



# Kosovo and Metohija facts

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## HISTORICAL REVIEW



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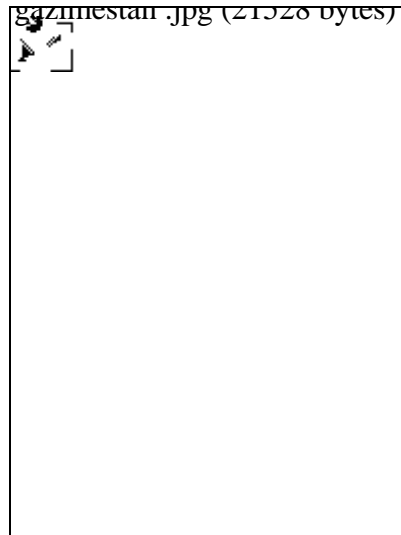
## I - Kosovo and Metohija (Old Serbia) the cradle of the Serbian statehood and spiritual life

The region of Kosovo and Metohija was populated, since the early medieval ages, by homogenous Serbian population. Under the Byzantine rule, until the final inclusion in the Serbian Medieval State of the House of Nemanjici by the end of the 12th and by the beginning of the 13th century, Kosovo and Metohija was an ethnically Serbian country. This is confirmed by the historical documents (the Charters of the Serbian rulers), and especially by antroponomial (analysis of personal names) and toponomastic research; the old toponims of Kosovo and Metohija are mainly of Slav origin. The very name of the region Kosovo and Metohija is derived from the Serbian words "kos", which would literally mean "the field of the bird kos" (blackbird) and "metoh", which means "church estate". Mobile groups of cattle breeders of Albanian nationality, mainly Roman Catholics, represented a negligible percentage, some 2% of the total population, in the western parts of the region, at the mountains of the present border region between Yugoslavia and Albania.

The situation in Kosovo and Metohija was not substantially changed during the Turkish invasion in the 'eighties and 'nineties of the 14th century. The ethnical relations remained the same, and the Serbian character of the region was not challenged. The studies of original Turkish regulations (defters) from the 15th century show that the line of the present state border between Yugoslavia and Albania, at its northern sector, mainly coincides with the ethnical border between the Serbs and the Albanians at that time. The Serbs achieved a very high degree of civilization especially in the region of Kosovo and Metohija, and their **European identity** is based on those achievements.

## II The Kosovo Battle

The Osmanli invasion changed the life conditions of the Serbian people. At the crossroads between eras, between the Serbian freedom and the slavery under the Turks, there stands an event which became the symbol of the Serbian history: The Kosovo Battle (June 28th, 1389).



According to its historical importance, and according to the place it got in the historical memory of the people, this battle belongs to the great armed conflicts in Europe, like the Kulikovo Battle (1380) and the Poitiers Battle (732), or, in still more distant past, the Termopile battle (480 B.C.). The stubborn resistance of the Serbs against the Osmanli invasion was crushed in the military and physical senses. The death of the Serbian Prince Lazar with his army got in the historical conscience of the people the meaning of a death of a martyr, but also of spiritual triumph in its heroic sacrifice for the ideals of Christian civilization. **For the Serbian nation, Kosovo and Metohija represents the seal of its identity**, the key of the lessons taught by its history, the flag of the national freedom.

In spite of the tragic outcome of that battle - the greatest part of the Serbian army was killed - the Serbian Empire lasted for 70 more years; Serbia was finally occupied after the fall of Smederevo in 1459.

The fall of the Serbian Empire meant the destruction of the Christian defense wall, and opened the way to the Turkish conquests which endangered Vienna several times.

The conscience about the medieval state was an active element in the struggle of the Serbian people for their liberation and unification, centuries later. The conscience about Kosovo and Metohija as a mother Serbian country represents an inalienable part of that conscience.

### III The Turkish Rule - The Beginnings of the Movement of the Population and the Islamisation

The Turkish invasion moved great ethnic masses in the Balkans. During the 16th century, according to the official Turkish data, the Christians still represented the absolute majority in comparison with the Moslems (Turks and islamised Albanians); together with other Christian communities, which still existed as small groups of citizens and cattle breeders, the number of Serbs represented 97% of the total population. The situation of the people under the Turkish rule was very difficult, the influence of the Turkish rule and of the islamisation was, as it is said by the Nobel Prize winner Ivo Andric, "absolutely negative". This is confirmed and witnessed by all historical

sources. The Osmanli rule existed on the law of discrimination and of the absolute rule of the Islam, with legal possibilities for individual and mass violence - until the physical destruction of individuals and of entire regions.

The Region of Old Serbia (as the region of Kosovo and Metohija, and of the neighboring regions was historically called), existed, therefore, in the 15th and 16th centuries, as a Serbian land. Until the end of the 17th century, old spiritual centers were activated in this region, and the strength of resistance of the Serbs grew. The situation of the people under the Turks was very difficult, especially because of forced islamisation.

These are the reasons of the permanent resistance and struggle of the Serbian people for their national liberation, for their return to the European civilization, but also the roots of the deep demographic changes which took place in the 18th and 19th centuries, which represent the basis of the present problem in Kosovo.

#### IV The Liberation Movement of the Serbs and the First Migrations of the Serbian People

The Liberation movement of the Serbs grew, already since the end of the 16th century, from the permanent resistance of the people and from their refusal to accept the Turkish-Islamic rule. The people was lead by the Church. During the great Austro-Turkish wars 1683-1690 and 1717-1737, the Serbs participated in those wars in masses in the very broad region of the Balkans. The North-Albanian Roman-Catholic Albanian tribes fought together with them. Exposed to cruel reprisals of the Turks after the defeat of the Austrians, the Serbs migrated in great waves to the north, from a huge territory, from Central Macedonia to the Danube.



The Migration of Serbs under the Patriarch Arsenije Carnojevic (painting by Paja Jovanovic)

**The two "Great Migrations"** of the Serbian people to Austria, under the Patriarchs Arsenije III Carnojevic (1690) and Arsenije IV Jovanovic - Sakabenta (1737), are an undeniable historical fact. In the first migration (1690), some 200.000 Serbs moved to Austria. The migrations obviously weakened the Serbian ethnic element. However, it can be seen in the further development of events and in the rebellions and insurrections that the

remaining part of the Serbian people in those territories was permanently renewed by individual or group Serbian migrations within the borders of the Turkish Empire, and that that renewal was strong enough for armed resistance. Kosovo and Metohija still represented, until the middle of the 18th century, an ethnically homogenous and densely populated Serbian country, as it had been before the Turkish invasion.

## V The Penetration of the Albanians into Serbian Territories

The Albanians penetrated into the south Slav countries only since the beginning of the 18th century. The key of that penetration was the islamisation of the Albanians in the 16th century, which included at least 50% of the total Albanian population. The penetration was reinforced by the forced islamisation of the Serbs.

The settlement of the Albanians was mainly achieved: towards Nis and Sophia by the end of the 18th century (some 50 kilometers of Sophia!), towards Skoplje and Veles, and to the north - towards Bosnia via the Novi Pazar Sanjak (territorial-administrative unit). The poor economic conditions in the mountainous areas, and in the arid mountains of the northern and central Albania were just the starting impulse of that great movement. That migration became only with islamisation and with the Turkish policy, a massive **colonization of Kosovo and Metohija and the extermination of the Slav population**. These political circumstances brought the Albanians to the new territory.

## VI. The Terror Against the Serbs in the 19th Century

Kosovo was the objective of the Serbian liberation movement and of the program of the national unification. That objective was expressed not only in the **First Serbian Insurrection 1804-1813**, but also in a number of rebellions, insurrections and rebels' actions in Old Serbia itself. The main and most cruel tool of the Turkish repression in the hands of the Turks were the Albanian settlers - Moslems, therefore all liberation movements of the Serbs in Kosovo and Metohija became always conflicts between Serbs and Albanians. At Kosovo and Metohija, during the Serbian insurrections in the so-called Belgrade Pashaluk (administrative-territorial unit), there was a terror without precedent, marked with the obvious plan of the extermination and exile of the Serbs from the entire Old Serbia. During the 1850s and the 1860s, the **genocide** against the Serbian people was confirmed by a great number of documents, of grievances to the Turkish administration against the crimes of the Albanians and in the reports of the European consuls (Bitolj, Skoplje, Prizren, Prishtina).



Djordje Petrovic - Karadjordje, Head of the First Serbian Insurrection

## VII The Liberation Wars of Serbia and Montenegro

The first liberation war of Serbia and Montenegro against Turkey, 1876-1877, and then the second one, represented the **first serious and frontal clashes between the Serbs and the Albanians**. The Moslem Albanians fought against the Serbian troops and defended the Turkish Empire, defending the country they had grabbed. The people in Old Serbia was subsequently exposed to bloody revengers' terror, which got an organized character in the Albanian Prizren League

## VIII The Prizren League

The nationalist Prizren League (1878) formulated for the first time the concept of "Greater Albania". The program of the League was directed against the Balkan states, indirectly against the European powers as well, who helped, although modestly, the liberation endeavors of Serbia, Montenegro and Greece. Conquering and revenging, anti-Serbian and anti-Slav, the League burdened the relations between the Serbian and Albanian peoples during decades.

## IX The Persecutions of the Serbs and the Change of the Ethnic Picture of Kosovo

Three decades after the Berlin Congress, 1878-1912, were marked by planned persecutions, by the physical destruction, displacement and forced exile of Serbs from Turkey. It was only during that period that the ethnic equilibrium at the territory of Old Serbia, i. e. of Kosovo and Metohija and of Northwestern Macedonia, was definitely changed. During some thirty years some **400.000 Serbs** left Kosovo and Metohija. There were records of many murders, pillages and profanations of churches and cemeteries, rapes and kidnappings of Serbian girls and women, even of small girls, attacks, plunders and robberies, all with the same objective - to weaken the Serbian

people and to expel them from their own country.

Even Skoplje was in the hands of the Albanian rebels in 1912, although the Albanians represented just a negligible minority at that time. A new and aggressive, Islamic, anti-Serbian state started to appear at the southern borders of Serbia, always ready to fight against the Christian Serbia.



## X. The Balkan War

The Balkan War, 1912, was waged by the Serbian State, together with Montenegro, Bulgaria, and Greece, for the liberation from Turks.

At the Kosovo, i. e. Skodra War Area (1912), the allies met the open enmity of the Albanian tribes and their armed resistance. The Autonomous Albania should have been created not only at the insistence of Austria-Hungary and Italy, but also with the consent of England, France and Russia. In the complex developments in 1912-1913, Serbia had to struggle resolutely in order to assure the possession of the liberated territories of Kosovo and Metohija, which was the objective of the aspirations of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The Serbian government was not ready to yield under the pressures in the question of Kosovo and Metohija: " There is no such Montenegrin or Serbian government which would or could cede to the Albanians or to any other this "Sacred Land", of the Serbian nation", it was emphasized in the Memorandum addressed to the European powers on January 21, 1913; regarding that question, **"the Serbian people does not want and can not make any concessions, transactions or compromises; no Serbian government would do such a thing"**.

Albania proclaimed its independence in Valona, on November 28, 1912.

## XI The London Peace Conference

The state of Albania was established at the basis of the decisions of the London Conference 1912-1913. The Albanians expressed territorial pretensions against Greece and Serbia already at that conference, although the attitude of the Big Powers was quite clear. At that platform, the Albanians built their concept of permanent endangering of those neighboring countries and of durable contesting of internationally recognized borders.

The Kosovo Committee was established in November, 1918, in Skodra, whose political and propaganda activities were directed against Yugoslavia. At the basis of those activities, terrorist bands known as "Kacaks" were active in Kosovo and Metohija between 1919 and 1924.

Even after the decision of the Ambassadors' Conference, on November 9, 1921, which recognized independent Albania, the territorial pretensions against Serbia were still expressed. Since the mid-thirties, Albania became the area of the Italian-Fascist strategic interests, and tolerated the anti-Yugoslav campaign of the Kosovo and Albanian political emigration.

## XII The Creation of the Fascist Protectorate "Greater Albania"

After the occupation of Albania by Italy, in April, 1939, the joint Italian-Albanian propaganda about the imminent creation of the "new" and "greater" Albania got the dimensions of a very well organized movement. In that way, a political opinion was formed in the majority of the Albanians that Fascism would soon assure the change of the Albanian borders. With such feelings, with open enthusiasm, the majority of the Albanians met, as **the achievement of their national objectives**", the political and military defeat of Yugoslavia (April 1941) and of Greece and the Fascist annexation of Kosovo, Metohija, Western Macedonia and eastern parts of Montenegro by Albania.

## XIII Kosovo and Metohija During the Second World War

The majority of the Albanian minority population in Yugoslavia and Greece spent the war years in the situation of the so called "Albanian unity" in the then created Fascist protectorate, the "Greater Albania". The majority of them fought at the side of the Fascist forces; the Albanians in Yugoslavia continued to terrorize the settled and autochthonous population, and that terrorism got the dimensions of a genocide. In all regions of the "Greater Albania", the non-Albanian population simply vanished, because of permanent violence and permanent pogroms. This was done, during the Second World War, with great success, especially by the political leadership of the Second Prizren League, established on September 16th, 1943.

Under the German occupation the terror was continued by the infamous Kosovo Regiment (Regiment Kosova), devastating the areas from Pec to Djakovica and Prizren, all over Kosovo and Metohija.. In the implementation of the basic aim of the Second Prizren League - the defense of "all territories populated by Squipetares" - they formed the volunteers' **SS- Division 'Skenderbeg'**, with over 11.000 Albanians in it. In the intent to link as strongly as possible the area of Kosovo and Metohija to Albania, the Albanians from those regions committed many crimes against the Serbs and Montenegrins. The demographic and ethnic picture changed also because of the permanent settlement of Albanians coming from Albania, who settled in the homes and on the estates of the exiled population. The ethnic cleansing of the Serbs got frightful dimensions.

## XIV The Persecution of Serbs since the sixties until the eighties

With the strict segregation (**similar to apartheid**) of the Albanian people from the other peoples of Yugoslavia, with the closing inside the walls of national, and especially language and cultural exclusiveness, the Albanians



in Yugoslavia were flooded by books, press, and especially textbooks from Albania, often with open anti-Yugoslav theses and concepts. Kosovo and Metohija, as an Autonomous Province of Yugoslavia, behaved increasingly in a secessionist way, in usurping the right to communicate directly and to establish various relations with the PR of Albania, to appear as the exclusive and compulsory intermediary in the contacts of all other factors and institutions in the Republic and in the Federation with that neighbor state.

The displacement of Serbs became more rapid and got the dimensions of exile. Serbian monuments and cemeteries were also the objectives of attacks, even the monuments from the anti-fascist struggle. Threats, blackmails, beatings, fires, rapes and murders created in the Serbs the psychosis of complete legal, personal and property insecurity, so that during that period, after 1968, many Serbian villages and many remaining Serbian homes in the Albanized settlements all over Kosovo and Metohija were finally emptied. The Albanians harvested wheat at Serbian estates, grabbed cattle, cut grass in the meadows, took away harvested wheat, and beat to death or killed the victims, especially if they resisted.

On November 27, 1968, there were organized massive demonstrations in Kosovo and Metohija, centered in Prishtina; the striking force of the demonstrations was composed of the youth - the Albanian students at the Prishtina University, primarily from the Philosophical Faculty. The Albanian students' youth conflicted with their Serbian and Montenegrin colleagues who were compelled to protest against the obvious discrimination in the allocation of scholarships, of places in students' dormitories, etc.; even the high school students were brutally attacked (attack against Serbian children in Klina, on May 15th, 1972); the Turks and Roms who did not want to declare themselves as Albanians were also the objectives of the attacks.

A new and much more dangerous explosion of the Albanian nationalism took place in 1981. The central slogan "Kosovo-Republic", expressed the first stage of the program of great Albanian nationalists, backed by the secessionist aim of secession from Yugoslavia and annexation to Albania of all territories populated by Albanians.

## XV The Real Objective of the Slogan "Kosovo Republic"

The entire political, economic, cultural and social development in the region of Kosovo and Metohija after the Second World War shows statistically that the separatists' ideology of the Albanians in that region was achieved in accordance with the objectives of the territorial and ethnic "Greater Albania". The Albanians took advantage of the internal riots in Yugoslavia at that time, and voted, anti-constitutionally "Kosovo-Republic", with the support of some circles in the international community, by the so-called Kacanik Constitution. The intention was to internationalize the question of Kosovo and Metohija, with no regard for the interests of Serbia and Yugoslavia, and thus to achieve, with the support of certain circles in the international community, complete political legitimacy.

The real position of the Albanians in the FR of Yugoslavia is maybe best illustrated by the fact that the highest state functions in Yugoslavia were performed by Albanians. Sinan Hasani and Fadilj Hoxha were presidents of Yugoslavia, Fadilj Hoxha was the President of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia, Azem Vlasi was the President of the Youth Organization of Yugoslavia. In the performance of all these, and many other state functions, they were in fact protecting the separatist movement. That situation went so far that even one part of the Yugoslav territory was ceded to Albania for the construction of a hydroelectric plant in Albania.

The insistence on the demographic picture of the Province in Europe resulted in the abuse of that fact in the request for the independence of Kosovo and Metohija. The Albanians did not accept the censa in 1981 and 1991, which left a huge area for arbitrary calculations of their total number in Kosovo and Metohija. Terrorism, purchase, under pressure, of the estates of non-Albanian population, non-payment of taxes, of electricity, of utilities, the lack of citizenship, are the main elements of the ethnic separatist strategy of non-recognition of the state. Also, Islamic extremism got strength since 1991, and the influence of the Albanian narcotic mafia as well.

## XVI The Islamic Extremism in Kosovo and Metohija Today

The attacks against Christians originated in the Islamic fanaticism which is spreading increasingly in Kosovo and Metohija, backed by the "missionaries" coming from Islamic countries. They not only spread hatred against the Serbs at their religious courses, but also against the non-Moslem Albanians. Almost all Albanian politicians in Kosovo and Metohija act as "good and faithful" Moslems. They address the faithful during the sermons in the mosques, emphasizing that the struggle for their objectives is at the same time the struggle for Islam - Jihad. The radicalized Islamic dogma prescribes bearing of children as a priority objective, in order to outnumber other peoples and religions - and that explains the demographic boom in this territory.



The village Prekale, Kosovo and Metohija, September 1988 - the fate of the Serbian people: mother with sons fleeing the Albanian terrorists

## XVII The Import of Terrorism from Albania

The Third Prizren League, established in America in 1946, with the identical program as the two previous ones - i. e. the creation of the "Greater Albania", used all propaganda means against Yugoslavia, especially after 1948, and after the conflict with Albania in the framework of the general confrontation and conflict with the Kominform and with the USSR. The conflict between Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union in 1948, made it possible to Albania to wage against Yugoslavia a combined propaganda and diversion war.

Terrorist-diversion groups were introduced from Albania; they killed the people from security forces, they terrorized the Serbian population. They smuggled weapons, which represented, together with the weapons left by the Bali (the fascist collaborators), a permanent danger of new rebellions. During all that time, the planned actions of the Albanian nationalism were always present. They were reflected in the permanent, chronic pressure against the Serbs, forcing them to leave the region, in the encouragement of the demographic pressures and of the immigration of the Albanian

population. The culmination of that process was the **arrival of an enormous number of Albanian political emigrés.**

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