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BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA SERBIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY  
Introductory Speech for the Founding Assembly

Decades of single-party rule have intensely disturbed the natural development of the Serbian nation. Amongst many illusions, the illusion which was also created was that the Serbian nation is small, weak and insignificant. That deterred all our friends and encouraged /our/ enemies to begin finishing off the fragmented and dismembered Serbian nation. However, let us not speak of enemies now. They are entitled to take advantage of our mistakes and weaknesses. We were a greater threat to ourselves than our enemies were to us.

Dismembered and divided during the war, we continued divided in peace time. We continued the genocide our enemies had carried out against us by destroying our own national and cultural identity. For the sake of a false and illusory peace at home, we sacrificed our greatest values, abandoned the traditions of our national culture, forsook our destroyed church and left it to an unequal struggle for survival, /are/ split into Reds and Blacks /Chetniks/, Whites /pro-Serb Montenegrins/ and Greens /independence-oriented Montenegrins/, townspeople and peasants.

Everywhere, and most of all here, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, we were for the most part devoted to the system which seemed to have been established to ensure our national annihilation. In the time of greatest devotion to the regime and the system, the greatest impoverishment occurred precisely in those devoted Serbian areas. Serbian areas loyal to the system were the very ones to suffer economic and cultural decline and large-scale migration. Several hundred thousands of Serbs left Bosnia and Herzegovina in this period, and Bosnia and Herzegovina was left without their posterity. Territorial organisation broke down the natural Serbian entities in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the Serbian nation was reduced to an inferior economic, demographic and political position.

The general anti-cultural and anti-civilisational pressure of the system hit the Serbs the hardest. Many Serbian intellectuals, scholars and artists left Bosnia and Herzegovina. Those who remained lived in disheartening and unjust conditions. Without support from their own nation, the needy and repressed Serbian intelligentsia, artists, journalists and others, kept themselves at a distance from all national affairs. The blood of many Serbian intellectuals froze at the thought of having to come out in support of their own nation and, by doing so, coming out in support also of their own position. Unprotected journalists were frightened and blackmailed by the attempt to their professional conduct control.

Among the Serbian intelligentsia, in its unequal position, fear gave rise to various ideas and reasons as excuses, leading it to a contempt for its own people as the source of its fears, and to the complete degeneration of the most educated and talented Serbian cadre. In this way, the Serbian nation lost the most high-quality part of itself.

The Serbian political intelligentsia was decimated and incapacitated for years, so that the Serbian nation was left without political leadership in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and that leadership has to be created anew. Much of the Serbian political intelligentsia was alienated wrongfully and unjustifiably from politics and now, instead of running the political affairs of its nation, it is performing unsuitable jobs.

An entire disappointed and deceived generation of this country's freedom fighters is sitting at home, a generation which built its most beautiful children, its

countless young heroes, into the foundations of its homeland, and that homeland, like a tottering tower, is swaying and plunging as though each moment might be its last.

The Serbian nation has reached the nadir of the crisis of its existence and has found itself so low that it is left with no option other than to recover. With the utmost difficulty and at the slowest pace, the Serbian nation is sobering up from the drunkenness of delusion, but this sobering up is a historic sobering up and a historic event.

In such conditions we are creating our Serbian Democratic Party of Bosnia and Herzegovina. In truth, we are not creating it, rather, it is creating us. Our abstract ideas have broken the reality of the state of the Serbian nation, on an unshakeable and completely formed political desire on the part of the Serbian people in Bosnia and Herzegovina, who have set a grand and unequivocal task for their intelligentsia and new political representatives: the establishment of a Serbian political subjectivity /as printed/ in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The basic objective of the Party is full and unconditional civil, national, cultural, religious and economic equality for the Serbs in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Here, these cannot be leading and following, nations first and second-class citizens, nation-building and non-nation-building elements.

The objective of the Party is to improve multi-ethnic relations, establish stability and reciprocity, enhance civil tranquillity.

The objective of the Party is a federative Yugoslavia, and in it an equal federal Bosnia and Herzegovina. Should this objective not be attainable, the objective of the Party will be to facilitate democratic methods as the Serbian nation's response to a new situation.

The objective of the Party is to resolve the Serbian national and political question in Bosnia and Herzegovina democratically, without risk-taking, frustration or tension.

The objective of the Party is constitutionality and legality and the rule of law.

The objective of the Party is to protect property and entrepreneurship.

The objective of the Party is to revive the village and its values.

The objective of the Party is to protect Serbian institutions and individuals, creators and creativity.

The objective of the Party is to protect freedom of religion and the activities of the Serbian Orthodox church.

The objective of the Party is to support a modern, depoliticized, federative Yugoslav army.

The objective of the Party is freedom for all and a democratic solution for all political issues.

The Party will be organised at the levels of the Republic, region, subregion, municipality and local commune. Regional and lower-level boards will be completely autonomous in respect of local and political assessments and personnel decisions.

The Serbian Democratic Party of Bosnia and Herzegovina will have two permanent programmes: social democratic and populist, with united membership. A rising new generation of the BH Serbian Democratic Party will be formed in the *Mlada Bosna* youth wing of the SDS which will nurture the cultural and political traditions of *Mlada Bosna* /young Bosnia/. Its establishment will be discussed later.

In addition to a Main Board, the BH SDS will have honorary membership which will form the basis for an advisory body, the Political Council of the Party, which has already attracted many wise party and non-party notables whose political assessments will be used by the Party.

There will be no revanchism or anti-communism. We do not dispute anyone's right to a political life, election race and participation in power. Moreover, the Party will be open to all democratically-minded members of the League of Communists, socialists or other parties which acknowledge the Serbian Democratic Party's programme as their own political programme. A large number of members of other parties and alliances have already announced that they are joining the Serbian Democratic Party. Among them are a number of individuals with great political experience and professional political expertise, so the Party will have experienced professional political workers both in the Political Council and in the operational structure.

Coexistence also created some permanent values which the Serbian Democratic Party will nurture and develop. In that sense, the Party will be open for cooperation with all democratic organisations in the Republic and the country. We cannot and will not cooperate with parties which have even the slightest trace of anti-Serbism, anti-Yugoslavism, anti-semitism and anti-democracy in their programme or dealings.

The name of Party is its most complete and exact legitimacy: it is the Party of the Serbs in Bosnia and Herzegovina, it is a democratic party which will work in the interests of the Serbian people and citizens and thereby also in the interest of all peoples and citizens in our region.