

Key Political Processes in the Former SFRY 1990-1992 and the Bosniak Respond

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Abstract:

This paper discusses some of the fundamental political processes in the former Yugoslavia in the first two years of the last decade of the 20th century, which led to its disappearance and then to aggressive Serbian military campaigns. The aim is to present the overall political context and the reasons for the dissolution of Yugoslavia by detecting points that the process led in the negative direction. It also wants to underline the role of global socio-political flows, primarily fall of communism in Eastern Europe. Particular aim is to underline position of Bosniaks as a political factor and their ability to organize people during these processes on the basis of recognizable political and national goals.

Keywords: Yugoslavia, Disintegration, Communism, Democracy, War, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Introduction

During the eighties of the 20th century, the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY), at least as defined in the 1974 constitution, was in a deadly situation and great torment. The Yugoslavians were increasingly aware of the threats of the disappearance of a common state that inevitably wore heavy political processes partly related to internal unresolved and accumulated problems, but also to the beginning of the fall of the Soviet Union and Communism in Eastern Europe. Yugoslavia could not be in a better position because of the program of political elites - Slovenian, Croat

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and Serbian - who were already offensive with the desire to gain the best positions for their people and the republic in the upcoming crucial political events. Redefining the Federation was a fundamental requirement of all.

In the context of the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe, it became clear that Yugoslavia lost its position before the beginning of democratic changes affecting the Eastern bloc, above all Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia. In fact, after the collapse of the USSR, Yugoslavia lost its strategic significance gained after 1945/8. Conclusion was that SFRY is no longer a "regional force, a key Balkan country that separates two super powers, simultaneously influencing the ideological erosion of the socialist bloc".¹ Even earlier, at the beginning of the eighties, US and USSR diplomats discussed that issue. In February 1980, while Josip Broz Tito was in a coma, a conversation in Vienna between Andrei Gromijk, Soviet Foreign Minister and Cyrus Vance (Syrus Venus), US Secretary of State, highlighted the common stance and opinion that Yugoslavia is facing the future the peripheral Balkan state. Disappearance of SFRY testifies to their good analysis.²

Constitutional Reforms and Economic Stabilization

One problem in Yugoslav politics was almost ubiquitous in the seventies and eighties. The problem of constitutional reform, both at federal and republic level, has risen to the political scene and was among the main topics in public discussions. At the end of the 1980s, this situation was well-directed by everyday life marked by political turmoil between Slovenia and Serbia due to the arrest of "Janša Four" and the tense situation in Autonomous Region of Kosovo.³ The Province of Kosovo immediately after the death of Josip Broz Tito came in the focus because of the great Albanian protests in 1981 that led to massive police intervention. After this situation in Kosovo was not normalized soon, it became ace in the hands of the Greater Serbian ideology in pressure on all other political factors in

¹ Branko Petranović, "Unutrašnje i međunarodne pretpostavke raspada dve Jugoslavije (Nacionalni sukobi i promenljivost međunarodnog položaja Jugoslavije kao uzročnici sloma)". *Filozofija i društvo* VI (1994): 121-141.

² Petranović, "Unutrašnje i međunarodne pretpostavke," 122.

³ In mid-1988, the military authorities arrested a group of Slovenes headed by Janez Jansa for "giving military secrets". Military trials and convictions of three of these prisoners triggered large protests in Slovenia during 1988 and 1989 and strengthened the Slovenes in their demands.

Yugoslavia. In May 1989, Slovenes demanded the release of "Four" with the threat of treating this problem solely as internal Slovenes, which had undermined already disrupted federal reputation and institutions.⁴ They went a step further and the amendments to the Slovenian constitution, which were discussed in the summer of 1989, showed determination in the desire to prevent Milošević from imposing on his plan. Also in mid-1989, at the session of the Presidency of the SFRY, drafts for the drafting of a new constitution (the Initiative for the Change of the Constitution of the SFRY) were discussed. It was more about Serbian desires than true aspirations for the functional organization of the Federation. All this witnessed the conflict between the two visions of the future of Yugoslavia, which reached the zenith. Federal Secretary for National Defense, Veljko Kadijević, was under great pressure due to such political relations and disrupted reputation of federal institutions.⁵ Precisely because of the Slovene amendments, it seemed the *coup d'état* became a logical consequence and a way of interrupting the tensions caused by a stronger critical relationship to the political system and its structures.⁶ But Army's indecisiveness had a reason: radical moves were not made so that the focus remained on politicians and their capabilities.

On the other hand, the appearance of Prime Minister Ante Marković on the political scene and his stabilization program, published on 18 December 1989, opened additional trenches between Milošević and the rest of Yugoslavia for interpreting the prime minister's action by the Serbian political circles as counter-Serbian. Economic measures that have improved the situation in Yugoslavia have been treated as "plundering of the Serbian economy".⁷ It is interesting that the Serbian leader was not clear about the prime minister's concept of economic recovery and stabilization. While Milošević sharply attacked Marković, as he did at the Congress of SK Serbia on December 16, 1989, another influential Serbian politician, Borisav Jović, had different approach. During session of "Serbian Coordination" (gathering of Serb politicians from different parts of Yugoslavia) in Serbia's Presidency on January 4, 1990, he said that "Serbia should accept the program in global, and criticize the details".⁸ Finally Milošević's plan was accepted. Milošević's speech in Kosovo

⁴ Borisav Jović, *Poslednji dani SFRJ. Izvodi iz dnevnika*. (Beograd: Politika, 1995), 14-15.

⁵ Jović, *Poslednji dani SFRJ*, 37.

⁶ Josip Glaurdić, *Vrijeme Europe. Zapadne sile i raspad Jugoslavije*. (Zagreb: Mate, 2011), 53.

⁷ Glaurdić, *Vrijeme Europe*, 61.

⁸ Jović, *Poslednji dani SFRJ*, 87.

(the view that 'new battles are in front of us') on marking the 600th anniversary of the Kosovo Battle (1389) were definitely the last drop of poison in the relations between the Yugoslav peoples and the republic, which also marked the beginning of the SFRY's disappearance.

Precisely because of such development the Slovene position, judged by the then pro-Serb and regime media, became increasingly "anti-Yugoslavian", while the Slovenes, in fact, were only trying to provide political defense against the Greater Serbian concept of Yugoslavia. Slovenian amendments on the constitution voted on September 28, 1989, the Greater Serbian politicians were considered as a beginning and the trigger of the already mentioned end of the common state.⁹ During discussion between a member of the Yugoslav Presidency from Serbia Borisav Jovic and Serbian President Slobodan Milošević both have clearly stated this and have shown willingness to accept the departure of Slovenia. They concluded that maybe the disintegration of the state began for Slovenes but not for other nations, sending such a signal that their plans to have Greater Serbia do not include Slovenia in any way.¹⁰ Six months later, again on 'Serbian coordination' on March 26, 1990, it was estimated that "the SFRY disintegration process was unstoppable" and therefore should ensure the borders within which there will be no war, and that Bosnia and Herzegovina will not and cannot survive.¹¹

A similar stance on the future of Yugoslavia could be found half a year later in the CIA report of October 18, 1990.¹² The United States (USA), as alleged, changed attitude in 1989 toward Yugoslavia and began to notice, on the example of Serb politics in Kosovo/toward Albanians in that province, Milošević's open negative use of national narratives.¹³ The last US ambassador to the SFRY, Warren Zimmerman, considered Kosovo to be the most serious European problem west of the USSR, and US senators led by Bob Dole, said that Milošević's approach to Kosovo would undermine the relations between Yugoslavia and the United States.¹⁴ Yet these attitudes of Zimmermann and a few senators and congressmen did not contribute

⁹ Jović, *Poslednji dani SFRJ*, 54.

¹⁰ Jović, *Poslednji dani SFRJ*, 77-78.

¹¹ Jović, *Poslednji dani SFRJ*, 131.

¹² Kosta Nikolić and Vladimir Petrović, *Rat u Sloveniji. Dokumenta Predsedništva SFRJ jun-jul 1991*. (Beograd: Institut za savremenu istoriju, 2012), 27-28.

¹³ Warren Zimmerman, *Izvori jedne katastrofe*. (Zagreb: Globus, 1997), 25.

¹⁴ Zimmerman, *Izvori jedne katastrofe*, 30-31.

to the American heavy turn when it comes to Yugoslavia, but they were a minority and 'silent voice' that did not reach significantly the ears of US President George Bush Senior and Secretary of State James Baker at the time.

The reluctance to normalization of relations at the federal level did not prevent Milošević from establishing a new order within the Serbian corps. The 'Anti-Bureaucratic Revolution', as Milošević's blow and the assumption to establish absolute authority in Serbia after the 8th Session of the Serbian Communists (1987) and the political elimination of Ivan Stambolic, had already been completed by the formal and factual abolition of the status of the province of Vojvodina and Kosovo by mid-1989 but and change of government in Montenegro. Indeed, this coup, after its 'success' in SR Serbia and Montenegro, has been transferred to federal, Yugoslav level with new contents and different bases.¹⁵ This Initiative for the Revision of the Constitution of the SFRY, in fact, testifies about it.

It can be argued that, for this reason, Milošević and the ruling Serbian oligarchy have made a strategic mistake because they "misrepresented US attitudes and misunderstood messages and warnings from the beginning, inadvertently interpreted American motives and interests (...) and lived in the illusion that things could be ended in the field (in practice), and then the Americans and Europe will not have anything else but to agree with the new state of affairs".¹⁶ One of the reasons for such Milošević's relationship lies in the fact that Markovic's visit to the United States in October 1989, when he sought financial assistance of \$ 4 billion, was completely unsuccessful.¹⁷ However, the positive outcome of the visit was the meeting with Jaffrey Sacks, who was suggested to talk with to Markovic by SFRY Presidency President Janez Drnovsek. Sacks urged prime minister to make the Yugoslav dinar a convertible to solid currency what he accepted.¹⁸

On the other hand, Milošević was for long time perceived as a reformer of Gorbachev's type. In mid-March 1989, Lawrence Eagleberger, Assistant Secretary of State, spoke before the Senate Foreign Policy Committee and indicated that Milošević had good

¹⁵ Olivera Milosavljević, "Antibirokratska revolucija 1987-1989. godine", *Dijalog povjesničara – istoričara* 8 (2004): 319-335.

¹⁶ Živorad Kovačević, *Amerika i raspad Jugoslavije*. (Beograd: Filip Višnjić, 2007), 41-42.

¹⁷ Zimmerman. *Izvori jedne katastrofe*, 65.

¹⁸ Zimmerman. *Izvori jedne katastrofe*, 66.

views on the market economy and that his moves would have a positive impact on the central government.¹⁹ But the American initial lack of interest and the support of "communist reformers" did not remain as the basic principle of their political relationship with the former Yugoslavia, but over time shifted and expanded to sanction the problem, especially in the context of an aggressive attack on BiH. This is what Milošević did not count.

Bosniaks in the Eve of Dissolution

The only South Slav people, as certain intellectuals have argued, who did not have a plan or solution for the Yugoslav crisis were Bosniaks.²⁰ Certain reasons to give weight to this statement can be seen. The political leader of the League of Communists in Bosnia and Herzegovina, or the Bosniak representatives in it, was too Yugoslavian, so the idea of a state's failure was strange for them. On the other hand the particular political reflection on the position of its own people was considered nationalistic and hostile to the constitutional- legal order. Appreciation of the solution and positioning of the people and its policies within the Federation and possible political processes was, therefore, far from the political thought and action of Bosniaks within the League of Yugoslav Communists (LYC/Party).

Also, there was no significant critical mass that could raise the voice and stand opposite to the party's hawks. The existence of a living cultural scene in Sarajevo and elsewhere in the Republic did not have too much influence on the League of Communists of BiH (SK BiH). Precisely about this creative energy in BiH during the 1980s, which fails to change certain political relations, the distinguished Bosnian-Herzegovinian intellectual Ivan Lovrenović said a remarkable fact: "These miraculous eighties were an exciting time in which one sees and hears that monolithic regimes crunches and lifts but it is still holding and freedom is not yet won but it is on the move, we are already practicing it, and it is only a question of the day when it will become complete... ".²¹ The monolith was crushed slowly because of the lack of political avant-garde as it was the case with the sub/cultural scene.

¹⁹ Glaurdić. *Vrijeme Europe*, 37.

²⁰ Šaćir Filandra, *Bošnjačka politika u 20. stoljeću*, (Sarajevo: Sejtarija, 1998): 355.

²¹ Admir Mulaosmanović, *Iskušenje opstanka. Izetbegovićevih deset godina*, (Sarajevo: Dobra knjiga, 2013), 32.

Before the concrete moves were made by the resurgent Bosniak political factor, besides the overwhelming political conflict between Slovenia and Serbia and Markovic's activity, also the Fourteenth Congress SKJ (held in Belgrade from 20 to 22 January 1990) happened what produced conflict between the Slovene and Croats together with the Serbian communists, what sparked abandoning of the assembly hall of these first. By it, in fact, the disappearance of the unique LYC was happened and the opening of gates for a political alternative that has been waiting its moment.

Relatively shortly after the idea of establishment of MSUJ (Muslim Party in Yugoslavia) failed and new approach became successful (to start political movement based on the Bosniakhood instead of Islam religion), a press conference was held in the Sarajevo Holiday Inn Hotel (March 27, 1990), on which the SDA (Party of Democratic Action) was formed.²² It was about a year after Croatia's initiative to establish the first opposition parties, the Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ) and the Croatian Social Liberal Alliance, later the Croatian Social Liberal Party (HSL).²³ This act of the establishment of the SDA, formally defined as a party of Yugoslavia citizens belonging to the Muslim historical and cultural circle, was followed by the process of political organization of the Serb (on 12 July 1990, the SDS B&H) and Croat (18 August 1990, the HDZ B&H) people.²⁴ In the meantime on the Yugoslav level things were falling apart. Elections in Slovenia and Croatia have turned political processes in the radical direction. The Serbs in Croatia on amendments to the Croatian constitution adopted by the Croatian Parliament on July 25, 1990, responded by a nationalistic rally in small town Knin (Croatia), where according to media around 120,000 people gathered. About a month before that, June 27, a community of six municipalities was formed with Knin as the center what actually announced the Serbian uprising in Croatia. Same pattern was used by Bosnian Serb politicians a about year after.²⁵

After general elections in B&H (18 November, 1990) coalition of winning people's parties was formed. Significant issues have already been raised at the one of the first sessions of the Bosnian Presidency,

²² Interview with Muhamed Čengić, 15. July, 2011. (U arhivi autora)

²³ Glaurdić. *Vrijeme Europe*, 77.

²⁴ Ivo Lučić, "Bosna i Hercegovina od prvih izbora do međunarodnog priznanja", *Status* 12, (2007): 189-204.

²⁵ Glaurdić. *Vrijeme Europe*, 87.

which affected political relations in B&H. The money supply from Serbia has disrupted the financial and economic flows throughout Yugoslavia and there was a need to find an adequate solution. Another important thing was to harmonize the principles that will lead Alija Izetbegovic in the upcoming talks on future of the state of the leadership of the Yugoslav republics in Belgrade.²⁶ The Yugoslav situation was burdened, in addition to the Serbian invasion and appropriation of funds, by the adoption of the Croatian Constitution on December 21, 1990 as well as by the Slovenian referendum. Pre-Christmas celebration Slovenia sought to embellish by a referendum on the secession of December 23, but in this period was held another round of elections in Serbia over which Milošević won, the said declaration of the Croatian constitution; the proclamation of the Statute of the Serbian Krajina in Croatia. These three things - the Slovene referendum, Serbian insurrection, and the Croatian constitution - to certain political scientists stand out as key moments in the collapse of Yugoslavia.²⁷

The negotiations that started at the Yugoslav level had a strong influence on Bosnia and Herzegovina. Izetbegovic clarified topics in talks, inter alia, he had with the Croatian and Serbian sides in mid-January 1991. Main issue was the attitude of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the future of Yugoslavia and Bosnians gave effort while were discussing it and tried to give contribution to peaceful solution. He said that in talks with Croats as well as with Serbs it was emphasized that the Yugoslav community should survive or try to define characteristics of the future community by avoiding federal or confederation dilemmas, federal states or state alliances, but all agree that there should be one unique army.²⁸

For Bosnia-Herzegovina's negotiating delegation, Izetbegovic as a leader should in the first place, look for the equal position of the republics. It was precondition for political stability. That's why political action was taken at the beginning of 1991. with a goal to reestablish shattered equal status of Bosnia and Herzegovina within SFRY. Explaining the reasons for initiating the process of adopting *the Declaration on Independence and Sovereignty* in Bosnian Parliament, Izetbegović also mentioned this as a powerful factor. The other thing that Izetbegovic seemed to be ignorant was the JNA (Army) position.

²⁶ Mulaosmanović, *Iskušenje opstanka*, 43.

²⁷ Glaurdić. *Vrijeme Europe*, 118.

²⁸ Alija Izetbegović, *Tajna zvana Bosna*, (Sarajevo: GIKOKO, 2005), 117.

Until the outbreak of the conflict, in April 1992, he tried to keep the Army in a neutral position or at least prevent it from being publicly acceded to the Greater Serbian concept. At the presidency session of June, 21 1991, attended by General Kadijevic, Izetbegovic pointed out what he considered important, and what two sides, the Presidency of the SR Bosnia and Herzegovina and the JNA, should do. He took care that "both the Presidency and the Army are in the standpoint of preserving Bosnian integrity and that the Army will oppose any attempt to violate Bosnian integrity in accordance with its constitutional obligations", and the other thing should be condemnation of the intrusion of paramilitary units from Croatia (Serb units) in the Bosanska Krajina - are about the invasion of Martić's specialists - that the Army will oppose such a case as any other attempt, "from whence to come".²⁹

That session of Bosnian presidency with presence of general Kadijević showed a complex situation Bosnia and Herzegovina was facing at the time. Radical approaches were triggered what endangered stability and introduced various scenarios for Yugoslav crisis. Most vulnerable republic was Bosnia and Herzegovina while most vulnerable ethnic group were Bosniaks. Situation in Macedonia was not easy but southern republic escaped deadly hug of Serb and Croat nationalists because there were no Serb-Croat issues. It was impossible to find common ground between all parties what minimized possibility of creating positive communication and cooperative environment.

Actually the last attempt to find a satisfactory solution to the Yugoslav problem was offered by Izetbegović and Kiro Gligorov, the Macedonian president, during the talks of the President of Yugoslav republics in Sarajevo on June 4, 1991, with the concept of *The Alliance of Sovereign Republics*. It seemed that the *Platforma* for the Establishment of Yugoslavia could be supported, and two days later it was also welcomed by the European Community. However, talks in Split/Croatia between same participants (June 12) showed that the verbal support of the *Platforma* by Tuđman and Milošević was only a media show. The Bosnian-Herzegovinian President of Presidency was aware that it would be difficult to reach an agreement, but he stressed

²⁹ Magnetofonski snimak sjednice Predsjedništva SRBiH sa generalom Veljkom Kadijevićem, održane u Sarajevu 21. juna 1991. Godine. U: Tomo Šimić, *Dokumenti Predsjedništva Bosne i Hercegovine 1991. - 1994. National Security and the Future (7/3)*, (Zagreb: Udruga Svetog Jurja, 2006), 14.

that *Paltforma* meets the demands of the 'West and East Bloc' in Yugoslavia.³⁰ Izetbegović believed that Western republics (Slovenia and Croatia) will be satisfied by more autonomy while Eastern (Serbia and Monte Negro) should fulfill their goals by survive of Yugoslavia.

Macedonian President Kiro Gligorov has characterized his cooperation with Izetbegovic as a co-operation of those who are in similar positions, so they are all related to each other. *The Alliance of Sovereign Republics* meant that all republics could become members of the Organization of United Nations (OUN), the military would be at federal level as well as a part of foreign affairs.³¹ Of all the republican presidents Izetbegovic worked best with Slovenian (Milan Kucan) and Macedonian (Kiro Gligorov) presidents. In one sense, it is understandable because there were no territorial pretensions and similar open questions among them. Izetbegovic acknowledged that Slovenia was definitely on the path of independence but even Yugoslavia without Slovenia could survive and represent good solution for Bosnia and Herzegovina and Bosniaks in particular. Milan Kucan confirmed Slovenian attitude and determination to James Baker during the June visit when he rejected the Izetbegović-Gligorov plan and once again emphasize Slovenian goal to separate from Yugoslavia.³²

Consequently, the Izetbegovic-Gligorov concept that was already known to the public did not receive support. The SDS BiH (Serbian Democratic Party led by Radovan Karadjic) leadership criticized this initiative and stated that "this Izetbegovic proposal was inadmissible and represents a further departure of Izetbegovic from the pre-election speech of a" reasonable federation".³³ The Serbian leaders, at thze first place Slobodan Milošević, considered that the *European Community* (EC) and *The North Atlantic Treaty Organization* (NATO) are working to accept the Izetbegovic-Gligorov plan of four republics (Slovenia, Croatia, Macedonia and BiH) and isolate Serbia and Montenegro. Borisav Jovic, member of the Yugoslav Presidency and strong supporter of Greater Serbian policy, therefore considered that "although the proposal is stupid, it should be accepted" and then

³⁰ Nikolić-Petrović. *Rat u Sloveniji*, 19.

³¹ Karabeg, Omer (2008): "Podela živog mesa /Intervju sa Kirom Gligorovom, 27. 2. 2008./". www.radioslobodnaevropa.org (pp. 10. 4. 2012.)

³² Zimmerman. *Izvori jedne katastrofe*, 165.

³³ Kolja Besarović, "Odbačena Platforma Gligorov – Izetbegović". *Javnost*, br. 34 (8. 6. 1991): 3.

evolve it into the Serbian concept.³⁴ By it Jovic meant about establishment of Serbian supremacy and hegemony.

Therefore the mid-1991 from Bosniak perspective opened gates of hell. Izetbegovic became aware of agreement between Tudjman and Milošević (Treaty of Karadjordjevo, March, 25 1991) about partition of Bosnia and Herzegovina while on the other side Bosnian Serbs began with their separatist moves by establishing autonomous regions on ethnic basis. The basic principle of Treaty of Karadjordjevo was mutual aid between Serbs and Croats – "the Croatian side will provide help for the constitution of the Serbian state, the Serb side will provide help the constitution of the Croatian state".³⁵ *The Platforma*, the last chance for Yugoslavia was rejected by key political figures so Bosniak leadership had huge dilemma what to do to keep situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina peaceful. Moreover it became big task when war started firstly in Slovenia than in Croatia what automatically retracted Bosnia and Herzegovina in political and even military turmoil after proclamations of independence (June, 25 1991).

Representatives of European Community (European Troika) successfully established three-month moratorium on July, 7 1991 on the decision on the independence of Slovenia and Croatia trying to stop military operations. For Milošević it was trigger for the creation of a Greater Serbia and he rushed to benefit from that situation through preparations at the ground. So, while the Slovenes, for their own reasons and interests, accepted this offer, Bosniaks remained on the position of an independent and equal BiH which is essentially undermined Milošević's plan. It is important to note that certain circles within the European Community considered that it necessary to re-examine the possibility of changing borders and that might be a viable option. Exactly on July, 13 1991, the Dutch government proposed the possibility of changing borders in Yugoslavia. Lord David Owen, one of the key international negotiators (EEC/EU co-chair of the conference for the Former Yugoslavia from August 1992) during Bosnian War regretted that this proposal promptly was rejected because it was worth to discuss about.³⁶

³⁴ Jović. *Poslednji dani SFRJ*, 338.

³⁵ Zapisnik sa sastanka predsednika Republike Hrvatske Franje Tuđmana i saradnika sa članovima Predsedništva Bosne i Hercegovine Nikolom Koljevićem i Franjom Borasom (Zagreb: 8. 1. 1992.). U: Nikolić. *Bosna i Hercegovina u vreme raspada SFRJ 1990-1992*, 67.

³⁶ David Owen. *Balkanska odiseja*. (Zagreb: Hrvatska sveučilišna naklada-Hrvatski institut za povijest, 1998), 66.

At that time one of the goals of Bosniak politics was to enable cooperation among them and Serbs, on both ethnic and state level. Reason was very simple, to ensure security because media propaganda against Bosnia, Bosniaks and Islam reached high level while political threat from Milošević regime was essentially dangerous. Hostility was main platform for Greater Serbian politics and Bosniaks started to suffer from imposed guilt for political development in Yugoslavia. In that narrowed political space, former SDA officials, and then MBO (Muslim Bosniak Party) leaders Adil Zulfikarpasic and Muhamed Filipovic tried to implement, as they themselves called, *the historic agreement* between Serbs and Bosniaks. The MBO officials (which was basically not a significant political factor in BiH), initiated talks with the top of SDS (Karadjic, Krajisnik and Koljevic) in mid-July 1991, as they said, to preserve peace in BiH. Zulfikarpasic, as the creator of the idea, said: "When I saw that we went into an open conflict with the Serbs, I went to Alija and asked him if he saw it (that conflict with Serbs are approaching), whether the guarantees of a world powers and whether there are any contacts with the Army, some agreement with Kadijevic, he have answered me negatively".³⁷

Prior to the idea of a Serb-Bosniak agreement, Zulfikarpasic advocated the joint performance of Slovenia, Croatia and BiH towards Milošević, but when he realized that Tuđman was conducting separate negotiations with Milošević at the expense of BiH, he decided to try to prevent such negotiations between Bosniaks and Serbs.³⁸ Talks (the historical agreement) were held under supervision of Alija Izetbegovic and he authorized Zulfikarpasic and Filipovic to represent Bosniaks. Main problem between negotiators was concept of the state, while Milošević and Serb side wanted to install federal state, Bosniaks were for confederal principle (Union of Sovereign Republics). Also, Izetbegovic's aim was to keep that agreement open to Croats what in Milošević's mind was totally unnecessary.

In Izetbegovic's subsequent interpretation, it is evident that he was concerned how the Croats of Bosnia and Herzegovina, but also the political establishment of Croatia would position themselves toward Bosnia and Herzegovina under those new circumstances. The

³⁷ Milovan Đilas and Nadežda Gaće, *Bošnjak Adil Zulfikarpašić*. (Zurich: Bošnjački institute, 1995), 184.

³⁸ Husnija Kamberović. *Hod po trnju. Iz bosanskohercegovačke historije 20 stoljeća*. (Sarajevo: Institut za istoriju. 2011), 269.

support he had from the HDZ BiH (Croatian Democratic Community) was subsiding, and after the publication of the Agreement (beginning of August 1991), Croat politicians in Bosnia and Herzegovina fought the same by calling it, among other things, the betrayal. One of them was Ivo Komšić, then vice-president of SDP BiH (Social Democratic Party), who reacted very sharply.³⁹ All that situation actually proved that Serbs wanted Bosniaks on their side while there are finalizing political issues with Slovenians and Croats which final outcome will be establishment of Greater Serbia. The "historical agreement" was also considered by Serbian leaders as a difficult political project. The most iconic among Serbian politicians, as well as the person who announced that the negotiations were successful (Nikola Koljević) how the Serbian side acted said: "It was, as you know, attempts, which I personally did not believe with Zulfikarpasić, to get a Muslim nation".⁴⁰

On August 14, 1991, Slovenes and Serbs achieve and expand the agreement from January of the same year, supporting the solution to the crisis based on the 'self-determination'. Slovenes agreed to stay out of the Serb-Croat conflict, supporting the creation of the Federation of Serbia, Montenegro, Macedonia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, but also refused international mediation in relations between Slovenia and Serbia, and in return for all this, they received Serbian support for their independence.⁴¹ In addition to the Serbian-Croatian Settlement which "assisted each other in the formation of their states on the historical aspirations of the two peoples" also happened to the Slovene-Serbian on the same basis. Late summer and early fall 1991 put Bosniaks in the front of strategically most important decision - to continue with democratic process and follow their goal, approaching to Western European democracies or to make an alliance with last European communist dictator. The choice was democracy.

Conclusion

Two-year period (1990-1992) between first democratic elections held in Yugoslavia and open attack and aggression on Bosnia and Herzegovina are crucial for understanding the collapse and fall of that

³⁹ Izetbegović. *Sjećanja*, 109.

⁴⁰ Zapisnik sa sastanka predsednika Republike Hrvatske Franje Tuđmana i saradnika sa članovima Predsedništva Bosne i Hercegovine Nikolom Koljevićem i Franjom Borasom: 63-64.

⁴¹ Glaurdić. *Vrijeme Europe*, 185.

socialist state. Economic crisis produced different approaches to stabilization what at the end brought political instability and hostility, at the first place between Slovenia and Croatia on one side versus Serbia on the other. Obsolete socialist political structure just enforced such development by acting irrationally and without agenda how to reform the state.

In that period Bosniaks were at the beginning of political organization. It was more than obvious that Yugoslavia was in great turmoil, nationalisms were awakened and possibility of conflict was on high scale. During the eighties Bosnia and Herzegovina experienced massive attack on its republican status what produced a lot of worries, especially for Bosniaks as a small nation. That's why the political party which was established (Party of Democratic Action with Alija Izetbegović as a President) required two political goals; equality of Bosnia and Herzegovina among other Yugoslav republics and equality of Bosniaks among other Yugoslav nations. Unfortunately, no one was ready to truly negotiate.

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