

ALBANIAN NATIONALISM IN CONTEMPORARY KOSOVAR POLITICS

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Abstract

The issue of Albanian nationalism is among the most contentious topics which was studied by local and foreign researchers for years. In its discourse, the Albanian nationalism is traced back to the Illyrians as the predecessors of current living Albanians in the Balkans. It is a diversified topic with many myths and legends, likewise glorious wars and outstanding national heroes. Given the fact that the Albanian territories had been ruled by various invasions during the centuries such as the Roman-Byzantine, Ottoman and Slavic, refers us to understand that the socio-political characters differ from each other based on circumstances and time. Moreover, Albanian nationalism in Kosovo almost has no difference from that of the Albanians living in Albania, Macedonia and beyond, because all of these fights and struggles has been for no purpose but for the unification of Albanian territories and the liberation of the country. In addition, the article argues about the Kosovar Albanian nationalist movements during former Yugoslavia emphasizing the period of Josip Broz Tito rule and the harsh regime of Slobodan Milosevic until the end of the war in 1999.

Keywords: Albanian Nationalism, Kosovo, Myths and legends, Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY), Tito, Milosevic.

Introduction to Albanian Nationalism

The emblem of Albanian nationalism is double-headed eagle, whereas the key figure and the designer of this nationalism is Gjergj Kastrioti-Skanderbeg. Gjergj Kastrioti during his childhood has been taken as a pledge from the Sultan and recruited (devşirme) in his well-known army called *Janissaries*. In the palace of the Sultan, he is circumcised and baptized as Skender or Iskender. This brave boy is one of the many examples to serve for the Ottoman army where-upon showing his agility and boldness he merits to be awarded with the title ‘*Bey*’ which today is familiar to be called as Skanderbeg. Turning back to his homeplace, he is accredited to be the noble hero of Albanians by his compatriots and treacherous by the Sublime Porte. So, after being recruited into janissaries army and receiving the best trainings of this discipline he is already skillful and knows the tactics how to fight the enemies. While among his countrymen is known as the hero of his nation. In Vatikan he was decorated by the Pope as Christ’s soldier or defender of Christianity in the Balkans. Therefore, after the fall of the Albanian lands under the surveillance of the Ottoman empire the majority of Christian Albanians fled to South of Italy or Venecia in order to be secured from the influence of the Ottoman Turks. In Italy, they have formed their strong ideology of Albanian nationalism which today are known as *Arbereshi*.

Notwithstanding, in Albania itself, the vast number of population started to embrace the new faith brought by the Turks and therefore being embodied with them in religion, culture, inter-marriage etc. Albanians used to play the key role during the reign of the Ottoman empire as no other nation in the Balkans. It is claimed that there were as much as forty ministers (vezirs), hundreds of officials, bureaucrats, counsellors, deputies, mullahs, hocas and servants coming from Albanian origin. Herewith, we can understand that Albanians did not use any kind of nationalism since they were incarnated and privileged within the empire.

Sultan Abdulhamid II for example, had a particular weakness for Albanians, his personel guard was made up of Albanians and he often commented that his empire depended on the Albanians and the Arabs.¹ As stated above the first sparks of Albanian nationalism emerged among Albanian diaspora in Southern Italy called Arberesh. They worked even in Albanian language to systemize it and are regarded as the first generation of Albanian awakening. However, political nationalism

¹ Bernd Fischer, “Albanian Nationalism and Albanian Independence,” *SEEU Review* 10, no.1 (2014): 31.

did not materialize until a powerful challenge to the Ottoman empire through the Eastern Crisis of 1875-1878, threatened the detachment of Albanian inhabited lands.²In March 1878 was signed the treaty of St.Stefano through which Turkey is obliged to recognize the autonomy of Serbia , Montenegro and Bulgaria.After this treaty signed, the discontent emerged between Balkan nations where the Congress of Berlin was to be signed on 13 June, 1878. Albanian thinkers and patriots were outraged by the treaty signed in St.Stefano which led them to organize the League of Prizren on June 10, 1878 three days before the Congress of Berlin was to be held. The main purposes of this league were ; protection of Albanian lands and unification in one state, to create a common history and building up of a common language and the claim for national identity linked with a territory³.Among prominent figures who contributed to and led the League of Prizren were Abdyl Bey Frasheri (the head) and his two brothers Şemseddin Sami Frasheri and Naim Frasheri, Ilyas Pashe Dibra, Ymer Prizreni , Isa Boletini , Pashko Vasa ,Jani Vreto , Sulejman Vokshi etc. In the beginning, the league was supported by Sultan Abdulhamid II because it was against any kind of dissolution of Ottoman empire and was seen pro-Ottoman for the Albanian living vilayets. But at the moment Abdyl Bey opened the issues of autonomy the Sultan imposed the military action to crush the leagues. Though many of the members of the committee of Prizren were at the same time the statesmen of the Porte, the Sultan started to look suspiciously towards his delegates. Meanwhile, fearing that Albania could also be lost from his hand alike the other Balkan territories, he started to prosecute and crush all those who were against the preservation of the status quo.But unification of all Albanians under one banner was as much important as never could be, since Albania was laggard in developing its own nationalism in the Balkans. Furthermore , politicians and poets like Pashko Vasa (was the governor of Lebanon from 1882 until his death) reactivated the national Albanian awakening by his famous poetic verse; ‘Do not look at Islam and Christianity the faith of Albanians is Albanianism’’.This proclamation served as the stimulus for Albanians to be more consolidated and avoid the disruption among each other.Subsequently ,three days after the League of Prizren was held, the commission sent Abdyl Bey Frasheri as the representative of Albanians at the Conference of Ambassadors in Berlin to express it’s complaint about the Albanian issue, but it was like a sledgehammer for him and a real humiliation for his

² Ibid.,

³ Bashkim Iseni, “National Identity , Islam and Politics in the Balkan,” *Akademie der Diözese Rottenburg-Stuttgart* (2009): 1-14.

nationality when the chancellor Otto Von Bismark denied him claiming ; “There is no such Albanian nation”. Critics were high amongst Albanian deputies due to such a blasphemous declarations of the ambassadors in Berlin, especially that of Bismark. It was quite obvious that the Great Powers looking their own interests and of course to satisfy Russian Empires’ desires to have a control over its Slavic brotherhood in the Balkans, marginalized the Albanian issue totally. With the outburst of the Balkan Wars during 1912-1913, Ottoman empire had lost all of its territories in region. Ismail Bey Qemali (Avlonyalı İsmail Bey), the founder of the independent Albanian state is often considered as the founding father of the Albanian nationhood. He refused to abandon the Ottoman empire until it became clear that the Sublime Porte could no longer offer the protection which Albanians required. The neighbor Slavic states alongside with Greece are partitioning Albanian lands. Being in such a crisis he immediately claimed the Independence of Albania on 28 November 1912. Even though his idea was to incorporate all Albanian living lands inside one state like ; Kosovo, Western Macedonia, The Epirus Province of Northern Greece, Sandjak and some parts of South and South West of Montenegro, in contrary two thirds of Albanian lands were annexed by neighbor living states. This was a real chaos which was waiting for the next ominous fate of the Albanians living under the persecution, massacres and deportations caused by different occupators in the region.

Nevertheless, the most important movements during this period are the *kaçaks* warriors. They emerged with the Balkan Wars and ended with the establishment of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia in 1924. They fought for unification of the divided lands within Albanian state. Significantly their movements are prominent in Kosovo and West-North of Macedonia fighting against Serbian invasion and Montenegro. The battalions were led by Isa Boletini, Azem Galica, Idriz Seferi, Mic Sokoli, Bajram Curri etc. Most of them were killed as martyrs in the battlefields. The government in Belgrade urged Azem Galica to give up its struggle and make peaceful compromise with local Serbs. But he made eight demands in 1919 , which again echoed same some seventy years after in 1990s. He asked for Kosovo’s recognition to self-government, stop killing Albanians, stop taking their lands, stop the colonization program , stop army actions in the pretext of “disarmament”, open Albanian schools , make Albanian an official language and stop interning the families of

rebels.⁴ Of course none of these demands was approved. But rather more systematic and harsh attacks occurred after this request.

Kosovar Albanians during the Titoist Yugoslavia

Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was formed in 1945 after the end of World War II ,under the leadership of Josip Broz Tito. Yugoslavia was comprised of six republics (Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Montenegro) and two autonomous provinces ; Kosovo and Vojvodina, both under the leadership of Republic of Serbia. Kosovo was granted lower status than that of Vojvodina. One year later after the Socialist Republic of Yugoslavia was formed in 1946, it was given the name; Autonomous District of Kosovo and Metohija. It is predominant opinion among Serbian historians that, there were at least three motives for the creation of the autonomous region of Kosovo and Metohija. These were; First to resolve the status of Albanians in Kosovo; Second to make way for the incorporation of Albania into a Yugoslav-dominated communist federation ; And third to create a balance between the Serbs and the other nations of the country based on the Leninist doctrine for resolving nationality questions in multinational states (the so called ‘Weak Serbia- Strong Yugoslavia’s Policy) .⁵ Distinctive motto which Titoist Yugoslavia was carrying was ‘‘Brotherhood und Unity - (Bratstvo Jedinstvo).’’ As mentioned above, Tito used a policy of abolishing inter-ethnic and inter-religious conflicts of Yugoslavian population and gathering them under one flag and one nationhood .Particularly, he tried to evanish antagonistic views that Serbs and Kosovar Albanians had during the years. In 1963, Yugoslavia adopted a new constitution, making Kosovo an autonomous province with greater decision-making powers.⁶ In the 1970’s Tito continued to support Kosovar Albanians within Kosovo, whereby in 1974, Yugoslavia adopted an amended constitution , which entitled Kosovo to participate in federal government, including being represented in the rotating federal presidency, electing parliamentarians to the federal legislature, and developing its own

⁴ Vedran Obucina, ‘‘ A War of Myths: Creation of the Founding Myth of Kosovo Albanians,’’ *Contemporary issues centar za politološka istraživanja-the political science research centre* 4, no. 1 (2011): 37.

⁵ Miranda Vickers, *Between Serb and Albanian: A History of Kosovo*,(New York: Columbia University Press, 1998.) 145.

⁶ Lanhe S. Shan, ‘‘Analysis Of Tito’s Policies On Ethnic Conflict: The Case Of Kosovo,’’ *The Journal of Living Together* 2, no. 2 (Summer/Autumn 2012): 53-59.

constitution. During 1960s-1970s, Communist Albanian state of Enver Hoxha gave a huge contribution appealing to Tito to give more rights to Kosovar Albanians. Enver Hoxha used more active role for the rights of his compatriots because Yugoslavia broke with Soviet Union in 1948. Furthermore, the most hopeful support was given by the People's Republic of China when Mao Zedong pledged to Hoxha that; "one who threatens the security of Albania will be in war with China." However, Enver Hoxha during this period thought that the issue of Kosovo was quite contentious and he cannot risk putting Albania in to the war with Yugoslavia. Due to the fact that the communists of Yugoslavia were those who established the offshoot communist party of Albania.⁷ In theory, "Blood Transfusion", Tito aimed to close the development gap between Kosovo and other Yugoslavian states. During 1960s, Kosovo, Macedonia and Bosnia and Herzegovina were the poorest regions of the country. Kosovo's per-capita income was \$800 compared with Slovenia's \$5000 per-capita income. In order to close this gap, Tito used "Blood Transfusion" policy to facilitate the development of the region by funneling the resources from richer to poorer regions.⁸ Kosovo's economy was very weak and dependent 70% on agriculture. Kosovar Albanian youth was demanding for better economic solution, employment and education. Being dissatisfied with such conditions in 1968 Albanians erupted into mass demonstrations against discriminatory administration⁹. Some of the slogans included "Kosovo Republic", "We want a University", "Down with colonial policy in Kosovo", and "Long Live Albania". Although the demonstrations were dealt with harshly, a series of measures were taken during this period which greatly improved the situation of Kosovar Albanians.¹⁰ Subsequently, Tito gave much more importance towards Kosovo issue promising economic investments and better education and health care conditions. On February 15, 1970 University of Prishtina was established. First university in the province of Kosovo and Metohija.¹¹ The studying languages at university were both Albanian and Serbo-Croatian. Serbs believed it was particularly undesirable

⁷ Ethem Çeku, "Kosovo During the Tense Relations Between Albania and Yugoslavia in Sixties and Seventies of the Twentieth Century," *International Relations Quarterly* 5, no. 2 (Summer, 2014): 1-20.

⁸ Shan, "Analysis Of Tito's Policies..,"

⁹ "Sot, 46 vjet nga demonstratat e vitit 1968 në Kosovë," *Telegrafi*, November 27, 2014, <http://telegrafi.com/sot-46-vjet-nga-demonstratat-e-vitit-1968-ne-kosove/> (accessed: December 17, 2017).

¹⁰ The Kosovo Report Executive Summary -- Main Findings, <https://www.law.umich.edu/facultyhome/drwcasebook/Documents/Documents/The%20Kosovo%20Report%20and%20Update.pdf> (accessed December 17, 2017).

¹¹ Universiteti I Prishtines "Hasan Prishtina", *Historiku*, <http://uni-pr.edu/page.aspx?id=1.8>, (accessed December 17, 2017).

for Albanians to receive education in the Albanian language, being afraid that linguistic ties would fuel Albanian nationalism. Namely, linguistic assimilation was part of the tendency to Serbianize the region, an ideology that was planned even before World War I. Consequently, Serbian authorities closed all Albanian-language schools that were opened by the Austro-Hungarian Empire during its occupation of Kosovo in World War I. Instead, the only educational institutions authorized by Serbian regime were religious schools, both Islamic and Catholic ones.¹² One of the most public acts of repression during this period was a show trial held in Prizren in 1956, at which leading Albanian communists were accused of being part of a network of spies supposedly infiltrating Kosovo from Albania, and were given long prison sentences. During this period Islam was suppressed, Albanians and Slav Muslims were encouraged to declare themselves Turks and emigrate to Turkey. Serbs and Montenegrins dominated the administration, security forces, and industrial employment¹³. Public investment was low, and levels of production and income grew more slowly than in the rest of Yugoslavia. Moreover, in 1937, Vaso Cubrilovic, proposed to reclassify Albanians as “Turks” and force them to emigrate by making their lives in Kosovo unbearable and miserable. Ultimately, concrete arrangements were made between Serbia and Turkey to encourage relocation of tens of thousands of Albanians from Kosovo to Turkey – a policy that also continued in socialist Yugoslavia until the 1950s and 1960s.¹⁴ Furthermore, between years 1963-1966, Aleksandar Rankovic, who served first Vice President of Yugoslavia and Minister of Internal Affairs, feeding his chauvinistic and nationalistic pan-serbian ideology of Vasa Cubrilovic¹⁵ awaited for his torturer policy against ethnic Albanians of Kosovo. Under his command, State Security Service (UDBA) of Yugoslavia darted miserably towards Kosovar Albanians persecuting and executing them in every corner. He also used the policy of assimilation by calling them pretendedly as “Turks”, therefore they ought to be deported in Turkey. It was like a nightmare for Albanian population of Kosovo until he was deposed from the office by Tito as conspiring against him.

¹² Agon Demjaha and Lulzim Peci, “What happened to Kosovo Albanians: The impact of religion on the ethnic identity in the state building-period,” *Kosovar Institute for Policy Research and Development*, no. 1/16 (June 2016): 1-109.

¹³ The Kosovo Report.,

¹⁴ Ibid.,

¹⁵ Robert Elsie, 1937 Vaso Cubrilovic: The Expulsion of the Albanians - Memorandum http://albanianhistory.net/1937_Cubrilovic/index.html (accessed December 17, 2017).

Moreover, in 1974 with adopting new constitution of Yugoslavia, situation regarding Kosovo issue changed for better. During this time Radio Television of Prishtina¹⁶ was formed and first newspaper in Albanian language “Rilindja”¹⁷ (Renaissance) started being published, though their roots dates back in 1945. Yet, Tito is proven to be the unprecedented leader during all history of Yugoslavia who strived for economic prosperity and coexistence of all multi-ethnic communities in the country. The death of Tito in 1980, would be remembered as a misfortune for the future of Yugoslavia and especially for the fate of Kosovo Albanians.

¹⁶ Wikiwand, “Radio Televizioni i Prishtines,” http://www.wikiwand.com/sq/Radio_Televizioni_i_Prishtin%C3%ABs (accessed December 12, 2017).

¹⁷ GazetaExpress, “70 vjetori i gazetës “Rilindja”, *Gazeta Express*, February 13, 2015, <http://www.gazetaexpress.com/lajme/70-vjetori-i-gazetes-rilindja-80356/?archive=1> (accessed December 21, 2017).

Brutal Regime of Slobodan Milosevic

After the death of Tito, Serbs and Kosovar Albanians no more looked nostalgic and ‘‘united under the banner of Tito’s Yugoslavia.’’ On March 1981, students of University of Prishtina being discontented with poor sanitary conditions in dormitory, lack of freedom of speech of Albanian population and insufficient Albanian literature at university, revolted against the government altogether with 20,000 civil protesters. They wanted to show popular indignation for the encroachment of freedom of speech, freedom of press, economic deficiency, high unemployment rate, and so on. Among the demands protestors indicated were the slogans for; ‘‘Kosovo Republic’’, ‘‘We love back the national flag’’, ‘‘We want the unification of Albanian territories’’ etc. On 2 April, 1981 Belgrade declared state of emergency prohibiting the movement of more than two people in public places. Against barehanded demonstrators were used harsh-forces such as tear gas bombs, truncheons, toxic chemical gases, firearms, tanks, armored vehicles and helicopters, and fighter jets even MIG-21.¹⁸ In protests many were killed and injured, arrested, and fled abroad in western countries, where they hoped for democracy. Nearly an entire generation in various forms of genocide was sacrificed on the altar of sacred homeland - for Kosova Republic¹⁹. When in 1986 Slobodan Milosevic became Chairman of the Serbian League of Communists, Serbian nationalism was already actively promoted by intellectuals and politicians throughout the country.²⁰ In 1989, an amended Serbian constitution that would substantially reduce the powers of the two autonomous provinces was submitted to the governments of Kosovo, Vojvodina and Serbia for approval. These amendments were first approved on 10th of March 1989 by the Vojvodina Assembly, then by the Kosovo Assembly on 23rd of March, and the Serbian Assembly on the 28th of March. The building of Kosovo’s assembly was surrounded by police and tanks, and deputies voted in favour of constitutional amendments that would restore Serbia’s power over province. With this, Serbia gained control of three seats on the Federal Presidency which, together with the full control over the puppet regime in Montenegro, would give Milosevic four out of eight seats in his struggle to maintain the control over federation.²¹ Albanians responded

¹⁸Linda Bekteshi, ‘‘Demonstratat e 81-shit apo kthesa e madhe,’’ *Gazeta Zeri*, March 11, 2015, <http://zeri.info/aktuale/23354/demonstratat-e-81-shit-apo-kthesa-e-madhe-foto-video/> (accessed December 23, 2017).

¹⁹ Ibid.,

²⁰ Agon Demjaha and Lulzim Peci, ‘‘What happened to Kosovo Albanians..,’’

²¹ Ibid.,

to the suppression of Kosovo's autonomy with mass demonstrations throughout the province. Thousands of people came out to take part in demonstrations which were forcibly crushed by special police resulting in 29 protesters being killed, and 97 civilians and 30 policemen injured. The ethnic protests were strongly supported by Albanian intellectuals, students and ordinary citizens throughout Kosovo, many of whom were arrested and later put on trial. On July 5, 1990 the Serbian Assembly unconstitutionally dissolved the Kosovo Assembly as well as Kosovo's provincial executive council and assumed full and direct control of the province. The entire structure of provincial administration was dismantled, and practically overnight Albanians were dismissed from their jobs, denied education in their own language, and exposed to a massive abuse of their human rights and civil liberties.²²

²² Ibid.,

The Fight Between Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA-UÇK) and Milosevic's Regime Forces and the Fail of Rambouillet Peace Accords

Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) , is considered as one of the most successful guerilla organization in modern history. Its roots are traced to Kosovo's years of radical political upheaval in the early 1980s at Pristina University. The purge of Albanian nationalistic movements addressed by Milosevic intelligentsia was not limited just inside the state. On 17 January, 1982 three Kosovar militant activists Jusuf and his brother Bardhosh Gervalla and Kadri Zeka were assassinated by Yugoslav security forces (UDBA) in Germany. One year later, Popular Movement for the Republic of Kosovo (LPRK) was formed. This movement was the turning point for the formation of Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA).²³ Slobodan Milosevic in 1989 abolished the Kosovo's province autonomy whereas the demonstrations escalated again as those in 1981. This severe attack on Kosovo Albanians was guaranteed to unite them behind the banner of 'nationalism and separatism'. In June 1990 almost all the Albanian delegates of the Kosovo Assembly who 15 months before had been intimidated into accepting the 'Constitution of the Tanks' - occupied the Assembly building for three consequent days and nights , prepared to adopt a Declaration of Independence. At this level, they demanded 'an equal unit in Yugoslavia' with 'Albanians as a nation and not a national minority'. The following week, on 2 July 1990 locked out of the Assembly building 114 out of the 123 Albanian Assembly members met the street symbolically to vote in a new status. This unilateral declaration, parallel to that decreed by Slovenia on the same day , was a message of the resolve of the whole Albanian population in Kosovo to reclaim their self-determination. Also, on 2 July, while Kosovo and Slovenia were declaring sovereignty, a referendum in Serbia approved imposing direct rule on Kosovo and Vojvodina. Three days later the Serbian parliament voted to dissolve the Kosovo parliament and government and on 26 July the *Law on Labour Relations under Special Circumstances* expanded powers to dismiss workers arbitrarily. On 7 September 1990, the Albanian delegates of the Kosovo Assembly gathered in Kacanik, near the border with Macedonia, to proclaim the New Constitution. Article 2 declared Kosovo 'a sovereign and independent state', and to nominate their own government. The meeting was cloak-and-dagger in one sense, however Tirana TV cameras were there to broadcast the proceedings. Three weeks

²³ Tim Judah, "A History of the Kosovo Liberation Army" in *Kosovo: Contending Voices on Balkan Interventions*, ed. William Joseph Buckley (Grand Rapids ,Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2000) , 108.

later, the Assembly of Serbia passed its own new constitution, avoiding the autonomy of Kosovo and Vojvodina yet claiming their votes on the federal presidency so that, combined with Montenegro, Serbia now had a bloc of half the votes on the federal presidency²⁴

In the aftermath, Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK) was formed by first Kosovo's president Ibrahim Rugova. The enormous assistance for separatist movements of Kosovo Albanians came from the funds created by the activists living abroad (Germany, Switzerland, USA, Sweden etc.). And the leader in exile was Bujar Bukoshi. Rugova was many times accused by Albanian civilians as impotent leader. He was calling the people to stay calm as long as the Serbs do not attack. However, horrified by the wars in Croatia and Bosnia members of the LPRK in exile denounced Rugova as 'a Serbian agent.' Kosovar Albanians were enraged when no new initiative was coming from the leader of Kosovo Democratic League (LDK) party Ibrahim Rugova. Rexhep Qosja repeated familiar attacks on Rugova and Albanian President Salih Berisha, declaring Dayton Accords the end of the illusion that 'the international community' would heed Kosovo's call for independence.²⁵ Adem Demaci had stayed out of party politics, was edging towards standing openly against Rugova. In general, criticisms of Rugova came along four axes: his undemocratic style, his opposition to any front of confrontation against brutal regime of Milosevic, including non-violent protest; his negotiating position (some calling him too rigid, others accusing him of preparing a 'sell-out' for autonomy).²⁶ It was generally understood by all that Rugova's policy of peaceful resistance and parallel government enabled the Serbs effectively to control Kosovo, and to encourage Kosovars emigration by violent means, and therefore the situation was fairly stable. Furthermore, Kosovars were bitterly disillusioned by the outcome of the Dayton Agreement, which made no specific mention of Kosovo apart from the UN Security Council's agreement to maintain an 'outer wall' of sanctions until Belgrade should begin seriously to address the Kosovo issue.²⁷ LDK led by Ibrahim Rugova was still calling for peaceful resettlement. Nonetheless, majority of Kosovars perceived that the status quo in Kosovo could no longer be preserved. In April 1995, in the Albanian-Kosovo border called (Pyramid D2), a group of three Albanians attacked a Serbian border patrol, using automatic weapons and grenades, killing

²⁴ Howard Clark, *Civil Resistance in Kosovo* (London : Pluto Press, 2000.), 72-73.

²⁵ Ibid.,

²⁶ Ibid., 123.

²⁷ Vickers, *Between Serb and Albanian...*, 281-287.

one border guard, and badly injuring two others. The cause or motive was revenge for the death of two young Albanian school teachers exactly one year earlier. The most serious incident inside Kosovo took place in August 1995 at town called Decan, when a number of armed men attacked a Serb police station, throwing a bomb inside and then firing on the police with automatic weapons, seriously wounding two.²⁸ In April 1996, the violence was growing in Kosovo, although, the reasoning for the violence was of the level of Serb propaganda, which was globally known as being anti-Albanian. On April 21, 1996, an ethnic Albanian student, Armend Daci, was shot and killed in Prishtina by a local Serb who reportedly thought Daci was breaking into his car. The next day, four Serbs were killed, all in one hour. That same night, in the village of Shtimje a police car was attacked by machine gun on the road between Mitrovica and Peja. According to Serb propaganda, the revenge for the Daci killing was generally considered the motive for these attacks, but post-war interviews with KLA leaders revealed that the April 22 actions had been planned in advance.²⁹

Non-violence was always the key modern European preference. Thus, when the situation escalated international observers called for immediate dialogue between the representatives of the Serbian and Albanian leaderships. And appealed to both sides to show restraint and avoid provocations. Later in the letter to the BBC World Service Albanian-language section, the KLA admitted killing the Serbs in Decan and Pec. The letter stated that 'a KLA guerilla detachment undertook an armed assault against Serbian aggressors' and that it was operating a struggle for the liberation of Kosovo that would continue until complete victory.³⁰

Moreover, Many Kosovars were frustrated; why in Dayton Peace Agreements Republika Srpska was granted to Serbs in Bosnia and Hercegovina while Albanians could not have their Republika Kosova within the framework of Yugoslavia under the similar conditions? Among the earliest Kosovar Albanian activists proposing 'independent and sovereign' Kosovo Republic within a new Federal Yugoslavia was Adem Demaci. He was the leader of the LDK's main rival Parliamentary Party of Kosovo (PPK), and chairman of the Council for the Defence of Human Rights and Freedoms (CDHRF) in Prishtina. Showing his impatience when dismissing the theory that the

²⁸ Ibid.,

²⁹ Nusret Pllana, *NATO intervention in Kosova*, trans. Alban Rafuna (Prishtina: Universiteti AAB Riinvest, 2011), 137.

³⁰ Vickers, *Between Serb and Albanian: A History of Kosovo...*

International Community would not tolerate any change of borders ; “I think that the borders have changed.What is being said about borders now is absurd since Yugoslavia no longer exists !”³¹ International Community was firm to ensure the territorial integrity for Yugoslavia, together giving the self-determination to Albanians by asking both Serbs and Albanians to find a middle way..., however, this was difficult because Kosovo must be treated as a constituent part of Serbia.

In 1996 there were more than 15 Albanian political parties in Kosovo.This factionalism of Albanians suited Belgrade since it was using as a pretext to hold the province under its own domination.Anyway, as stated above the LDK party of Ibrahim Rugova was lacking of creativity and it was criticized for its tendency to monopolise power.Demaci vocally criticized LDK for being negligent to form a well education in Kosovo , and lacking of serious role for democratic prospects of Albanians.The Parliametary Party of Kosovo (PPK) argued that ‘parallel’ state led by Rugova’s LDK could not last for more than a couple of years.Since it is dragging Kosovo to a system without schooling , lack of prosperity in education, health, free-speech etc.Therefore, PPK argued that Albanians could no longer support Rugova’s stance and that a more active resistance to the situation was needed.Demaci has propagated active forms of resistance.He has pointed that Albanians needed to exert more pressure if they want to be taken seriously, and that furthering their aims through massive popular protest might require painful sacrifices.Later on, it was announced that Rugova and Milosevic had signed an agreement on education.Serb officials and LDK negotiators had been meeting secretly, mediated by an Italian Catholic body, the Comunita di Sant’Egidio.On 1 September 1996, simultaneously in Belgrade and Prishtina, Milosevic and Rugova signed an agreement announcing the return of Albanian students and Teachers to schools, setting up a mixed group (three Serbs , three Albanians) to negotiate implementation.³²

The inability of the LDK to realize its ambitions for independent Kosovo,convinced both Ibrahim Rugova and International Community support the status quo in Kosovo.Postponment of the “parallel” presidential and parliamentary elections by Rugova in May 1997 infuriated the Kosovo opposition.Belgrade interpreted the postponement as a positive step in that the Kosovars were possibly now thinking about getting involved in Serbia’s political life.Belgrade responded by

³¹ Ibid., 294.

³² Clark, “*Civil Resistance in Kosovo*,” 125.

placing additional troops along Kosovo-Albanian border , arresting a large number of youths suspected of belonging to the KLA.

In other words, KLA forces were labelled by Belgrade propaganda with different slanderous epithets like; '*the band of nationalistic right movement of Enver Hoxha*' ; though he died 11 years before KLA first appeared publicly. Than, as Islamic fundamentalist terrorist group, drug dealing and human trafficking gang. However, none of these blasphemous labels KLA belonged to. In contrary, KLA was Kosovo Liberation Army which struggled to defend its own people and territory against aggressive chauvinistic regime of Slobodan Milosevic.

Between February 28 and March 1, 1998 the Serb police and military forces, as the pretext of fighting against KLA attacked two villages of Drenica valley, Qirez and Likoshan. Furthermore, the Serb military forces on March 5, 1998 attacked Prekaz, more precisely the house of Adem Jashari, the leader of KLA forces and its legendary commander. After an uneven war for more than two days and nights, Adem Jashari, along with his family, was killed. A girl who was eleven years old was saved. The plot was of a genocidal size, as 83 people were killed after three attacks, including, at the very least, 24 women and children.³³

The course of events was becoming even more violent. A major turning point took place on January 15, 1999 when 45 ethnic Albanians were killed in the village of Reçak. It was a rare case that was presented realistically in the eyes of the world opinion from the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) mission. It was immediately condemned by the head of this mission, the US diplomat William Walker. Moreover, on January 18, Chief Prosecutor Louise Arbour of the War Crimes Tribunal was denied entry into Kosova, where she planned to investigate the Reçak incident. Overall, it can be said that the Reçak Massacre provoked an outcry among the Western public opinion; and Western governments began consulting on ways to back up diplomacy with force.³⁴

An agreement with Milosevic was brokered by US Assistant Secretary of State, Richard Holbrooke. He was the man widely credited with successfully bringing about the negotiation of the Dayton agreement, which had ended the Bosnian civil war three years previously. Federal Republic

³³ Pllana, *NATO intervention in Kosova*, 144.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 150-151.

of Yugoslavia (FRY) abidance with the Holbrooke-Milosevic agreement was to be verified by the OSCE. The OSCE created an unarmed, civilian 'Kosovo Verification Mission' (KVM), which began in November 1998.³⁵ A final diplomatic effort began in January 1999 after the Recak Massacre when the parties in conflict were summoned to Rambouillet outside in Paris. These high level negotiations sought a general settlement in the manner of the Dayton process for Bosnia. The 'Contact Group', consisting of France, Russia, the Federal Republic of Germany, Italy, the United Kingdom, and the United States, aimed for a settlement that NATO was prepared to underwrite with a major peace support force in Kosovo. The proposals in Rambouillet offered substantial autonomy for the Kosovar Albanians and held out the eventual prospect of a referendum that might lead to independence. The Kosovar Albanians, with some reservations, eventually accepted the formula, but the Yugoslav delegation walked away from the draft proposals. The Yugoslavian's refusal to sign, and the deteriorating situation inside Kosovo, led to the withdrawal of the Kosovo Verification Mission (KVM) in March and, within a week, NATO's decision to finally use coercive airpower.³⁶ When NATO launched *Operation Allied Force* on 24 March 1999, its members and planners expected air operations to be successfully concluded within a few days. In the event, NATO's military effort lasted for over two months. As the operation dragged on, NATO increased the numbers of aircraft and widened the targeting list to strike at the heart of the FRY's infrastructure, government and media apparatus.³⁷ In early June, 1999 President Milosevic pointed his acceptance of the international demands, compliance with which was necessary to end the bombing. After brief negotiations with NATO, represented by Lieutenant General Sir Michael Jackson, the FRY leadership agreed to withdraw its security forces and accepted a NATO-led peacekeeping force and a UN international administration mission in Kosovo (UNMIK). These points were incorporated into Security Council Resolution 1244.³⁸ Kosovo continued to be under the surveillance of UNMIK until February 17, 2008 when it unanimously declared its independence from Serbia.

³⁵ Paul Latawski and Martin A. Smith, *The Kosovo crisis and the evolution of post-Cold War European security* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2003), 7-9.

³⁶ *Ibid.*,

³⁷ *Ibid.*,

³⁸ *Ibid.*,

CONCLUSION

Albanian nationalism did not start until the Treaty of St. Stefano on March 3, 1878 when Albanian lands were split and granted to neighboring countries. In the aftermath, The League of Prizren was formed on June 10, 1878. This is one of the main historical events where politicians and delegates gathered for the first time after 500 hundred years to defend the rights of their nation. The reason why Albanians have been the last people to declare their nationalism and independence from the Sublim Porte is; that they have been embedded within the empire in government, administration, taxation, military, religious affairs, public affairs, literature, etc. Thus, comparing to other adjacent states in the Balkans, Albania is the last one to declare its independence on November 28, 1912. With regard to Albanian nationalism in Kosovo, we might claim that it did not cease until the very end of the war in June, 1999. During the World War I, the *kaqaks* (bandits) were among the first warriors to defend the Albanian lands. But they were cut off after the formation of Kingdom of Serbia. When talking about the period of former Yugoslavia, many Albanian intellectuals struggled for the autonomy which was granted by Josip Broz Tito in 1963. The people of Kosovo were able to enjoy this autonomy until March 1989, when Milosevic forcefully abolished it. In addition, the stiff struggle of Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) is one of the most glorious events in Albanian national history. The KLA is the one that urged the Greatest Powers of the World, and those who unjustly torned off Albanian lands in 1913 to gather at an international conference, in Rambouillet, especially for the Albanian cause. And, it was mainly the KLA war that enabled for the first time a conference of such international size to be a representative of the Albanian nation. Last but not least, KLA opposed with braveness the Serbian military machinery and barbaric genocide conclusively, and to liberate Kosovo from the Serbian colonisation.

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