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Alija Izetbegović's *Islamic Declaration* and Populism in Bosnia

York Norman

Populism, broadly defined as a modern political movement aimed at mobilizing the masses against established elites, has a unique history among Bosnian Muslims in comparison to other South Slavic peoples. Whereas late nineteenth and early twentieth-century forms of Balkan populism typically formed around peasant communities, rising up first against the abuses of local landlords, Bosnian Muslims had a much smaller peasant population than their Serbian and Croatian neighbors. From the Austrian occupation of Bosnia in 1878 until Tito's land reforms of 1948 and 1953, Bosnian Muslims were made up of diverse social groups. While roughly 50 percent were peasants, many were townsmen, or traditional landowners, a legacy of the Ottomans who ruled Bosnia from 1463 to 1878.¹ As a result, populist movements, when they made their rare appearance, defined their protests in terms of the rights of the Muslim religious community. Such movements primarily aimed at restoring Islamic governance, or at least autonomy for their community, and looked to political Islamic movements in the Middle East and elsewhere for inspiration.

Arguably, the first Bosnian Muslim populist movement occurred in the wake of the Austrian occupation, when the new authorities first implemented a series of modernization measures, such as universal conscription and multi-confessional public schools. Local Muslims were often leery of these measures, since they feared they were a way of secularizing, and even converting new generations of Bosnian Muslim youth to Catholicism, the official faith of their new overlords as well as that of Bosnian Croats. Ali Fehmi Džabić (1853–1918), the mufti, or chief religious official of Mostar, led a series of protests throughout the country after Fata Omanić, a young Bosnian Muslim woman, ran away from her family and converted to Catholicism in order to sanctify a mixed marriage in 1899. Džabić then proceeded to denounce the Austrian reforms as following a pro-Croat agenda, and demanded that his community have autonomy in religious and educational matters. The Austrians tolerated the protests at first, but prohibited Džabić from returning to Bosnia after a brief trip to Istanbul in 1902. They were indeed suspicious of Džabić's ties to the Ottoman revisionist circles, who sought to end Austria's unofficial colonization of their former province. Populist denunciations of the Austrians died down after that event, as the movement was then dominated by the landed elites, who sought to use the situation to consolidate their

traditional rights. The Austrians conceded these, as well as the formal recognition of partial Bosnian Muslim judicial and educational autonomy in 1909, a year after they had formally annexed Bosnia. The movement also had the status as an official political party, the Muslim National Organization (*Muslimanska narodna organizacija*).² The Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, later known as the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, also officially acknowledged these privileges, and thereby avoided renewed protests.³

Hitler's invasion and destruction of Yugoslavia, and the consequent inclusion of Bosnia into the *Ustaša*, or Croatian fascist Independent State of Croatia, led a new generation of Bosnian Muslim political leaders to reevaluate their community's position. Bosnian Muslims' fears that they faced the prospect of extermination if they protested, instead prompted a number of key Islamic politicians to collaborate in various ways with the occupiers. This included figures such as Husein Đozo (1912–82), a prominent advocate in prewar years for liberalizing religious life, who volunteered in 1943 to become the leading imam for the SS Handžar Division, largely made up of Bosnian recruits.⁴ Mehmed Handžić (1906–44), the leading “traditionalist” figure in Bosnia and head of the Gazi Husrev Library, who published his opinions regularly in the journal *El-Hidaje* (“The True Path”) often sought to cement local Muslim privileges in return for submission.⁵ Finally, Alija Izetbegović (1925–2003) began his career at the age of 16 when he joined the *Mladi Muslimani* (Young Muslims)—a group that also frequently cooperated with the *Ustaša* and Nazi German authorities, but was critical of both the liberal and traditionalist camps of Islamic thought.⁶

Tito, unsurprisingly, was not particularly kind to either Izetbegović or Đozo after the Partisan victory in the war. Izetbegović and Đozo were both sentenced, receiving three and five years of hard labor respectively. But where Đozo reconciled with the Communist regime in the 1950s, and in fact became the leading Islamic intellectual voice in favor of the Socialist Federated Republic of Yugoslavia, Izetbegović remained a diehard opponent even after his release, when he became a law student at the University of Sarajevo. It was during this time that he became familiar with leading twentieth-century Muslim thinkers such as Muhammad Iqbal (1877–1938)—the intellectual father of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan—and Sayyid Qutb (1906–66)—a member of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood who elaborated a radical originalist (*Salafi*) version of Sunni political Islam. Inspired by such work, he would craft his own message of protest against Tito's Yugoslavia when he wrote the *Islamic Declaration* (*Islamska deklaracija*) in 1970.⁷ Although he advocated a “democratic” version of political Islam, he argued that Bosnian Muslims must overcome both “internal” and “external” threats to achieve his ultimate aim of national independence.

The Yugoslav authorities refused to publish Izetbegović's work, and, he was eventually sent to jail for the second time as a political prisoner in 1983. He would be viewed by many Bosnian Muslim non-Communist political activists during the last years of Yugoslavia as a living political martyr for their cause. This roughly paralleled the nationalist populist Franjo Tuđman (1922–99), who likewise fell afoul of Tito for inciting Croatian nationalist resentments, especially after the publication of his book *Velike ideje i mali naroda* (“Great Ideas and Small Nations”) in 1969, and was similarly sentenced to jail.⁸

It is no coincidence that Izetbegović published his *Declaration* in 1990. Yugoslavia was on the verge of civil war, and Izetbegović played an active part in pushing for an independent Bosnia, led by the Muslim community, demographically the largest of the three nationalities there. His message reverberated strongly at a time when the economy suffered, and Bosnian Serbs, led by the future war-criminal Radovan Karadžić, threatened genocide. Izetbegović, after successfully campaigning to be President of Bosnia, was also able to win a referendum declaring the independence of his state. Izetbegović's aim of Bosnian Muslim independence was largely achieved with the formation of the Muslim-Croat Federation, but at a cost of three years of war, during which nearly 65,000 Bosnian Muslims died, and hundreds of thousands were ethnically cleansed.

Certainly, one could claim that the Bosnian Muslim populism, focused first on a program of cultural autonomy, was only transformed into a full-fledged independence movement under Izetbegović's guidance, truly beginning with the writing of his *Declaration*. This chapter will analyze the import of the *Declaration*, highlighting the nationalistic, yet religious motivation of his call to political action. Reference will frequently be made to Izetbegović's predecessors and colleagues among Bosnian and globally renowned political Islamic activists alike.

One possible target of Izetbegović's *Declaration* was the Marxist regime that pervaded Yugoslavia at the time he wrote. He claimed that the Marxist economic system had become "fossilized" during the 50-odd years since the Russian Revolution, and as a result, had failed to serve the needs of its people. This echoed the criticisms of other former Yugoslav dissidents, like Franjo Tuđman, who used such arguments to justify the breakup of Yugoslavia in favor of a new series of non-socialist independent states. Tuđman, like Izetbegović, would often seek solace in the pre-Yugoslavian past, where he imagined that his "country" managed to maintain its political independence during the medieval era, and later its autonomy.⁹

But Izetbegović was very careful not to dwell too much in the *Declaration* on the cultural impact of Marxism on Bosnian Muslims. At no point in this work did he openly characterize Tito and the Yugoslav Communists as the primary enemy of his community, which deprived it of its religious freedom. He obviously may have feared such a statement might have cost him his life. Qutb, who wrote *Milestones*, his most provocative work, in 1964, some six years before Izetbegović composed his own, did not hesitate to denounce Marxism as an ideological danger, a veiled reference to Nasser's social reforms: Marxism "deprived people of their spiritual needs, which differentiates human beings from animals."¹⁰ Qutb's execution some two years later was a direct result of such boldness, a lesson of which Izetbegović was undoubtedly acutely aware.

However, Izetbegović's *Declaration* is strongly critical of Muslim elites, both in Bosnia and beyond. He blamed the "backwardness of Muslim peoples" on "conservatives who want the old forms, and modernists who want someone else's forms." He castigated the conservatives as "Hajjs and Sheikhs . . . [who want to] drag Islam into the past" by setting themselves up as "intermediaries between man and the Quran." In his opinion, they were hopeless dogmatics who refused to "apply Quranic principles to new situations, which continue to emerge from world developments." They might have had

“a love of Islam, but it is the pathological love of a narrow-minded and backward people, whose deathlike embrace has strangled the still-living Islamic idea.”¹¹

Although Izetbegović did not specify these conservatives by name, he likely was making a thinly-veiled reference to Handžić, whose famous wartime essay “Patriotism, Nationality, and Nationalism from an Islamic point of view” (*Patriotizam, narodnost i nacionalizam sa islamskog gledišta*) argued that while Muslims sometimes endorsed benevolent forms of nationalism, they were also right to reject its extreme “extreme” forms:

Islam is not against nationalism. It recognizes and tolerates its non-aggressive form, and can even approve it in some cases, because this mild nationalism unifies groups that cannot live on their own, bringing these people together for their own welfare ... [But] in many cases one group's nationalism is nothing other than religious propaganda and proselytization.¹²

Handžić's circle also asserted the primacy of Islamic law, to be adjudicated by the theologically trained authorities, like himself, and not mere demagogic Bosnian Muslim politicians, who lacked this education:

Our divine faith is our scholarly faith, as it can be seen on nearly every page of the Koran. According to it the basis of our faith is scholarship. Our Prophet (Peace Be upon Him) was proud of those who taught. The mission of his followers was to instruct the world in the true faith. This divine mission, after the death of the Prophet, was incumbent on those people who recognized the faith, and that was the scholars. Our Prophet said that prophets who founded their religious communities did not leave any property to their successors except for their divine scholarship. Consequently, the true bearers of this inheritance, our science, I considered to be the true inheritors of the prophet. The scholar's mission is to be a miniature version of the Prophet.¹³

Izetbegović responded belatedly to this criticism, a sore point given his lack of Islamic scholastic credentials, both as a member of the Young Muslims, and in the later stages of his political life. Izetbegović's dismissal of Handžić's conservatives largely echoed that of Iqbal, a well-credentialed doctor but no theologian, who called for Muslims to rid themselves of the superstitions of their predecessors.¹⁴

Izetbegović's criticism of “modernists” is equally sharp:

As far as the so-called progressives, Westerners, modernists, and whatever else they are called are concerned, they are the exemplification of real misfortune throughout the Muslim world, as they are quite numerous and influential, notably in government, education and public life. Seeing the Hajjs and conservatives as the personification of Islam, and convincing others to do likewise, the modernists raised a front against all that the idea represents. These self-styled reformers in the present-day Muslim countries may be recognized by their pride in what they should rather be ashamed of, and their shame in what they should be proud of.

These are usually “daddy’s sons,” schooled in Europe, from which they return with a deep sense of their own inferiority towards the wealthy West and a personal superiority over the poverty-stricken and backward surroundings from which they sprung. Lacking an Islamic upbringing and any spiritual or moral links with the people, they will quickly lose their elementary criteria and imagine that by destroying local ideas, customs and convictions, while introducing alien ones, they will build America—for which they have an exaggerated admiration—overnight on their home soil.¹⁵

This critique, however vague, was likely aimed at Đozo, the premier Bosnian Muslim modernist for much of the mid- to late-twentieth century. Regardless of his chameleon-like ability to flourish under the *Ustašas*, and later under Tito, Đozo did consistently condemn those Bosnian Muslims who used the program for educational and legal autonomy to build up a populist movement. Rather he emphasized that Muslims should try to strengthen their own personal faith, and give up on larger concerns to politically organize the Muslim community at large.¹⁶ Đozo also advocated that his people ultimately assimilate with local non-Muslims, which, in the Tito era, meant embracing a Yugoslav, and not a separate Bosnian Muslim identity. This was far too “cosmopolitan” for Izetbegović’s taste.

Izetbegović further elaborated on the “perfidious” influence of education in leading astray new generations of Muslims, both at home and abroad:

For centuries now our peoples have been deprived of educated people. Instead they have two other types, equally undesirable: the uneducated, and the wrongly educated. In no Muslim country do we have a system of education, sufficiently developed and capable of responding to the moral understanding of Islam and the needs of the people. Our rulers either neglected this most sensitive institution of any society, or left it up to strangers. The schools to which foreigners donated money and personnel, and thereby curricula and ideology, did not educate Muslims, not even nationalists. In them our budding intellectuals were injected with the “virtues” of obedience, submission and admiration for the might and wealth of the foreigner; in them, the intruders fostered a vassal mentality in the intelligentsia . . . Iron chains are no longer necessary to keep our peoples in submission. These silken cords of this alien “education” have the same power, paralyzing the minds and will of the educated. While education is so conceived, foreign wielders of power and their vassals in the Muslim countries need have no fear for their positions. Instead of being a source of rebellion and resistance, this system of education is their best ally.¹⁷

Here Izetbegović was repeating the complaint that traditional Bosnian Muslims had had since 1878, the first time that their community was subject to a non-Muslim political authority. Izetbegović subtly pushed for control over public schools and Sarajevo’s theological faculty. As any savvy Balkan politician, he was well aware that control of the school system was the best way to inculcate loyalty to the state. It is not

a coincidence that Izetbegović's complaints roughly paralleled those of Džabić's protest movement approximately a century before.

Beyond Bosnia, Izetbegović targeted the younger generations of Turkish and Arab modernizers, who were often trained in former missionary schools, like Robert College in Istanbul, and the American Universities at Beirut and Cairo. He blamed the creation of these institutions either on the European colonial powers, the United States, or even Middle Eastern nationalists.¹⁸

He reserved particular venom for Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (1881–1938), the founder of modern Turkey, who initiated a comprehensive program of secular reform, aimed at reducing Muslim cultural and social influence in the public sphere. He commented that Atatürk was “obviously a greater military leader than a cultural reformer . . . [who] prohibited the wearing of the fez. It soon became evident that changing the shape of their caps cannot change what is in people's heads or habits.”¹⁹

Atatürk's banning of the fez, an Islamic-styled red tasseled hat, in 1925 was indeed an important part of his greater secularization program. The irony, however, is that the fez itself had been an innovation. Before the *Tanzimat*, or Ottoman reform era, men had worn turbans, with different colors denoting their religious denomination. The fez, worn by Muslims and non-Muslims alike, was a sartorial symbol of equality and common citizenship. If Atatürk approached secular reform superficially, he certainly was not the first Muslim leader to do so.²⁰

He then launched into a comparison between Turkey and Japan, blaming Atatürk for the decline of his country:

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries [both Turkey and Japan] were ancient empires, each with its own physiography and place in history. Both found themselves at approximately the same level of development; both had a glorious past, which indicated both great privilege and a heavy burden. Then followed the well-known reforms in both countries. In order to continue to live its own way and not in another, Japan tried to unite tradition and progress. Turkey's modernists chose the opposite path. Today, Turkey is a third-rate country, while Japan has climbed to a pinnacle among the nations of the world . . . While Turkey abolished Arabic writing, which because of its simplicity, and just 28 characters, is one of the most perfect and widespread of alphabets, Japan rejected demands . . . to introduce the Roman script. No one is illiterate in modern-day Japan, while in Turkey—40 years after the introduction of Roman letters—over half the population cannot read or write, a result which would cause the blind to regain their sight . . . By abolishing the Arabic alphabet, all the wealth of the past, preserved in the written word, was largely lost to Turkey, and by this single act, the country was reduced to the brink of barbarism. With a series of “parallel” reforms, the new Turkish generation found itself with those spiritual props, in a kind of spiritual vacuum. Turkey had lost its remembrance of its past. Whom did this profit?²¹

Here Izetbegović railed against Atatürk's language reforms, particularly his switch from the Arabic to Latin script in 1928. Atatürk also regularized the Turkish grammar, reducing much of the Arabic and Persian vocabulary that had been used in Ottoman

Turkish. Certainly, there were problems in realizing the reform. Atatürk's modern Turkish was read in the printed press, and taught in the schools. Much of the population, still living in the countryside, remained illiterate. Even those who were taught the earlier Ottoman Turkish tended to adopt modern Turkish as a second language. Islamic theologians were especially reluctant to give up their mother tongue.²²

Nevertheless, Izetbegović's characterization of Japan's successful rise to power as based on retaining its traditional language, and Turkey's decline as explained by its abandonment of its old language, is a gross overstatement. Although he focused on cultural continuity as the key to national success, he did not touch on Japan's geographical advantage as a compact island nation, relatively distant from Europe in comparison to the Ottoman Empire, which had a far harder time protecting its vast territories from encroachment from its European neighbors.

More importantly, Izetbegović did not directly address his main grievance with Atatürk: his abolition of the Caliphate in 1924. Indeed, Izetbegović called his movement pan-Islamic in orientation. Pan-Islamism, an anti-colonial movement with the aim of uniting all Muslim peoples under the auspices of Ottoman Sultan Abdulhamid II (1876–1909), was abandoned by Atatürk after the Ottoman loss of Mecca, Medina and the other Arab provinces in the First World War. Pan-Islamism survived the war in altered form, with Bosnian and Arab intellectuals vigorously engaged in a debate as to who would succeed the Ottoman Sultan as the leader of the Muslim world. Izetbegović's Young Muslims, like Qutb's Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, began as movements in response to this loss, hoping to find a practical alternative to reform this institution.²³

Qutb labeled his opponents in a similar manner to Izetbegović. He regarded those who strove to modernize their society by borrowing from Western political and cultural traditions as *Jahiliya*—godless Westernizers who pursued pleasure and material wealth instead of embracing the Muslim faith. Izetbegović adopted Qutb's vocabulary himself when he stated that:

The struggle towards new goals did not begin today. On the contrary, it has already experienced *shihada* (martyrdom) and its history contains pages about the suffering of its victims. Still, this is mainly the personal sacrifice of exceptional individuals or courageous minor groups in collision with the mighty forces of the *Jahiliya* (the Godless). The magnitude of the problem and its difficulties, however, required the organized action of millions.²⁴

Đozo reacted to such arguments about "struggle," when he wrote in 1973 that:

Today, unfortunately, there are many in the Islamic world who mistakenly speak about struggle in a confrontational sense rather than struggle as self-reform, progress and a general spiritual and cultural renaissance. But it is necessary to reject aggression and its consequence which leads to weak government . . . That is the true path.²⁵

The argument clearly is about the definition of "struggle," expressed in classical Arabic as "jihad." For Đozo, such struggle was internal and could not in any way, shape, or

form be applied to the struggle for a Bosnian Islamic movement. Izetbegović obviously interpreted things differently.

Yet, for Izetbegović, the main problem he encountered was that the Muslim masses rejected participating in the modernist intelligentsia's reform projects:

By their acts, modernists have created a state of internal conflict and confusion in which any program—Islamic or foreign—becomes impracticable. The masses want Islamic action, but cannot carry it through without the intelligentsia. An alienated intelligentsia imposes a program, but cannot find enough people prepared to contribute the blood, sweat and enthusiasm for this paper ideal. The opposing forces cancel each other out, and a stage of powerlessness and paralysis sets in.²⁶

He strove to resolve this dilemma in the following way: "There is only one possible way out: the formation and grouping of a new intelligentsia, which thinks and feels Islam. This intelligentsia would then fly the flag of the Islamic order. And, together with the Muslim masses, take action to bring it about."²⁷ For Izetbegović, this movement was inherently democratic in nature:

The establishment of an Islamic order is in fact, a supreme act of democracy, because it means the realization of the deepest inclination of the Muslim peoples and the ordinary man. One thing is certain: regardless of what some of the wealthy and the intelligentsia may want, the ordinary man wants Islam and life in his own Islamic community. Democracy here does not come from principles and proclamations, but from facts. The Islamic order does not use force simply because there is no need for it. On the other hand, the un-Islamic order, sensing the constant resistance and hostility of the people, finds a solution in having recourse to force. Its transformation into a dictatorship is more or less the rule, an unavoidable evil.²⁸

The chance for establishing a populist Islamic movement was indeed hard to come by. Izetbegović in his youth certainly would not have seen such an opportunity. The Second World War, and the ensuing Titoist communist regime, would certainly not brook democratic elections or other fundamental political freedoms necessary to protest in favor of Bosnian Muslim independence. Those who would come close to attempting it, such as Handžić in 1944, or Džabić in 1902, would wind up exiled or worse.²⁹ Izetbegović's bold call to arms some 20 years before the breakup of Yugoslavia doubtlessly won him the status of a political prophet.³⁰

Yet, Izetbegović, as elsewhere in his *Declaration*, would ground this argument with examples from the Islamic world and its rich heritage, without referencing his own country specifically. For example, he would posit that the inherent democratic tendency within Islam began with the first four Caliphs, the companions of Prophet Muhammad. These Caliphs, known as the "Rightfully-Guided," were chosen by the consensus of the Islamic community. In Izetbegović's eyes, their "election" was inherently republican, since the Caliph as head of state was responsible to his people for "public affairs and social matters."³¹

Izetbegović was no doubt influenced by Iqbal, who seemingly came to a similar conclusion: “the republican form of government is not only thoroughly consistent with the spirit of Islam, but has also become a necessity in view of the new forces that are set free in the world of Islam.”³²

Iqbal then elaborated that the only way for Islamic law to be effectively implemented was through a “Muslim legislative assembly” in which such issues would be debated by “laymen who happen to possess a keen insight into affairs. In this way alone, can we stir into activity, the dormant spirit of life in our legal system, and give it an evolutionary outlook.”³³

Iqbal’s arguments that Islamic republicanism was a new phenomenon differed from that of Izetbegović. Rather than pointing to the example of the Caliphs, Iqbal talked glowingly of Atatürk’s decision to abolish the institution. He believed that maintaining the Caliphate would have perpetuated a monarchical system, which would inhibit rather than promote Islamic growth. Izetbegović hoped instead to revive the institution as an elective head of state.

Nevertheless, Izetbegović credited Iqbal for his idea of creating an Islamic republic: “Pakistan is the dress rehearsal for the introduction of an Islamic order, under modern conditions and at present rates of development.”³⁴ While he pointed to problems of political unity among the Pakistanis, he blamed Muhammad Ali Jinnah for failing to maintain a unified movement after Iqbal’s death.

One can see why Izetbegović would identify so much with the Pakistani movement. The Bosnian Muslims, like the Muslims of the subcontinent, were a minority religious community within a larger state. The question would be whether they could thrive as a religious minority or whether they should push for a separate Muslim state. Izetbegović alone spoke to this issue, admitting that “the Islamic order can only be established in countries where they represent the majority of the population.” He then postulated that: “Muslim minorities within a non-Islamic community, provided they are guaranteed freedom to practice their religion, to live and develop normally, are loyal and must fulfill their commitments to that community, except those which harm Islam and Muslims.”³⁵ This statement implied that the Bosnian Muslims should remain within Yugoslavia, as long as they were given their religious and cultural autonomy. This position was well-grounded in Bosnian history, given that the Bosnian Muslim community sought an established religious, cultural, and educational autonomy after its annexation by Austro-Hungary in 1908, its incorporation into the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes in 1918, and acquired somewhat greater freedoms under Tito’s Yugoslavia in the 1970s.³⁶

That situation likely changed for Izetbegović by 1990 on the eve of the war when Yugoslavia was wracked by ethnic nationalism, giving many the impression that Tito’s multicultural model of development was a thing of the past. If he abandoned Yugoslavia in favor of an independent Bosnian state, he might instead argue that Bosnian Muslims were the majority within that state—Muslims accounted for only 43 percent of the overall Bosnian population in 1990, although they made up a plurality of the three major groups, and arguably were a majority at times in the past, and even in the future.³⁷

Thus, Izetbegović might have envisioned the possibility to establish an “Islamic order” in Bosnia. When he talked in general about the aims of an Islamic movement, he stressed that moral and social reform must come before seeking political power:

Each nation, before being called upon to play its part in history, has had to live through a period of internal purging and the practical acceptance of certain fundamental moral principles. All power in the world starts out as moral firmness. Every defeat begins as moral failure. All that is desired to be accomplished must first be accomplished in the souls of men.³⁸

To Izetbegović, this moral reform—what he termed as “Islamization”—involved following traditional Islamic teachings as working for the good and welfare of the greater Islamic community, having a good work ethic, taking no interest as profit, condemning crime, forbidding alcohol, loose morals and pornography, and encouraging women to act as moral guides for their children. Nonetheless, Izetbegović nuanced this message by also stressing progressive aims, such as racial and social equality, Muslim self-reliance, and, most importantly, a refusal to impose his moral program on unwilling participants: “As it recognizes God, but no dogma or hierarchy, Islam cannot turn into a dictatorship and any kind of inquisition or spiritual terror is thereby done away with.”³⁹ Besides promising to leave non-Muslims in peace, Izetbegović went so far as to defend women’s rights to vote and prohibit polygamous marriage. He also made no statement about veiling—a sensitive issue in Bosnia since many Bosnian Muslim women would be likely to refuse the practice.

Yet, this “internal” religious revival was only one step in the process: “stressing the priority of the religious and moral renewal does not mean—nor can it be interpreted to mean—that the Islamic order can be brought about without Islamic governance.”⁴⁰ In his opinion, the movement should take power once it had the moral and numerical strength to establish an Islamic government, and not simply overturn the old, non-Islamic order. Timing was all-important, since seizing power without adequate moral and political preparation would cause a “coup d’état and not an Islamic revolution.” Any delay in taking action when the movement was ready could also prove deadly, since the un-Islamic order would have the opportunity to suppress the movement.

This talk of an Islamic movement that transformed itself from an internal struggle of faith to an external struggle for power is very reminiscent of Qutb’s position on jihad. To Qutb, jihad signified not only a struggle for individual and communal identity, but also the establishment of a global Islamic government: “the ultimate objective of the Islamic movement . . . is a means of establishing the divine authority within it so that it becomes the headquarters for the movement . . . which is then carried throughout the earth to the whole of mankind.”⁴¹

His defense of Islamic revolution—regardless of definition—did not go over well with many of Izetbegović’s critics—whether they be Serbs, Croats, the Yugoslavian authorities, or even secular Bosnian Muslims. While he did not specify how such a revolution was appropriate for Bosnia, he did stoke fears that an Islamic movement could pose a threat to national and regional security even if it was originally culturally and religiously based. This fear was bound to grow after the Iranian revolution in 1979 and the growth of Hamas among Palestinians and of Hezbollah among the Shiites of Lebanon in the early 1980s. The subsequent jailing of Izetbegović only helped him launch his own political career in the lead-up to war in 1992. He was seen at the trial by many Bosnian Muslims as a brave political dissident, who wanted to reestablish

autonomy, if not independence for his community; others saw him as a ruthless Islamic radical who pandered to his community's long-standing grievances with the Yugoslav state in order to impose his own form of dictatorship based on religious difference.

What is lost in this analysis is the broad, if contradictory, nature of Izetbegović's *Islamic Declaration*. On the one hand, he portrayed his own Islamic movement as innately democratic and progressive. Allowing for Muslims to form Islamic cultural associations—a civic group—could potentially empower a religiously alienated population to play an important part in revitalizing popularly elected government in Bosnia and elsewhere in the Islamic world; places where stable republican government often had a hard time developing. His partial embrace of Iqbal's vision of an Islam reconciled with modernity led him to include progressive messages—such as his stress on racial and social equality, freedom of belief, and the right of women to vote.

On the other hand, Izetbegović's denunciations of Westernizers, foreigners, and Marxists as un-Islamic and reactionary did not bode well for those who wished to maintain the delicate multicultural balance of Yugoslavia and its successor states. Although he never mentioned his home country specifically, one could perceive the threat of an intolerant movement that would seek to impose its agenda on non-Muslims and the secular-minded—the majority within Bosnia. This could be seen in Izetbegović's parallels with Qutb's call for an Islamic seizure of power, and even Iqbal's model of an Islamic republic in Pakistan. His mockery of Atatürk's alternative of a secular, but independent Turkish Republic as "Western-controlled" and a third-rate country cut off from its cultural heritage, showed a fundamental lack of respect for state traditions that did not easily fit his definition of an "Islamic order." Even his citation of Pakistan as his dress rehearsal seemed to suggest that creating a Muslim-dominated Bosnian state from Yugoslavia was logical and necessary. This was a step far removed from earlier Bosnian political activists, especially Džabić in 1899–1902 and Handžić in 1941–4, who had both sought autonomy, not independence for their community.

Admittedly, Izetbegović likely matured in the decades after writing his *Declaration*. He never spoke about political radicalization in his two other major works—*Islam between East and West*⁴² and his *Notes from Prison*.⁴³ He also became aware of the need to compromise with non-Muslims inside and outside Bosnia that were key to his community's survival; indeed, by signing the Dayton Peace Accord he agreed to join an uneasy federation with Bosnian Croats, and even a loose affiliation with the Bosnian Serbs—the party most responsible for perpetuating ethnic cleansing and even genocide during the Bosnian civil war of 1992–5. Still, the *Declaration's* publication in 1990 and its controversial political program contributed in its own unique way to the conflict that ensued. The *Declaration* that launched Izetbegović's political career as a Muslim populist would continue to haunt him until the end of his days.

Notes

- 1 Fikret Karčić, *The Bosniaks and the Challenges of Modernity: Late Ottoman and Hapsburg Times* (Sarajevo: El-Kalem, 1999), 109–11; Mustafa Imamović, *Historija Bošnjaka* (Sarajevo: Preporod, 2006), 367–72.

- 2 Robert Donia, *Islam Under the Double Eagle: The Muslims of Bosnia and Hercegovina, 1878–1914* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981), 100–18, 122–8, 160, 170–81.
- 3 Imamović, *Historija Bošnjaka*, 489–94.
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- 13 *Ibid.*, 46–7. One wonders if Handžić's argument in favor of special political privileges for the Muslim learned was affected to any extent by the great political influence wielded by Alois Stepinac (1898–1960), the Cardinal of Croatia.
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