

POLITICAL AND IDEOLOGICAL PROFILING OF
MUSLIMS IN INTER-WAR YUGOSLAVIA

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ABSTRACT

Political and ideological profiling of Muslims in inter-war Yugoslavia is a comparative survey of the *historical* evolution of the political attributes of the Muslims of inter-war Yugoslavia. The paper primarily aims to explore the political and ideological attribution of the Muslims (as a minority groups) in a multi-ethnic and constitutional monarchic state. Since the Muslim community of inter-war Yugoslavia portrayed an ethnically divided and politically separated society (Slavic origin Muslims of Bosnia-Herzegovina and Albanian and Turkic origin Muslims of Macedonia and Kosovo) it is worthwhile to question whether (or to what extent) the communal division drove the political and ideological positions of the Muslims to ethnic aspirations. The paper claims to offer comparative insights on the political awakening, political manifestation, and political participation patterns of the Muslims of inter-war Yugoslavia.

Keywords: Inter-war Yugoslavia, Muslims of Yugoslavia, Minority Politics, Cemiyet, JMO.

INTRODUCTION

This study is a comparative survey of the *historical* evolution of the political attributes of the Muslims of inter-war Yugoslavia (the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, Slovenes, as of 1929 the Kingdom of Yugoslavia). This research is being conducted with the primary aim to explore the political and ideological attributions of the Muslims (as a minority group) in a multi-ethnic and constitutionally monarchic state. To make sense of their perspectives, an analysis based on political science and applying the relevant terminology has been employed.

The analysis is divided into three main chapters covering the political awakening, political manifestation, and political participation patterns of the Muslims. In the political awakening chapter the narrative extends back to the second half of 19th Century in the Balkans. The political activities (political reactions, organizations, party configurations, and public mobilization patterns) of the Muslims are traced until the eve of World War I. In the political manifestation chapter the political codes and ideological perspectives of the Muslims are explored. Finally, in the political participation chapter, the political actor typology of the Muslims and their party politics under the constitutional monarchy are analysed.

The Muslim community of inter-war Yugoslavia portrayed an ethnically divided and politically separated society: Slavic origin Muslims of Bosnia-Herzegovina were quite distinct from the Albanian and Turkic origin Muslims of Macedonia and Kosovo. In line with this, they displayed separate political agencies and were represented as such in the Parliament. The voting behaviour of Muslims was shaped by this separation: the Bosnian Muslims (overwhelmingly Slavic origin) voted for the Yugoslav Muslim

Organization (JMO), while the Kosovar and Macedonian Muslims (Albanian and Turkic origin) preferred to vote for the Islam Muhafaza-i Hukuk Cemiyet (Cemiyet) (Sandzak Muslims proved an exception here as the Serbo-croat speaking Sandzak Muslims voted mainly for Cemiyet). However, despite the portrayed ethnic division, political appeals did not predominately derive from ethnocentrism instead they were embracing the whole Muslim community. Hence, the second aim of this paper is to explore whether (or to what extent) the communal division drove the political and ideological positions of the Muslims to ethnic aspirations. To figure this out, the political manifestation and political participation patterns of the Bosnian and Kosovar-Macedonian Muslims are analysed comparatively. The political attitudes of the Muslims of Macedonia and Kosovo (so the Cemiyet) and those of Bosnia-Herzegovina (so the JMO) are analysed separately but with a parallel structure. In the political manifestation chapter the foundation of political parties, party programs and the ideological stances are examined respectively. Then, in the political participation chapter electoral positions, alliances, and briefly parliamentary politics are examined respectively.

For Muslims, the presence and continuity of their political participation and involvements were contingent upon the political situation in the country. Between 1918 and 1928 the country was ruled through a constitutional monarchy system. The King apparently did not directly intervene into the political life and even when he did it was done by the hands of the political parties. Hence, during this period clear-cut party politics were dominant. However, by contrast after the Royal coup on January 6th 1929, the country was driven into a period of civil and political inactivity. Initially the political parties were banned, but eventually political participation and

representation parochially allowed; however politics were confined to reluctant, state-controlled political parties. Additionally, for the Muslims, with the 6th January coup their political participation was restricted due to the prohibition of ethnic and confessional representation (Kamberovic, 2008:143-190). Thus, it is more profitable to restrict this analysis to within a specific limited time period and therefore, the period between the day of foundation (December 1st, 1918) and the day of royal coup (January 6th, 1929) has been investigated within this research.

In due course of this research it has been observed that the scholarly literature on the political involvements of the Muslims of inter-war Yugoslavia are inclined to emphasize the ethnic characters of their political actions. While some scholars recognize ethnic identities but focus mainly on the religious character; some others have reduced their explanations of their political struggles to ethnic conflict (for instance see Poulton, and Vickers, 1997:145-6 or Banac, 1984). However, the common view is that Muslims were mainly behaving as a confessional group (Lampe, 1996; Babuna, 2004; Adanir, 2002; Friedman 2000; Lopasic, 1981). Their political stances, as can apparently be seen from the political agencies' party programs were highlighting a united vision of a confessional group rather than the specific ethnic claims of Bosnians or Kosovar-Macedonians (See Ersoy *b.*, 2010: 276-280 and Hrabak, 2003:81). Thus, this study treats the Muslims of inter-war Yugoslavia as a confessional group and their political involvements have been considered from this perspective. Consequently, the main hypothesis of this paper is that the political stances and perspectives of Muslims were shaped by their confessional identity and the Muslim political agencies (JMO and Cemiyet) were confessional parties rather

than ethnic ones. Thus, political division was a result of ideological separateness and not due to ethnocentric appeals.

Since the title refers to ideology, it is better to clarify the scope of the term because within this research Ottomanism, Pan-Islamism, Yugoslavism, and Bosnianism have all been introduced as ideological perspectives. The term *ideology* has been used with reference to wider social-scientific use that “*the term ... can be applied to all ‘isms’ or action-oriented political philosophies*” such as feminism, ecologism, or religious fundamentalism. The criterion here is that the idea should bring a ground for organized political action. (Heywood, 2000:22-24) Thus, the above listed concepts (Ottomanism, Pan-Islamism, Yugoslavism, and Bosnianism) are assigned as ideological orientations and perspectives of the Muslims of interwar Yugoslavia which have occasionally shaped their political behaviour. In this scope the concept of;

- *(Pan)Islamism* refers to the idea of being a member of or having an affiliation to a wider Islamic community beyond the nation-state borders.

- Ottomanism* refers to the idea of keeping the Ottoman State alive by refusing the ethnic divisions and embracing the *millet* system. However, post-Ottoman Ottomanism was a kind of nostalgia among Muslims which functioned as a symbol of their superior position within the states apparatuses. Thus it was to maintain the Ottoman period social and economic status of the Muslims.

- Yugoslavism* came into being as a unifying idea that aimed to unite all South Slavs under one state with the principle of equality of all component ethnicities (Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes).

- Bosnianism* refers to two distinct ideas. The first one refers a territorial nationalism of Bosnians regardless of confessional distinctions in Bosnia. The

second use refers to religious nationalism of Bosnian Muslims. The latter mainly applied during the 1930s.

Finally, throughout the paper due to the alphabetical plurality of the issued sources, the vernacular use of the letters could not be employed over the manuscript. The closest English use is used preferentially.

CHAPTER I. POLITICAL AWAKENING

I. BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA

The political awakening among the Muslims of interwar Yugoslavia dates not so far back in history. Bosnian Muslims enjoyed a separate political development than the rest of the provinces of the Ottoman Empire due to the Austro-Hungarian occupation (and later annexation) in 1878. The development of political activities of Muslims under the Austro-Hungarian occupation was during the early years of the occupation represented by military resistance which was mounted in order to preserve the unity of the Ottoman *millet* (confessional communities). The second stage was marked by a series of cultural and political grievances which ended up with the submittal of a number of formal petitions to the Austro-Hungarian rulers, the foundation of intellectual associations, and various publications such as journals and newspapers. The final stage of political development amongst the Muslims living under occupation was reached as civil activism evolved political agency which eventually led to the establishment of a political representational body (Babuna,1996:131). On the other hand, to show another path of political awakening; as Aleksandre Popovic describes, some intellectuals (modernists) accepted the opportunities offered by the new government in order to gain advantages which enabled the development of a cultural, intellectual and political awakening (1986:196; 2006:211). Therefore, it can be stated that the (proto)ideological commitments of the Muslims were shaped by the political forces of either opposition¹ (conservatives) or loyalty (modernists) towards the

¹ Mark Pinson's assertions on the opposition of Muslims strenghtens this argument. He argues that the conflict "*functioned as a kind of incubator*" for Bosnian Muslims to define the basis of their ideological stance. The need for national identity and the will for political participation among the Bosnian Muslims were boosted thanks to this *conflict* (Pinson,1994:96).

Austro-Hungarian government. However, in considering the culture of resistance and traditionalism in Bosnia-Herzegovina, it should also be borne in mind that the Bosnian Muslims were already hostile towards the reforms put in place by the Ottomans just before the Austro-Hungarian occupation.

OPPOSITIONAL PERFORMANCES

Military Resistance and Ottomanism

Austro-Hungarian authorities gained the right to occupy and administer the Bosnia-Herzegovina at the Congress of Berlin which was also the congress responsible for a redrawing of the Balkans map in 1878. The military rebellion and civil resistance against the occupiers commenced in Bosnia-Herzegovina when the Austro-Hungarian military troops stepped on to the lands of the Ottomans. Hence, the protection of the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire was seemingly the primary reason for the resistance as Atif Purivatra asserts: “[*The*] struggle of the Muslims against the Austro-Hungarian army was not only an indirect defence of the Turkish Empire but also [was the protection of] their (Ottoman’s) privileged position, rather than the [defence of] their native country–Bosnia-Herzegovina” (1977:13). Muslim rebellions were thus sustained even after the occupation of Sarajevo on 19th August 1878. The rebellion was overwhelmingly run by the Muslims of Bosnia; but meanwhile in some parts of the province Serbs also took up arms and endeavoured to protect their lands. The Serbs’ collaboration with Muslims mainly occurred in Herzegovina in 1882. The cooperation between Muslims and Serbs was maintained due to parallel demands regarding autonomy for religious education and the right to refuse military recruitments (Purivatra,1977:14). More generally, the Bosnian Serbs’ antagonism against the Austro-Hungarian rule and their will to end Austro-Hungarian

overlordship brought them together with the Muslims. This collaboration was mediated by some pro-Serb Muslims activists however these forces were not the sole reason which led them to work in league together. Instead, there was a “tactical cooperation” between Serbs and Muslims as they both supported each other on cultural autonomy issues and the Muslims benefited from the Serbian expertise in the (legal) organization of the petition drives. Together then both Serbs and Muslims protested the annexation. As Robert Donia mentions “*until the annexation Muslims and Serbs both celebrated the Sultan’s birthday, ostentatiously demonstrating their hopes for a return to Turkish sovereignty*”(1981:179). However, the Muslims abandoned such hopes when the Ottoman Empire lost the Balkan Wars (1912-1913), whilst the Serbs of Bosnia-Herzegovina were attracted by the rise of a victorious Serbian state (Popovic,1986:366). Thus, the Balkan Wars brought an end to the validity of the Ottomanist stances in the political activities of the Muslims and exerted a pull towards pragmatism in their ideological standing.

Cultural/Religious Autonomy Movement and Pan-Islamism

The struggle of the rebellion had a relatively limited impact on the generation of a concrete political stance but conversely the ideological standpoint and general agenda were heavily influenced by the cultural and religious demands of the Muslims (Babuna,1996:131). They sought to secure the Islamic foundations for progress during the Austro-Hungarian reign and they maintained the willingness to see the *Caliph* (the ruler of the Islamic nation, in this case, the Sultan of the Ottoman Empire) and the *Shaikh ul Islam* (head of the religious affairs in the Caliphate) in Istanbul on the top of the religious hierarchy. As a consequence, their spiritual loyalty to the *Shaikh ul Islam* in Istanbul had continued despite the creation of a native Islamic religious authority in

Bosnia-Herzegovina. Since the native religious hierarchy was founded by the Austro-Hungarians and they had appointed the *Reisul-Ulema* (grand mufti); the Hierarchy's responsibility was towards the Austro-Hungarian government rather than the *ummah* (the Islamic nation) (Donia,1981:141). This fostered Pan-Islamist and Ottomanist commitments amongst the Muslims. So much so that, the religious leader of Mostar (Mufti-Ali Fehmi Efendi Dzabic) even asked Istanbul to intervene. The pan-Islamist² policy of the Ottoman Empire had prompted this conservative/traditionalist opposition (Babuna,1996:131-147).

Ali Fehmi Dzabic came into the forefront as a prominent pan-Islamist and Ottomanist intellectual and religious figure after the occupation. Owing to his well-respected personality, he managed to lead the 'Muslim autonomy movement for cultural and religious rights' for years even after he was dismissed by the Austro-Hungarian government and banned from re-entering Bosnia in 1902. With the leadership of Dzabic the Muslim community submitted a large number of petitions to the government on behalf of the Muslim population. Thanks to this movement, Muslims

² Aydın Babuna argues that the official Pan-Islamist policy of the Ottoman Empire influenced the internal political activism in Bosnia-Herzegovina and he criticises Robert Donia's explanation of the sources of the Muslim movement. According to Babuna, Robert Donia is reducing the sources of Muslim activism to "*local power struggle within and between the elites of various towns in Bosnia-Herzegovina and the relations of the elites with the Austrian regime and other social classes*" (Babuna, 1996:148-9). Indeed, by stating that "*neither innovative ideologies nor social dislocation could account for the growth of Muslim political activism*" Donia disregards the influence of Pan-Islamism among the Muslims of Bosnia-Herzegovina. On the other hand, the existence of an official pan-Islamist policy in the Porte is contested as Dr. Abdulhamid KırımıZı of Istanbul Şehir University commented in our correspondence on the issue that "*the Pan-Islamism's use as a long-term policy is being exaggerated; Abdulhamid II had no such power to follow a long-run pan-Islamist policy. What he did was employing ad hoc policies producing palliative reactions not a coordinative great policy*" (Personal correspondence on June 12,2011).

gained the opportunity to become involved in political activities. Until the party (Muslim National Organization) was established, the Pan-Islamist wing consisting mainly of religious intellectuals, headed the movement. This wing was reluctant to fight for the interests of the landlords. When Dzabic gave authorization to Serif Arnautovic (a notable landowner) to lead the movement Muslim opposition reached a more formal and organized form of political action as the landowners took the upper hand and the supremacy of the *hodzas* (religious functionaries) (and with them Pan-Islamism) ceased (Ibid).

Configuration of the Political Agency

The foundation of the first Muslim political party was contingent upon a fusion of religious precisions and landlord's interests despite the discordant relations of the parties. Landowners, after taking control, merged their economic interests with the interests of the rest of the Muslim community with the clear support for religious, cultural, and educational rights. However, the politicization of the Muslims needed a gradual increase in the tone and convincingness of the opposition. The cooperation among the leading (landlord) families was the impulse behind the political institutionalization. In particular, joint opposition to the implementation of agrarian reform successfully gathered the landlords under a single roof, because the proposed agrarian reform was endangering their historically vested superior social and economic position (Ibid:142). The Mostar Protests of 1899 and the submitted petitions were thus the harbingers of an organized Muslim front. This was followed by a series of gatherings and assemblies held in Kiseljak, Budapest, Mostar and Sarajevo in 1899 and 1900 from which a united conservative Muslim voice developed. However, despite the emergence of a united voice, Dzabic and his followers always feared that

the landlords could ruin the movement by favouring their own interests and seeking to promote their property rights while overlooking the cultural and religious issues (Donia,1981:128-143,161-5).

After the annexation of 1908, a liberal political atmosphere was introduced and political parties had the chance to be recognized legally (Ibid:168). The Muslim autonomy movement for cultural and religious rights had already converted into a political party in 1906 named as Muslimanska narodna organizacija (Muslim National Organization-MNO). Nonetheless, the formal declaration of the party had to be postponed due to the suppressive policies of the Austro-Hungarian government (Ibid:171). Thus, it was only in 1910 that the foundation of the party was officially declared. The leading cadre unfortunately had no prominent charismatic leader and instead a moderate landowner, Ali-beg Firdus, fronted the movement. Immediately after the foundation of the Parliament of the Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1910 the first election was held.

When Dzabic was the leader of the opposition, religious functionaries provided direction to the political mobilization of the Muslim population and hence, the movement employed primarily religious symbols. Similarly, when Ali-beg Firdus was in office, the political mobilization continued its claims to be led by the citation of religious values (Babuna,1996:147). Thus, in the parliamentary elections of 1910 the MNO managed to attract the majority of the votes in both cities and rural areas along with securing the backing of the Muslim population from all social classes. They gained all of the 24 seats allocated to the Muslim population in the Parliament (Ibid).

Meanwhile, the participation of the Muslim masses in the elections also demonstrated that the political awakening and consciousness among the Muslims of Bosnia-Herzegovina had made huge progress. After more than thirty years of activism the Muslim elites had finally managed to create a start for Muslim participation in the party politics of Bosnia-Herzegovina (Ibid).

LOYALTY APPEALS

Despite its important role, the opposition cannot in itself be regarded as the sole source of an awakening of political consciousness amongst Muslims in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Some authors for instance suggest that the modernism (allegedly) introduced by the Austro-Hungarians was a herald for cultural and intellectual progress as well as the development of a greater political consciousness. The modernist progress and political consciousness were contingent upon the creation of an indigenous nationality and a national ideology: the Bosnjak and Bosnianism (Bosnian Nationalism). However, there was confusion about the use of Bosnjak because the term Bosnjak had already been used by the last vizier of Bosnia “*to address the Muslim faith inhabitants of Bosnia*” (Ersoy a.,2010:191). The later use of Bosnjak (Bosnian nation-Bosnjastvo) which was introduced by the Minister of Finance Benjamin Kallay was embraced by the modernists in order to completely emancipate the “*Bosnians from allegiance to Belgrade, Zagreb or Constantinople and ... [support the] acknowledgement of a common Bosnian identity...*” (Okey, 2007:62) This identity and ideology could not offer an alternative to the strong anti-regime stance (Imamovic,2006:213) and as a result it was espoused only by some intellectuals who were loyal to the Austro-Hungarian government (Babuna,1999:211).

Mehmet-beg Kapetanovic was one of the devoted supporters of Bosnian nationalism; he founded the journal *Bosnjak* the purpose of which was to combine the local culture with the European one. His obedience to the Austro-Hungarians was for pragmatic purposes; he considered them as a vehicle for modernism. Kapetanovic believed that the return to the Ottoman Empire was nothing but an unrealistic dream and in one of his well-known articles he wrote that “*Bosnia can become anything but Turkish, never again; so why think so foolishly and hope for Bosnia’s retreat to previous conditions*”. He was in favour of true integration of Muslims into the Austro-Hungarian Empire as can be observed in the same article when he mentioned that “*...anyone who fully carries out his religious duties must be a friend, with his heart and soul, to the government under which he enjoys his holy rights without any obstacle.*” Kapetanovic and his friends, like Mustafa Hilmi Imamovic, even went so far as to promote service in the Austro-Hungarian army which had been made compulsory in 1881 (Ersoy a.,2010:192). As a result in World War I (WWI), the Austro-Hungarian troops recruited from Bosnia fought against Italians in Dalmatia and Albania with a contingent of Muslim soldiers identifiable by their *fez* (a brimless felt hat, once common in the Ottoman Empire) and the *imams* (religious officials) who accompanied them in the war. In order to help to the creation of a Bosnian nation and the establishment of a national ideology in 1890 phonetic writing and a special grammar for the Bosnian language were introduced (Lopasic,1981:119). These developments demonstrate that the *bosnjastvo* was a kind of escape hatch for “*the Muslims who were the object of Croat-Serb rivalry*” (Banac,1984:360) and who rejected identification as either a Serb or Croat³.

³ Some Bosnian Muslims considered themselves Serb or Croat rather than Bosnjak or Ottoman. Even some prominent members of MNO were pro-Serbian like Serif Arnautovic and Dervis-beg Miralem.

As discussed above the political awakening amongst Muslims occurred within two intellectual circles: traditionalist/conservatives and modernists. While the conservatives were overwhelmingly religiously-motivated activists, the modernists came from a reformist tradition and some of them were completely secularized Bosnian intellectuals. There were some reformists who were more moderate in their devotion to both Bosnian nationalism and Islam; for instance Hasan Rebac, Sacir Sikiric, Hamidija Kresovljakovic and Mehmet Spaho (Popovic,2006:213-4). With the support of the moderate Muslims; religious publications were published in Latin or Cyrillic alphabets and the use of the Arabic alphabet was abandoned (Popovic,1984:205). The modernist intellectuals also took an interest in party politics and founded the Muslimanska napradna stranka (Muslim Progressive Party) in 1908 but they failed to attract mass support from any of the social classes. In 1910 they renamed the party as Muslimanska samostalna stranka (The independent Muslim Party) but again they could not win any of the seats in the 1910 elections (Donia,1981:171).

This heyday of party politics in Bosnia-Herzegovina did not last long however as the Austro-Hungarian government dissolved the parliament in 1912 and 1913 because of the Balkan Wars. Following the Balkan Wars, WWI broke out and all of the political actors and political life was largely suspended until early in 1918 with the end of the war. New political boundaries came into effect with the end of WWI and the politically awakened Muslims of Bosnia formed new political parties in order to be

Some cultural and intellectual associations or published journals were again pro-Serbian or pro-Croatian. Gajret was one of them founded in 1903 and known as a pro-Serbian journal.

politically represented in the Parliament of the Kingdoms of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (Donia,1981:xi).

II. THE RUMELI VILAYETS: MACEDONIA AND KOSOVO

The occupations which followed the Berlin Congress of 1878 meant that the new state frontiers (or the military occupations) split the previous Muslim community of *Rumeli Vilayets* (*vilayet*: province) which had existed under the Ottoman Empire. Whilst Bosnia-Herzegovina was occupied by the Austro-Hungarians; Kosovo and Macedonia both remained part of Ottoman territory until after the Balkan wars of 1912-13 (Map1). Therefore, the Muslim community of inter-war Yugoslavia had witnessed a different way of administrative and political life before the WWI. Above an overall picture of the political awakening of the Muslims of Bosnia-Herzegovina under the Austro-Hungarian rule was provided and consequently it is now possible to contrast these developments with those experienced in the Ottoman Empire particularly in Macedonia and Kosovo between the same period; 1878 to 1912. The argument presented here will be that whilst Muslims in Bosnia-Herzegovina owe their political awakening to the legacy of resistance against the Austro-Hungarian government and the introduction of modernism by contrast the Muslims of Macedonia and Kosovo owe their awakening to the modernist transformation of the Ottoman Empire.



Map 1 Ottoman Rumeli 1878-1912

Source Blumi, Isa (2011) *Reinstating the Ottomans: Alternative Balkan Modernities, 1800-1912*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

In the Ottoman Empire, the reformation of the administrative (reorganization of provincial administration in 1860) and legal system (introduction of secular citizenship rights -1839- and promulgation of the first Constitution -1876) initiated the experience of constitutional citizenship in the Empire (known as the 1st Constitutional Era). These developments were followed by the foundation of the Parliament (1877) in order to facilitate the political participation of the Ottoman *teba* (citizens) in a legitimate way. The first elections were held in the summer of 1877 with the deputies elected at a provincial level. Since there were no empire-wide political party organizations, the deputies had no formal political affiliation with any agency but their respective confessional groups and constituencies. From the Rumeli Vilayets 48 deputies were sent to the Parliament (were the total number of members was 130) after the first elections (Table 1); whilst the Serbia and Montenegro provinces ignored the elections and did not send any deputies (Derindere,1999:82-95). The Parliaments assembled after two elections in 1877 were in balance in terms of the confessional representation (Table 1, Table 2). The ideological motivation behind this was to foster the multi-cultural, multi-confessional, and multi-ethnic nature of the concept of Ottomanism. Thus, the Ottomans were mounting a challenge to nationalist and separatist aspirations in a manoeuvre designed to (re)integrate the confessional groups into the Empire.

Table 1: Constituencies and the numbers of the deputies in the parliament from the Rumeli Vilayets after the first elections (1877)

Constituencies	Muslim	Non-Muslim
Edirne	4	4
Tuna	3	3
Selanik - Manastir	4	5
Kosova - Sofva	3	2
Bosna - Hersek	5	5
Iskodra	2	2
Yanva	3	3
Total	24	24

Source: Tuncer. Erol (2002) *Osmanlı'dan Günümüze Seçimler 1877-1999*, Ankara: TESAV Yayınları. p. 297.

Table 2: Constituencies and the numbers of the deputies from Rumeli Vilavets in the parliament after the second elections (1877)

Constituencies	Muslim	Non-Muslim
Edirne	4	4
Tuna	3	1
Selanik - Manastır	4	4
Kosova	3	5
Bosna - Hersek	4	4
Iskodra	2	2
Yanva	-	3
Total	20	24

Source: Tuncer. Erol (2002) Osmanlı'dan Günümüze Seçimler 1877-1999, Ankara: TESAV Yayınları, p. 298.

Despite the existence of political-movements since the early 19th century (either separatist or anti-modernist organizations) party politics was formally introduced into the Ottoman Empire's political scene by the Young Turk coup in 1908 (2nd Constitutional Era started) following which the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) rose up as the most powerful political group. The CUP initially emerged with the merger of Ottoman unitarism supporting university students in Istanbul and the secularist/positivist Young Turks in Paris (in 1899). When they were suppressed by Sultan Abdulhamid II, the resurgence of the party burgeoned from the Rumeli Vilayet in 1906; with the leadership of the bureaucratic elite (district caimacam, commissioned officers, and other officers) in Macedonia. This reveals a parallel between inter-war Yugoslavian Macedonia and Kosovo as in both cases all members of these bureaucratic elite were members of a *tarikah* (Islamic religious order) (Tunaya,1988:22). After recruiting hundreds of official and civil activists the revolutionary organization CUP managed to plot a successful coup against the Sultan Abdulhamid II (1908). They had initially promoted Ottomanism when they were first founded in 1899 but in due course an ideological shift occurred within the party from Ottomanism to Pan-Turkism and Turkish nationalism.

When the new regime took power in 1908 it was embraced and celebrated by the Ottoman *teba* with the rationale being that the ambition of people, regardless of their ethno-religious origin, was in favour of a constitutional regime in which freedoms, unification, and progress was guaranteed (Blumi,2011:2). This commitment is evident from the continuing plurality observable within the Parliament after both the 1908 and 1912 elections (Table 3). Additionally, the death of thousands (of Albanian, Greek, Serb, or Bulgarian origin people) in the Ottoman lines of battle after 1908 was due to their loyalty to a multi-national empire rather than for the cause of their individual national states. Thus, “*being an Albanian, Greek, Serb, or Bulgarian meant a very different thing prior to 1912; they could not have envisioned the world experienced after the World War I*” (Ibid:6). This argument challenges Ivo Banac’s (1984) historically gained national individuality thesis about the “sub-nationals of inter-war Yugoslavia”⁴, by illustrating that the Ottoman *teba* were clinging to the hope that a transformed/modernized Empire could still exist. Only the traumas experienced after the Balkan Wars caused a significant shift in this mind-set as people began to consider new futures apart from the Ottoman Empire. The establishment of political parties from both wings of the political scale can be explained as a strategy which recognised the value in applying a variety of different methods to try and secure the future of the Empire (See Table 4).

⁴ Isa Blumi argues that “*early post-Ottoman societies ... resisted adopting narrow ‘nationalist’ identities of modern states*” (Blumi,2011:7) He even goes far with saying that “*No possible justification for writing an exclusively ‘national’ story prior to the demise of the Ottoman State*” that challenges also the Yugoslav ‘national’ history writing. He also argues that the Ottoman *teba* “*prior to the 1912 had no firm ethno-national consciousness*”, in this sense, the western-imposed evolutionary process of nation-state formation argued to be incompatible with the post-Ottoman nation-states case. If we consider this argument it can also be argued that the Muslims of inter-war Yugoslavia did not grab the Yugoslav identity due to their commitment to their Ottoman past. The Austro-Hungarian attempt to create a “Bosnian nation” can be an example for this.

Table 3: Parliamentary elections of 1908 and 1912 and the numbers of the deputies from the Rumeli Vilavets

Constituencies*	Parliamentary Elections	
	1908	1912
(Albania, Macedonia and Aegean Islands)		
Iskodra		
Kosova	61	49
Manastır		
Yanya		
Selanik		
Aegean Islands	out of 288	out of 284
Total	110	
Ethnic Origin**		
Albanian	30	17
Turkish	11/12	12
Slav	8	8
Rum/Greek	11	6
Other	1	3

Source: *Ahmad, Feroz and Rustow. A. Dankwart (1976) İkinci Meşrutvet Döneminde Meclisler: 1908-1918, Güney-Doğu Avrupa Araştırmaları Dergisi, No: 4-5, p.247.
**Ibid, p. 266-8

Instantaneously after the coup, the CUP spread over the country (Kayalı,1995:271) and with the tremendous efforts of some of its members, such as Ibrahim Temo, they opened up branches across the Balkans as well (Tunaya,1988:20). The aim behind such expansion was to enable them to get into contact with local groups and mobilize people to help create a unitarian and centralist Parliament (Kayalı,1995:271). Since, these centralists enjoyed both grassroot and elite support simultaneously and had the opportunity to use media for public mobilization their hand was strengthened in the elections (Blumi,2011:1). However, as we can see from Table 4 even with such advantages they could not attract the voters in the Rumeli Vilayets. In both elections, the liberal/decentralist wing (Party of Ottoman Liberals-Ahrar Partisi- and Party of Freedom and Understanding-Hürriyet ve İtilaf Partisi-) got the upper hand.

Table 4: Political Party affiliations of the deputies from the Rumeli Vilayets in 1908-1912 Elections

1908 Elections	Independent	CUP	Liberals	Socialist
Albanian	15	2	13	-
Turkish	1	9	3	-
Slav	4	-	1	3
Rum/Greek	5	-	5	1
Total	25	11	22	4
1912 Elections*	Independent	CUP	Liberals	Socialist
Albanian	11	3	3	-
Turkish	2	5	-	-
Slav	7	-	-	1
Rum/Greek	5	-	1	-
Total	25	8	4	1

Source: Ahmad, Feroz and Rustow. A. Dankwart (1976) İkinci Meşrutivet Döneminde Meclisler: 1908-1918, Günev-Doğu Avrupa Araştırmaları Dergisi. No: 4-5, pp.266-8.

*In 1912 Elections, no deputies were elected for the Parliament from Pristine.

Along with the electoral mobilization, the CUP established contacts with local Muslim groups in Skopje and in Prizren. In Skopje, CUP cadres were mainly Albanian in origin and while they stood on the side of the coup and plotters, they later amalgamated with the Albanian Revolutionary Committees and allied with the Albanian national movement (Poulton and Vickers,1997:143-4). In Prizren, the pivotal and pioneering movement was the Albanian League of Prizren. The founders of the League were mostly the landlords and those connected with the Ottoman authorities (Kopeček and Trencsényi,2006:349) and thus, the organization was loyal to the Sultan. Despite the ‘uniting the Albanian citizens of Ottoman Empire’ motto, later (after 1912) it evolved into a national programme for creating an Albanian state. Since the League was organized as branches ideological commitment varied due to the lack of centralized authoritative control. Whilst the Kosovar members were more traditionalist, loyal to the Caliph, and Ottomanist some other prominent leaders like Pashko Vasa, Sami Frashëri, and Abdyl Frashëri were constituting an intellectual, autonomist and reformist wing. As Noel Malcolm cites from a British officer “*The movement is rather religious than secular, and is led by the Muftis, Ulemas, Kadis*”

(Malcolm,1998:222). It was declared in the political program that the League was focusing on preserving the sovereignty of the Sultan (article1) and on creating a more decentralized form of governing which involved creating local councils and stipulated local direct participation in these councils (article4) (Kopeček and Trencsényi, 2006:351). These demands illustrate the level of modernism in terms of the political “participation” that the Ottoman *teba* reached in the years which Bosnia-Herzegovina was under the occupation of the Austro-Hungarians.

In the scope of the introduction of civic citizenship and the following reforms, it is better to rely primarily on the explanation of the awakening in the Rumeli Vilayets through the electoral rights and party politics; otherwise if we link the “mass” awakening to local nationalist activism we will mistakenly follow the narrowly interpreted nationalist historiography as they have been “*relying on ‘models’ of analysis that allocate for too little attention to a few isolated members of the bourgeoisie*” (Blumi,2011:13).

CHAPTER II. SOUTH SLAV UNIFICATION AND MUSLIM INTEGRATION

By the end of the Balkan Wars both Macedonia and Kosovo had passed into Serbian hands. Despite the short term Bulgarian changeover during World War I (WWI), in 1918 Serbian rule over Macedonia and Kosovo was restored. Nonetheless, the territorial unity of the Southern Slavs required belief in a distinct idea of co-existence; an embracing promise of liberation that was not restrained by the Serbian state borders of WWI. The long-serving intellectual idea of Yugoslavism appeared as a suitable label which could fill the ideological vacuum and generate a political program (Djokic,2007:15). Thus, with an initial push from the Habsburg Slavs, an autonomous State of Slovenes, Croats, and Serbs (comprised of Vojvodina, Slovenia, Croatia, Dalmatia, and Bosnia-Herzegovina) was requested to be declared within the Austro-Hungarian Empire in May 1917 (the so-called ‘May Declaration’) and almost immediately after this the Corfu Declaration of July 1917 came out to herald the Southern Slav union. The Corfu Declaration envisioned that the Austro-Hungarian Slavs and the Kingdom of Serbia could unite under the constitutional monarchy of the Karadjordjevic dynasty (Imamovic, 2006: 262-264).

From the time of the proclamation of the unification of the new state (December 1, 1918) to the first parliamentary elections (November 28, 1920) the country (Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, Slovenes-Kingdom of SHS) was governed by the Interim National Parliament (INP) and unelected deputies. However, despite the absence of electoral politics, the newly founded political blocks (Radicals versus Democrats) still managed to reflect the party politics which emerged during the parliamentary process

(1918-1929). Regarding the new political divisions and parties, it would be better to introduce the main political actors of the new state.

The Radical Party was the most prominent actor in the parliamentary politics of the Kingdom of SHS. Its leader Nikola Pasic held the Prime Ministry post several times in the Kingdom of SHS (from 1921 until his death in 1926). The Radical Party was embracing a nationalistic political expression of a Serb identity which was dominated by Southern Slav unitarism. The party was thus also the political instrument of the “*establishment-clique of businessman, bureaucrats, professionals, politicians, the army, and the royal palace*” and it successfully promoted centralism at all times (Rothschild,1992:210-1).

The Democrat Party⁵ aimed to advance the idea of Yugoslavism from a more unitarian perspective and was more etatist than that of the Radicals. However, despite such differences the Democrats and Radicals were both united in their pro-Serbian stance and the Pribicevic wing of the Democrat Party was also a doctrinal centralizer. This gave the Radicals room to manoeuvre on unitarism arguing that unitarism and autonomy were ideas being imposed from outside the old Serbia proper (Ibid:211). After the 1923 elections the Democrat Party split into two parties; while the Davidovic wing continued its activities under the banner of the Democrat Party, the Pribicevic wing founded its own party, the Independent Democratic Party, in 1924.

⁵ The party led by Ljuba Davidovic but Svetazor Pribicevic also had a great influence within the party.

The Croatian Peasant Party was the party which primarily provided a voice for the Croatian people. The party predominantly followed an agrarian ideology and adopted a populist program featuring calls to uphold Croatian state rights and the promotion of Croatian nationalism. The party was advocating decentralism in the Kingdom of SHS and thus the leader of the party -Stjepan Radic- became a symbol of oppositional activism and of the national distinctiveness of the Croats. Radic employed a political strategy which consisted largely of boycotts, abstention, and withdrawal to try and resist the assimilative effects of centralism (Ibid:212).

Thus, it can be clearly observed that the prominent leading parties of the Kingdom were founded overwhelmingly on an ethnic basis. The vitality of ethnic issues also continued to foster a vast influence over politics in the region; for instance, although the Communists were the largest opposition party and gained relatively more deputies (58) than the Croatian Peasant Party (50) in the 1920 elections, the Croatian Peasant Party proved to be much more influential source of opposition in the Parliament than the Communists (Lampe,1996:122). Finally, despite on-going debates over centralism and decentralism a centralist constitution was adopted on June 28, 1921. However, due to the ethnic structure of the political parties, the adaptation of a centralist constitution was widely interpreted as a victory of the Serbs over the Croats and the other ethnic communities. This development was then followed by the Radicals establishing hegemony over the political institutions which remained in effect until January 6th 1929; the King committed a coup d'etat on this date. This coup resulted in political parties being banned and parliamentary politics being brought to a complete halt. During the years prior to the coup between 1921 and 1928, party politics were marked by the failure of Nikola Pasic, Stjepan Radic, and Svetozar Pribicevic to build

any successful coalition governments. Several times two of this trio managed to form alliances however they proved not to be long-lasting and the frequent failure and collapse of these coalitions drove country into a political chaos (Lampe,1996:127 and Dragnich,1983:14-43).

A further failure which led the country farther into a dead end was the malfunctioning social integration policies. In terms of integration, immediately after the establishment of the Kingdom of SHS, Belgrade promoted a set of policies which was designed to simultaneously show and impose a unity onto the Southern Slavs. This was seen as necessary in order to achieve a consistent integrity which could unite the diverse communities which each carried their own unique historical, confessional, ethnic, ideological, and institutional backgrounds (Tomasevich,1955:235). To this end, the policies formulated mainly emphasised concepts of national unity but this unitarism resulted in unrest and long-lasting conflicts developing among the confessional communities of inter-war Yugoslavia (Poulton and Vickers,1997:145). In this regard, in the national education system the use of “local” tongues in schools was prohibited in both Macedonia and Kosovo. Minority schools were also closed down and the primary school curricula and textbooks were written in accordance with the Serbian “national” narratives and myths (Tomasevich,1955:235; Kostovicova,2005:35; Turosienski,1939:17). In a further effort to guarantee unity, the Kosovar and Macedonian Muslims were also forced to be taught in Serbo-Croatian in religious courses. These courses consequently were delivered mainly by Bosnian Muslims and accordingly, the Albanian-origin *muftis* and *imams* were replaced with their Serbo-Croat speaking co-religionists from Bosnia-Herzegovina (Banac,1984:299 and Kostovicova,2005:37). This policy and others like it acted almost as a denial of the

existence of national minorities which as Ivo Banac demonstrates with a quotation from a Ministry of Foreign Affairs document was the official policy “*our thesis was always that there are no national minorities in our Southern regions*” (Banac,1984:298). Additionally, as Banac argues, the reports of official censuses numerically reduced the number of the minorities. For example, the 1921 census reveals that there were 439,657 Albanian origin citizens in the Kingdom, whereas as Banac claims that in reality the figure was nearly one million. These newly developed policies affected the political choices of the Muslims of Kosovo and Macedonia but to a certain extent the Bosnian Muslims remained exempt from the adverse effects of these policies.

In addition to the divisive policies outlined above, the allegedly egalitarian policies, such as agrarian reform, also further ruined the possibility of integration. The forceful redistribution of arable lands represented a continuation of the Austro-Hungarian period policies in Bosnia-Herzegovina and of the post-Balkan’s Serbian policies in Kosovo and Macedonia (Tomasevich,1955:125). The aims of these continuing reforms were influenced by a number of factors: (i) objectives to change the land-tenure relations in order to terminate the feudal system, (ii) overpopulation in agriculture, (iii) ‘capitalist forces’ pressure on agricultural production and (iv) the common idea of the ‘land belongs to those who till it’. This final factor seems to have been the most influential one as it was eventually enshrined in the Constitution of 1921 (Ibid:344). The agrarian reform were of benefit to mass peasant society and to the political parties as they could employ land-related discourses in favour or in opposition of the agrarian reforms for electoral mobilization (Ibid:345). However, as might be expected, the Muslim political parties were almost universally against the

implementation of the reforms as they would invariably have the harshest effect on the Muslim areas. Due to the implementation of the agrarian reforms, the Muslim landowner class was threatened with extinction as their material wealth continued to gradually melt away because of inadequate compensations. Thus, there was a mass emigration of Muslims to Turkey and a subsequent repopulation of the previous homes of emigrants' places primarily by Serbian colonists (Kostovicova,2005:38 and Banac,1984:301).

CHAPTER III. POLITICAL MANIFESTATION

I. MUSLIM POLITICAL AGENCIES

The Muslims of inter-war Yugoslavia lacked a united voice or a united representative body within the new state; there were rather a number of parties rallying to attract Muslim votes and to gain the representative post of the Muslims of their respective regions. Those parties were organized according to the communal divisions among the Muslims. Seemingly the political parties⁶ of Bosnia-Herzegovina outnumbered those of Southern regions⁷ (Popovic,1986:237-8). However, many of the existing Muslim parties were either closed or completely annihilated shortly after the first elections. Accordingly, only some Muslim parties gained the chance to join in the political competition to represent their respective constituencies in the Kingdom. Among them Jugoslavenska muslimanska organizacija (Yugoslav Muslim Organization-JMO) and Islam Muhafaza-i Hukuk Cemiyet⁸ (Cemiyet in Turkish, Xhemijet in Albanian, and Dzemijet in Serbo-Croat) were most successful in politically mobilizing the Muslim masses and as such represented them in the national Parliament. Consequently, in order to keep the discussion concentrated this paper will feature only the JMO and Cemiyet as the references to be analysed.

⁶ Jugoslavenska muslimanska demokratija (December 1918, Sarajevo), Muslimanska organizacija (January 1919, Sarajevo), Muslimanska zajednica (January 1919, Banja Luka), Jugoslavenska muslimanska organizacija (February 1919, Sarajevo), Muslimanska tezacka (seljacka) stranka (March 1920, Sarajevo), Muslimanska narodna stranka (March 1920, Sarajevo), Muslimanska radikalna stranka (1920, Sarajevo), Jugoslavenska muslimanska narodna organizacija (1920, Sarajevo).

⁷ Islam Muhafaza-i Hukuk Cemiyet (1919), Demokratska zajednice (1927, Skopje) Socijalisticka rodnicka partija (1920, Skopje).

⁸ The English translation of the name of the Cemiyet varies (for instance, Islamic Association for the Defence and Justice or Turkish National Party), I preferred Ivo Banac's (1984) translation *Society for Preservation of Muslim Rights* because the name of the party is originally in Turkish language and Banac's use reflects the meaning best.

YUGOSLAV MUSLIM ORGANIZATION

The initial political activities of the Muslims were spontaneous actions and can be traced back to early 1918. These actions acquired organizational forms after several meetings in which their current situation and their future expectations were debated and discussed. From these loose organisations a number of political agencies originated throughout Bosnia-Herzegovina (see footnote 6) (Purivatra,1977:47). Some of these parties had a local character, while others enjoyed a national one but whilst they were claiming to represent all Muslims, they faced an “*inability to extend [their] mandates to other Muslim communities out of Bosnia.*”(Friedman, 2000:171) This was the case even for the JMO, the most able bodied Muslim political organization of its time.

The JMO, acting in the capacity of a successor to the MNO (Donia and Lockwood, 1978:195), was formed after a series of gatherings of the local organizations. The foundation’s congress was held in Sarajevo over three days from the 14th-17th February 1919. During the congress it was stated that the Muslims from all over the country had gathered in order to prepare a party program which would merge the different needs of the Muslims from all social strata. There were 54 delegates from Bosnia-Herzegovina and 40 from the rest of the country and they all recognised that the formation of one united Muslim political party represented an ideal opportunity to raise the Muslim voice in the Parliament (Purivatra,1977:54). However, their claims to create an approach which was able to represent the interests of all the Muslim communities from all over the country were proved to be difficult to implement. To overcome this handicap, the adherents of the JMO rejected the importance of class divisions among the Muslims despite the fact that the party remained led by middle-

class urban Muslims. Instead, they declared their agenda to represent a united vision shared by all Muslims including landlords, small holders, modernist intellectuals, traditionalist religious intellectuals, small merchants, and peasants. Thus they declared “*there are no class differences, Muslim peasants and Muslim landlord feel the same way*” regarding the problems facing the Muslim community (Banac,1984:368).

The fundamental codes of the organization can clearly be seen from the party program which was set out during the foundation congress. The program features the following demands, goals, and objectives (Ersoy *b.*,2010:276-280):

- Most appropriate way for Yugoslav rapprochement and unification is sticking to the notion of complete equality of the three tribal names (Serb, Croat, and Slovene). Bosnian Muslims ought to be exempted from nationality debates; the nationalization of the Muslims is a matter of cultural and social development not daily politics.
- The freedoms on the issues related to religious rights, private property, political participation, and press ought to be guaranteed.
- Small peasant properties ought to be protected from the burden of agricultural tax.
- The religious education ought to be compulsory in elementary and secondary school. The religious education ought to be granted autonomous status.
- The constitution ought to explicitly highlight unlimited recognition of equality of Islam with Christianity and other religions.
- The Vakuf properties ought to be exempted from expropriation.
- Shari’ah Courts ought to be in charge of all family matters including endowment, marriage and divorcement, birth and death registration.

- the JMO represents the interests of all Muslim communities of the country and invites the Muslims from all over the country to join to the party.

Regarding the ideological basis, there are two distinct trends which influenced the political stance of the JMO: namely Islam and Yugoslavism. The Islamic religion and tradition was the foremost influence over the party's course of action. This was in spite of the fact that the JMO in public often claimed it was not a religious party (Ersoy *b.*,2010:277 and Banac,1984:377). It is apparent however that Islam played an enormously significant role in the party from the beginning (Purivatra,1977:378) particularly when the former mufti of Tuzla Hadji Hafiz Ibrahim Efendi Maglajlic was in office (1919-1921) (Malcolm,1994:163) as initially when the founding members were admitted the party was organized on a religious basis (Banac,1984:371). Even after Maglajlic's time in office was complete, the party program in the JMO continued to recognise a privileged place for religion as can also be seen in the fact that the political actions taken were often dominated by religious issues. The notorious slogan "*religion is in danger*" always served the JMO to politically mobilize the Muslim masses (Purivatra,1977:380). Therefore, the JMO had to act as a party of a religious community despite the fact that the front office of the party consisted almost entirely of secular bourgeoisies (Adanır,2002:279). After Mehmed Spaho's takeover, the party gradually shifted to a more moderate position concerning Islam as the leader cadres' attachment to religion was gradually reduced along with the share of the religious people in the administrative and local cadres. At the local and district level, the religious leaders or elites were also largely replaced by merchants and intellectuals. Thus the JMO had reoriented itself away from focusing almost exclusively on religious issues towards a wider struggle to establish political,

economic, social, and cultural rights for Muslims addressing religious issues only to protect religious equality and raise consciousness (Purivatra,1977:382). Nonetheless, Muslim consciousness still had to be promoted by the JMO at times in order to secure political solidarity. Thus, it was only by engaging in this difficult balancing act that the JMO was able to remain influential in both Muslim religious and intellectual circles during Mehmet Spaho's period in office (Sadkovich,2005:12).

The JMO inherited its main political arguments from its predecessor the MNO and these included the core issues of struggling to establish the rights of the landlords and for the cultural and religious rights of Muslims more generally. However, despite maintaining these arguments, they completely abandoned some of the political attachments of MNO with the devotion to the Ottoman past being the most prominent to be discarded. This was largely due to the fact that the Ottomanist appeal, which was already weak during the Austro-Hungarian period, had completely disappeared within the new state. Bosnian Muslims in this respect differed from those of Macedonia and Kosovo as they retained a strong vision of their Ottoman past and its enduring heritage which clearly did not correspond to the aspirations felt by the Muslims of Bosnia-Herzegovina(Popovic,2006:213). The reappearance of Ottomanist discourses on the political scene coincides with the emergence of pan-Islamism in Bosnia in 1930s but even in that case it appears that the Ottomanist aspiration was in reality nothing but a titular nostalgia (Bougarel,1997:533).

Along with Ottomanism, Bosnianism also became a titular nostalgia in post-WWI Bosnia. The identification "Bosnjak" promoted by the Austro-Hungarian's was frowned upon by the founding cadres of the JMO (Adanır,2002:278-9 and

Babuna,2004:297) and Mehmed Spaho followed the founders closely in this respect. Although after the 1927 elections the JMO declared itself to be a Bosnian rather than a Muslim or Yugoslav party (Sadkovich,2005:12), they still never pursued a nationalistic agenda and rather strived to protect their identity within Yugoslavism (Babuna,2004:297 and Djokic,2003:7). They seem to have adopted this term as this “*vogue concept offered them protection from external pressures, particularly from Serbian side in terms of their national identity*” (Babuna:2004:297). Therefore, the JMO supported centralist governments and “*denounced an aggressive process of nationalization of Bosnian Muslim*” (Ersoy b.,2010:276). Due to this, their ideological appeal was branded as “*tactical Yugoslavism*” (Bougarel,2003:102). Nonetheless, the JMO remained a defender of Muslim interests and they never used Yugoslavism for political mobilization. Instead, it was genuinely the ideology of Islam which was employed to mobilize the Muslim masses (Sadkovich,2005:11). Consequently, their religious attachment pushed Bosnian Muslims to remain insistently a-national (Banac,1984:371). Although in reality the Muslims in Bosnia enjoyed all the attributes of a nation with the sole exception of “national awareness” (Ersoy b.,2010:276).

ISLAM MUHAFAZA-I HUKUK CEMİYET

As overviewed in the first chapter; the Bosnian Muslims managed to establish their political agency after several meetings of local notables during the Austro-Hungarian occupation. In a similar way, the politically awakened (during Ottoman period) Muslims of Kosovo and Macedonia formed their political agency after a number of “secret” gatherings in Skopje in 1919. These congresses were assembled in order to foresee the future footsteps on issues concerning the Muslims of the new Kingdom.

Hence, the foundation congress was held from the 17th-18th December 1919. Similarly to the petition drives of the Bosnian Muslims under Austro-Hungarian rule, the Muslims of the Southern regions formed demands during the foundation congress. These demands highlighted the need for religious autonomy, the lack of spaces for the Muslim political voice, and the unpleasant effects of the agrarian reform (Hrabak,2003:81).

Despite the end of direct political influence of the Ottoman Empire over Macedonia and Kosovo, the remnants of the Young Turks in Macedonia continued to receive guidance and instruction from Istanbul after WWI. Thus, the initial stimulus and motive for organization among Muslims originated from prominent and notable Turks⁹. They formed secret circles comprised of Turkish and Albanian elites in order to (i) characterize the Muslim voice and (ii) transmit and follow the instructions and guidance from Istanbul. The religious autonomy demands and the refusal to accept the establishment of an independent native Islamic hierarchy (that would replace the *Caliph* and *Shaikh ul Islam*'s status with a "national" Islamic leader) were predominantly as a result of this collaboration. Under the supervision and guidance of Turkish notables, the ethnic and conservative circles of Macedonia and Kosovo were united and later formed their own political agency (Cemiyet). In addition to the

⁹ It should be stated that during the mentioned period the ethnic label of *Turk* was not assigned according to any clearly defined criteria. Particularly in areas of mixed populations, some notable figures were referred to as Turk among Turks while they were simultaneously referred to as Albanian among Albanians (Baklacioğlu,2010:145). Therefore, those who are referred to as 'Turk' here are those who acted in cooperation and collaboration with Istanbul, those who were loyal to the Ottomanist idea of Evlad-ı Fatihan (being the descendant of conquerers-the Ottomans), and those who could use Turkish language. In-the-mean-time, as the name of the party is in Turkish language; the argument upon the promineny of the Turkish members gains strength. In addition to this, it should be bore in mind that the official press organ and the formal newsletter of the organization *Rehber* (Guidance) came out in the Turkish language in 1920.

formulated demands and the new political program during the foundation congress the central committee of the organization was also established. Necip Draga an industrial entrepreneur known to be very close to the Young Turks in Salonica, was elected as the president of the organization (Ibid:82).

The fundamental codes of the organization are clearly illustrated in the party program from the foundation congress. The program features the following demands, goals, and objectives (Ibid:81):

- Autonomy in religious affairs: Foundation of a united religious administration that will be in charge of the control of the religious affairs across the entire country. This organization's hierarchical connection with the Caliph ought to be guaranteed.

- Maintaining the Shari'ah Courts for marriage, family, and inheritance cases.

- Protection of Vakuf and Madrasa goods. Exemption of Vakuf properties from settlement or providing compensations for goods already confiscated.

- Autonomy in religious education; guaranteeing the use of mother tongue in religious education.

- Ejection of reciting Orthodox Christian prayer and verses in state schools: Exclusion of Muslim children from reciting them; alteration of the textbooks which would adversely affect the religious character of the students.

- Muslim deputies would run for constitutional assembly to represent the entire Muslim community in separate organizations.

- Exemption of *beg* (landlord) lands from agrarian reform with a general solution to agrarian question.

- Compensation for unpaid rates (incomes) of *begs* from foreign *ciftluks*.

-Return of the lands to pre-1912 status/position: Return of the lands to the peasants whose properties were taken away violently under the Serbian administration or of the lands to the *begs* whose properties were colonized without any agreement.

Regarding the ideological basis of the Cemiyet, there are two distinct views supported in the encyclopaedic entries (i) the first explains that the Cemiyet formed to stand against the agrarian reform and colonization (Srdic,1975:235) and (ii) the second explains that the Cemiyet was established on a religious basis (Krljeza,1955:193). Nevertheless when the support and cooperation of the landowner notables and the religious elites is considered it is possible to recognise that the Cemiyet was the party of both *begs* and *hodzas* (Ibid:193) and therefore acted as a political manifestation of both religious and social class doctrines.

Cemiyet and by extension the Muslims of the Southern regions had a more developed vision of their Ottoman past and heritage which did not correspond with those of the Muslims of Bosnia-Herzegovina (Popovic,2006:213). Hence, before and after its foundation the Cemiyet had close ties with Istanbul and later with Ankara. Émigré's in Istanbul (for instance the Albanian Club-Arnautski Klub or the Bosnian Muslims in Istanbul) particularly encouraged the Muslims of the Kingdom of SHS to unite their voices. During the early post-war years the relations of the Muslims with Istanbul weakened but by the mid-1920s there occurred something of a revival in their relationship (Hrabak,2003:157). In the 3rd congress of the Cemiyet (1922), they declared a new campaign to seek the backing of Mustafa Kemal (Ibid:149) through the hands of the émigrés in Istanbul. In line with this, in October 1922 Bosnian

Muslims in Istanbul prepared complaints to Mustafa Kemal about the oppressions and illegality experienced by the Muslims in Kingdom of SHS and similar complaints were voiced by the migrant Macedonian peasants (Ibid:161). In the context of continuing “intense” relations with Istanbul and Ankara; these examples demonstrate that there was a common consent in attempting to grab hold of an Ottoman past. However, we can barely talk about an Ottomanist stance as a political strategy as Ottomanism was overwhelmingly deployed on a religious basis. In the Ottoman Empire, the Sultan was also the leader of the entire Muslim community over the world. In the prayers (particularly in Friday prayers) Muslims were reciting the name of Caliph (so the Sultan) and offering their greetings to him (Adanır,2002:270), just as the Muslims of the Kingdom of SHS did until the abolition of the Caliphate in Turkey in 1924. In the Ottoman Empire there was also the *Shaikh ul Islam* who was the head of the religious hierarchy and charged with organizing and supervising daily religious affairs and practices. The Muslims of the Kingdom of SHS, especially the Macedonians, were in favour of considering the *Shaikh ul Islam* as the head of their religious hierarchy. In this respect, it can be argued that the terms set in Cemiyet’s party program were designed to hierarchically link native religious organization into a subordinate position with the Caliphate and *Shaikh ul Islam* due to their (religious) Ottomanist stance.

Separate from the Ottomanist discourse, the religion, as argued in the *Enciklopedija Jugoslavije* (Krleža,1955:193) was always identified to be central to the course of action of the Cemiyet. From the beginning of its political activism religion held a privileged spot and on the first day of its foundation congress some participants (such as Hidajet Kulunovic) insisted that the organization (Cemiyet) should remain entirely

religious. Possibly due to the impracticality of running a purely religious political movement in a multi-ethnic society and in a secular age, the congress put religion down as only one of the components of the foundational codes. Thus, in order to develop a practicable solution more moderate members were elected to prepare the party program. It is also worth mentioning here that the chief of this group, Zuhranbeg of Ohrid was against the proposals of Hidajet Kulunovic and so purely religious solutions were not favoured (Hrabak,2003:83). Nonetheless, a number of religiously orientated goals and objectives are included in the party program including items addressing religious hierarchy, religious education, Shari'ah Courts, madrasas, and vakufs. Thus, throughout the first half of the 1920s religious concerns consistently occupied a privileged position in the party politics of Cemiyet.

In the *hodzas* side, Islam remained the main code and source of proper conduct, whilst the *begs* put their material loses on the top of the list for action. However, this should not be taken to imply that the *begs* ignored and did not support attempts to defend religious rights. To maintain the delivery of religious services the material support of the wealthy was always required and the *begs* while seeking ways to protect their material positions, were also striving to show that they recognised the importance of the religious issues. The demands for the protection of vakufs and madrasas in the party program demonstrate this intention: vakufs could only be run by the material support of the wealthy. However, the places occupied by the *begs* in the Cemiyet gradually diminished, owing to this in 1920 elections none of the elected deputies were *agas* or *begs*; instead businessmen occupied the majority of the posts (Ibid:109).

Apart from class politics, occasional marks of nationalism were seen in the political and ideological scene despite the Cemiyet's endeavours to exempt the influence of nationalism. The relations of the Kosovar and Macedonian Albanians with Albania prompted the nationalist appeals of the Albanians. Particularly the Kaçak movement which stood against the incorporation of the Kosovar Albanians into the Kingdom of SHS, enhanced the appeal of Albanian nationalism and denounced any appeals to Yugoslavism. Thus, pre-existing Albanian nationalism came to be infused among the Albanians without causing alienation among the members of Cemiyet. However, because the Cemiyet was in cooperation with centralist Radicals and accepted the Serbian hegemony (Krljeza,1955:193) their cadres were politically beaten by numerous Albanians who began raising their voice on national demands (Srdic,1975:235).

Additionally, the Albanians gained the upper-hand in the party particularly with the leadership of Ferhad-beg Draga and consequently the appeal of nationalism rose higher in the political agendas (Hrabak,2003:197). By comparison, Turkish nationalism only functioned as a trigger for emigration into Turkey and therefore had a minor influence over party politics; rather it reinforced commitment to the Ottoman past.

II. MUSLIM SEPARATENESS

Ottomanism and Islam required a kind of amalgamation amongst their devotees but overall the Muslims of the Kingdom of SHS failed to unite their political voice. In the early post-war period, the JMO and Cemiyet both held beliefs about the religiously united nature of the Muslims across the whole country. Thus, the religiously

motivated motto of “Muslims getting closer” was generated during this period (Ibid:82-3). However, the Muslim deputies joined the parliamentary elections in separate Muslim political organizations. This separateness prevented them from developing more intimate relations and as a result their influence shrunk. The Muslims of Sandjak insisted on collaboration with the Bosnian Muslims in the foundation congress of Cemiyet. Similarly, in the early post-war period the Bosnian Muslims strove to form a united Muslim society and invited the Southern regions’ Muslims to action (Ibid:143). However, different expectations of the parties on the issues of vakufs, religious education, and southern Slav integration tore them apart (Aruçi,1988:346). A correspondent of *The Moslem World* reported in a 1920-dated article that:

“The Moslems of both districts [Bosnia-Herzegovina and Macedonia] saw the advisability of combining for political purposes, and set to work to organise themselves. It was at first suggested that they should all combine on purely religious grounds, and form a distinct and united Mohammedan party; but the more advanced among them pointed out that *the day has gone by when a political party can be founded on religion*. Zuhdi Bey said that between the Moslems of Macedonia and [Old] Serbia on the one hand, and those of Bosnia and Herzegovina on the other, there was nothing in common but religion; and Hidayet Effendi caustically remarked that the begs of Bosnia were their brothers, it is true, but their purses were not sisters and that the Bosinaks would simply make use of their Macedonian kinsmen to save their chifliks. So the *suggestion of a common party was rejected...*” (The Moslems of Yugoslavia,1920:300) [Emphasis added].

The issues pointed out here clearly demonstrate where the sense of separation and divisions lay. In line with this, the main political differentiation was in terms of the absolute split between the political parties of Bosnia-Herzegovina and those of Southern regions. In reciprocal perception: the Muslims in Bosnia-Herzegovina were a real element of the state; while the Muslims in Macedonia and Kosovo alternatively

were the defeated elements of the state (Hrabak,2003:143). These perceptual differences were also promoted by Belgrade as Serbian political circles did not gladly watch the formation of relations among the Muslims. For instance, Radicals put forth that one Muslim party would be more harmful than profitable for Muslims (Ibid:83). In the end it was the Muslims who ultimately failed to unite because their religious unity was overcome by daily politics and ideological appeals (Popovic,1986:237).

CHAPTER IV. POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

“I participate, you participate, he participates, we participate, you participate...they profit.” (Quoted from a student poster-1968 in Arnstein, 1969).

I. POLITICAL ACTORS

In the Kingdom of SHS suffrage was confined to men aged 21 or above; women were exempted from voting (Imamovic,2006:279). However, despite its gender discrimination, in the conditions of those days, this electoral structure was coinciding with mass public participation. Accordingly, electoral participation meant that in general people’s opinions were being expressed within the system. Nonetheless, as the introductory quote highlights, it would be controversial to argue that electoral participation was to the benefit of the ordinary masses as they were incapable of disentangling their own interests from those of the elites. The “they” mentioned in the above quotation referred in the inter-war Yugoslavian Muslim community case to the religious leaders and notable landowners, as they were charged with defending both the religious and material privileges of the Muslims in the political scene (Burg,1983:15). Thus, those who were capable of participating in politics, to such an extent as to be capable of exerting an influence upon it, were restricted to notable figures from the religious, landowner and merchant communities of the country.

In accordance with this, it should be stressed that the religious elites were always involved in politics in the country, even during the Austro-Hungarian or Ottoman Empire times. We can, thus, argue that the political awakening of the Muslim masses was in a sense prompted by the religious leaders of those times. For instance, as mentioned in the first chapter, the Mufti of Mostar Ali Fehmi Efendi Dzabic took the

initiative to orchestrate the first political struggle against the Austro-Hungarian authorities (Babuna,1996:131-147) and later the first leader of the JMO was the Mufti of Tuzla Hadji Hafiz Ibrahim Efendi Maglajlic. He occupied the office until 1921 and played a crucial role in defending Muslim rights in the Parliament (Malcolm,1994:163). On the Kosovo and Macedonia side, circumstances were very similar as in the Ottoman parliaments of 1908 and 1912, 10 per cent of the deputies from the Rumeli Vilayets were the members of *ulema* (Islamic scholars) including the muftis of Prizren and Pristine (Ahmad and Dankward,1975:265). Meanwhile, the members of the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) in Rumeli were, despite coming from bureaucratic elite groups, members of a *tarikah* (Tunaya,1988:22). This means that they had a strong sense of commitment to their religious leaders. Additionally, the League of Prizren of Kosovar Muslims came to be known as a group being led by the *muftis*, *ulemas*, and *kadis* (Malcolm,1998:222). In the political agency of the Macedonia and Kosovo Muslims (Islam Muhafaza-i Hukuk Cemiyet) the religious elites also took their place with for instance, an *ulema*, Tefvik Efendija being elected as a member of the central committee of the party in the foundation congress in 1919 or in the 1920 elections Mehmed Alija Mahmutovic, the mufti of Novi Pazar, being elected as a deputy from the Cemiyet list (Hrabak,2003:109). In addition there are numerous other examples of the direct influence religious leaders had over politics. As illustrated when the Supreme Mufti in Belgrade Mehmed Zeki went to Skopje in 1923 in order to facilitate the restoration of relations between the government and the Muslims (Ibid:196). Or the Bosnian *Reisul-Ulema* Dzermaludin Causevic who enjoyed popular support and was thus able to demand rights on behalf of the Muslim community from the state authorities during the 1920s (Bougarel,2008:326-7 and Imamovic,2008:65-91). Causevic's demands directed

towards political authorities appear similar to those of the JMO or Cemiyet. This demonstrates that a religious leader acted as the political representative of the Muslim community despite the existence of political agencies. The religious elites' political involvement arose from the fact that they took it as their duty to defend the Islamic community (Burg,1983:15).

Nevertheless, the Muslims' motivation to politically organize and react against the state authorities did not mainly stem from religious reasons; instead religion functioned as the mass mobilizing force. Political activism originated mainly as a reaction to the redistribution of goods and the reorganization of economic relations instigated by the state authorities. Despite Ali Fehmi Efendi Dzabic's mapping out of the ways to resist, it was Serif Arnautovic, a notable landowner, who founded the political agency (Muslim National Organization) and led the movement into Parliament after 1910. Thus, it was the landowners who took control of the political agencies and they strived to merge their economic interests with the interests of the rest of the Muslim community through the use of religious discourse and offering support for distinct Muslim cultural and educational rights. The political parties were also contingent upon cooperation among the leading (landlord) families for political institutionalization and as such in one respect the foundation of the Muslim National Organization can be seen as an assemblage of landlords under a single roof.

Although the landlords had played a crucial role during the period of political awakening, within the new state and in a more hostile political environment their influence had to be more balanced in Muslim political campaigns. Hence, the landlords' political influence shrunk in the Yugoslav Muslim Organization (JMO) as

middle-class urban Muslims took a more dominant role. This change explains why in the JMO party program the burdens of the landlords are somewhat ignored while the sufferings of small peasants were emphasised, as we will see below (Ersoy *b.*,2010:276-280). Despite this loss of influence landlords remained in the party and continued to exert an influence within the party pointing out their rights and the financial losses they had suffered. In Macedonia and Kosovo a similar pattern was observed as the landowners' influence was gradually reduced within the Cemiyet when Necip Draga was in office. He was an industrial entrepreneur and promoted the participation of other businessmen and consequently there were no landlords in the list of Cemiyet in 1920 elections. Their previous positions were all replaced by businessmen (Hrabak,2003:109). However, in contrast to the JMO, the Cemiyet did draw attention to the landlords' material losses, as they put forth in the party program. They continued to contend that the Muslim landlords' lands should be exempted from agrarian reform and that the lands which had been confiscated should either be returned or fairly compensated.

II. PARTY POLITICS: MUSLIMS IN THE PARLIAMENT

The JMO and Cemiyet came forward as esoteric parties which were contingent upon multi-faced political actions. Thus, to survive they (i) formed tactical alliances either with ruling or opposition parties, (ii) grabbed their party programmes or claimed to be sincere before their voters and (iii) supported the rights and reclaimed the privileges of the Muslim landlords -a stance which stood against agrarian reform (Popovic,1986:238). The section below examines how the JMO and Cemiyet pursued these parliamentary actions.

YUGOSLAV MUSLIM ORGANIZATION

The JMO followed a relatively stable policy in the parliaments of the Kingdom of SHS. Starting from the Interim National Parliament (INP) until 1924 the JMO sided along with the centralist parties. JMO was the largest party of Bosnia-Herzegovina in almost all elections between 1918 and 1929 (see Lampe,1996:129 and Ferhadbegovic,2008:178-9). Due to this, the significance of the party was recognized by both centralist and federalist parties. In the elections held on the 28th November 1920, the JMO gained 24 seats (out of 419) in the Constituent Assembly in which they voted in favour of a centralist constitution. Whilst they were autonomist, for the sake of the territorial integrity of Bosnia-Herzegovina, they allied with the Radicals. It should also be bore in mind that in those days the party had been headed by the pro-Serbian Ibrahim Efendi Maglajlic. This alliance was forged in exchange for agreed improvements over the compensation question for landowners, the status of the *vakufs*, and the preservation of the territorial integrity of Bosnia-Herzegovina. The agreement was reached by the articulation of a final demand inserted into the constitution in Article 135 also known as the Turkish clause (Imamovic,2006:283).

The JMO enjoyed electoral bargaining power, since they received the majority of Muslim votes and it was considered extremely unlikely that Muslims would vote for any non-Muslim party (Banac,1984:370). This voting behaviour of the Muslims strengthened the hands of the JMO in alliances. The JMO supported Pasic's government before and after the promulgation of the constitution in exchange the correction of all injustices that were inflicted on Muslims by the state (Purivatra,1977:86-7). Nonetheless, particularly when Ibrahim Efendi Maglajlic was in office, the JMO "*expressed determination to protect Islamic regulations and*

customs” (Banac,1984:375). They further demanded mandatory religious instruction in elementary and secondary schools, the establishment of the Shari’ah Courts, and the adoption of anti-alcoholism as a social policy (Purivatra,1977:86-7). The appeal to Islam continued as an electoral strategy during the 1923 elections as the JMO was manipulating voters with the claim that the very existence of the Bosnian Muslims was at stake and “*who did not vote for them committed an ‘unpardonable sin before God and before the nation, for which posterity would damn them’*” (Sadkovich,2005:12).

The party was passed into the hands of Mehmed Spaho in 1921 and as soon as he came into office relations were tightened with the Pasic government. As a result under his presidency, the parliamentary bargaining power of the party shrunk, as in the 1923 elections the number of deputies decreased to 18 (out of 312). Nevertheless, the power it retained was sufficient that the JMO was able to contribute significantly to the overthrow of Nikola Pasic’s government in 1924. For a while, Mehmed Spaho was intending to isolate the JMO from the unstable Pasic governments and in order to do so, he started operating in collation with the Slovene People’s Party in order to “*mediate between the anti-centralist Croats and the centralist Serbs*” (Malcolm,1994:168). This went further when the Croat Peasant Party, Slovene People’s Party, and Yugoslav Muslim Organization representatives met in Zagreb to negotiate the political action against the Radical government (on September 19, 1923). They organized as a federalist block arguing that the radical government not only failed to respect its commitments in previously reached protocols, but continued with further prosecutions through their *own* laws (Purivatra,1977:161-2).

In this respect, as long as the Muslims were in question and were at stake, the JMO never hesitated to seek a common language with the opposition parties (Banac,1984:376). Accordingly, as can be seen from the above clause, by 1924 the JMO shifted into parliamentary opposition (Friedman,1996:97). Consequently, by 1925 the JMO found itself isolated and under attack by the Serbian political and media circles. The Pasic government even upheld a Muslim organization Yugoslav Muslim National Organization (JMNO) to substitute the JMO and to attempt to soften its political power. Nevertheless, in the 1925 elections the JMO secured its domain and won 17 seats in the Parliament. The hostile Serbian attitudes were seen again in an attempt on Mehmed Spaho's life in 1926 during a period of political violence which swept through the mixed populated areas across the country. In 1927 elections despite a poor showing in the elections, the JMO managed to win 18 deputies. The political circumstances after the elections drove the JMO to cooperate with the pro-Serb parties and hence they joined a Serbian-led government in 1927. However, these political rapprochements were far from being enough to be protected from the detrimental effects of the royal dictatorship established after a successful coup on the 6th January 1929. King Alexander banned all ethnic and religious parties immediately after the coup and he split Bosnia-Herzegovina into several provinces to ensure the Serbs constituted the majority in each province. Mehmed Spaho made efforts to reconstruct the party but these could only commence in earnest after the adoption of the 1931 constitution (Sadkovich,2005:12-3). However these efforts were relatively unsuccessful as the political scene remained hostile to a Muslim party.

ISLAM MUHAFAZA-I HUKUK CEMİYET

In the elections for the Constituent Assembly held in 1920, the Cemiyet gained 8 seats (out of 419) in the Parliament. 5 of its deputies were from Macedonia, 2 from Kosovo, and 1 from Sandjak. This election was a test for the Cemiyet; along with the JMO they sought to hold the post of the political representative of the Muslims of the Kingdom of SHS. In the Constituent Assembly, due to disagreements on fundamental issues, like agrarian reform, the deputies of the Cemiyet voted against the draft version of the constitution. The agreement between Radicals and Cemiyet reached only on the eve of the final constitutional negotiation (Hrabak,2003:139-41) and therefore the deputies of Cemiyet pledged their support (Krljeza,1955:193). However, because they were low in number, Cemiyet's demands were only partially represented in the final version of the constitution (Hrabak,2003:141).

Despite this tactical alliance between the Radicals and Cemiyet, after the constitution was proclaimed the Radicals gradually ignored the Cemiyet deputies and appeared indifferent to the issues vital to the Muslims and consequently the Cemiyet moved away from Radicals (Ibid:173). The crucial issues involved were those repeated by the Cemiyet deputies in 1923 namely: (i) the government should immediately introduce a law acknowledging Shari'ah Courts, (ii) vakufs' autonomy should be protected, (iii) Muslim schools should be opened and (iv) the agrarian problem in the southern regions should be resolved (Ibid: 205).

Therefore, in the third congress the Cemiyet decided to organize an independent outing and self-directed rally for the May 1923 elections (Ibid:163). In this election, the Cemiyet reached the pinnacle of their electoral success. They gained 14 seats (out

of 312) in the Parliament garnering 3.3% of all votes. All Muslim parties together received 9.1% of the votes while according to the census of 1921 registered Muslims constituted 11.1% of the population (Ibid:166). Cemiyet's independently held rally deepened the conflict with Radicals, whilst in the Parliament the Cemiyet continued to have fewer conflicts with the autonomist Democrats. Consequently, the Cemiyet contributed to the fall of Radicals government in July 1924 (Srdic,1975:235). However, their contribution was simultaneously the harbinger of their destruction as in less than a year the Cemiyet ceased functioning as the result of intense official pressures. These pressures centred upon the Cemiyet as the Government dedicated its all forces in 1924 to vanish the Kaçaks from the Southern regions.

The alleged relations with Kaçak movement signalled a death knell for the Cemiyet. The public accusations issued by the government which linked the leader of the Cemiyet Ferhad Draga with the Kaçaks increased in 1923 and consequently, Ferhad Draga was arrested and imprisoned in Skopje on the 12th February 1925, shortly after the elections (8th February), for the charge of harbouring Kaçak members. His political immunity was insufficient to protect him as he was arrested in the scope of State Protection Law (Zakona o zastiti drzave). (Hrabak,2003:196, 271)

In the 1925 elections, the number of the deputies of the Cemiyet elected was not clear. In *Enciklopedija Jugoslavije* it is claimed that the Cemiyet could not get any deputies (Krleza,1955:194) but a Belgradian newspaper (Novosti) claimed that the Cemiyet had won 5 deputies in the elections. However, two other newspapers, on the day following the elections, were reporting that the Cemiyet gained only one deputy: Ferhad Draga (Hrabak,2003:271). Despite the loss of the status of political agency,

the Cemiyet could not be wiped out from the political scene in Southern regions entirely. The spectres of the Cemiyet continued influencing and supervising the political sight of the Muslims of the Southern regions throughout the years in which the country remained under the royal dictatorship.

CONCLUSION

This research was conducted to explore the political and ideological appeals made to the Muslims in inter-war Yugoslavia. Through examining a wide range of academic sources in English, Turkish, Serbo-Croatian, and German and preparing and presenting a comprehensive comparative analysis of political and ideological perspectives I believe this aim has been achieved. Considering the current possible academic shortcomings in this research, I am also confident that I fulfilled the second aim and provided a strong argument to illustrate that the political stances and perspectives of Muslims were shaped by their confessional identity. The Muslim political agencies (JMO and Cemiyet) were confessional parties and their political division were due to ideological separateness and not because of ethnocentric appeals.

The political division initially stemmed from the separate political awakening of the Muslims of inter-war Yugoslavia. The Austro-Hungarian rule over the region divided the Muslim community and resulted in different political ‘awakenings’; what happened in Bosnia-Herzegovina after WWI was that the Muslims re-organized their political agency developed during the Austro-Hungarian period. Whereas, on the contrary in Kosovo and Macedonia the political awakening was bound to the hope that a transformed/modernized Muslim Empire could still exist. A shift in this appeal occurred only as a result of to the traumas experienced during the Balkan Wars and it was only after this that Muslims began to consider new futures apart from the Ottoman Empire. These different awakening caused a separate developments of the (proto)ideological commitments of the Muslims.

Consequently, when the time came for the establishment of the Kingdom of SHS Muslims constituted a confessional group with different political aspirations and expectations. Their religious unity was overcome by the segregating forces of daily politics and ideological appeals. The political parties did not manage to unite nor did they manage to extend their mandates over the other Muslim communities of the Kingdom of SHS.

Despite this that the political agencies of the Muslims were confessional parties is apparent from their party programs. The party programs of JMO and Cemiyet feature mainly religious demands: autonomy in religious education, continuity of the Shari'ah Courts in family matters and protection of vakuf properties for example. Both parties also emphasized that they represented the entire Muslim community within the Kingdom. Both parties were organized in a religious basis and therefore Islam played enormously significant role in their electoral mobilization. Thus, the ideological positions of the parties merged only on issues specifically related to Islam. Religious elites also played a significant role in the configuration of both political agencies, as they had already previously led the political awakening of the Muslims through mapping out the way to politically organize. For both parties then, despite the shift towards a more moderate standing, religious discourse dominated their actions in the Parliament. The demands set in their party programs were presented to parliament with the motivation to defend the rights of the entire Muslim community.

However, their ideological positions outside of the issue of Islam resulted in separation. For instance in regards to Ottomanism for the JMO it represented nothing but a titular nostalgia and thus they prompted to discard their Ottoman past. On the

other hand the Cemiyet had a more comprehensive vision of their Ottoman past. They declared and defended the hierarchical attachment to the *Caliph* and *Sheikh ul Islam* in Istanbul while the Bosnian Muslims were favouring a local autonomous religious hierarchy. Thus, Kosovar and Macedonian Muslims strived to continue intense relations with Istanbul and then Ankara.

As the ethnocentric appeals were weak within the JMO and Cemiyet, the JMO constantly refused to enter debate over the nationality of the Bosnian Muslims; they rather embraced Yugoslavism. However, the JMO remained a defender of Muslim interests and they never used Yugoslavism for political mobilization. On the other hand, Cemiyet decisively denounced any appeals to Yugoslavism, yet to some extent Albanian nationalism emerged and merged with the Cemiyet presenting something of an ethnocentric stance; however this was far from being capable of setting the party's political agenda. Nonetheless, JMO's Yugoslavism was certainly a divisive factor.

As shown throughout the preceding analysis the JMO and the Cemiyet were confessional parties and were shaped by the confessional identity of the Muslims of inter-war Yugoslavia. Their political division was thus due to ideological separateness and not because of ethnocentric appeals. However, this division does require more scrutiny as if both parties had such a strong commitment to Islam then the divisive ideological issues might seem to offer a relatively minor explanatory capacity. Consequently, it might be productive for future research to attempt to ascertain the differing factors of the different groups in terms of their commitment to Islam. This research is a history and political science work; and therefore the explanatory capacity, in terms of theological divisions and debates within Islam, is somewhat limited. To

further elucidate the reason behind the division, anthropological research into the relevant religious communities should be conducted, as has been performed by Ger Duijzings to explain the situation of the Islamic community during the 1980s (see Duijzings, 2000, particularly the chapter 5 entitled as “Albanian Dervishes versus Bosnian Ulema”). In Kosovo and Macedonia the *tarikahs* and *tekkes* had led the daily life in Islam but by contrast their influence was always limited in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The religious hierarchy in Bosnia-Herzegovina alternatively displayed a hostile attitude towards Muslims who follow *tarikahs* (see Burg, 1983). Thus, it might be necessary to further examine how internal religious rivalry might also have accelerated and further developed the separateness of the inter-war Yugoslavia Muslim community.

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