

Distorted Images of Islam: The Case of Former Yugoslavia

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Abstract: *Since the 1980s, the former Yugoslavia has witnessed increasing distortion of images of Islam in academic publications, media, and public life. This process has been connected with the changes in power structure in Serbia, and with the new ideological orientation of the Serbian leadership which opted for national exclusivism (ethnofascism). The Muslims have been portrayed as a threat to the realization of the Serbian hegemonist project. In order to mobilize domestic public opinion against the Muslims and to justify future acts against them in the eyes of the West, the Serbian leadership needed an image of Islam as a totalitarian, inherently violent, and culturally alien system on European soil. Such a distorted image has been provided by some influential Serbian orientalists, the Orthodox Church, and some historians. Due to these distortions, these Serbian intellectual circles have become accomplices in the crimes committed against the Muslims in former Yugoslavia during 1992-1995.*

The history of European-Muslim relations could be seen as a history of different images of Islam in European eyes, or of Europe in Muslim eyes. These images are indicators of the political, economic, and cultural relations between two civilizations. They were created by specific people at specific times, and sometimes reveal more about their creators than their objects. They have contributed to the improvement or worsening of inter-civilizational relations.

Why Former Yugoslavia?

During the last two decades, an image of Islam as a violent and militant religion has gained considerable acceptance in Europe. In this regard, the

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case of former Yugoslavia is particularly illustrative. In the past, that country was considered a champion of the nonaligned movement. During that period very close relations with many Muslim countries were established. Indeed some non-Muslim authors even saw Islam as an "anti-imperialist religion." Some of today's most vocal supporters of Serbian ethnofascism¹ were delighted at that time by the Islamic revolution in Iran and the "Islamic rebellion against the West."

A merciless struggle for the political heritage of Josip Broz Tito (1892-1980) marked the beginning of the new ideological orientation of the Serbian leadership. The new *vožd*² Slobodan Milošević opted for open reliance on Serbian nationalism. New ideological use of the past, disseminated through state-controlled media, opened the Pandora's box of suppressed myths, prejudices, and hatred.

Since Serbian history is one of struggle against Osmanlı domination in this area, Serbian nationalism has inevitably revived anti-Muslim feelings. The distortion of the image of Islam became an integral part of that orientation. In practice, the trend was towards Serbian mass mobilization; first, against the Albanians in the southern province of Kosovo; and second, against the Bosnian Muslims (in Bosnian, *Bošnjak*).

The distortion of the image of Islam shows us that terrorizing truth inevitably leads to terrorizing the people and that genocide is regularly preceded by the dehumanization of its victims.

The Distortion: Continuation of War by Other Means

In the history of the Serbian intellectual tradition dealing with Islam, there are periods during which that business was understood as "the continuation of war by other means," and other periods characterized by more objective and tolerant atmosphere. In the latter atmosphere, some Serbian writers and poets (Jova Jovanović Zmaj, Bora Stanković, Aleksa Šantić, for instance) wrote very impressive novels and songs on Muslim life in the former Yugoslav lands.

It is also true that in very influential segments of Serbian society there existed latent prejudices against "the Turks" and their religion. Those prejudices regularly erupted in open hostilities and brutal persecution during crises when "aliens" were accused of "conspiracy" against national interests, supranational projects abandoned, and solutions sought in national exclusivism and ethnic purity.

A recent case of such campaign is the diabolization of Islam and the Muslims from the 1980s in Serbian public life. The undemocratic atmosphere, a kind of "created massmadness" in all strata of Serbian society, and the existence of *advocati diaboli* among educated elite were

sufficient conditions for such a phenomenon.

The distorted image of Islam was created by a number of clergymen of the Serbian Orthodox Church, historians, and orientalists. Among them, only the role of orientalists has received proper scientific attention. This was done by Norman Cigar of the Marine Corps Command and Staff College, Virginia, who undertook research on the role of the Serbian orientalists in the genocide of Bosnian Muslims.³ The role of Serbian historians and the Orthodox dignitaries is yet to be fully researched, documented, and analyzed. In this article we shall try to highlight some aspects of their involvement in the distortion of the image of Islam and of its followers.

Orientalists and Islamologists

The main conclusion of Norman Cigar in the above-mentioned study is that Serbian orientalists have been at the forefront of the anti-Islamic movement since the 1980s, contributing "significantly to genocide against Muslims by making this process intellectually respectable among all the strata of Serbian community."⁴ These scholars have "consistently misinterpreted and intentionally distorted Islam and the Muslim community's conditions and objectives."⁵ The author has analyzed the works of a large number of scholars who were dealing with Islam. Notable among these are the most influential "professional orientalists" such as Alexandre Popović (Ecole de Hautes Etudes en Science Sociales, Paris), Darko Tanasković (Department of Oriental Languages, Belgrade University), and Miroљub Jevtić (Faculty of Political Sciences, Belgrade University, who is unremarkable for his scholarship, but much more known for his interviews to nationalistic papers).

Norman Cigar found that these scholars had projected Islam as a totalitarian system, inherently violent, a remnant of the past in the Balkans, and preparing for a new invasion of Europe and the destruction of Western civilization. The Muslims are portrayed as cultural aliens on European soil, traitors to the religion of their forefathers, the fifth column, a bridgehead for re-Islamization of Serbia or the Balkans, and so on.

Each of these three authors—who were linked by ideological, professional, and personal connections—had a specific area of influence and audience, and made his personal contribution to the development of appropriate conceptual and terminological tools for the given task.

Alexandre Popović, known in European learned circles as a specialist in Islam in post-Osmanlı Balkans, has undertaken a mission to warn Europe and the world of increasing Islamic radicalism in former

Yugoslavia and Bosnia in the 1980s. His article on Islamic radicalism was praised later by his younger colleagues as an example of early warning.⁷

In that article and in later work on Yugoslav Muslims, he expounded the thesis that since the 1970s, Islamic radicalism has been on the scene in Bosnia either in the form of "secular radicalism" (Muslim Marxist intelligentsia) or "religious radicalism" (*'ulamā'*).⁸ These two groups, according to him, worked together as the promoters of the radicalization of the Bosnian Muslims. The very concept of "radicalism" in Popović's use was vague enough to cover any kind of conscious Muslim activity. What was viewed in the case of other religious communities as taking over of new horizons of freedom at the end of the Communist regime, has become "radicalism" in the case of the Muslims. He was of the opinion that Muslims were favoured by Josip Broz Tito, and it is quite fair that they lose those privileges after his demise. In order to resolve the apparent contradiction in the thesis that the Bosnian Muslim *'ulemā'* and Marxists worked together for the promotion of Islam, A. Popović and Darko Tanasković resorted to the Shī'āh concept of *katmān* (dissimulation). Their explanation was that Sunnī Bosnian Marxists used Shī'āh tactics: they just pretended to be Marxists while in fact they were real Muslim radicals. The fact that those Marxists sent Muslim activists to jail, as they did in 1983, did not disturb these experts on "peripheral Islam."

Darko Tanasković considered it his duty to "cautiously and constructively warn about the tendency of (mis)use of Islam for political purposes," at a time when Islam had "already begun to (mis)use politics, secular as well as religious and cultural, for its own purposes."⁹ By then the author had lost his sense of cautiousness and constructiveness, and he began to object to the Muslims' demand not to be forced to eat pork in the Yugoslav People's Army (in 1989); the intention of the Republic of Bosnia and Hercegovina to establish connection with the Organization of Islamic Conference (in 1991); the growth of Islamic consciousness among the Muslim communities in the Balkans (in 1992); and so on.

Close to the leadership of the ruling Serbian Socialist Party led by Slobodan Milošević, D. Tanasković continued to act as a top advisor on Muslim policy. On 23 September 1993, at the peak of the genocide against the Bošnjaks, and the strangulation of Sarajevo (where at one time he used to be warmly received by Muslim intellectuals), Tanasković gave an interview to *Vojska*, an official paper of the Yugoslav (Serbian) Army under the title "Europe will not avoid the demographic jihad." The term "demographic jihad" could be considered one of his personal

contributions to the Serbian vocabulary of distorted images of Islam. His views in this regard were completely in line with those of the indicted war criminal General Ratko Mladić, commander-in-chief of the Bosnian Serbs' army:

The Islamic world does not have the atomic bomb, but it does have a demographic bomb. Atomic bombs are under some kind of control. Their enormous reproduction is not under any kind of control.¹⁰

British historian Mark Almond described this concern about Muslim population growth as "the fascistic obsession with fertility, or rather the lack of it."¹¹

Mirosljub Jevtić was promoted as an "Islamologist" by the Serbian media in late 1980s after he published his doctoral dissertation on jihad.¹² He tried, without even an elementary knowledge of Arabic and Islamic studies, to give an exposition of the complex meanings of jihad, types of armed jihad throughout history, interstate conflicts, jihad in the ideologies of Muslim liberation movements and Islamic fundamentalism, and finally jihad in the Yugoslav context. The book was lauded by Tanasković. It was, however, sharply criticized as being devoid of any scientific value by the Bosnian author Tarik Haverić.

In subsequent years, Jevtić became a self-proclaimed expert on militant Islam in Yugoslavia, ever ready to "disclose" to the Serbian nationalist papers the secret plans of disguised *mujāhidīn* to retake territories in the Balkans lost in the 19th century, to "discover" that the Muslim demand for a separate cemetery in the Serbian capital is a preparation for attack on Serbia, to give a final *fatwá* on the proper meaning of Islamic laws which allow extermination of non-Muslims, and to disclose that Muslim sacrifice on the *ʿĪd al-Adhá* is, in fact, preparation of young Muslims to slaughter their non-Muslim neighbors.¹³ In one of his rare interviews¹⁴ translated into English, a summary of his and his teachers' distortion of Islam can be found.

There is a rational explanation for the fact that from the 1980s influential Serbian intellectuals began an undeclared war against Islam and the Muslims in Yugoslavia, whom Jevtić called "the reservists of Allah's army." That explanation should be looked for in the changing social situation and political power struggle in post-Tito Yugoslavia.

The Serbian orientalists set themselves on a collision course with Islam in the wake of the eruption of the Albanian revolt in Kosovo in 1981, when some orientalists started talking about "Islamic fundamentalism" and the "jihad" of Albanians against Serbs. In fact, all documents published at that time indicated that the forces behind the

Albanian revolt were clandestine cells of "Marxist-Leninist" orientation, officially described by Yugoslav authorities as "counter-revolutionaries" and *irredentists*. However the Serbian leadership realized that these Bolshevik terms can not appeal to the European public in the 1980s. Therefore they opted for labels which had already been introduced in dealings with the Muslims. Overnight, "counter-revolutionaries" became *mujāhidīns* and "Islamic fundamentalism" replaced "dogmatic Marxism."

After the abolition of the autonomous status of Kosovo in 1989, the Serbian leadership turned toward Bosnia. In this case, some orientalists (for example, Popović and Tanasković) tried to emphasize the "militancy" of the Islamic revival in the republic which was evident from the 1970s. Again, the labels "Islamic fundamentalism" or "Islamic radicalism" were used. These terms replaced the earlier label "pan-Islamism," which were being used by the Communists in Bosnia after World War II, for different kinds of Islamic activities. In fact, the Communists, as preachers of proletarian internationalism, were especially afraid of other internationalist ideas, hence they severely persecuted Muslims.

It seems that in the late 1980s "Islamic fundamentalism" (in domestic use) and "Islamic radicalism" (in international use) were gradually accepted as new weapons which could be arbitrarily used against any kind of undesirable Muslim activity in the former Yugoslavia. The role of orientalists was to provide party ideologues, state security officials, and regime journalists with updated concepts and terms.

With the breakdown of Yugoslavia (1991-1992) and the beginning of the aggression against Bosnia and its people, Serbian distortion of Islam became massive. Almond observed:

In practice in the 1990s Serb policies were likely to revive the very kind of Islamic fundamentalism which they were supposed to combat. The psychological need to create one's ideal enemy to justify one's own savagery is again apparent. Albanians and other Muslims are hated as much for not living up to their stereotype as for conforming to it.¹⁵

The Serbian Orthodox Church

Throughout history, the Serbian Orthodox Church has presented Islam as a religion connected with "the Ottoman yoke." Ironically, the Church owes its rebirth to the Osmanlis (in the restoration of the autocephalous Peć patriarchate in 1557 by the Bosnian-born Grand Vizier Sokollu Mehmed Pasha), but it has never overcome its medieval hatred and animosity towards the Turks and their religion. Furthermore, even after

the withdrawal of the Osmanlı armies from Serbia in 1862 and the Balkans in 1912, the Orthodox clergy continued to wage periodic wars for "holy cross and golden freedom" against the remaining Muslims, and to seek revenge for battles lost centuries ago.

In the context of the obsession of the Serbian Orthodox Church with the medieval past, myth became a prevailing mode of the apprehension of reality. Dobrica Ćosić, the intellectual founder of today's Serbian ethnofascism, often pointed out that the Serbs communicate with God and the universe through myth, not the Bible.¹⁶ In that mythology, the Kosovo myth occupies the most dominant place and continues to shape the pseudo-historical consciousness of today's Serbs and their attitudes toward the Muslims.

The Kosovo myth is a Serbian popular account of the battle fought in the "Field of Blackbirds" (Kosovo Polje) in the summer of 1389 between the multinational forces of the Serbian prince Lazar Hrebljanović (1329-1389) and the Osmanlı army led by Sultan Murad I (1326-1389).¹⁷ In that battle the outnumbered Osmanlı army managed to defeat the Serbs and their allies. The commanders on both sides were killed. Sultan Murad was stabbed by a Serbian knight who became a symbol of revenge. Prince Lazar was captured and executed with other Serb noblemen in revenge for the murder of the sultan and breach of promises. The Serbs saw the Battle of Kosovo as the end of their medieval state and the beginning of the five century-long Osmanlı rule or "the life out of history." The Osmanlıs saw that battle as merely one of their successful campaigns in the Balkans in the last decades of the 14th century, never as the most decisive event for Balkan or Serbian history.¹⁸

The Kosovo myth was created in the period between 15th and 19th centuries by the Orthodox clergy and folk singers.¹⁹ The earlier version was more religious in expression than the present one. In the early version, Prince Lazar was portrayed as a righteous and pious ruler, a Christian martyr who chose "the Kingdom of Heaven" over the "Kingdom of Earth," and fought against the rule of "the Turks," "the Agarjani," "the Ishmaelites," or simply "the infidels." The Serbian Orthodox Church has canonized Prince Lazar and cherished his cult as one of the most important elements of its teaching and practice. As should be expected, St. Lazar's enemies are eternal enemies of the whole Serbdom.

Why has the Serbian Orthodox Church given such significance to Prince Lazar and the Battle of Kosovo? Most probably there are two main reasons: conceptual and historical. First, it is known that the Orthodox churches are organized on ethnic and national bases. Following

the Byzantine tradition, they accept the supremacy of the state over the church, and consider themselves the custodians of national traditions and interests. In that context, it is natural that some political figures and events acquire the aura of religious significance and sanctity in Orthodox Christianity. Second, historical records showed that a special relationship existed between the Church and Prince Lazar, who built churches, donated land to monasteries, and sponsored the work of Orthodox missionaries. In the power struggle in Serbia after 1389, the Church supported Lazar's widow and son and created the image of a martyr in order to justify the secular interests of his heirs.²⁰

Since the end of the 18th century, significant changes have taken place in the structure of the Kosovo myth. The emphasis has moved from Prince Lazar to the figure of Miloš Obilić, the sultan's assassin, who gave the myth a "warrior-paganic character" and broke from the Christian traditions.²¹ The notion of vengeance has become the central element of the myth, and violence has become one of the highest values in personal code of honour. The national romantics used the myth for the intensification of anti-Osmanli feelings and national liberation during the 19th century. However, ideological and political use of the Kosovo myth continued after the cessation of Osmanli rule in Serbia. In 1913, the alleged day of the Battle of Kosovo—Vidovdan (June 28th)—was proclaimed a public holiday and the coming decades witnessed its new affirmation. At that time, there were no Turks in the Balkans and it became obvious that the celebration of Vidovdan, where the Orthodox Church played the central role, was directed against their cultural successors, the Muslims. In his study of the Kosovo myth, Miodrag Popović, a Serbian historian of literature, writes:

According to the myth, Vidovdan was the day of heroic competition, and the triumph of good over evil. In the new cult, developed under the pressure of political and economic demands of the Serbian bourgeoisie, penetration to southern lands and the conquest of Kosovo, Vidovdan has become a symbol of bloody, merciless revenge against everything that is Turkish and Muslim in general.²²

In spite of the tendency toward dialogue and ecumenism among the religious communities in former Yugoslavia, the Serbian Orthodox Church has failed to critically examine its own history and doctrine, and has continued to build the religious, ideological and political consciousness of its members on such ahistorical and irrational bases. From that perspective, the Serbian writer Matija Bečković described Kosovo as "the Serbian Gospel,"²³ and the poet Isidora Sekulić wrote the following:

Serbia is not a state, it is Kosovo, and Kosovo is a tomb, the tomb in which everything is buried, and the resurrection can only spring from the tomb, because there is no resurrection without death.²⁴

The executors of the ethnofascist project of Greater Serbia have exactly followed the ideas expressed in these verses. Celebrating the 600th anniversary of the Battle of Kosovo on 28 June 1989, the Serbian president Slobodan Milošević vowed:

There is no time for sorrow. It is time for struggle... We shall win the battle for Kosovo regardless of the obstacles facing us inside and outside the country.²⁵

In the same year, the Serbian Orthodox Church dug up the bones of Prince Lazar from his church at Kosovo and carried them throughout "the Serbian historical lands" and future "killing fields" (including Croatia and Bosnia and Hercegovina) in order to bring "national homogenization" of the whole Serbdom. Such obsession with death and cemeteries could only bring disaster to the peoples in the central part of the Balkans.

The historical responsibility of the Serbian Orthodox Church lies in the fact that its dignitaries allowed tribal paganism to overshadow Christianity in its doctrine and practice, that it could not see Abraham's sons in Muslim neighbors, and that it continued to portray Islam reproducing images and vocabulary from the time of the Osmanli-Serbian confrontation. In doing that, it gave *de facto* dispensation to common criminals to conduct genocide against the Muslims.

The role of the Serbian Orthodox Church has been acknowledged by some dissenting Serbian intellectuals, like Bogdan Bogdanović, a university professor and former mayor of Belgrade; and Mirko Kovač, a novelist, who highlighted the church's involvement in the preparation of genocidal policy against non-Serbs.²⁶ That church has been described as the "spirit behind the Yugoslav People's Army"—the ideologically Communist army of former Yugoslavia which became the "fighting fist" of the Serbian hegemonist project.

The Historians

A number of Serbian historians contributed to the distortion of the image of Islam. Their general orientation was to see the Turks as archenemies responsible for "the life of the Serbs out of history." A good example of such orientation could be found in the works of historian Radovan Samardžić.²⁷ With mixed feeling of self-pity and self-glorification, he describes the Serbs as a nation which for a long time resisted the

Osmanlis, trying to prevent their invasion of Europe. In return, the Osmanlis punished the Serbs in different ways: taking away their ethnic name, deporting them to regions where they would perish, interfering with Serbian traditions, taking their children and converting them to Islam (child levy), and carrying out mass conversions to Islam. Samardžić argues that the Osmanlis developed a system for the suppression of whole nations. He maintains that this system included a genocidal policy. He further argues that since the Osmanli system was built on Islam, in *ultima linea* Islam is responsible for the plight of the Serbs.

The claim that the spread of Islam in the Balkans was part of the "genocidal policy" of a foreign, Asiatic state against the Serbian people implies that today's Muslims are descendants of apostates and renegades (in the case of Bošnjaks) or surviving elements of occupiers (in the case of the Turkish ethnic minority), and therefore various actions for their "return into the religion of their forefathers" or punishment for betrayal, are legitimate.

Similar views could be found in the doctoral dissertation of the celebrated Yugoslav novelist Ivo Andrić (1892-1975), who was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature for his novel *The Bridge on the Drina*. That, along with a number of his other novels dealing with life in Bosnia under the Osmanlis, was accepted almost as a historical fact by a large public in former Yugoslavia. Due to this, his views on Islam and the Muslims appeared very significant. These views were systematically expressed in his dissertation *The Development of Spiritual Life in Bosnia Under the Influence of Turkish Rule* (1924) published posthumously in the Serbian language in 1982 and translated into English in 1990.²⁸

In Andrić's interpretation, the spread of Islam in Bosnia is a direct result of the conquest by "an Asiatic military people whose social institutions and customs spelled the negation of the Christian culture, and whose religion—begotten under other skies and social circumstances and quite incapable of adaptation—shackled the life of the spirit and the mind in Bosnia, disfiguring it and molding it into an exceptional case."²⁹ According to him, "... Islamization went ahead ruthlessly and quickly.... Whoever wished to retain his property for good along with the political ascendancy and privileges vested in it had finally to convert to Islam."³⁰ Andrić quotes the Montenegrin bishop and poet Petar Petrović Njegoš (1830-1851), known for his anti-Islamic feelings: "the cowardly and the covetous turned into Turks."³¹

Islamic social and administrative institutions are seen in a similarly negative manner. Using historically doubtful documents, the provisions

of Islamic law are interpreted as providing the legal basis for discrimination against and neglect of non-Muslims, a ground for the obstacles to Church life, and a major cause of "Bosnian backwardness."³² Bosnian Muslim literature in oriental, as well as the Bosnian language written in the Arabic alphabet (*aljamiado*), was underestimated; "they [Muslim poems] are meager in quantity as well as low in quality."³³

The disrespect of facts and anti-Muslim biases were translated into literary fictions by writers like Andrić. The tortures invented by the Wallachian prince Vlad Țepeș (1430-1477), known as Dracula, and used against the Osmanlis, were in Andrić's novels attributed to Bosnian Muslims, who allegedly used them against the Serbs.³⁴ A cruel play between fiction and reality continued with the Serbian slaughter of Bosnian Muslims on *Ād al-Adhá* in 1992 on the bridge of River Drina in the southeastern Bosnian town of Višegrad, the scene of Andrić's fiction.³⁵ The killers tried to justify their heinous actions by asserting that they just had to take their revenge on "Turks" for their old crimes.

The distortion of Islamic teaching and history is especially noticeable in the works of those Serbian historians who played, or are still playing, an active role in politics. They believe that the role of historians is not just to find out what really happened in the past, but also to reshape history. Two examples are very illustrative: Vasa Čubrilović and Milorad Ekmečić. Vasa Čubrilović (d. 1990) was a surviving member of the terrorist organization that assassinated Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife in Sarajevo on 28 June 1914. In 1937 he proposed to the Serbian-dominated Yugoslav government a "final solution" for the question of Muslim Albanians in Kosovo in a paper *Iseljavanje Arnauta* (The Expulsion of Albanians).³⁶

He listed a number of brutal measures which were a combination of state terror and "the creation of suitable psychosis" that must force the Albanian Muslim population to leave their homes so that a secure "ethnically clean" region of Kosovo might be delivered in the hands of the Serbs. Among the proposed measures are: abuse of Islam and Muslim *‘ulemā’* and forcing Muslim girls to go to schools with boys.³⁷ The justification of these measures is even worse. Pleading that Serbia must learn from the Turks, he wrote:

Turkey brought to the Balkans the customs of the Sheriat... Even the Balkan Christians learned from the Turks that not only the state power and domination, but also home and property are won and lost by the sword.³⁸

His disciples learned the lesson: depriving the Bošnjaks of life, home

and property, and (if possible) state, by the usurped sword of the former Yugoslav People's Army, and the world's indifference, is legitimate.

After the Second World War, Čubrilović became a prominent member of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts (SANU), one of the promoters of Serbian nationalism after Tito's death. Milorad Ekmečić, one of the leading Serbian historians and the most influential Serbian intellectuals in Bosnia and Hercegovina before 1992, devoted his life to the study of Serbian and Yugoslav history. He is especially concerned with human geography in the Balkans, the role of religion in the process of nation formation, securing of vital space for Serbian people, the German rise, and the re-emergence of Turkey as a regional power in the Balkans. He regrets that Russia today has no great leaders, but believes that this is temporary, and that the greatness of the Russian land is eternal.³⁹ In 1992 he asserted that the war in Bosnia is just a continuation of the Serbian liberation struggle that began in 1804 against the Osmanlis, and that for this struggle Serbs should be ready to sacrifice hundreds of thousands of their own people. The learned professor, now in Belgrade, is obviously not concerned with the Muslim casualties. Relying upon his knowledge of history, he warned in 1995 the Serbian politicians engaged in peace negotiations: "Wherever the Muslims settle down, due to their high population growth, that territory has been already lost after a decade."⁴⁰

The Destiny of the Distortions

These three groups of intellectuals have become the main creators of the distorted images of Islam. Their views were popularized by a large number of *apparatchiks*, unscrupulous media, and institutionalized education. At the same time, those Serbian scholars who refused to participate in the hegemonist project were marginalized and condemned to silence. The distorted image of Islam has provided ideological support and justification for the anti-Muslim policy in former Yugoslavia. That trend was a result of a specific political atmosphere, but it is also true that it has brought further radicalization of Serbian opinion of Muslims.

In our view, the only effective way for the correction of the distorted image of Islam is the defeat of the Serbian hegemonistic project, which should include an end to the authoritarian regime and the democratization of public life. Only the abandonment of the idea of political dominance may lead to the abandonment of its advocates and their distortions. However, those people can not be forgiven because they knew what they were doing.

Notes

1. A term coined by the Serbian sociologist Slobodan Inić to denote the ideological orientation of the present régime in Belgrade which was responsible for the breakup of former Yugoslavia and wars in Slovenia, Croatia and Bosnia and Hercegovina.
2. Archaic Serbian, "leader."
3. Norman Cigar, "Serbia's Orientalists and Islam: Making Genocide Intellectually Respectable," *The Islamic Quarterly*, 38 (1994) 3: 147-170.
4. *Ibid.*, 148.
5. *Ibid.*, 150.
6. Alexandre Popović, "Le radicalisme Islamique en Yougoslavie" in *Radicalismes Islamiques*, Alexandre Popović, ed. (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1986).
7. Darko Tanasković, *U dijalogu s Islamom* (In a Dialogue with Islam) (Gornji Milanovać: Dečje novine, 1992) 8.
8. Alexandre Popović, *Jugoslovenski Muslimani* (Yugoslav Muslims) (Belgrade: Akvarius, 1990).
9. Tanasković, *U dijalogu s Islamom*, 198.
10. Mark Almond, *Europe's Backyard War: The War in the Balkans* (London: Mandarin, 1994) 203.
11. *Ibid.*, 198.
12. Miroljub Jevtić, *Savremeni džihad kao rat* (Modern Jihad as War) (Belgrade: Nova Knjiga, 1989.)
13. Extensive quotations where he has elaborated these views are given by Norman Cigar in cited work.
14. For an Arabic translation of this interview, see Muhammad Mufaku, *al-Islām fī Yūghustāfiyā, min Bilghrād ilā Sārāyāwū* (Ammān: Dār al-Bashīr Press, 1413/1993) 294-297; for an English translation see, H.T. Norris, *Islam in the Balkans: Religion and Society between Europe and the Arab World* (London: Hurst & Company, 1993) 295-298.
15. Almond, *Europe's Backyard War*, 196.
16. Hadžem Hajdarević, "Zlikovdan" (Day of Crimes), *Ljiljan*, 5 July 1995, 4. *Ljiljan* is a Bosnian national weekly paper.
17. See, H.T. Norris, *Islam in the Balkans* (London: Hurst & Company, 1993) 257-263.
18. *Ibid.*
19. For a critical account of the emergence, symbolical structure, and social function of the Kosovo myth, see Miodrag Popović, *Vidovdan i časni krst* (The Day of Vid and Holy Cross) (Beograd: Slovo ljubve, 1976).
20. John V.A. Fine Jr., *Dictionary of the Middle Ages*, s.v. "Serbia" and

"Lazar Hrebljanović" (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1986).

21. M. Popović, *Vidovdan i časni krst*, 78-96.
22. *Ibid.*, 129-130.
23. Almond, *Europe's Backyard War*, 198-199.
24. *Ibid.*, 190.
25. *Ibid.*, 197.
26. Interview with Bogdan Bogdanović by Selena Seferović, "Ne vraćam se u Zemlju Budaliju, a kad stane rat, rado bih živio u Sarajevu ili Mostaru" (I am not going back to a country of madness and, when the war stops, I would like to live in Sarajevo or Mostar") *Ljiljan*, 16 August 1995, 5-6; Interview with Mirko Kovač by Gavriilo Grahovac, "Bošnjaci će odbraniti Bosnu zato što nisu isti kao njihovi neprijatelji" (The Bošnjaks will defend Bosnia because they are not the same as their enemies) *Ljiljan*, 29 March 1995, 5-6.
27. Radovan Samardžić, *Ideje za srpsku istoriju* (The Ideas for the Serbian History), (Beograd: Jugoslavijapublik, 1989) 9-10, 229-233.
28. See Ivo Andrić, *The Development of Spiritual Life in Bosnia under the Influence of Turkish Rule*. Edited by Želimir B. Jurčić and John F. Loud, (London-Durham: Duke University Press, 1990).
29. *Ibid.*, 16.
30. *Ibid.*, 18.
31. *Ibid.*, 20.
32. *Ibid.*, 23-34.
33. *Ibid.*, 67-68.
34. Smail Balić, "Dilema između Istoka i Zapada u djelima Bašagića, Mulabdića i Handžića" (The dilemma East or West in the Works of Bašagić, Mulabdić and Handžić), *Zbornik radova Četvrtog simpozijuma* (Proceedings of the Fourth Symposium) (Zagreb: Zagrebačka Džamija, 1994), 28.
35. For an eyewitness account of such crimes, see State Commission for Gathering Facts on War Crimes in the Republic of Bosnia and Hercegovina, *Bulletin*, (October 1992)1: 50-53; (March 1993)3: 22-23.
36. Almond, *Europe's Backyard War*, 194-196.
37. *Ibid.*, 195.
38. *Ibid.*
39. Fahrudin Djapo, "Četnike nema ko da briše" (There is no one who could erase the Chetniks) *Ljiljan*, 15 November 1995, 34.
40. "Ekmečićev niski pad" (Ekmečić's low fall) *Ljiljan*, 25 October 1995, 38.