

## BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA – HISTORIC FACTS

This paper is intended to give contribution to the celebration of the 25<sup>th</sup> November – Day of Bosnia and Herzegovina statehood and, in this regard, it represents the objective scientific findings related to the history of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which confirms that Bosnia and Herzegovina is a permanent political, social, and historic category. Within the framework of the selected topic and the space, we shall present four major issues – social and scientific findings, such as: *ZAVNOBiH (Anti-fascistic Council of the National Defense of Bosnia and Herzegovina) and its historic relevance*, Communists and the issue of Bosniac ethnicity, Restoration and the escalation of the Great Serbian movement, and Planning of crimes and defense of Bosnia and Herzegovina.\*

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\* Numerous relevant references were consulted during the drafting of this paper, including the Archive of the Institute for Research of Crimes against Humanity and International Law of the Sarajevo University, and: E, Redžić, BOSNA I HERCEGOVINA U DRUGOM SVJETSKOM RATU, Sarajevo, 1998; Isti, OD ZAVNOBiH-a I POSLIJE DEJTONA, u: ZAVNOBiH - DEKLARACIJA O PRAVIMA GRAĐANA BOSNE I HERCEGOVINE, Zbornik radova istoimenog Okruglog stola, održanog u Sanskom Mostu, 1. jula 1999. godine, Glavni odbor SUBNOR-a, Akademija nauka i umjetnosti Bosne i Hercegovine, Skupština Opštine Sanski Most, Sarajevo 2001, str. 17-29; M. Filipović, DEKLARACIJA ZAVNOBiH-a O PRAVIMA GRAĐANA BOSNE I HERCEGOVINE KAO POVIJESNI DOKUMENT I KAO POLITIČKI PROGRAM, u: Zbornik radova istoimenog Okruglog stola ..., str. 31-41; M. Kreso, VRIJEME I USLOVI NASTAJANJA DEKLARACIJE O PRAVIMA GRAĐANA BOSNE I HERCEGOVINE, u: Zbornik radova istoimenog Okruglog stola ..., str. 51-60; REZOLUCIJA ZAVNOBiH-a od 26. novembra 1943, u: Zbornik radova istoimenog Okruglog stola ..., str. 127-151; M. Kreso, PLATFORMA NARODNOOSLOBODILAČKOG POKRETA OD 1941. DO 1945. GODINE - CILJEVI I REALIZACIJA, u: 60 GODINA OD ZAVRŠETKA DRUGOG SVJETSKOG RATA - KAKO SE SJEĆATI 1945. GODINE, Institut za istoriju, Sarajevo 2006, str. 175-194; Isti, VRIJEME I USLOVI NASTAJANJA DEKLARACIJE O PRAVIMA GRAĐANA BOSNE I HERCEGOVINE, u: ZAVNOBiH - DEKLARACIJA O PRAVIMA GRAĐANA BOSNE I HERCEGOVINE, Glavni odbor SUBNOAR-a BiH, Sarajevo 2001, str. 51-60. \* \* \* ZEMALJSKO ANTIFAŠISTIČKO VIJEĆE NARODNOG OSLOBOĐENJA BOSNE I HERCEGOVINE - ZAVNOBiH (1943.-1945.), Arhiv Bosne i Hercegovine, Sarajevo 1981.; R. Dizdarević, 60 GODINA ZAVNOBiH-a, Glas antifašista, SUBNOAR BOSNE I HERCEGOVINE, Godina VIII, Sarajevo, januar 2004, str. 6-11; S. Bandžović, TITOV ODNOS PREMA IZGRADNJI BOSANSKO-HERCEGOVAČKE DRŽAVNOSTI (1943.-1945.), u: TITO I BOSNA I HERCEGOVINA: REGIONALNI NAUČNI SKUP, Zbornik radova, Savez društava Tito u Bosni i Hercegovini, Sarajevo 2006, str. 99-128; S. Čekić, ODNOS NOP-A PREMA POČINJENIM ZLOČINIMA U TOKU DRUGOG SVJETSKOG RATA, u: TITO I BOSNA I HERCEGOVINA ..., Sarajevo 2006, str. 83-95; M. Pejanović, TITOVA VIZIJA DRŽAVNOSTI BOSNE I HERCEGOVINE U JUGOSLOVENSKOJ FEDERACIJI (1943.-1946.), u: TITO I BOSNA I HERCEGOVINA ..., Sarajevo 2006, str. 129-138; S. Čekić, AGGRESSION AGAINST THE REPUBLIC OF BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA – planning, preparation, and the execution – Institute for Research of Crimes against Humanity and International Law of the Sarajevo University, Sarajevo, 2004; Isti, GENOCID NAD BOŠNJACIMA U DRUGOM SVJETSKOM RATU, Dokumenti, Sarajevo, 1996; Isti, HISTORIJA GENOCIDA NAD BOŠNJACIMA, Sarajevo, 1997; V. Dedijer - A. Miletić, GENOCID NAD MUSLIMANIMA 1941.-1945, Zbornik dokumenata i svjedočenja, Sarajevo, 1999; Z. Dizdar - M. Sobolevski, PREŠUĆIVANI ČETNIČKI ZLOČINI U HRVATSKOJ I BOSNI I HERCEGOVINI 1941-1945., Zagreb, 1999; M. Zečević, DOKUMENTI SA SUĐENJA RAVNOGORSKOM POKRETU: 10. juni -15. juli 1946, knj. 1-3, Beograd, 2001; M. Minić, OSLOBODILAČKI ILI GRAĐANSKI RAT U JUGOSLAVIJI 1941.-1945, Novi Sad, 1993; B. Petranović, ISTORIJA JUGOSLAVIJE 1918-1998, Beograd, 1988; F. Jelić-Butić, USTAŠE I NDH, Zagreb, 1977; D. Bilandžić, HISTORIJA SOCIJALISTIČKE

Around the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, numerous and versatile historic forgeries are present based on political and ideological grounds, which present untruthful facts about the events in Bosnia and Herzegovina that they interpret without any foundation in the documents or the archives, and then they construe political truths applicable in current circumstances. Unfortunately, we are faced with the merciless abuse of science by scientists without any scruples or accountability, as well quasi-scientists. This is particularly characteristic for the Great Serbian intellectuals and politicians who build and establish foundations for the ideology, policy and the practice of crimes.

Considering the lies, deceptions, and forgeries of the Great Serbian intellectual (secular and spiritual) elite, it is necessary, for the sake of human, scientific, and historic truths and, dozens, thousands, hundreds of thousands and millions of victims of the Balkans during the last two centuries, to point out at important facts:

- first, Great Serbian state project, which is unfortunately the reality. The project is of Nazi and criminal character, because it, inter alia, contains two big mutually connected elements: conquering of somebody else's territories (*lebensraum*), including Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the extermination of peoples, that is, genocide, crime of all the crimes, including the genocide directed against Bosniacs in Bosnia and Herzegovina (to "finally resolve the Muslim issue"). Although it was militarily defeated in the WWII, when the political program of the Chetnic movement of Draža Mihailović and the Exile government in London, persistently supported by Allies, the Serbian great state project in the second half of the 80-ies of the last century was restored and it escalated in conquering wars and ample crimes against humanity and international law, including the genocide against Bosniacs in the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and

- second, the complexity of fighting for Bosnia, restoration of its statehood, and defense of its territorial integrity, sovereignty, and independence, especially during the WWII and around the end of 20<sup>th</sup> century.

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## 1. ZAVNOBiH and its historic importance

In its major part of the history, Bosnia, and its population, especially Bosniacs were stretched between huge ideological and political divisions in Balkans and European continent. The boundaries between the Western and Eastern Roman Empire went through Bosnia (Rome and Byzanth), eastern and western Christianity, as well as those that separated Venice, Austria and Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and Ottoman Empire.

Numerous crusade war and conquers against Bosnia, which exists for at least mid of the 10<sup>th</sup> century, and its autochthon Bosnian Church were started in the medieval times. Bosnia, as a respectable kingdom, successfully defended its state independence until the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Weak as the result of these wards and internal conflicts, and under the heavy attacks coming from the Ottomans, without any help from the Christian West, which was expected after the king Stjepan Tomaš was baptized and the coronation of Stjepan Tomašević with the Pope crown, Bosnia finally surrendered to the Ottoman power in 1463.

As the protruded Ottoman province Bosnia served as a polygon for further Ottoman conquers of Central Europe. After the Ottomans were defeated in the Vienna war (1683-1699), Bosnia became a borderline Ottoman province exposed to permanent attacks coming from Austria and Venice. In these wars, which continued throughout the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Bosnia managed with its forces to defend itself, and succeeded to win the crucial battle near Banja Luka in 1737.

During the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century, Serbia (in the east) and Croatia (in the west) constantly fought around Bosnia, while the Bosniacs were the element through whose rights and interests, the former two factors settled their aspirations and interests. Historically observed, as of the fall of the Ottoman power in 1878, until the present day, Bosnia is the key battleground and the victim of the confronting Serbian and Croatian nationalistic and great state interests. These are the programs and demands of the Serbian and Croatian hegemonic aspirations towards Bosnia and Bosniacs, with the objective to occupy Bosnia and incorporate it into Serbian or Croatia, and exterminate biologically and spiritually Bosniacs.

The conquering aspirations of the genocidal character from both western and eastern neighbors are present in Bosnia also in part of Serbian and Croatian historians and politicians. Serbian and Croatian nationalistic historiography and politics deny Bosnia as a state and Bosniacs as people. Denying Bosniacs, the representatives of such historic science and politics deny its history, culture, language, religion, tradition, ethnic background, identity, and status of nation.

Numerous crimes have been committed against Bosnia and Bosniacs based on this nationalistic ideology and great state projects, and the culmination was in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

With the fall and the capitulation of the monarchist Yugoslavia in April 1941, within the framework of fascistic occupation and the destruction of Yugoslavia in 1941, the so-called Independent State of Croatia was declared on the 10<sup>th</sup> April, which incorporated Bosnia and Herzegovina by the decision of the fascistic forces and the intention of the Croatia fascists. Peoples and citizens of Bosnia were not even consulted for such an establishment. Thus, Bosniacs were turned into the object of Croatia politics. Yugoslav Communist Party, with Josip Broz, did not recognize the capitulation or the occupation of Yugoslavia, and it defined the political platform and objectives of the liberation – liberation of the country from the fascism and national and social liberation of all peoples and ethnicities in Yugoslavia, and invited all the peoples and ethnicities to the Peoples Liberation War. Such objectives encompassed at the same time national and class character of the liberation, directed against the invader and its collaborationists, which facilitated the inclusion of largest groups of people in the combat. The essence of the platform of the Peoples Liberation movement in Yugoslavia during the WWII was best expressed by Tito: “Peoples Liberation War in Yugoslavia would not be so persistent and successful if the Yugoslav people did not see the perspective of defeating fascism, bourgeois establishment in Yugoslavia, system of calls exploitation and national **harassment ... Peoples Liberation War would remain only a phrase, even a deceit if it** did not include, in addition to overall Yugoslav purpose, the national purpose for every nation, and if it did not mean, in addition to the liberation of Yugoslavia, the liberation of Croats, Slovenians, Serbians, Macedonians, Albanians, Muslims, etc”.

The occupational regime resulted in the overall deterioration of living conditions, especially severe persecutions and expelling of population. This, and the mobilization of the main occupational forces in the Eastern front, reduction of the occupation density to the European average of 1 soldier to 1 square kilometer of the occupied territory, was used by the Communist Party to initiate the antifascist rebellion. Government of Kingdom of Yugoslavia in exile placed itself under the protection of Great Britain, after the capitulation was signed, and it did not respond to the call of the Antifascist coalition to organize the Resistant movement in the country. They waited in London for the fall of the Tripartite pact to take over the authority in Yugoslavia. The Chetnic movement Draža Mihailović joined other

collaborationists in fighting the Peoples Liberation movement,<sup>\*</sup> executing genocide against Bosniacs and other crimes against combatants and supporters of Peoples Liberation movement, and all other antifascists.<sup>\*\*</sup>

The Ustasha collaborationist regime relied more on the Nazi Third Reich and following their patterns, it engaged in persecution of non-Croatian population. The first victims of the Ustasha genocide were Serbians, Jews, and Roma, and in July the Islamic community strongly reacted and opposed to this. Those were well known Muslim resolutions, which were unique phenomenon during the WWII.

The basic form of the rebellion was the partisan war, which grew into the overall Liberation war against all the invaders and their supporters. The Peoples Liberation Army was established in 1942 with its first divisions and corps, and the crucial battles in 1943 strongly established the Peoples Liberation movement, whose platform was based on consistent internationalism.

During the antifascist war in Yugoslavia, 1941-1945,<sup>\*\*\*</sup> in addition to the liberation war against invaders and their supporters, the war was also fought for Bosnia and Herzegovina, as an independent federal unit (Republic). Bosnia and Herzegovina during that war “gave its absolute maximum ... Bosnia suffered the biggest casualties like destroyed villages, towns, farming infrastructure, property of our people in Bosnia and Herzegovina, most of human casualties...” (Tito, November 1945.). All, but the first quisling offensives, were in the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the biggest battles, such as *Neretva* and *Sutjeska*, which were the turning point in the Yugoslav frontline.

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\* Chetnics of Draža Mihailović and his formations cooperated with the German, Italian, Bulgarian occupational troops and authorities throughout the occupation period and they joined them in armed conflicts against the Peoples Liberation Army and the Yugoslav partisan units. They were supported by them in weapons, ammunition, food and other supplies, and the goals were to destroy the Liberation movement and support the invaders in maintaining the occupation. Chetnics made the arrangements with the Ustasha authorities on the cooperation with the aim of destroying partisans, and they jointly fought partisans.

\*\* Chetnics of Draža Mihailović, during the WWII (1941-1945), in accordance with the (great) Serbian ideology and politics and Chetnic program and goals of Chetnics units and movement, especially the *Instruction* by Draža Mihailović, carried out the genocide against Bosniacs and other forms of crimes against humanity and international law.

Chetnics, together with other occupying forces and under their command, fought the Peoples Liberation movement, they killed antifascists, activists, soldiers and members of the Peoples Liberation movement. They tortured, killed, slaughtered, hanged unprotected doctors, medical staff and even the wounded.

Chetnics commanders, in their propaganda and practices, were against not only Croatians and Bosniacs in the Liberation movement, but also Jews, accusing them of communism or partisan antifascism. Chetnics killed all the captured Jews antifascists.

\*\*\* War in Yugoslavia, 1941-1945, was primarily liberation war. Its liberation dimension is the initial and permanent characteristic, which has never been challenged. Peoples Liberation movement was on one side, organized by the Yugoslav Communist Party and Josip Broz Tito, and all the occupying forces of Yugoslavia and their collaborationists were on the other side, including the Ustasha movement of Ante Pavelić and the Chetnic movement of Draža Mihailović.

Antifascism in Yugoslavia, 1941-1945, with its victory established the civilization foundations of contemporary mankind. In this war, Yugoslavia, especially Bosnia and Herzegovina, had a signified and prominent position, giving a huge contribution to antifascist combat and the liberation of the country.

Bosniacs in Peoples Liberation War, equally with other peoples and forces made a single antifascist block, in which they opposed occupants and their collaborationists, and suffered huge losses on the genocidal background, and yet they secured the biological survival (without antifascist battles Bosniacs would not survive – Peoples Liberation movement helped them survive).

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On 25<sup>th</sup> November 1943, in Varcar Vakuf (Mrkonjić Grad), at the Founding Assembly the State Antifascist Council of the National Liberation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (ZAVNOBiH) was elected as the highest political representative of the (antifascist) Peoples Liberation movement in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

ZAVNOBiH worked in its three sessions: 25-26 November 1943 in Mrkonjić Grad; 30 June, 1-2 July 1944 in Sanski Most, and 26-28 April 1945 in Sarajevo. The Presidency carried out its functions between the sessions, as the highest authority in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Establishment of ZAVNOBiH was initiated by the Conclusion of the First Session of AVNOJ (*Antifascist Council of the Peoples Liberation of Yugoslavia*), as the highest political authority of Peoples Liberation war, held on 26-27 November 1942 in Bihać, to establish national (state) antifascist councils of Croatia, Slovenia, Serbia, Montenegro, Macedonia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina, and its establishment by building the network of peoples liberation boards, which by that moment covered more than 2/3 of the BiH territory.

By the *Resolution* of the AVNOJ Founding Assembly, it was announced that AVNOJ was established as the highest representative body, expression of unity in the combat for final liberation and the full freedom and equality. The *Proclamation* talked about “free national units” in the Yugoslav state, which specifically mentioned Bosnia and Herzegovina and three nations “Serbs, Croats, and Muslims”.

Free territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina was about 30,000 km<sup>2</sup> and it made the axis of central free territory of Yugoslavia (at the time of establishment of ZAVNOBiH and the

restoration of statehood of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the free territory, in addition to Bosnia and Herzegovina, included also relevant portions of Croatia, Montenegro, and Sandžak), which stationed majority of the Peoples Liberation Army troops and the Supreme Headquarters and almost 300,000 combatants, divided into 27 divisions and 9 corps (Peoples Liberation Army of Yugoslavia and partisan detachments of Bosnia and Herzegovina were in 2 corps, 6 divisions, 23 brigades, 25 detachments, and several independent battalions). Military areas of the 3<sup>rd</sup> and the 5<sup>th</sup> Corps secured the free territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina, along with 29<sup>th</sup> divisional military area together with 15 military regions and around 50 command posts (with the fortifications, warehouse, hospitals, and partisan guards).

ZAVNOBiH and its activity, from 1943 to April 1945, is the most important event in the history of Bosnia and Herzegovina. With its *Resolution* at the Founding Assembly and the Proclamation to Peoples in Bosnia and Herzegovina, in the night 25/26 November 1943, ZAVNOBiH, after 480 years, restored the statehood of Bosnia and Herzegovina, confirmed its historic and political and state-legal individuality and it established the federal Bosnia and Herzegovina (practically a state), which is the most relevant legacy of the antifascist war. This is a historic date – Day of statehood of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

By not wanting to go back and reaffirming the platform of the Peoples Liberation movement, *ZAVNOBiH Resolution* condemned the Government of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia in exile and their cooperation with the aggressors,\* and the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina denied every right of that Government and the King to represent them, and

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\* Politics of the Government of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia in exile served the interests of aggressors of Yugoslavia, because they are in favor of the idea “that it was not time to fight aggressor” (which was contrary to the invitation of antifascist coalition to organize resistance in the occupied countries), which was the main motto of the fascist, collaborationist, traitor, and genocidal Chetnic movement of Draža Mihailović, supported for long by Allies.

Government in exile in London welcomed the Colonel Mihailović, declared the Chetnic movement as the Army in Homeland and glorified Chetnic movement and its alleged contribution in fighting the aggressor, thus intentionally misleading the Allies and the public about its alleged contribution to the overall fight of the Yugoslav people. All the fights by the partisan units, which only fought the aggressor, they credited intentionally to the Chetnic movement.

Units under the command of Draža Mihailović alone or together with other aggressor and quisling units, constantly fought Peoples Liberation Army of Yugoslavia. Government in exile credited the fight of the Peoples Liberation Army to the Chetnic movement, and kept advising Chetnics that it was not the time to fight aggressor. Abusing the results of the Peoples Liberation Army, Government in exile managed to secure the financial and military support for the Chetnics movement, which was used by Chetnics in fighting Peoples Liberation Army and soldiers who fought on the side of the Allies. The government in exile is responsible for misleading the world public about the situation in Yugoslavia, which intentionally deceived the Allies in order to maintain its position. They did everything to prevent the truth from reaching the world, because the truth would invoke losing of the position. In this way, they created the false image of the situation in the country and its contribution to the Allies. But, this political game about the Chetnic movement was played with the knowledge and under the control of primarily Great Britain British, and then United States of America.

asked the Allies<sup>\*\*</sup> to withhold any support to King and the Government, and expressed their will to rearrange the Yugoslavia as the state of equal nations and ethnicities and create a new democratic federative Yugoslavia, which will guarantee full equality to all its peoples, especially that the liberated Bosnia and Herzegovina become free and unified in which the full equality is guaranteed to Serbs, Muslims/Bosniacs, and Croats. On that occasion, it was stated that peoples in Bosnia and Herzegovina “wanted their country, which is neither Serb, nor Croat, nor Muslim but rather Serb and Croat and Muslim country, to be free and unified in which the full equality of Serbs, Muslims, and Croats will be secured”, and that peoples in Bosnia and Herzegovina will equally participate with other peoples in building of the federative Yugoslavia.

The fight for Bosnia and Herzegovina as the independent federal unit (Republic) in WWII was pursued under the severe conditions of occupation and collaboration, genocide, Peoples Liberation war and the liberation of the country. The emerging of the federal Bosnia and Herzegovina within the Yugoslav state was followed with the controversial attitude within the mere leadership of the Peoples Liberation movement. Namely, some “leading comrades” did not have clear position on this matter. Several members of the Central Committee of the Yugoslav Communist Party was in favor of the idea that Bosnia and Herzegovina has the status of autonomous province, rather than status of equal federal unit, whereby they thought of “*autonomy attached to the Republic of Serbia*”. This position, whose holders were Moša Pijade, Milovan Đilas and Sreten Žujović was based solely on national approach (“the number of nations – the number of federal units”), which basically meant disregarding of one nation, that is, Bosniacs, and this position was in contravention of official practice of Peoples Liberation War in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Sandžak.

The discussion about the number of federal units during the preparation for AVNOJ session in Jajce was held in the Central Committee. In the first Draft of the Decision, as proposed by Milovan Đilas, based on Soviet model: five national Republics for five Yugoslav nations (Serbians, Croatians, Slovenians, Macedonians, and Montenegrins), which was in

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<sup>\*\*</sup> Allies and the Government in exile sent a huge moral, political, and military support to the Chetnic movement of Draža Mihailović. At the same time, Chetnics received military and other support from both Government in exile and Allies, and German and Italian occupants for their fight against Peoples Liberation Army and partisan detachments in Yugoslavia.

Long-term strategic interests of Great Britain and United States of America towards Serbia and Balkans, and political and ideological reasons, played a key role in tolerating the collaboration of the Chetnic movement of Draža Mihailović, giving support in weapons, although Allies knew that the weapons was used in the operations involving Germans and Italians in fighting Peoples Liberation movement, which was the only force here against the aggressor. The British military mission and the American intelligence officers were in the headquarters of Draža Mihailović (British mission remained in Chetnic headquarters until late 1944, and the Americans remained until January 1945).



contravention of official practice of Peoples Liberation War in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Sandžak, five federal units were envisaged, whereby Bosnia and Herzegovina was scheduled to get the status of autonomous province within one of the two strongest Republics. As there was no consensus which Republic would get it – Serbia or Croatia, it was proposed that Bosnia and Herzegovina gets direct link with the federal institutions.

Energetic discussions about the future state position of Bosnia and Herzegovina were held in the Province Committee of the Yugoslav Communist Party for Bosnia and Herzegovina. Joining Bosnia and Herzegovina to the federal unit Serbia or Croatia was not acceptable as the final solution. The idea that Bosnia and Herzegovina as autonomous unit is directly linked with the federal institutions of the Yugoslav federation, with somewhat less rights than the other federal units, was not accepted as well. Arguments of the Province Committee of the Yugoslav Communist Party for Bosnia and Herzegovina that Bosnia and Herzegovina has to be a separate unit, equal to other federal units, were not accepted by all the members of the Central Committee who took part in the discussions.

In the eve of the founding session of ZAVNOBiH, long and exhaustive discussions were held about the future constitutional status of Bosnia and Herzegovina between the representatives of the Province Committee of the Communist Party for Bosnia and Herzegovina, Rodoljub Čolaković and Avdo Humo, and Milovan Đilas, Sreten Žujović and Moša Pijade, members of the Central Committee. Province Committee of the Yugoslav Communist Party for Bosnia and Herzegovina unanimously and firmly held the position that Bosnia and Herzegovina may only have the status of equal federal unit within the federative Yugoslavia. Moša Pijade, Milovan Đilas and Sreten Žujović thought that Bosnia and Herzegovina may only be the autonomous province, not the federal unit.

With the concept of Bosnia and Herzegovina as the federal unit in the federative Yugoslavia, according to Avdo Humo, he was in early November 1943 along with parts of the Province Committee of the Yugoslav Communist Party for Bosnia and Herzegovina (Rodoljub Čolaković, Avdo Humo) along with several respectable politicians from Eastern Bosnia on his way to Jajce, where the Supreme Command and the Central Committee were. Having arrived to Jajce, they received the draft decision by which Bosnia and Herzegovina was supposed to be established as autonomous province directly linked with the Yugoslav federation. This draft decision was contrary to the concept of Province Committee of the Yugoslav Communist Party for Bosnia and Herzegovina and political platform of the liberation war, and therefore the discussion were held with some members of the Central Committee (Moša Pijade, Sreten Žujović,

Milovan **Đilas**, and Edvard Kardelj). Central Committee members, except for Kardelj **who agreed with Čolaković** and Humo, were of the opinion that Bosnia and Herzegovina cannot be Republic, **“because there is no Bosnian-Herzegovina nation and the Republic is a national category. Moreover, they doubted the definition of Muslim as nation, not believing that even in socialism Muslim could develop to a nation ...”**.

Olga Humo (wife of Avdo Humo) wrote in late 2001 that during the preparation for the Second Session of AVNOJ, while she typed the documents, she was aware of the events surrounding this event, adding that Avdo Humo **“together with Rodoljub Čolaković** came from Eastern Bosnia to the AVNOJ session. First discussion related to this session, two of them had with **Moša Pijade** who prepared proposals and materials. As for the status of Bosnia there were two proposals. First was to divide Bosnia and Herzegovina between Serbia and Croatia, but **Đilas** asked that eastern Herzegovina be joined with Montenegro. The second proposal, defended by **Moša Pijade**, was that BiH gets the status of autonomous province. As for this proposal, it remained unclear where would this province go, to Serbia or Croatia. Serbians wanted it for themselves, and Croats defended that position that it should have belonged to them, given the circumstances that two provinces were already scheduled for Serbia”.

Province Committee of the Yugoslav Communist Party for Bosnia and Herzegovina refused those two proposals for the future establishment of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Though Kardelj accepted the position of Province Committee of the Yugoslav Communist Party for Bosnia and Herzegovina, Pijade, Žujović and Đilas remained with their positions. That is the reason why the leadership of the Province Committee of the Yugoslav Communist Party for Bosnia and Herzegovina went to see Tito, as suggested by Kardelj, and informed him about their dissatisfaction, disagreement and arguments. The discussion with Tito lasted for four hours. On that occasion, Avdo Humo talked about ethnic and historic reasons in favor of Bosnia and Herzegovina as Republic, and Rodoljub Čolaković supported him.

Tito **“adjudicated”** – and accepted the concept of Province Committee of the Yugoslav Communist Party for Bosnia and Herzegovina about Bosnia and Herzegovina as an equal federal unit and stated: **“Bosnia and Herzegovina has to be equal Republic at least as much as Serbia and Croatia are. The other, Muslims have to absolutely equal nation, inasmuch as Serbs and Croats in Bosnia and Herzegovina”**.

Tito, in terms of constitutional status of Bosnia and Herzegovina, unlike **“some leading comrades”**, never had any doubts. He confirmed that on the occasion of his visit to Bosnia and Herzegovina in November 1979, when he also stated: **“*Bosnia and Herzegovina***

*cannot belong to this or to that, but to peoples who have ever lived here. Anyway, no one gave this to them as a gift, they fought for it during the peoples liberation war in which they massively took part. It was the only possible and blessed solution, not only for the peoples in Bosnia and Herzegovina, but also for our community. In the past, Bosnia and Herzegovina was also a stumbling point. With our peoples liberation war, it got rid of it’.*

With the Republic status, it was necessary to prevent the division of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and make of it “miniature model of Yugoslav integration”. There was dissatisfaction among some circles in Serbia due to the establishment of the federal Yugoslavia and the new formula of inter-ethnic relations. That is the reason why Blagoje Nešković, President of the Main peoples liberation board of Serbia, in November 1944, less than a week following the Agreement Tito-Šubašić on the establishment of single government of Democratic Federative Yugoslavia (1 November 1944), at the Great antifascist peoples liberation Assembly of Serbia reacted: *“Is it because there are Serbs in Bosnia, Herzegovina, and Croatia, and their mixtures with Croats and Muslims, that we should convert all the Croats and Muslims to Serbs? Is this the matter of Serbs from Serbia to impose Serbs in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia their dissolution from Croats and Muslims, when their community is so tied with theirs like their houses which are on the same soil, when they created during this three-year war their brotherhood and unity”.* Some remarks were also heard in Croatia. At the Assembly of ZAVNO Sandžak in March 1945, under the pressure of higher authorities, the decision was made to disband ZAVNO Sandžak and to divide the territory of Sandžak between the federal units of Serbia and Montenegro. According to the records, that meeting pointed out that there were four nations in Yugoslavia: Serbs, Croats, Slovenians, and Macedonians, with four federal units, and based on *“special reasons”* two more federal units were created: Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro.

At the Second ZAVNOBiH, 1 July 1944, the session adopted *Declaration on the rights of citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina*, which falls in the group of the highest degree documents in the world. Declaration from Sanski Most, preceded by three years *Universal Declaration on Human Rights*, and it was on the same level. Decisions and other documents adopted at the Second ZAVNOBiH session had far-reaching effect for the building of statehood of Bosnia and Herzegovina and further building of peoples authorities. ZAVNOBiH was established as the highest legislative and executive authority, the highest authority of the state authority, as the only representative of the peoples sovereignty. It was decided that ZAVNOBiH Presidency has executive powers. Second

ZAVNOBiH session declared Bosnia and Herzegovina a federal unit in the Democratic Federative Yugoslavia. ZAVNOBiH authorities became the holders of the Bosnia and Herzegovina statehood.

Building of Bosnia and Herzegovina statehood, intensified after the Second ZAVNOBiH session, entered a higher level of organization in early 1945. The expedited development of Bosnia and Herzegovina as the federal unit within Democratic Federative Yugoslavia took place especially after the liberation of Sarajevo, 6 April 1945, where the main seat was of the ZAVNOBiH Presidency and other state authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina. At the Third, Sarajevo session, ZAVNOBiH grew into the Peoples Assembly of federal Bosnia and Herzegovina, as the highest legislative and representative authority of peoples in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and it established the Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as the highest executive and the commanding authority. With the establishment of *Peoples Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina* and *Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina*, and the declaration of peoples boards, as territorial authorities, the federal Bosnia and Herzegovina got its full organization required for the peacetime living conditions.

During the antifascist war, there was a crucial change in the political relations in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Antifascist war against the occupants and their collaborationists could count only on the success if all the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina and all the peoples living there were convinced that the war would bring them equality and freedom. That was the decisive factor, which orientated the political life and opinion in Bosnia and Herzegovina towards the common, not the partial political goals. The position stem from this fact that Bosnia and Herzegovina and its citizens, peoples living in it, may be free and equal only if Bosnia is equal to other countries, which emerged from the antifascist war. Thus, the dominant position appeared that the war against fascism and the fight for equality of citizens and peoples in the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina is possible an efficient only if the Bosnian state is restored and all its peoples equal. This political platform had an absolute and unchallenged support of all the antifascist forces in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the representatives of all its peoples who on 25<sup>th</sup> November 1943 adopted the famous *ZAVNOBiH Resolution*, which restored the statehood of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as the single state of Serbs, Croats, and Muslims (Bosniacs).

*ZAVNOBiH Resolution* and the emerging of Bosnia and Herzegovina constitute key date in the recent history of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the basis which facilitates the complete independence of Bosnia and Herzegovina. ZAVNOBiH is a proof that the common living is not only possible but also logical in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and that their common

state can only function for the good of all and as such it can provide good results. Thus, ZAVNOBiH as of 1943 is the most important date in our history, the date which confirms millennium long history of Bosnia and it serves as a model for the development of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which secures full equality and freedom to all its peoples. Independence of Bosnia and Herzegovina (1992) is only a logical consequence and the result of what the history of Bosnia and Herzegovina presented, and for what ZAVNOBiH secured essential political and constitutional prerequisites. The legacy of Peoples Liberation war and antifascist war in the WWII were important foundation of the defensive war 1992-1995 against fascism, aimed at preservation of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

## 2. Communists and the issue of Bosniac ethnicity

Yugoslav communist movement has never managed to articulate clear, generally acceptable, and respectable position towards Bosniacs. Different positions, reserves, inconsistency, denial, “nationalization”, mistrust and different perspective in reference to taking positions in the high Communist party bodies were always present, even during the 70-ies of the last century when the Bosniacs were official recognized as nation under the name of *Muslims*.

Ideological fatality and the nationalistic positions of certain leading Yugoslav communists, as well as permanent prejudice towards Bosniacs and Islam, were along with the Croatian and Serbian (mis)understanding, denial (of Bosnia state and Bosniac ethnicity) and claiming Bosnia and Herzegovina, the burdening factor for correct understanding of ethnic issue of Bosniacs.

Communist movement in the monarchist Yugoslavia, embodied in Communist Party of Yugoslavia, did not have a clear position towards the ethnic issue of Muslims/Bosniacs. It was in fact completely divided in this regard, with the supremacy of those forces that did not recognize ethnic position of Bosniacs, but they saw it as a religious group, “which needed to make an ethnic option in the Serb or Croat direction, not as a third ethnic group in Bosnia and Herzegovina”. Communists did not, “either time-wise, or tactic-wise, or the strategic-wise” captured the Bosniac ethnic issue, by the analogy of the Serbian, Croatian, Macedonian or Slovenian. In this regards, they considered that Bosniacs as “undetermined”, and/or “without ethnic awareness”, needed to become Serbs or Croats or both Serbs and Croats. Not even the Fifth State Conference of Communist Party of Yugoslavia (1940), did present the harmonized position towards the Bosniacs. At that time, the Communist Party

assessed that the biggest number of Bosniacs “was mainly determined as a confession, not ethnicity”, which was particularly pushed by the party functionaries Serbs and Montenegrins, especially Milovan Đilas, who was in favor of the thesis that Muslims were not a formulated nation, but are either Serbs or Croats.

Bosniac communist intelligence was the only one that among the Bosniac people and the unity of the communist party in the eve of the WWII reached awareness on the ethnic being of Bosniacs and constituent specifics of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The communist movement placed the emphasis at that time on the Bosnian being and individual territorial-political unit of Bosnia, that is, independent territorial and historic individuality of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Communist movement, at the beginning of the armed rebellion against the occupants and their collaborationists (1941) in majority of its proclamations to *peoples and citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina*, in addition to Serbs and Croats, addressed Bosniacs as *Muslims* (with capital M) as a separate nation. During the Peoples Liberation movement and the antifascist war, the communists held the position that the Muslims/Bosniacs equally with other nations and forces made a single antifascist block, which was reflected in the establishment of Muslim units of the Peoples Liberation movement (Muslim brigades, battalions, and detachments).

“Muslim issue” was more seriously considered before the Peoples Liberation war and the socialist revolution due to the potential and desired allying that would make the antifascist block bigger and stronger, not the desired ethnic conversion of Bosniacs in the revolution, as it was the case with other nations. Yet, there was no essential or radical change in the theoretical position towards Bosniacs among the communists during the WWII.

The fundamental documents of the Second AVNOJ session, held in Jajce on the 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> November 1943, where among other things, AVNOJ was established as a supreme legislative and executive authority of Yugoslavia and the executive body of AVNOJ – National Committee of Liberation of Yugoslavia (NKOJ), whose president was Josip Broz Tito, unfortunately did not mention Muslims/Bosniacs. By the *Decision on building Yugoslavia on the federative principle* it was decided to build Yugoslavia on the federative principle, “which will secure full equality of Serbians, Croatians, Slovenians, Macedonians, and Montenegrins, that is the peoples of Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia, Macedonia, Montenegro, and Bosnia and Herzegovina”.

Two different criteria were used for building Yugoslavia on the federative principle, based on which they established five federal units. Five federal units (Serbia, Croatia,

Slovenia, Macedonia and Montenegro) acquired their status within Democratic Federative Yugoslavia based on national principle. Every of five officially recognized nations (Serbians, Croatians, Slovenians, Macedonians, and Montenegrins) got (their respective) federal national-political community, that is, Republic with the majority nation.

The sixth federal unit – Bosnia and Herzegovina did not get its federal status based on national criterion, but was rather seen as the historic community (with historic and state-legal continuity and/or. territorial-political tradition) that is, Republic with two officially recognized ethnicities (Serbs and Croats). Thus, Bosnia and Herzegovina was based on national equality of Serbs and Croats. In this way, the position advocated by Moša Pijade, Milovan Đilas and Sreten Žujović, got its full impact in the wording of the decision on building Yugoslavia on federative principle.

At the Second AVNOJ session, Muslims/Bosniacs were not officially recognized as a separate political nation, as it was the case with Serbs, Croats, Slovenians, Macedonians, and Montenegrins. In this way, by the Decision on building Yugoslavia on federative principle, the Muslims/Bosniacs, or the third majority nation, were excluded from the future Yugoslavia. The decision ignored the specific practice in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the fundamental ZAVNOBIH document, as well as the fact that it represented an important factor in two already designed provinces (Bosnia and Herzegovina and Sandžak), and that in the course of 1941 the Main headquarters of the peoples liberation detachment were established for those province; and also that in accordance with the decision of the Founding Assembly of AVNOJ in Bihać – the selection of the highest political-representative bodies of those provinces was scheduled – the state antifascist councils.

Clear and categorical *ZAVNOBiH Resolution*, dated 25 November 1943, on Bosnia and Herzegovina, “brotherly state”, “which will secure full equality of all Serbs, Muslims, and Croats”, AVNOJ in Jajce did not accept without giving any explanation. This was apparently the confrontation between the decisions of the Bosnian and Yugoslav war assemblies. Namely, ZAVNOBiH and AVNOJ have opposite positions in reference to Bosniacs. Political status of a nation, known as *Muslims*, which was recognized to Bosniacs during ZAVNOBIH was denied at AVNOJ. Bosnia and Herzegovina, as a compromise, got the status of equal Republic, but Bosniacs were not recognized political status of a nation, whereby in the future social development they should choose between Serbs and Croats.

The supremacy of national over historic-political criterion, which was the position during the establishment of communist federative Yugoslavia, risked the equal federal status

of Bosnia and Herzegovina and left the space for future divisions between Serbs and Croats and/or Serbian and Croatia.

Failing to consider ZAVNOBiH *Resolution* dated 25 November 1943, as well as ZAVNO Sandžak dated 20 November 1943, risked the authenticity of the Platform of the Peoples Liberation movement. Dishonorable action which prevented the delegation of ZAVNOS to take part in the Second AVNOJ session also confirms it.

Chief interior opponent of the Platform of Peoples Liberation movement in the WWII was the Serbian cultural club and the Chetnic Ravna Gora movement of Draža Mihailović. The leading people in the Serbian cultural club were very adamant during the fight for international recognition of the Democratic Federative Yugoslavia that his recognition is conditions with the change of Platform of the Peoples Liberation movement. Dr. Slobodan Jovanović and Dr. Živko Topalović did this by gathering the reactionary immigration, and Dr. Vasa Čubrilović, as “the Serbian-Croat” and “Slovenophile, without any party determination” within Single peoples-liberation front of Serbia. In this way, the Peoples Liberation movement, in addition to the war against the occupants and their collaborationists including Chetnics was imposed an important element of confrontation with the Government in exile, and through them with the interested forces of Antifascist coalition.

Peoples Liberation movement during the fight for international recognition of Democratic Federative Yugoslavia had to face positions, ideologies, and platform of the Serbian cultural club and the Chetnic Ravna Gora movement of Draža Mihailović, and it was ultimately forced by the international community to unify the “Kingdom and Peoples Liberation movement”. In this way, the Platform of the Peoples Liberation movement was significantly damaged.

*Decision* of the AVNOJ Presidency dated 21 November 1944, adopted at the session in Belgrade, was in contravention with the AVNOJ *Decision to build Yugoslavia on the federative principle* dated 29 November 1943, by which it was explicitly emphasized that “the national minorities will be secured all the ethnic rights”. With this, under the pressure of allies, the exception was made and it was disastrous, which ultimately compromised the adopted and pursued Platform of the Peoples Liberation movement.

Peoples Liberation movement, that is, National Committee of the Liberation of Yugoslavia and Josip Broz Tito were under the pressure and blackmailed with the recognition of legacy of the 4-year people liberation war because of the failure to recognize the Government in exile, which through its Army (Chetnics) in Homeland, cooperated with the



occupant forces at home and committed numerous crimes including genocide against Bosniacs.

After the Moscow conference and “fifty-fifty” agreement between Churchill and Stalin, then Soviet military domination in the Balkans, it was not only the failure to recognize the Government in exile as the partner in the single government of the Democratic Federative Yugoslavia, but also the clearly formulated Platform of the Peoples Liberation movement in terms of re-establishment of the country into the community of truly equal nations was risked. The return to the pre-war great-Serbian hegemony was prevented, federal state defined in the Second session in Jajce was defended, but nine federal units as envisaged in 1941 structure of command and control over the armed rebellion was missing (Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia, Montenegro, Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sandžak, Kosovo, and Vojvodina).

In the last year of the war, under the pressure of great Antifascist coalition, the Peoples Liberation movement of Yugoslavia had to accept some legitimacy to the Government in exile and divided, in the beginning, some authorities with them, which in 1944-1945, appeared as the establishment of “Single government of DFY”, by which the great-Serbian positions and interests infiltrated in the Peoples Liberation movement and the state authorities. This results in significant national imbalance in the structure of authorities, even the Peoples Liberation Army of Yugoslavia, which was renamed to Yugoslav Army on 1 March 1945.

This fact, around the end of 1944 and in 1945, under the influence of Serbian nationalists among the communists, conditioned a series of actions incompatible with the basic goals of the Platform of Peoples Liberation movement, such as – introduction of military administration in Vojvodina and Kosovo; - termination of federal status of Sandžak and its State antifascist council of peoples liberation and its division between Serbia and Montenegro, by which the Bosniacs of Sandžak were tricked and played, and Serbian expanded its territory, while Serbian nation got the state bigger than that from the time of Dušan (mediaeval) empire; - expelling of half a million of Germans and settlement of Serbians and in their homes in Vojvodina; - some Serbian politicians also proposed the termination of the Federation, and Macedonia hardly managed to avoid joining with Serbia – due to the demand for the unification of Morava-Vardar valley; - Bosniacs were denied ethnic status, and with the victory in the November elections, the multi party system was abandoned.

Political basis of the first elections in the new Yugoslav state (September 1945) did not recognize the ethnic status of Bosniacs. At the session of the Constitutional Assembly of Federative Peoples Republic of Yugoslavia - FPRY (29 November 1945 – 1 February 1946) the discussion was held on the demands of the peoples representatives to recognize Bosniacs the status of a nation and that this nation known as Bosniac is credited the separate torch (the sixth) in the state coat-of-arms\*, which would be the sign that the Bosniacs are equal subject together with other nations. It was necessary to insert the sixth torch and the symbol of the sixth federal unit. Unfortunately, the demands to recognize Bosniacs and strengthen the statehood of Bosnia and Herzegovina were not accepted (Milovan Đilas and Moša Pijade strongly opposed).

In the First FPRY Constitution (1946) communists did not recognize the ethnic specifics to Bosniacs. Bosniacs remained unaccepted, unrecognized, and limited to a religious group, which under the directing leadership of the great-Serbian and great-Croatian ideology needed to choose between those two options.

Bosnia and Herzegovina was the sixth Yugoslav Republic in the common federative state, in which five Yugoslav nations lived. This fact that five nations lived in six republics clearly suggests that Bosniacs in political terms were not equal with other nations of the Yugoslav socialist Federation.

Though communists, with Tito on top, reinstated Bosnia and Herzegovina as a state, Bosniacs were not returned their national-political rights. Up until the sixties and seventies of the last century, communists did no recognize Bosniacs the political status of a nation, denying them every specific national capacity, whereby they saw their future in the identification as Serbs or Croats. They were again denied as a nation and they could express themselves nationally. They were subjected to pressure of their “nationalization” in terms of Serbian, Croatian, Montenegrin or Macedonian origin and identity. With the Federal Constitution of 1974, Socialist Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina became constitutionally and politically equal with other republics. At the same time, Bosniacs were recognized as equal under the name of *Muslims* (with capital M), yet they were denied the geographic determination (by the state of Bosnia), as it was the case with Serbians and Croats thanks to their mother states (Serbia and Croatia). In this way, the ruling ideology imposed a

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\* In the state coat-of-arms, five nations as the continuity of the federal state were symbolized with one torch each (every ethnicity – Serbians, Croatsians, Slovenians, Montenegrin, and Macedonians – got one torch each) – and the sixth torch was not entered into the state coat-of-arms as the symbol of Bosniacs.

religious, not ethnic name to Bosniacs. So, they were left in the inferior position not to, given their number and size, raise the issue of majority in the state in which they live.

Bosnia and Herzegovina in the post war period (1945-1991), achieved a significant economic and cultural development on the foundations of the Peoples Liberation movement and the antifascist war, thus securing also the national affirmation of Bosniacs despite the fact that it was insisted during two decades on two nations (Serbians and Croatians) and marking of Muslims on the religious (not ethnic) background. Period of its renaissance facilitated the establishment of independent and sovereign state of Bosnia and Herzegovina. In extremely difficult conditions of aggression against the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the genocide against Bosniacs (1993), Bosniacs replaced the then religious basis of its identity (*Muslim*) with the historic identity, based in the existence of the state of Bosnia and its people Bošnjani – Bosnians – *Bosniacs*.

### 3. Restoration and escalation of the Great Serbian movement

The crisis of the Yugoslav socialist state (90-ies of the 20<sup>th</sup> century) definitely undermined decades-long and established great Serbian hegemony. Its direct executors and beneficiaries – officers, diplomatic, police, party personnel and apparatus, SANU, University, radio, TV and other media, felt jeopardized in their monopolistic positions. They declared the grown demands for genuine equality in the distribution of the powers and social functions, mainly achieved by the 1974 Constitution, as jeopardizing the Serbian people. Those great Serbian forces believed that the forthcoming confusion at the international level would facilitate to finally achieve their war goals, set during the 19<sup>th</sup> century (“all Serbs and Serbians in one state”).

Challenging the privileged position of Serbians, established during the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, throughout the new Yugoslavia caused resistance, which culminated by the attempt of Ranković to organize coup in 1966 and they often found the support in the goals of USSR. During the 70-ies, this was manifested as the resistance to the 1974 Constitution, during the preparation and immediately after it was adopted. It was primarily expressed in form of resistance to the genuine equality of non-Serbian peoples and ethnic minorities, as well as their two-component concept of armed forces. Only two years after its adoption, Draža Marković ordered the preparation of BLUE BOOK on “injustice towards Serbians”. With the death of Josip Broz Tito in 1980, an important integrating factor of SFRY disappeared. Already around the late 1981, Petar Stambolić threatened that the Serbians

would rely on its “power and number”, and he effectuated the BLUE BOOK the following year. Escalation of the restoration of the Great Serbian movement could not be stopped, especially after *Association of writers in Serbia* and *Serbian Academy of Science and Arts* came to life.

Frightened with the loss of such a substantive support, the other such integrating factor - JNA and its leadership (since 1982 Admiral Branko Mamula and his successor and protégé General Veljko Kadijević) started looking for solution of their own position. With the reorganization of the system of command and control and by suppressing the territorial component, the role of Armed forces was changed. Instead of defense from the outside enemy, with such reorganized armed forces, they wanted to impose themselves as the arbiter of the internal crisis. The support was found in similar tendencies of such forces in Serbia and USSR.

As of 1986, the political events in SFRY are characterized with open manifestations and strengthening of nationalism. That nationalism, generated in Belgrade in the Serbian intellectual, political and military leadership lead to the internal crisis in the state, which undermined the foundations of the socialist Yugoslavia and facilitated to, based on the great state project of “Great Serbia”, destroy the common Yugoslav state. Basically, this was a fascistic nationalistic program and nationalistic aggressive politics which burdens the Serbian people with the mythological history. The most renowned and complete program of that kind is contained in the understanding of SANU, “which envisaged and designed the Serbian nationalistic program”, especially in its Memorandum (program for establishment of “Great Serbia”, “nationalistic testament”, “manual of nationalism”), which “expressed the political thought that has deep roots and long tradition from **Garašanin** ‘**NAČERTANIJA**’ to **Moljević program** of ‘**HOMOGENOUS SERBIA**’”. That political thought “Understood and accepted Yugoslavia as expanded Serbia, for which the AVNOJ concept of defining the inter-ethnic relations on the basis of full equality of the Yugoslav peoples and their Republics in the common federation meant inequality of Serbians as the majority nation”. That is the reason why “the authors of the Memorandum condemned the AVNOJ decisions as ‘**anti-Serbian creation**’ and rejected the AVNOJ borders ‘because they destroyed the Serbian nation’ for which reason ‘the Serbian nation did not exercise the right to have its own state’”. They used “very difficult words” to describe the position of Serbians in Yugoslavia, and therefore concluded that “worse historic defeat could not be imagined than the one of the Serbians in Yugoslavia”, “so that the solution for the Serbian national issue ‘imposed as the

principal political issue””. They saw the solution in a new establishment of the Yugoslav state, which would secure the dominant position to Serbians, as the majority nation in the centralized Yugoslav federation. If this was not possible, the Serbians “would have to find another option – unification of Serbian ethnic space by creation of Great Serbia”.

Serbian nationalism, in accordance with its general concept turned towards the idea of Great Serbia, that is, unification of “Serbian states” and the enforcement of the policy “All Serbians in one state”. Serbian politics decided to execute its program related to the establishment of a single state for Serbian peoples - “state of all Serbians” at all costs, even with the use of weapons. It meant the direction of fascization and breaking of Yugoslavia, as well as forcible alteration of the Republic borders.

The radical nationalistic-fascistic group of Slobodan Milošević came to life on the political stage immediately after the 8<sup>th</sup> session of Central Committee of the Communist Party of Serbia (1987), which used the statements about the general jeopardy of the Serbians and program “all Serbians in one state”. As of then, the Serbian nationalism, nationalistic by character, became the state policy “supported” by Republic state apparatus, mass media, Serbian Academy of Science and Arts, Serbian Orthodox Church, Association of writers in Serbia, “famous Serbian nationalists and other until-yesterday communists”. In the summer and the autumn of 1988, the nationalistic-populist movement was organized for the purpose of spreading nationalistic indoctrination of the masses, and the so-called “anti-bureaucratic revolution”, that is, “bureaucratic anti-revolution”, as the mass gatherings were called which used the coup model to annihilate the legal and establish the rigid, centralistic, unlimited power, headed by the famous Serbian nationalists. “Everything was pushed aside, **workers’ strikes**, social dissatisfaction: Serbian-hood became a symbol of life and value of all the values. Meetings looked like national festivals”. Meeting mass was “brought in front of every state institution marked as the institution that had to be ‘destroyed’... That ‘selected army’ with Chetnic cockades above the heads of Njegoš, **Vuk, Slobodan Milošević** ... with blood-hungry mascots, mottos, posters, Komit hats, fiddles, knives in their teeth ... with the entire iconography of the darkest populist kitsch, adjudicated on the site with shouts, by welcoming and applauding to every curse, threat or verdict. Everything that was not in that crowd was declared traitors, enemy, anti-Serbian, immoral...”. **Patriotism** was “proven with the number of gathered citizens, and people felt as if they breathed freely for the first time. The state institution stopped to function: meetings were the strongest weapon in the

hands of authorities”. It continued with a “big dismissals of leading people in the committees, municipalities, companies, institutions. Members were particularly confused with the demagogic propaganda that Yugoslavia was jeopardized by all the other Yugoslav nations, but the Serbians, and that as **Ljubičić** envisaged, only Serbians and Yugoslav National Army could defend it! And this defense meant the death sentence for Yugoslavia. What else could it be if it meant that the Serbians and JNA would shoot at other Yugoslav nations who also created that Yugoslavia, and all that as if for the sake of Yugoslavia!”

Milošević nationalistic policy and practice of mass meetings and coup behavior (“bureaucratic anti-revolution”) replaced in Serbia, Kosovo, Vojvodina and Montenegro the legally elected leaderships and unwanted personnel. By the revision of the 1974 Constitution (adoption of the Constitution of Serbia, 28 September 1990), they revoked the autonomy of Vojvodina and Kosovo, and thus Serbia was the first one to declare secession and destroy the constitutional order of SFRY (coup against the federal Constitution) and even before the (multiparty) elections started with the process of establishment of Great Serbia. A collaborationist regime was then established in Montenegro. The process of hegemonization of Serbians was expedited, especially in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In that way, the Serbian nationalism fostered its positions in Kosovo, Vojvodina, and Montenegro, and by the change of ratio in federal institutions, primarily SFRY Presidency, JNA and Central Committee, it destroyed the federal fundamentals of SFRY and grew stronger in coming attempts to rearrange Yugoslavia according to its model.

Many combatants of the Peoples Liberation were transformed into the convinced nationalists, and their war veteran organizations mainly supported the conquering policy of the Serbian regime. “The last representatives of the partisan generation, which ruled Serbia for more than four decades, were removed from politics with the end of the 8<sup>th</sup> session”.

Serbian nationalism from the 90-ies started appearing not only as the traditional and anti-Semitic nationalism, with the platform defeated in the WWII, but also as the “legal nationalism” within the system and the Yugoslav communist party. Exactly that “party”, “communist nationalism” earned most credits for the finishing off of the socialist system and Yugoslavia. Many communist betrayed the idea, policy and practice of antifascism, by embracing nationalistic ideologies and the great state projects of the fascistic and genocidal character.

Serbian hegemonic concept which established Yugoslavia in 1918, survived revolution and almost half-century long rule of socialism, finally buried Yugoslavia. Due to the inability to get hold of the absolute influence in the SFRY Presidency and the Central Committee, Great-Serbian orientated politicians, at the 14<sup>th</sup> Congress (20-23 January 1990) destroyed Communist Party as the integrative factor of the Federation. By the termination of autonomy of Kosovo and Vojvodina, yet formally maintaining their votes in the SFRY Presidency, they tried to secure the possibility of over-voting all the others, which finally resulted in the paralyzing of the Presidency.

Turning the JNA General Headquarters into the General Headquarters of the SFRY armed forces (1988) and exclusion of Republics and Provinces from the system of command and control over the armed forces, the complete change in the command and control of the armed forces was executed. This action revoked the right of the Republics and Provinces to control the Territorial defense. Territorial defense was re-subordinated to the JNA Headquarters within their areas of their responsibility. Staging the crisis in the SFRY Presidency (March 1991), a series of coups was initiated in Yugoslavia. Branko Kostić finished them on 3 October 1991 with the coup in the SFRY Presidency.

In the service of destroying the federative Yugoslavia and the implementation of the great state project of “Great Serbia”, the fifth-column Serb Democratic Party of Bosnia and Herzegovina was most directly engaged. A series of activities was undertaken to destroy the constitutional order in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and planning and preparation for the genocide against Bosniacs. There is ample evidence about it corroborating the *subjective (mental) element of Genocide - intention (mens rea)* in commission of genocide against the Bosniacs in the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

#### 4. Planning of crimes and the defense of Bosnia and Herzegovina

In the general Yugoslav crisis, the sovereign Bosnia and Herzegovina and its authorities maintained the positions in all the discussions on the re-arrangement or dissolution of common state that it had to survive, irrespective of the form (federation or confederation), accepting also to the asymmetric options. Following the coup in the SFRY Presidency (3 October 1991) the Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina adopted on the 14<sup>th</sup> October *Memorandum (Letter of interest)* and *Platform on the position of Bosnia and Herzegovina and future establishment of the Yugoslav state*. Due to the specific situation of this multiethnic system, the condition of the survival within the Yugoslav community was that

Serbia and Croatia remain part of it. In the conditions of the silent occupation and The Hague Conference (from the 8<sup>th</sup> October, with the attempts of S. Vance, the Special Envoy to the UNSG), almost 100 days were waited for the result of the Conference and the position of the European community.

Unlike them, following the instructions of its employers in Belgrade and Zagreb, two of three coalition partners in the authority, without leaving their positions, intensified their fifth-column activity and destruction of Bosnia and Herzegovina on all levels.

With the Brussels *Declaration on Yugoslavia* dated 17 December 1991, based on the recommendations of the Badenteur (Robert Badenteur) Arbitrary commission dated 7 December, the dissolution of SFRY was stated and the Republic were invited to declare their position on the independence by the 23<sup>rd</sup> December 1991, with the promise that they would be recognized on the 15<sup>th</sup> January 1992. Bosnia and Herzegovina filed its *Application* and responded to the *Questionnaire* of the Arbitrary commission, and by that time, the working text of the Draft Constitution of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina was prepared.

It was only on that 15<sup>th</sup> January 1992 that the (new) *Report* of the Badenteur Arbitrary commission was published, in which it was stated that the establishment of Bosnia and Herzegovina as a sovereign and independent state was conditioned with the referendum of its citizens, as all the other requirements from the December Declaration of the European Community were met.

Based on that, the Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina adopted on the 26<sup>th</sup> January 1992 *The decision on referendum on the future status of the Republic*. Referendum was scheduled and held on the 29<sup>th</sup> February and 1<sup>st</sup> march 1992.

Thus, under the international control and conditions of the practical occupation of the country, achieved by the increase of density of JNA presence and illegally armed Serb armed formations, including criminal activities of the para-state creation *Croatian community of Herzeg-Bosnia*, aimed at “proclamation of the Croat state in Bosnia and Herzegovina” and its “joining to the Republic of Croatia”, refusal of municipalities where “saoization” (creation of Serb autonomous areas) was completed to take part in the preparations for the referendum, and the attempt to redefine the issue of the independence of Bosnia and Herzegovina by the Croatian Democratic Community for Bosnia and Herzegovina (so-called Livno issue) and other organized forms of the destruction of Bosnia and Herzegovina, a huge pressure on the voters was exerted. At the referendum, of 3,253,847 registered voters, despite the obstruction and the pressure from the Serb Democratic Party of Bosnia and Herzegovina



and the established illegal authorities of the Republic of Serb Bosnia and Herzegovina, in a significant number of municipalities, 2,073,568 or 64.31% voters responded. Positive response to the referendum question (*for sovereign and independent Bosnia and Herzegovina, stated of equal citizens, and nations in Bosnia and Herzegovina – Muslims, Serbs, and Croats, and members of other peoples who live in its*) was given by 2,061,932 or 63.95% of the total number of voters, which is 99.44% of the number who took part in the referendum (there were only 6,037 voters or 0.19% registered voters in Bosnia and Herzegovina against the referendum).\*

Following the referendum and rather long consultations with the allies, the European Community recognized on 6 April 1992 the independence and sovereignty of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the following day the United States of America did the same. Bosnia and Herzegovina was therefore internationally recognized and it acquired full state sovereignty and international-legal subjectivity. Political and administrative borders of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as one of the six federal units of the SFRY became international state borders.

Serbia and Montenegro and the Republic of Croatia, in conditions of the dissolution of Yugoslavia, whose basic positions lied on Nazi and fascistic ideology and politics, developed and shaped within the great state projects, and the reincarnation of the quisling forces from the WWII, and the creation of the collaborationist national-socialist creations (*Republic of Serb Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatian Community of Herzeg-Bosnia and Autonomous Province of West Bosnia*), executed in an organized and systematic way all the preparations (ideological, intelligence, political, military, media, legal, economic, etc.) for the aggression and other forms of crimes in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The objective of the aggression was to conquer and destroy the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina and exterminate Bosniacs. Numerous records – original documents of various proveniences – testify that those were planned crimes against humanity and international law.

These are the crimes which emerged on the fundaments of two nationalistic ideologies, two aggressive and genocidal strategies, two criminal politics, two great-state projects, two nationalistic movements, two states, two or better to say three collaborationist creations, two foreign armies, four collaborationist military formations and several other armed units and groups, including the foreign mercenaries (Russians, Greeks, etc.). Such a

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\* Referendum for sovereign and independent Bosnia and Herzegovina (29 February and 1 March 1992), organized on the basis of ZAVNOBiH, is a fundamental and crucial historic fact in the BiH statehood and the Bosniac political sustainability in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

criminal ideology, policy and practice, on the bases of fascism, had its objectives – establishment of great-Serbian and great-Croatian state on the account of independent and sovereign, historically permanent and clearly defined state of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The objective of that ideology, policy and practice was the invading war for the “living space”, and stealing of somebody else’s – Bosnian land.

Aggression against the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the genocide against Bosniacs are the essence of the joint criminal enterprise of the state Federal Republic of Yugoslavia – Serbia and Montenegro from September 1991 to the end of 1995, and the state of the Republic of Croatia, from the end of 1991 to the 18<sup>th</sup> March 1994, their state, military, and police leaderships, their fifth column, collaborationists and mercenaries in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Intention of that criminal act was to conquer, divide and destroy the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina as the state – and “final solution” of the Muslim issues – extermination of Bosniacs or their downsizing to insignificant ethnic group. All the relevant sources confirm that prior to the aggression against the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the genocide against Bosniacs, there was a well designed intention to commit all these forms of crimes.

To achieve this genocidal intention, following activities were undertaken: The constitutional concept of the SFRY defense was destroyed; Territorial defense of Bosnia and Herzegovina was reduced and disarmed as well as some other constitutive elements of the Federation; JNA was transformed from the antifascist and multiethnic armed force to the great-Serbian army; classic aggressive plans of the Army of the Kingdom of Serbia were tested against Bosnia and Herzegovina; Serbian and Croatian extreme nationalistic movements were restored and they escalated; methods, mechanisms and plans for the preparation of crimes were designed; principal agreement to destroy Bosnia and Herzegovina was achieved between the Heads of States of the neighboring countries - Pact **Milošević-Tudman** (March 1991); borders of great Serbia and great Croatia were defined; the fifth column was organized and armed (great-Serbian and great-Croatian) in Bosnia and Herzegovina; commands in the occupied territories were in the hands of the Heads of States of the neighboring countries – which appeared as the occupation force; initial positions for the aggression and other criminal activities were taken to facilitate efficient aggression and genocide against Bosniacs.

Aggression against Bosnia and Herzegovina was planned (politically, militarily, economically, media, intelligence, psychologically, etc.), with clear goals to destroy Bosnia

and Herzegovina. The responsible political and military leadership ordered the execution of this plan, and it was executed in an organized and systematic way. The aggressor states are known, then the ideologists, planners, organizers, order issuing authorities, executors, and associates in this crime.

The Belgrade, and Zagreb regimes, headed by Slobodan Milošević and Franjo Tuđman, planned, prepared and organized the aggression against the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the genocide against Bosniacs, controlled and commanded the aggression; they planned the operative plans, and prepared them and coordinated and directed and executed through their officers the combat operations against Bosnia and Herzegovina; they secured the manpower (officers and soldiers), logistic support (tanks, transporters, helicopters, artillery and infantry weapons, radars and computing devices, ordnance, ammunition, fuel and oils and other strategic resources; medical material, health insurance and other military equipment, salaries and pensions, and thus directly participated in the execution of genocide and other forms of crimes against humanity and international law. Only in the period until the 31<sup>st</sup> December 1994, FRY secured 89.4% infantry, 73% artillery, and 95.1% antiaircraft ammunition in support of aggression. International Court of Justice had in due time all these data, even during the court proceedings, but unfortunately, it did not consider this and other key evidence corroborating the direct engagement of FRY in the aggression against the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the genocide against Bosniacs.

Armed aggression and occupation war against Bosnia and Herzegovina were integral parts of Milošević and Tuđman state policy, on whose behalf the major part of Bosnia and Herzegovina was occupied, and the Bosniacs killed, persecuted and taken to the concentration camps just because of their national, ethnic and religious background. Genocide against Bosniacs, besides the occupation and division of Bosnia and Herzegovina between two aggressors, was an instrument of achieving the main purpose of the aggression – spreading the aggressor lebensraum. Important requirement for this goal was biological and spiritual extermination of Bosniacs. Unexplainable passive attitude of the international community, inadequate response of the UN, alleged neutral position of the world powers and ineffectiveness of the international order facilitated the aggressor and their collaborationists to use this instrument and exterminate Bosniacs, while they were committing genocide.

During the defensive war, the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina defended itself from brutal great-Serbian and great-Croatian aggression, which included as allies or collaborationists numerous members of all its three nations, to justify aggression and crimes,

which is anyway the practice of all fascistic regimes. The defensive war was conducted primarily with the local forces and resources, in conditions of multifold stronger aggressor and in the situation when Bosnia and Herzegovina was imposed illegitimate arms embargo, imposed by UNSC upon the request of the Serbian leadership and Slobodan Milošević in person in 1991, though it was a recognized, independent state and a member of the UN, which practically prevented the state to defend its territorial integrity and safety of its citizens from the aggression and this right was guaranteed in the UN Charter.

Mobilized reserve police staff and self-organized groups of patriots provided first resistance and allowed that based on *Platform for the actions of the Presidency in time of war*, as the highest framework for gathering all patriotic forces, under the leadership of the Headquarters of the Territorial defense of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, significant yet barely armed forces gathered, and they grew in summer 1992 to the Army of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which continued growing but it still remained insufficiently armed. From the early companies, battalions, detachments, and groups, the Army was transformed into brigades and corps, but its units remained attached to certain territories, and in addition to the central free territory, some were in several free enclaves. The weapons were collected with difficulties, mainly by conquering it from the aggressor or their collaborationists.

The defensive war was conducted in almost impossible conditions. The state (and its Territorial defense) was first disarmed, then occupied, and then the occupation apparatus was build in almost one third of its territory, which along with the fifth-column and criminal behavior and actions of several parties, especially Serb Democratic Party and Croatian Democratic Community, prevented adequate preparation for the defense. Like in the Peoples Liberation war, 1941-1945, the start was very difficult: available, captured, in primitive workshops designed, and some procure expensively, weapons and ammunition was outnumbered by the number of volunteers, so that even several of them would use one rifle.

With the hard endeavors, the constellation of the forces in the country and the world changed. Although limited to less than 30% of total state space and mutually isolated, the free territories were somehow consolidated.

The defensive war, in summer 1995, was at the door of the success, just because it was defensive, because it did not strive for somebody else's territory, but it only tried to prevent its own territories and its own sovereign, internationally recognized state, and a member of the UN. Approaching to this final success, yet long-lasting and difficult, was accomplished with the last atoms of power of the people and the Army.

The degree and duration of these endeavors were conditioned by inadequate attitude of the Organization of the United Nations. Primarily, they did not understand “the nature of the shameful euphemism of the notion ethnic cleaning”, that is, “incomplete understanding of the Serbian war goals”, as the UNSG, Kofi Annan, titled one of his chapters in the REPORT for the UNGA dated 15 November 1999 (Para. 494-498).

Great-Serbian and great-Croatian aggression against the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina caught Bosniacs politically organized, mainly, around the Party of Democratic Action. In conditions of the fall of Yugoslavia, planning, preparation, and the execution of the aggression against the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the genocide against Bosniacs, that political party engaged in the preparation for the defense from the aggressor. In grave conditions of the aggression against Bosnia, the Party of Democratic Action, together with the antifascist and patriotic forces from its nation, organized resistance, initiated and conducted the defense of its country from the aggression and genocide. In this regard, we should particularly point out to the fact that the Bosniacs against fought the fascism at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, though in far worse conditions, because there was no antifascist coalition this time, as it was the case in WWII.

In this unjust war, Europe, United Nations and international community risked the survival of Bosnia and Bosniacs with this arms embargo (UN admitted this mistake in their Report on the fall of Srebrenica dated 15 November 1999.). Even in those conditions, Bosniacs, using own forces and in unjust fight, while defending multiethnic Bosnia and Herzegovina and themselves from biological extermination, defended Europe and the world from fascism, giving in this way a huge contribution to combating this evil, which caused huge human and material losses to the world. Today, unfortunately, it is forgotten that Bosniacs defended the entire Bosnia and Herzegovina and the freedom of all its citizens, irrespective of their national, ethnic, religious or political background. Yet, they are proud of it.

Unfortunately, aggressor in cooperation with the collaborationists perpetrated grave violations of international humanitarian law against Bosniacs and Bosnia and Herzegovina, including genocide. Mass graves anyway testify of this, and they are identified almost every day, although the criminals tried to systematically destroy the traces of their crimes.

Bosniacs, thanks to the international independence and sovereignty and the courageous resistance of the patriots and antifascists stopped the aggression, defended and preserved Bosnia and Herzegovina and its multiethnic character. They survived biologically and became aware of its strength and historic role in fighting for its

survival and sustainability of Bosnia. In conditions of the worst aggression, Bosniacs fought for the universal values: human rights and freedoms, democracy, multiethnic, multicultural and multi-religious society.

Unfortunately, USA and the leading (West) European forces (Great Britain, France, Germany, and Russia), while manipulating the international politics and institutions, without adequate moral authority, were not ready to accept the fact on the genocide in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which is confirmed by the lack of political will to, due to the national, ethnic, and religious background of the genocide victims (Bosnian, European Muslims), timely, adequately, and efficiently react and stop the genocide; reduced and minimized the crime of genocide committed against the peaceful, unarmed, helpless Bosniacs, autochthones European nation. They observed the crime indifferently and rewarded the Serbian aggression by dividing the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which pre se is almost a crime.

By the Dayton Accord, they rewarded the aggressors, their collaborationists and national-socialists, who destroyed Bosnia and Herzegovina and committed genocide against Bosniacs, unlike WWII when they defeated militarily the occupant armies and their collaborationists.

The Dayton Bosnia and Herzegovina is made of two entities –one of which is *Republika Srpska* or the Serb entity, genocidal creation of the great-Serbian Nazism, built on grave violations of the international humanitarian law, marked and soaked mainly in Bosniac blood, surrounded by numerous hidden mass graves and concentration camps in which legally operate fascistic organizations. This genocidal creation was legalized by the so-called international community as the constitutional category. Political leadership and other structures of the entity Republika Srpska, in accordance with the great-Serbian genocidal ideology, politics, and practice, conceal, minimize, relativize and deny the genocide against Bosniacs; permanently and continuously equalize genocide victims and the executors of crimes; deny historic, political, legal and the statehood continuity of Bosnia and Herzegovina; obstruct in all possible ways the strengthening of Bosnia and Herzegovina and they constantly pursue the secession and destruction of Bosnia and Herzegovina by denying the possibility of sustainability and development of the quality of common living and thus they undermine the universal human values, freedoms and rights, civilization and cultural legacy. The entity *Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina*, whose foundation lies in the Washington Agreement (18 March 1994), basically functions as two separate entities, in one of which the forces of the collaborationist creation of Croatian Community of Herzeg-

Bosnia fully operate, although its leadership is currently in trial (joint criminal enterprise) before the ICTY, and their political supporters together with the leadership of Republika Srpska, publicly advocate for such a criminal creation in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

It is finally the time and a need to unify and actively engage all the antifascists and antifascist forces in maintaining and building of Bosnia and Herzegovina as a state of all its citizens and ethnicities.