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3

BALKANLARDA  
İSLÂM  
MİADI DOLMAYAN UMUT

İSLAM IN THE BALKANS  
UNEXPIRED HOPE

GÖNÜL FETHİNDEN ZİHNİYET TEMSİLİNE  
FROM THE CONQUEST OF HEARTS TO THE  
REPRESENTATION OF MENTALITY

EDİTÖR  
MUHAMMET SAVAŞ KAFKASYALI

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ANKARA - BELGRADE - BUCHAREST - BUDAPEST - CHISINAU - KIEV  
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# Bosnian Cultural Communication with the Muslim East during the 20<sup>th</sup> Century: A Brief Survey

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## *Summary*

**T**his article explores cultural communication between Bosnia and the Muslim East taking Egypt as an example. Three types of communication are identified: education of the Bosniaks, communication through books and communication through conferences and exchange of official visits. Changing trends and tendencies in the areas of research determined by the course of history during the 20th century are sketched.

As for the education of the Bosniak students in Egypt, from the very beginning it was focused on Islamic studies. Gradually Egypt took the place which Istanbul had previously held in the Islamic education of the Bosniaks. By passage of time, the number of Bosniaks students at Al-Azhar increased and reached 52 graduates in the period 1962-1997.

Books on Bosnia published in Cairo in the first half of the 20th century were rare: one travelogue and one book on Bosnian ulama and poets. In the second half of the 20th century, especially during the war in Bosnia, we assume that number of these books increased. However, these developments were out of the scope of this research as they deserve a special investigation. On the other hand, from the first decades of the 20th century we see a process of the translation of Egyptian authors into Bosnian language. This process started in the second decade of the 20th century and continued until World war Two. Mainly Islamic books were translated. The establishment of the socialist state in Yugoslavia and its harsh policy toward religion had a consequence on the interruption of these activities. This trend reversed in 1970s and 1980s, when the regime became more liberal and a new generation of Bosniak graduates from Middle Eastern universities appeared in public life.

Conferences as a medium of cultural communication became frequent only in the second half of the 20th century. Again, political circumstances had important role. Yugoslav foreign policy oriented toward forging alliance with Arab and Muslim countries within Non-Aligned movement opened doors to the Bosniak Muslim representatives to establish and develop communication with Islamic institutions abroad. This tendency started with bilateral visits and developed into multilateral forms within international institutions of Islamic research and solidarity.

## 20. Yüzyılda Bosna'da Müslüman Doęu ile Kültürel İletişim: Kısa Bir İnceleme

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### Özet

**B**u makalede Mısır Arap Cumhuriyeti'ni örneğini kullanarak Bosna ile Müslüman Doęu arasındaki kültürel iletişim araştırılmaktadır. Üç türden iletişim belirlenmiştir: Boşnakların eğitimi, Kitaplar ve konferanslar aracılığı ile iletişim ve resmi ziyaretlerin mukabele edilmesi. Tarihin akışı içinde 20. yüzyılda araştırma alanlarında belirlenen deęişen eğilimleri ve eğilimleri çerçelenmiştir

Mısır Arap Cumhuriyetinde eğitim gören Bosnalı öğrencilerin eğitimi başından beri İslam çalışmalarına odaklanmıştır. Mısır Arap Cumhuriyeti Bosnalıların İslami eğitim konusunda daha önce İstanbul'un muhafaza ettiği yere yavaş yavaş geçti. Zaman içinde Al-Azhar'daki Bosnalı öğrencilerin sayısı artarak 1962-1997 döneminde 52 mezun verildi.

20. yüzyılın ilk yarısında Kahire’de Bosna ile ilgili kitapları nadir bulunurdu: bir seyahat rehberi ve Bosnalı ulema ve şairlerle ilgili birer eser mevcuttu. 20. yüzyılın ikinci yarısında ve özellikle Bosna’da savaş sırasında bu kitap sayılarının arttığını varsayılmaktadır. Ancak bu gelişmeler özel araştırma gerektirdiğinden bu çalışmanın kapsamına alınamamıştır. Diğer yandan 20. yüzyılın ilk onlu yıllardan itibaren Mısırlı yazarların eserlerini Bosna diline çevrilme sürecine şahit oluyoruz. Bu süreç 20. yüzyılın ikinci on yılında başlayarak İkinci Dünya Savaşına kadar devam etmiştir. Genellikle İslami kitapları çevriliyordu. Yugoslavya’da sosyalist devletin kurulması ve bu devletin dine karşı katı yaklaşımı nedeniyle bu faaliyetlere ara verilmesine neden olmuştur. 1970’li ve 1980’li yıllarda daha liberal rejimin iktidara gelmesi ve Orta Doğu üniversitelerinden mezun olan yeni nesil Boşnaklar kamusal hayata geçtiklerinde bu eğilim tersine işlemeye başlamıştır.

Konferanslar kültürel iletişim ortamı olarak 20. yüzyılın ikinci yarısında sıklıkla kullanılır hale gelmiştir. Yine siyasi ortamın çok önemli bir rolü vardı. Yugoslavya dışişleri politikası Bağlantısızlar Hareketi kapsamında Arap ve Müslüman ülkeleri ile ittifak kurmaya yönelik olduğundan Bosnalı Müslüman temsilcilerine yurtdışındaki İslami kurumlarla iletişimin kurulması ve geliştirilmesi için kapılar açıldı. İkili ziyaretler başlayan bu eğilim uluslar arası İslami araştırma ve dayanışma kapsamında çok yönlü şekillere büründü.

## Introduction

Cultural communication between Bosnia and Herzegovina (henceforth: Bosnia) and the Muslim East was established during the 15<sup>th</sup> century which saw the process of the Ottoman conquest and the spread of Islam in this land. Bosnia was incorporated into the multiethnic Ottoman Empire and Bosnian Muslims (Bosniaks) entered Ottoman-Islamic cultural zone of the Muslim world. The spread of Islam was accompanied with the spread of Arabic language as the language of Islamic scholarship, Turkish language as the language of state administration and Persian language as the language of poetry. Islamic educational and cultural institutions were established in Bosnia following the Ottoman pattern. Three generations after the conversion into Islam we see Bosniak scholars and statesmen serving in different capacities across the Ottoman state. Similarly, historic records show us that Muslim scholars, soldiers and state officials from the Middle East were sent to Bosnia, some of them stayed there, intermingled with the local population and were included into Muslim Bosniak ethnic group.

From 17<sup>th</sup> century onward, after the Ottoman withdrawal from Central Europe, Bosnia became the western most province of the Empire. This situation lasted until the end of the Ottoman rule in this land in 1878. The Austro-Hungarian occupation of Bosnia marked a new period in the history of this land and its people. Political connections with the Muslim East were severed. Religious connections for some time were preserved between Sarajevo and Istanbul, until the abolishment of the Caliphate in Turkey in 1924. Austro-Hungarian occupation of Bosnia brought radical change in the dominant type of culture: instead of being a part of the Near East, as it was in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Bosnia became a part of Central Europe. This new identity was preserved during the consequent political frameworks within this country existing during the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

However, during all these turbulent times Bosniaks felt that they have two identities: European and Islamic. European identity was emphasized during the process of modernization, starting with the Ottoman project (*tanzimat*), continued with Austria-Hungary, the Yugoslav monarchy and socialist Yugoslavia. Islamic identity was essential for the very existence of the Bosniak nation since the religion and culture based on it was the most significant differentiating factor between them and other groups living in Bosnia. For the preservation of this identity, the dissemination of Islamic knowledge and cultural patterns of life was crucial. This constantly turned Bosniaks towards the Muslim East and its religious and cultural centers.

This article explores cultural communication between Bosnia and the Muslim East taking Cairo as an example. Three types of communication are identified: education of the Bosniaks in Cairo, communication through books and communication through conferences and exchange of official visits. Focus was put on the religious elements in this communication. Changing trends and ten-

dencies in the areas of research determined by the course of history during the 20th century are sketched.

### 1. Scholarly links: Bosniak students at Al-Azhar<sup>1</sup>

Connections between the Bosniaks and Al-Azhar before the 20th century were sporadic. During the Ottoman rule over Bosnia, higher Islamic learning was sought in Istanbul, the political and cultural center of the Empire. Occasionally, some Bosniak scholars, such as Mustafa Aqhisari (18. century) visited Cairo and copied some manuscripts in its libraries.

During the Austro-Hungarian rule over Bosnia (1878-1918) only three Bosniak students studied at Al-Azhar. These were Mehmed Potogija (1865-1953), Ibrahim Zafranija (1869-1943) and Džemaludin Čaušević (1870-1938). In fact, they studied Islamic sciences in Istanbul, but occasionally traveled to Cairo and attended lectures at Al-Azhar.

This situation changed following the radical changes in political, cultural and social life introduced to Turkey by Kemal Atatürk. With the comprehensive project of normative, institutional and symbolic secularization, Istanbul ceased to be any longer the center of Islamic learning for the Muslims of the Balkans. They turned toward Egypt and other Arab countries.

During the period between two the world wars three generations of Bosniak students graduated from Al-Azhar. The first generation included Šaban Hodžić (1903-1980), Alija Aganović (1902-1961), Mustafa Gljiva (1901-1928), Besim Korkut (1904-1975), Derviš A. Korkut(1900-1943), Mehmed Handžić (1906-1944), Muhamed Fočak (1906-1978), Kasim Dobrača (1910-1979), Ahmed Smajlović (?), Akif Handžić (1910-1945), Fadil Čokić (1911-1994), Bahrija Mulabdić (?-1973) and Ahmed Džemal Dervišević (?-1936).

This generation was followed by Husein Djozo (1912-1982), Ibrahim Trebinjac (1912-1982), Abdulah Dervišević (1909-1981), Salih Hadžalić (1914-1997), Husein Merhemić (1912-1997) and Osman Merhemić (1913-1985)

The third generation included Abdurahman Hukić (1921-1990), Mustafa Drljača (?), Mustafa Sahačić (1910-1990), Husein Viteškić (?), Ćamil Avdić (1913-1979), Sejid Musić (?) and Mustafa Pašić (1910-1982).

Altogether, 26 Bosniak students studied at Al-Azhar during the period 1918-1941.

World War Two interrupted the schooling of Bosniak students in Egypt. In addition, the socialist regime established in Yugoslavia after the war with its rul-

1 This section is based on dr Jusuf Ramić's *Bošnjaci na El-Azheru*, Sarajevo, Rijaset Islamske zajednice u BiH, 1997, p. 160.

ing Marxist ideology, took a hard line against religion. Consequently, sending Bosniak students abroad for Islamic studies was temporarily stopped.

This situation slowly started to change from 1958, when an official delegation of the Islamic community in Yugoslavia visited Egypt and reached an agreement with Egyptian Ministry of Awqaf that 10 Muslim students from Yugoslavia be admitted to Al-Azhar. Thus, the first batch of post-war students consisting of graduates of the Gazi Husrev Beg madrasa in Sarajevo- Ahmed Smajlović, Jusuf Ramić, Salko Čanić, Merzuk Vejzagić and Hamdija Jusufspahić - left Yugoslavia on 19<sup>th</sup> October 1962 for Egypt. This event marked the beginning of contemporary period in the education of the Bosniaks at the most reputable centre of Islamic learning in the world. Since 1962 up to 1997, according to prof. dr Jusuf Ramić, 52 Bosniak students graduated from Al-Azhar. Some of them continued their postgraduate studies and three of them- Ahmed Smajlović (1938-1988), Jusuf Ramić (b.1938) and Akif Skenderović (b.1938)-obtained their PhD's.

As we can see, connections between the Bosnikas and Al-Azhar were intensified during the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This fact had significant consequences. Transfer of knowledge from the centre of mainstream Islamic learning to Bosnia was re-established and secured. Contemporary Muslim thinkers from Arab world became known to Bosnian Muslim public through translations, reviews and treaties written by Al-Azhar graduates. These graduates played an important role in religious, cultural and academic life of Bosnia and Yugoslavia. Some contributed significantly to the study of Islamic heritage in this region. Others, serving as imams, muftis and mudarris left their impact on religious life and education. Finally, some prominent graduates- such as Husein Džozo, dr Ahmed Smajlović and dr Jusuf Ramić- contributed to the shaping of Islamic higher learning in Bosnia.

## 2. Communication through books

### 2.1. Books on Bosnia and the Bosniaks published in Cairo

The earliest book on Bosnia published in Cairo during the 20<sup>th</sup> century was a travelogue *Rihlat al-sayf ila bilad al-Busna wa'l-Harsak* (Summer journey to country Bosnia and Herzegovina) written by Muhammad Ali-pasha (1875-?), brother of khediv Abbas-pasha II (ruled 1892-1914). Muhammad Ali-pasha with his companions visited Bosnia for two weeks (8. September-22 September 1900). The first edition of this book was copied and circulated among Ali-pasha's friends. The second edition was published in Cairo in 1907. A century later, this book was translated into Bosnian language by Hana Younis Al-ghoul and published together with its Arabic original by the Institute for History and Historical Archive in Sarajevo.<sup>2</sup>

2 *Ljetno putovanje u Bosnu i Hercegovinu, uvaženi princ Muhamed Ali-paša, brat Njegove ekscelencije kediv Abbas-paše II, Sarajevo, Institut za istoriju i Istorijski arhiv, 2008.*

Prince Muhammad Ali-pasha was a man of broad education, knowledge of European languages and aristocratic manners. He decided to visit Bosnia, which in 1900 was under the Austro-Hungarian rule, and to learn more about the customs of its people. In those years Bosnia was undergoing a transformation from a traditional Eastern society into modern Central European. Therefore, the travelogue by Muhammad Ali-pasha is an important eye-witness account on situation in Bosnia in the beginning of the 20th century. However, since the author did not know much about the complex history and composition of this land and prevalence of his elitist attitudes, some of his remarks and conclusions do not reflect the real situation.

The second book published in Cairo on Bosnia in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was *Al-Jawhar al-asna fi tarajim ulama wa shu'ara Busna* (Cairo: Matba'a 'Alamiya, 1349/1930, 142) written by Mehmed Handžić, Bosnian student at Al-Azhar. The book consists of a foreword, introduction, 223 biographies of Bosnian scholars and poets, annex and content.<sup>3</sup> In the Introduction the author provided for Arab readers information about Bosnia, its population, spread of Islam in this country and characteristics of the Bosnian Muslims. This book is the first comprehensive treatment in Arabic of the scholarship and literature of the Bosniaks.

## 2.2. Translations of Egyptian authors into Bosnian language

Translations of Egyptian authors into Bosnian language was related to the spread of ideas of Islamic reformism (*harakat al-islam wal-tajdid*). The spread of the ideas of this movement led by Djamaluddin al-Afghani (1838-1897), Muhammad Abduh (1849-1905) and Rashid Rida (1865-1935) and others started in the last decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and continued during the first half of the 20th century.<sup>4</sup> Reformist ideas came to Bosnia from Egypt, Turkey and Tsarist Russia. They spread through circulation of reformist publications or students who studied in those countries. In this place we will focus on authors of the books published in Egypt.

One of the first books of this kind translated into Bosnian was *Al-mar'a al-muslima* (*Muslim woman*) by Muhammad Farid Wajdi (1875-1954), Egyptian encyclopedic writer. The translation of this book into Bosnian was published first in segments in the periodical *Biser* during 1913 and 1914 and as a book in 1915 by the First Muslim Publication House and Bookstore in Mostar (Prva muslimanska nakladna štamparija i knjižara u Mostaru). Thus, translation of this book into Bosnian came only two years after its first appearance in Cairo.

3 Fatima Omerdić, "Bibliografija štampanih djela arapskim pismom bosanskohercegovačkih autora u Gazi Husrev-begovoj biblioteci", *Anali Gazi Husrevbegove biblioteke*, vol. XXV-XXVI, Sarajevo, 2007, p. 324.

4 See Fikret Karčić, *Društveno-pravni aspekt islamskog reformizma*, Sarajevo, Islamski teološki fakultet, 1990, p. 197-241.

The period between the two world wars in Bosnia saw the appearance of the translation of a part of *Tafsir al-Manar*, a commentary of the Qur'an by the mufti of Egypt shaykh Muhammad Abduh and his disciple Rashid Rida, named after the reformist journal *al-Manar*. The translator was Šukrija Alagić (1881-1936), a prolific Muslim writer educated in Bosnia and Vienna.<sup>5</sup> Four volumes of the translation of *Tafsir al-Manar* were published under titles: *Tefsiru-l-Kur'ani-l-Kerimi I* (Sarajevo: Islamska dionička štamparija, 1926), *El-Kur'anul-Hakimu, Kur'an Mudri (prijevod i tumač) II* (Sarajevo: Islamska dionička štamparija, 1931), *El-Kur'anul-Hakimu, Kur'an Mudri (prijevod i tumač) III* (Sarajevo: Islamska dionička štamparija, 1932) and *Tefsiru-l-Kur'ani-Hakim (Kur'an s tumačem), IV* (Derventa: Štamparija Josip Lay, 1934).

In the second half the 20<sup>th</sup> century up to the 1970s Islamic publication activities in Bosnia were limited to essential religious textbooks. In 1970 a Bosnian version of Islamic revival started. Islamic revival was expressed in increased personal religiosity, (re)construction of mosques, development of Islamic education and publications, increased use of Islamic social symbols and the attempts to building regional Muslim solidarity institutions.<sup>6</sup> The Islamic community in Bosnia established its Publication center, which later on became known as El-kalem. This center started to publish translations of classical and modern works on Islam, Islamic heritage and textbooks. Among the modern authors translated into Bosnian were Egyptian writers.

The most prolific author and translator as well as *spiritus movens* behind the re-establishment of religious and cultural connections between the Bosnian Islamic community and the Arab world was prof. dr Ahmed Smajlović (1938-1988). His Ph.D. defended at Al-Azhar was titled *Falsafat al-istishraq wa atharuha fil-adab al-'arabi al-mu'asir*, published in Cairo 1980 by the publishing house Dar al-Ma'arif. He translated a number of books written by Arab authors including Mustafa Mahmud (1921-2009), an Egyptian scientist and prolific author. In the 1970s and 1980s he was a very popular figure in public discourse on religion in Egypt.

His book *Dialogue with an Atheist* was translated into Bosnian as *Dialogue with a friend* (Dijalog s prijateljem, Sarajevo: Starješinstvo Islamske zajednice u SR BiH, Hrvatskoj i Sloveniji, 1976). With this translation he became known among the Bosnian Muslim public.

The second translated book was Abdulaziz Kamil's *Islam and Discrimination* (Islam i diskriminacija, Sarajevo: Starješinstvo Islamske zajednice u SR BiH, Hrvatskoj i Sloveniji, 1979).

5 See Ferid Dautović, *Šukrija Alagić: doprinos islamskim znanostima s posebnim osvrtom na Tefsir*, Master thesis, Sarajevo, Fakultet islamskih nauka, 2001.

6 See Fikret Karčić, "Islamic Revival in the Balkans 1970-1992", *Islamic Studies*, vol. 36, no.2-3, 1997, p. 565-581.

Another prolific translator of these authors was Mesud Hafizović (1947-2001), a graduate of Al-Azhar. His master thesis defended at Philological Faculty of the University of Belgrade was about *Linguistic work of Ibrahim Anis* and was published by the Faculty of Islamic Studies in Sarajevo. He translated books of the following Egyptian authors: Azharite scholar

Muhammad Bahiyy, *Belief in God* (Vjerovanje u Boga dž.š., Sarajevo: Starješinstvo Islamske zajednice u SR BiH, Hrvatskoj i Sloveniji, 1977); publicist Mustafa Mahmud, *Allah* (Sarajevo: Starješinstvo Islamske zajednice u SR BiH, Hrvatskoj i Sloveniji, 1980), liberal author Khaled Muhammad Khaled, *Humanity of the Muhammad p.b.u.b.* (Sarajevo: Straješinstvo Islamske zajednice u SR BiH, Hrvatskoj i Sloveniji, 1983).

Dr Jusuf Ramić, also contributed to the translation of Egyptian authors. He has obtained his Ph.D. from Al-Azhar after defending thesis titled *Usra al-Muwaylihi wa atharuha fil-adab al-'arabi*. The dissertation was published in 1980 in Cairo by the Dar al-Ma'arif publishing house. Among others, he translated a book by Mustafa Mahmud *Al-Qur'an: muhawala li fahm 'asri* (Kur'an: savremeni pokušaj razmijevanja, Sarajevo: Starješinstvo Islamske zajednice u SRBiH, Hrvatskoj i Sloveniji, 1981)

Apart from translated books, during this period an important role in the dissemination of works of authors from the Arab world played the journal *Islamska misao* (Islamic thought), published in Sarajevo by the Islamic authorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Slovenia. The first issue of the journal was published in December 1979 and continued to be published until May 1993. The journal was described as a periodical dealing with "Islamic studies, theology and religious information". A key role in the emergence and publication of this journal played prof. dr Ahmed Smajlović. A considerable number of articles translated from Arabic or European languages were published in this journal.<sup>7</sup> Among Arab authors whose works have been translated are: Muhammad Abduh, Abdul Halim Mahmud, former rector of Al-Azhar, Abdul Mahmud Shahata, Abdul Jawdat Al-Sahhar, Mustafa Abdul Razaq, Abu A'la Afifi, Anwar Abdul Malik, Muhammad Arkun and the like. Among the translators from Arabic into Bosnian language were: Ibrahim Ahmetagić, Ismail Ahmetagić, Munir Ahmetpahić, Senahid Bristrić, Mustafa Cerić, Besim Čanić, Nermin Čanić, Abdulah Čelebić, Salih Čolaković, Ibrahim Džananović, Hasan Džilo, Mehmedalija Hadžić, Mesud Hafizović, Habiba Hafizović, Rešid Hafizović, Ahmed Halilović, Bilal Hasanović, Zuhdija Hasanović, Abdurahman Hukić, Salih Ibrišević, Ibrahim Jakubović, Jarkoč Selim, Jelovac Selim, Nevad Kahteran, Mahmud Karalić, Fikret Karčić, Ismet Kasumović, Fatima Kunto, Šefik Kurdić, Sabaheta Kutješ,

<sup>7</sup> For the full bibliography of this journal see Osman Lavić, *Bibliografija časopisa El-Hidaje i Islamska misao*, Sarajevo, Gazi Husrevbegova biblioteka and Rijaset Islamske zajednice u BiH-IC El-Kalem, 2001, p. 71-207.

Džemaludin Latić, Enes Ljevaković, Ibrahim Husić, Hasan Makić, Vehbija Makić, Naida Mehmedagić-Sušić, Halil Mehtić, Muhamed Mrahorović, Teufik Muftić, Šerif Mujkanović, Hilmo Neimarlija, Omerdić Ibrahim, Fikret Pašanović, Mustafa Prljača, Šukrija Ramić, Jusuf Ramić, Fuad Sedić, Subhija Skenderović, Seid Smajkić, Ahmed Smajlović, Nijaz Šukrić and Ibrahim Trebinjac.

What is striking here is a large number of persons competent to translate from the Arabic language to Bosnian in comparison with earlier periods. This itself is an important indicator of the rise of knowledge of Islam and Arabic as well as cultural communication with the Arab world among the Bosniaks during the last half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The trend of translation of Arab authors continued in the 1990s which saw the appearance of translations of Islamists authors such as Sayyid Qutb (1906-1966) and Muhammad Qutb (b.1915). Mustafa Prljača (b.1961), another graduate of Al-Azhar, translated a book by Sayyid Qutb *Ma'alim fi'r-tariq* (Znakovi na putu, Tuzla 1996). In addition, he translated Muhammad Qutb's *Durus min mihnat al-Busna wa'l-Harsak* (Pouke iz Bosne, Sarajevo, 1997).

In the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the most important translation work from Arabic language was translation of Sayyid Qutb's commentary of the *Qur'an-Fi zilal al-Qur'an* (U okrilju Kur'ana). The translation was undertaken by a number of lecturers from the Faculty of Islamic studies in Sarajevo including prof. dr Omer Nakičević. Prof. dr Jusuf Ramić, Mesud Hafizović and Enes Ljevaković. The translation was published in 30 volumes by the Faculty of Islamic studies. The first volume appeared in 1996 and the last in 2000.

In the case of translations of Egyptian authors into Bosnian language, especially those dealing with Islamic themes, we see how sporadic translations from the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century became intensified during 1970s and 1980s and reached its peak in the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

### 3. Communication though conferences

Bosniak religious representatives participated or planned to participate in a number of Pan-Islamic conferences organized in the Muslim world during the first half of the 20th century such as: the Caliphate congress in Cairo in 1926, Pan-Islamic congress in Jerusalem in 1931 and the Congress of European Muslims in Geneva in 1935.<sup>8</sup> In this place we will focus on the issue of Bosniak participation in the Caliphate Congress in Cairo in 1926

<sup>8</sup> This phenomenon was subject of study of this author. See Fikret Karčić, "The Bosnian Muslims and Islamic International Networks: "The Age of Conventions", *Bosnian Studies*, Vol.I. no.1, sarajevo, 2007, p. 114-121.

This congress was called by the Egyptian *ulama* with the aim of discussing the issue of the Caliphate. It was believed that the Egyptian king Fuad (reigned 1923-1936) wanted to legitimize his own claim to the Caliphate by sponsoring this convention. The Bosnian *ulama* was invited to participate in this convention, but the Yugoslav authorities prevented them from traveling.

As reasons for its decision the Ministry of interior cited that the Congress does not have the character of a general Muslim convention but rather regional one, that there is no need for Muslims from the Kingdom of SHS to participate in such a Congress and, finally that participation in such a Congress may cause disorder between Yugoslav Muslims and some other Muslims and indirectly cause damage to the state. Consequently the Bosnian Muslim delegation, as a part of Yugoslav Muslim delegation, was prevented from participating in the Cairo Caliphate Congress.

During World War Two Bosnia was incorporated into the Nazi satellite “Independent state of Croatia” which was under a German protectorate. The Bosniaks became caught between the Serbo-Croat conflicts and became especially the target of a genocidal policy of the Serbian nationalists. At the hands of these nationalists the Bosniaks suffered immense losses which amounted to 103.000 persons or 8.1% from expected natural growth.<sup>9</sup> Facing this dramatic situation some Bosniak *ulama* sent letters to the Egyptian authorities asking them to intervene with the British military command to spare Bosnian towns from bombardment.

After the end of the World War Two a new, socialist regime was established in Yugoslavia within which Bosnia enjoyed the status of a federal unit. In the beginning the socialist regime had a harsh policy toward all religious communities including Muslims. This was a part of a Marxist project of building a new society. Consequently, all international relations of religious communities were severed. Property of religious communities became subject of nationalization, agrarian reform and expropriation. Religious educational institutions, except few, were closed. For instance, out of more than 40 Islamic high schools (*madrassa*) in Bosnia, only one- Gazi Husrev Beg *madrassa* in Sarajevo- remained open. The same destiny awaited the highest institute of Islamic learning in Sarajevo- The Higher School of *Shari'a* and Islamic Theology ( *Viša islamska šerijatsko-teološka škola*), which was closed down in 1946. This policy had serious consequences for the dissemination of Islamic knowledge including Arabic language. The Bosniaks were left without any possibilities to attain higher Islamic education and study Arabic language with their main school in Sarajevo closed down and international connections severed.

9 Mustafa Imamović, *Historija Bošnjaka*, Sarajevo, BZK “Preporod“, 1997, p. 537.

A decade after the establishment of socialist state in Yugoslavia, the regime started to open some possibilities for religious communities, including Muslims. There were two main reasons for this shift in the policy. First, the socialist regime in Yugoslavia needed to show the outside world that Yugoslav citizens enjoy freedoms and liberties in their country, including freedom of religion. Second, Yugoslav foreign policy was moving toward an alliance with Third world countries what eventually lead to the formation of the Non-allied movement. Policy of friendship with the Muslim countries, opened to the Muslims of Yugoslavia, an opportunity to revive their own connections with Islamic institutions in the Arab world.

These developments are visible from the increased exchange of visits between the Muslim and especially Arab world and Islamic institutions in Yugoslavia, participation of the delegates of the Islamic community in Yugoslavia in Islamic conferences and dynamization of religious life at home. It should be mentioned here that the place of the highest Islamic institutions during that time in Yugoslavia was Sarajevo.

Islamic periodicals in Bosnia give us up-close pictures of these developments. The first foreign Muslim visit to the Islamic community in Yugoslavia was the visit of a parliamentary delegation of Lebanon and Syria in 1955.<sup>10</sup> A year later, on 15 July 1956 president of Egypt Gamal Abdel Naser visited Sarajevo. He was greeted by more than 100.000 people on the streets of Sarajevo. A photograph showing him praying in the main Sarajevo mosque- *Begova džamija*-was widely circulated.<sup>11</sup>

In 1957, a new religious leader of the Muslims in Yugoslavia *rais al-ulama* Sulejman efendi Kemura took as his priority to re-establish connection with Muslim institutions in the Middle East. A high profile delegation of the Islamic community in Yugoslavia lead by the *rais al-ulama* visited in 1957 United Arab Republic (Egypt and Syria), Lebanon, Jordan and Saudi Arabia.

During its stay in Cairo, the delegation was received by Gamal Abdel Nasser. In the talks with Egyptian minister of Islamic foundation (*awqaf*), delegates of the Islamic community in Yugoslavia discussed different modes of cooperation with their host.<sup>12</sup> Contacts were re-established and news on developments in Egypt was followed in Sarajevo. For instance, in 1959 Husein Džozo, a pre-war graduate from Al-Azhar, wrote a short article about the appointment of shaykh Mahmud Shaltut as the Rector of Al-Azhar. He expressed his happiness that a

10 "Posjeta libanske i sirijske parlamentarne delegacije islamskim ustanovama u Sarajevu", *Glasnik Vrhovnog islamskog starješinstva u FNRJ* (Further: *Glasnik*), Vol.6, no. 5-7, 1955, p. 235.

11 Mustafa Ševa, "Visoka posjeta Gazi Husrevbegovoj džamiji u Sarajevu", *Glasnik*, Vol. 7, no. 10-12, 1956, p. 296.

12 "Put delegacije IVZ na Bliski istok", *Glasnik*, Vol. 9, no. 6-8, 1958, p. 238-258.

person known as the “protagonist of a new interpretation of Islamic institutions” had been appointed as the rector of this prestigious university.<sup>13</sup>

In May 1959 mufti of Syria Dr Muhammad Abu Jarr Abidin visited the Muslims of Yugoslavia. He was given audience with Yugoslav president Josip Broz Tito. In Sarajevo he was guest of *rais al-ulama*.<sup>14</sup>

The intention of the Islamic authorities in Sarajevo to inform the Arab world on developments in Yugoslavia could be seen from the fact that in 1959 the basic act of the Islamic Community- its Constitution- was translated into Arabic and published in the official organ of the Community.<sup>15</sup> In the same year, the Islamic Community in Yugoslavia for the first time in its history participated in an international exhibition of Islamic publications in Beirut. The exhibition was held in the capital of Lebanon in April 1959. The Islamic Community in Yugoslavia sent 16 publications published in socialist Yugoslavia as well as in the pre-war Yugoslavia. These publications included: Qur’an (Arabic text published in Sarajevo in 1953), *Glasnik Vrhovnog islamskog starješinstva u FNRJ*, an official bi-monthly organ of the Islamic Community published in Bosnian language with summaries of main articles in Arabic, *Kratka obuka o namazu* (A short instruction how to perform *salah*) (Sarajevo 1956), *Jasini šerif* (Sura Ya Sin), published in Arabic with transliteration in Latin and Cyrillic alphabet (Sarajevo 1957), *Takvim*, a yearbook of the Islamic Community in Yugoslavia, *Mali ilmihal* (A short instruction on religion) (Sarajevo 1957), and number of other textbooks on Islam, Arabic and Persian language. This was very humble contribution to an international exhibition of Islamic publications but the Islamic Community in Yugoslavia was very proud of its participation.

In 1960, *rais al-ulama* Sulejman efendi Kemura visited Iraq and participated in the celebration of the second anniversary of the Iraqi revolution (14-21 July).<sup>16</sup>

From 1961 Husein efendi Djozo, who will become the main ideologue of the Islamic Community until his death in 1982, intensively contributed to Islamic publications following, among others, developments in the Middle East and interpreting those events for Muslim public in Yugoslavia. Thus in 1961 Husein efendi Djozo wrote on the reorganization of Al-Azhar supporting the establishment of “secular“ faculties within the framework of the oldest Islamic university in the world. He also welcomed the establishment of the Academy of Islamic Research within Al-Azhar as a forum for the exchange of views and opinions of the Muslim scholars of our age.<sup>17</sup> Later on, Husien efendi will become a member of

13 Husein Djozo, “Novi rektor Al-Azhera šejh Mahmud Šeltut“, *Glasnik*, Vol.10, no.1-3, 1959, p.1-8.

14 “Prva posjeta visoke uleme Sirije Jugoslaviji“, *Glasnik*, 10, no.7-9,1959.

15 “Ustav IVZ u FNRJ na arapskom jeziku“, *Glasnik*, Vol.10, no.10-12,1959, p. 408-427.

16 Abdurahman Hukić, “Putovanje Reisu-l-uleme u Irak“, *Glasnik*, Vol.11, no. 7-9, 1960.

17 Husein Djozo, “Povodom najnovije reorganizacija El-Azhara“, *Glasnik*, Vol.12, no. 10-12, 1961, p. 408-411.

this Academy. He will regularly attend its sessions and become a personification of the Muslims of Yugoslavia in the eyes of Arab Islamic scholars.

Since 1961 the editorial board of the *Glasnik* introduced a regular section entitled *Iz islamskog svijeta* (From the Muslim world), whereby different news from the Middle East and other parts of the Muslim world were published.

During the 1960s official visits between the Muslim east and the Islamic Community in Yugoslavia continue to exchange. For instance, in July 1961 parliamentary delegation of the United Arab Republic lead by Anwar al-Sadat visited Sarajevo.<sup>18</sup> In 1962, a delegation of the Islamic Community in Yugoslavia visited Morocco at the invitation by Allal al-Fasi, minister of *waqf*.<sup>19</sup> In September 1964 a delegation of the Islamic University Muhammad ibn Ali al-Sanusi from Libya visited the Islamic Community in Yugoslavia.<sup>20</sup>

Since in 1964 first Bosniak students in post-war period were admitted at Al-Azhar, some of them, such as Ahmed Smajlović, began to publish articles in the official publication of the Islamic Community on Al-Azhar and recent development related to this university.<sup>21</sup>

In October 1968, the Islamic periodical recorded the visit of *ulama* from Sudan to the Islamic Community in Yugoslavia<sup>22</sup> and the visit of *rais al-ulama* to Algeria.<sup>23</sup> Algerian minister of *awqaf* returned this visit in July 1969 and visited *rais al-ulama* of the Islamic Community in Yugoslavia.

An especially sad event from the Arab world - death of the president Gamal Abdel Nasser - was significantly recorded by Islamic periodicals.<sup>24</sup> News was followed by the commentary of the consequences of this event to the Arab world.

During 1970s *Glasnik* - the official organ of the Islamic Community in Yugoslavia continued to follow events in the Muslim and Arab world and to record the exchange of visits between Islamic institutions abroad and the Islamic Community in Yugoslavia. For instance, in 1971 vice-president of the United Arab Republic Husein Shafi'i visited Yugoslavia. In Belgrade's Bayrakli mosque he was welcomed by *rais al-ulama* Sulejman efendi Kemura and Prof. Dr Mustafa Kamarić, president of the Islamic Assembly in Yugoslavia.<sup>25</sup> In August 1974 another visitor from Egypt was recorded. It was dr Ibrahim al-Tahawi, a minister in the Presidency of the Republic of Egypt.<sup>26</sup>

18 *Glasnik*, Vol.12, no. 7-9, 1961, p. 331.

19 *Glasnik*, Vol.13, no.10-12, 1962, p. 347.

20 *Glasnik*, Vol.27, no.12, 1964, p. 588-608.

21 Ahmed Smajlović, "Uvaženi Hasan Memun na čelu El-Azhar", *Glasnik*, Vol.28, no.3-4, 1965, p. 99; "Al-Azhar, velika islamska tvrđjava", *Glasnik*, Vol.29, no. 3-4, 1966, p. 110-114.

22 *Glasnik*, Vol.32, no.1-2, 1969, p. 13-19.

23 *Glasnik*, Vol.32, no.1-2, 1969, p. 22-28.

24 *Glasnik*, Vol.33, no. 9-10, 1970, p. 468-469.

25 *Glasnik*, Vol.34, no.1-2, 1971, p. 63-64.

26 *Glasnik*, Vol.37, no. 9-10, 1974, p. 385.

May 1975 saw the inauguration of the new *rais-al-ulama* of the Islamic Community in Yugoslavia. For this post was elected Naim ef. Hadžiabdić. His inauguration in Sarajevo was well attended by representatives from the Muslim world. High level Arab-Islamic delegation was headed by prof. dr Abdul Halim Mahmud, rector of Al-Azhar.<sup>27</sup>

During 1970s and 1980s participation of the Bosniaks Muslims in international Islamic conferences was intensified. This was result of the liberalization of the Yugoslav regime as well as the emergence of a new generation of Muslim leaders educated in the Middle East. In those conferences the Islamic Community and Yugoslavia was mainly represented by Husein efendi Djozo, who became a member of the Academy of Islamic research in Cairo and prof. dr Ahmed Smajlović, a PhD. holder from Al-Azhar and from 1975 president of the Islamic authorities in Bosnia, Croatia and Slovenia.

Once established, these connections continued throughout the 1990s. In the beginning of that decade the Yugoslav federation broke up and in 1992 Bosnia became an independent country. However, the proclamation of independence was followed by Serbian aggression on the new state and genocidal war against the Bosniaks. The public in Muslim countries, including Arab countries of the Middle East, was shocked by the images of war from the once peaceful country. Interest in Bosnia and its population increased, some earlier published books were reprinted, journalists were sent to the Balkans and finally some Muslim countries such as Egypt, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Malaysia contributed troops to the peacekeeping mission in Bosnia.

After the end of war in Bosnia, new types of communication between this country and the Arab and Muslim countries were established including diplomatic relations, interstate cultural cooperation, economic relations and the like. The Islamic Community in Bosnia strengthened its previous communication with Islamic institutions abroad and religious representatives of the Bosniaks became very visible in the international scene. However, more detailed exposition of these new developments is beyond the scope of this research.

## Conclusion

This research has shown that three types of cultural communication were developed between Bosnia and the Muslim East, especially Egypt during the 20th century. These types are: scholarly links, communication through books and through participation in the conferences.

As for the education of the Bosniak students in Egypt, from the very beginning it was focused on Islamic studies. Gradually Egypt took the place which

<sup>27</sup> *Glasnik*, Vol.38, no. 5-6, 1975, p. 261-263.

Istanbul had previously held in the Islamic education of the Bosniaks. By passage of time, the number of Bosniaks students at Al-Azhar increased and reached 52 graduates in the period 1962-1997.

Books on Bosnia published in Cairo in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century were rare: one travelogue and one book on Bosnian *ulama* and poets. In the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, especially during the war in Bosnia, we assume that number of these books increased. However, these developments were out of the scope of this research as they deserve a special investigation. On the other hand, from the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century we see a process of the translation of Egyptian authors into Bosnian language. This process started in the second decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and continued until World war Two. Mainly Islamic books were translated. The establishment of the socialist state in Yugoslavia and its harsh policy toward religion had a consequence on the interruption of these activities. This trend reversed in 1970s and 1980s, when the regime became more liberal and a new generation of Bosniak graduates from Middle Eastern universities appeared in public life.

Conferences as a medium of cultural communication became frequent only in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Again, political circumstances had important role. Yugoslav foreign policy oriented toward forging alliance with Arab and Muslim countries within Non-Aligned movement opened doors to the Bosniak Muslim representatives to establish and develop communication with Islamic institutions abroad. This tendency started with bilateral visits and developed into multilateral forms within international institutions of Islamic research and solidarity.

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