

Serbia, the Serbo-Albanian Conflict and the First Balkan War

Abstract: After the restoration of Serbia in 1830, the areas of medieval Serbia left out of her borders were dubbed Old Serbia – Kosovo, Metohija, Rascia (the former *sanjak* of Novi Pazar and the neighbouring areas). Old Serbia (from 1877 onwards the *vilayet* of Kosovo) was dominated by local Albanian pashas, whereas the Christian Orthodox Serbs and their villages were attacked and pillaged by Muslim Albanian brigands. The religious antagonism between Muslims and Christians expanded into national conflict after the 1878 Albanian League had claimed the entire “Old Serbia for Greater Albania”. The position of Christian Orthodox Serbs, who accounted for a half of the population at the end of the nineteenth century, was dramatically aggravated due to Muslim Albanians' tribal anarchy, Austria-Hungary's pro-Albanian agitation and, after 1908, frequent Albanian rebellions. All efforts of Serbia to reach a peaceful agreement with Muslim Albanian leaders in Old Serbia before the First Balkan War had ended in failure. The First Balkan War was the most popular war in Serbia's history as it was seen as avenging the 1389 Battle of Kosovo which had sealed the Ottoman penetration into the Serbian lands. In October 1912, Serbia liberated most of Old Serbia, while Montenegro took possession of half of the Rascia area and the whole of Metohija. While the decimated and discriminated Serb population greeted the Serbian and Montenegrin troops as liberators, most Albanians, who had sided with the Ottomans, saw the establishment of Serbian rule as occupation.

Keywords: Serbia, Old Serbia, Ottoman Empire, Kosovo, Metohija, Serbs, Muslim Albanians, First Balkan War

Growing tribal privileges vs. decaying Ottoman system

Prior to the Serbian Revolution (1804–1813) which led to the establishment of an autonomous Serbia (1830), the present-day area of Kosovo and Metohija had been subdivided into several *sanjaks* governed by local Ottoman officials, mostly outlawed Albanian pashas. General conditions of the Empire's Christian subjects deteriorated along with the deterioration of the once powerful Ottoman central authority. Already assigned by the Ottoman theocratic system to a lower social class (*reaya*) than Muslims, they were now exposed to re-feudalization as a result of the rapid Ottoman administrative and economic decline. The *timar* (*sipahi*) system was turning into *çiftlik* system, especially detrimental to the Christian Orthodox tenant farmers. Local Muslim Albanian governors in the districts and provinces in

nowadays Kosovo and Metohija became hereditary feudal lords as early as the eighteenth century. Muslim Albanians were tolerated by the Sublime Porte as feudal lords or scofflaw regents because they were seen as promoting the Ottoman order based on *Shari'ah* law and tribal privileges. Their pro-Ottoman culture made them useful even though they corrupted the Ottoman administration. In the early nineteenth century, Albanian beys ruled as semi-independent provincial governors, virtually uncontrolled by the central government in Constantinople.¹

Several notable Albanian families succeeded in imposing themselves as hereditary pashas (Djinolli or Djinić in the Priština area, Begolli or Mahmutbegović in the Peć area, Rotulli or Rotulović in Prizren etc.). Ruled by renegade Albanian pashas who, similarly to the conservative Muslim beys in Bosnia, wanted to preserve the *status quo* which would guarantee their privileges in Turkey-in-Europe, the Serbs of Kosovo-Metohija suffered from both local outlaws and frequent Albanian revolts against the attempts of Europeanization and modernization on the part of Ottoman central authorities. In these unruly conditions, plundering and violence became the prevailing social and political conditions in the area.²

The successive waves of violence perpetrated by Muslim Albanians against Christian Serbs in Metohija during the 1840s, as well as in the two following decades, were amply recorded in various official complaints, usually signed by notables and priests from Serbian villages. The official complaints, listing numerous grievances, were submitted to the Ottoman Sultan, Serbian Prince and Russian Emperor respectively. The abbot of Visoki

¹ Robert Mantran, ed., *Histoire de l'Empire Ottoman* (Paris: Fayard, 1989), 250–264; Donald Quataert, *Ottoman Empire 1700–1922* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 46–53; Vladimir Stojančević, “The restored Serbian State and the Albanians 1804–1876”, in *Serbia and the Albanians in the 19th and early 20th Centuries*, Academic conferences of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, vol. LIII, Department of Historical Sciences No 15 (Belgrade: Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, 35–62). See also contemporary analysis in Ami Boué, *Recueil d'itinéraires dans la Turquie d'Europe*, I-II (Vienna: W. Braumüller, 1854), *passim*.

² For more, see Vladimir Stojančević, *Južnoslovenski narodi u Osmanskom carstvu od Jedrenskog mira 1829. do Pariskog kongresa 1856. godine* (Belgrade: PTT, 1971). A general history of Kosovo in English by Alex N. Dragnich & Slavko Todorovich, *The Saga of Kosovo. Focus on Serbian-Albanian Relations* (Boulder & New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), offers a Serbian perspective. Pro-Albanian point of view in: Noel Malcolm, *Kosovo. A Short History* (London: MacMillan, 1998), critically reviewed by Aleksa Djilas, “Imagining Kosovo. A Biased New Account Fans Western Confusion”, *Foreign Affairs*, (September 1998); for a more balanced approach see Miranda Vickers, *Between Serb and Albanian. The History of Kosovo* (London: Hurst, 1998); the most recent: Dušan T. Bataković, *Serbia's Kosovo Drama. A Historical Perspective* (Belgrade: Čigoja štampa, 2012).

Dečani monastery, Serafim Ristić, described the difficult position of the Christian Serbs in Metohija, particularly in the district of Peć, in a memorandum sent to Constantinople.³

The Serbian Orthodox Church re-established in 1557 by the famous vizier Sokollu Mehmed Pasha under the name of Patriarchate of Peć, was eventually abolished in 1776, and all the Serb bishoprics came under jurisdiction of the Greek-controlled Patriarchate of Constantinople.⁴ Nevertheless, several Serb bishops remained in office. In the early decades of the nineteenth century, the dynamic Serb metropolitans Janićije and Hadži Zaharije of the Raška-Prizren Bishopric urged the establishment of Serb schools.⁵ According to the available data, several dozen primary schools in both Metohija and Kosovo were attended by at least 1,300 Serbian students in the 1860s. A number of talented students from Kosovo and Metohija were trained as teachers in Serbia from the early 1860s onwards owing to generous scholarships granted by the wealthy Prizren Serb merchant Sima Andrejević Igumanov (1804–1882), the founder of the Serbian Theological School (*Bogoslovija*) in Prizren in 1871.⁶

The first half of the nineteenth century was marked by spiralling violence mostly directed against the Christian Orthodox Serb population, which resulted in their occasional conversion to Islam and increasing emi-

³ “[...] the violent persecutions by Albanians and the mistreatments exceeding every measure which, if not stopped, will force us [the Serb Christians] out from our land drenched with the blood of our ancestors and from our hearths to flee.[...] For not even our Holy Churches remain untouched by criminals. Not a single Christian house has been spared from looting, and every village, town, church or monastery cries under persecution.[...] That is why there is no use to ask who did this because whatever we have said so far has brought no use.” Cf. this quotation and other similar complaints against Albanian terror compiled by Serafim Ristić in a volume under the title *Plač Stare Srbije* [The Lament of Old Serbia] (Zemun: Knjigopečatnja I. K. Soprona, 1864), dedicated to British pastor Rev. William Denton. Cf. also William Denton, *Christians in Turkey. Their Conditions under Mussulman Rule* (London: Dadly, Isbiter & Co, 1876).

⁴ On Sokollu Mehmed pasha, see Radovan Samardžitch, *Mehmed Pasha Sokolović* (Lausanne: L’Age d’Homme, 1994).

⁵ Cf. the most important studies: Petar Kostić, *Crkveni život pravoslavnih Srba u Prizrenu i njegovoj okolini u XIX veku* (Belgrade: Grafički institut “Narodna misao” A. D., 1928) and, by the same author, *Prosvetno-kulturni život pravoslavnih Srba u Prizrenu i njegovoj okolini u XIX veku i početkom XX veka (sa uspomenama pisca)* (Skoplje: Grafičko-industrijsko preduzeće Krajničanac a. d., 1933).

⁶ Vladimir Bovan, *Sima A. Igumanov. Život i delo* (Priština & Prizren: Narodna i Univerzitetska biblioteka “Ivo Andrić” & Srpska Pravoslavna Bogoslovija Svetog Kirila i Metodija, 2004). On Metohija, Milisav Lutovac, *La Metohija: étude de géographie humaine* (Paris: Librairie ancienne Honoré Champion, 1935).

gration to the neighbouring Principality of Serbia.⁷ Appalling Serb testimonies of religious and social discrimination against them, perpetrated mostly by Muslim Albanian outlaws (*kaçaks*), were confirmed by both Western and Russian travellers.⁸

The ambitious plans of the Serbian Prince Mihailo Obrenović and his Prime Minister Ilija Garašanin's for an all-Christian uprising in Turkey-in-Europe in the late 1860s paved the way for future cooperation with the powerful Muslim and Roman Catholic clans from northern Albania. Nevertheless, the Belgrade government's friendly relations with the clans of northern Albania had no tangible effect on the Kosovo renegade pashas and their lawless clans in terms of improving the difficult position of the persecuted Christian Serb population.⁹

The decrease of Serb population caused by tribal anarchy and forced migration was partially compensated by high birth rate in the rural areas where both Serbs and Albanians lived in extended families (*zadruga*) comprising several generations with up to 80 members (20 to 40 on average). Demographic structure was different amongst urban population. According to the renowned Russian scholar A. F. Hilferding who conducted extensive, highly reliable research during his voyage to the region in 1858, the ethnic and religious composition of the main towns was as follows: Peć — 4,000 Muslim and 800 Christian Orthodox families; Priština — 1,200 Muslim and 300 Christian Orthodox families; Prizren — 3,000 Muslim, 900 Christian Orthodox and 100 Roman Catholic families.¹⁰

In the 1860s, the British travellers M. McKenzie and A. P. Irby recorded that Serb villages were not the sole target of Albanian outlawed raiders. During their visit to Vučitrn, a Serb priest explained them, in the presence of an Ottoman official (*mudir*), the position of urban Christians:

There, said he, the *mudir* sits — one man with half a dozen *zaptis* [police-men] — what can he effect? There are here but 200 Christian houses, and from 400 to 500 Mussulman [Muslim], so the Arnaouts [Albanians] have

⁷ For more, see *Savremenici o Kosovu i Metohiji 1852–1912*, ed. Dušan T. Bataković (Belgrade: Srpska književna zadruga, 1988).

⁸ Throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth century, up to 1912, Christian Serbs in Kosovo and Metohija resorted to social mimicry in order to avoid being attacked: when in public, they wore Albanian costume and spoke Albanian. Some eventually embraced Islam and became Arnautashi — Albanized Serbs. Cf. Dušan Šijački, *Balkanski rat u reči i slici*, vol. I-II (Belgrade: Štamp. Savić, 1913); for an elaborate analysis see Jovan Cvijić, *La Péninsule balkanique. La géographie humaine* (Paris: Armin Colin, 1918), 343–355.

⁹ Sadulla Brestovci, *Marrëdhëniet shqiptare-serbo-malazeze 1830–1878* (Prishtina: Instituti Albanologjik i Prishtinës, 1983).

¹⁰ Aleksandar F. Giljferding, *Putovanje po Hercegovini, Bosni i Staroj Srbiji* (Sarajevo: Veselin Masleša, 1972), 154–165 (Serbian translation from the Russian original of 1859).

it all their own way. They rob the Christians whenever and of whatever they please; sometimes walking into a shop, calling for what they want, and carrying it off on promise of payment, sometimes seizing it without further ado. Worse than this, their thoroughly savage, ignorant, and lawless way of living keeps the whole community in a state of barbarism, and as the Christians receive no support against them, no enlightenment nor hope from Constantinople, they naturally look for everything to Serbia; — to the Serbia of the past for inspiring memories, to the Principality [of Serbia] for encouragement, counsel, and instructions.¹¹

According to Austro-Hungarian military intelligence sources from 1871, the demographic structure of Old Serbia (Kosovo, Metohija, the former *sanjak* of Novi Bazar [*Novopazarski sandžak*] and present-day north-western Macedonia) prior to the Eastern Crisis (1875–1878) was as follows: 318,000 Serbs, 161,000 Albanians, 2,000 Osmanlis (ethnic Turks), 10,000 Vlachs, 9,000 Circassians and Gypsies. Of them, 250,000 were Christian Orthodox, 239,000 Muslims and 11,000 Roman Catholics.¹²

Serbia's and Montenegro's two wars against the Ottomans (1876, 1877–1878) resulted in the defeat of the pro-Ottoman Muslim Albanian troops and the migration, both voluntary and forced, of at least 30,000 Muslim Albanians (*muhadjirs*) from the liberated territories of the present-day southeast Serbia, the former *sanjak* of Niš. Conversely, dozens of thousands of Serbs fled from various parts of Old Serbia, mostly Kosovo (Lab and other areas of eastern and northern Kosovo), into the newly-liberated territory. Their exact number, however, has never been determined. Prior to the Second Serbo-Ottoman War (1877–78), the Albanians were the majority population in some areas of the *sanjak* of Niš (Toplica), while a number of Albanian villages was emptied from the district of Vranje after the 1877–78 war.¹³ Reluctant to accept their loss of feudal privileges in a Christian-ruled European-type state, most Muslim Albanians emigrated to Metohija and Kosovo, taking out their frustration on the local Serbs.¹⁴

¹¹ G. Muir Mackenzie and A.P. Irby, *Travels in the Slavonic Provinces of Turkey-in-Europe*, vol. I. 2nd rev. ed. (London: Dadly, Isbiter & Co, 1877), 246.

¹² Peter Kukulj, Major im Generalstabe, *Das Fürstentum Serbien und Türkisch-Serbien (Stara Srbia, Alt-Serbien). Eine Militärisch-geographische Skizze (Im Manuskript gedruckt)*. (Vienna: Aus der kaiserlich-königlich Hof- und Staatsdruckerei, 1871), 147–149.

¹³ For example, prior to 1878 the Prokuplje area in the region of Toplica had 2,031 Serbian, 3,054 Albanian, and 74 Turkish households. After 1878, only a few Albanian villages remained, while 64 were completely deserted. For more see Djordje Mikić, "Social and Economic Conditions in Kosovo and Metohija from 1878 until 1912" in *Serbia and the Albanians*, ed. V. Stojančević, 241–242.

¹⁴ Radoslav Pavlović, "Seobe Srba i Arbanasa u ratovima 1876. i 1877–1878. godine", *Glasnik Etnografskog instituta* 4–6 (1955–57), 53–104; Emin Pllana, "Les raisons de la

Vilayet of Kosovo: Religious Affiliation, Tribal Society and Rise of Nationalism

The *Vilayet of Kosovo* (1877–1912), an administrative unit of 24,000 sq km extending from Novi Pazar and Taslidje (Pljevlja) to Priština, Skoplje and Tetovo, was synonymous with Old Serbia during the last decades of Ottoman rule; it was a large political unit subdivided into *sanjaks*, *kazas* and *nahis*.¹⁵ In addition to Christian Orthodox Serbs and Muslim Albanians, its population included a considerable number of Muslim Slavs, Bulgarians, ethnic Turks, Hellenized Vlachs and Greeks. According to diverse data regarding the *Vilayet of Kosovo*, with Priština (until 1888) and Skoplje (1888–1912) as its successive seats, the Albanians, mostly Muslims, accounted for less than a half of the population until the late 1870s.¹⁶

The number of Serbs declined during the following decades. Prior to the First Balkan War (1912) Albanians were already a majority in most of Metohija (Prizren, Djakovica and Peć), while Serbs remained a relative majority in the rural areas of Kosovo (Mitrovica, Priština, Gnjilane, Zvečan, Ibarski Kolašin, Novo Brdo), and in the region of Rascia (the former *sanjak* of Novi Bazar). In total, there were 390,000 ethnic Albanians and 207,000 Christian Orthodox Serbs in the whole of Old Serbia.¹⁷

Prior to the Eastern Crisis (1875–1878), the Muslim Albanians had wavered between their loyalty to the Ottoman Empire and defending their own local interests which pitted them against the measures implemented by the central authorities in Constantinople. Defending their old privileges, the Muslim Albanians became, just as Muslim Slavs in Bosnia, a serious obstacle to the modernization of the Ottoman Empire during its declining period.¹⁸ Their national movement took an organized form at the very end of the Eastern Crisis. The Albanian League (1878–1881) was formed on the eve of the Congress of Berlin in Prizren. The Albanian League called for a solution of the Albanian national question within the borders of the Ottoman Empire; conservative Muslim groups prevailed in its leadership

manière de l'exode des refugies albanais du territoire du sandjak de Nish à Kosovo (1878–1878)", *Studia Albanica* 1 (1985), 179–200.

¹⁵ Shukri Rahimi, *Vilajeti i Kosovës me 1878–1912* (Prishtinë: Enti i Teksteve dhe i Mjeteve Mësimore i Krahinës Socialiste Autonomë të Kosovës, 1978).

¹⁶ Prior to the First Balkan War (1912) the *Vilayet of Kosovo* covered an area of 24,000 sq km and consisted of six *sanjaks*: Skoplje (Uskub), Priština, Peć, Sjenica, Taslidja (Pljevlja), and the *sanjak* of Prizren, previously part of the *Vilayet of Monastir* (Bitolj, Bitola). The present-day Kosovo and Metohija encompassed mostly the areas of the *sanjaks* of Peć, Priština and Prizren (ibid.) Cf. also Miloš Jagodić, *Srpsko-albanski odnosi u Kosovskom vilajetu, 1878–1912* (Belgrade: Zavod za udžbenike, 2009).

¹⁷ D. T. Bataković, *The Kosovo Chronicles* (Belgrade: Plato, 1992), 134–137.

¹⁸ Ibid. 83–88.

and commanded the 16,000 men-strong paramilitary forces operating in several Ottoman *vilayets*.¹⁹

The main cause of their discontent was the territorial enlargement of Serbia and Montenegro, two new independent states recognized by the Congress of Berlin in July 1878, while the main victims of their religious and national frustration were the Christian Serbs remaining under Ottoman rule, who were held responsible for the aspirations of the neighbouring Balkan states. Dissatisfied with the Porte's concessions to great European Powers, the Albanian League tried to sever all ties with Constantinople. In order to prevent further international complications, the new Sultan, Abdülhamid II (1876–1909), ordered military action and brutally destroyed the Albanian movement.²⁰

The real nature of the Albanian League and its attitude towards other ethnic communities was described in detail in a confidential report sent to the Serbian government in Belgrade by Ilija Stavrić, Dean of the Serbian Theological School (*Srpska Bogoslovija*) in Prizren. A first-hand account of the Albanian League meetings revealed that Albanians were determined to “expel the Serbs and Montenegrins back to their former borders [...] and if they return, to put these infidels [Kosovo-Metohija Serbs] to the sword”.²¹ Well-informed and Albanian-speaking, Stavrić added that a member of the Albanian League forced the Serbian community in Prizren “on the 13th of this month [June 1878] to cable a statement of our loyalty as subjects and our satisfaction with the present situation to the Porte; moreover, [we were forced] to declare that we do not wish to be governed by Bulgarians or Serbia or Montenegro. We had to do as they wished. Alas, if Europe does not know what it is like to be a Christian in the Ottoman Empire?”²²

Nevertheless, a revived loyalty to the Sublime Porte emerged among the Muslim Albanians only a few years later as an ecstatic response to the Sultan's proclaimed pan-Islamic policy. Far from being Islamic fanatics, the Albanians greeted the new policy of Sultan, who assumed the title of reli-

¹⁹ Bernard Stulli, “Albansko pitanje 1878–1882”, *Rad JAZU* 318 (Zagreb 1959), 287–391; For more see A. Hadri, ed., *Konferenca Shkencore e 100 – vjetorit të Lidhjes Shqiptare të Prizrenit, Prishtinë, 6–9 qershor 1978*, vols. I–II (Prishtinë: Akademia e Shkencave dhe e Arteve e Kosovës, 1981); *La Ligue albanaise de Prizren 1878–1881. Documents* (Tirana: Academie des sciences de la RPS d’Albanie, Institut d’histoire, 1988).

²⁰ Stavro Skendi, *The Albanian National Awakening 1878–1912* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1967), 31–53.

²¹ Arhiv Srbije, Ministarstvo inostranih dela, Političko odeljenje [Archives of Serbia, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Political Department], 1878, fasc. IV, no 478, a confidential letter of Ilija Stavrić of 26 June (8 July) 1878 from Prizren.

²² *Ibid.*

gious leader (*caliph*), as meaning the renewal of their tribal privileges and autonomy, as well as political and social predominance over their neighbours, the Christian Slavs. Thus the Muslim Albanians in the western Balkans were encouraged by Sultan and Caliph Abdülhamid II to relentlessly suppress Christian unrest as a potential threat to the internal security of the Empire's European provinces.²³

Furthermore, modern Albanian nationalism, stemming from its tribal roots, gave priority to tribal rather than any other loyalties. Although defined in ethnic terms, the Albanian national movement was still dominated by a Muslim majority and burdened by conservative Islamic traditions further reinforced by pan-Islamic policy and fears of European-style reforms. According to confidential Austro-Hungarian reports, Muslim Albanian volunteers from Old Serbia demonstrated absolute solidarity with the Ottomans during the Greek-Ottoman War of 1897, while their patriotism, directed against Christians, was easily transformed into religious fanaticism.²⁴

The slow progress of Albanian national integration provided the Dual Monarchy with the opportunity for broad political action: in this early process of nation-building, the Albanian elites and the entire nation were divided into three religious communities. Their members had different social statuses, opposed political traditions, spoke different dialects and used different alphabets. In order to minimize these differences, Vienna launched some important cultural initiatives: books about Albanian history were printed and distributed, the national coat-of-arms was invented, and various grammars were written to promote a uniform Albanian language.²⁵

The Latin script, supplemented with new letters for non-resounding sounds, was intended to become a common script for Albanians of all three confessions; until the early twentieth century, a variety of scripts were in use for texts in Albanian, including Greek, Cyrillic, and Arabic characters. Special histories were written — such as *Populare Geschichte der Albanesen* by Ludwig von Thalloczy — and distributed among the wider public in order to awaken national consciousness and create a unified national identity for

²³ Cf. Peter Bartl, *Die albanischen Muslime zur Zeit der nationalen Unabhängigkeitsbewegung (1878–1912)* (Wiesbaden: O. Harassowitz, 1968), 72–89. On Abdülhamid II see contemporary testimonies in V. Bérard, *La politique du sultan* (Paris: Calmann Lévy, 1897), 62–98; on Serbs under Abdülhamid II see V. Bérard, *La Macédoine* (Paris: Calmann Lévy, 1897), 97–143; Georges Gaulis, *La ruine d'un Empire. Abd-ul-Hamid ses amis et ses peuples*, prefaced by Victor Bérard (Paris: Armand Colin, 1913), 350–353.

²⁴ Haus, Hoff und Staatsarchiv, Wien, Politisches Archiv [HHSStA], Türkei, vol. XII, carton 170, 1901, *Studie des konsul Simon Joanovic uber der Sandschak von Novi Pazar*.

²⁵ D. T. Bataković, *Kosovo. Un conflit sans fin?* (Lausanne: L'Age d'Homme, 2008), 61–63.

the Albanians of all three confessions. The most important element in Austria-Hungary's political and cultural initiative was the theory of the Illyrian origin of Albanians. This was a deliberate choice intended to "establish continuity with a suitable historical past", a typical case of "invented tradition"; still, something was different from the similar pattern applied elsewhere in Europe: the "inventors" and the propagators of an "invented tradition" were not members of the national elite but their foreign protectors.²⁶

Similarly to other belated nations (*verspätete Nation*) confronted with rival nationalisms, the Albanians sought foreign support and advocated radical solutions. The growing social stagnation and political disorder produced anarchy that reigned almost uninterrupted during the last century of Ottoman rule: the Christians, mostly Serbs, were the principal victims of political discrimination and the Muslims, mostly Albanians in Kosovo-Metohija, were their persecutors.²⁷

Fabricated rumours about the Kosovo Serbs' rising to arms on the very day Serbia was proclaimed a kingdom in March 1882 resulted in the establishment of a court-martial in Priština. Over five years of its uninterrupted activity, roughly 7,000 Kosovo Serbs were sentenced for "sedition", while another 300 were sentenced to hard labour on the basis of suspicion rather than evidence. The prominent Serb urban elders were imprisoned, along with teachers and merchants, priests and some prosperous farmers. The sentenced were sent to prisons in Salonika or exiled to Anatolia. It was not before 1888 that some of the surviving Serbs were pardoned due to the joint mediation of Russian and British diplomacy.²⁸

Kosovo Serbs Drama: Discrimination and Persecution, 1882–1912

It was in 1882 that Sima Andrejević Igumanov from Prizren published the terrifying testimony: *The Current Regrettable Situation in Old Serbia (Sadašnje nesretno stanje u Staroj Srbiji)* containing credible and verifiable data on the harassment, discrimination and atrocities committed by Otto-

²⁶ Eric Hobsbawm, "Introduction" to Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992). Cf. also Milorad Ekmečić, *Stvaranje Jugoslavije 1790–1918*, vol. II (Belgrade: Prosveta, 1989), 451–455.

²⁷ *Kosovo-Metohija dans l'histoire serbe* (Lausanne: L'Age d'Homme, 1990), 192–215; Nathalie Clayer, « Le Kosovo : berceau du nationalisme albanais au XIX^e siècle », in *Religion et nation chez les Albanais aux XIX^e-XX^e siècles* (Istanbul: Les Éditions ISIS, 2002), 197–220; see also G. W. Gawrich, *The Crescent and the Eagle. Ottoman Rule, Islam and the Albanians 1874–1912* (London: I. B. Taurus, 2006).

²⁸ *Istorija srpskog naroda*, vol. VI-1 (Belgrade: Srpska književna zadruga, 1983), 323–326. Cf. also Janičije Popović, *Život Srba na Kosovu i Metohiji 1812–1912* (Belgrade: Narodna knjiga, 1987), 247–248.

man Turks and Muslim Albanians in the early phase of the court-martial's activity. Fearful that Serbia would pay enough attention to the sufferings of her co-nationals in Turkey-in-Europe, Igumanov attempted to raise awareness of the new wave of ethnically and religiously motivated violence.²⁹

A mixture of religious, socially-based antagonisms and growing national rivalry added to the intensity of the Serb-Albanian conflict: "It is true that the Albanians in Kosovo, who were preponderantly Muslim, identified themselves religiously with the Turks, and on that basis were identified with the [Ottoman] Empire. They naturally regarded [Orthodox] Christians, being enemies of Turkey, as their own enemy. However, as far as the Slavs were concerned, the hatred of the Kosovars [Kosovo Albanians] was not founded on religion — although religion intensified it — but on ethnic differences: they fought the foreigner (the *Shkja*) because he coveted their land."³⁰ Nevertheless, the religious dimension, although not predominant among Muslim Albanians, remained the basis of social reality: many Muslim Albanians in Kosovo-Metohija believed Islam to be the religion of free people, whereas Christianity, especially Orthodox Christianity, was seen as the religion of slaves. European consuls observed an echo of such beliefs among the Albanians as late as the early twentieth century.³¹

Serbia to revive the issue of Serbian Metropolitans in Prizren and Skoplje, as the first step to re-establish the Patriarchate of Peć and to obtain wider international support for the official recognition of Serbs as a separate nation and their legal protection in Old Serbia. Serbian General Consulate was opened in Uskub (Skoplje) covering the whole of the *Vilayet* of Kosovo in 1887 and, after a long delay, another Serbian consulate was

²⁹ "Our homeland [Old Serbia] has been turned into hell by dark crazed bloodsuckers and masses of Asian tyrants. Banditry, violence, destruction, spying, denunciation, daily arrests, accusations, trials, sentences, exiles, seizure of property and life in many ways, wailing and mourning for the dead and burial of the executed, all these have become ordinary events everywhere in Old Serbia and [Slavic] Macedonia." Quoted from *Savremenici o Kosovu i Metohiji 1852-1912*, 101.

³⁰ "*Shkja* – plural *Shkje* – is the word the Albanians use for the Slavs. The derivation is from Latin *sclavus* in the meaning of Slav." (Quoted from Skendi, *Albanian National Awakening*, 202).

³¹ "*Les musulmans d'origine albanaise [...] sont cependant fanatiques et leur fanatisme se base sur la conviction que l'Islam est la religion des gens libres et des patrons tandis que le christianisme est la religion des esclaves.*" (Archives du Ministère des Affaires Étrangères [AMAE], Paris, Corr. Politique et commerciale, Nouvelle série, Turquie, vol. XVI/7); D. T. Bataković, "Mémoire du vice-consul de France à Skoplje (Uskub) sur les Albanais de Metohia de 1908" in *Miscellanea* 20 (Belgrade: Institut d'histoire 1990), 112.

established in Priština in 1889.³² The immediate response was Albanian-led anarchy that developed into a large-scale attempt to drive out the Christian Serbs from Metohija. In April and May 1889 alone, around 700 persons fled from Kosovo and Metohija to Serbia. The Russian consul to Prizren, T. Lisevich, concluded that the Muslim Albanians' goal was to cleanse all the areas between Serbia and Montenegro and thus deprive Old Serbia of its Serbian character. Anti-Serbian feelings culminated with the murder of the first Serbian Consul in Priština, Luka Marinković, in June 1890. Based on the information received from the Serbs of Priština, the Serbian government claimed that Albanian conspiracy was behind the assassination, while the Sublime Porte presented the murder as an act of general Muslim antagonism to Christian foreigners. Marinković's successors succeeded in getting the first Serbian bookshop started and sponsored the renovation of the primary and secondary Serbian school in Priština.³³

After the death of Meletios (*Meletije*), the last Greek Metropolitan in Prizren, the concerted diplomatic efforts of Belgrade and Cetinje, bolstered by the Russian Embassy in Constantinople, resulted in the appointment of a Serb prelate, Dionisije Petrović (1896–1900), as Raška-Prizren Metropolitan. In accord with the Belgrade government, the new metropolitan, as well as his successor Nićifor Perić (1901–1911), carried out a broad reorganization of both ecclesiastical and educational institutions of Christian Serbs, opened new schools, established new church-school communities, and coordinated all important national affairs throughout Old Serbia.³⁴

³² *Spomenica Stojana Novakovića* (Belgrade: Srpska kniževna zadruga, 1921), 171–173. Until the end of the First Balkan War in 1912 daily reports on the living conditions of Serbs and the political situation in the *Vilayet* of Kosovo were sent regularly from the Serbian consulates in Uskub (Skoplje) and Priština (the copies were forwarded to the Legation in Constantinople). Several thousands comprehensive documents deposited in the Archive of Serbia in Belgrade, in the Fonds of Serbian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Arhiv Srbije, Belgrade, Ministarstvo inostranih dela, Prosvetno-političko odeljenje i Političko odeljenje 1878–1912), have been only partially published. Cf. the published diplomatic correspondence in Vladimir Ćorović, ed., *Diplomatska prepiska Kraljevine Srbije*, vol. I: 1902–1903 (Belgrade: Državna štamparija, 1933); and another three volumes edited by the archivist Branko Peruničić, *Pisma srpskih konzula iz Prištine 1890–1900* (Belgrade: Narodna knjiga, 1985); *Svedočanstvo o Kosovu 1901–1913* (Belgrade: Naučna knjiga, 1988); *Zulumtî aga i begova u kosovskom vilajetu 1878–1912* (Belgrade: Nova, 1988). Cf. also diplomatic correspondence published by R. Samardžić, M. Vojvodić and D. T. Bataković in *Zadužbine Kosova. Spomenici i znamenja srpskog naroda*, eds. A. Jevtić & Ž. Stojković (Belgrade & Prizren: Eparhija raško-prizrenska 1987), 607–738; Milan Rakić, *Konzulska pisma 1905–1911*, ed. Andrej Mitrović (Belgrade: Prosveta, 1985).

³³ D. T. Bataković, “Entrée dans la sphère d'intérêt de l'Europe”, in *Kosovo-Metohija dans l'histoire serbe*, 179–185.

³⁴ Novak Ražnatović, “Rad vlade Crne Gore i Srbije na postavljanju srpskih mitropolita u Prizrenu i Skoplju 1890–1902. godine”, *Istorijski zapisi* XXII/2 (1965), 218–275; *Istorija*

Serbia, on her part, planned to open a consulate in Prizren (1898–1900) so as to facilitate daily communication with the Raška-Prizren Metropolitan and to provide moral support to the discriminated local Serb population. However, as the local Muslim Albanians threatened to burn down all Serb houses and shops in the town and sent angry protests to the Sublime Porte, Serbia eventually gave up that idea altogether.³⁵

Systematic persecution against the Christian Serbs in Kosovo, Mehotija and Slavic-inhabited Macedonia, fiercely conducted from 1882 onwards, was an integral part of Sultan Abdülhamid II's pan-Islamic policy. Seeking to put an end to this situation, the Serbian Minister at the Sublime Porte, Stojan Novaković, spared no effort in 1898–1899. In his diplomatic note submitted to the Ottoman Foreign Minister, Novaković stressed that “crimes and robberies are daily occurrences, and the perpetrators remain unpunished, and not even charged by the [Ottoman] authorities. The number of refugees fleeing across the border for their lives is enormous, and increases daily. According to the data the Royal government [of Serbia] possess, more than four hundred crimes have been perpetrated in the *sanjaks* of Priština, Novi Pazar, Peć and Prizren within a few months, last summer and winter. They include murder, arson, banditry, desecration of churches, rape, abduction, robbery, plundering of whole herds. This figure accounts for only part, one-fifth at most, of what really happened, since most crimes have remained unreported because the victims or their families do not dare to complain.”³⁶

Formal investigations by Ottoman authorities had no significant results, nor did they improve the security of Serbs in Old Serbia. Deprived of Russian support in Constantinople, the Belgrade government accomplished nothing. The plan to submit a bilingual “Blue Book” of diplomatic correspondence regarding Albanian violence to the 1899 International Peace Conference at Hague was prevented by Austria-Hungary - Vienna sent a protest to Austrophile King Alexander I Obrenović of Serbia. In the absence of official support, Serb refugees from Old Serbia and Slavic

srpskog naroda, vol. VI-1, 303–305; Archimandrite Firmilijan Dražić was first appointed administrator of the Metropolitanate of Skoplje in 1897, and eventually confirmed as the Serbian metropolitan of this diocese in 1902. The entire *Vilayet* of Kosovo (Old Serbia) was thus under the jurisdiction of the Serbian bishoprics of Raška-Prizren and Skoplje.

³⁵ D. T. Bataković, “Pokušaj otvaranja srpskog konzulata u Prištini 1898–1900”, *Istorijski časopis XXXI* (1984), 249–250.

³⁶ Bilingual Serbian-French publication with correspondence between the minister of Serbia at Constantinople and Ottoman foreign minister Tefvik Pasha: *Documents diplomatiques. Correspondance concernant les actes de violence et de brigandage des Albanais dans la Vieille Serbie (Vilayet de Kosovo) 1898–1899* (Belgrade: Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, 1899).

Macedonia sent a memorandum to the Conference, but their complaints were not put on the official agenda.³⁷ The impunity of Muslim Albanians for their crimes in the 1880s and particularly 1890s, under the auspices of Sultan Abdülhamid II himself, led to uncontrolled anarchy which was causing serious trouble for both the governor (*vali*) of Kosovo and the central government in Constantinople.³⁸

Western travel accounts from the end of the nineteenth century vividly portrayed the precarious situation of Christian Orthodox Serbs in Kosovo-Metohija and the neighbouring areas:

Of the rest of the Christian Servian [Serbian] population of Old Serbia [Old Serbia], for every nine who remain one has fled in despair to free Serbia [Serbia] within recent years. The remainder, unarmed and unprotected, survives only by entering into a species of feudal relationship with some Albanian brave. The Albanian is euphemistically described as their 'protector'. He lives on tolerably friendly terms with his Servian vassal. He is usually ready to shield him from other Albanians, and in return he demands endless blackmail in an infinite variety of forms. [...] They can be compelled to do forced labour for an indefinite number of days. But even so the system is inefficient, and the protector fails at need. There are few Servian villages which are not robbed periodically of all their sheep and cattle — I can give names of typical cases if that would serve any purpose. For two or three years the village remains in a slough of abject poverty, and then by hard work purchases once more the beginnings of the herd, only in due course to lose it again. I tried to find out what the system of land tenure was. My questions, as a rule, met with a smile. The system of land tenure in this country, where the Koran and the raffle are the only law, is what Albanian chiefs of the district chooses to make it. The Servian peasants, children of the soil, are tenants at will, exposed to every caprice of their domestic conquerors. Year by year the Albanian hillmen encroach upon the plain, and year by year the Servian peasants disappear before them.³⁹

A similar first-hand account recounting the crimes against Christian Serbs committed by Muslim Albanians was penned by a notable American traveller:

It would be difficult for the [Ottoman] Turks to carry out there the custom of disarming [Orthodox] Christians. But the Ottoman Government had secured the loyalty of Christians [Roman Catholic Albanians] — as

³⁷ D. T. Bataković, "Memorandum Srba iz Stare Srbije i Makedonije Medjunarodnoj konferenciji mira u Hagu 1899. godine", *Prilozi za književnost, jezik, istoriju i folklor* LIII–LIV (1987–88), 177–183.

³⁸ *Pisma srpskih konzula iz Prištine 1890–1900*, 185–187.

³⁹ Henry N. Brailsford, *Macedonia. Its Races and their Future* (London: Methuen & Co, 1905), 275–276.

well as Mohammedan Ghegs [Muslim Albanians] by allowing them to pillage and kill their non-Albanian neighbours to their hearts' content. They are ever pressing forward, burning, looting, and murdering the Servians [Serbs] of the *Vilayet* of Kossovo [Kosovo]. The frontier line of Albania has been extended in this way far up into Old Serbia [Old Serbia]. Even the frontier of Serbia proper is not regarded by these lawless mountain men. They often make raids into Bulgaria when quartered as soldiers on the border. The [Muslim] Albanians have overrun all Macedonia. They have found their way in large numbers as far as Constantinople. But beyond their own borders and the section of Kossovo from which the Servians have fled, they are held within certain bounds. In many Albanian districts the Albanians are exempt from military service, but large numbers of them join the Turkish army as volunteers. They enlist for the guns and cartridge.⁴⁰

A detailed list of Christian Serb households in the Bishopric of Raška-Prizren, compiled in 1899 by Metropolitan Dionisije Petrović, amounts to 8,323 Serbian houses in the villages and 3,035 in the towns of Kosovo and Metohija, which gives 113,580 persons (with ten persons per family on average). By comparison with the official data of the Serbian government registering some 60,000 Serbs forced to emigrate from Kosovo, Metohija and the neighbouring regions to the Kingdom of Serbia between 1890 and 1900, the statistics showed that the number of Serbs in villages had declined by at least one third from the time of the Eastern Crisis (1875–1878). Most of the remaining Serbian houses were in larger towns, where they were relatively protected from violence: in Prizren (982), Priština (531), Peć (461), Gnjilane (407) and Orahovac (176), and much fewer in small towns such as Djakovica (70) and Ferizović (20).⁴¹

British diplomats, usually distrustful of Serbian political goals on account of their fear of Russian influence, were quite concerned with the scope of the Albanian outlaws's terror in Kosovo. In May 1901, a British diplomat reported that forty Serbian families were compelled to emigrate to the Kingdom of Serbia due to the Albanian terror, whilst another report from September of the same year stressed that that the whole of Old Serbia suffered from Albanian-inspired violence: "The Old Serbia [Old Serbia] is still an area of disturbance owing to the lawlessness, vendettas and racial jealousies of the Albanians". The same confidential report stated that the oppression against the Serbian population continued and

⁴⁰ Frederick Moore, *The Balkan Trail* (London: Smith, Elder & Co, 1906), 223–224.

⁴¹ St. Novaković, *Balkanska pitanja i manje istorijsko-političke beleške o Balkanskom poluostrvu 1886–1905* (Belgrade: Serbian Royal Academy, 1906), 515–527; *Documents diplomatiques. Correspondance concernant les actes de violence et de brigandage des Albanais dans la Vieille Serbie (Vilayet de Kosovo) 1898–1899*, 135–136.

that 600 Albanians, supported by fifty Ottoman soldiers, “had reduced a [Serb-inhabited] village of sixty households to one quarter of that number”. Similar confidential British report of December 1901 underscored that Albanian terror in the period from the early spring to the end of that year resulted in the expulsion of 250 Kosovo Serb families to the Kingdom of Serbia.⁴²

Metohija (the *sanjak* of Peć) remained the main theatre of the continuous ethnic cleansing of Serb Orthodox Christians. The Serbian consuls from Priština and Skoplje were banned by the *vali* of Kosovo to travel and visit their co-nationals or the renowned Serb monasteries of Patriarchate of Peć and Visoki Dečani until 1905 because of the fear for their security. Mgr Nićifor Perić, the new Metropolitan of Raška-Prizren entrusted in 1903 the administration of the Dečani Monastery to the brotherhood of the Russian skete of St. John Chrysostom from Mount Athos, dependency of the Serbian monastery of Hilandar (*Hilandar*). The Russian monks were brought in in the hope that they would protect the Serbs in Metohija, deprived of both Russian and Serbian diplomatic protection, restore monastic life in the impoverished monastery and stem the growing influence of Austro-Hungarian and Roman Catholic propaganda. Russian diplomacy, with their consulate in Prizren and Embassy in Constantinople, was also expected to provide assistance for the protection of Serbs. Dissensions between Belgrade and St. Petersburg, and divisions among the Serbs of Metohija regarding the actions of Russian monks in charge of Visoki Dečani monastery militated against Serb national and cultural action in Metohija.⁴³

According to Austro-Hungarian statistics from 1903, the population of Kosovo and Metohija consisted of 187,200 Serbs (111,350 Christian Orthodox, 69,250 Muslim and 6,600 Roman Catholic) and 230,300 Albanians (Muslim 215,050, Roman Catholic 14,350 and Christian Orthodox 900).⁴⁴ These statistics, however, could not be completely reliable, given the difficulties in collecting data and the Dual Monarchy’s strong political interest in supporting Albanians at that time — at the outset of Great Powers’ reform action in Old Serbia and Macedonia, the three “Macedonian Vilay-

⁴² *Correspondence Respecting the Affairs of Southeast Europe*, Turkey, no. 1 (1903) (London: Printed for H.M. Stationery Office by Harrison and Sons, St Martin’s Lane, 1903), 45, 88–89, 102.

⁴³ For more details see D. T. Bataković, *Dečansko pitanje*, 2nd ed. (Belgrade: Čigoja Štampa, 2007), with the earlier literature.

⁴⁴ HHStA, Politisches Archiv, XII, k. Nationalitäten und Religions-karte der Vilayete Kosovo, Salonik, Scutari und Monastir. See an important analysis in Kemal H. Karpat, *Ottoman Population 1830–1914. Demographic and Social Characteristics* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), 70–77.

ets" (1903–1908). Indeed, the Serb-inhabited areas in the northern regions of *Vilayet* of Kosovo were alone excluded from the reform project as a result of Vienna's adamant demand.⁴⁵

Serbia, the Young-Turk Regime and the rebelled Albanians (1903–1912)

The Young-Turk Revolution, the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the proclamation of Bulgaria's independence, which all took place in 1908, essentially altered the balance of power in the Balkans. The abortive reform action on the part of Great Powers had come to an end. The Young-Turks restored the 1876 Constitution, proclaimed equality for all subjects of the Ottoman Empire regardless of their religion and nationality, and announced radical political and social reforms.⁴⁶ These promises were greeted by Ottoman Serbs as an opportunity for their national affirmation and free political organization. In Skoplje (Uskub), the seat of *Vilayet* of Kosovo, the *Serbian Democratic League* was formed as early as 10 August 1908 with the temporary Central Committee presided over by Bogdan Radenković. The formation of district committees ensued at the meetings held in Priština, Vučitrn, Mitrovica, Gjilane and Ferizović, comprising the most distinguished Serb representatives, teachers, priests, craftsmen and merchants. The Serbian newspaper *Vardar* was founded in Skoplje to propagate the principles of the Serbian Democratic League, writing extensively on the difficult position of Serbs throughout Old Serbia. The *Vardar* devoted special attention to the oppression against Kosovo Serbs renewed after the expiration of a formal pledge (*bessa*) not to do so given by Albanians in Ferizović. The Serbian Democratic League and the *Vardar* insisted that the stipulations of the Ottoman Constitution be fully enforced upon Albanians as well; the Albanians recognized the new regime but displayed no readiness to obey the law.⁴⁷

Having concluded an agreement with the Young-Turks, the Serbs from Turkey-in-Europe put forward their own candidates in several important districts for the elections for a new Ottoman Parliament. In Kosovo

⁴⁵ For more, see Milan G. Miloievitch, *La Turquie d'Europe et le problème de la Macédoine et de la Vieille Serbie* (Paris: Arthur Rousseau, 1905); Fikret Adanir, *Die Makedonische Frage. Ihre Entstehung und Entwicklung bis 1908* (Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1979).

⁴⁶ Djordje Mikić, *Austro-Ugarska i Mladoturci, 1908–1912* (Banjaluka: Institut za istoriju, 1983), 78–98. Cf. more in Momtchilo Nintchitch, *La crise bosniaque et les puissances européennes, 1908–1914*, vol. I-II (Paris: Alfred Costes, 1937).

⁴⁷ *Istorija srpskog naroda*, VI-1, 330–333. On Young Turks see more in Feroz Ahmad, *The Young Turks. The Committee of Union and Progress in Turkish Politics, 1908–14* (London: Hurst Company, 2010).

and Metohija they had candidates for the Peć, Prizren and Priština *sanjaks*, but managed to win a mandate in Priština alone – Sava Stojanović was elected. Two more Serbs became the members of parliament in Constantinople, Aleksandar Parlić from Skoplje and Dr. Janićije Dimitrijević from Monastir, while Temko Popović of Ohrid was elected senator.⁴⁸ A large assembly of the Ottoman Serbs was held in Skoplje on the Visitation of the Virgin in 1909 with 78 delegates present, 44 from Old Serbia and 34 from Slav-inhabited Macedonia; the *Organization of the Serbian People in the Ottoman Empire* was established which would grow into a representative body of all the Serbs from the Ottoman Empire.⁴⁹

The annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina in October 1908 and the project for building a railway through the Novi Pazar *sanjak* revealed Austria-Hungary's ambition to establish its rule in the Ottoman-held provinces in the Balkans. The meetings held by Serbs against the annexation were also attended by Albanians. Frightened by Austro-Hungarian aspirations, many Albanian notables made attempt to approach the Serbs.⁵⁰ Bairam Curri of Djakovica proposed to Bogdan Radenković a joint protest to the annexation, while the prominent Begolli (Mahmudbegović) family of Peć negotiated with Serbian diplomats about possible cooperation. At the same time, Austro-Hungarian followers among Albanian notables strongly opposed this rapprochement with the Serbs. While relative peace reigned in Gnjilane and Priština, the Serbs were still oppressed in the Peć *nahi*. The Albanians threatened that the proclamation of Constitution was only temporary and that the infidels (*gjaurs*) would never have the same rights as Muslims.⁵¹

Notwithstanding individual crimes, the situation in Kosovo and Metohija was tolerable prior to the unsuccessful *coup d'état* in Constantinople in April 1909. Abdülhamid II failed to topple the Young-Turks, and he was thus compelled to abandon his throne. His half-brother Mahmud V Reshad was proclaimed Sultan.⁵² Within the Young-Turk leadership, a pan-Ottoman inclination prevailed, which considered all subjects of the Empire Ottomans. The Serbian Democratic League was renamed the *Educational-*

⁴⁸ For more detail see Dj. Mikić, "Mladoturski parlamentarni izbori 1908. i Srbi u Turskoj", *Zbornik Filozofskog fakulteta u Prištini* XII (1975), 154–209.

⁴⁹ *Rad Narodne skupštine otomanskih Srba: od 2. februara do 11. februara 1909* (Skoplje: Izdanje Prve srpske štamparije Vardar, 1910); *Istorija srpskog naroda*, VI-1, 335–338.

⁵⁰ *Istorija srpskog naroda*, VI-1, 335–336.

⁵¹ *Zadužbine Kosova*, 704. Cf. also Gaston Gravier, "La Vieille-Serbie et les Albanais", *Revue de Paris*, 1^{er} novembre 1911.

⁵² François Georgeon, *Abdülhamid II. Le sultan caliphe (1876–1909)* (Paris: Fayard, 2003), 280–309, 413–425.

Charitable Organization of Ottoman Serbs, but its activities were soon curbed. Under various decrees and laws, the activities of many Serbian societies were forbidden, land estates were confiscated from churches and monasteries, while the work of schools and religious committees was hindered. The law on the inheritance of estates greatly upset the Serbs, since many owners fled to Serbia in the previous period. Many estates were divided among the new *muhadjirs* (Muslim Slavs who settled in Kosovo after the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina). The new legislation also upset *chiflik* farmers: their *agas* could drive them off their land and settle Muslims instead, or exert double taxes.⁵³

At the beginning of the Young-Turk reign, the Albanians also founded their national clubs and educational societies which became the centers of national gathering and political agitation. Autonomist tendencies were revived. The pan-Ottoman ideology of the Young-Turk leadership, the centralization of administration, the introduction of military service and the new tax policy ruffled the Albanians. Instead of enjoying Abdülhamid II's protection, they faced the resolute Young-Turks who had no regard for their special rights and privileges. The first conflicts in Kosovo and Metohija arose in 1909 when the Ottoman authorities attempted to complete the lists for conscription purposes and the collection of taxes. At the anniversary of the Revolution in 1909, the Albanians held a congress in Dibra (Debar). They rejected the demand for conscription, clamoured for the creation of an autonomous region encompassing all Albanian-inhabited areas, and displayed marked hostility towards the neighboring Serbian states.⁵⁴

Despite their religious diversity, political disagreements, different economic interests, the leadership of the Albanian movement attained a high degree of national solidarity in opposition to the centralism of the Young-Turks. The Young-Turks' attempts to introduce military service and new taxes enraged Albanians of all three confessions. Regular Ottoman troops could not suppress the rebellious Albanian clans, and the Young-Turks were soon compelled to making concessions after the punitive expedition of Djavaid Pasha in fall 1909 and the rigorous measures in northern Albania had not brought the desired results.⁵⁵

Another Albanian insurrection broke out in spring 1910 following the repeated attempts of the authorities to collect taxes. The resistance in Kosovo and Metohija was particularly strong in the Djakovica (Gjakovë)

⁵³ *Istorija srpskog naroda*, VI-1, 340–342; see further documents in *Zulum i begova u Kosovskom vilajetu 1878–1912*, 460–529.

⁵⁴ Irena G. Senkevič, *Osvoboditelnoe dvizhenie albanskogo naroda v 1905–1912 gg.* (Moscow: Nauka, 1959), 140–145; Skendi, *Albanian National Awakening*, 391–394.

⁵⁵ Skendi, *Albanian National Awakening*, 393–395.

and Lab region. Under the command of Torgut Shefket Pasha, nearly 50,000 strong Ottoman troops ruthlessly crushed the insurrection and seized arms, but this forced pacification proved just a temporary solution. Albanian committees increased agitation for an autonomous Albania and fomented discontent among Albanians in the Balkan provinces of the Ottoman Empire. The rebellions in Yemen and Lebanon, the disorder in Crete and the Italian incursion in Tripoli put the Young-Turks in a difficult position.⁵⁶

The Malissors rose to arms in northern Albania. The Montenegrin King, Nikola I Petrović Njegoš, supplied the courageous Malissors rebels with arms and provided shelter for refugees. He hoped that Albanian insurrection would further weaken the Ottoman rule in the region. The Albanian leaders from Old Serbia, Isa Bolletini and Suleyman Batusa, were among 3,000 Albanians who found refuge in Montenegro. A memorandum (“Red Book”) was sent from Montenegrin capital Cetinje to Great Powers and the Young-Turks demanding the recognition of the Albanian nation and the creation of an autonomous Albania.⁵⁷

In fall 1911, Bolletini requested arms from Serbia, while the Montenegrin government urged Belgrade to assist the Albanian insurrection before some other foreign power took advantage of the situation. The Serbian Premier, Milovan Dj. Milovanović — the architect of the Balkan League of 1912 — regarded the Albanian insurrection and its ties with Montenegro with certain distrust. Fearing that Austria-Hungary could send its army to restore order in the *Vilayet* of Kosovo, Milovanović believed that the rebellion was not in the interest of Serbia and the Ottoman Serbs.⁵⁸

The Serbs of *Vilayet* of Kosovo soon found themselves cornered between the Young-Turks and the Albanians. The Young-Turk authorities were often rather harsh: after the introduction of extraordinary measures and court-martial (*urfia*) in May 1910, many people were beaten, and several Serbs died from the wounds inflicted, during the action to seize arms from the population in Kosovo. Local Albanian outlaws availed themselves of the turmoil to sack Serbian homes.⁵⁹ When Sultan Mahmud V Reshad arrived in Kosovo in summer 1911 to offer amnesty to the rebelled Muslim Albanians, another wave of violence hit the Christian Serbs. From July to

⁵⁶ Alan Palmer, *The Decline and Fall of the Ottoman Empire* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1994), 212–213.

⁵⁷ D. Bogdanović, *Knjiga o Kosovu*, Spec. Eds. DLXVI (Belgrade: Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, 1985), 159–160.

⁵⁸ Vladimir Ćorović, *Odnosi između Srbije i Austro-Ugarske u XX veku* (Belgrade: Državna štamparija, 1936), 350–352; more extensively in Bogumil Hrabak, “Arbanaški prvak Isa Boljetinac i Crna Gora 1910–1912”, *Istorijski zapisi* XXXIX (1977).

⁵⁹ Rakić, *Konzulska pisma*, 201–214; *Zadužbine Kosova*, 707–708.

November 1911, 128 robberies, 35 arsons, 41 banditries, 53 abductions, 30 blackmails, 19 threats, 35 murders, 37 attempted murders, 58 armed robberies, 27 affrays and abuses, 13 attempts to convert people to Islam by forced circumcision and 18 serious woundings were perpetrated against Christian Serbs throughout Old Serbia.⁶⁰ The disturbing extent of violence urged Serbian consuls in Skoplje and Priština to demand from the Belgrade government to secretly arm the persecuted Serb population in Kosovo.⁶¹

Nevertheless, the Young-Turk regime found itself in a severe crisis and new elections were announced. Belgrade expected the Young-Turks to win the elections, and instructions were sent to Kosovo Serbs to support the Ottoman government. After the conference of Ottoman Serbs held in Uskub (Skoplje), in March 1912, a new electoral agreement was concluded with the Young-Turks. The Albanians, fierce opponents of the Young-Turk regime, renewed their attacks upon the Serbs prodded by their chiefs.⁶²

The preparations for a general Albanian insurrection had begun in January 1912 under supervision of Hasan Prishtina of Kosovo and Ismail Kemal of south Albania. Hasan Prishtina's task was to gather the people and collect the arms, while Ismail Kemal was to contact Albanian committees and make propaganda in European capitals. It was agreed that the insurrection in the *Vilayet* of Kosovo would begin in the spring and spread to other regions inhabited by Albanians. In July 1912, the insurrection broke out in Kosovo; refusing to shoot their Muslim brethren, the Ottoman officers, soldiers and gendarmes joined the rebels. The *vali* of Kosovo personally returned to the Albanians the arms seized two years before. War with Italy, uprisings and unrest all over the Empire combined with the danger of international involvement compelled the Sultan to remove the Young-Turks, dissolve the Parliament and yield to the demands of Albanians.⁶³

⁶⁰ *Zadužbine Kosova*, 716; additional archival documentation, 717–728.

⁶¹ Ibid. French Consul in Uskub, Pierre-Léon Carlier, also reported in September 1912 on continuous persecution by the Albanians against the Ottoman Serbs, supplied with a list of crimes in August and September 1912: "J'ai entretenu à différentes reprises Votre Excellence des vexations continues dont souffrent les Chrétiens en général, et les Serbes Ottomans en particulier, dans le vilayet de Kossovo, du fait des Albanais, et de l'inaction absolue des autorités ottomanes pour la poursuite des crimes des attentats contre les propriétés [...] qui montrent la situation lamentable qui est faite aux Serbes dans ce Vilayet" (AMAE, Paris, Turquie, Guerres balkaniques, vol. VII, Uskub, 16 septembre 1912). Cf. also Bataković, *Kosovo Chronicles*, 154–156.

⁶² *Istorija srpskog naroda*, VI-1, 345–347; cf. *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije*, vol. V/2 (Belgrade: Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, 1985). See also Dragi Maliković, *Kosovo i Metohija 1908–1912* (Priština: Institut za srpsku kulturu, 2000), 310–318.

⁶³ Bataković, *Kosovo Chronicles*, 162–165.

Nevertheless, some 15,000 rebels, dissatisfied with the appeasing promises of the Sultan, moved south and took control over Uskub. A committee was sent from Constantinople to enter into negotiations with the rebels. Hasan Prishtina handed it a list with 14 specific demands: special laws for Albania based on the common law; the right to carry arms, amnesty for all rebels; appointment of officials who speak Albanian and are familiar with their customs in four *vilayets* (Kosovo, Scutari, Monastir and Janina); recognition of the Albanian language as official; curriculum and religious schools in the native tongue; army service for Albanians in their own territory alone; building of roads and railways, further administrative subdivisions; trial for the Young-Turk government. As the local authorities accepted most of the demands after a week, the rebels dispersed.⁶⁴

The rebel leadership comprised the people of different political affiliation and social status. Some of them were military commanders, others prominent tribal chiefs (Riza Bey Krieziu, Bairam Curri) and former outlaws (Isa Bolletini, Idriz Seferi); some of them supported the old Ottoman system, others were ardent Austrophiles. On the other hand, there were also former diplomats and dissatisfied politicians (Hasan Prishtina, Jahja Aga, Hadji Rifat Aga and Nexhib Draga), and all of them held quite opposing views as to the future of Albanians. Their official petitions did not contain a demand for the territorial autonomy for the Albanians, nor was the Porte willing to comply with such a demand. Fearing an intervention of other Balkan states, Hasan Prishtina and Nexhib Draga, the major negotiators, were satisfied with a settlement of the Albanian question within the framework of Ottoman legitimacy.⁶⁵

The attitude of the rebels toward the political status of Serbs in Old Serbia was, despite some exceptions, basically intolerant. The Serbian newspaper in Skoplje *Vardar* pointed out that the Serbs in Old Serbia were not against the fulfilment of Albanian national demands on the part of Ottomans: "We just consider it unfair that we Serbs are excluded, whose desires and interests, like in this case, as always, remain unheeded".⁶⁶

⁶⁴ B. Hrabak, "Arbanaški ustanci 1912", *Vranjski glasnik* XI (1975), 339 and passim.

⁶⁵ Ibid. 323–324. See also Jovan N. Tomić, *Les Albanais en Vieille-Serbie et dans le Sandjak de Novi-Bazar* (Paris: Hachette & C^{ie}, 1913).

⁶⁶ Hrabak, "Arbanaški ustanci 1912", 325. One of the Serbian agents in Kosovo, Grigori-je Božović, who observed the Albanian movement in summer 1912, noted the following: "As far as the Serbs are concerned, the negative aspect of this movement is that the Arnauts [Albanians] are on the verge of becoming a nation, and they wish to settle their issue in Kosovo, and they are neither the conquerors nor the conquered. We [the Serbs] fall between them and the Young Turks, and both will rage at us. A positive move is that the Albanians are starting to rid themselves of Turkish fanaticism; Muslim solidarity and hypnosis are slackening; they are very aware that they are at enmity with the Turks

The Serbian government endeavored to exploit the Albanian insurrection to further weaken the Ottoman system and oust Austro-Hungarian influence in its leadership. The Serbian consul in Priština conferred with the influential leaders — Bairam Curri, Isa Bolletini and Riza Bey, while Bolletini's two sons were guests of the Belgrade government. Many Albanian leaders were paid large sums of money or were given arms. In return, the Serbians demanded that all the rights granted to the Albanians should be extended to Serbian population as well. Due to insistence of several of the leaders, particularly the pro-Austrian Hasan Prishtina, this demand was rejected.⁶⁷

The Albanian national movement felt, despite periodical assistance from both Montenegro and Serbia and the on-going negotiations, profound intolerance for Serbs in the *Vilayet* of Kosovo. No Albanian seriously entertained the idea of recognizing the rights of Serbs to have national institutions and independent political activity as evidenced by the escalation of Albanian violence in 1912. Periodical attempts of some tribal chiefs to approach distinguished Serbian representatives in the Ottoman Empire were merely tactical moves without real political importance. Intolerance towards the Serbian people, which still constituted the majority in certain districts of the *Vilayet* Kosovo, was exhibited in all plans and programs of Albanian leaders. From the emergence of the Albanian League to the beginning of the second decade of the twentieth century, the Serbs in Kosovo, Metohija and the neighboring regions were deprived of the most fundamental human and civil rights. Confrontation between the Albanians and Young-Turks, the fear of the Balkan states' and Austria-Hungary's interference only temporarily halted the continuous persecution of Kosovo Serbs.

Liberation from the Ottomans 1912: Jubilant Serbs and Hostile Albanians

With the First Balkan War (1912) the tide turned. A series of Albanian rebellions (1910–12) had precipitated the formation of the Balkan Alliance (Greece, Serbia, Bulgaria, Montenegro), which, motivated by the deteriorating status of the entire Christian population in European *Vilayets*, declared war on the Ottomans. Prior to the outbreak of war, the Serbian Prime Minister, Nikola Pašić, offered the Albanian leaders an “accord on the union of Serbs and Albanians in the Vilayet of Kosovo”, whereby ethnic Albanians would be given religious freedom, the use of the Albanian language in Albanian municipal schools and administration, preservation

and, most importantly, they speak of Serbia with sympathy and regard it as an amicable country” (ibid. 320.)

⁶⁷ Bataković, *Kosovo Chronicles*, 167–172.

of the Albanian common law and, finally, an Albanian legislative body in charge of religious, judicial and educational affairs within the Kingdom of Serbia.⁶⁸ At the same time, Serbia endeavored to obtain support of the Kosovo Albanians in the forthcoming military operations. In a secret mission to northern Kosovo, two most reliable intelligence officers Dragutin T. Dimitrijević Apis and Božin Simić intended to come to an agreement with two influential Albanian chieftains Isa Bolletini and Idriz Seferi: they were requested not to take part in the impending war against the Ottomans.⁶⁹ The Commander of the Third Serbian Army assigned to operate in Kosovo, General Božidar Janković, also had contact with Kosovo Albanians. In his war proclamation, King Petar I Karadjordjević invited Serbian troops to respect the lives, property and legal rights of various national and religious groups in Turkey-in Europe, including Albanians, Muslim Slavs and ethnic Turks, thus ensuring political liberties, civil and human rights to all future citizens of Kingdom of Serbia. The war declaration emphasized amiable attitude towards the Albanians provided they maintained their neutrality during the military operations. However, Austro-Hungarian agitators encouraged both Muslim and Roman Catholic Albanians to confront the Serbian army, promising that the Dual Monarchy's troops were already on their way from Bosnia to assist them.⁷⁰

On 10 October, the Albanians opted for armed defence of their "Ottoman fatherland" at their vast gathering in Uskub (and subsequently in Priština and Dibra). Kosovo Albanians received 63,000 rifles from the Ottomans to organize a full-scale resistance against the Serbian troops but no more than 16,000 of them came to the frontline at Merdare to face the well-prepared, highly disciplined and modernized Serbian army.

Out of its roughly three million inhabitants Serbia managed to mobilise almost 255,000 soldiers in ten infantry divisions, one cavalry division and artillery batteries amounting to 288 cannons. The 76,000 men strong Third Serbian Army led by General Božidar Janković stormed Kosovo. Highly motivated Serbian troops advanced in exaltation. The general feeling among the Serbian soldiers, imbued with the Kosovo tradition, was that

⁶⁸ Djordje Mikić, "The Albanians and Serbia during the Balkan Wars", in Bela Kiraly & D. Djordjevic, eds., *East Central European Society and the Balkan Wars*, War and Society in East Central Europe, vol. XVIII (Social Science Monographs, Boulder & New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), 165–196. Further elaborated by Djordje Dj. Stanković, "Nikola Pašić i stvaranje albanske države", *Marksistička misao* 3 (1985), 157–169.

⁶⁹ Čedomir A. Popović, "Rad organizacije Ujedinjenje ili smrt – pripreme za Balkanski rat", *Nova Evropa* 1 (1927), 313–315; Milan Ž. Živanović, *Pukovnik Apis* (Belgrade: chez l'auteur 1957), 649–651; *Savremenici o Kosovu i Metohiji*, 351–353, 381–383.

⁷⁰ Balcanicus [Stojan M. Protić], *Le problème albanais, la Serbie et l'Autriche-Hongrie* (Paris: Augustin Challamel, 1913), 42–51.

they were the “Avengers of Kosovo”, the heartland of medieval Serbia (“Old Serbia”) which had fallen under the Ottoman rule after the fateful Battle of Kosovo in 1389.⁷¹ As the most popular war in contemporary Serbian history, the First Balkan War was marked by a remarkably high combat morale.⁷² Similar patriotic feelings also overwhelmed Montenegrin troops which advanced steadily into Metohija, towards Istok, Peć and Djakovica.⁷³

The Serbian artillery scattered Albanian irregular (*bashibozuk*) units. The first Serb soldier to enter liberated Priština was the famous poet and former Serbian consul in Priština, Milan M. Rakić, who left Foreign Ministry and joined the army as a volunteer. Having captured Priština, the Serbian troops attended the solemn liturgy at the Monastery of Gračanica celebrating the long-awaited liberation of Kosovo. Following the liberation of Priština (22 October), the First Serbian Army won a decisive victory over the considerably stronger Ottoman troops at Kumanovo (23–24 October 1912), and triumphally entered Skoplje. After another Serbian victory (18–19 November) near Monastir (Bitolj, Bitola in the *vilayet* of Monastir) the war was brought to an end.⁷⁴

Austro-Hungarian diplomatic representatives and intelligence agents from the Old Serbia were shocked by the spectacular victories of Serbs. The Ibar detachment of the Serbian army (*Ibarska vojska*) entered Kosovo from the north, through Mitrovica and Zvečan, continuing its breakthrough towards Peć and Djakovica which had already been seized by Montenegrins. The Austro-Hungarian Consuls, especially Oskar Prochaska in Prizren and Vice-Consul Ladislav Tachi in [Kosovska] Mitrovica, along with their network of agents, attempted in vain to encourage the Albanians to fight against the Serbian forces by spreading rumors of Austro-Hungary’s entry into war and the imminent conquest of Belgrade. The Serbian government

⁷¹ On Kosovo tradition, Thomas A. Emmert, *Serbian Golgotha. Kosovo 1389*, East European Monographs (Boulder & New York: Columbia University Press, 1990).

⁷² Jean Pellisier, *Dix mois de guerre dans les Balkans. Octobre 1912-août 1913* (Paris: Perrin et Cie, 1914), 33: “...il n’y a pas des sacrifices dont les Serbes ne soient capables pour le triomphe de leur cause nationale. Presque toute la population civile, de 18 à 50 ans, est en ce moment sous les armes, Et tous, depuis le dernier des paysans, qui sait à peine lire et écrire, jusqu’au plus grand des savants, se battent avec un grand enthousiasme et un héroïque courage. L’exemple des hommes est aussi suivi par les femmes.”

⁷³ See a first-hand account of the Serbian war correspondent from Vojvodina, Jaša Tomić, *Rat na Kosovu i Staroj Srbiji 1912. godine* (Novi Sad: Štamparija Svetozara Miletića, 1913).

⁷⁴ Henry Barby, *La Guerre des Balkans, Les victoires serbes* (Paris: Grasset, 1913), 56–78.

was aware of the Dual Monarchy's encouragement of Kosovo Albanians to oppose the Serbian army, but there was little evidence available.⁷⁵

Viennese press, hostile to Serbia for decades, spread alarming news that the Serbian army had reportedly wounded and killed Consul Prochaska in Prizren. This failed attempt to discredit the Serbian army became known as "the Prochaska affair". Nevertheless, the planned advance of Serbian army into Albania was halted for the next ten days - an outlet to the Albanian littoral was among Serbia's war aims. A later investigation of the Command of the Third Army established that, before the arrival of the Serbian army, Consul Prohaska had „spread misinformation“ and prepared the Albanians to resist a small detachment of Serbian troops that took Prizren on 30 October 1912. Prochaska had also "staged a shooting from the consulate on the day the Serbian army arrived in Prizren" and then "refused to attend the ceremony which was prepared by the Prizren municipality" for the Serbian troops and avoided „to present himself" to the commander of the Serbian Third Army, General Janković.⁷⁶

In an additional investigation regarding the conduct of the Austro-Hungarian Vice-Consul Tachi in Mitrovica, who caused similar incidents but on a smaller scale, the following was discovered: "Mr. Ladisav Tachi [...] is already known as a Serbophobe [...] It is known that Mr. Tachi, through his agents and mercenaries, prepared the grounds for Austro-Hungarian occupation of Sanjak [of Novi Bazar] and Mitrovica. He coordinated the spreading of his propaganda through the agency of Albanians — the Catholics. He also had quite a following amongst Muslims, the immigrants from Bosnia. On the eve of the arrival of Serbian army in Mitrovica, he claimed that the Austro-Hungarian army had already reached Pljevlja [Taslidje]. There is a written proof that can be found at Muslim leaders in Mitrovica, as well as [the regions of] Shala, Drenica and [Ibarski] Kolašin, proving Mr. Tachi's involvement with the Albanians and Turks from the area."⁷⁷

⁷⁵ While he was searching a house of one of the Albanian beys in Dibra (Debar) a Serbian seargeant-scholar found the notes made by Austrian Baron Nopcsa. These notes were made during his travels around Albania, Old Serbia and Macedonia in a mission to secure support of Muslim and Catholic Albanians for the struggle for an autonomous Albania under the patronage of Austria-Hungary; officially, he was conducting "scientific geological research". Jovan N. Tomić, *Austro-Bugarska i albansko pitanje* (Belgrade: Geca Kon, 1913), 38.

⁷⁶ Dimitrije Popović, *Balkanski ratovi 1912–1913*, ed. D. T. Bataković (Belgrade: Srpska književna zadruga, 1993), 118; John D. Treadway, *The Falcon and the Eagle. Montenegro and Austria-Hungary, 1908–1914* (West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 1983), 121.

⁷⁷ Report of the Serbian consul in Priština, Milan Dj. Milojević, quoted in Popović, *Balkanski ratovi*, 120–121. On military operations see more in Borislav Ratković, *Oslobodjenje Kosova i Metohije 1912* (Belgrade: Tetra GM, 1997).

The Austro-Hungarian agitation amongst the Albanians in Old Serbia proved to have been an insufficient motivational force.⁷⁸ The Eastern detachment (*Istočni odred*) of Montenegrin army marched into Peć, where it was welcomed by the local Serb population as well as the monks of the Patriarchate of Peć; the troops then continued their advance to the Visoki Dečani monastery. The Montenegrin troops met eventually with their Serbian allies in Djakovica, which became the borderline between Serbian and Montenegrin possessions in Old Serbia.⁷⁹

In order to achieve rapid pacification, the Serbian military authorities issued proclamations in Priština and other towns calling Albanians to put down and surrender their arms, guaranteeing their civil rights and property. Even in the traditional hotbed of outlaws, Drenica, and in the Peć area, Muslim Albanians eventually accepted partial, if not full, disarmament. However, as a result of anti-Serbian agitation of their tribal leaders many Albanians fled and found shelter in the mountains. Occasional skirmishes with the still rebellious Albanians provoked strong reactions on the part of Serbian troops. Certain incidents following armed attacks on Serbian military and civilian authorities were portrayed by the Viennese

⁷⁸ Leon Trotzky, the future leader of the Bolshevik revolution, was a Vienna-based Russian journalist, who observed the First Balkan War from his hotel in Belgrade. He was informed of the situation on the front by Serbian socialists, who were adamantly against the war, as well as from other Viennese war correspondants in Belgrade. Thus, his reports on the alleged “Serbian crimes“ in Kosovo against Albanian civilians, similar to those from Austrian press, were not confirmed by other war correspondants who witnessed the military operations in Old Serbia. Leon Trotzky, *The Balkan Wars 1912–1913* (New York & London: Pathfinder 1993), 117–137. The first-hand account which provides the entirely opposite views is Barby, *La Guerre des Balkans*, passim; Général Herr, *Sur le théâtre de la Guerre des Balkans* (Paris & Nancy: Berger-Levrault, 1913); 23–67; Adopf L. Vischer, *An der serbischen front; erlebnisse eines arztes auf dem serbisch-türkischen kriegsschauplata, 1912*, (Basel: K.C.F. Spittlers, 1913); Gaston Gravier, *La nouvelle Serbie* (Coulommiers: Imp. P. Brodard, 1913). There were, however, international reports on the crimes against civilians committed by all warring sides, not always verifiable and, as Robert Seaton-Watson observed, mostly from the Bulgarian perspective: *Report of the International Commission to Inquire into the Causes and the Conduct of Balkan Wars*. Division of Inter-course and Education of Carnegie Endowment for International Peace (Aylsbury: Hazel Watson and Viney, 1914), reprinted as *The Other Balkan Wars: A 1913 Carnegie Endowment Inquiry in Retrospect with a new introduction and Reflections on the Present Conflict* by George F. Kennan (Washington: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1994).

⁷⁹ For more on the military aspect see Richard C. Hall: *Balkan Wars 1912–1913. Prelude to the First World War* (London: Routledge, 2000), 52–55. On the Ottoman army, Edward J. Erickson, *Defeat in Detail, The Ottoman Army in the Balkans, 1912–1913* (Westport: Praeger, 2003). For a broader historical context see André Gerolymatos, *The Balkan Wars. Myth, Reality and the Eternal Conflict* (Toronto: Stoddart, 2001), 211–232.

press as heroic resistance of the Albanians, while the actions of Serbian forces were presented as gruesome acts of oppression against the innocent civilian population. In parallel, Serbian officers kept reassuring the Albanian population that Serbia is at war against the Ottomans alone, and not against them. Serbia quickly established civil administration in the newly-liberated areas. Kosovo was divided into the Lab, Priština and Prizren districts. Montenegro divided Metohija into the Peć and Djakovica districts.⁸⁰ Having been defeated the main Albanian leaders, Bairam Curri, Riza Bey Kryeziu and Isa Bolletini, fled to Malissia in northern Albania. Whilst the most of Kosovo Albanians remained hostile to the new Serbian regime, Christian Serbs, as well as Muslim Slavs of Gora (Goranci) and Peć, greeted the Serbian and Montenegrin armies with exhilaration.⁸¹

The Serbs in Prizren shouted “Thank God, thanks Serbia!” stressing that they had been waiting for that moment for five hundred years (since the 1389 Battle of Kosovo). They emphasized the fact that they had been persecuted solely by the Albanians and that they maintained good relations with the ethnic Turks.⁸² The Serbs of Priština solemnly greeted the Serbian troops with church bells tolling, strong emotions, tears and flowers; the houses were open for soldiers, while the Muslim municipality authorities presented themselves to General Janković and recognised the new regime.⁸³ In Peć, the local Serbs were also thankful to ethnic Turks, who had often been robbed by Albanian outlaws as well. The Turks of Peć refused the demand of Riza Bey Kryeziu to destroy the Patriarchate of Peć and they were instrumental in preventing a number of robberies and attacks by the Albanians, prior to the arrival of Montenegrin troops in the town. The jubilant Serbs in Peć reported bitterly to a war correspondent that there was not a single Serbian house among the remaining 500 in that town that did not lose one or two family members during the reign of terror of Albanian outlaws: “You came in the nick of time to liberate us. If you had come in several years, you would not have found us here!”⁸⁴

⁸⁰ *Prvi balkanski rat* (Belgrade: Istorijiski institut JNA, 1959), 416–417, 464–469; for more see Mikić, “Albanians and Serbia”, 163–166.

⁸¹ D. T. Bataković, *Kosovo i Metohija u srpsko-arbanaškim odnosima* (Belgrade: Čigoja Štampa, 2006), 189–199.

⁸² Tomić, *Rat na Kosovu i Staroj Srbiji*, 155–157.

⁸³ *Ibid.* 119–120.

⁸⁴ The urban Turkish communities in Prizren, Peć and Priština blamed the Albanians for all the conflicts in the past and expressed their readiness to live in peace with Serbs and to recognise the new regime (*ibid.* 191–193).

Epilogue

The London Treaty of 30 May 1913 fixed the borders between Serbia, Montenegro and the newly-established Albania with the exception of some disputed sections left to the arbitration of an International Commission. Austro-Hungary tried to obtain a “Greater Albania” in order to counter-balance Serbia and Montenegro which doubled their territories after the First Balkan War.⁸⁵ Although Serbia and Montenegro were forced to withdraw their forces from the Albanian littoral under the threat of Austro-Hungarian military intervention, their delegations emphasised the fact that Kosovo and Metohija, the “Holy Lands of the Serbian people”, could under no circumstances remain outside their borders. Both Old Serbia (most of the *Vilayet* of Kosovo) and Slav-inhabited Macedonia (most of the *Vilayet* of Monastir) were officially incorporated into Serbia on 7 September 1913 by King Petar I Karadjordjević’s decree. The most of Metohija (the *sanjak* of Peć with Istok, Peć, Dečani and Djakovica) was integrated into the Kingdom of Montenegro.⁸⁶

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⁸⁵ Cf. more in Mihailo Vojvodić, “Razgraničenje Srbije i Crne Gore s Albanijom 1912–1913. godine”, *Istorijski časopis* XXXIV/1989 (Belgrade: Istorijski institut 1990), 149–162.

⁸⁶ Borislav Ratković, Mitar Djurišić and Savo Skoko, *Srbija i Crna Gora u Balkanskim ratovima 1912–1913* (Belgrade: BIGZ, 1972); Dimitrije Djordjević, *Izlazak Srbije na Jadransko more i konferencija ambasadora u Londonu 1912* (Belgrade: chez l’auteur, 1956). On Albania, Arben Puto, *L’indépendance albanaise et la diplomatie des grandes puissances, 1912–1914* (Tirana: Editions “8 Nëntori”, 1982); on Serbia’s role in the First Balkan War, *Prvi balkanski rat 1912. Godine i kraj Osmanskog carstva na Balkanu*, ed. V. Stojančević, Scientific Conferences, vol. CXVI, Department of Historical Sciences, no. 30 (Belgrade: Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, 2007).

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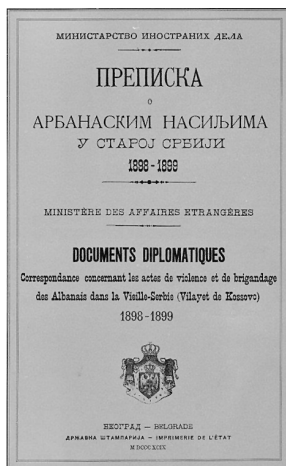
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Entrance of the Serbian troops in Gračanica, 1878



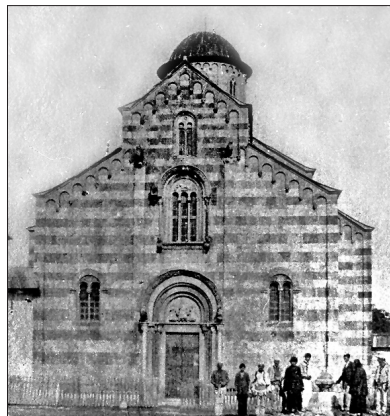
Vilayet of Kosovo, 1877-1912



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3



4

Свечан улазак Ђенерала М. Живковџа у Митровицу.
Entrée solennelle du général M. Givkovitch à Mitrovitz.

5



1 The Correspondance on the Albanian Violence in Old Serbia, 1898-1899 (The Blue Book of Diplomatic Correspondence)

2 Requiem for a beheaded Serb by Albanian outlaws in Peć, 1906

3 Serbian and Montenegrin officers in Djakovica, 1912

4 Visoki Dečani Monastery, 1903

5 Solemn entrance of the Serbian troops of General M. Živković in Mitrovica, 1912

Serbia 1912-1913

