men and Christian women), the re-Islamization of previously secular elements of Bosniak society, the introduction of Islamic sacred law *(sharia),* Arabic as the first foreign language in schools (rather than English, French, or German), polygamy, Islamic missionizing, and the legal prohibition of pork and alcohol. Several monuments erected by the former regime in Sarajevo disappeared during the war. However, the monuments were not only those dedicated to Communist heroes such as Čolaković or Masleša, but to writers Skender Kulenović, Mak Dizdar, Meša Selimović, Branko Ćopić, and Ivo Andrić as well. Bosniak deputies at the assembly of the Sarajevo canton held their Friday midday prayers—the *juma* (which, as a rule, should be held in a mosque)—on the assembly grounds.

Some extremists—such as Adnan Jahić in September, 1993—advocated the creation of a "Muslim state as a national state of the Bosniaks or the Muslims" in the area controlled by the Bosnian army, whose leaders would be Izetbegović (secular) and Cerić (religious). It would have "Muslim ideology, based on Islam, its religious-legal and ethical-social principles, but also with those contents of West European provenance that are not in contradiction with the abovementioned" and that would "strive for a gradual abolishment of the duality between sacred and profane, religious and political," and so forth. A similar initiative was suggested by a group of SDA deputies in February, 1994: the "Bosniak Republic" would be the Bosniak national state in which Serbs and Croats would have the status of national minorities.[141]

One source of such ideas was Islamic students studying abroad in

Muslim countries. Another was military units composed exclusively of Muslims, including foreign Islamic soldiers, who openly declared that they were fighting a jihad. Friedman estimates that there could not have been more than 1,000 such mujahedeen fighters, Mojzes reports there were at least 3,000, and Bellion-Jordan cites a figure of from 4,000–6,000. They came from different countries with Muslim populations: from the Arab states, Iran, Afghanistan, and Pakistan to Sudan, Algeria, Egypt, and Turkey. There were also some Albanians from Albania, Kosovo, or from the diaspora. An example of such exclusivist units was the so-called Black Swans, based near Sarajevo. This elite fighting force of from 600–800 men followed Islamic customs and prayer, avoided alcohol and contact with women, and had its own Muslim chaplains. According to Bosniak sources, 420 Muslim clergymen were included in the army.[142]

Other exclusively Muslim military units—including the Green Berets, El Mujahid, the Muslim Forces, the Green Legion, and the Patriotic League, which was a paramilitary organization of the SDA[143]—also borrowed Muslim religious iconography: the color green; Qur'anic inscriptions in Arabic script on badges; bands tied around the forehead, on military equipment and weapons, and flags; beards; salutes; and war cries such as "*Allahu Akbar!* God is great!" There also were posters bearing the slogan "By our faith and on our land" in green at the 1996 general elections. Rasim Delić, a senior Bosniak officer in the Bosnian army, made this revealing statement: "In time of war religion always attracts more followers. . . . It is very important for us to motivate the people in this way."[144] Other commanders pointed out the importance of the spread and respect of Bosnian Islamic culture and religion within Bosnian army units. Many Muslim obituaries included fundamentalist phrases, for example that the deceased fell in "battle against the infidel," or that the deceased had automatically earned "a place in heaven." Bosniak soldiers killed in action are celebrated as *šehids,* which means "witnesses of the faith" or "martyrs sacrificed for their faith."[145] The inscription on the memorial tombstone in Mostar—in the Bosniak part of town on right side of Neretva River (which is otherwise almost entirely under authority of Herzegovian Croats)—is eloquent enough:

In the name of merciful and compassionate Allah!
Believers who are not fighting
—except those who are unfit for the fight—
are not the same as those who are
fighting on Allah's way
with their belongings and their lives.

Those who will fight putting in
their belongings and their lives
Allah will reward with a whole grade
higher over those who will not fight,
and He promises to all fine recompense.
Allah will award fighters, and not to those who are not fighting,
a great recompense.

To martyrs who succeeded in defending Mostar.

Some Bosniaks/Muslim forces committed atrocities against the non-Muslim population. There is evidence that the Bosnian army "had eliminated thirty-three Catholic parishes in Central Bosnia." Muslim extremists killed a number of Franciscan priests. Such events and attitudes justifiably caused alarm among the Bosnian Serbs and Croats and the majority of secularized Muslims. One of the most outstanding critics of this policy was Cardinal Puljić, who warned about the dangers of Islamizing Sarajevo and the territory under government control, and expressed his apprehension of theocracy.[146] Franciscan superior Anđelović also criticized policies that discriminated against other believers.

Alarmist and self-victimizing discourses appeared in some Bosniak circles. They identified evil-minded plots, spoke of "Crusades" launched by both sides and by a "Christian Europe," and suggested that an effort aimed at "the damnation of the Muslims" had been launched.[147] Others persistently repeated the historiographic myth that Bosnian Muslims are the only descendants of the medieval adherents of the Bosnian Church (wrongly named *bogomili*), who converted to Islam en masse after the Ottoman conquest and, for this reason, are the only indigenous nation in Bosnia-Herzegovina (in contrast to the "latecomer" Serbs and Croats). They also glorify the thousand-year continuity of Bosnian statehood and idealize the Ottoman era of Bosnian history.[148] President Iztebegović stated that the Bosniaks were in favor of a multinational and multireligious and pluralist Bosnia-Herzegovina, in which "we Bosniaks, the Muslim nation of Bosnia, are predestined as the leaders of the new integration of Bosnia."[149]

At the same time, the Bosniaks, more than the other two national groups, most strongly emphasized the need for the cooperation of all three Bosnian national groups. A year before the war began, Izetbegović announced that "no one here has any intention of creating an Islamic Bosnia" and advocated "a secular state."[150] However, there are different

opinions about Izetbegović's maximal political and religious ambitions in this regard.[151] He was also quoted in a 1990 interview as saying that the Bosnian Muslims were a "religious nation." Haris Silajdžić, the Bosnian prime minister and minister for foreign affairs, said: "We are not Muslims, nor are we Serbs or Croats, but Bosnians."[152] Senior Muslim religious dignitaries like Yugoslav *reis-ul-ulema* Hadži Jakub efendi Selimovski, a Macedonian, opposed the partitioning of Bosnia-Herzegovina and supported its secular status from the very beginning of the war. In the spring of 1992 he stated: "any advancement of one nation above the others, with the goal of domination and subjection, is alien to Islam because the Qur'an teaches us that we are only divided into nations and tribes in order that we may get to know each other better."[153]

There was a change in the leadership of the Bosnian Islamic community during the war. On April 28, 1993, Mustafa Cerić replaced the moderate Selimovski as *reis-ul-ulema.* Cerić had been the imam of the Zagreb mosque and was a known critic of Serb and Croat policies toward and within Bosnia-Herzegovina. Selimovski, who was outside the country, refused to recognize the changes, claiming that he had been appointed in 1990 with an eight-year mandate. Cerić 's closest adviser and deputy is Ismet efendi Spahić, the imam of the Begova džamija mosque in Sarajevo. Salih Čolaković, the president of the Bosnian *mesihad,* was also replaced. Bougarel, French expert on Bosnian Islam, believes that this allowed the radical political trend within Bosnian Islam—represented by the El-Hidaje Association and supported by the SDA—to dominate "over less political trends, both progressive (J. Selimovski) and traditionalist (S. Čolaković)."[154]

In short, there are four main options in contemporary Bosnian Islam. First, the secular option: religion is an intimate affair; the moral values of Islam are emphasized; religion is not the foundation of society, politics, or law. Second, the traditional option: Islam is the religion and the law; Islam should become the state religion; Islamic sacred law should be introduced and religious customs and symbols respected. Third, the modernist option: the modernization of Islamic values and the principle of Islamic sacred law. And fourth, the radical revivalist option: Islam infuses every aspect of life; early Muslim history and the primary sources of Islamic teaching are the basis of everything. Bougarel notes that this inter-Muslim pluralism is "too fragmented for it to be possible to assign individuals, let alone institutions, an exact place" within it. It is more reflected "in several of the debates which have disturbed the Muslim community of Bosnia Herzegovina."[155]

ANOTHER JEWISH EXODUS

About 1,200 Jews lived in Sarajevo at the beginning of the war. Many later left Bosnia-Herzegovina and sought refuge abroad: about 400 in Israel and about 300 elsewhere.[156] Jakob Finci, the leader of the Jewish community, estimates that only about 600 Jews remain in Sarajevo (Bakić believes the figure to be 500).

RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES STRIVE FOR PEACE

Ethnic cleansing and military clashes are estimated to have claimed some 279,000 lives (killed and missing, out of which 180,000 are Bosniaks, 115,000 Serbs, 38,000 Croats, and 19,000 others).[157] About 2 million refugees fled their homes; captured women—mostly Bosniak—were systematically raped. The Dayton Peace Agreement—signed by Izetbegović, Tudjman, and Milošević in Paris in December, 1995—introduced a fragile peace to the partitioned country (51 percent going to the Bosnia-Herzegovina federation, and 49 percent to the Serbian Republic). The peace is based on complicated and scarcely feasible rules written down in the constitution, legislation, refugee repatriation plans, human rights guarantees, and in other documents. Bosnia-Herzegovina's jurisdiction is very limited.

Refugees are hesitant to return, especially to areas controlled by the "other" side. Only a handful of the 20,000 refugees from minority ethnic groups expected to return to Sarajevo in 1998—as was optimistically announced in the so-called Sarajevo Declaration, signed on February 3, 1998—had returned to the city by the middle of the year: 477 Serbs, 365 Croats, and 47 "others." Serbs attacked a group of Catholics that included Cardinal Puljić in Derventa; Croats assaulted Serbs in Drvar; Croat authorities in Stolac and Čapljina are resisting the return of Bosniak refugees; the tense situation in ethnically divided towns like Mostar needs no comment.

There has been conflict within the leadership of Bosnian Serb and Croat nationalist parties. The new prime minister of the RS was the reconciliatory Milorad Dodik of the Independent Social-Democratic Party. The Croats also have an alternative to the HDZ, which is now headed by Ante Jelavić, an HVO general and defense minister for the Bosnia-Herzegovina federation (and fervent advocate of Croatian Herceg-Bosna as a separate, third entity), in Krešimir Zubak's new party, the New Croatian Initiative. There is much wrangling and mutual accusation between parties on both sides.

Regarding religion, Mojzes notes that "the positive contributions of the religious communities were few, and the negative were many."[158] On the horns of a dilemma between "universalist rhetoric in favor of peace and practice sustaining a political strategy having provoked the war," their most useful contributions were their humanitarian and charity work, as well as care for refugees and for the wounded—regardless of religious or national identity.[159] The volte-face by all three religious communities in recent years is an interesting change: from vocal support for and passive connivance with the nationalist policies of these nations in the late 1980s, to eventual criticism and distancing. Belated and uncommon as they were, individual religious organizations made a number of ecumenical contacts and reconciliatory statements. The following is a brief discussion of the more important meetings held between religious leaders during this period.

The dialogue between the Catholic Church in Croatia and the Serbian Orthodox Church ended in 1989 because of historical and recent contradictions between them.[160] However, Cardinal Kuharić and Patriarch Pavle held several meetings: in Sremski Karlovci in May, 1991; in Slavonski Brod in August, 1991; in Saint Gall, Switzerland, in the spring of 1992; and in Geneva in September, 1992. They invited the Muslim religious leader to the last meeting, but he was unable to leave Sarajevo be-

cause of the siege. Both religious leaders condemned the war, war crimes, and ethnic cleansing, and demanded the release of all prisoners.[161] Patriarch Pavle and a Muslim delegation led by the mufti of Belgrade, Hadži Hamdija efendi Jusufspahić, met in the summer of 1991 and appealed "for peace and against the misuse of religious faith for national-political purposes."[162]

In January, 1993, Cardinal Puljić and the Bosnian Roman Catholic bishops, who were accompanied by *Reis-ul-ulema* Selimovski visited Pope John Paul II. Puljić and Patriarch Pavle met again in May of the same year at the Sarajevo airport, but *Reis-ul-ulema* Cerić canceled his participation because the Serbian Orthodox Church refused to condemn Serb war crimes. Catholic and Orthodox bishops, the mufti of Belgrade, and representatives of the Protestant and Jewish communities met in Hungary in December, 1993, but, Muslim representatives from Sarajevo were unable to attend. They condemned the manipulation of religious symbols for military purposes. The following month, six Catholic bishops from the former Yugoslavia announced that Bosnia-Herzegovina must remain the homeland of Muslims, Serbs, and Croats. Furthermore, Muslim and Catholic dignitaries in Bosnia-Herzegovina condemned the Bosniak-Croat clashes and declared the SDA and HDZ were responsible."[163]

A meeting between the pope, Patriarch Alexei II of Russia, and *Reis-ul-ulema* Cerić of Bosnia was planned for November, 1994, but had to be canceled. Puljić, Cerić, and Jevtić (representing the patriarchate of Belgrade) met in Geneva in January, 1995. Puljić also held a meeting with Orthodox metropolite Nikolaj from central Bosnia in April, 1996. The pope met with the *reis-ul-ulema* during his visit to Sarajevo in 1997. Senior representatives of all four religions in Bosnia-Herzegovina signed a declaration on a joint moral endeavor in June, 1997. In it, Cerić, Puljić, Bosnian metropolite Nikolaj Mrđa (representing Serb patriarch Pavle) and Jakob Finci, the leader of the Jewish community, expressed their concern about the sluggish implementation of parts of the DPA and emphasized mutual respect. They supported the return of all refugees and condemned violence; ethnic and religious hatred; the destruction of houses, religious buildings, and cemeteries; and the exploitation of the media for inciting and encouraging retribution.

Senior figures from all religious communities held meetings before, during, and after the war. For the most part, they were in agreement in respect to condemning the war and the persecution of civilians. Their joint statements called for peace, tolerance, mutual respect, and cooperation. It is interesting to note that many of these dignitaries were the original

firebrands who tried to justify violence, religio-national homogenization, ethnic cleansing and *just* wars. Despite their calls for peace—mostly expressed abroad—their actions and statements spoke differently. Moreover, if they did not personally breach their own promises of reconciliation, subordinates within their church hierarchies did so. It is my opinion that the apparent duplicity of such "church diplomacy" and practices deeply compromised the hypocrites who advocated them, and places them abreast other accomplices of the recent tragic events in the Balkans.

The vast majority of the Orthodox clergy fled from territory not under Serb control. Their repatriation to areas not under "their" control therefore poses a difficult problem. Metropolite Nikolaj of Sarajevo conducted his first mass in "government-controlled" Sarajevo on February 8, 1996. The Orthodox Church did not allow Orthodox bishops and clergy to return until after the meeting in December, 1995. The final details regarding the repatriation of about two hundred Orthodox priests to Croatia were agreed on at a meeting of senior Serbian Orthodox Church leaders in June, 1998.