

## A GENOCIDE OF MUSLIMS: Bosnia and Beyond

By Grace Halsell

*Phrases such as "Muslim militant" and "Islamic terrorist" appear so often in the U.S. media it is as if word processors were programmed to produce only such pairs. Muslims, now numbering about one billion, are aware of the stereotype. Do these Muslims tend to see a duplicity in U.S. Middle East policy? Do they perceive that the U.S. and Europe make the same stereotypical judgment for all Muslims, all over the world? If they are not seeing Muslims as authentic human beings, will they deem them expendable. Is this why, they ask, the Americans and the West can so easily turn a blind eye to a genocide of Muslims in Europe?*

My journey of discovery, as regards Muslims living in Europe, began a long while ago. I was still in my 20s when I first went to Yugoslavia. This was back in the time of Tito. And communism was the red menace—we feared it might take over the world. And there was that Iron Curtain. One day in Paris I boarded a train—it looked like any other train. But it had an exotic name, the Orient Express. I traveled through Munich and Zagreb and on to Belgrade. What did I learn? I knew I was in a country of six federated people's republics. And that Tito ruled as a dictator. Tito stayed in power almost longer than any modern-era ruler. The people stayed together in one country because they feared Tito. And even more, they feared the Soviet Union.



Grace Halsell

In 1985, I returned for a second visit to Yugoslavia. Tito was gone. Communism was gone. In Sarajevo, site of the World Olympics, which millions watched on their TV screens, I saw many new skyscrapers. One felt the impact of the West. I stayed at a Holiday Inn. The air was clean. I felt safe on the streets at night. Also, in Sarajevo, then the most cosmopolitan city in the Balkans, I saw Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Christian churches standing in close proximity to a mosque and a synagogue.

The Christians, Muslims, Jews of Sarajevo—and one third of the city had inter-religious marriages—wanted to live as they were living, in a multi-ethnic, multi-religious harmony. But in Belgrade a virulent nationalism took over from communism, with Milosevic, the ultra nationalist, as undisputed ruler. Like Hitler and his "pure" Aryans, Milosevic wants to live among "pure" Serbs. Soon after the death of Tito, Milosevic's nationalists began the destruction of Yugoslavia. They began a campaign to eradicate other Yugoslavs—now the "enemy" because they were non-serbs. I will deal with the two main victims: Albanians in Kosovo, most of them Muslim, and the Muslims in Bosnia.

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Metropolitan Museum of Art

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All correspondence should be addressed to:  
Room 570, 475 Riverside Drive, New York, NY  
10115-0241. (212) 870-2053; FAX: (212) 870-2050

## About This Issue

She forded the Rio Grande with Mexican illegals, sailed 2,000 miles down the Amazon by tug, lived with 28 members of a Chinese family on a Hong Kong fishing junk.

She has worked as a Navaho Indian in California, as a black woman in Harlem, and (for President Johnson) as a speech writer in the White House.

In 1979, she set out for the Holy Land to live with families of Muslim, Jewish and Christian faiths. Her book, *Journey To Jerusalem*, published by Macmillan, continues to be one of AMEU's all-time best sellers.

As a war correspondent, she has covered Korea and Vietnam. And Bosnia. In 1993, she jour-

neyed to that sad land to report on the political rape of some 50,000 Bosnian women.

Earlier this year, Grace Halsell returned to the Balkans to investigate the two main victims of Serbian aggression; Bosnian Muslims and the Albanians of Kosovo.

The common thread throughout her personal and professional life is concern for the voiceless. Now, through her, the voices of dying and uprooted Muslims in Bosnia, Kosovo and Macedonia—suffering their own holocaust—come to us.

AMEU's current Book & Video Selections are offered on pages 14-16.

John F. Mahoney  
Executive Director

## Greater Serbia

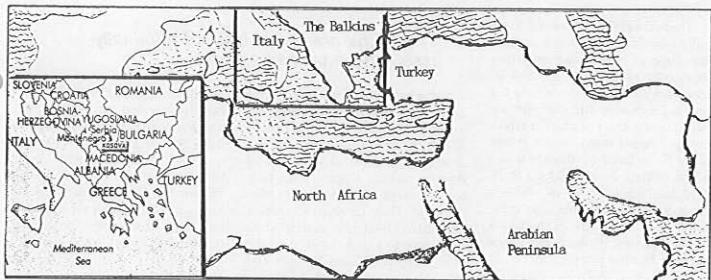
To date, the Serbs have killed more than 200,000 people, most of them civilians. And half of their victims have been women and children. In their barbaric assaults, they have killed Christians and Jews, but the overwhelming majority of their victims are Muslim. Having ignited Europe's worst convulsion of destruction, cruelty and violent death since the fall of Nazi Germany, the Serbs—in addition to the known dead—have bequeathed to us a list called "missing"—a list of some 50,000 men, women and children.

And they have seized land. In refugee camps, talking with Bosnian victims—during a 1993 trip to Croatia—I listened to their stories of marauding Serbs, who destroyed their villages, homes, mosques—and sacked them of all possessions. Beyond the stories of physical torture, I was struck by how many victims told me they had been coerced by pain of death to declare Serbia was a Super Power of infinite size. In tor-

ture chambers, when asked, "How big is Greater Serbia?"—if a victim wished to live, he or she must exclaim, "It extends—all the way to New York!" In one concentration camp, prisoners were forced to say, "It extends—all the way to Tokyo!" I became convinced that the Serbs, no less than the most militant Zionists, felt themselves to be on a holy mission—to build a "Greater" nation, superior to any of its neighbors.

By force of arms the Serbs have seized, for the most part from unarmed civilians, some 70 percent of what was Bosnia-Herzegovina. This central part of the old Yugoslavia has long been known as a region more rich in natural resources than Serbia, and the Serbs coveted and determined to seize the Bosnian timberlands, mines and minerals.

The Serbs had the muscle, the might to take what they coveted since they are inheritors of one of the strongest armies in Europe, an army that belonged to all the people of Yugoslavia. While all the inhabi-



**Eastern Europe and the Near East**

tants of the six republics had paid for the airplanes, tanks, mortars, uniforms, this army was Yugoslav in name only because Serbs always dominated it from their capital in Belgrade. After Slovenia, then Croatia, then Bosnia declared independence, the Serbs moved against each of them, but its juggernaut moved most ruthlessly against Bosnians—and this on April 6, 1992, one day after their new nation had been created and officially recognized by the United States.

Looking into the tragic faces of Bosnian victims, I heard repeatedly, "We were asleep. Gangs of Chetniks climbed in the window." Or, "We were asleep. They began shelling." The Bosnian men had no weapons by which to defend their homes, wives, children. They found a few rusty rifles or kitchen knives of no use against tanks and mortar attacks. It was never a civil war, but rather a war against civilians. There cannot be war between hundreds of tanks and none, said Bosnian Foreign Minister Haris Silajdzic. "Between aircraft and none. There can be only slaughter. We do not have war, we have slaughter." Like the first several years of the Nazi rise to power, the Serbs have moved against defenseless people and with impunity flaunted international laws.

Out of a population of 4 million,

the Serbs have forced half of the Bosnians—2 million people—from their homes. They robbed their pockets, plundered their homes, shoved the living and dead on flat-bed trucks and set them on a road of no return. In addition to the dead and the missing, the Serbs have bequeathed to the world another list called refugees—these being about a million—mainly women and children, and the very old—who now sit in makeshift camps, all with tales of sorrow, all in physical and spiritual pain. The hapless victims are being off-loaded as unwanted cargo. No one wants them, but they are shipped off to Germany, Austria, Holland, France—onto every country in Europe. The United States apparently has taken only a few. Some say they are none of our business. Yet we are still paying the price of a Nazi holocaust. Of the European countries, Germany has taken the most Bosnian refugees. Yet it is now in an economic slump and is finding it increasingly difficult to pay the costs of housing and feeding those whom the Serbs have "cleansed" of all possessions.

The Serbian rulers may be the first to officially sanction rape as a weapon of war. We know wars always bring atrocities. Among them rapes. But the Serbian regime has taken the matter of rape in war down into deeper, more sinister dimen-

sions. Judy Darnell, a registered nurse from Marlton, N.J., who now works with women rape survivors, told of Serbs repeatedly raping one 82-year-old woman. As for women held in rape camps, "They are either holding these women to keep the Muslim population in Bosnia from reproducing or they are killing them." I talked with Marta, 56, who had cried so profusely her eyes had gone past the color of red—all around her sockets was the color purple. She was held in a rape camp: "I repeatedly was raped, we were all raped. I saw Serbs raping children—girls as young as six and eight years old." She said she and others could do nothing. If a woman objected too strenuously, "they slit your throat."

I can never forget the pained look in the large, dark eyes of Nadia, 20. The first Serb who raped her cut her long hair to her scalp—"so I can see submission in your Muslim eyes." On Christmas day, 8 Serbs came—Now we celebrate, they told her, all of them raping her. The number of victims such as Marta and Nadia is staggering. The latest studies put the figure at "more than 50,000" women and girls raped. "Not even the Communists or Hitler made a systematic, sanctioned use of women as a 'weapon of war,'" said Bosnian Vice President Ejup Ganic.

The Serbs are going beyond criminally assaulting a woman's body. In the name of ethnic cleansing, they repeatedly rape a woman, and do so with a specific goal—forcing her into a pregnancy and then forcing her to bear a child of another ethnic group. I heard many horror stories of the Serbs forcing fathers to watch a Serb violate his daughter's body. And husbands forced to watch a gang of Serbs raping his wife. It became plain to me the Serbs had a mission: to destroy the honor of the Bosnian Muslim population.

All of the atrocities, of course, are aimed at destroying an entire culture. It was on my 1985 visit to Mostar that, for the first time, I began to learn about the rich heritage bequeathed by Ottoman architects. I stood on the graceful Mostar Bridge, built in 1557 by the Turkish sultan Suleiman the Magnificent. "The bridge was built to last— forever," Ismail, a Bosnian Muslim guide told me. He said for centuries his people had seen the bridge as not merely beautiful but also "a link" for people of different cultures and religions walking over the Neretva River. When last November the bridge was destroyed by mortar fire, I remembered standing mid-way on the lovely span—and I recalled Ismail's love for that symbol of his heritage.

While the bridge was destroyed by mortar fire from Catholic Croats—who for a while had joined Serbs in killing Muslims—it has been the Serbs who consistently have eradicated any vestige of Islam in Bosnia.

Before the Serbs began their attacks, the Bosnian Muslims had some 2,000 mosques. Now most have been destroyed. The Serbs bulldozed the Ustikolina Mosque, the oldest in Bosnia, built in 1448. They dynamited the Ferhadiya Mosque in Banja Luka, built in 1579 by Ferhad Pasha Sokolovic, the nephew of a Serb who converted to Islam after the Ottoman Turk invasion. They razed the Rijecanska Mosque in Zvornik.

## ***The Serbs are going beyond criminally assaulting a woman's body.***

Serbs have been particularly ruthless with imams. After attacking Bratunac, a Muslim town that had about 33,000 people, the Serbs tortured the imam, as documented in an official Bosnian Islamic report: "First they took Imam Muhammed Mujkanovic. They (Serbian Orthodox Christians) beat him and tried to force him to make the sign of the cross. They cut his small finger and the next one, so only three fingers remained, those fingers that the orthodox people use to cross themselves. Muhammed raised only one finger. Infuriated, the Chetniks finished him with a baton upon his head. He died in blood."

Serbs shot a younger imam, Sulejman Dizdarevic, in a village near Prijedor, together with 20 other Muslims. "The Serbs rolled the bodies into the mosque carpets and set them on fire." In Foca, a town that formerly had 40,000 inhabitants, the Serbs bulldozed one of the most beautiful as well as one of the oldest mosques, Aladza Mosque. While bulldozing the mosque, they also flattened the nearby graveyard. Serbs targeted, especially in Sarajevo and Mostar, national libraries, museums and archives, in the process wiping out nearly the entire written record of Bosnia's history.

In Sarajevo alone, the Serbs destroyed 74 mosques. Dr. Halil Kapic of the Bosnian Consulate in Austria told me. "They targeted—and gave direct hits—to the Oriental Institute in Sarajevo. It was a unique institute in the Balkans. We—all of civilization—lost extensive collections of Oriental manuscripts and microfilm, destroyed by Serbian shelling." The targets of such acts, of course, are not the monuments alone or the libraries alone but civilization itself. Embodied in the burned books and the fallen 350-year old clock tower in Banja Luka and other monuments

are learning, art, civility. All that has been obliterated the United States and Western Europe say they hold dear. Yet our leaders stood by. Just as we live even today with the barbarism of the Nazis, so not only the victims but all who stood by will have a price to pay for the unfettered barbarism of the Serbs—intent only on building their Greater Serbia.

## **Explosive Kosovo**

The Albanians of Kosovo are—after the Bosnian Muslims—the second most tragic victims of Serbian ethnic cleansing. In Pristina, the capital of Kosovo, which is situated between Albania and Serbia, I visited in the home of Hidajet Hyseni, a poet and journalist, who explained how, after Tito's death, Milosevic and his nationalists gained power—and moved against them.

"Under Tito, we had all been Yugoslavs. Tito had forged together six republics and included two provinces within Serbia. But Kosovo was an 'Autonomous' Province—and as such we were one of the independent units of the Yugoslav federation, having a vote equal to Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia and the others in the confederal presidency of Yugoslavia. We had our own parliament, our own supreme court and judges, we ran our administrative affairs, our hospitals. And we sent our children to schools run by Albanians and classes were taught in Albanian. Moreover, we had our Pristina University—it was one of the largest in the Balkans. About 20,000 Albanian students were enrolled. These were not only from the Autonomous Republic of Kosovo, but also Albanians from other republics, such as Montenegro and Macedonia. Classes were taught in Albanian as well as Serbo-Croatian.

"After the death in 1980 of Tito," Hyseni continued, "Milosevic be-

came the undisputed leader of Serbia. He began fanning Serbian nationalism. To avoid being enveloped in this, we sought to upgrade our status from Autonomous Province to Autonomous Republic. Kosovo is larger than Montenegro, for instance. And there was our cohesiveness—we are 93 percent Albanians, so we thought these factors warranted our being a republic.”

In 1981, Hyseni and others organized a peaceful demonstration. “We were no threat—to anyone. We had no guns, only a few placards. But the Serbs used this demonstration as an excuse to move in with tanks and 100,000 soldiers—and they seized military control. They arrested and imprisoned countless Kosovo citizens. I was one of them,” Hyseni said. “For being in that one peaceful demonstration, they kept me in prison for 10 years.”

One day I drove around Pristina with Edita Tahiri, a member of the leading Albanian political party, the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK), and a member of its presidency. “There was our parliament,” and she pointed to one building. “Only Serbs in there.” And later, “There was our supreme court. Now, only Serbs.” As we passed each of the downtown buildings, it was the same story.

Dr. Fehmi Agani, deputy chairman of the LDK, explained how the Serbs seized control: “They suspended all our government bodies. They dissolved our parliament—this in defiance of the Constitution. They fired every Albanian from positions of responsibility—replacing them with Serbs. They closed down our Albanian-language radio and television. And they began their rule of oppression and terror.”

Shortly before my arrival in Kosovo, paramilitary gangs of Serbian Arkans (“Tigers”) stormed the Institute of Albanian Culture and “screaming and shouting like wild animals,” according to one of the victims, they physically assaulted



Hidajet Hyseni and Lirije Osmani

highly respected Albanian professors, who had dedicated their lives to academic research and teaching. One of the victims, Professor Anton Cetta, a folklorist, 75, told me: “A gang of 40 or 50 Serbs stormed into the institute, shouting, ‘We are going to kill you! All of you!’ They began beating us, using the butts of their guns. They hit me, I fell against some stairs. I was upside down, and in a pool of blood.”

Another victim, Dr. Zekerija Cana, a distinguished historian and author of several books, also was beaten by Serbian gunmen: “It is still a nightmare. Their assault was not only against us as people, it was a genocidal act against our Albanian culture. Such acts are condemned by all international charters.”

Dr. Xhavit Ahmeti, Albanian Adviser for Education, told me that after armed Serbs moved in, “They determined to close our university and our schools. They dismissed 850 university professors and 20,000 Albanian teachers.” In his mid-40s, and a native of Pristina, Ahmeti, who took his college degrees, including a doctorate, in Zagreb, was one of the professors dismissed by the Serbs.

“Officially the Serbs permit Albanian children to go to school only in classes taught by Serbs and in the Serb language. Thus they closed down classes that were taught by Albanians in our language. After they closed 22 of our primary schools, we

began giving lessons in private homes. Ninety percent of Albanian pupils are now going to private homes. It’s a big sacrifice for them. The Serbs have shot and killed 22 pupils attending classes in private homes. They killed three adults who opened their homes for classrooms and they killed two of our Albanian teachers.” He added that Albanian teachers have been working without salaries for 3 years.

One day I met Mehmet Aliu, 55, who vacated a large private residence, making it available for 1,611 pupils to study there. In one of the rooms, I saw 50 students huddled together, sitting on hardwood floors, their shoes at the door. The students have no desks, chairs or blackboards, and many of them walk 4 and 5 miles to get to such a private home. Aliu said he thinks of the teachers “as my family”—and in addition to paying all bills for the maintenance of the home-school, he gives the teachers a stipend. One of the teachers told me, “After Aliu gave his large home for our classes, the Serbs came and beat him and imprisoned him. An Albanian lawyer intervened. And he was released. Because of Serbian harassment and beatings, a son, Agim Aliu, and a brother, Ahmet Aliu, 50, fled to Germany.”

At the Dardanian elementary school, I talked with the Albanian director, Zeqir Islami. “After the Serbs seized control, they wanted to

send 500 Serbian pupils here, but did not want them to mingle with our pupils. So they installed walls to separate the children," Islami said. "They took two-thirds of this building for their 500 pupils and left us one-third for our 2,331 Albanians. The Serbs also divided the toilet facilities. Previously the school had four water closets. The Serbs built a wall giving their children three of these, and leaving only one for the 2,331 Albanian children."

In addition to dismissing thousands of teachers, the Serbs fired almost all Albanian doctors and staff members from Albanian medical centers and clinics. I visited one small private clinic, where I talked with Dr. Osman Sejfiija, trained in Zagreb as a plastic surgeon: "We try to meet their basic needs," he said, as he looked in on an elderly sick woman. The Serbs, Sejfiija told me, do not permit Albanian surgeons, pediatrician or gynecologists to practice "in our own centers, which we ourselves financed." Additionally, he pointed out that Albanian mothers, who fear going to Serbian doctors, are giving birth in their homes to 50,000 babies annually—"and there's a real problem of sanitation."

I found Kosovo a powder-keg, waiting to explode. I asked Dr. Ibrahim Rugova, elected by his people as President of the Republic of Kosovo, if he thought the U.S. would speed to his defense if the Serbs begin ethnic cleansing on a mass scale. My interview with Dr. Rugova was held in Pristina's Writers Hall, a gathering center for authors, poets, professors and politicians, including members of the LDK, headed by Rugova as its chairman. Before turning to politics, Dr. Rugova, born in 1944, was a scholar, a literary critic, a poet, an author. For some years he studied in Paris, specializing in literature.

"We are looking to the United States, we are placing our faith in Washington's vow to come to our aid, should the Serbs begin an all-out campaign of ethnic cleansing," said

Dr. Rugova. He referred to a December 1992 statement made by then President George Bush warning Serbian leader Milosevic that any provocation of conflict in Kosovo would prompt the use of "universal force against Serbs in Kosovo and in Serbia proper." And early this year, President Clinton, before the air strikes downing 4 Serb aircraft, reiterated that pledge.

"These pledges are very important. And also we feel the U.S. presence in the Republic of Macedonia is very significant,"—a reference to 300 U.S. troops sent to join a United Nations Protection Force with a total of 1,000 men now stationed in Macedonia. It is widely assumed that the U.S. presence in Macedonia is meant as a signal that no neighboring country should further destabilize Macedonia—or Kosovo.



Mehmet Aliu

"Our people are living in a state of violence," Dr. Rugova said. "We are completely vulnerable. We have no police forces, no weapons. And as you see the international mechanisms, the procedures for responding to aggression can be very complicated. Even when a resolution is urgently needed, it can take a while before it is acted upon. And if we wait 3 or 4 days here, for outside help, then we will have a catastrophe." Rugova has said repeatedly that if Serbia goes on suppressing the national identity

of his people, "then there will be an uprising. I can only warn the Serbs: they, too, are a small people. In the past, whenever a small people has tried to play the role of power in the Balkans, this has always ended in a tragedy for that people."

Some analysts have speculated that the Serbs, rather than roll their tanks over the Kosovo Albanians, will tell the international peace negotiators they will make peace—provided they get total ownership of the rich northern half of Kosovo, with its silver mines. Whatever happens, it seems unlikely the Serbs will as yet relinquish their dream of a Greater Serbia.

Meanwhile, few from the outside world visit Kosovo. There is, for instance, no American there in any official or humanitarian aid capacity. Washington does not have a U.S. Information Agency office nor a consular office—or for that matter, any representation whatsoever. In fact, while I was there, I was the only American in all of Kosovo. Neither the United Nations nor the European Community with their international organizations that spend billions to prevent war and promote peace have any representatives in Kosovo. Formerly, European peace delegations from Sweden, Holland and other countries came through, but the Serbs are making it difficult for them to get visas "and fewer are coming in now," Dr. Rugova told me.

At one time, the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), formerly known as the Helsinki Commission, had members stationed in Kosovo. Then the Serbs told them to go—and they left. Now with no outside monitors of any kind, "the level of violence is increasing," Dr. Rugova said. As I was leaving Kosovo—I traveled there from Skopje and returned through Skopje—an Albanian told me:

"There are two possibilities. The international powers must move immediately to put Kosovo under the protection of the United Nations.

And remove all weapons." And the other possibility? "A war will start here—and it will make the Bosnian conflict look like a tea-party."

Meanwhile, Serbs use Kosovo to write history as they wish it to be.

Take the Battle of Kosovo, 1389. Most of the Balkans, including the Albanians, Hungarians, Bulgarians, Germans, Rumanians, Vlachs, Greeks and Italians—as well as the Serbs, then a small, insignificant country—fought in the battle. They were all fighting against the Turks. The Turks won.

Still, despite their small role—and their being on the losing side—the Serbs make a huge celebration each year on the anniversary of that battle. They use the anniversary to claim Kosovo as "the cradle" of their civilization. Actually, the Serbs being Slavs—and the Slavs being newcomers to the Balkans, as compared with others—their history does not stand up to any serious investigation, but nationalists are dangerous not because they are accurate in what they say but because they are not.

For the record, the indigenous Illyrians were in the Kosovo region for more than 1,000 years before the Serbs came on the scene. But the Serbs like to insist they got there first. However, the Serbs along with other Slavic people did not begin to settle in the region until the 7th century A.D.

Still, the Serbs who want an empire today insist that they had one—back when the Ottoman Forces came to the Balkans. However, this so-called Serbian empire, was constructed by means of mercenary armies, partly German. It was an incoherent mass of different and hostile races, put together by Stefan Dushan. And on the death of Dushan the rival feudal chieftains fought with one another for power—splitting off into separate principalities before the arrival of the Turks. The so-called Serbian Empire lasted in all only 9 years!

Not winning Kosovo in that early

battle, the Serbs in 1912-13 waged a "scorched earth" policy of genocide, putting to the sword civilian men, women and children. I have read a dozen documents on this assault. Due to that 1913 invasion, the Serbs now speak of an "Old Serbia" which allegedly existed in Kosovo.

While in Kosovo, I said to one Albanian that the Serbs are saying Kosovo is "the cradle" of their civilization, that it is their "holy land." He replied:

"Yes. All parts of the former Yugoslavia they like, they call holy land."

## The Bogomils

On a 1993 visit to refugee camps in Croatia, I had an interpreter, Musadik Borogovac. Traveling by car out of Zagreb—and skirting areas of armed Serbs—we might be 4 or 5 hours getting to a refugee camp. Along the way Musadik, a native of Sarajevo and in his late 40s, began talking to me about his people—and himself. He is tall, slender, wears horn-rimmed glasses and is scholarly in appearance. Musadik has a university degree and speaks several languages, including impeccable English.

Prior to Serbia's brutal military assaults, "Bosnians generally were known as successful businessmen, with many contractors being very active in a number of Middle Eastern markets including Libya, Egypt and Jordan." In his own case, Musadik owned and managed a large furniture manufacturing company. "I had 40 factories in Bosnia and 60 assembly plants in the United States." After Serbian shelling and tank attacks on his factories, Musadik was left with nothing more of his business than memories. He did not dwell on his loss. Rather, he talked about his forebears. He contrasted them with the Serbian warlords—dubbed "war criminals" by the U.S. government—who kill, plunder, rape. These criminals, said Musadik, come from a peasant, uneducated, uncouth stock. They never lived in towns, never had

libraries.

"My forebears lived in urban areas. And living in towns, they had libraries. Some Bosnian urban dwellers owned large farms and many were successful merchants. They were educated, industrious." And most of all, what Musadik wanted me to know and repeatedly insisted on telling me—and in a manner that might sum up the worthiness of his heritage: "We were Bogomils!"

I had never heard the term, Bogomil. It translates from an old Slavonic language to mean, "dear to God." I vaguely wondered why the topic was so important to Musadik. One day he showed photos of stone monuments and tombstones, with inscriptions indicating the early presence of the Bogomils. I gave these only a cursory glance. Indeed, it was only after I returned home to Washington, D.C., that I decided to delve into the history of Musadik's forebears.

The early Bogomils were said to have been inspired by the teachings of Mani, a reformer and prophet born in Babylon in A.D. 216. His teachings, known as Manichaeism, was denounced as heresy. Mary Edith Durham, a British scholar on the Balkans, points out "The history of modern Bosnia began during the reign of Justinian"—this in the sixth century. She adds that "Bosnians at an early date—it is said A.D. 940—were ruled by elective Bishops or governors. By the 10th century, Father Bogomil was living and with his teachings the new sect which became known as Bogomilism had taken root in the Balkans.

In 1180, Kulin Ban, chief of Bosnia, lapsed from the Catholic Church to become Bogomil. At this time, notes British scholar Durham, "the Orthodox Church appears to have had little hold in Bosnia." She adds that at this early date Bosnia was separate, standing "completely outside" Serbia.

In his study, "The Bogomils," a Cambridge University scholar, Dmitri Obolensky writes that Bo-

gomilism became one of "the most powerful" movements in the history of the Balkans. Nowhere did Bogomilism find more devoted adherents than in Bosnia—already well known for its prosperous farms and rich mines, and for the blustery independence of its local nobles. The nobles as well as the Bosnian peasants were among the staunch supporters of austere Bogomilism. By 1221, one scholar noted, "there were none but Bogomil priests in Bosnia, under whom the country was extremely devout."

Musadik had indicated there were two reasons why his forebears had embraced Islam. The first, as I soon learned, was to escape the persecution of their neighboring Christians. For the Eastern and Western churches, the Bogomils, having disengaged themselves from the Orthodox and Catholic creeds, were "heretics" and "blasphemers."

In her book, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon: A Journey Through Yugoslavia*, Rebecca West writes that a Council of Constantinople "laid it down that Bogomils must be burned alive." Church leaders condoned the seizing and selling of Bosnians as slaves in Christian lands "because they were not regarded as Christian." West also writes: "Since the Papacy in Rome had staked a great deal on Bosnia, it continued in crusade after crusade against the land, with full indulgences, as in the case of crusades to Palestine...It had used every form of political pressure on neighboring monarchs to induce them to invade Bosnia and put it to fire and the sword."

In 1256, Pope Innocent III (1198-1216) summoned the faithful Christian lords of Hungary to invade Bosnia and seize the lands and treasures of its "blasphemers." In 1247, the Pope urged the Bosnians to return to the Catholic fold, reminding them that his predecessors "had tried to redeem their see by devastating the greater part of it and by killing or carrying away in captivity many

thousands of Bosnians." The Bosnians responded by adopting Bogomilism as the official state religion.

In one last supreme effort, the Papacy "supported the Emperor Sigismund of Hungary, who held Croatia and Dalmatia, and who wished to add Bosnia to his kingdom." Though the Emperor "scored the success of capturing the Bosnian king," West writes, the Bosnians were unimpressed "and replaced him by another, also a staunch Bogomil."

After the Turks came to the Balkans, the Bosnian Bogomils, hoping to escape persecution from their neighbors, openly supported the Turks against the Christian rulers. As a result, the Turks in 1415 offered the Bogomils military protection, secure titles to their land and freedom to practice their religion—if they counted themselves as Muslims and did not attack Ottoman forces. The Bogomils quickly accepted the offer.

And so there flowered a kind of free Slavic state within the Ottoman Empire, in which Bosnian Bogomils enjoyed special autonomy and peculiar immunities. The other Slavs must have looked upon the Bosnians as the favored child. The Turks so treated them. The Pasha of Bosnia did not make his capital in Sarajevo, but in Travnik, some 50 miles away. By law, the Pasha could not spend more than one night at a time in Sarajevo. Over the years, Bosnia's Bogomils, some blond and blue-eyed, settled in Istanbul and became part of the ruling elite, serving even as viziers.

A second reason why Bosnian Bogomils became the only Slavs to embrace Islam: their brand of Christianity had much in common with the teachings of Islam. Consider these half-dozen characteristics of the early Bogomils:

—The Bosnian Christians early on turned away from pomp, from elaborate rites and costly clerical raiments and ornate displays of gold. They condemned the use of icons and

relics. They rejected the cult of saints.

—They spoke out against the corrupting sale of indulgences.

—They taught "the equality of all God's children." They confessed their sins to one another, which suggests that they recognized no essential distinction between the priesthood and the laity. They were opposed to the feudal order, and criticized the expropriation of land by the established Church and monasteries as well as great estate-owners.

—They kept Sunday as a day of fasting, and did not celebrate the Orthodox feasts. They spurned all prayers used by the Orthodox Church, together with the liturgy.

—They recited the Lord's Prayer at regular intervals and with appointed prostrations. They prayed four times a day and four times a night.

—They laid the greatest stress on ethics, which was derived exclusively from the New Testament.

—They did not drink intoxicants. They held the view that "the vine" from which Orthodox and Catholic Christians made their wines, was first planted by the Devil.

In the books I read I found even their worst critics, such as Comas, a Bulgarian priest, writing in the late tenth century, allowed the Bogomils to have been an ascetic and temperate people. In his "Sermon Against the Heretics," Comas wrote that in appearance, "they are lamb-like, modest and silent" as well as "pale from fasting. They do not talk idly, nor laugh loudly, nor show any curiosity. They keep away from the sight of men, and outwardly they do everything so as not to be distinguished from righteous Christians...The people, on seeing their great humility, think that they are Orthodox."

Cosmas noted that the Bogomils accused priests of laziness, hypoc-



riety, immorality, as well as an addiction to drinking and robbing. And Cosmas, adding that in his opinion their charges were all too true, blamed the Christian clergy for creating the circumstances leading to the schism that Bogomilism represented.

In his study on "Bogomilism in Macedonia," published in Skopje in 1975, Dragan Tahkovski praises the characteristics of honesty and simplicity that the Bogomils exemplified. He writes that though Father Bogomil "was not a church prelate but an ordinary priest," he nevertheless exemplified such wisdom that "he must have been raised in a highly developed cultural atmosphere in which knowledge could be readily acquired."

My friend—and interpreter, Musadik, was hoping I'd understand that his people had come from a highly developed cultural atmosphere, one in which knowledge could be readily acquired. I guess that was why he kept insisting that I learn how the Bosnians became the only Slavs in the Balkans to embrace Islam.

## How "Muslim" Became a Nationality in Bosnia

*"There is no Palestinian people."*

**Former Israeli Prime Minister  
Golda Meir**

*"There are no Bosnians per se."*

**Former U.S. Secretary of State  
Henry Kissinger**

Like the Palestinians, the Bosnians insist they are a people. Yet, others, more powerful, have insisted they are not.

"I could not say I was 'Bosnian,'" explains Dr. Nedzib Sacirbey, who was born in 1926 in Travnik, the former capital of Bosnia (until 1863). A medical doctor, trained in Zagreb, and later based in Sarajevo, Sacirbey for more than two years has been special representative in the United States for Bosnia President Alija Izetbegovic. He also is the father of

Muhamed Sacirbey, ambassador to the United Nations from Bosnia-Herzegovina.

For many decades, said Dr. Sacirbey, Bosnian Muslims were not permitted to designate themselves as either Bosnians or Muslims. Then how, I asked, had "Muslim" become a nationality? "It was a technique to prevent our becoming Bosnians. Neither the Serbs or the Croats wanted that."

Between World War I and II, Dr. Sacirbey said, questionnaires were sent out asking: "What is your religion?" Or, the query might be, "Of what province are you a citizen?" In 1941, the year Hitler came to power, the Croats had an extreme nationalist party called Ustasha and Ustasha party members collaborated with Hitler. To reward them, Hitler "gave" them Bosnia—making it a part of the newly independent state of Croatia.

"We who were living in Bosnia were then told: 'Everyone who is Muslim and Catholic—you are Croats.' They told us that. But no one asked us how we wished to identify ourselves.

"Everyone had to have an identity card. And if a Bosnian Muslim happened to be in a German prison camp and refused to identify himself as a Croat, he would not be released. And in Bosnia, those Muslims who refused to call themselves Croats could not find jobs. They remained unemployed.

"In 1948 in the first census taken in Tito's Yugoslavia, the Communist Party suggested Muslims choose between Croat and Serbian. Some members of the Party did so. "All others—this the majority of Muslims—remained true to their convictions of self-identity—they were not willing to call themselves Croats or Serbs. Yet it was not possible to say, 'I am Muslim—by nationality.' That was not allowed. So most marked 'undeclared' in that census. There was no question asked regarding religion."

The 1953 census was the first in which the people of Yugoslavia were

asked a question about religion. This census revealed that the highest number of atheists were found in Montenegro, and the second highest in Serbia. The largest number of believers were among the Muslims.

In that census, a majority of Bosnians also put "undeclared" or "undeclared." In 1961, the majority also registered "undeclared."

Dr. Sacirbey recalled that in the summer of 1962, when he was working in a medical school in Sarajevo, a neighbor—and a Communist—Atif Purivatra, came to visit him. Purivatra said the Communist Party's Central Committee had requested that graduate students submit papers. And he was wondering: on what subject would he write his doctorate paper? I pointed out that while many scholars had written papers on the political parties of the Croats and the Serbs, no one until that time had written about the political parties of the Muslims. So he chose to deal with that idea. After his paper was published in March, 1963, "the party and state recognized that Bosnian Muslims must get a name."

Sacirbey believes that "the majority of Bosnians wanted to be called Bosnians. But as in the past, the people of Bosnia were not given the opportunity to vote on what we wanted to be called."

In the census of 1973, it was decided that Muslim with a capital "M" should designate ethnicity or nationality. And that the word with a small "m" would mean one's religion.

That, said Dr. Sacirbey, "was a technique to give us some recognition—while at the same time it prevented our saying we were Bosnians."

Still, to be recognized at all was a victory. "The majority of our people welcomed this decision. It gave us a chance to be identified. And this was important to us for several reasons: there were many positions in the government, army, education and in other fields that were allocated on the basis of ethnicity. We

## ***Not one single mosque stands today in any Bosnian area under Serbs' control.***

were aware that some kind of quota system existed, and that acceptance to certain schools, as well as achievement in other endeavors, were based on that quota. Thus we were now represented. Now we knew our numerical strength, as say compared with Croats or Serbs, and how many we should expect to have as our representatives in governing boards."

In the census of 1981, more than 7 percent of Bosnian Muslims declared themselves simply as "Yugoslavians" and 10 years later (1991) this number went down to 5 percent. "We knew that in order to protect our rights, we needed to be seen as a group. We would have preferred to be called Bosnians, but since this did not at that time seem a possibility, we were glad to be designated as simply 'Muslims'—and this, for the time being, became our identification, our ethnicity."

Dr. Sacirbey said that when the U.S. recognized Bosnia as a sovereign and independent nation, it recognized a country with well defined borders, a parliament and an elected presidency.

"I was called on April 6, 1992, from the U.S. State Department. I was told, 'Yesterday our General Consul in Zagreb met with Franjo Tudjman and informed him the United States was recognizing Bosnia.' The State Department spokesman told me that it would recognize Croatia at the same time—provided that Croatia agreed to recognize Bosnia. And Tudjman agreed to do so. At the same time, the U.S. Ambassador in Belgrade met with Slobodan Milosevic and informed him of these developments. The U.S. recognized both Bosnia and Croatia the following day—April 7, 1992."

Speaking of the brutal assaults against his people, by the Serbs and later by the Croats, he said "It is again

their desire to eliminate us as a people." Sacirbey, like so many of the Bosnians, have sacrificed to say that they are neither Serb nor Croat. Sacirbey was first jailed in 1943 by the German occupation authorities. Three years later, during the early days of the Tito regime, he and his late wife, Aziza, an obstetrician, were arrested for leading a Muslim youth group in Sarajevo. It was during this time that Bosnian President Izetbegovic had been jailed by the communists, and he and Sacirbey became close friends. "So I have known him for many long years. He is a man who wants peace, he seeks a balance based on equality and mutual respect."

While the U.S., following its recognition of Bosnia, sent an American ambassador to Sarajevo, there is no official Bosnian ambassador to the U.S.

"Bosnia always has been a multi-ethnic country," Dr. Sacirbey explained. "Since Bosnia named my son, a Muslim, to the U.N., it would be fair to have a Bosnian Serb or Bosnian Croat ambassador to Washington. Consensus is the important factor. Peace depends on consensus. Meanwhile, the Bosnian government has named a charge d'affaires officer to Washington. He is Sven Alkalaj, a businessman from Sarajevo. He happens to be Jewish, and he is married to a Muslim." Sacirbey added:

The press often repeats what so-called 'peace negotiators' say about our hating each other. The problem of the Nazi holocaust was not because Nazis and their victims 'always' had hated each other. It is not true to say that Muslims, Croats and Serbs have 'always' hated each other and that Tito's communism merely repressed the deep-rooted ethnocentrism. That is simplistic and an excuse for permitting the

Serbs to kill and rape civilians and take land. But those who turn their backs on Bosnia say, 'Those people have always fought one another.' If we had been fighting each other for centuries, we would have exterminated ourselves by now. Tito was only in power for 35 years. Our history together is ancient. This is not a 'civil war,' but rather the Serbs began a genocide against civilians.

I blame Cyrus Vance, U.N. partner in the Vance-Owen Peace Plan, for missing a chance for an early peace. Vance did not call the Serbs the aggressors. By calling all three sides wrong, Vance created a wrong impression. But we know who the aggressors are. Serbs, aided by Croats, have not only attacked and killed civilians, but they have also destroyed all aspects of Islamic culture. Not one single mosque stands today in any Bosnian area under Serbs' control. Croats follow the Serbian examples of destroying mosques. They have destroyed or damaged some 2,000 mosques, some of them dating back for centuries.

"The Serbs as fighters are bullies. In Sarajevo it's never been a question of 'war'—but of bullies staying up in the hills, firing upon innocent civilians below. Denied arms, the Bosnians have had no means of defending themselves. The Serbs have shot and killed more than 10,000 in Sarajevo—and more than 90 percent of the victims have been civilians. Many, as anyone can see on their TV screens, are small children. There were two weeks in April-May, 1993, when Clinton and others talked tough. And the Serbs re-acted. They were plainly frightened, and were backing off. But then it became plain that the West wanted to appease the Serbs and their allies, including the Greeks, the French, English and the Russians. Now the Serbs are no longer frightened by Clinton—or anyone.

"In the Nazi holocaust, most who

could have halted Hitler claimed, 'We did not know.' No one can say that about Milosevic and Karadzic. They know they instigated rape as a weapon of war, that even today they maintain concentration camps—and for two years they shelled women and children. Hitler said he wanted a 'pure' race—and Milosovic and Karadzic want a land of 'pure' Serbs. And like Hitler, they will not be easily appeased."

## Albanians— The Ancient Illyrians

The Kosovo Albanians and the Bosnian Muslims, the two main victims of Serbian aggression, have some similarities. Both groups, for instance, had been Christian—the Albanians being the first Europeans to have embraced Christianity. But in historical, ethnic and linguistic backgrounds, they are a different people.

Albanians, with a rich and unique history, once were quite large in number. At one time, in the 19th century, the Albanians were more numerous than the Serbs or the Greeks. Even so, the European leaders who have made boundaries have not always recognized their legitimacy as a people. In drawing boundaries, world leaders over the years have divided the large and cohesive population. At present Albanians are found in Kosovo, Macedonia and elsewhere. And they are now more numerous outside the state of Albania than those within. There are 3 million living in the state of Albania; 2 million living in Kosovo; and about one million in Macedonia and Montenegro. Additionally, there are some 200,000 Albanians living in southern Italy, many in the Calabria region. Due to almost half a century of isolation under communism, the Albanians of the Balkans are only now beginning to learn about one another. For example, an Albanian of Kosovo said she recently traveled to Albania—and saw my grandmother,

for the first time in 50 years."

To learn the history of her people, I talked with Dr. S. Sophie Juka, a native of Albania and one of the leading authorities on Albanian history. Now an American citizen, and for many years a professor in U.S. universities, Dr. Juka lives in New York. First, she explained that while most people living in the Balkans are a Slavic people, "Albanians are different. We are an ancient people, and most scholars agree we are Illyrians. There is much evidence that our forebears, the Illyrians, are indigenous to their land. Archaeologists in numerous digs have found grave sites with artifacts dating from the Illyrian period—that is, going back to 2,000 years B.C. Additionally, we have stone monuments from that era.

The Illyrians founded an immense empire extending from Epirus, in what is now northwestern Greece, to the Danube and the Black Sea. They fought with great valor against the Romans for more than a century. Eventually the Romans conquered the whole of Illyria.

After the Roman conquest—in A.D. 9—many Illyrian soldiers then fought in the Roman army and rose to high position, Dr. Juka related. "Illyrians who became emperors and viceroys include Claudius II, Aurelian, Probus, Diocletian, Maximilian, Constantius, Valens and Valentinian. Also one of the greatest of the early scholars, Saint Jerome, was an Illyrian. In Byzantium history, the Illyrians produced three of its greatest emperors: Constantine, who officially accepted Christianity; Justinian, who built Saint Sophia; and Justinian, famous for his Code of Laws."

None of their neighbors—including those in the former Yugoslavia, the Serbs, Croats and Bosnians—are descendants of the Illyrians. While Bosnians, Serbs and Croats are a Slavic people and speak a Slavic language, the language of

the Illyrians and the Albanians further substantiate that the Albanians are descendants of the Illyrians: "We have a unique language. It's a distinct branch of the Indo-European languages—and unlike any other European language. In the family of Indo-European languages, Albanian constitutes a branch of its own, as does another ancient Indo-European language, namely Greek."

The Albanians also gave a different response from that of the Bosnians to the arrival of the Ottoman Forces. While the Bosnian Bogomils had welcomed the Turks as liberators, "the Albanians cannot say that," explained Dr. Juka. "The Albanians fought numerous battles against the Turks and were proud of their valor in those battles." After I went to Albania, in downtown Tirana I would see a striking monument to the greatest Albanian national hero, Skanderberg, compared by French historians to Charles Martel, who in 732 halted the Moorish invasions at Poitiers. In central Tirana, the large monument to the national hero who fought against the Turks is near the main mosque.

As regards Islam, I asked Dr. Juka why—since they were opposed to the Ottomans and waged fierce battles against their Islamic forces—did the Albanians give up Christianity?

"There is no doubt that in the Balkans the Turks used pressure at times, especially perhaps in regard to the Albanians because they resisted them longer than other Balkan nations and also on account of their links with the Pope and the West. In general, however, the Turks strike one as being tolerant. Practically all conversions seem to have been in a way voluntary. There were Albanians who rose to high office with the Ottomans, becoming statesmen, reformers and scholars. Thus it might appear to some that their conversions were a means to gain high positions. The fact remains, however, that under the



Arben Khaferi

Turks the Greeks and the Armenians, too, held high positions while remaining Christian.

"Thus, another factor as regards the Albanians was involved," she continued. "Let us go back in history and recall that Albanians are the first Europeans to have embraced Christianity—and that the Albanians adhered to the universal Church of Rome and thus did not have a national church of their own—as did the Serbs who settled in the regions they presently inhabit in the 7th century—and had the backing of the Eastern Orthodox Church. On account of adverse circumstances, Rome was unable to give the Albanians the necessary support to survive as Roman Catholics. Pressured by the Orthodox Serbs in the north and by the Orthodox Greeks in the south, who tried to assimilate them, the majority of the Albanians turned to Islam. Islam—in the beginning at least—represented a buoy, a safe haven—a means to keep their national identity."

After 450 years, the Turks called a truce with the Albanians and granted them autonomy in the provinces of Shkodra, Janina, parts of Manastir as well as Kosovo. "Kosovo was considered a part of Albania, so

its history cannot be separated from Albania's," Dr. Juka said.

In addition to "explosive Kosovo," with Albanians living under Serbian military domination, I discovered in traveling through Macedonia that the new nation has a far greater problem than a squabble with Greece over a name: its Albanian Muslim population is large, rapidly growing—and is restive. Of Macedonia's 2 million population, the Albanians say they are 35 to 40 percent, and in the western part of Macedonia the Albanians already number 70 percent. In 20 years, the Albanians might well be the majority.

I talked with Arben Khaferi, chairman of the Party for Prosperity and Democracy, the largest of the Albanian political parties in Macedonia. He lives in Tetovo, which has a population of 200,000, of which 82 percent are Muslim. The Skopje government, he said, "must remove economic and cultural barriers. The Academy of Science is composed entirely of Macedonian Slavs—there are no Albanians. The Ministry of Education employs 700 persons and until recently all were Macedonian Slavs. Now they have 4 Albanians. In all, the official Macedonian institutions, the Albanians are only .01 percent."

In Skopje, I talked with President Kiro Gligorov who is widely praised for his moderate and conciliatory views. He knows he is sitting on a volcano and that a domestic dispute could spark a war across international borders. He talked about the economic difficulties his country suffers both from the sanctions against Serbia and Montenegro—much of his country's trade has always been with those neighbors—as well as the Greek embargo on goods passing through its northern port. Such problems, Gligorov said, "are keeping us away from what should be our main track, as in any democratic country, which is to create better living conditions for its citizens." He "absolutely" believes in a future in which

Macedonian Slavs and Albanians will work together in harmony. "We are putting our maximum efforts toward achieving this aim, to attain an existence where all citizens of this country can become integrated into society, with all rights being respected.

"Albanians are represented in the present government," he said. "We have an Albanian vice prime minister. The deputy minister of defense is an Albanian." However, out of a total 120 in the parliament, only 23 are Albanians. Khaferi indicated to me he felt that Macedonian elections had not always been fair.

While I was in Tirana, a group of Albanians from western Macedonia met with Albanian President Berisha. They were urging him to be more aggressive in support of their interests. According to a Tirana newspaper, he told them: "Work hard in promoting any democracy, enlarge the horizons of democracy. The more Albanians understand democracy, the better for them and for the civilized world. Increase the number of friends of Albania. You have to work with the democratic dialogue, you must struggle hard to realize your human rights."

## A 1937 Memo

More than a half-century ago, the Serbs studied a plan for the ethnic cleansing of 200,000 Albanians living in their midst.

On March 7, 1937, Dr. V. Cubrilovic, a nationalistic Serb, presented the Belgrade government with a document with detailed plans on "ethnic cleansing" which back then was simply called, "The Expulsion of Albanians." In that year, Dr. Cubrilovic was an adviser in Belgrade's monarchic regime of Stoyadinovic.

In Germany, Hitler was practicing his brand of "ethnic cleansing," as was Stalin. Cubrilovic said the Serbs should practice the same—and that no one would notice. "At a time

when Germany can expel tens of thousands of Jews and Russia can shift millions of people from one part of the continent to another, the shifting of a few hundred thousand Albanians will not lead to the outbreak of a world war." Even if it did, he added, the Serbs should not mind. He urged the Belgrade regime to know what it wants "and persist in achieving this, regardless of the possible international obstacles."

After Tito came to power, the memorandum on "The Expulsion of the Albanians" was temporarily shelved, although its author continued to have prestige and influence. He was a member of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia. In 1970 he held the post of director of the Institute of Balkanology in Belgrade.

Excerpts of his 1937 memorandum, "The Expulsion of the Albanians," follows:

"The only way and the only means to cope with them (the Albanians) is the brute force of an organized state..."

Once the Serbs drove the Albanians in their midst out of their homes, the Serbs should, Dr. Cubrilovic says, force them to go to Albania—or Turkey. Since it was unlikely the Albanians would want to leave their homes and properties voluntarily, "agitators for their removal must be found, as quickly as possible, especially from Turkey."

The memorandum urges the Serbs to use Islam as a means of attacking the Albanians. "The Muslim masses, in general, are very readily influenced, especially by religion, and are superstitious and fanatical. Therefore, first of all we must win over their clergy and men of influence, through money or threats..." At another point, the document states that the Albanians are "very touchy" about their religion, and "therefore they must be harassed on this score. This can be achieved through ill-treatment of



President Gligorov of Macedonia with Link writer Grace Halsell

their clergy (and) the destruction of their cemeteries."

By all means possible, the Belgrade government must so act "as to make staying intolerable for the Albanians." The plan calls for "fines and imprisonments (and) the ruthless application of all police dispositions," including "compulsory labor and any other measure that an experienced police force can contrive."

Another means to remove the Albanians, says the document, "by secretly burning down Albanian villages and city quarters." The Albanians must never get compensation for their lost homes and lands. Rather, "The state must reserve for itself the unlimited right to dispose of the fixed and movable assets of the people transferred and must settle its own colonists there immediately after the departure of the Albanians."

The author arrives at his suggested figure of the expulsion of 200,000 Albanians by urging the forced evacuation of 40,000 Albanian families—and by figuring 5 members to a household. As for carrying out this plan, it is stressed that "military force should be employed." In a struggle to gain homes, businesses and land from

native Albanians, the state will be successful, the report concludes, only if it acts "brutally."

## Conclusion

I do not think the war started by the Serbs is a "religious" war, per se. But I think the conflict is religious in the sense that if the victims were Christians or Jews, the West—long before now—would have stopped the Serbs. There is a double standard. The near one billion Muslims know this, even if the West refuses to see it.

My second conclusion: the Serbian Nationalists are no different from the Nazis. They will not be appeased by present day Chamberlains, coming from London or Washington. If the Western leaders do not stop hoping to placate the war criminals and deal—with great force against them—the Serbs will slaughter tens of thousands of other civilians—well beyond Bosnia.



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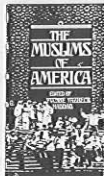
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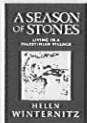
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