

Kosovo and Metohija
Living in the Enclave

Edited by
Dušan T. Bataković



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Contents

Foreword	7
Dušan T. Bataković <i>Kosovo and Metohija: Identity, Religions & Ideologies</i>	9
Miloš Luković <i>Kosovska Mitrovica: Present and Past</i>	83
Helena Zdravković <i>Historical Victimage of Kosovo Serbs and Albanians</i>	107
Valentina Pitulić <i>Folklore in the Serb Enclave: Preserving Identity in Hostile Environment</i>	131
Harun Hasani <i>Migrations of Goranians</i>	143
Radivoje Mladenović <i>The Širinička Župa: Štrpce Municipality –Historical Background and Current Field Research</i>	155
Mirjana Menković <i>The Enclave of Velika Hoča: Cultural Heritage as a Means of Socio-economic Renewal and Preservation of Serbian Identity in Kosovo and Metohija</i> .	175
Miloš Luković <i>Tzintzars in Uroševac, Lipljan, Obilić, Priština and Kosovska Mitrovica</i>	225
Dušan T. Bataković <i>Surviving in Ghetto-like Enclaves: The Serbs of Kosovo and Metohija 1999–2007</i>	239

Appendix

<i>Chaos and disorder: Kosovo and Metohija four years later</i> by Fr. Sava Janjić	265
<i>Roma in Kosovo and Metohija: Arguments against independence of Kosovo and Metohija</i> by Rajko Djurić	283
<i>Belgrade Valedictory: March 1 2007</i> by Julian Harston	287
<i>Kosovo and Metohija at the Crossroads</i> by Fr. Sava Janjić	293
<i>The Visoki Dečani Monastery Land Issue</i> by Visoki Dečani Monastery . . .	305
<i>Kosovo Future Status</i> by Joseph K. Grieboski	315
Abstracts	319

Foreword

This collection of papers is devoted to the post-war situation in Serbia's troublesome autonomous province of Kosovo and Metohija, which, after three months of continuous NATO air strikes in 1999, eventually was, in June 1999, entrusted to the United Nations Interim Administration of Kosovo (UNMIK) by UNSC Resolution 1244.

Most of the pre- and post-1999 writings on Kosovo have been focused on often dramatic developments revolving around the Albanian national cause in the Province, and the suffering of Albanians after they went into full-scale uprising. As they are the majority population in Kosovo (an estimated seventy to seventy five percent of the Province's population prior to the bombing), researchers and analysts worldwide have concentrated primarily on their problems, somehow oblivious to the fact that despite their dense concentration in certain areas of Kosovo, the Kosovo Albanians have only been the largest ethnic minority (eighteen percent) within the whole Republic of Serbia, legal successor both of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (1992–2003) and of the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro (2003–2006). Therefore, it should be underscored once more that there is no such thing as a separate Kosovo identity for the population of the Province, divided, for centuries, into Albanians and Serbs as the main rivalling communities.

Contrary to the widespread interest in the Albanian side of the problem, this collection of papers focuses on the neglected developments among the discriminated, harassed and persecuted Kosovo Serbs and other non-Albanian ethnic groups, forced to live, under difficult conditions, within isolated enclaves, often heavily guarded by the NATO-led military contingents of KFOR, whose forces have been scaled down from 48,000 soldiers from various states in June 1999 to 16,000 in 2007.

Ranging from general historical overviews, multidisciplinary sociological and communicological approaches (Helena Zdravković), regional and micro histories (Miloš Luković), to important cultural heritage sites (Mirjana Menković on Velika Hoča) and case studies of certain communities (Radivoje Mladenović on Sirinička Župa), folklore as the way of pre-

serving one's endangered identity (Valentina Pitulić), or specific historic areas (Gora by Harun Hasani), the volume is focused on various aspects of the extremely complicated struggle for survival of the Serbs and other non-Albanian communities. Two extensive papers of D. T. Bataković are historical surveys of the past, including the most recent developments, covering the whole phenomenon of the Serb-Albanian dispute over Kosovo, cut into two different phases by the 1999 NATO bombing.

The Appendix brings important documentary material concerning the situation after the 2004 March pogrom and the 2007 perspectives from inside Metohija (Fr. Sava Janjić of the Dečani Monastery), a balanced view of Julian Harston, the outgoing UN representative in Belgrade (*Belgrade Valedictory*), as well as a paper on the difficult position of the Kosovo Roma (Rajko Djurić). The volume also brings out a key document, with analysis, on the endangering of the property of the Serbian Orthodox Church by local Albanian authorities, as well as an important insight of the Washington D.C.-based Institute of Religion, gained during a visit to Kosovo and Metohija, with possible outcomes of the Province's uncertain future.

It is of utmost importance to mention here the valuable collaboration of Biljana Sikimić of the Institute for Balkan Studies, who suggested several papers from her volume on enclaves previously published in the Serbian language, as well as of Andrija Stupar, for his shrewd advice and tireless copy-editing of the main articles in this volume, thus facilitating the delicate work of the Institute staff (Marina Adamović-Kulenović and Kranislav Vranić) involved in the preparation of the texts for printing.

Editor

Dušan T. Bataković

Kosovo and Metohija
IDENTITY, RELIGIONS & IDEOLOGIES

*Conflicting historical traditions:
Serbian Jerusalem vs. ancient Albanian land*

The notion of “Kosovo” carries different, indeed opposing, meanings for the different national communities of Kosovo and Metohija. For the Serbs, Kosovo above all signifies an ancient Serbian territory, a Serbian “Holy Land”, the impressive cultural and economic rise of which was in the late medieval period brutally brought to a halt by the Ottoman conquest and cut off from its European and Christian background. The Serb popular and Romantic traditions both highlight the “suffering of Kosovo”, presaged by the famous battle of Kosovo in 1389. Surrender to the Ottomans became a reality for the majority of Christian Orthodox Serbs by the middle of the fifteenth century, as several Serb realms in the southern Balkans and in Bosnia fell one after another: the Despotate of Serbia (covering today’s central Serbia including Kosovo), and a number of remaining independent or semi-independent Serb-inhabited princedoms (1459–1481) including Herzegovina and Montenegro.¹

In the Serbian language, the word Kosovo (*kos* meaning the blackbird, and *Kosovo*, a field of blackbirds) combined with another historical name, Metohija (derived from the Greek word *metochion*, pl. *metochia*, meaning monastic possessions), is the official name of the southern province of Serbia with its 1,300 churches and monasteries scattered all over the area. Although its majority population is now Albanian, Kosovo is seen as epitomizing both the national and cultural identity of the whole Serbian nation. As the political and cultural core of medieval Serbia, Kosovo gave two of Serbia’s three most important medieval dynasties, the House of Hrebeljanović-Lazarević

¹ Rade Mihaljčić, *The Battle of Kosovo in History and in Popular Tradition* (Belgrade: BIGZ, 1989); Nada Milošević-Djordjević, *Kosovska epika* (Belgrade: Zavod za udžbenike i nastavna sredstva, 1990).

(1371–1427) and the House of Branković (1427–1459). They ruled Serbia during the decisive ninety years between the Battle of Maritsa (1371) and the final Ottoman conquest in the middle of the fifteenth century (1459).

The Kosovo tradition became established as a popular legend under the auspices of the Patriarchate of Peć (1557–1766), the restored Serbian Orthodox Church in the first century of Ottoman domination. The Legend of Kosovo gradually merged with popular tradition, taking on almost mythic proportions, and emerged as a cornerstone of modern Serb identity in the age of nationalism. For the average Serb of today, the word Kosovo still stands for an ancient and sacred Serbian land, where the Serbs have been systematically persecuted and expelled from, for being Slavic and Christian Orthodox, over the last three centuries, with the exception of recent periods of occasional repression against the Albanians.

Within this frame of perception, not only were the conquerors — the Ottoman Turks — seen as persecutors, but also their local allies, above all Muslim Albanians — legal and illegal immigrants descending from the highlands of northern and central Albania and settling in the plains of Metohija and Kosovo at various times during Ottoman rule (1455–1912), under the Italian Fascist and German Nazi occupation (1941–1945), and under Tito's communist regime (1945–1990). In 1968, supported by the lifetime dictator of communist Yugoslavia J. B. Tito and in the context of further decentralization of the communist federation, the Albanian communist leadership of Kosovo succeeded in banning the name *Metohija*, seen as too much Christian Orthodox and Serbian for the desired political image of the Albanian-dominated Province of Kosovo. In 1990, the term *Metohija* was reintroduced, as the official part of the name of the Province after its autonomy was limited and the province returned under the jurisdiction of Serbia.

Waves of spiraling violence continued, remaining the main characteristic of Kosovo and Metohija history. As a phenomenon of *longue durée*, the Serbian-Albanian rivalry in Kosovo-Metohija has been marked by the combined effects of social discontent and religious and ethnic strife, producing several waves of mass migrations during the last three hundred years. Muslim Albanians from the highlands of northern and central Albania, the poorest region of Turkey-in-Europe, were steadily settled in the fertile plains of Metohija and Kosovo by the Ottoman authorities, and their main rivals there were Christian Orthodox Serb peasants, as they occupied most of the arable land.

Occasional instances of interethnic and inter-religious cooperation, as well as rare attempts of mutual communal assistance — usually short-lived and only superficially tolerant — were not the prevailing political practice. In spite of certain efforts during the last two centuries, for the two main

Kosovo communities, Albanian and Serb, as well as for the other non-Albanians in the area (Goranies, i.e. the Muslim Slav, Serbian-speaking community of the Gora region; Roma with several names and denominations; ethnic Turks; other Muslim Slavs, renamed Bosniaks since 1999; ethnic Croats), interethnic communication remained very limited. Furthermore, interethnic communication failed to survive the mounting Serbian-Albanian conflict at the end of the twentieth century.² Interethnic distance in Kosovo and Metohija has remained highest within the whole of Serbia, with no tangible improvements after the 1999 NATO bombing campaign (38,000 combat sorties between 24 March and 10 June 1999) and the resulting establishment of the UN administration (UNMIK) in June 1999.

For the average Albanian of today, on the other hand, the word Kosovo (or *Kosova* in Albanian) symbolizes an “ancient Albanian land” directly linking the ancient Illyrians of Dardania with the modern Albanian community in this territory. The common self-perception of the Kosovo Albanians is that of the greatest victims of Balkan history — in particular prior to and after the Balkan Wars (1912–1913) — deprived of the right to form a single state with the rest of their fellow Albanians, all proud descendants of ancient Illyrians.

Although interpretable as a Balkan instance of “inventing tradition” and having little to do with the established and verifiable historical facts, the myth of the Illyrian origin of modern Albanians was a powerful ideology that effectively bound together very different religious groups and clans together in the late nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth century.³ In more recent times, for the Albanians, Kosovo has become the symbol of Diaspora nationalism nurtured by their constant demographic growth as a form of ethnic legitimization over the disputed territory. In the case of Kosovo, the Diaspora type of nationalism is almost synonymous with the desire for complete and unrestricted ethnic control over a disputed area.⁴

² Cf. Ger Duijzings, *Religion and the Politics of Identity in Kosovo* (London: Hurst & Co, 2000). Another sympathetic, useful but incomplete survey highlighting mostly the positive aspect of interethnic relations, in particular between Serbs and Albanians, is available in the journalistic narrative of Petrit Imami, *Srbi i Albanci kroz vekove* (Belgrade: Radio B92, 1998).

³ Eric Hobsbawm, “Introduction: Inventing Traditions” in Eric Hobsbawm & Terence Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 1–2.

⁴ Cf. standard works in English and French: Alex N. Dragnich & Slavko Todorovich, *The Saga of Kosovo. Focus on Serbian-Albanian Relations* (Boulder: East European Monographs, Columbia University Press, 1984); Arshi Pipa & Sami Repishti, eds., *Studies on Kosova* (East European Monographs, Boulder: Columbia University Press, 1984); Radovan Samardžić, ed., *Le Kosovo-Metohija dans l'histoire serbe* (Lausanne: L'Age

This practice has its roots in the nineteenth century, in the Romantic period of “national awakening”. Both Kosovo and Metohija (in Albanian known as *Rafshite e Dukadjinit*) were from the mid-nineteenth century widely known as *Arnautluk*, a term synonymous with lawless territory on the periphery of the crumbling Ottoman Empire, thus linking the notion of a Muslim Albanian with constant rebellion against Ottoman central authority.⁵

Nevertheless, there is no reliable evidence for ethnic continuity between ancient Illyrians and present-day Albanians. The huge gap in the historical record between the sixth and eleventh centuries, however, has produced little effect on Albanian national mythology, or on the inclusion of the Illyrian myth as an ingredient of modern Albanian national identity. As regards to Kosovo — as an alleged Illyrian-Albanian territory — a two-stepped approach has been applied. First, the missing link in the alleged Illyrian-Albanian continuity was found in the ancient tribe of Dardanians. The second step was to multiply efforts aimed at “unmasking Serbian

d’Homme, 1990); *Kosovo, Past and Present* (Belgrade: Institute for International Affairs, 1989); Dušan T. Bataković, *The Kosovo Chronicles* (Belgrade: Plato, 1992); Idem, *Kosovo. La spirale de la haine* (Lausanne: L’Age d’Homme, 1993; 2nd ed. 1998); Branislav Krstić, *Kosovo. Facing the Court of History* (New York: Humanity Books, 2004).

Cf. also in Serbian: Djoko Slijepčević, *Srpsko-arbanaški odnosi kroz vekove s posebnim osvrtom na novije vreme* (Himelstir: Eparhija zapadnoevropska, 1983); Dimitrije Bogdanović, *Knjiga o Kosovu* (Belgrade: SANU, 1985); Atanasije Jevtić & Živorad Stojković, eds., *Zadužbine Kosova. Spomenici i znamenja srpskog naroda* (Prizren-Belgrade: Eparhija Raško-prizrenska, 1987); D. T. Bataković, *Kosovo i Metohija. Istorija i ideologija* (Belgrade-Valjevo: Hrišćanska misao, 1998); *Kosovo i Metohija u velikoalbanским planovima 1878–2000* (Belgrade: Institut za savremenu istoriju, 2001).

The papers by Serbian, Albanian and Western scholars reflecting different views of the problem available in the collection: *Kosovo/a. Confrontation or Coexistence*, eds. Ger Duijzings, Dusan Janjic & Shkelzen Maliqi (Peace Research Centre: University of Nijmegen & Political Cultural Centre 042, 1996). Quite useful for the recent developments is also Thanos Veremis & Evangelos Kofos, eds., *Kosovo. Avoiding another Balkan War* (Athens: ELIAMEP, 1994); William Joseph Buckley, ed., *Kosovo. Contending Voices on Balkan Interventions* (Grand Rapids, Michigan-Cambridge UK: William B. Eerdmans, 2000); also useful is “Kosovo. Six siècles de mémoires croisées”, *Les Annales de l’autre Islam* 7, Actes du colloque tenue en 1999 (Paris: INALCO, 2000). The standard German/Austrian approach available in Jens Reuter, *Die Albaner in Jugoslawien* (Munich, 1980); Wolfgang Petritsch, Karl Kaser & Robert Pichler, eds., *Kosovo/Kosova. Mythen, Daten, Fakten* (Klagenfurt & Vienna: Wieser Verlag, 1999).

⁵ Nathalie Clayer, “Kosovo: le berceau du nationalisme albanais au XIX^{ème} siècle?”, *Les Annales de l’autre Islam* 7 (2000), 169–182.

myths” about Kosovo through the rapid growth of ostensibly scholarly publications.⁶

Due to this ideological pattern imposed on Albanian historiography both by national romanticism and the Stalinist-type communist regime of Enver Hoxha, Kosovo came to be perceived by the whole Albanian nation as an “occupied ethnic territory”.⁷ The contrasting versions of the historical past of Kosovo and Metohija became a significant factor causing the profound political and cultural distrust between Serbs and Albanians.

Nevertheless, the usual approach, often lacking reliable scholarly background, is to compare the Serbian historical account, overwhelmingly based on verifiable data, with Albanian romantic-historical theses that have significantly less backing in sources, in order to offer a kind of “balanced” version of history. However, such attempts to find a middle ground usually produce a distorted and misguided view of the region’s past.

The rise and fall of medieval Serbia

Present-day Kosovo-Metohija is a small (10,887 sq km) but fertile and mineral-rich region. An autonomous province within Serbia inhabited by Albanians and Serbs as the two main ethnic groups, the region has had a long and turbulent past. Until the early Middle Ages it was successively included into different Roman and Byzantine provinces and inhabited by different ethnic groups. Its pre-Roman population of varied origin (Illyrian in the west and Thracian in the east and south) was gradually Romanized during the long rule of both Rome and Constantinople.⁸

⁶ Cf. a typical example: Ali Jakupi, “Origins and Motives of Serbian Myths in Kosovo”, *Eurobalkans* 34–35 (Spring/Summer, Athens, 1999), 21–27. Notoriously pro-Albanian as regards the Kosovo issue is Noel Malcolm, *Kosovo. A Short History* (London: Macmillan, 1998). Cf. the review of Malcolm’s book by Aleksa Djilas, “Imagining Kosovo: A Biased New Account Fans Western Confusion”, *Foreign Affairs* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations Inc., vol. 77, no. 5, September 1998). More balanced, but still incomplete is Miranda Vickers, *Between Serb and Albanian. A History of Kosovo* (London: Hurst & Company, 1988). In the French-speaking countries, an ardent supporter of the most prolific pro-Albanian positions is a geography professor at the University of Toulouse, Michel Roux, *Les Albanais en Yougoslavie. Minorité nationale, territoire et développement* (Paris: Editions de la Maison des Sciences de l’Homme, 1992).

⁷ Cf. more in the standard E. Hoxha-sponsored, Stalinist-type version of the ancient Illyrian origin of Albanians: A. Buda, ed., *Albanians and Their Territories* (Tirana: 8 Nëntori: Academy of Science, 1985).

⁸ *Illyriens et Albanais*, ed. Milutin Garašanin (Belgrade: Académie serbe des sciences et des Arts, 1990), bilingual Serbian and French edition.

With the settlement of Slavs during the seventh century most of the central Balkans became a fief of different Slavic tribes under stronger or weaker control of Byzantium. A former Bulgarian and Byzantine possession, the region that has come to be known as Kosovo-Metohija was integrated between the early twelfth century and the middle of the fifteenth century into the medieval Serbian state: the Kingdom (1217–1346), Empire (1346–1371), various princedoms (1371–1402) and the Despotate of Serbia (1402–1459). As a predominantly Serb-inhabited area Kosovo-Metohija became the prestigious centre of the main Serbian political and cultural institutions.⁹ As an area rich in natural resources it was suitable for cultivation, for exploiting silver and gold mines around which thrived mining towns, for building fortresses, palaces, churches and monasteries.¹⁰

Three important bishoprics (Hvosno, Prizren, Lipljan) were founded in Kosovo and Metohija in the early thirteenth century under the first Serbian Archbishop, Sava Nemanjić, the future St. Sava: “Serbia was never to fall under strong Catholic influence [...] Sava’s first task was to place all Serbian territory under the jurisdiction of its new archbishop. This necessitated the ousting in 1220 of Greek bishops from the recently acquired towns of Prizren and Lipljan. Sava then proceeded to construct Serbia’s Church administration, dividing all Serbia’s territory (including Zeta and Hum) up into about ten bishoprics”.¹¹

Furthermore, Kosovo-Metohija was an important political and commercial crossroads for the major Balkan roads leading from Bosnia and Rascia to Macedonia, and central Serbia to Dioclea (Duklja, later called Zeta, present-day Montenegro) and other ports in the south of the eastern Adriatic coast.

Within a century, Kosovo, the northern part of Kosovo-and-Metohija, became covered by fortresses and palaces of the Serbian rulers and their prospering nobility. The cities of Priština, Prizren and especially the prosperous mining town of Novo Brdo were among the richest in the western Balkans in the fourteenth and first half of the fifteenth century. The Plain of Kosovo (*Kosovska ravnica*) — stretching from Mitrovica to Kačanik —

⁹ For more, see Bariša Krekić, “Medieval Serbia: The Nemanjids and Byzantium” in Speros Vryonis Jr., ed., *Byzantine Studies. Essays on the Slavic World and the Eleventh Century* (New Rochelle, New York: Aristide D. Caratzas Publisher, 1985), 43–52; Sima M. Ćirković, *La Serbie au Moyen Age* (Paris: Zodiaque, 1992).

¹⁰ Desanka Kovačević, “Dans la Serbie et la Bosnie medievales: Les mines d’or et d’argent”, *Annales, Economies, Civilisations*, vol. 2 (Paris: Armand Colin, 1960), 248–258.

¹¹ John V. A. Fine Jr., *The Late Medieval Balkans. A Critical Survey from the Late Twelfth to the Ottoman Conquest* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press), 117.

was dotted with more than 130 churches built by Serbian rulers, church dignitaries and local noblemen. The Serbian Archbishopric, founded and initially seated in Rascia (1219), was relocated to Peć in the Hvosno area (later called Metohija) and, under Emperor Stefan Dušan, elevated to a Patriarchate in 1346.

Hvosno or Metohija, the western part of the present-day province of Kosovo and Metohija (4,684 sq km in area), was covered with a network of large and rich monasteries built by the Serbian kings, such as Dečani and the Patriarchate of Peć, and a significant number of late medieval churches erected by local Serbian noblemen (e.g. Orahovac, Velika Hoča, Crkolez, Vaganeš, Zočište, Ubožac, Dolac, Prizren etc). Most of Metohija's densely populated villages were granted to the major royal foundations (monasteries) erected between the late twelfth and mid-fourteenth centuries; hence its name *Metohija*.¹² The monastery of Dečani alone had more than 2,500 sq km of estates, including villages, forests and vineyards. The monastery of Holy Archangels was granted an even larger estate, not only in Metohija itself but also in the neighbouring areas of today's Macedonia and Albania, stretching from Šar Mountain to Alessio on the Albanian coast. Huge estates were donated to the Serbian monastery of Hilandar [*Hilandar*] on Mount Athos.¹³ The prospering Serbian economy, especially the exploitation of mines, rich in silver and gold, and large estates that the rulers granted to the Church, made the medieval Serbian monasteries prestigious centers of sophisticated culture and civilization. In the fourteenth century, there were more than 200 churches and monasteries throughout Metohija, and many others were built in the following decades.¹⁴

Among the most important royal endowments are: The Mother of God of Ljeviša (*Bogorodica Ljeviška*), a bishopric seat in Prizren built on the foundations of an earlier Byzantine church by King Uroš I Nemanjić (1243–1276) and his powerful successor King Stefan Uroš II Milutin (1281–1321). King Milutin, the main patron of the revitalized mining industry in Serbia, also built two large monasteries in Kosovo: the monastery of St. Stefan at Banjska near Zvečan in northern Kosovo, and the monastery of Gračanica near Priština in central Kosovo. Comparing Salisbury Cathedral with Gračanica, Steven Runciman said that “the former may soar gracefully heavenward; the latter with the simplicity of its design, the comprehensive

¹² Milisav Lutovac, *La Metohija – étude de géographie humaine* (Paris: Institut d'études Slaves et Librairie ancienne Honoré Champion, 1935).

¹³ Miloš Blagojević, *The Estates of Hilandar Monastery in Kosovo and Metohija, 12th–15th Centuries* (Belgrade: Zavod za udžbenike, 2006), 31–45 (multilingual edition).

¹⁴ Gojko Subotić, *The Art of Kosovo. The Sacred Land* (New York: Monacelli Press, 1998).

economy of its balance and its interior, is the work of a people no less spiritual but far more sophisticated and cultured.”¹⁵

The complex of three churches known as the Patriarchate of Peć (Holy Apostles, Holy Virgin, and St. Demetrios) began to be built in the mid-thirteenth century and was eventually completed in the 1320s by Archbishop Danilo II.¹⁶ The monastery of Dečani near Peć, with its church dedicated to the Pantocrator, was intended as the funerary church of King Stefan Uroš III Dečanski (1321–1331). The monumental monastic complex of Dečani was eventually completed by his son and heir King Stefan Uroš IV — future Emperor Stefan Dušan.¹⁷ The Holy Archangels near Prizren, by far the largest medieval Serbian monastery, was the endowment of Stefan Dušan, erected shortly after his coronation in Skoplje as “Emperor of Serbs and Greeks” in 1346. The cathedral of the Holy Archangels was the most monumental church built in the Byzantine Commonwealth in the fourteenth century.¹⁸

The Serbian monasteries in Kosovo-and-Metohija held in their libraries, in medieval times alone, at least 7,500 manuscripts, with Peć and Dečani as the most important centres. Several thousand new manuscripts and printed books were produced during the following two centuries of the Church’s organized activity under Ottoman rule (1557–1776). The most prolific genres of Serbian medieval literature were hagiography, biographies of the sainted rulers and church dignitaries (bishops, archbishops and patriarchs), and *memoria, eulogies, hymns*, and other forms of devotional literature, written in or translated into Old Church Slavonic.¹⁹

In the process of rapid disintegration of Stefan Dušan’s Empire under his weak heir Emperor Uroš I (1355–1371) — the last ruler of the Nemanjić dynasty — Kosovo-and-Metohija came under the control of powerful regional lords belonging to the highest ranks of Emperor Dušan’s

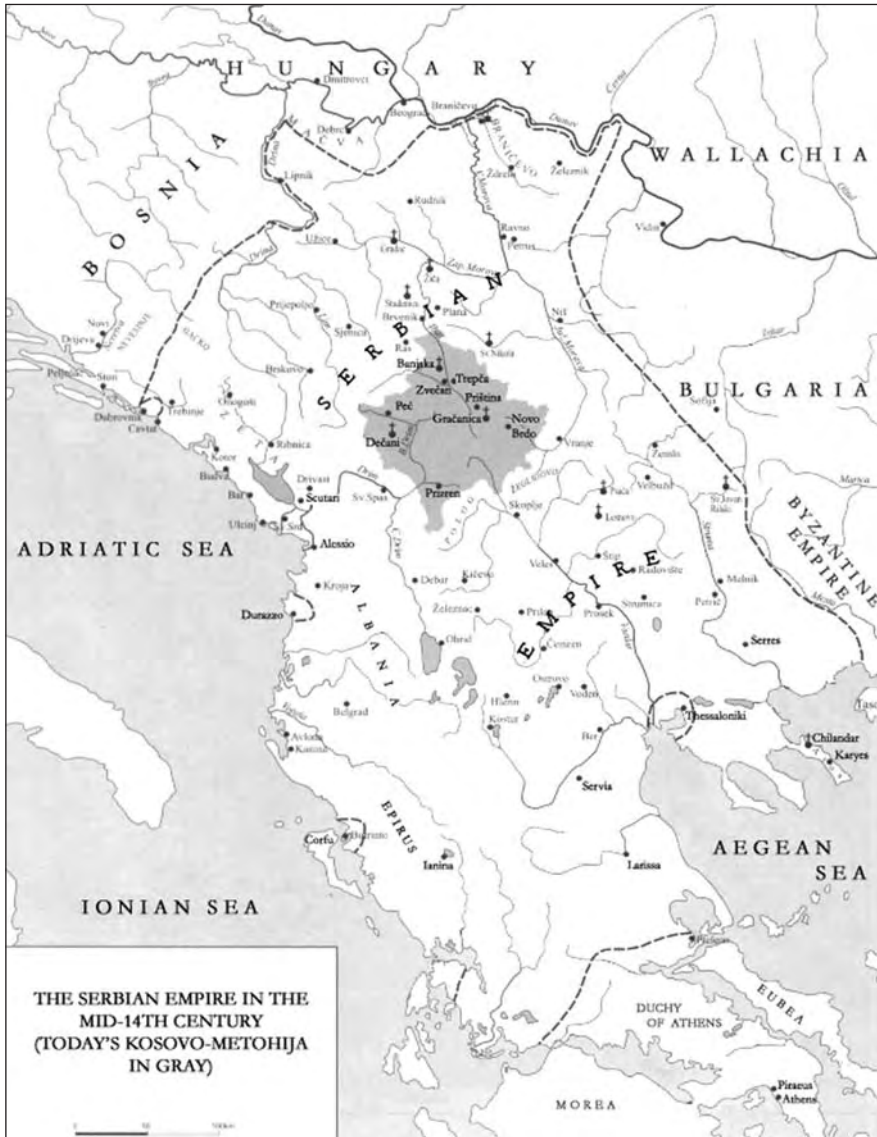
¹⁵ Steven Runciman, *The Byzantine Civilization* (London: Methuen & Co, 1975), 285.

¹⁶ Vojislav J. Djurić, Sima M. Ćirković & Vojislav Korać, *Pečka Patrijaršija* (Belgrade & Priština: Jugoslovenska knjiga & Jedinstvo, 1990).

¹⁷ Cf. comprehensive study by Branislav Todić & Milka Čanak-Medić, *Manastir Dečani* (Belgrade: Muzej u Prištini, Mnemosyne & Manastir Visoki Dečani, 2005).

¹⁸ For more, see D. Obolensky, *Byzantine Commonwealth: Eastern Europe, 500–1438* (New York: Praeger, 1971).

¹⁹ In the early 1980s the Christian Orthodox Serbian monasteries in Kosovo and Metohija had only 359 Serbian manuscripts dating from the medieval and Ottoman periods; 140 of the most precious medieval manuscripts were burnt together with the entire National Library in Belgrade during the indiscriminate Nazi carpet bombing on 6 April 1941. Cf. Dimitrije Bogdanović, “Rukopisno nasledje Kosova” in *Zbornik okruglog stola o naučnom istraživanju Kosova* (Belgrade: SANU, Naučni skupovi, vol. XLII, 1988), 73–79.



nobility which subsequently emerged as independent local rulers. After the defeat of Serbian armies in Macedonia at the Battle of Maritsa in September 1371, it was Prince Lazar Hrebeljanović (1371–1389) of Kosovo, the most distinguished among Dušan's nobles, who emerged as the strongest regional lord capable of bringing together the rivalling feudal princes of the former Empire. Having established control over the rich mining areas of the former Serbian Empire in Kosovo, Prince Lazar formed a reliable

matrimonial alliance of regional lords for the defence of Serbia against the Ottoman invasion.²⁰

Although the initial Ottoman raids into Serbia were successfully repulsed (1381, 1385/86, 1388), in 1389 the Ottoman threat became imminent. The decisive battle between the Serbian (supported by their allies from the Bosnian kingdom) and Ottoman armies (supported by many of the Sultan's Slav vassals) took place on *Kosovo Polje* (The Field of Blackbirds), on St. Vitus Day (*Vidovdan*) or 15 June 1389. Both rulers, Prince Lazar and Sultan Murad I, perished in the battle. Prince Lazar's son-in-law, Vuk Branković — most likely unjustly remembered in epic tradition as a traitor who slid out of the battle during its crucial phase — remained the sole independent regional ruler until 1392, when he accepted vassalage to the Ottomans.²¹

The immediate outcome of the battle, which engaged some 30,000 troops on both sides, was not perceived as an Ottoman victory. The first reports claimed the victory of the Christian Serbian armies, and various sources confirmed heavy losses on both sides. Most of those contemporary sources that did not perceive the outcome of the battle as a triumph of the Christian forces emphasized that none of the armies emerged victorious. It was only later, as the legend surrounding the 1389 Battle of Kosovo grew, that the Ottomans began to claim their victory, while the Serbs, deeply affected by the post-Kosovo political situation marked by unsettled internal strife eventually leading to the final Ottoman conquest, began to describe the battle as a tragic defeat.²²

Be that as it may, the Battle of Kosovo had far-reaching political consequences for the future of Serbia. Only a year after the Battle, Serbia became a vassal of the Ottoman Empire.²³ Nonetheless, present-day Kosovo-and-Metohija with its rich mining centre of Novo Brdo (seized by the

²⁰ Sima M. Ćirković, "Serbia on the Eve of the Battle of Kosovo" in Wayne S. Vuchinich & Thomas A. Emmert, eds., *Kosovo. Legacy of a Medieval Battle* (A Modern Greek Studies Yearbook Supplement vol. 1) (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1991), 1–17.

²¹ Thomas A. Emmert, *Serbian Golgotha. Kosovo 1389* (Boulder: East European Monographs, Columbia University Press, 1990).

²² Nicholas J. C. Pappas & L. Brigance Pappas, "The Ottoman View of the Battle of Kosovo" in Vuchinich & Emmert, eds., *Kosovo*, 41–59; Cf. also in the same book Stephen W. Reinart, "A Greek View on the Battle of Kosovo", 61–88.

²³ Emmert, *Serbian Golgotha*, 42–60. S. M. Ćirković, ed., *Kosovska bitka u istoriografiji* [The Battle of Kosovo in Historiography] (Belgrade: Istorijski institut, 1990); Nikola Tasić, ed., *Kosovska bitka 1389. i njene posledice* (*Die Schlacht auf dem Amselfeld 1389 und ihre Folgen*) (Belgrade: Institute for Balkan Studies, 1991) (bilingual Serbian and German edition).

Ottomans only in 1455) remained a border region of exceptional economic and spiritual importance until the very end of the Serbian medieval state — under the first Despot Stefan Lazarević (1389–1427), and his less successful successors of the Branković dynasty (1427–1459).²⁴

A second battle of Kosovo, with János Hunyady at the head of a Hungarian–Wallachian alliance, took place on 17–20 October 1448 and ended in disaster for the crusading Christian troops, deprived of support of the ailing Despot Djuradj Branković, reluctant to venture into another risky war. Despite frequent raids and pillaging, Kosovo-and-Metohija remained an important region, in particular for the economy and cultural development, until 1455, when Serbia, on top of major setbacks suffered in previous decades, lost Novo Brdo and Prizren. What had remained of the Despotate of Serbia eventually yielded under the overwhelming Ottoman onslaught on its new capital Smederevo in 1459.²⁵

The rural population of medieval Kosovo and Metohija can be identified due to the charters issued by the Serbian rulers, containing detailed data on taxes, peasant households, family names, origin, etc. The personal names and most place-names are predominantly Serbian. Feudal obligations of serfs were known as the “Serbian Law”, while the nomadic rural population was covered by the “Vlach Law”. Albanians are occasionally referred to as nomads living in the borderland between Metohija and Albania (upper and lower Pilot area). The 1455 Ottoman census shows that only 80 of 600 villages had household heads bearing typical Albanian names.²⁶

Urban centers in Kosovo and Metohija, as elsewhere in late medieval Serbia, were more multicultural than rural areas. Under Byzantine rule, the towns of present-day Kosovo-and-Metohija had a significant Greek population, including administrative and church officials, while Slav or Serb merchants from the Adriatic coast, mostly Roman Catholics from Ragusa (Dubrovnik) and Cattaro (Kotor), were continuously engaged in trade and business in the area. Following the activation of the rich mines of Trepča, Novo Brdo and Janjevo in the early fourteenth century, their number, along with that of Saxon miners, considerably increased.²⁷ Under Despot Stefan Lazarević, the northernmost city, Belgrade, became Serbia’s capital and cul-

²⁴ Cf. Vojislav Jovanović, Sima Ćirković, Emina Zečević, Vujadnin Ivanišević & Vesna Radić, *Novo Brdo* (Belgrade: Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments of the Republic of Serbia, 2004). Bilingual Serbian and English edition.

²⁵ Momčilo Spremić, *Despot Djuradj Branković i njegovo doba* (Belgrade: SKZ, 1994).

²⁶ O. Zirojević, “Les premiers siècles de la domination étrangère” in *Kosovo-Metohija dans l’histoire*, 41–46; Bataković, *Kosovo Chronicles*, 45.

²⁷ See Desanka Kovačević, “Dans la Serbie et la Bosnie médiévales: Les mines d’or et d’argent”, *Annales, Economies, Civilisations*, vol. 2 (1960), 253–258.

tural hub, whilst the southern town of Novo Brdo in Kosovo remained the main economic center, as testified by the “Law on Mines” (*Rudarski zakonik*) issued there in 1412.²⁸

The presence of a certain number of Albanian miners of the Roman Catholic rite was recorded in Novo Brdo in the 1430s, but the whole area, both rural and urban, remained predominantly inhabited by Christian Orthodox Serbs. Besides Serbian Orthodox churches and monasteries, the urban centers of Kosovo and Metohija disposed with several Roman Catholic parishes, for Saxons, Venetians, Ragusans and other foreign traders.²⁹

Ottoman rule: Conquest and decline

From the middle of the fifteenth to the early twentieth century, the whole of Kosovo and Metohija was part of the Ottoman Empire. Conquered in 1459, the Despotate of Serbia, Kosovo and Metohija included, was organized into several Ottoman administrative units (*sanjaks*), while most of the nobility that had not perished in the wars emigrated to neighbouring Hungary, where they kept resisting the Ottomans until the 1526 Battle of Mohács. In Ottoman-held Serbia a certain number of former Serb feudal lords entered into the Ottoman *sipahi* system and were eventually Islamized. Being Christian Orthodox, the majority of Serbs, both urban and rural, as well as all other non-Muslim ethnic groups (“people of the book”), became *reaya*, second-class citizens under the Ottoman Islamic order. Apart from legalized religious discrimination, discrimination became evident in all spheres of everyday life.

The lowered status of the Christian population also implied social dependence, as most of the Christian Orthodox Serbs were reduced to landless peasants liable to paying feudal taxes. They were, like other Christians, not only obliged to dress differently, to pay additional tax in lieu of military service, but they were deprived of such rights as riding a horse, possessing or carrying arms, and so on. Nor had the Christians the right to repair their churches or ring church bells without permission of the Ottoman authorities. It was, however, possible to rebuild some ruined churches, but only with the authorization of the Ottoman administration.

Prizren Cathedral, dedicated to the Mother of God of Ljeviša, was converted to a mosque probably immediately after the Ottoman conquest; the same destiny befell the monastery of St. Stefan at Banjska, one of the

²⁸ S. M. Ćirković, “Le Kosovo Metohija au Moyen Age” in *Kosovo-Metohija dans l’histoire serbe*, 23–27.

²⁹ S. M. Ćirković, “The Cradle of Serbia” in *Kosovo. Past and Present*, ed. Ranko Petković (Belgrade: Review of International Affairs, 1989), 24–27.

most impressive foundations of King Stefan Uroš II Milutin (1281–1321). Stefan Dušan's main endowment, the monumental Church of the Holy Archangels near Prizren, where he had been solemnly buried in 1355, was abandoned as early as 1519 and turned into ruins by the end of the century. Marble blocks from the ruined Holy Archangels were reused for the remarkable Sinan Pasha Mosque in Prizren in 1615. Most of the Serbian monasteries and churches were devastated and left in ruins, while many village churches were completely abandoned. Not many were restored until after the liberation of Kosovo and Metohija in 1912. The monasteries of Dečani, Gračanica and Patriarchate of Peć were permitted to perform religious services and their medieval estates, although severely reduced, were reconfirmed by Ottoman *firmans*.

Thorough archaeological surveys have shown that most of the approximately 1,300 monasteries, churches, hermitages and other monuments the Serbs built, or rebuilt on the foundations of earlier Byzantine churches in the area of Kosovo and Metohija, date from the thirteenth to the fifteenth century. The magnitude of the havoc wrought by the conquest can be seen from the earliest Ottoman registers combined with censuses (*defterers*): in 1455 Ottoman register, apart from the Monastery of Devič in the Drenica area, there were only ten to fourteen active Christian Orthodox churches out of probably hundreds active prior to the conquest. After the consolidation of Ottoman rule in the middle of the sixteenth century, their number significantly increased — fifty-three churches, including eleven monasteries. The large monasteries such as Dečani, the Patriarchate of Peć and Gračanica to a lesser extent were spared from destruction. Nevertheless, their previously wealthy land possessions were reduced to a handful of land estates in the surrounding villages. The *firmans* the Ottoman sultans granted to these three main monastic communities comprised, apart from paying taxes, the obligation to perform different services, including the service of falconry as well.³⁰ In the *Sanjak* of Prizren, according to the 1571 Ottoman census, there were thirty-one Christian Orthodox churches and monasteries, dependencies of the Sultan or the local *sanjak-bey*.³¹ In the area of Mount Čičavica, remembered as the “Serbian Holy Mountain” in popular tradition, there were, according to the Ottoman censuses of 1525–26 and 1544–45, “a total of fifty-two monasteries and churches”.³²

³⁰ Zirojević, “Les premiers siècles”, 40–46.

³¹ Olga Zirojević, “Crkve i manastiri u Prizrenskom sandžaku”, *Kosovsko-metohijski zbornik* vol. 1 (Belgrade: SANU, 1990), 133–141.

³² So far thirty-six sites of former churches have been found while “there is a traditional belief among the Serbian and Albanian people that on Čičavica there are seventy-seven spring wells, seventy-seven streams and seventy-seven churches”.

The re-establishment of the Serbian Orthodox Church under as the Patriarchate of Peć in 1557 marked the beginning of a vigorous religious renaissance of the Serbian *millet*. The reassembling of the Christian Orthodox into one religious community (*millet*) under the central authority of the patriarchs of Peć brought about a tremendous change in their general position within the rigid theocratic structure of the powerful Ottoman Empire. Sokollu Mehmed-Pasha (Mehmed-paša Sokolović), the Ottoman vizier of Serbian descent, installed his first cousin Makarije Sokolović (1557–1571) on the Serb patriarchal throne and granted him the same privileges as those enjoyed by the Ecumenical patriarch of Constantinople.³³

The Serbian patriarchs had the right to dispose with church property, to collect church tax, to decide on heirless property, to confirm all guild regulations, and to preside over civil and criminal cases, all within a self-governing Serbian community. As the head of the Serbian *millet*, the patriarch of Peć became a real *etnarch* of all Christian Orthodox Serbs that were under the jurisdiction of the restored Serbian Patriarchate. Patriarch Makarije was succeeded by other members of the Sokolović family—Antonije (1571–1575), and, alternating with one another, Gerasim and Savatije (1575–1586/7).³⁴

The Patriarchate of Peć organized a proficient and full-scale revival of medieval Serbian cults and, in parallel, obtained the Sublime Porte's permission to restore fully or partially many demolished or damaged churches and monasteries. Based on the tradition of medieval Serbia, the Patriarchate of Peć was largely perceived, especially by the Christian Orthodox Serbs in Kosovo and Metohija, as a structural continuation of medieval Serbia that through its chancery, financial and judicial functions became instrumental in preserving both religious and ethnic identity.

The self-governing church communities (*crkvene opštine*), under the auspices of local bishops, became the pillar of the everyday life of both rural and urban members of the Serbian *millet*. The patriarchs had legal authority over certain trade guilds in towns, and disputes within the Serbian *millet* were usually settled through the combined implementation of common law, patriarchal decrees and the Code of Emperor Stefan Dušan (*Dušanov zakonik*), the most enduring legal document of medieval Serbia, used by various Serbian communities until the late eighteenth century.

³³ Radovan Samardjitch (Radovan Samardžić), *Mehmed-Pasha Sokolovitch* (Lausanne: L'Age d'Homme, 1994); also available is a Turkish translation of this important historical biography.

³⁴ The list of patriarchs of Peć with precise dates of their rule in D. T. Bataković, ed., *Histoire du peuple serbe* (Lausanne: L'Age d'Homme, 2005), 112 (list established by A. Fotić).

Epic poetry, spread widely over the centuries by gifted bards playing the *gusle* (one-stringed violin), sent a powerful emotional and political message. The epic ballads, with the Kosovo covenant as their central theme, immortalized national heroes and rulers, both medieval and pre-modern, thus cultivating the spirit of defiance and nurturing the hope of forthcoming liberation from Ottoman domination. Epic poems about the Battle of Kosovo and its heroes described the tragic destiny of the last Nemanjićs, the heroism of Prince Lazar and his valiant knight Miloš Obilić, the assassin of the Ottoman Sultan Murad at the Battle of Kosovo. The treachery of Vuk Branković, Prince Lazar's son-in-law, became a symbolic justification for the tragic consequences of the Battle of Kosovo.³⁵

According to the epic legend, on the eve of the Battle of Kosovo in 1389, Prince Lazar chose the heavenly kingdom over the earthly one, freedom over slavery. It was described in the epic song the *Downfall of the Serbian Empire*, considered as “perhaps the best-known summing up of the whole Kosovo myth; and Lazar's choice is, of course, ‘a repetition and the periphrasis of similar points made in Serbian historical literature in the Middle Ages’.”³⁶ Transcending their real historical context, many of these ballads, highly popular among the rural population, were sung, as testified by foreign travellers, throughout Serb-inhabited lands, from Montenegro, Herzegovina, Bosnia and Slavonia to Croatia and Dalmatia, and from southern Hungary to Slavic Macedonia.

Demographic profiles: Urban and rural society

The urban landscape of Kosovo and Metohija under the Ottomans was mainly shaped by Islam and its culture. Most of the Orthodox churches in the towns were converted to mosques, and many new mosques were erected soon after the establishment of the Ottoman administration, from Priština and Vučitrn to Zvečan and Prizren. Even several of about a dozen Roman Catholic churches, built under the Nemanjićs mostly for the colonies of Saxon miners and Ragusan merchants in Novo Brdo, Stari Trg, Trepča and Janjevo, were gradually converted to mosques. Nevertheless, the Roman Catholic communities headed by local chaplains remained in the area and

³⁵ Ivan Božić, “Neverstvo Vuka Brankovića” in Ivan Božić & Vojislav J. Djurić, eds., *Le Prince Lazare* (Belgrade: Filozofski fakultet, 1975).

³⁶ Svetozar Koljević, “The Battle of Kosovo in its Epic Mosaic” in *Kosovo. Legacy*, 128. Additional comprehensive analysis is available in Svetozar Koljević, *The Epic in the Making* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980).

were additionally strengthened by Roman Catholic Albanians newly settled in some urban centers.³⁷

Analysis of the earliest Ottoman registers shows that the demographic composition of Kosovo and Metohija did not alter much during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The small-in-number Muslim population consisted largely of members of the Ottoman administration and military, essential in maintaining order, whereas Eastern Orthodox Christians continued to predominate in rural areas. Kosovo and parts of Metohija were registered in 1455 under the name *Vilayeti Vlk*, after Vuk Branković who once ruled this vast area. Some 75,000 inhabitants lived in 590 registered villages.³⁸ A place-names analysis of some 8,500 personal names shows that Slav and Christian names were heavily predominant.³⁹

However, Christian Orthodox Serb tenant farmers who paid taxes and fulfilled additional obligations towards the Empire enjoyed legal protection, while other Serb-inhabited areas that provided auxiliary troops for the Ottoman army (*voynuk*, *martolos*) or secured bridges, forests and mountain passes, enjoyed partial or complete tax exemption as well as a certain degree of local self-government. Many dues paid in money, labour and kind set aside, the hardest for the Christian Serbs was the form of taxation known as *devşirme* — healthy teenage male children were taken away from their parents, converted to Islam and trained to serve in the janissary corps of the Ottoman army or assigned to various kinds of services in the administration.⁴⁰

A renewal of patriarchal forms of life within the new political and social framework was characteristic of the Christian Orthodox Serbs in the rural areas of Kosovo-Metohija. Many Serbs accepted the so-called *Vlach* (cattle-breeding) status to avoid that of tenant farmers, while the Christian Albanians, being cattle-breeding nomads during previous centuries, continued to live almost autonomously in the mountain areas bordering on Albania. Settlements with population bearing Albanian names were registered mostly beyond the boundaries of what today is Metohija, i.e. west of Djakovica. An analysis of the names in the Sanjak of Scutari in the sixteenth century shows that those of Slav origin predominated among the Christians. In Peć, sixty-eight percent of the population had Slav names, in

³⁷ Zirojević, “Les premiers siècles”, 53–57.

³⁸ Miloš Macura, *Naselja i stanovništvo. Oblasti Brankovića 1455* (Belgrade: SANU, 2001).

³⁹ *Istorija srpskog naroda*, vol. II (Belgrade: SKZ, 1982), 260–265; Bogdanović, *Knjiga o Kosovu*, 72.

⁴⁰ Hasan Kaleshi, “Kosovo pod turskom vlašću” in M. Maletić, ed., *Kosovo nekad i sad (Kosova dikur e sot)* (Belgrade: Književne novine, 1973), 145–176.

the Suho Grlo area — fifty-two percent, in the Donja Klina area — fifty percent, and around the monastery of Dečani — sixty-four percent, while other names were common Christian ones frequent among Serbs as well.⁴¹

From the mid-sixteenth century the process of Islamization of the Albanians became very intense in the regions adjacent to Kosovo-Metohija, among the powerful tribes of northern and central Albania. Having converted to Islam, a process which probably acquired larger proportions only in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries (especially in the north of today's Albania), the Albanians gradually became part of the influential ruling class in the Ottoman Empire enjoying distinct social and political privileges. The increasing number of Islamized Albanians holding highest or high-ranking positions at the Sublime Porte generated a similar process on the local level in Kosovo-Metohija: Albanians increasingly replaced Islamized Slavs, ethnic Turks or ethnic Arabs in the provincial administration. Christian Serbs and Muslim Albanians, now divided by religion and religion-based privileges, gradually grew into two opposed social and political groups.⁴²

The Ottoman sources show that between 1520 and 1535 only 700 of 19,614 households in the Vučitrn district were Muslim (about 3.5 percent), with 359 (2.0 percent) in the Prizren district. In areas beyond the geographic borders of Kosovo and Metohija, in the Scutari and Dukagjin districts, Muslims accounted for 4.6 percent of the population. According to an analysis of names registered by the census of the Dukagjin district, Albanian settlements did not become predominant until south of Djakovica, whilst the ethnic composition of Prizren and its area remained basically unchanged during the sixteenth century.⁴³ The Christian Orthodox Serbs, as recorded both by later Ottoman censuses and Western travellers, remained the predominant ethnic group until the late seventeenth century. The Ro-

⁴¹ Zirojević, "Les premiers siècles", 70–71; Bataković, *Kosovo Chronicles*, 41–42.

⁴² Cf. Georg Stadtmüller, "Die Islamisierung bei der Albanern", *Jahrbuch für die Geschichte Osteuropas* (Munich: Osteuropa-Institut München, 1955), 404–429; Hasan Kaleshi, "Das Türkische Vordringen auf dem Balkan und die Islamisierung: Faktoren für die Erhaltung der ethnischen und nationalen Existenz des albanischen Volkes" in Peter Bartl & Hans Glassl, eds., *Südosteuropa unter dem Halbmon* (Munich: Oldenburg, 1975), 127–138.

⁴³ Zirojević, "Les premiers siècles", 66–73; Olga Zirojević, "Prizren u defteru iz 1571. godine", *Istorijski časopis XXXVIII* (Belgrade 1991), 243–254. Cf. also Selami Pulaha, *Popullsia Shqiptare e Kosovës gjatë shek. XV–XVI* (Tirana 1984). On economic aspects, see Hasan Kaleshi, "Jedna prizrenska i dve vučitrske kanunname", *Glasnik Muzeja Kosova i Metohije II* (Priština 1957), 292–293.

man Catholic archbishop of Bar, Marino Bizzi, reported in 1610 that Kosovo is full of “schismatic”, i.e. Serb Christian Orthodox, villages.⁴⁴

It was only after the wars and resettlements in the late seventeenth century that members of different northern Albanian clans (Krasniqi, Beri-sha, Gashi, Shala, Sopi, Krieziu, Thsaç, Bitiqi) began to settle on the abandoned estates of Metohija in more significant numbers, advancing towards Kosovo, while small numbers of settlers came from other Albanian clans (Kastrati, Mertura, Klimenti, Mzi, Drushtina, Hoti, Mertura, Shkrelia). According to an estimate, 704 clans and extended families, with about 4,446 households, settled in Kosovo proper.⁴⁵

The Great Serb Migration of 1690: Generator of demographic change

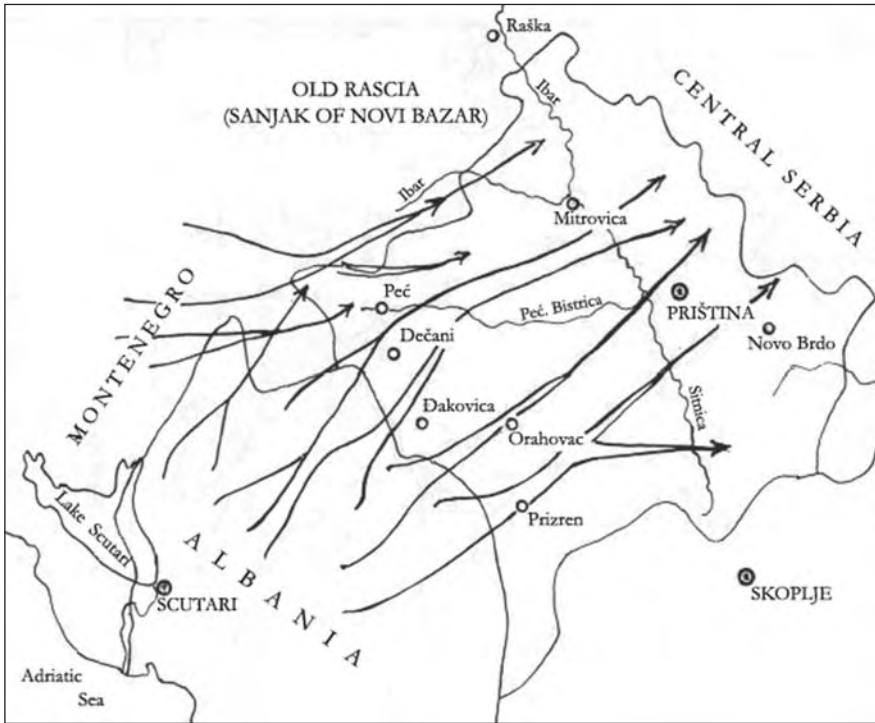
A Serb-Albanian conflict broke out during the Holy League’s war against the Ottoman Empire (1683–1690). The Christian Orthodox Serbs joined the Habsburg troops in their military campaign in Serbia as a separate Christian militia (*Militia Rasciana, Razische Feld-Miliz, Irreguläre Truppen*). With the exception of the brave Kelmendi tribe of Christian, Roman Catholic faith, the majority of Albanians — as newly-converted Muslims — took the side of the Sultan’s army against the military coalition of Orthodox and Roman Catholic Christians. Both Habsburg troops and Serbian militia, led by local guerrilla leaders, were defeated by the freshly recruited Ottoman troops in the decisive battle that took place at Kačanik in 1690, closing the strategic pass between Kosovo and Macedonia.⁴⁶

After the Christian defeat, tens of thousands of Serb families, headed by the Patriarch of Peć Arsenije III Crnojević, withdrew from Kosovo and Metohija and neighbouring areas in fear of reprisals. A local church chronicler recorded that “in the spring of 1690 the patriarch — Arsenije Crnojević of Peć — summoned a vast number of Serbs, 37,000 families [10 to 30 members on average], and they all set off to join the Imperial

⁴⁴ Franjo Rački, “Izveštaj barskog nadbiskupa Marina Bizzija o svojem putovanju god. 1610. po Arbanaškoj i Staroj Srbiji”, *Starine JAZUXX* (Zagreb: Jugoslavenska akademija znanosti i umjetnosti, 1880), 50–156, quotation on p. 121. Cf. also Marko Jačov, *Le missioni cattoliche nei Balcani durantela guerra di Candia (1645–1669)*, vols. I–II (Città del Vaticano: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1991).

⁴⁵ Atanasije Urošević, *Etnički procesi na Kosovu tokom turske vladavine*, Posebna izdanja, vol. DLXXVII, Odeljenje društvenih nauka, vol. 94 (Belgrade: SANU, 1987), 19.

⁴⁶ Cf. detailed accounts in Rajko L. Veselinović, *Arsenije III Crnojević u istoriji i književnosti*, Posebna izdanja, vol. CLI (Belgrade: SAN, 1949); Dušan J. Popović, *Velika seoba Srba* (Belgrade: SKZ, 1954); Gligor Stanojević, *Srbija u vreme Bečkog rata* (Belgrade: Nolit, 1976).



Migration of Albanian tribes to Kosovo, 17th–18th century

[Habsburg] army. In the same war there was large-scale looting and dislocation of Christians and plundering of all the Serbian lands. Monasteries, towns, and villages were abandoned, and some were burned down.”⁴⁷

Fearing large-scale vengeance and reprisals similar to those organized against the Kosovo Serbs, many other Christian Serbs — from central and eastern Serbia — fled northward to cross the Danube and the Sava rivers into the neighbouring Habsburg Empire. In Metohija and Kosovo, many previously Serb-inhabited villages around the towns of Peć, Djakovica, Vučitrn, Trepča and Priština were destroyed in systematic reprisals carried out by the Ottoman force composed of Tatars and Muslim Albanians. At least 300 villages, as recorded by Austrian sources, ceased to exist. However, a certain percentage of Kosovo Serbs, having fled into the mountains, survived the reprisals and, after the Sultan proclaimed amnesty, resettled the surviving households, mostly in Kosovo proper.

The Great Migration of Christian Orthodox Serbs in 1690 was a turning point in their history. In Kosovo and Metohija alone, several towns

⁴⁷ Ljubomir Stojanović, *Stari srpski zapisi i natpisi* (Belgrade: SKA, 1905), vol. III, Nos. 5283 and 5302.

and a number of previously Serbian villages were completely abandoned. The Christian Serb population was additionally decimated by plague, and whatever had remained after that by the reprisals carried out by Ottoman irregular troops. The Serbs that emigrated north of the Danube were resettled in the Habsburg region bordering Serbia — in southern Hungary (today's Vojvodina). The new churches they built along the Danube in Habsburg Empire were named after those left behind in the old Kosovo homeland. The presence of Kosovo Serbs was recorded in the Buda area subsequent to 1700.⁴⁸

The two wars that followed were just as detrimental to Christians in Kosovo and Metohija. The Habsburg-Ottoman war (1737–1739) caused another wave of forced migration. Namely, a large-scale uprising broke out again in Kosovo and Metohija, engaging some 10,000 Serbs. They were joined by Montenegrin tribes, and Habsburg envoys even stirred up the Climenti (Kelmendi), a Roman Catholic tribe from northern Albania, to join forces against the Ottomans. In the wake of the Habsburg defeat in 1739, thousands of Serbs, led by the new patriarch of Peć Arsenije IV Jovanović-Šakabenta, fled to southern Hungary followed by their Christian Albanian allies.⁴⁹ Some of the landed property abandoned by Christian Orthodox Serbs was gradually settled by Muslim Albanian nomadic tribes, whose obligations towards the Ottoman Porte were rather different from those of Christian Serbs.

Islamization, new settlement, Albanization

Settlement of Muslim Albanians first in Metohija and then in Kosovo proceeded at a slow pace. The number of Christian Orthodox Serbs in the region was still considerable while the refugees began to return to their homes after the large-scale Ottoman reprisals had lost momentum. This new Albanian settlement in Kosovo and Metohija usually took place in waves of varied scale and intensity: once the abandoned land or rich estate

⁴⁸ Radmila Tričković, "La Grande migration des Serbes" in *Kosovo-Metohija dans l'histoire serbe*, 97–107.

⁴⁹ *Ob, in the year of Our Lord 1737 there was great unrest when the Germans took Niš [...] After came the pasha called by the name Koporilu Oglu [...] and took Niš again [...] At that time Serbian Patriarch Arsenije the Fourth fled. O, is there any way in which the Christian faithful did not suffer then and any torture by which they were not tortured? It is not possible at this time to write of this for fear of the Turks. Then Kosovo was plundered, as well. What else can I say: it was not in the days of Diocletian (when the Christians were horribly persecuted) as it is now, for God has unleashed it because of our sins. Recorded by Petar Andrejić (Lj. Stojanović, Stari srpski zapisi i natpisi (Belgrade & Novi Sad: SANU, Narodna biblioteka Srbije & Matica srpska, 1987), vol. V, Nos. 7734 and 7737.*

was seized from its previous Slav owner, fellow Albanian tribesmen were brought in to protect the vast expanses needed for their large herds and for potential settlement of their large extended families. In this population shift the social aspect played an important role: as everywhere else in the Ottoman Empire, cattle-breeders were constantly in conflict with peasant tenant framers.

The emerging conflict was additionally fuelled by a social and religious dimension: due only to the fact that he was Muslim by religion, an Albanian cattle-breeder was allowed to carry a gun and could, without fear of punishment, persecute and rob an Orthodox Christian, in most cases a Serbian peasant, deprived of any means of self-protection. The series of Ottoman wars against the Habsburgs during the eighteenth century weakened the central authority in Constantinople, inevitably giving rise to anarchy on both the central and peripheral levels of Ottoman power and administration. Prior to the nineteenth century tribal-controlled and Muslim-inspired anarchy acquired large proportions, spreading all over Turkey-in-Europe, including Kosovo-Metohija.⁵⁰

Conversion of Christian Serbs to Islam took place in the seventeenth and first half of the eighteenth centuries, when Muslim Albanians began to exert a stronger influence on political events in the region. Many Christian Serbs accepted Islam in order to survive, waiting in vain for the right moment to re-embrace the faith of their ancestors. The Islamized Serbs preserved their language and observed their old customs (especially *slava* — the family patron-saint day — and Easter) through several generations. However, several generations later, the strong Albanian environment pressed them into adopting Albanian dress and into using the Albanian language outside their narrow family circle for safety reasons. Thus a kind of social mimicry developed which enabled the converts to survive, i.e. to avoid further discrimination for not being in conformity with the prevailing social framework.

The enduring process of religious conversion also led to Albanization, which, however, did not begin until after the Islamized Serbs, gradually divested of their previous ethnic identity, began to marry girls from Albanian clans and eventually became absorbed by the Albanian-speaking Muslim community. Christian Orthodox Serbs used to call their freshly Albanized compatriots *Arnautasi* until the memory of their Serbian origin waned completely, though old customs and legends about their ancestors continued to be passed down from generation to generation.⁵¹

⁵⁰ *Kosovo-Metohija dans l'histoire serbe*, 113–139.

⁵¹ Jovan Cvijić, *La péninsule balkanique. Géographie humaine* (Paris: A. Colin, 1918), 343–355.

For a long time the Albanized Muslim Serbs (*Arnautasi*) felt themselves as being neither Turk nor Albanian, because their customs and traditions set them apart, and yet, they did not feel themselves as being Serb either, the Serbs considering the Christian Orthodox faith as their foremost national attribute. Even so, many *Arnautasi* retained their old surnames until the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The district of Drenica and the area of Prekoruplje (stretching from Klina to Lapušnik and Mališevo) as well as the Medjuvodje area in Metohija, converted to Islam in the course of the eighteenth century, but continued to be bilingual into the early twentieth century. In the Drenica area, set between the plains of Metohija and Kosovo, the *Arnautasi* bore surnames pointing to their Serbian origin, such as Dokić, Velić, Marušić, Zonić, Račić, Gecić. The situation was similar in Peć and its surroundings, where many Islamized and Albanized Serbs carried characteristically Serbian surnames: Stepanović, Bojković, Dekić, Lekić, Stojković, etc.⁵²

The eminent geographer and anthropologist Jovan Cvijić, who traveled across Kosovo-Metohija during the last decades of Ottoman rule, was witness to social mimicry among the Serbs: “When a stranger comes to a Serbian home in Metohija, the host will speak Albanian so as not to reveal his origin. But a person familiar with this practice will have no trouble seeing whether the house he came to is Serbian or not, at least from some old and well-kept national costume of a Serb woman. Some Serbs of Metohija were welcomed and stayed overnight in an Albanian house, and their Albanian host had no idea that he was having Serbs in his home. Through this mimicry of appearance the people avoided persecution and violence. But this led directly to conversion to Islam and Albanization. There are families that are only half-Islamized (in the vicinity of Peć, as well as in Gora region near Prizren), where only men accepted Islam while women kept the [Christian Orthodox religion]”.⁵³

The eastern parts of Kosovo and Metohija, with their compact Serbian settlements, were the last to undergo Islamization. Earlier Islamization in the Upper Morava Valley and the Izmornik area is identified in the early eighteenth century, while the last wave took place in the 1870s. Slav toponyms of many presently Albanian villages in Kosovo indicated that the Serbs had lived there in the previous centuries, while in some places Christian Orthodox Serbian cemeteries were shielded against desecrators

⁵² Todor P. Stanković, *Putne beleške po Staroj Srbiji 1871–1898* (Belgrade: Štamparija Dj. Munca i M. Karića, 1910), 111–140.

⁵³ Jovan Cvijić, *Osnove za geografiju geologiju Makedonije i Stare Srbije*, vol. III (Belgrade: SKA, 1911), 1162–1165.

by local Muslim Albanians aware that those were the graves of their own ancestors.⁵⁴

In geographical terms, Kosovo-and-Metohija was considered an integral part of Serbia as recorded by both domestic and foreign sources during the first three centuries of Ottoman domination. In 1830 the Principality of Serbia was established as an autonomous state under Ottoman suzerainty. The Principality covered the northern part of the medieval Kingdom of Serbia, while its southern part remained under full Ottoman control. The name Old Serbia for this southern portion of medieval Serbia first appeared shortly before 1830. Old Serbia encompassed not only Kosovo-Metohija, but also the area of medieval Raška (Rascia) including the former *Sanjak* of Novi Bazar, the Skopje (Uskub) area and today's north-western Slav-inhabited Macedonia. The name Old Serbia was also used by both Serbian and European scholars and travel writers to describe the heartland of medieval Serbia. It was only after 1877, when the *Vilayet* of Kosovo was formed, that the term Old Serbia began to be associated with this Ottoman administrative unit of similar extent.

Growing tribal privileges vs. decaying Ottoman system

Prior to the Serbian Revolution (1804–1813) which led to the establishment of autonomous Serbia (1830), the Kosovo-Metohija area was governed by local Ottoman governors, mostly outlawed Albanian pashas. General conditions under which the Empire's Christian subjects lived deteriorated apace with the deterioration of Ottoman central authority. Already assigned by the Ottoman theocratic system to a lower social class (*reaya*) than Muslims, they were now exposed to a re-feudalization as a result of the Ottoman administrative and economic decline. The *timar* (*sipahi*) system was turning into a *çiftlik* system, especially harmful to the Christian Orthodox population, predominantly having the status of tenant farmers. Local Muslim Albanian governors in the districts and provinces covering Kosovo-Metohija became hereditary feudal lords as early as the eighteenth century. Albanians of Muslim faith were tolerated by the Sublime Porte as feudal lords or as scofflaw regents because they were seen as promoting the Ottoman order based on *Shari'ah* and tribal privileges. Their pro-Ottoman culture made them useful even though they corrupted the Ottoman administration. In the early nineteenth century they ruled as semi-independent

⁵⁴ Atanasije Urošević, *Kosovo* (Belgrade: SANU, 1965); Slijepčević, *Srpsko-arbanaški odnosi*, 95–127.

provincial governors, virtually uncontrolled by the central government in Constantinople.⁵⁵

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 Kosovo-Metohija Serbs were stuck between local outlaws relentlessly persecuting them and frequent Albanian revolts against the central authorities' attempts at modernization. In that situation, plundering and violence became the prevailing social and political conditions in the area.⁵⁶

Serb cultural activity was limited to church-cultural communities which, supported by the Serbian Principality, made additional efforts to organize a school system for the Serbian children. At several monasteries and churches (Gračanica, Visoki Dečani, Devič, Duboki Potok, Vračevo, Draganac), additional buildings were constructed to accommodate the growing number of students of monastic and, subsequently, secular schools. Religious schools were established in all major towns (Priština, Peć, Mitrovica, Vučitrn, Gnjilane and Djakovica), while the best private schools, funded by church communities and guilds, were located at Prizren, Vučitrn, Mitrovica, and the villages of Donja Jasenovo and Kovači.⁵⁷

After the Patriarchate of Peć was abolished in 1776, all the Serb bishoprics came under the jurisdiction of the Greek-controlled Patriarchate of Constantinople. Nevertheless, several Serb bishops remained in office. In the early decades of the nineteenth century, the establishment of new Serb schools was urged by the dynamic Serb metropolitans Janičije and Hadži Zaharije of the Raška-Prizren Diocese. When in 1830 the Prizren bishopric chair was taken over by Greek bishops, efforts were made, in particular under Greek Metropolitan Ignatius (1840–1849), to open Tzintzar (Hellenized Vlach) schools in different urban centres, where lessons in Greek would also be attended by Serbian children.⁵⁸ According to the available

⁵⁵ 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.

⁵⁶ For more, see Vladimir Stojančević, *Južnoslovenski narodi u Osmanskom Carstvu od Jedrenskog mira 1829. do Pariskog kongresa 1856. godine* (Belgrade: PTT, 1971).

⁵⁷ Jagoš K. Djilas, *Srpske škole na Kosovu od 1856. do 1912. godine* (Priština: J. Djilas, 1969).

⁵⁸ 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.

data, in the 1860s several dozen primary schools in Metohija and Kosovo were attended by at least 1,300 Serbian students. A number of talented students from Kosovo and Metohija were trained as teachers in Serbia from the early 1860s, owing to generous scholarships granted by the wealthy Prizren Serb merchant Sima Andrejević Igumanov (1804–1882), the founder of the Theological School (*Bogoslovija*) in Prizren in 1871.⁵⁹

According to reliable Serbian sources, the first half of the nineteenth century in Kosovo-Metohija was marked by spiralling violence mostly directed against the Christian Orthodox Serb population, resulting in their occasional conversion to Islam and increasing emigration to the Principality of Serbia.⁶⁰ Appalling Serb testimonies of both religious and social discrimination against them, perpetrated mostly by Muslim Albanian outlaws, were additionally confirmed by both Western and Russian travelers.⁶¹

The Serbian ruler Prince Mihailo Obrenović's (1860–1868) and his Prime Minister Ilija Garašanin's ambitious plans for an all-Christian uprising in Turkey-in-Europe in the late 1860s paved the way for future cooperation with 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 either the Kosovo renegade pashas and their lawless clans or on the improvement of the difficult position of the persecuted Christian Serb population.⁶²

The decrease of Serb population caused by tribal anarchy and forced migration was partially compensated by a high birth rate in the rural areas. In rural areas, the Christian Serbs, as well as the Muslim Albanians, lived in extended families (*zadruga*) comprising several generations and with up to as many as eighty members, but twenty to forty on average. The demographic structure was different in the urban population. According to the renowned Russian scholar A. F. Hilferding who conducted extensive, highly reliable research on his voyage to the region in 1858, the composition of the main towns was as follows: Peć — 4,000 Muslim and 800 Christian

D., 1928); Idem, *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).

⁵⁹ Vladimir Bovan, *Sima A. Igumanov. Život i delo* (Priština & Prizren: Narodna i Univerzitetska biblioteka "Ivo Andrić" & Srpska Pravoslavna Bogoslovija Svetog Kirila i Metodija, 2004).

⁶⁰ For more, see Dušan T. Bataković, ed., *Savremenici o Kosovu i Metohiji 1852–1912* (Belgrade: SKZ, 1988).

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² Sadulla Brestovci, *Marrëdhëniet shqiptare-serbo-malazeze 1830–1878* (Prishtina: Instituti Albanologjik i Prishtinës, 1983).

Orthodox families; Priština — 1,200 Muslim and 300 Christian Orthodox families; Prizren — 3,000 Muslim, 900 Christian Orthodox and 100 Roman Catholic families.⁶³

In the 1860s the British travellers M. McKenzie and A. P. Irby recorded that Serb villages were not the only target of Albanian outlawed raiders. During their visit to Vučitrn, a Serb priest explained, 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* [policemen] — what can he effect? There are here but 200 Christian houses, and from 400 to 500 Mussulman [Muslim], so the Arnauts [Albanians] have 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.”⁶⁴

The demographic structure of Old Serbia (Kosovo, Metohija, the former Sanjak of Novi Bazar and present-day north-western Macedonia) prior to the Eastern Crisis (1875–1878), according to Austro-Hungarian military intelligence sources in 1871, 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.⁶⁵

Two wars that Serbia and Montenegro, supported by the Russian Empire, waged 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 from the liberated territories of 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

⁶³ Aleksandar F. Giljferding, *Putovanje po Hercegovini, Bosni i Staroj Srbiji* (Sarajevo: Veselin Masleša, 1972), 154–165 (Serbian translation from the Russian original of 1859).

⁶⁴ 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.

⁶⁵ Peter Kukulj, Major im Generalstabe, *Das Fürstentum Serbien und Türkisch-Serbien (Stara Srbia, Alt-Serbien). Eine Militärisch-geographische Skizze (Im Manuskript gedruckt)*. Wien. Aus der kaiserlich-königlich Hof- und Staatsdruckerei 1871, 147–149.

Kosovo), into the newly-liberated territory. Their exact number, however, has never been determined. Prior to the Second Serbo-Ottoman War (1877–78), Albanians were the majority population in some areas of Sanjak of Niš (Toplica region), while from the Serb majority district of Vranje Albanian-inhabited villages were emptied after the 1877–78 war.⁶⁶ Reluctant to accept the 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.⁶⁷

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*. In addition to Christian Orthodox Serbs and Muslim Albanians as the two major ethnic groups, its population included significant numbers of Muslim Slavs, Bulgarians, ethnic Turks, Hellenized Vlachs and Greeks. According to diverse data, in the Vilayet of Kosovo, with Priština (until 1888) and Skoplje (1888–1912) as its successive seats, Albanians accounted for less than one half of the population until the late 1870s.⁶⁸

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 area), and in the region of Rascia (former Sanjak

⁶⁶ 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 V. Stojančević, ed., *Serbia and the Albanians in the 19th and early 20th Centuries*, Academic Conferences, vol. LIII, Department of Historical Sciences, No 15 (Belgrade: Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, 1990), 241–242).

⁶⁷ Radoslav Pavlović, “Seobe Srba i Arbanasa u ratovima 1876. i 1877–1878. godine”, *Glasnik Etnografskog instituta* 4–6 (Belgrade 1955–57), 53–104.

⁶⁸ 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), with the Sanjak of Prizren, previously part of the Vilayet of Monastir (Bitolj, Bitola), included into it of 1897. As in previous administrative reorganizations, present-day Kosovo and Metohija encompassed mostly the areas of the *sanjaks* of Peć, Priština and Prizren.

of Novi Bazar). In total, there were 390,000 ethnic Albanians and 207,000 Christian Orthodox Serbs in the whole of Old Serbia.⁶⁹

Until the Eastern Crisis (1875–1878), the Muslim Albanians were wavering between being generally loyal to the Ottoman Empire and defending their own local interests which required opposition to the measures implemented by the central authorities. Defending their old privileges, the Muslim Albanians became, just as the Muslim Slavs in Bosnia, a serious obstacle to the modernization of the Ottoman Empire during its declining period.⁷⁰ 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 and based in Prizren. The Albanian League called for a solution to the Albanian national question within the borders of the Ottoman Empire: it was conservative Muslim groups that prevailed in the League's leadership and commanded 16,000 men-strong paramilitary forces operating in several Ottoman vilayets.

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 combined religious and national frustration were the Christian Serbs that remained under Ottoman rule, seen as the decisive pillar of support for the aspirations of the neighbouring Balkan states. Dissatisfied with the Porte's concessions to major 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.⁷¹

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 (*Bogoslovija*) in Prizren. A first-hand account of the Albanian League meetings, it reported that Albanians were determined to “expel the Serbs and Montenegrins back to the former borders ... and if they return, to put these infidels [Kosovo-Metohija Serbs] to the sword”.⁷² Well-informed and Albanian-speaking, Stavrić added that the Serbian community in Prizren was forced by a member of Albanian League “on the

⁶⁹ Bataković, *Kosovo Chronicles*, 134–137.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 83–88.

⁷¹ Stavro Skendi, *The Albanian National Awakening 1878–1912* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1967), 31–53.

⁷² Arhiv Srbije, Ministarstvo inostranih dela, Političko odeljenje [Archives of Serbia, Belgrade, 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.

13th of this month [...] 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?"⁷³

Nevertheless, a revived loyalty to the Sublime Porte emerged among the Albanian Muslims only a few years later as an ecstatic response to the Sultan's proclaimed pan-Islamic policy. Lacking the component of Islamic fanaticism, the new policy of the Sultan, who assumed the title of religious leader (*caliph*), meant to Muslim Albanians in particular the renewal of their tribal privileges and autonomy as well as both political and social predominance over their immediate neighbours, the Christian Slavs. Thus the Muslim Albanians in the western Balkans were encouraged by the Sultan and Caliph Abdülhamid II to relentlessly suppress all Christian-led unrest as a potential threat to the internal security of the Empire's European provinces.⁷⁴

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 additionally reinforced both by the Pan-Islamic policy and by fears of European-style reforms. During the Greek-Ottoman War in 1897, according to confidential Austro-Hungarian reports, the Kosovo-Metohija Muslim Albanian volunteers demonstrated absolute solidarity with the Ottomans, while their patriotism, directed against Christians, was easily transformed into religious fanaticism.⁷⁵

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

⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ Cf. Peter Bartl, *Die albanischen Muslime zur Zeit der nationalen Unabhängigkeitsbewegung (1878–1912)* (Wiesbaden: O. Harrassowitz, 1968).

⁷⁵ Haus, Hoff und Staatsarchiv, Wien, Politisches Archiv, vol. XII, Türkei, carton 170, 1901, *Studie des konsul Simon Joanovic über der Sandschak von Novi Pazar.*

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 was 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 of 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 case of “invented tradition”, but with an important difference from the similar pattern applied elsewhere in Europe: the “inventors” and propagators of the “invented tradition” were not members of the national elite but their foreign protectors.⁷⁶

Similarly to other belated nations (*verspätete Nation*), when confronted with rival nationalisms 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: there the Christians, mostly Serbs, were the principal victims of political discrimination and the Muslims, in Kosovo-Metohija mostly Albanians, were their persecutors.⁷⁷

False rumours that the Serbs were going to rise to arms in Kosovo on the very day Serbia was proclaimed a kingdom in March 1882 resulted in the establishment of a court-martial in Priština. For the five years of its uninterrupted activity, based on suspicion rather than hard evidence, roughly 7,000 Kosovo Serbs were sentenced for “sedition”, while another 300 were sentenced to between six and hundred-and-one years' hard labour. 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. Only in 1888, due to the joint mediation of Russian and British diplomacies, were some of the surviving Kosovo Serb convicts eventually pardoned.⁷⁸

⁷⁶ Hobsbawm, “Introduction: Inventing Traditions”. Cf. also Milorad Ekmečić, *Stvaranje Jugoslavije 1790-1918*, vol. II (Belgrade: Prosveta, 1989), 451-455

⁷⁷ *Kosovo-Metohija dans l'histoire*, 192-215.

⁷⁸ *Istorija srpskog naroda*, vol. VI-1 (Belgrade: SKZ, 1983), 323-326. Cf. also Janićije Popović, *Život Srba na Kosovu i Metohiji* (Belgrade: Narodna knjiga, 1987), 247-248.

Kosovo Serbs: Discrimination and persecution 1882–1912

In 1882 Sima Andrejević Igumanov published a terrifying testimony: *The Current Regrettable Situation in Old Serbia* (*Sadašnje nesretno stanje u Staroj Srbiji*), a book of credible and verifiable data on harassment, discrimination and atrocities committed by the Turks and Muslim Albanians in the early phase of the court-martial's activity. Fearful that Serbia would fail to pay enough attention to the sufferings of her co-nationals in



The Vilayet of Kosovo, 1877–1912

Turkey-in-Europe, Sima A. Igumanov attempted to draw the public eye to the new wave of ethnically and religiously motivated violence:

“Our homeland [Old Serbia] has been turned into hell by dark crazed bloodsuckers and masses of melting Asian tyrants. Banditry, violence, deletion, 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.”⁷⁹

A mixture of religious, socially-based antagonisms and growing national rivalry added to the intensity of the Serb-Albanian conflict: “It is true

⁷⁹ Bataković, ed., *Savremenici*, 101.

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 difference: they fought the foreigner (the *Shkja*) because he coveted their land.”⁸⁰ 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.⁸¹

Serbia struggled to implement stronger diplomatic monitoring, to revive the issue of re-installing Serbian Metropolitans in both Prizren and Skoplje, as the first step to re-establish 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. To the network of Serbia's diplomatic missions in Turkey-in-Europe, a general consulate based in Skoplje (Uskub) covering the whole of the Vilayet of Kosovo was added in 1887, while in 1889, after a long delay, a Serb consulate was eventually established in Priština.⁸² The immediate response was Albanian-led anarchy

⁸⁰ “*Shkja* – plural *Shkje* – is the word the Albanians use for the Slavs. The derivation is from Latin *slavus* in the meaning of Slav.” (Quoted from Skendi, *Albanian National Awakening*, 202).

⁸¹ “*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.*” (Quoted from D. T. Bataković, “Mémoire du vice-consul de France à Skoplje (Uskub) sur les Albanais de Metohia de 1908” in *Miscellanea* 20 (Belgrade 1990), 112).

⁸² *Spomenica Stojana Novakovića* (Belgrade: SKZ, 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 Skoplje and Priština (while copies were circulated to the Legation of Serbia in Constantinople). Several thousand comprehensive documents stored in the Archive of the Serbian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (*Arhiv Srbije, Beograd, 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 additional three volumes edited by the archivist Branko Peruničić, *Pisma srpskih konzula iz Prištine 1890–1900* (Belgrade: Narodna knjiga, 1985); *Svedočanstvo o Kosovu 1901–1912* (Belgrade: Naučna knjiga, 1988); *Zulumi aga i begova u kosovskom vilajetu* (Belgrade: Nova, 1988). Cf. also diplomatic correspondence published in

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 Kosovo and Metohija to Serbia. The Russian consul to Prizren, T. Lisevich, in his evaluation of the anarchy in Kosovo and Metohija, concluded that the Muslim Albanians' goal was to cleanse all areas between Serbia and Montenegro and thus deprive Old Serbia of its Serbian character. Anti-Serbian feelings culminated in the murder of Serbian Consul Luka Marinković in Priština in June 1890. Based on information received from the Serbs of Priština, the Serbian government maintained that an Albanian conspiracy was responsible for the assassination, while the Sublime Porte sought to present the murder as an act of general Muslim antagonism towards Christian foreigners. His successors, including the greatest Serbian playwright Branislav Dj. Nušić, succeeded in getting the first Serbian bookshop started and sponsored the renovation of the primary and secondary Serbian school in Priština.⁸³

After the death of Meletios, the last Greek Metropolitan in Prizren, the concerted diplomatic effort of Belgrade and Cetinje, bolstered by the Russian Embassy in Constantinople, resulted in a Serb prelate, Dionisije Petrović (1896–1900), being appointed 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 for the Christian Serbs, opened new schools, renewed teaching staff, established new church-school communities, and coordinated all activities relating to important national affairs.⁸⁴

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

Zadužbine Kosova. Spomenici i znamenja srpskog naroda, eds. R. Samardžić, M. Vojvodić and D. T. Bataković, 607–738; Milan Rakić, *Konzulska pisma 1905–1911*, ed. Andrej Mitrović (Belgrade: Prosveta, 1985).

⁸³ D. T. Bataković, “Entrée dans la sphère d’intérêt de l’Europe“ in *Kosovo-Metohija dans l’histoire serbe*, 179–185.

⁸⁴ 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; *Istorijski srpskog naroda*, vol. VI-1 (Belgrade: SKZ, 1983), 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 whole of Vilayet of Kosovo (Old Serbia) was thus covered by the Serbian metropolitans of Raška-Prizren and Skoplje.

all Serb houses and shops in the town and sent fierce protests to the Porte, Serbia eventually gave up the idea altogether.⁸⁵

Systematic persecution against the Serbs in Kosovo, Metohija and Slavic-inhabited Macedonia, flaring from 1882, was an integral part of Sultan Abdülhamid II's pan-Islamic policy. Seeking to put an end to this situation, Serbian Envoy to Constantinople Stojan Novaković made a solitary effort of diplomatic pressure on the Sublime Porte in 1898/99. In his diplomatic note submitted to the Ottoman Foreign Minister, Novaković stressed that "crimes and robberies are daily occurrences, and the perpetrators not only remain unpunished, they are not even pursued 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, raiding 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 dare not complain."⁸⁶

Formal investigations by Ottoman authorities had no significant results, nor did they in any way improve the security of the Serb population in Old Serbia. Deprived of Russian support in Constantinople, the government in Belgrade accomplished nothing. A plan to submit a bilingual "Blue Book" of diplomatic correspondence on richly-documented Albanian violence against Serbs in Old Serbia to the 1899 International Peace Conference at Hague was prevented by Austria-Hungary, after the protest sent to King Alexander I Obrenović of Serbia, politically bound to Vienna by secret treaties. In the absence of official support, Serb refugees from Old Serbia and Slavic Macedonia sent a memorandum to the Conference, but their complaints about being systematically discriminated by Muslim Albanian outlaws were not put on the official agenda.⁸⁷ The policy of impunity of which the Muslim Albanians, under the auspices of Sultan Abdülhamid II himself, took full advantage in the 1880s and in particular the 1890s, gradu-

⁸⁵ D. T. Bataković, "Pokušaji otvaranja srpskog konzulata u Prištini 1898–1900", *Istorijski časopis XXXI* (1984), 249–250.

⁸⁶ *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 Etrangères MDCCCXCIX).

⁸⁷ 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.

ally turned into uncontrolled anarchy which was causing serious troubles for both the governor (*vali*) of Kosovo and the central government in Constantinople.⁸⁸

Western travel accounts from the very end of the nineteenth century vividly portray the precarious situation of the Christian Orthodox Serb population in Kosovo and Metohija and the neighbouring areas of Old Serbia (Vilayet of Kosovo):

“Of the rest of the Christian Servian [Serbian] population of Old Servia, for every nine who remain, one has fled in despair to Servia [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 Serbian 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 beginning of the herd, only due to lose it again. I tried to find out what 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 peasant, children of the soil, is tenant 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.”⁸⁹

A similar first-hand account was recorded by a notable American traveller:

“It would be difficult for the 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 well as Mohammedan Ghags [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 Servia. Even the frontier of Serbia proper is not regarded by these lawless mountain men. They often make raids

⁸⁸ *Pisma srpskih konzula iz Prištine 1890–1900, 185–187.*

⁸⁹ Henry N. Brailsford, *Macedonia. Its Races and their Future* (London: Methuen & Co, 1905), 275–276.

into Bulgaria when quartered as soldiers on the border. The 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 Kosovo 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."⁹⁰

A detailed list of Christian Serb households in the Diocese of Raška-Prizren, compiled in 1899 by Metropolitan Dionisije, 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, statistics show that the number of Serbs in villages had declined by at least one third from the time of the Eastern Crisis. 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 they were much fewer in small towns such as Džakovica (70) and Ferizović (20).⁹¹

Metohija, however, remained the main target of continuous ethnic cleansing of Christian Orthodox Serbs. Metropolitan Nićifor Perić negotiated in 1903 to entrust the administration of Dečani Monastery to the brotherhood of the Russian skete of St. John Chrysostom from Mount Athos. The Russian monks were brought with the hope that they would protect the Serbs in Metohija, deprived of both Russian and Serbian diplomatic protection, from the unrestricted oppression of Muslim Albanian outlaws, restore monastic life in the impoverished monastery and bar the growing influence of both Austro-Hungarian and Roman Catholic propaganda. As far as the protection of Christian Orthodox Serbs was concerned, Russian diplomacy was also expected to provide assistance. Dissensions that arose between Belgrade and St. Petersburg, and divisions among the Serbs of Metohija for and against the actions of the Russian monks now in charge of Dečani monastery had additional negative effects on Serb national and cultural action in Metohija.⁹²

⁹⁰ Frederick Moore, *The Balkan Trail* (London: Smith, Elder & Co, 1906), 223–224.

⁹¹ St. Novaković, *Balkanska pitanja i manje istorijsko-političke beleške o Balkanskom poluostrvu 1886–1905* (Belgrade: SKA, 1906), 515–527; *Prepiska o arbanaskim nasiljima u Staroj Srbiji* (Belgrade: SKA, 1899), 136 (bilingual French and Serbian edition).

⁹² For more detail, see D. T. Bataković, *Dečansko pitanje* (Belgrade: Prosveta & Istorijski institute, 1989; 2nd ed. 2007) (with the earlier literature).

According to Austro-Hungarian statistics of 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). These statistics, however, should not be completely trusted, given difficulties in collecting precise data and having in mind the Dual Monarchy's strong political interest in supporting Albanians at the time of data collection — at the very beginning of the Great Powers' reform action in Old Serbia and Macedonia, the three so-called "Macedonian Vilayets" (1903–1908). Within this international effort comprising gendarmerie from most European Powers, only the Serb-inhabited areas of the Vilayet of Kosovo were excluded from the reform project as a result of Vienna's adamant demand.⁹³

Liberation from the Ottomans

With the First Balkan War (1912) the tide turned. A series of Albanian rebellions (1910–12) had precipitated the formation of a 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 war, 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 were offered, within the Kingdom of Serbia, religious freedom, the use of the Albanian language in Albanian municipal schools and administration, preservation of the Albanian common law and, finally, an Albanian legislative body in charge of religious, judicial and educational affairs. At the huge gathering held in Skoplje on 10 October (and subsequently in Priština and Debar), the Albanians opted for armed defence of their Ottoman fatherland, and for using the arms obtained from Serbia against Serbia.⁹⁴

Kosovo Albanians were supplied with 63,000 rifles from the Ottomans alone to organize full-scale resistance against the Serbian troops. And yet, no more 16,000 Muslim Albanians of Kosovo came to the frontline to face the Serbian army. The Serbian artillery scattered Albanian irregular (*bashibozuk*) units without encountering any serious resistance. Having

⁹³ 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).

⁹⁴ Djordje Mikic, "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, Columbia University Press New York, 1987), 165–196. Elaborated in Dj. Dj. Stanković, "Nikola Pašić i stvaranje albanske države", *Marksistička misao* 3 (1985), 157–169.

been soundly defeated the Albanian leaders Bairam Curri, Riza Bey and Isa Bolletini fled to Malissia in northern Albania. Oskar Prochaska, Consul of Austria-Hungary in Prizren, tried in vain to incite Albanians to resist the Serbian troops.⁹⁵ Whilst Albanians remained hostile, Serbs in all of Kosovo and Metohija greeted the Serbian and Montenegrin armies with exhilaration.

The first Serb soldier to enter liberated Priština was the famous poet and former Serbian consul Milan M. Rakić, who had joined the army as a volunteer. After the liberation of Priština (22 October), and the decisive Serbian victory over the considerably stronger Ottoman troops at Kumanovo (23–24 October), the war was over in both Old Serbia and Slavic-inhabited Macedonia. Kosovo was re-integrated into Serbia while most of Metohija became part of Montenegro.

The Third Serbian Army, led by General Božidar Janković, later known as “the avenger of Kosovo” for liberating the most of Kosovo proper, attended the solemn liturgy at the Monastery of Gračanica celebrating the centuries-awaited liberation of Kosovo.⁹⁶ The military authorities issued proclamations in Priština and other towns calling Albanians to put down and surrender their arms. 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 by tribal leaders many Albanians fled and took shelter in the mountains. Serbian officers kept reassuring the Albanian population that Serbia is at war against the Ottomans, not against them. Serbia quickly established civil administration in the newly-liberated areas. Kosovo became part of the Lab, Priština and Prizren districts. Montenegro reorganized liberated Metohija into the Peć and Djakovica districts.⁹⁷

The London Treaty of 30 May 1913 fixed the borders of Serbia, Montenegro and newly-established Albania, with the exception of some disputed portions left to an International Commission to decide on subsequently. Both Kosovo and Slavic-inhabited Macedonia were officially incorporated into Serbia on 7 September 1913 by a solemn proclamation of the National Assembly of the Kingdom of Serbia, while most of Metohija was integrated into the Kingdom of Montenegro by a similar decision.

⁹⁵ John D. Treadway, *The Falcon and the Eagle. Montenegro and Austria-Hungary, 1908–1914* (West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 1983), 121.

⁹⁶ Elezi Han, one of the smaller towns, was renamed after him to Djeneral Janković. It now is on the border with the FYROM.

⁹⁷ *Prvi balkanski rat*, 416–417, 464–469; for more, see Mikić, “Albanians and Serbia”, 163–166.

In late July 1914, two days before Vienna declared war on Serbia, Austro-Hungarian consular officials in Albania were instructed to provide full financial and military support to an Albanian insurrection in Serbian territory. The Kosovo Albanian leaders in exile Bairam Curri, Hasan Prishtina and Isa Bolletini obtained significant financial support as well as arms and ammunition supplies from Austro-Hungarian consuls in order to prepare armed incursions which would instigate a full-scale Albanian rebellion in the Serb-held territories of Metohija, Kosovo and north-western Macedonia, inhabited by a mixed Muslim Albanian and Christian Slavic population.⁹⁸

In Constantinople, an agreement was concluded between the Hapsburgs and the Ottomans: Austria-Hungary was to incite and finance the Albanian rebellion, while the Young Turks were to be responsible for propaganda, military organization and operations. Incursions into the Serbian territory and the Muslim Albanian rebellion in Kosovo, Metohija and north-western Macedonia were to pave the way for opening another front against Serbia. After the Austro-Hungarian attack in July 1914, Serbia deployed most of her troops along the border with the Dual Monarchy. The initial small-scale attacks from Albania were recorded as early as the beginning of August 1914. The Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian alliance was becoming tighter, which sealed the fate of the six-month reign of the freshly-elected Prince of Albania Wilhelm von Wied. After several unsuccessful attempts to crush the insurrection, the German prince was abandoned by his volunteers and left Albania for good in early September 1914.⁹⁹

When the retreating Serbian army, followed by countless refugees, reached Kosovo, sabotage and surprise attacks began. In many Kosovo villages local Albanians refused to provide food without differentiating between soldiers and civilian refugees. In Istok, a small town in Metohija, on 29 November 1915, a unit of exhausted Serbian soldiers lagging behind the main military column was massacred by Albanian brigands. Near the Monastery of St. Mark of Koriša in the vicinity of Prizren, Albanians of the Kabash clan treacherously disarmed, robbed and executed some sixty Serbian soldiers.¹⁰⁰

After the Serbian army's retreat from Peć, Albanian outlaws pillaged many Serbian homes and shops. Austro-Hungarian guards prevented them from entering the hospital in Peć and massacring the wounded Serbian

⁹⁸ More detail in Andrej Mitrović, *Serbia's Great War* (London: Hurst & Co, 2007).

⁹⁹ Bogumil Hrabak, *Arbanaški upadi i pobune na Kosovu i u Makedoniji od kraja 1912. do kraja 1915. godine: nacionalno nerazvijeni nejedinstveni Arbanasi kao orudje u rukama zainteresovanih država* (Vranje: Narodni muzej, 1988), 124–145.

¹⁰⁰ *Zadužbine Kosova*.

soldiers. Local Albanians set ambushes near [Kosovska] Mitrovica as well, killing exhausted soldiers and robbing unarmed refugees. Serious crimes were committed against the Serbian civilian population in Suva Reka and elsewhere in Kosovo as well.¹⁰¹

Following the agonizing withdrawal of the defeated Serbian troops to central and northern Albania — held by the Serb-friendly regime of powerful General Essad-Pasha Toptani in his Adriatic capital Durazzo — Austria-Hungary and Bulgaria established their rule in occupied Serbia (1916–1918).¹⁰² Kosovo and Metohija were separated and made parts of two different Austro-Hungarian occupation zones: Metohija was included in the General *Gouvernement* ‘Montenegro’, a smaller portion of Kosovo with Kosovska Mitrovica and Vučitrn became part of the General *Gouvernement* ‘Serbia’; the largest portion of Kosovo proper with the Prizren area (Priština, Gnjilane, Ferizović, Prizren, Orahovac) was included into the Bulgarian Military-Inspectional Region ‘Macedonia’.¹⁰³

As protectors of Albanians, Austro-Hungarians were quick to establish schools and local administration in the Albanian language. Kosovo Albanians remained privileged, whilst Serbs were utterly distrusted. Things were even worse in the Bulgarian occupation zone: massive oppression, internment of civilians, forced Bulgarization, persecution and murder of Serbian priests followed the establishment of Bulgarian rule. Nićifor Perić, former Metropolitan of the Raška-Prizren Diocese, was interned and murdered in Bulgaria. Serbian priests suffered most, persecuted and murdered in both occupation zones and by both Albanians and Bulgarians. The Metropolitan of Raška-Prizren, Vićentije, and his deacon, Cvetko Nešić, were taken from Prizren to Uroševac on 23 November 1915 and burned alive two days later.

In Kosovo rural communities Bulgarians often appointed ethnic Albanians and Turks as chiefs, officials or gendarmes, who then assisted their compatriots in plundering local Serb property, in winning court cases against Serbs, and in hushing up occasional murders. In some Kosovo vil-

¹⁰¹ Kostić, *Crkveni život pravoslavnih Srba*, 141–143; Bogumil Hrabak, “Stanje na srpsko-albanskoj granici i pobuna Arbanasa na Kosovu i u Makedoniji” in *Srbija 1915*, Zbornik radova Istorijskog instituta 4 (Belgrade: Istorijski institut, 1986), 80–85; Hrabak, *Arbanaški upadi i pobune*, 186–195.

¹⁰² D. T. Bataković, “Serbian Government and Essad-Pasha Toptani” in Andrej Mitrović, ed., *Serbia and the Albanians in the 20th Century*, Conferences of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, vol. LXI, Department of Historical Sciences, no. 20 (Belgrade, 1991), 57–78.

¹⁰³ A serious crisis broke out in 1916 over the issue on dividing occupational zones between Bulgaria and Austria-Hungary. Cf. *Istorija srpskog naroda*, vol. VI-2 (Belgrade: SKZ, 1983), 146–148; for more, see Mitrović, *Serbia’s Great War*.

lages, Turks and Albanians jointly oppressed Serbs without fear of punishment, just as it was during the last years of Ottoman rule.¹⁰⁴

The restoration of the Kingdom of Serbia, carried out by the forces joined into the *Armée d'Orient* under the supreme command of General Franchet d'Esperey in the autumn of 1918, started after the Serbian armies made a major breakthrough on the Salonica Front, an event that changed the course of the Great War. Commanded by French General Tranié, French and Serbian troops reached Kosovo in early October, subsequently liberating Priština, Prizren, Gnjilane and Mitrovica. Serbian *komitadji* units, led by Kosta Milovanović Pećanac, met French troops at Mitrovica and immediately set off to Peć. Serbs surrounded the city and compelled the considerably stronger Austro-Hungarian garrison to surrender; it was only after that that the French cavalry trotted into town.

Muslim Albanians, however, took arms left behind by the defeated Bulgarian and Austrian troops and attacked representatives of the Serbian civil and military authorities, while the order to surrender arms met with strong armed resistance, in particular in Drenica and the rural surroundings of Peć. It was not until mid-December 1918 that Serbian forces finally managed to crush Albanian resistance and partially disarm the rebels. The Second Serbian Army briefly introduced martial law and re-established civil administration only after the eventual restoration of law and order.¹⁰⁵

*Within the Serbian and the Yugoslav realm:
Reconstruction, agrarian reform, resettlement*

After Montenegro's unconditional decision to unite with Serbia on 26 November 1918, and the formation of a common Yugoslav state (the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes) on 1 December 1918, Kosovo-Metohija remained an integral part of Serbia and her different political units (*oblast* and *banovina*). The purpose of the centralized system that was established was to give a common, European-like Yugoslav identity to different religious, ethnic and national groups divided not only by their different pasts, customs and traditions, but also by many related prejudices, stereotypes and self-referring grievances. For the ruling Karadjordjević family, restorers of Ser-

¹⁰⁴ Janičije Popović, *Kosovo u ropstvu pod Bugarima* (Leskovac, 1921); on the persecution of the clergy, see additional information in *Zadužbine Kosova*, 745–750.

¹⁰⁵ Bogumil Hrabak, "Učešće stanovništva Srbije u proterivanju okupatora 1918", *Istorijski glasnik* 3–4 (1958), 25–50; Idem, "Reokupacija oblasti srpske i crnogorske države arbanaškom većinom stanovništva u jesen 1918. godine i držanja Arbanasa prema uspostavljenoj vlasti", *Gjurmime albanologjike* 1 (1969), 255–260; Andrej Mitrović, *Ustaničke borbe u Srbiji 1916–1918* (Belgrade: SKZ, 1988), 520–522.

bia, liberators of Kosovo and founders of Yugoslavia, it was a tremendously difficult task to find a European-type pattern that would be able to unite disparate elements within the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, and to reconcile their often opposing political traditions.

After the First World War, the role of the main protector of Albania and the certified interpreter of Albanian interests was taken over by a new regional power — Italy. Rome continued its old practice of stirring Serb-Albanian conflict, now with the newly-established Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (renamed the Kingdom of Yugoslavia in 1929), over supremacy in the Eastern Adriatic. For several years (1918–1924) Kosovo-and-Metohija remained a restless border area constantly threatened by Albanian outlaws (*kaçaks*), supported by the “Kosovo Committee”, an organization of Kosovo emigrants struggling for a “Greater Albania”.

The Kosovo Committee was financed by various Italian governments. In Yugoslavia, as in pre-war Serbia, the ethnic Albanians were a minority hostile towards the new state ruled by their former serfs. The Kosovo beys reached an agreement with Belgrade about their own privileges, satisfied that their kinsmen were guaranteed religious rights but not adequate minority rights, deprived of secular schools and wider cultural activities in their native language.¹⁰⁶ Nevertheless, Kosovo Muslim Albanians, as a predominantly conservative patriarchal community, often preferred religious to communal schooling, and Islamic to secular institutions.

The leading Albanian beys from Kosovo, Metohija and north-western Macedonia founded the *Çemijet* political party in 1919. They made direct arrangements with Belgrade, offering political support in exchange for partial exemption from the agrarian reform. Supported by the local Muslim population, mostly Albanian, Turkish and Slav Muslims, the *Çemijet* won 12 seats in the Yugoslav Parliament in the 1921 elections, and was even more successful two years later (14 seats). The *Çemijet*, serving mostly religious and social interests rather than political ones, gradually evolved into an organization that combined religious affiliation with distinct national goals. As early as 1925, however, the party was banned by the Royal Yugoslav authorities for its clandestine ties with the remaining *kaçak* groups and the anti-Belgrade government in Tirana. It continued, for a certain period of time, to operate clandestinely, recruiting followers, mostly young men, for the Albanian national cause.

¹⁰⁶ Under the Treaty of Saint-Germain (1919), minorities in Serbia within the borders of 1913 (including Kosovo-Metohija) were excluded from international protection. Cf. Radošin Rajović, *Autonomija Kosova. Pravno-politička studija* (Belgrade: Ekonomika, 1987), 100–105.

To the challenge of both Kosovo Albanians and their kinsmen from Albania, Belgrade responded by taking twofold measures. First, repopulation of Serbs in Kosovo was undertaken with the aim of restoring the demographic balance disturbed during the last decades of Ottoman rule. Second, as the initial step in pulling these regions out of their centuries-long backwardness, the feudal system was abolished in 1919. Serfdom was put to an end and former serfs were declared the owners of the land they tilled. For the first time, the native Kosovo Serbs as well as many landless Kosovo Albanian families obtained their own land. Following the *Decree on Settlement in Southern Regions* (24 September 1920), colonization began in late 1920, albeit without adequate preparations. It has been suggested that implementation of the colonization project “was entrusted to feeble and unskilled officials”, which led to dangerous mismanagement.¹⁰⁷

Thus the first Serb settlers were left to themselves, while the royal authorities charged with carrying out the resettlement project often took advantage of flaws of the reform to engage in various forms of abuse. Many Kosovo Albanians were deprived of their former property, at least partially. After the first decade of implementation, both the agrarian reform and colonization, although aimed to upgrade the economy and secure interethnic balance, proved to suffer from major shortcomings, which had the worst consequences for the Serb settlers themselves but also provoked growing discontent among the Albanians.¹⁰⁸

However, of the total amount of land allotted to Serbian settlers in Metohija and in Kosovo only five percent was arable. In two huge waves of colonization (1922–29 and 1933–38), 10,877 families (some 60,000 colonists) were allotted 120,672 hectares (about 15.3 percent of the land of present-day Kosovo-and-Metohija). Another 99,327 hectares planned for settlements were not allotted. For the incoming settlers, 330 settlements and villages were built, with 12,689 houses, forty-six schools and thirty-two churches.¹⁰⁹

Two inter-war official state censuses (1921, 1931) used questionnaires containing questions regarding religious affiliation and native language, but not ethnic origin or national identity. Nevertheless, in demographic terms, the present-day Kosovo-Metohija had a relative Albanian majority, excluding therefore all propaganda speculation, both inter-war and post-war, on alleged mass migrations or mass expulsions of Kosovo Albanians

¹⁰⁷ Krstić, *Kosovo*, 83.

¹⁰⁸ Milovan Obradović, *Agrarna reforma i kolonizacija na Kosovu (1918–1941)* (Prishtina: Institut za istoriju Kosova, 1981).

¹⁰⁹ Nikola Gaćeša, “Settlement of Kosovo and Metohija after World War I and the Agrarian Reform” in *Kosovo. Past and Present*, 100–110.

(1919–1941). According to the 1921 census, Kosovo had 436,929 inhabitants; Albanians (i.e. inhabitants using Albanian as their native language) constituted 64.1 percent (280,440). Religious affiliation gave the following results: 73 percent Muslim, 26 percent Christian Orthodox and nearly two percent Roman Catholic. According to the 1931 census, using the same questions, present-day Kosovo-and-Metohija had 552,064 inhabitants, of which 347,213 were Albanian-speaking (62.8 percent). Religious affiliation provided the following data: 72 percent Muslim, 26 percent Christian Orthodox and two percent Roman Catholic.¹¹⁰

Within the French-inspired *banovina* system, established by King Aleksandar, the distribution of ethnic Albanians was as follows: 150,062 or sixteenth percent in *Zetska banovina* (most of Metohija and today's Montenegro with Dubrovnik); 48,300 or 3.36 percent in *Moravska banovina* (central Serbia with northern Kosovo) and 302,901 or 19.24 percent in *Vardarska banovina* (eastern and southern Kosovo, Prizren and Gora area, and Slavic-inhabited Macedonia). As for the ethnic Turks, they numbered 124,599 or 7.91 percent of the population in *Vardarska banovina*, mostly in the Prizren area.

Recent estimates for the 1921 and 1931 censuses, plus the 1939 internal military data, show an increasing trend both in percentage and in absolute terms as far as the Serbs in present-day Kosovo-and-Metohija are concerned: in the 1921 census they numbered 92,490 (21.1 percent); in 1931 they numbered 148,809 (26.9 percent); and in 1939 there were 213,746 of them (33.1 percent). By contrast, the Albanian population increased in absolute terms but decreased in percentage: in 1921 it numbered 288,900 (65.8 percent); in 1931, 331,549 (60.1 percent); and in 1939 it increased to 350,460 (54.4 percent). The ethnic Turks as the third largest ethnic group decreased in both terms (27,920 — 6.3 percent; 23,698 — 4.3 percent; 24,946 — 3.8 percent).¹¹¹ The increase in the number of Serbs was caused not only by the influx of settlers, but by some 5,000 state officials and technicians of various professions as well.¹¹²

¹¹⁰ Interwar censuses quoted by Hivzi Isljami, "Demografska stvarnost Kosova" in *Sukob ili Dijalog. Srpsko-albanski odnosi i integracija Balkana* (Subotica: Otvoreni univerzitet, 1994), 40.

¹¹¹ Milan Vučković & Goran Nikolić, *Stanovništvo Kosova u razdoblju 1918–1991. godine* (Munich: Slavica Verlag, 1996), 80–82; Julie A. Mertus, *Kosovo, How Myths and Truths Started a War* (Berkeley: University of California, 1999), 315–316.

¹¹² Djordje Borozan, "Kosovo i Metohija u granicama protektorata Velika Albanija" in *Kosovo i Metohija u velikoalbanskim planovima* (Belgrade: Institut za savremenu istoriju, 2001), 125–126.

In terms of security, the whole area was frequently raided from Albania. The Serb colonists as well as the Yugoslav state officials were the most frequent victims of numerous Albanian outlaws, especially in the Drenica area. In 1922, Albanian outlaws (*kaçaks*), considered by the local Albanian population as national heroes, committed fifty-eight murders, eighteen attempted murders, thirteen assaults and seventy-one robberies. In Metohija alone there were at least 370 active *kaçaks*, led by Azem Bejta in the Drenica area. The Serbian Orthodox Church remained the favourite target of *kaçak* attacks to the extent that in the 1920s both the Monastery of Dečani and the Patriarchate of Peć — in the Ottoman period racketeered by local Albanian chieftains for armed protection against their fellow tribesmen — had to be placed under military protection. The royal Yugoslav authorities, continuously trying to establish long-term security, responded with severe and often brutal military and police measures against local outlaws and raiders from Albania, occasionally harshly retaliating against Albanian civilians as well.

The *kaçak* activities decreased after their leader Azem Bejta died following a fierce fight with the Yugoslav military forces.¹¹³ It has been difficult to estimate the exact number of Albanians who immigrated to Albania from Kosovo and other Yugoslav areas: from 1924 to 1926 some 849 persons immigrated to Albania, while an additional 8,571 left between 1927 and 1934. The practice of temporary migration makes it difficult to establish how many settled permanently in Albania or elsewhere. Nevertheless, recent claims by certain Western scholars that the Kingdom of Yugoslavia drove out as many as half a million or even more Albanians in the interwar period in order to resettle Serbs on the confiscated land are based on propagandistic figures supplied by Albanian emigrants of the 1920s and 1930s. These figures, embraced by Albanian and some Western scholars sympathetic to the Albanian cause, find corroboration neither in the Serbian/Yugoslav archives nor in the available statistics (both public and confidential) of interwar Yugoslavia.¹¹⁴

¹¹³ The extensive documentation from the Serbian and Yugoslav archives for the 1920s is available in Ljubodrag Dimić & Djordje Borozan, *Jugoslovenska država i Albanci*, vol. I–II (Belgrade: Službeni list SRJ, 1998); Dragi Maliković, *Kačački pokret na Kosovu i Metohiji 1918–1924* (Leposavić & Kosovska Mitrovica: Institut za srpsku kulturu, 2005). For the Albanian, mostly romantic perspective on the *kaçak* movement, see L. Rushiti, *Lëvizja kacakë në Kosovë (1918–1928)* (Prishtina: Instituti Albanologjik i Prishtinës, 1981).

¹¹⁴ Muhamet Pirraku, “Kulturno prosvetni pokret Albanaca u Jugoslaviji 1919–1941”, *Jugoslovenski istorijski časopis* 1–4 (1978), 356–370; Ivo Banac, *The National Question in Yugoslavia: Origins, History, Politics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984).

In order to strengthen its influence in Italian-dominated Albania and to pacify Albanian outlaws in Kosovo and Metohija, the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes became actively involved in the internal power struggle in Albania. From the time of Balkan Wars plans were developed for the Serbian political, economic and even military penetration into the northern areas of Albania. In the early 1920s Belgrade strongly supported the establishment of a separate state of the Mirditës, a Roman Catholic tribe of northern Albania headed by Mark Gjoni. In the mid-1920s Belgrade financed the return to Albania of the exiled political leader Ahmed Zogu, who promised to stifle the activities of the anti-Serbian and anti-Yugoslav Kosovo Committee. Zogu organized the assassination of his bitter rivals Bairam Curri (1925) and Hasan Prishtina (1933), the most prominent leaders of the Kosovo Committee. Nevertheless, with Mussolini's growing influence in the region, Belgrade was unable to impose its decisive influence on the Tirana government. Under Ahmed Zogu, a former protégé of Belgrade and the future King Zogu I, Albania eventually came back under the political and economic influence of Fascist Italy.¹¹⁵

The conflict with Italy and the Rome-controlled Albanian national movement was given fresh impetus as the Second World War approached. Under Mussolini's patronage, Albanian emigrants from Kosovo-Metohija, the pro-Bulgarian IMRO movement in Yugoslav Macedonia, and the Croatian fascist forces (Ustasha), coordinated their guerrilla actions against the politically vulnerable Yugoslav kingdom.¹¹⁶ Belgrade's ambitious plan to avert the growing danger for the stability of its southwest borders by the means of an organized mass migration of the ethnic Albanian and Turkish populations from both Kosovo and Slavic Macedonia to Turkey (1938) was never implemented due to the death of Kemal Atatürk, the fall of Milan Stojadinović's government (1939), unsettled financial terms with Ankara and the outbreak of the Second World War.¹¹⁷ However, the growing dis-

¹¹⁵ Živko Avramovski, "Albanija između Jugoslavije i Italije", *Vojnoistorijski glasnik* 3 (1984), 153–180; Roberto Morozzo della Rocca, *Nazione e religione in Albania (1920–1944)* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1990), 151–166; Marco Dogo, *Kosovo. Albanesi e Serbi: le radici del conflitto* (Lungro, C. Marco, 1992), 147–219.

¹¹⁶ Cf. Giuseppe Zamboni, *Mussolinis Expansionspolitik auf dem Balkan* (Hamburg: Burke, 1970), 301–338; Cf. also Stefan Troebst, *Mussolini, Makedonien und die Mächte 1922–1930. Die Innere Makedonische Revolutionäre Organisation' in der Südosteuropapolitik des faschistischen Italien* (Cologne: Böhlau, 1987).

¹¹⁷ Individual proposals concerning mass emigration or even expulsion of the ethnic Albanians within the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, such as the infamous proposal by the historian Vasa Čurbrilović in 1937, were neither discussed nor accepted by the Yugoslav government which remained focused exclusively on the bilateral agreement with Ankara. Contrary to what is often strongly suggested by most Albanian and some less

content of Kosovo Albanians, who hoped to receive decisive support from the Fascist camp after Italy occupied Albania in 1939, remained a latent threat to Yugoslav security.¹¹⁸

The Second World War: Rage, resettlement and repression

The Kingdom of Yugoslavia was dismembered by German Nazis, Italian Fascists and their Bulgarian and Hungarian allies after a blitzkrieg in April 1941. Most of Kosovo-Metohija, western Slavic Macedonia and Montenegrin border areas went to Fascist Albania, occupied by Italy two years before. Bulgaria took a small eastern portion of Kosovo, but its northern parts with the rich Trepča mines were assigned to German-occupied Serbia. A decree of King Victor Emanuel III, dated 12 August 1941, solemnly proclaimed a "Greater Albania". In this new satellite Fascist-type state, the Italian Government set up an Albanian voluntary militia numbering 5,000 men — *Vulnetari* — to help the Italian forces maintain order as well as to independently conduct surprise attacks on the Serb population. In addition, a campaign to settle Albanians from northern and central Albania into the abandoned estates of both native Kosovo Serbs and Serb settlers started as early as 1941: "The Italian occupation force encouraged an extensive settlement program involving up to 72,000 Albanians."¹¹⁹

The main consequence of establishing a Fascist-sponsored and Nazi-supported "Greater Albania" was the merciless persecution and expulsion of some 60,000 to 100,000 Serbs, mostly colonists. Roughly 10,000 of them, native Kosovo Serbs included, fell victim to punitive actions of various Albanian militias. Both Fascist Italian and Yugoslav Communist propaganda portrayed the Kosovo Albanians as victims of "Greater Serbian hegemony". The new Fascist rulers gave the Kosovo Albanians the right to fly their own flag and to open schools with instruction in Albanian. The tribal and mostly peasant Kosovo Albanian population received the newly acquired national symbols enthusiastically, but was not ready to restrain its actions to the cultural and political plane. In reality, the Albanians planned to organize a full-scale revenge against the Serbs, perceived as oppressors under the Kingdom of Yugoslavia.

reliable Western scholars, neither in the Serbian nor in Yugoslav military or civilian archives is there any evidence for any link between this document of Čubrilović and official Yugoslav policy.

¹¹⁸ Branislav Gligorijević, "Fatalna jednostranost. Povodom knjige B. Horvata 'Kosovsko pitanje'", *Istorija XX veka: časopis Instituta za savremenu istoriju* 6, 1–2 (Belgrade, 1988), 185–192.

¹¹⁹ Vickers, *Between Serb and Albanian*, 123.

During the first few months of Fascist occupation, Italian and Albanian forces burned down nearly 10,000 homes of Serb settlers in frequent night raids. The owners and their families were expelled to Montenegro and central Serbia, and some were sent to interment camps in Albania. At least 900 Serbs were sent to the Porte Romano concentration camp in Durazzo (Durrës). Most of them were from Gnjilane, while others were from Prizren, Priština, Peć, Uroševac and Lipljan. Roughly 600 Serb prisoners from the Gnjilane area drowned on a cargo ship on their way to concentration camps in Italy. In the Italian-Balist *questura* of Prizren, the large building of the Roman Catholic Seminary was used as a prison for Serb detainees, who were often tortured to death. Many Serbs “ended up in concentration camps in Priština and Mitrovica. These Serbs were apparently used as a labour force for fortification works in Italian Albania, and in the Trepča mines working for the Germans.”¹²⁰ The Albanians, both locals and fresh settlers from Albania, used to plough the colonist fields afresh to erase every trace of Serb settlement and forestall Serb return. If Serbs did try to return after the war, they would find it hard to recognize their seized property.¹²¹

The main targets were, as earlier during periods of anarchy or wars, the priests and monks of the Serbian Orthodox Church and their flock: Andrija Popović, a priest from Istok, and Nikodim Radosavljević, a hieromonk of Gorioč monastery, were murdered by Albanians in 1941 together with 102 Serbs from the parish of Istok; Damaskin Bošković, a renowned hieromonk of Devič monastery, was tortured and murdered by local Albanians in mid-October 1941, while the medieval monastery of Devič was burned down and destroyed; parish priests of Uroševac (Dragoljub Kujundžić) and Djakovica (Slobodan Popović) were murdered in 1942; the parish priest of Kosovska Mitrovica (Momčilo Nešić) was murdered in 1943; parish priests of Peć (Mihailo Milošević) and Ranilug (Krsta Popović) were murdered in 1944, etc. At least twenty-six Serb churches and monasteries were desecrated, pillaged or burned; some, like Gorioč monastery, were used as prisons for the Kosovo Serbs; dozens of smaller Serb churches were razed to the ground and the medieval monasteries of Gračanica, Sokolica, St. Mark of Koriša and St. Peter of Koriša were looted on a regular basis by local Albanians. During these frequent raids several monks and nuns were either

¹²⁰ Bernd J. Fisher, *Albania at War 1939–1945* (West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 1999), 87.

¹²¹ Cf. extensive documentation in Nenad Antonijević, *Albanski zločini nad Srbima na Kosovu i Metohiji za vreme Drugog svetskog rata. Dokumenti* (Kragujevac: Muzej žrtava genocida, 2004).

wounded or killed.¹²² Many Christian Orthodox graveyards were devastated or desecrated by local Albanians to erase every trace of Serb settlement.

Large-scale destruction of Serb colonist villages was a major component of a strategic plan: to demonstrate to potential post-war international commissions drawing new borders that Serbs had never lived in Kosovo. A prominent Kosovo Albanian leader, Ferat-beg Draga, solemnly proclaimed in 1943 that the “time has come to exterminate the Serbs [...] there will be no Serbs under the Kosovo sun.”¹²³

New persecutions of the Kosovo Serbs ensued after the capitulation of Italy (September 1943), when Kosovo and Metohija came under the direct control of the Third Reich. The Albanians’ nationalism was spurred on by the creation of the “Second Albanian League”, while the infamous Albanian-staffed SS “Scanderbeg” division launched a new wave of violence against the remaining Serbian civilians.¹²⁴ According to the first, although incomplete, post-war Yugoslav estimations, there were in Kosovo and Metohija 5,493 killed or missing persons and 28,412 imprisoned or disabled persons, mostly Serbs,¹²⁵ while about 75,000 Albanians from Albania had settled on the abandoned Serbian farms during the Fascist and Nazi occupation.¹²⁶

In the membership of the newly-established Communist Party of Albania (formed under the supervision of Yugoslav instructors Miladin

¹²² *Zadužbine Kosova*, 783–793.

¹²³ Hakif Bajrami, “Izveštaj Konstantina Plavšića Tasi Diniću, ministru unutrašnjih poslova u Nedićevoj vladi oktobra 1943, o kosovsko-mitrovačkom srezu”, *Godišnjak arhiva Kosova XIV–XV*, Prishtinë : Arkive të Kosovës, (1978–79), 313. Cf. also Jovan Pejin, *Stradanje Srba u Metohiji 1941–1944* (Belgrade: Arhivski pregled, 1994).

¹²⁴ Bataković, *Kosovo Chronicles*, 13–17; for a detailed account, see Laurent Latruwe & Gordana Kostic, *La Division Skanderbeg. Histoire des Waffen SS albanais des origines idéologiques aux débuts de la Guerre Froide* (Paris: Godefroy de Bouillon, 2004).

¹²⁵ Arhiv Jugoslavije [Archives of Yugoslavia], Belgrade, 54-20-47. The only official state report, of 1964, recorded the following number of war victims: 4029 Serbs, 1460 Montenegrins, 2177 Albanians, 74 Jews, 47 Croats, 32 ethnic Turks, 28 Slav Muslims, 11 Slav Macedonians, 10 Slovaks, 9 Slovenes, one Hungarian and 98 unspecified others (Antonijević, *Albanski zločini*, 39).

¹²⁶ According to the census of 1948, despite heavy war losses claimed by Albanians themselves, the number of Albanians augmented by 75,417 within nine years. Cf. Predrag Živančević, *Emigranti. Naseljavanje Kosova i Metohije iz Albanije* (Belgrade: Ekspres, 1989), 78. The latest research, based on official, although incomplete documentation, scales down the number of immigrants from Albania in the 1950s, who were using Yugoslavia only for transit towards Western countries, Cf. Bogumil Hrabak, “Albanski emigranti u Jugoslaviji”, *Tokovi istorije, časopis Instituta za noviju istoriju Srbije* vol. 1–2 (Belgrade 1994), 77–104.

Popović and Dušan Mugoša), there were numerous advocates of the Greater Albanian idea. Its leader Enver Hoxha had taken the first step towards an agreement concerning the creation of a post-war Greater Albania. Albanian communists joined forces with the Balli Kombëtar, an active Kosovo Albanian nationalist organization. Nevertheless, the agreement reached in the village of Mukaj on 2 August 1943 turned out to be a short-lived one.¹²⁷ In addition, the Bujan Declaration of Kosovo Albanian communist representatives (including numerous representatives of Albania), issued on 2 January 1944, called for the unification of Kosovo and Metohija with Albania after the victory of the communist guerrilla. This decision was quickly dismissed by the Yugoslav communist leadership under the Moscow-appointed military leader Josip Broz Tito as premature and damaging to the common communist goals in the final phase of the Second World War.

The communist experiment: A failed reconciliation

Soviet-type communism was believed to be the model for long-term historical reconciliation between Serbs and Albanians. The ambitious reconciliation plan within this new Stalin-led social project soon proved to be infeasible: despite tremendous ideological changes, the Balkan geopolitical realities remained unchanged; the old territorial rivalry simply acquired a new ideological framework. It was *realpolitik* that compelled the Moscow-appointed communist leader Josip Broz Tito to preserve Yugoslavia's integrity so that the new communist Yugoslav federation could become the legal successor of the Yugoslav Kingdom in the post-war period. At the same time, J. B. Tito had to take into account the sentiments of the Serb communists and partisans that constituted the overwhelming majority of his forces fighting in different regions of Yugoslavia against Nazi Germans, Fascist Italians, Fascist Croats (Ustasha), the SS Handjar Division in Bosnia, the SS Scanderbeg Division in Kosovo, and so forth.¹²⁸

¹²⁷ The short-lived agreement with the CPA and the Balli Kombëtar of 1942 turned into full cooperation of Balli Kombëtar with the Nazis after the capitulation of Italy in September 1943.

¹²⁸ The first Yugoslav anti-fascist guerilla (headed by Colonel Dragoljub Mihailović, from early 1942 General and Minister of War of the Royal government-in-exile), known as the Ravna Gora Movement (*Ravnogorski pokret*) or traditionally *dražinovci* or simply Chetniks, were also fighting the occupation forces, including those in Kosovo and Metohija. Nevertheless, having been betrayed by the Partisans in November 1941, they entered into armed conflict with the communist guerilla, adding another quagmire to the civil war. For more, see Walter R. Roberts, *Tito, Mihailovic and the Allies 1941–1945* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1987).

A large-scale Albanian rebellion against communist Yugoslavia in late 1944 underscored the necessity of maintaining Kosovo-Metohija within Serbia even under the new Soviet-type federal system. In November 1944, Kosovo-Metohija was liberated from Nazi occupation by Tito's communist forces — the partisans. The *Balli Kombëtar* supporters and other Albanian units, rearmed and freshly recruited into partisan formations (November — December 1944), organized the large-scale uprising, attacking Tito's partisan forces. The Albanian revolt was brutally crushed only when additional Yugoslav troops were brought in, and military rule was set up in Kosovo and Metohija between February and May 1945.

The decision that Kosovo and Metohija should remain part of Serbia as a distinct region (*oblast*) was made after the abolition of military rule on 10 July 1945. As a concession to Kosovo Albanians, the Yugoslav communist leadership issued a decree, a temporary measure on paper, forbidding the return to Kosovo-Metohija and Slavic Macedonia of all interwar Serb settlers (at least 60,000), including those forcibly displaced by the wartime authorities of 'Greater Albania'. The notorious "Temporary Ban on the Return of Colonists to their Previous Places of Residence" was issued on 6 March 1945 and entered into force 16 March 1945. Some 1,757 Serb families were settled outside Kosovo-and-Metohija until 8 October 1945, while another 2,918 families of Serb interwar colonists remained in Kosovo awaiting resettlement to other regions of Serbia.¹²⁹

The ban was followed by the "Law on the Revision of Land Allotment to Colonists and Prospective Farmers in Macedonia and the Region of Kosovo and Metohija", passed on 3 August 1945. It was further cemented by the "Law on the Revision of Land Allotment to Colonists and Prospective Farmers in the People's Republic of Macedonia and the Autonomous Region of Kosovo and Metohija", passed on 2 November 1946. Only a few thousand Serb interwar colonists succeeded in returning to Kosovo in later periods, mostly those from communist families.¹³⁰ A special law on the management of the abandoned land of Serb colonists in the Autonomous Region of Kosovo-Metohija was endorsed by the Presidium of the Serbian National Assembly on 22 February 1947, while another decree (30 September 1947) made it possible for just a few hundred families — those that met the difficult ideological requirements for keeping ownership of

¹²⁹ "Privremena zabrana vraćanja kolonista u njihova ranija mesta življenja", *Službeni list DFJ* 13, 16 March, Beograd: Službeni list DFJ, 1945.

¹³⁰ "Zakon o reviziji dodijeljivanja zemlje kolonistima i agrarnim interesentima u Makedoniji i Kosovsko-metohijskoj oblasti", *Službeni list DFJ*, 5 August 1945. Cf. also *Službeni list DFJ* 89, 1946.

land — to return to Kosovo.¹³¹ The revision of the rights of pre-war settlers and their families sharply reduced this population to one third of their pre-1941 number. The rest were mainly resettled in Serbia's northern province of Vojvodina.¹³²

The main reason for forming a distinct territorial unit of Kosovo-Metohija in 1945 was to prepare its unification with Albania, should Tirana accept to become the seventh Yugoslav republic, or to enter, united with Kosovo-Metohija, into a larger Balkan federation. The Tito-led Balkan Federation was supposed to include Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Albania and, possibly, in case of the communist victory in the civil war, Greece. The whole project was abandoned in the wake of the Yugoslav split with Stalin in 1948. Kosovo and Metohija thus became an internal Yugoslav issue.¹³³

After 1945, Yugoslavia became a six-member federal communist state based on a mixture of Soviet-type federalism and a Habsburg-inspired Austro-Marxist form of cultural autonomies. In his 1971 interview with the Parisian newspaper "Le Monde", the Yugoslav dissident Milovan Djilas (one of the founding fathers of the Montenegrin nation) did admit, however, that the division of Serbs amongst five of the six republics had been aimed at subduing the "centralism and hegemonies of the Serbs", seen as a major "obstacle" to the establishment of communism.¹³⁴

Within such a system, the Kosovo Albanian minority was to play an important political role. In order to erode the interwar political domination of Serbs as the majority nation, Tito chose to follow the Soviet model and established six new federal units, or republics. In order to rebalance the interethnic relations, at first, in 1945, Kosovo-and-Metohija was created as an autonomous region (*oblast*) within the federal unit of Serbia. In 1959, the Serb-inhabited municipality of Lešak was attached to Kosovo-and-Metohija Region in order to strengthen the Serb community in the area. By the 1963 Constitution, the Kosovo-and-Metohija Region was upgraded to an Autonomous Province within Serbia. The 1974 Constitution bestowed upon the Province wider powers additionally limiting Serbia's authority. The

¹³¹ More details with data in Milovan Obradović, "Revizija agrarne reforme na Kosovu", *Kosovo*, vol. 3 (Priština: Zavod za istoriju Kosova, 1974), 367–412.

¹³² Borozan, *ibid.*, 103, fn.1.

¹³³ Branko Petranović, "Kosovo in Yugoslav-Albanian Relations and the Project of a Balkan Federation, 1945–1948" in Mitrović, ed., *Serbs and Albanians*, 1991, 88–98. Cf. also Branko Petranović & Momčilo Zečević, *Balkanska federacija 1943–1948* (Belgrade: Zaslou, 1991), 77–104.

¹³⁴ *Le Monde*, 30 December 1971. Cf. more in Aleksa Djilas, *The Contested Country: Yugoslav Unity and Communist Revolution, 1919–1953* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1991).

powers were only slightly different from those of the republics: the main provision Autonomous Province lacked was the right to self-determination, reserved only for the republics within the Yugoslav federation.

The political and cultural emancipation of the Kosovo Albanians within Serbia began to be fully promoted immediately after the war. In 1949, the official second to Tito proudly stated that the “Albanians in the Autonomous Region of Kosovo-Metohija, who had been oppressed in the old [Royal] Yugoslavia, have now been completely guaranteed a free political and cultural life and development and an equal participation in all the bodies of the popular authorities. After the liberation [1945], they acquired their first primary schools — 453 primary schools, 29 high schools and 3 advanced schools. Studying from textbooks in their native [Albanian] tongue, some 64,000 Albanian children have so far received an education and about 106,000 ethnic Albanian adults in Kosovo and Metohija have learned to read and write.”¹³⁵

Nevertheless, the restless Albanian population, still favouring unification with Albania, was put under the strict control of the Serb-dominated state and police apparatus. Until 1966, Serbs in the state security forces in Kosovo and Metohija accounted for 58.3 percent of the security service cadres, 60.8 percent in the police and 23.5 percent in the total population; Montenegrins made up 28.3 percent of the cadres in the security service, 7.9 percent in the police and 3.9 percent of the total population; Albanians accounted for 13.3 percent in the security service, 31.3 percent in the police and 64.9 percent in the total population.¹³⁶

The concern that considerable quantities of arms were still hidden in private possession was confirmed by the occasional shoot-out with Albanian outlaws, from 1948 supported by military agents from Albania. An extensive operation of collecting hidden arms was carried out in the winter of 1955–56. Serbs and Albanians suffered almost equally, despite the fact that larger quantities were found in Albanian possession. The operation was not motivated by concealed ethnic discrimination but rather by immediate ideological and state reasons, which became evident from numerous complaints lodged not only by Albanians, but also by dignitaries of the Serbian Orthodox Church reporting numerous abuses of the Serb- and Montenegrin-dominated secret police in the region.¹³⁷

¹³⁵ Aleksandar Ranković, *Izabrani govori i članci* (Belgrade: Kultura, 1951), 184–185.

¹³⁶ *Intervju*, Belgrade, 4 September 1978. Cf. an analysis on interethnic relations, ethnic stereotypes and social conditions, Srdja Popović, Dejan Janča & Tanja Petovar, *Kosovski čvor. Drešiti ili seći? Izveštaj nezavisne komisije* (Belgrade: Hronos, 1990), 18–19.

¹³⁷ For more documents, see *Zadužbine Kosova*, 805–813.

Nonetheless, the Kosovo communists, both Serbs and Albanians, who had executed the most prominent Kosovo Serb novelist Grigorije Božović as early as 1945, continued to arrest and harass Serbian monks and priests, considered as enemies of the communist dictatorship. It was under the auspices of Tito's state officials that an impressive prewar Serbian Orthodox church in Djakovica was demolished on St Sava's Day in January 1950, in order that a monument to the fallen partisans of Kosovo could be erected in its place.¹³⁸ Yugoslav communists were equally brutal in suppressing the Stalinist-oriented Albanian nationalists advocating unification with Albania, represented since the 1960s by fanatic and able activists such as Adem Demaqi.¹³⁹

During the period of Soviet-type centralism in Yugoslavia (1945–1966), Albania, as part of the Soviet bloc (1948–1961), was hostile towards Yugoslavia. Therefore, Tito relied on the Kosovo Serbs as the main guardians of the territorial integrity of Yugoslavia. The State Security Service (*UDBA*), headed by Tito's first deputy, Aleksandar Ranković, persecuted both Serbs and ethnic Albanians as ideological enemies throughout the 1950s. After the ideological reconciliation with Moscow (1955) and within the policy of gradual *rapprochement* with Albania (1966–1971), Tito favoured an advanced level of political emancipation of the Kosovo Albanians. The Yugoslav dictator had hoped, in vain, to reinstall Yugoslav influence in Albania. Instead, the power bestowed upon Albanians in Kosovo by the Constitutional amendments of 1968 and 1971 was diverted to serve primarily the Albanian national cause.¹⁴⁰

The new model of federalism launched in Yugoslavia after 1966 was rounded off by the 1974 Constitution. A model of *national-communism* was introduced where the power of federal jurisdiction came to reside in the ruling communist oligarchies of the six constituent republics. Thus, the communist *nomenklatura*, becoming sovereign in their own republics, came to represent the majority nationality. As the only republic with provinces, Serbia was the exception, since, under the 1974 Constitution, both of her

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 803–804; Bataković, *Kosovo. La spirale de la haine*, 47–50.

¹³⁹ On Kosovo Albanian subversive organisation, see Sinan Hasani, *Kosovo. Istine i zablude* (Zagreb: Centar za informacije i publicitet, 1981), on Demaqi, pp. 162–163.

¹⁴⁰ For internal politics of Yugoslavia, Cf. more in Stevan K. Pavlowitch, *The Improbable Survivor, Yugoslavia and its Problems 1918–1988* (London: C. Hurst & Co), 34–47; B. Petranović & Momčilo Zečević, *Agonija dve Jugoslavije* (Belgrade: Zaslou, 1991), 307–319; D. T. Bataković, *Yugoslavia. Nations, religions, idéologies* (Lausanne: L'Age d'Homme, 1994).

autonomous provinces, Vojvodina and Kosovo could use, in many cases, the power of veto against the central authorities of Serbia.¹⁴¹

Through the model of *national-communism* the 1974 Constitution introduced majority rule of the majority nation in each of the six republics and two provinces of the federation. The result was continued discrimination — to a greater or lesser extent — against smaller-in-number nations or national minorities within each republic or province.

The new political course in Kosovo and Metohija emboldened the nationalists and advocates of unification with Albania. The Albanians saw the new party policy, drafted by the 1968 and 1971 Constitutional amendments, not as a fresh opportunity for intensified national and cultural emancipation but rather as a long-awaited chance for historical revenge against the Serbs, perceived exclusively as their long-time oppressors, and they used the newly-gained political, judicial and legislative powers as a tool against them. The term Metohija was immediately removed from the official name of the province.

In late November 1968, on the occasion of the National Day of Albania, the Albanian students in Priština and several other towns voiced not only demands for a separate Kosovo republic within Yugoslavia, but shouted Greater-Albanian, pro-Enver Hoxha slogans as well. These demonstrations, severely suppressed by the army and police forces, were hidden from the wider public, although they heralded long-term goals of Albanian nationalism in the Province. Kosovo Albanians considered Yugoslavia as an imposed, transitional phase on their path to eventual unification with Albania.¹⁴²

Obviously, the ideological and national model for Kosovo Albanians was not the official Titoist vision of communist-inspired “brotherhood and unity” but the Stalinist-type of ethnic nationalism orchestrated by the communist dictator Enver Hoxha of Albania. Several generations of the Kosovo Albanian youth had, through educational arrangements with Tirana, been receiving an education based on a collectivist communist-type approach to the national question mixed with romantic nineteenth-century, in practice rather aggressive, nationalism. Therefore, Enver Hoxha’s official theory that the Albanians were the direct descendants of ancient Illyrians was considered to be the ultimate “verification” of the historical right of Albanians to the whole of Kosovo. From that perspective, Serbs, who had settled in the

¹⁴¹ On the fall of Ranković in 1966 and the subsequent period, see Steven L. Burg, *Conflict and Cohesion in Socialist Yugoslavia: Political Decision-Making since 1966* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1983).

¹⁴² Miloš Mišović, *Ko je tražio republiku Kosovo 1945–1985* (Belgrade: Narodna knjiga, 1987), 78–93, 150, 240–241, 346–347.

Balkans in the late sixth and seventh centuries A.D. (i.e. centuries after the ancient Illyrians), were stigmatized in the popular Kosovo Albanian view as intruders into lawfully “Albanian lands”.¹⁴³

From party-sponsored discrimination to ethnic mobilization

In Kosovo and Metohija, this new nationalistic policy resulted in a behind-the-scenes combination of political pressure and ethnic discrimination against the non-Albanian population. In the provincial administration, most of the Serbs and Montenegrins were either replaced by Albanians or politically marginalized. By a tacit agreement within the Communist Party, the Serb officials who had lost their positions in the Kosovo administration were almost automatically accepted and employed elsewhere in Serbia, so as to tone down their discontent. Continuous administrative, judicial, police or direct physical pressures orchestrated by the Albanian-dominated Kosovo communist *nomenklatura* primarily targeted Kosovo Serbs and Montenegrins. Their quiet but steady migration, mostly to central Serbia, was a process tacitly approved by the federal Yugoslav authorities.¹⁴⁴ The few officials who dared to denounce the ethnic discrimination, not only Serbs but also ethnic Turks (such as Kadri Reufi), were punished and expelled from the Communist party. By contrast, the Serb officials who cooperated with the Kosovo Albanian leadership were rewarded with higher posts in federal institutions or diplomatic bodies.¹⁴⁵ The most prominent Kosovo Albanian scholar Hasan Kaleshi was among the first to denounce, in the 1970s, the ethnic hatred propagated by Tirana-inspired textbooks and related historical writings. Often insulted or boycotted by other colleagues for his criticism of Albanian nationalism, Kaleshi died in suspicious circumstances a few years later.¹⁴⁶

During this silent ethnic cleansing the Serb population in Kosovo and Metohija was reduced by almost half, from 23.6 percent in 1948 to 13.2 percent in 1981, notwithstanding their relatively high birth rate during the whole period of Tito’s rule. The Montenegrin population in Kosovo

¹⁴³ For the Albanian view on Illyrian theory and the ethno-genesis of Kosovo, see *The Truth on Kosova* (Tirana: Encyclopedia Publishing House, The Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Albania, 1993). Cf. also D. T. Bataković, “Kosovo-Metohija in the 20th Century: Nationalism and Communism”, *Eurobalkans* 30–31 (Athens: A. Papadopoulos S.A., 1998), 21–27.

¹⁴⁴ Pedro Ramet, *Nationalism and Federalism in Yugoslavia 1963–1983* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), 160–163.

¹⁴⁵ Bataković, *Kosovo Chronicles*, 70.

¹⁴⁶ For more, see Mišević, *Ko je tražio republiku*.

dropped from 3.9 percent in 1948 to 1.7 percent in 1981. Between 1961 and 1981, 42.2 percent of all Kosovo Serbs and 63.3 percent of all Kosovo Montenegrins left the province to settle in other parts of Serbia or Montenegro. Only 15 percent of these migrations were, however, motivated by economic reasons: all others were triggered by interethnic tensions, pressures and harassments by Albanians which remained unpunished by the local police and judicial authorities.¹⁴⁷

This ethnically motivated persecution also targeted the Serbian Orthodox Church, perceived as the pillar of Serbian identity in the Province: bishops, priests, monks and nuns, cemeteries and landed property. Numerous instances of continuous persecution both by Albanian nationalists and by Albanian provincial bureaucrats were reported to the Holy Synod by the Raška-Prizren Diocese on 19 May 1969. Patriarch German, then the head of the Serbian Orthodox Church, was compelled to ask Tito, the communist dictator of Yugoslavia, for protection:

“The violence decreases somewhat only to reappear elsewhere in an even more serious form. During the last year its forms have become extreme. There not only has been destruction of crops in the fields, destruction of forests (monasteries of Devič, Dečani, Gorioč near Peć), desecration of graves (Kosovska Vitina and elsewhere), but even physical assaults on nuns (last year in the monasteries of Binač near Kosovska Vitina and Mušutište near Prizren, and this spring, in Devič — where the prioress suffered serious physical injuries, a novice of the Dečani monastery was injured by the axe, a hieromonk of Gorioč monastery was hit in the head with a stone, priests around Kosovska Mitrovica were stoned, etc.), which has resulted in the emigration of our faithful from those regions.”¹⁴⁸

The Patriarch's request, just another one in a series of similar complaints to the authorities of Serbia and other federal institutions, produced neither short-term nor long-term results. Namely, J. B. Tito promised protection and law enforcement but, in practice, no tangible results were achieved. Numerous complaints, including copious verbatim reports by Serb citizens and believers subsequently published in various church magazines, remained entirely ignored by the communist authorities both in Belgrade and Priština until the early 1980s.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁷ Detailed analysis based on extensive field research can be found in R. Petrović & M. Blagojević, *The Migration of Serbs and Montenegrins from Kosovo and Metohija. Results of the Survey Conducted in 1985–1986* (Belgrade: Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, 1992).

¹⁴⁸ The whole letter is reproduced in *Zadužbine Kosova*, 833.

¹⁴⁹ For further documentation from the Archive of the Holy Synod in Belgrade concerning continuous persecution of the Serbian Orthodox Church in the Raška-Prizren

Moreover, the Kosovo Albanian *nomenklatura* often allotted the land of the expelled Serbs to immigrants from Albania. From 1945 until Tito's death in 1980, the number of Albanians in Kosovo and Metohija almost tripled, which gives a population increase of 164 percent from 1948 to 1981. The number of immigrants from Albania has never been exactly determined.

In the first post-war years, their settlement in Kosovo and Metohija had been aimed at facilitating the expected annexation of Albania to the Yugoslav federation as the seventh republic. The second wave of Albanian settlement was organized between the late 1960s and the early 1980s by the Kosovo Albanian *nomenklatura* in order to bolster the ethnic supremacy of Albanians in the Kosovo districts with mixed population and a stronger Serbian presence. The spectacular demographic growth of the Kosovo Albanian population, facilitated by the socialist welfare system and huge federal and Serbian investments into the economy of the Province, gave additional social stimulus to the hostile nationalism of new generations of Kosovo Albanians, at liberty to be educated on a dangerous mixture of nineteenth-century romantic nationalism and Enver Hohxa's Stalinist-type ethnic-communism. As a result, despite abundant political and social advantages they obtained after 1945, Kosovo Albanians still considered Yugoslavia as a transitional phase: they aspired to the status of a constituent republic of Yugoslavia endowed with the right to self-determination, i.e. secession, which they looked upon as a stepping-stone to eventual unification with Albania.

This barely hidden political goal of the Kosovo Albanians was recognized by experienced American journalists travelling in the area in the early 1980s: "The [Albanian] nationalists have a two-point platform [...] first to establish what they call an ethnically clean Albanian republic and then the merger with Albania to form a greater Albania."¹⁵⁰

Economic frustrations of the Kosovo Albanians as a predominantly agrarian population lacking job opportunities was, therefore, largely diverted into national dissatisfaction through a massive propaganda campaign led by intellectuals proliferating national mythology. The political goal of the coming rebellion was symbolically announced by the fire Albanian extremists set to the historic seat of the Serbian Orthodox Church, the Patriarchate of Peć, in March 1981. The large-scale Albanian rebellion in March and

Diocese between 1945 and 1981, see *Zadužbine Kosova*, 793–838. Cf. also Dimitrije Bogdanović, "The Serbian Church during the Kosovo Hardship" in Predrag D. Kijuk, Dušan T. Bataković and Slobodan Mileusnić, eds., *The Battle of Kosovo, 1389–1989* (Belgrade: Homeland, 1989), 142–144.

¹⁵⁰ Marvine Howe, "Exodus of Serbians Stir Province in Yugoslavia", *The New York Times*, 12 July 1982.

April 1981, described initially as a student revolt, evolved within weeks into a nationalistic movement demanding the status of a federal republic for Kosovo within Yugoslavia. The demand arose only a year after the death of J. B. Tito, disrupting the sensitive balance of power in the federal leadership of communist Yugoslavia.¹⁵¹

Attempts to appease the Albanian revolt in Kosovo and Metohija by means of the standard communist practice of repeated party purges and by continuous repression (actions of the federal military and police forces against Albanian protesters, large-scale legal prosecution and punishment, mostly of younger people) did not yield expected results. The League of Communists' parallel efforts to minimize the problem of discrimination against the Serbs and of their forced migration from Kosovo and Metohija only resulted in the growing frustration of Serbs all over Yugoslavia in the years that followed.

The foreign press frequently reported on the Yugoslav police retaliation against young Albanian protesters shouting slogans against federal Yugoslavia while praising Enver Hoxha, the communist dictator of Albania. The Kosovo Serb claims, supported by Yugoslav officials in Belgrade about Albanian-organized ethnically motivated persecution, discrimination and harassment were strongly and concertedly denied by Kosovo Albanians, Hoxha's officials from Tirana and their supporters on the international scene. The Kosovo Serb claims, often minimized by foreign correspondents and special envoys to the region were confirmed from independent sources, by unbiased American journalists fully acquainted with regional conflicts, developments and dilemmas. In the well-informed American reporter's view, the following process was the major development in Kosovo: "Serbs have been harassed by Albanians and have packed up and left the region. Some 57,000 Serbs have left Kosovo in the last decade [...] the exodus of Serbs is admittedly one of the main problems [...] in Kosovo."¹⁵²

Similar balanced reporting on continuous hardship of the Kosovo Serb population both before and after the 1981 riots was drowned out by an orchestrated media campaign. In the late 1980s, Western reporting, with a few noble exceptions, was focused exclusively on constant violation of the human rights of the rebelled Kosovo Albanians. The conflict in Kosovo was often presented as internal ethnic strife, omitting the real ideological

¹⁵¹ Nora Beloff, *Tito's Flawed Legacy. Yugoslavia and the West since 1999* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1985), 209–214.

¹⁵² *The New York Times*, 12 July 1982.

background of Albanian nationalism, fostered by the Albanian regime in Tirana.¹⁵³

Nevertheless, in 1987 the *New York Times* came out with a detailed report: “the current hostilities pit separatist-minded ethnic Albanians against the various Slavic populations of Yugoslavia and occur at all levels of society, from the highest officials to the humblest peasants. A young Army conscript of ethnic Albanian origin [Aziz Kelmendi] shot up his barracks [in Paraćin, central Serbia], killing four sleeping Slavic bunkmates and wounding six others. The army says it has uncovered hundreds of subversive ethnic Albanian cells in its ranks. Some arsenals have been raided.”¹⁵⁴

It should be noted that, in retrospect, this kind of both credible and verifiable reporting provides a clear and indisputable account of the hidden political objectives of Kosovo Albanians and confirms the claims of Kosovo Serbs about being persecuted, discriminated and pressured into leaving the province. Managing to undermine the whole federal system as established by the 1974 Constitution, the Albanian question in Serbia and Yugoslavia produced a domino effect, arousing Serb concerns over their own position both in Serbia and in the Yugoslav federation. Much classified information about interethnic tensions in Kosovo and Metohija was leaked to the public and eventually found its way to Western press reports. It was reported that “ethnic Albanians in the Government have manipulated public funds and regulations to take over land belonging to Serbs. And politicians have exchanged vicious insults. Slavic Orthodox churches have been attacked, and flags have been torn down. Wells have been poisoned and crops burned. Slavic boys have been knifed, and some young ethnic Albanians have been told by their elders to rape Serbian girls.”¹⁵⁵ The goal of radical Albanian nationalists was described as the formation of “ethnic Albania that includes western Macedonia, southern Montenegro, part of southern Serbia, Kosovo and Albania itself. That includes large chunks of the republics that make up the southern half of Yugoslavia. Other ethnic Albanian separatists admit to a vision of a greater Albania governed from Priština in southern Yugoslavia rather than Tirana, the capital of neighbouring Albania. [...] As Slavs flee the protracted violence, Kosovo is becoming what ethnic Albanian nationalists have been demanding for years, and especially strongly since the

¹⁵³ The official position of Albania in 1981 is available in the collection of articles from Tirana’s *Zëri i popullit* daily: *A propos des événements de Kosove* (Tirana: 8 Nëntori, 1981).

¹⁵⁴ David Binder, “In Yugoslavia, Rising Ethnic Strife Brings Fears of Worse Civil Conflict”, *The New York Times*, 1 November 1987.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

bloody rioting by ethnic Albanians in Priština in 1981 — an ‘ethnically pure’ Albanian region, a ‘Republic of Kosovo’ in all but name.”¹⁵⁶

It was also observed, correctly, that the “growing tension between Albanians and Serbs here this year has converted this poor southern region from a chronic local trouble spot into the potential flash point of a country increasingly divided by national rivalries. Since the outbreak of riots here in 1981, authorities of the autonomous province of Kosovo have faced a steady challenge from separatist and nationalist groups among the dominant Albanian population. More than 1,000 people [Kosovo Albanians] have been jailed for seeking Kosovo’s independence from Serbia, the Yugoslav republic to which Kosovo nominally belongs, or unification with the neighbouring nation Albania. The significance of this conflict has been multiplied this year by the emergence of concern among Yugoslavia’s Serbs, the country’s largest ethnic group, about the ‘forced emigration’ of Serbs from Kosovo under pressure from the Albanians. Small farmers, tradesmen and professionals have been steadily leaving the province’s cities and the small Serbian villages around them, raising the prospect that a historic seat of the Serbian nation will soon be populated only by Albanians. More than 20,000 have emigrated since 1981 out of a total Serbian population of about 220,000. Meanwhile, the Albanian population of over 1.2 million is expanding at the fastest pace in Europe. The local Serbs arguing that Albanian-dominated provincial authorities have offered them no protection from violent attacks, have signed petitions and staged several demonstrations outside Pristina this year. To the embarrassment of [Kosovo Albanian] authorities, they have also sent three delegations to press their case in Belgrade, the capital of Serbia and of Yugoslavia. The acts have inflamed nationalist feeling among Serbians outside Kosovo and prompted demands by intellectuals and even Serbian communist political leaders for constitutional changes and other drastic action to stop the emigration and restore Serbia’s control over Kosovo. The Serbian outbursts, in turn, have provoked concern by leaders of Yugoslavia’s five other, smaller republics, who sympathize with some complaints but are wary of Serbian national aspirations. The last delegation of Serbs to visit Belgrade early this month, meanwhile, warned that they would take up arms against their perceived tormentors among the Albanians.”¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁷ Albania itself, the world’s most rigid Stalinist government has kept the nation so isolated and poverty-stricken that about 5,000 refugees have fled across the heavily guarded border to Kosovo. A powerful tradition of close-knit clans has bound the community together, raised the birth rate and discouraged emigration to other parts of Yugoslavia. The result, said economists and government officials, has been pressure for

The intransigence of the national-communist *nomenklatura* in the Yugoslav federal leadership, tacitly patronizing Albanian extremism, created dangerous tensions which were difficult to control: from 1981, self-organized Kosovo Serbs gradually gained wide popular support after frequent mass protests before federal Yugoslav institutions in Belgrade.¹⁵⁸ Since the very beginning of their open protest against discrimination, the Serbs of Kosovo and Metohija enjoyed both moral and political support of priests, monks and bishops of the Serbian Orthodox Church — generally perceived as the archenemy of the communist regime. With its open letters to the public denouncing “cultural and spiritual genocide” directed against the Serbian Christian heritage (desecration of churches, monasteries and graveyards, harassments and attacks on monks and nuns, etc.) widely distributed through the religious press, the Patriarchate, no longer seen as a parochial and conservative organization, but as a natural protector of national interest in dangerous situations, gradually regained the confidence of

land in Kosovo even from those Albanians who are neither separatist nor anti-Serbian. “Let me explain the psychology of an Albanian farmer about the land,” said Abrashi, himself Albanian. “For centuries these people have been defining their existence and their worth only through land. They are ready to make great sacrifices, to work 30 years, to go and work abroad, to live in terrible conditions so as to collect, penny by penny, the money to buy a piece of land. And the land must be near that of the rest of the family. For that they will pay almost any price.” Land prices in Kosovo, despite its poverty, are five times those in Serbia and typically range around \$35,000 for an acre of good farm land, Abrashi said. Newspapers have reported sales of farms for over \$1 million. As a result, Serbs, who unlike the Albanians have attractive alternatives outside the province, have had a powerful economic incentive to sell their land to Albanians. For the Serbs who have remained; frustrated Albanian youth have kept up a steady harassment ranging from the painting of hostile slogans on Serbian homes and vandalism of Serbian graveyards to beatings and rapes. “One cannot speak of these developments as being only the deeds of individual [Albanian] groups anymore,” said Serbia’s interior minister Svetomir Lalović in a recent speech. “At issue are seriously disturbed interethnic relations.” Few killings have been recorded since the 1981 riots. But in the three months of July, August and September, authorities recorded 34 assaults by Albanians on Serbians. Two instances of rape provoked outraged demonstrations near Priština and motivated the last, angry delegation that marched on the federal parliament in Belgrade. Yugoslav officials predict that it will take many years to resolve the tensions in Kosovo, and dissidents are even less sanguine. (Jackson Diehl, “Ethnic Rivalries cause unrest in Yugoslav Region”, *Washington Post* Foreign Service Saturday, 29 November 1986).

¹⁵⁸ Cf. “Kosovo polje—dnevnik događaja”, *Intervju* 127, 11 April 1986; Atanasije Jefić, *Od Kosova do Jadovna* (Belgrade: Srpska Pravoslavna Crkva, 1986); Kjell Magnusson, “The Serbian Reaction Kosovo and Ethnic Mobilization Among the Serbs”, *Nordic Journal of Soviet & East European Studies* 43 (1987), 3–30.

the wider public and established a new moral influence on a largely secular Serb population.¹⁵⁹

Despite the growing support in all Serb-inhabited areas of Yugoslavia — from Slovenian enclaves, most of eastern and western Bosnia, Dalmatia and the whole of Krajina (areas of the former Habsburg Military Frontier) in Croatia to Herzegovina, northern Macedonia, Montenegro and Vojvodina — for the protection of the Serbs of Kosovo and Metohija, the main federal institutions, still fully controlled by the old-age dogmas of the League of Communists, remained hostile to any significant change of political or legal provisions or to any kind of new constitutional arrangements that could impose restrictions on the discrimination against Kosovo Serbs and other non-Albanian ethnic groups and harmonize the legal system in the whole of Serbia.

On 25 October 1987, the eight-member Federal Presidency decided to deploy federal police forces to Kosovo and Metohija in order to maintain order. The Kosovo Albanian *nomenklatura* read this act as clear evidence of losing support among other nationalistic leaderships inside the Federation. Eventually supported by official Belgrade, local Kosovo Serb communists emerged victorious in this conflict, which ended up with repeated purges of Albanian communist leaders in Priština as well as elsewhere in Kosovo and Metohija.

As a result, after the federal authorities failed to ensure the protection of the Serbs in Kosovo and Metohija, the problem was bound to become a means of highly orchestrated political manipulation, in particular when a new communist hardliner, Slobodan Milošević, using a populist strategy, imposed himself in the middle of 1987 as the sole protector of Serb national interests. Milošević's intention was to re-establish the influence of the discredited League of Communists on the basis of a newly-discovered Serb nationalism, a model already applied a decade before in other constituent republics of federal Yugoslavia. Most Serbs perceived him as a genuine Serb patriot who pretended to be a hard-line communist. Milošević, however, turned out to be a communist only pretending to be a Serb patriot.¹⁶⁰

His neo-communist populism gained momentum as the collapse of communism encouraged by nationalism was already underway in Soviet-dominated Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union itself. Milošević's hard-

¹⁵⁹ "Declaration of the Bishops of the Serbian Orthodox Church against the Genocide by the Albanians on the indigenous Serbian Population, together with the Sacrilege of their Cultural Monuments in their own Country", *South Slav Journal* 11/2-3 (40-41) (London: South Slav Journal, 1988), 61-64, 87-89.

¹⁶⁰ For more, see Slavoljub Djukić, *Kako se dogodio vodja* (Belgrade: Filip Višnjić, 1991); Kosta Čavoški, *Slobodan protiv slobode* (Belgrade: Dosije, 1992).

line communist approach to the national question soon proved to be the most discrediting element for general Serb interests in Yugoslavia.¹⁶¹

Even before Milošević rose to power in 1987, the secessionist movement of the Kosovo Albanians had been able to mobilize a large spectrum of Albanian Diaspora in the West, using a mixture of traditionally right-wing accusations against the Serbs and an ultra-left “Marxist-Leninist” rhetoric furnished over the years by Enver Hoxha’s Albania. After the 1987 party coup in Belgrade, Albanians skilfully portrayed themselves as the main victims of the neo-communist regime of Slobodan Milošević, while Serbia was often portrayed as the “last bastion of communism in Europe”.¹⁶² Using politically correct liberal rhetoric, and staging well-organized pacifist demonstrations, Kosovo Albanians managed to attract the attention of the Western media and their political elite.¹⁶³

Nevertheless, in reality, while maintaining full control over the key institutions and executive power in the Province, Kosovo Albanians, and extremist nationalists in particular, continued to harass and discriminate the non-Albanian population. A rare first-hand American correspondent noted that “ethnic Albanians already control almost every phase of life in the autonomous province of Kosovo, including the police, judiciary, civil service, schools and factories. Non-Albanian visitors almost immediately feel the independence — and suspicion — of the ethnic Albanian authorities.”¹⁶⁴

The Kosovo Albanians, following the pattern of strict tribal obedience, were organized as a homogeneous political movement bound by common nationalist ideals. Political freedom and human rights, as viewed by the Kosovo Albanians, were exclusively linked to their collective rights and were confined to their claims for unrestricted majority rule in a territory defined as “the Republic of Kosovo” within the Yugoslav federation.

Protests of Kosovo Albanians provoked another wave of ethnic mobilization. It was the Trepča Albanian miners’ protest of November 1988

¹⁶¹ J. F. Brown, *Nationalism, Democracy, and Security in the Balkans* (Brookfield: Dartmouth Pub, 1992); Lenard J. Cohen, *Broken Bonds: Yugoslavia’s Disintegration and Balkan Politics in Transition* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1995).

¹⁶² Batakovic, *Kosovo. La spirale de la haine*, 71–77.

¹⁶³ For an Albanian point of view, see Ibrahim Rugova, *Independence and Democracy* (Prishtina: Fjala, 1991; Alush Gashi, ed., *The Denial of Human and National Rights of Albanians in Yugoslavia* (New York: Illiria, 1992); *Open wounds: human rights abuses in Kosovo* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 1993).

¹⁶⁴ The obvious result of such a policy was the following: “while 200,000 Serbs and Montenegrins still live in the province, they are scattered and lack cohesion. In the last seven years, 20,000 of them have fled the province, often leaving behind farmsteads and houses, for the safety of the Slavic north.” (David Binder, “In Yugoslavia, Rising Ethnic Strife Brings Fears of Worse Civil Conflict”, *The New York Times*, 1 November 1987).

followed by a similar Albanian miners' hunger strike in January 1989 that generated a series of Albanian-organized solidarity strikes in Belgrade-based, state-owned companies throughout Kosovo and Metohija. In addition, between November 1988 and September 1989 mass strikes or other work boycotts took place in at least 230 companies throughout the province, producing a tremendous loss of two million working hours. Albanian-sponsored strikes soon became the chief weapon of the Independent Trade Unions of Kosovo (BSPK), organized in 1990 to substitute the provincial Federation of Trade Unions (FTU). On 3 September the BSPK called for a one-day general strike to protest against the dismissals of 15,000 Albanian workers. The general strike of Kosovo Albanians, fully boycotted by the Province's thirty-five percent Serb and non-Albanian population, managed to halt most of the big companies all over Kosovo and Metohija and demonstrated the power of ethnic mobilization and solidarity. However, the strike failed to achieve its aims; rather, Serbia responded by firing an additional 5,000 workers who had refused to comply with the strict rules of workers-self-management that were still a legal obligation for all workers in Yugoslavia.

Conflicts, parallel worlds, confrontation

The final result of the limitation of Kosovo autonomy imposed by Serbia was another huge wave of unrest and, in turn, severe police repression. As Albanian protests continued, the Yugoslav leadership, at the request of the authorities of Serbia, deployed the federal army forces to Kosovo and Metohija in February 1989. During the ensuing March protest some protesters, some of whom were armed, were killed while hundreds were arrested in conflicts with the federal army. That same month, the Albanian communist leader Azem Vllasi and another fourteen Albanian communists were sentenced for "counterrevolutionary activities undermining the social order", for organizing the riots of miners at Stari Trg and Albanian ethnically motivated demonstrations throughout Kosovo.¹⁶⁵

By the 26 March 1989 amendments to the Constitution of Serbia, the autonomy of both Serbian provinces, Kosovo (with the term Metohija reintroduced) and Vojvodina, was reduced to the level enjoyed under the 1963 Constitution.¹⁶⁶ The limitation of autonomy meant in fact the removal of all constitutional provisions perceived or treated as elements of potential

¹⁶⁵ It was later that their sentences were abolished under the pressure of the international and Yugoslav public. Cf. Hugh Poulton, *The Balkans. Minorities and States in Conflict* (London: Minority Rights Group, 1991), 67–68.

¹⁶⁶ "Ustav Republike Srbije", *Službeni glasnik Republike Srbije* 1 (Belgrade 1990).

Kosovo statehood. It also ended the unrestrained, ethnically motivated political domination of Albanians in the Autonomous Province of Kosovo.¹⁶⁷

The Albanian members of the dismissed communist Assembly of Kosovo responded on 2 July 1990 by proclaiming the Republic of Kosovo within Yugoslavia, i.e. a federal unit separate from Serbia. Furthermore, the Kosovo Albanian representatives, fully ignoring the political rights of Kosovo Serbs and other national communities and ethnic groups, adopted their own Albanian “Constitution” at an assembly held secretly in Kačanik on 7 September 1990. These acts, followed by a widespread Albanian boycott of all official Serb-dominated institutions, from schools to hospitals, were regarded by Serbian authorities as illegal attempts at secession.¹⁶⁸

Belgrade’s immediate response was to fire all Kosovo Albanians who challenged the restored statehood of Serbia. The next measure was harsh police retaliation against often violent Kosovo Albanian protesters. Unyielding in their aim to obtain independence from Serbia, Kosovo Albanians at first chose a strategy of passive resistance, personified by Ibrahim Rugova, a prominent communist intellectual that became leader of the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK), a political party functioning as a mass Albanian national movement. Rugova’s policy was to refuse all contact with official Belgrade and the Serb-dominated authorities in Kosovo, labeling them illegal institutions that violated 1974 Kosovo autonomy. Furthermore, throughout the early 1990s, Kosovo Albanians adamantly rejected frequent calls, supported by the international community, for a democratic compromise through political compromise with the anti-Milošević democratic forces in Serbia. Kosovo Albanians, therefore, invested nothing into the promotion of democracy or human rights in Serbia. The majority of Kosovo Albanians boycotted all post-1990 multiparty parliamentary elections in Serbia while in parallel denouncing Milošević’s communist regime as pursuing “colonial” and “apartheid” policy.

The only beneficiary of the situation was Milošević, who rose to power through being perceived as the main protector of discriminated Kosovo Serbs. In practice, Milošević manipulated the Kosovo issue for his own short-term needs, primarily as a safe reservoir for at least twenty-six parliamentary seats needed for maintaining his undisputed power in Serbia. In return, Milošević tolerated the parallel political system established by Albanians for their own community in Kosovo and Metohija. The long-term strategy of Kosovo Albanians remained unchanged during the wars

¹⁶⁷ Cf. “Amandmani na Ustav Srbije 1989”, *Službeni glasnik SR Srbije* 11 (Belgrade 1989).

¹⁶⁸ Cf. Shklzen Maliqi, “A Demand for a New Status: The Albanian Movement in Kosovo” in Veremis & Kofos, eds., *Kosovo. Avoiding Another Balkan War*, 210–218.

of Yugoslav succession waged in Slovenia, Croatia and Bosnia: they sought to obtain international support, first political and eventually military, for the cause of Kosovo's secession from Serbia which, in April 1992, formed a common state with Montenegro: the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.¹⁶⁹

Kosovo Albanians, therefore, kept rejecting all calls for democratic struggle within Serbia and for cooperation with the nascent democratic bloc in Belgrade. Milošević was, for his own ends, using Kosovo to remain in power, stifle the democratic opposition and suppress any discussion about his communist-inspired policy, Kosovo included. Already in 1992, Milošević lost mass support and resorted to electoral fraud to maintain power, while using the international embargo imposed on Serbia and Montenegro in June 1992 to increase his control over the economy, politics and media through both security and army services. The Serbian democratic opposition (DE-POS) was eventually supported by the highest-ranking representatives of the Serbian Orthodox Church in their often joint efforts, during 1992, to stop the bloodshed of the civil wars in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, and to pave the way to compromise and peace through political dialogue and international mediation:

"The Serbian Orthodox Church and the Serbian people have never adhered to godless Communism or to any other totalitarian ideology. [...] The Serbian Church openly dissociates and distances itself from this and this kind of [Milošević-appointed] government and its supporters. We wish to remind all [persons] in power, especially in Serbia, that no one's chair [political position] is more important than the destiny and freedom of the whole nation and that no one has a monopoly on the people and the future of our children. [...] Also, we appeal to all authorities in Serbia and all factors in Europe and the world to respect the rights and responsibilities of all who live in Kosovo and Metohija, and not to impose solutions under pressure from any side; instead, [we appeal for] true support to a compassionate and just democratic order that will ensure protection for all people and nations in this region, which, because of its spiritual, national and cultural significance, is to Serbs what Jerusalem is to Jews."¹⁷⁰

After the Dayton Peace Accords of 1995 Serbia's President Slobodan Milošević, as one of the signatories of the hard-won peace, went from being the demonized "butcher of the Balkans" to being the guarantor of the post-war settlement in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Despite growing opposition to his oppressive neo-communist regime throughout Serbia and the three-month

¹⁶⁹ Cf. Albanian point of view in Elez Biberaj, *Kosova: the Balkan Powder Keg* (London: Research Institute for the Study of Conflict and Terrorism, 1993).

¹⁷⁰ The entire text of the *Memorandum* of the Holy Assembly of Bishops (held 14-27 May 1992) was published in *Glasnik Srpske patrijaršije* 6 (June 1992), 94-97.

protests against electoral fraud in the winter of 1996, Milošević still enjoyed almost unconditional Western support and even became the chief Serbian negotiator for the pending Kosovo crisis. However, the increasing efforts of different international mediators demanding a peaceful solution to the Serb-Albanian conflict in Kosovo failed due to procrastination within the Belgrade regime, but also due to the opposition of Albanians who demanded, as a first concession, the restoration of the autonomous status granted by the 1974 Yugoslav Constitution.¹⁷¹

The attempts to normalize the education process for ethnic Albanians by allowing them to use public schooling facilities and thus to reduce interethnic tensions in Kosovo did not produce the expected results: Serbian officials presented the problem of the education system as primarily a humanitarian issue, whereas the Albanians saw the problem as inseparable from the future political status of Kosovo.¹⁷²

While Albanians saw the restoration of the autonomous status of 1974 merely as a transition to their full independence from Belgrade, different semi-official Serbian proposals called for a permanent solution to the problem through the partitioning of Kosovo along ethnic lines. In parallel, the democratic opposition in Belgrade proposed various transitional solutions, ranging from regionalization (Miodrag Jovičić) to cantonization (D. T. Bataković) of Kosovo and Metohija, hoping to prevent further aggravation of interethnic relations which would obviously lead to uncontrolled armed conflicts in the nearest future.¹⁷³

The opposing attitudes of Serbs and Albanians, with their leaders Slobodan Milošević and Ibrahim Rugova entrenched in their uncompromising positions, blocked the various mediation efforts of EU or US representatives. The general impression of foreign analysts was that Kosovo was turning into two “parallel worlds”, with each side demonizing or simply ignoring the other.¹⁷⁴ Albanian-sponsored terrorist attacks and more than

¹⁷¹ D. T. Bataković, “Kosovo-Metohija Question: Origins of a Conflict and Possible Solutions”, *Dialogue* 7/25 (Paris 1998), 41–56.

¹⁷² The Milošević-Rugova agreement, signed under the auspices of Sant’Egidio, never came into effect due to different interpretations: *Naša Borba*, Belgrade, 3 and 4 September 1996. An overview of different initiatives with corresponding documentation in Stefan Troebst, ed., *Conflict in Kosovo: An Analytical Documentation, 1992–1998*, ECMI Working Paper No. 1 (Flensburg: European Centre for Minority Issues, 1998). Cf. also a detailed account of the negotiation process by Predrag Simić, *Put u Rambuje, kosovska kriza 1995–2000* (Belgrade: Nova, 2000).

¹⁷³ D. T. Bataković, “Progetti serbi di spartazione”, *Kosovo: Il triangolo dei Balcani*, *Limes* 3 (Roma 1998), 153–169.

¹⁷⁴ See the analysis: *Parallel Worlds*, Institute for War & Peace, Media Focus 3, London, 4 December 1998.

sixty assassinations from 1995 to 1998, notably of Kosovo Serb policemen and civilians, but also of Kosovo Albanian officials loyal to Serbia, were aimed at destroying the last bridges of communication between the two communities, and punishing all the members of the Albanian community unsympathetic to the secessionist cause.

The Albanian clandestine paramilitary organization KLA (the Kosovo Liberation Army) announced armed resistance in February 1998. This was a major turning-point after which the decade-long passive resistance of the Albanians gradually turned into armed rebellion and afterwards into full-scale civil war in the Province. Milošević's regime responded with severe, often excessive, police measures targeting both terrorist KLA groups and, occasionally, civilians involved in providing logistics. After a series of persistent clashes between the KLA and Serbian police forces, the armed conflict escalated in the summer of 1998.¹⁷⁵

After the failed Rambouillet negotiations on the future status of Kosovo, NATO decided to resolve the crisis by military action.¹⁷⁶ Officially, the NATO campaign against Yugoslavia, lacking legal authorization from the UN, had five initial objectives: 1) safe return of Albanian refugees; 2) withdrawal of all Serbian forces from Kosovo; 3) NATO military control on the ground; 4) extended autonomy for Kosovo; and 5) the gradual introduction of multiethnic democracy. Another two objectives were added subsequently: overthrowing Milošević and no commitment of ground troops.¹⁷⁷

The bombing of Yugoslavia that started on 24 March 1999 strained Serbian-Albanian relations in Kosovo to the limit. The Kosovo Albanians supporting the paramilitary KLA units openly rejoiced at the bombs falling on Belgrade and other towns in Serbia. In addition, the KLA forces resumed operations against Serbian police units and local Serbian civilians, but also against those Albanians or members of other ethnic groups (such as

¹⁷⁵ Cf. "Serbia: Democratic Alternative", *Special Report by US Institute of Peace*, Washington DC, June 1998, p. 7. For more, see D. T. Bataković. "The Serbs in Kosovo and Metohija. War, International Protectorate and National Catastrophe", *Eurobalkans* 36–37 (Autumn/Winter 1999), 23–40.

¹⁷⁶ David Gompert, "How to Defeat Serbia", *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 73, no. 4 (New York: Council on Foreign Relations Inc., 1994).

¹⁷⁷ "A Bungled War", *The Economist*, London, 8 May 1999, 11. See a rather critical analysis of the Kosovo crisis development and NATO operations in Ignatio Ramonet & Alain Gresh, eds., "La nouvelle guerre des Balkans", *Le monde diplomatique, Manière de voir* no. 45 (May–June 1999). Cf. another, less critical, Western perspective by Ronald Dannreuther, "War in Kosovo: History, Development and Aftermath" in Mary Buckley and Sally Cummings, eds., *Kosovo. Perception of War and its Aftermath* (London & New York: Continuum, 2001), 12–29.

Roma, Muslim Slavs, Gorani and others) that had remained loyal to Serbia throughout the conflict. In response, the Serbian police and military forces launched full-scale operations against Albanians, and the KLA forces, apart from small pockets in central and north-eastern Kosovo (the Drenica and Lab areas), were crushed and pushed into the mountains towards the Albanian border (the Junik area). With many crimes against civilians, committed by both sides, plus the high percentage of civilians, mostly Albanian, displaced to neighbouring countries, interethnic relations sank to their lowest level since the Second World War.¹⁷⁸ Nonetheless, it was the brotherhood of the Serbian monastery of Dečani that sheltered some 200 local Albanian women and children trying to escape from persecution and revenge.

According to UNHCR data on 25 May 1999, there were 957,913 ethnic Albanian refugees who left Kosovo since the first armed attacks of the KLA on the Serbian police in March 1998. The large-scale exodus of Albanians from Kosovo was, from the Albanian standpoint, variously explained: first, as ethnic cleansing organized by Serb paramilitary forces; second, as flight from Kosovo to avoid the NATO bombing; third, Kosovo Albanians found themselves coerced by the KLA. Indeed, the KLA made an effort to legitimize the NATO air strikes and “secure” the arrival of NATO troops in Kosovo. During April 1999, it was also a way for a part of the defeated KLA units to be transferred to Albania or Macedonia along with the refugees in order to avoid destruction by the Yugoslav army (*Vojska Jugoslavije*) and police forces of the Milošević regime.

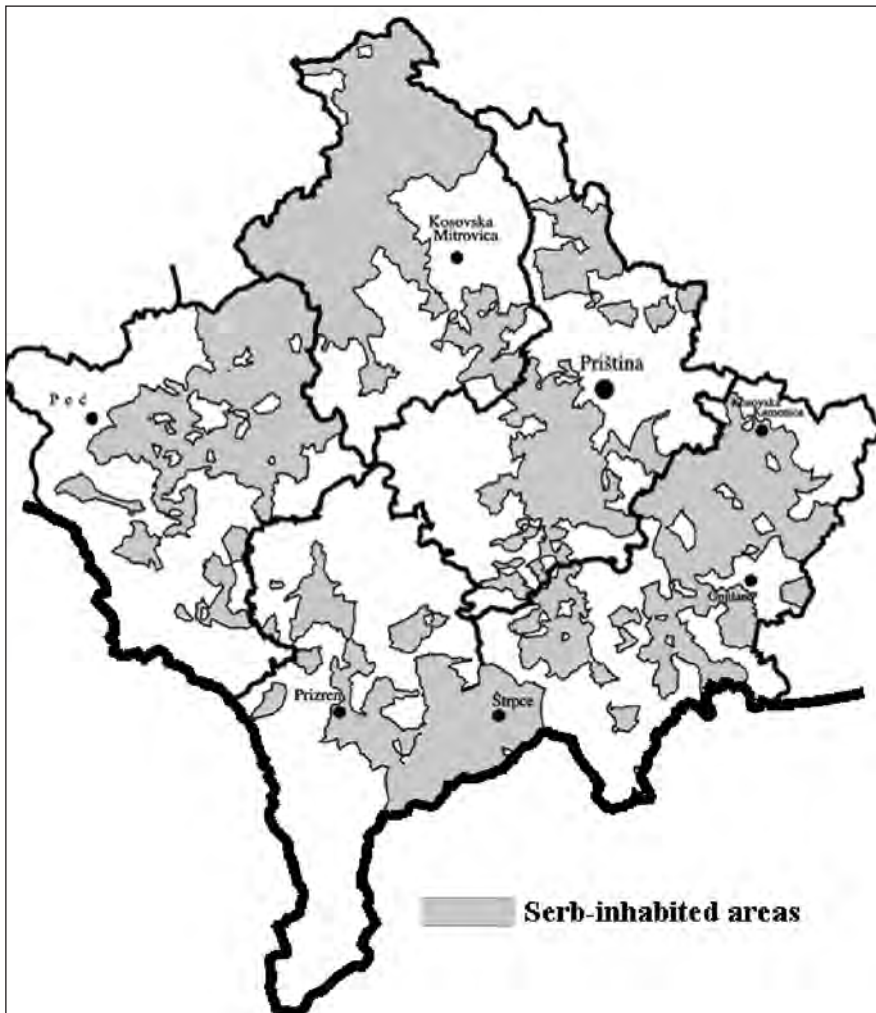
The Hague Tribunal (ICTY) indictment against Milošević for war crimes unsealed in the middle of the NATO bombing campaign contributed significantly to his decision to accept the total withdrawal of Serbian military and police forces from Kosovo, with the proviso that the new international protectorate should not extend to other parts of Serbia which were to remain under his control. According to the military-technical agreement signed in Kumanovo on 9 June 1999, Kosovo, after the withdrawal of all Serbian forces, was placed under the NATO-led Kosovo Force (KFOR) military protectorate. The authority of the United Nations civil administration was introduced by UN SC Resolution No 1244 of 10 June 1999. Although an international protectorate, Kosovo and Metohija, by the pro-

¹⁷⁸ Predominantly pro-Albanian interpretation of the events in the report of the International Crisis Group, *The Kosovo Spring*. The International Crisis Group Guide to Kosovo (Brussels 1998); for Serbian attitudes, see pp. 77–82. Cf. also D. T. Bataković, “Kosovska kriza: izazovi i ishodi”, *Književne novine* 971, Belgrade, 1 April 1998.

visions of UN SC Resolution 1244 legally remained within the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.¹⁷⁹

The centuries-long interethnic conflict between Serbs and Albanians in Serbia's troublesome province of Kosovo and Metohija, still heavily burdened by religious, national and ideological antagonisms, remained unsettled, and was only deepened after the unprecedented seventy-eight day-long NATO bombing campaign in the spring of 1999 — the alliance's first and last attack on a sovereign nation in post-Second World War Europe.

¹⁷⁹ For a legal aspect, see Robert M. Hayden, *Blueprint for a House Divided. The Constitutional Logic of the Yugoslav Conflict* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000), 167–180.



Kosovo and Metohija Serb-inhabited areas in 1999

APPENDIX

**Emigration of Kosovo-Metohija Serb colonists
1918-1941**

N°	DISTRICT	SERBIAN FAMILIES 1918-1941	SERBIAN FAMILIES 1991	PERCENTAGE
1	Vitina	480	75	15.83
2	Vučitrn	700	83	11.85
3	Glogovac	407	0	0.00
4	Gnjilane	304	30	9.86
5	Dečani	938	59	6.28
6	Djakovica	2079	94	4.52
7	Istok	1000	119	11.90
8	Kačanik	86	4	4.40
9	Klina	652	86	13.19
10	Kosovo Polje	384	36	9.30
11	Kos. Kamenica	212	39	18.39
12	Lipljan	555	121	21.80
13	Mališevo	380	1	0.26
14	Obilić	319	70	21.94
15	Orahovac	310	12	3.80
16	Podujevo	1566	163	10.40
17	Peć	1441	159	11.03
18	Priština	336	82	24.40
19	Srbica	531	0	0.00
20	Suva Reka	173	0	0.00
21	Kos. Mitrovica	171	26	15.20
22	Uroševac	633	104	16.42
23	Štimlje	69	3	4.34
24	Prizren	266	15	5.64
	Total	14,045	1,371	9.75

Ethnic structure of Kosovo and Metohija towns in 1981

Source: *Ethnic Structure of Population of SFR Yugoslavia as of 1981, Volume I, Data by settlements and communes*, Federal Statistical Bureau, Belgrade 1991.

MULTIETHNIC CITIES	TOTAL POPULATION	SERBS AND MONTENEGRINS	ETHNIC ALBANIANS	MUSLIM SLAVS	ROMA
Gnjilane	35,229	5644 + 143	25,619	107	2821
Istok	4478	1312 + 190	2413	153	377
Klina	4512	928 + 262	3156	37	107
Kos. Kamenica	5386	1679 + 46	3333	42	229
Kos. Mitrovica	52,866	8933 + 1503	32,390	4082	4299
Orahovac	13,134	2037 + 141	10,515	83	219
Peć	54,497	3847 + 7039	36,660	4153	2272
Priština	108,083	16,898 + 4169	75,803	2504	5101
Prizren	61,801	7709 + 470	39,412	5144	2592
Uroševac /Ferizaj	37,659	5202 + 262	28,365	1525	1813
Vučitrn	20,204	1046 + 142	17,903	28	947

Albanian, Serbian and other non-Albanian population of the main urban centres (1981)

TOWN	ETHNIC ALBANIANS	SERBS AND OTHERS
Gnjilane	25,619	8715
Istok	2413	2032
Klina	3156	1534
Kos. Kamenica	3333	1996
Kos. Mitrovica	32,390	18,817
Orahovac	10,515	2490
Peć	36,660	17,311
Priština	75,803	28,672
Prizren	39,412	15,915
Uroševac	28,365	8702
Vučitrn	17,903	2763

Miloš Luković

Kosovska Mitrovica

PRESENT AND PAST

Introductory note

Today Kosovska Mitrovica is a divided town. The Ibar river has become a sharp boundary between its estranged parts, south and north, and the bridge on the Ibar serves more to divide the two banks than to link them. Since 1999, when the territory of Kosovo and Metohija was placed under the control of international forces, the northern part of Kosovska Mitrovica has functioned as a separate urban entity, a kind of enclave. Just at this point the Ibar executes an elbow bend, abruptly changing its course from west-east to south-north. The town stands where the Sitnica and Ljušta rivers flow into the Ibar, in a narrow valley surrounded by outlying spurs of the Kopaonik, Rogozna and Čičavica mountains, dominated to the north side by the hills of Zvečan (799 m) and Mali Zvečan (750 m).¹

The present population of Kosovska Mitrovica is very different from what it was prior to the tumultuous events of 1999, which caused the tide of its population to ebb and flood simultaneously. From the northern part

¹This is a revised version of the paper "Istorijske, urbano-demografske i sociolingvističke osobnosti Kosovske Mitrovice" published in the volume *Život u enklavi, Liceum* 9 (Kragujevac 2005), 11–87. This paper emerged from the author's work on two research projects: 1) a project carried out in 2001–2005 by the Serbian Academy's (SASA) Institute for Balkan Studies – *Ethnolinguistic and Sociolinguistic Research into Refugees and Multi-Ethnic Communities in the Balkans*; 2) a project carried out in 2002–2003 by the Serbian Language Institute of the SASA – *A Study of Slavic Speech in Kosovo and Metohija*. These were mainly linguistic in character, but required study of the different layers of the material and non-material culture of the area. The author of this work conducted research in the northern part of Kosovska Mitrovica intermittently throughout 2003, 2004 and 2005.

of town the Albanians² withdrew to the southern part, and from the southern part Serbs and many Roma of both Christian Orthodox and Islamic persuasion crossed to the north. Significant numbers of the displaced did not settle permanently there or in the vicinity but continued the trek northwards towards Leposavić and central Serbia, sharing the fate of others who left the territory of Kosovo and Metohija. According to joint information from the office of the Serbian Commissioner for Refugees and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (based on a registration carried out during 1999 and 2000), of 187,129 internally displaced persons from the territory of Kosovo and Metohija, 7,829 persons came from the Municipality of Kosovska Mitrovica, and the following numbers from adjoining municipalities: Zvečan 920, Vučitrn 5300, Srbica 770, Leposavić 846 and Zubin Potok 537 persons, a total of 16,202 persons from the entire Kosovska Mitrovica district.³

However, the number of those who in 1999 left the northern part of Kosovska Mitrovica (hereafter: North Kosovska Mitrovica) and settled in the southern part of the town or elsewhere in the interior of the Province is not known to us. Another unknown is the exact number of people who arrived that year in the northern part of this divided town from various areas of the Province and thus became its people. They are scattered all over the town: most are in private accommodation (some have taken over the apartments and houses of Albanians and others who crossed to the south or moved on), and a large group of them were collectively accommodated in the building of a secondary technical school. Some of the displaced Roma (a total of 744 persons) were placed in the *Česmin Lug* and *Kablar* camps in North Kosovska Mitrovica, in the *Žitkovac* camp in Zvečan and a camp in Leposavić. Within this population some Roma declare themselves as Egyptians, and some as Ashkalia (Askali).⁴

North Kosovska Mitrovica is supported by an extensive hinterland on the left bank of the Ibar, comprising the municipalities of Zvečan, Zubin Potok and Leposavić. According to unofficial estimates, about 60,000 people live in this area, mostly Serbs and some Roma and Bosniaks,⁵ with the exception of the villages of Čabar in the Municipality of Zubin Potok,

² Besides the term *Albanian / Albanians* currently used in political and legal terminology in Serbian, others are also used here to denote the same ethnic group: *Šiptar/Šiptari* (Shiptar/Shiptars, for the period after WWII), *Arbanas/Arbanasi* and *Arnaut/Arnauti* (for the period prior to WWII). Notes will be provided as these terms occur. None of those listed have any pejorative connotation and are, semantically, synonyms.

³ Registration of displaced persons 2000: 45.

⁴ The name Ashkalia (*Askali*) is common for Roma of Islamic faith whose maternal language is Albanian. As displaced persons Ashkalia can be found today in Belgrade and other places in central Serbia, even in the vicinity of Novi Sad (Veliki Rit).

⁵ The term *Bosniaks* is currently in use in Serbian-language political and legal terminology, but in Kosovska Mitrovica it has a longer tradition. Between 1878 and 1912, it was used for Serbian-speaking Muslims who found refuge in Mitrovica as colonists

Gušavac, Žaža and Bajgor in the Municipality of Zvečan, and Ceranje in the Leposavić Municipality, where the population is Albanian. Enclaves of Serbs exist in the two municipalities closest to Kosovska Mitrovica on the south side – Vučitrn (Gojbulja and Prilužje villages and a couple of Serb houses in the villages of Svinjare and Mirače) and Srbica (the villages of Banja, Suvo Grlo and Crkolez).

There is no reliable information on the total number or ethnic structure of the people currently living in North Kosovska Mitrovica. A routine census by the Republic of Serbia in 2002 did not include the territory of Kosovo and Metohija, not even the areas of the Province where there are significant numbers of Serbs. Nor do the local authorities of the international civil administration for Kosovo and Metohija (UNMIK) or the Municipalities provide reliable figures for North Kosovska Mitrovica. It is said that there are currently 20,000 people living in that part of the divided town; it is estimated that the southern part has sixty to eighty thousand people, among them a number of recent newcomers from Albania.

A careful examination of the situation in the northern part of the divided town as it is now leads us to the conclusion that it represents a specific enclave of the Serbian population in Kosovo and Metohija. On the south side it is sharply divided from the neighbouring Albanian settlements. Even in the Ibar valley, to the west of Kosovska Mitrovica, formerly the main road to Rožaje, villages inhabited by Albanians run for another seven kilometres. In order to reach the first Serb village in the Ibar valley (Zupče), UNMIK has built a roundabout road via Zvečan and the saddle of the mountain that separates it from the Ibar valley.

Thus the ethnic division of this part of the Ibar valley is today complete. In the town itself this is confirmed by a particular urban curiosity: along the left bank of the Ibar, in North Kosovska Mitrovica, three apartment buildings in which Albanians have remained living are surrounded by barbed wire and connected by a specially constructed wooden bridge to the southern part of town – almost an enclave within an enclave.

Today the population of North Kosovska Mitrovica is ethnically and linguistically almost completely homogeneous, but the people differ in origin and length of time they have lived in the town. There are three different classes of population: the *Mitrovčani* (older inhabitants) who consider themselves natives (families that have been living there since before World War II); “newcomers” from the post-war period (a couple of generations) and refugees, originally from different parts of Kosovo and Metohija, who found themselves there after the arrival of NATO forces in the Province.

(refugees) from Bosnia and Herzegovina and founded the *Bošnjacka Mahala* (Bosniak Quarter). At that time Mitrovica belonged to the Ottoman Empire.

To the north of Kosovska Mitrovica there are villages with Serb populations, of which Leposavić is increasing in importance as the central village of the municipality, closer to the “administrative border” of the Province and the seat of new international and local institutions, among them the Institute for the Culture of the Serbian People in Kosovo and Metohija. A main artery also passes there, the *Ibarska Magistrala* road leading to towns in central Serbia, the busy traffic creating the illusion of a close connection with the home republic in spite of the border checkpoints of international forces at the “administrative border”.

North Kosovska Mitrovica has two profiles: 1) the external – everyday, bustling, recognisable; 2) the internal – its spirit stratified, complex, more difficult to understand. The first is immediately obvious to the newcomer on first encountering the town. The second needs to be approached gradually and revealed with care, not an easy task for those coming from outside, whatever the strength of their desire, sincerity and ability. After all, Kosovska Mitrovica is a town where people have constantly come and gone, not only in recent years but always, and especially over the last 130 years. The most recent re-structuring of the population into those who live in the north and those who live in the south also requires separate sociolinguistic research.⁶

The current appearance of North Kosovska Mitrovica

The curious bend made by the Ibar gives North Kosovska Mitrovica the shape of a funnel. The entire town seems to tumble downhill towards the bridge on the Ibar, but there is almost no traffic on that bridge. Surrounding it are buildings of three or four storeys with some taller ones, a reminder that this part of town is of more recent origin. Among them, along the main street (which leads from the direction of Zvečan to the Ibar bridge) are rows of shops, company offices, pubs, coffee shops and restaurants, bakeries, kiosks selling grilled meat, pumpkin seeds to nibble at and other minor necessities. There is an improvised bus station. Even though the customary square is lacking, there is a feeling that this is now the centre of North Kosovska Mitrovica. Closer to the Ibar is the *Bošnjачka mahala*, where some houses of an older type remain, with walled courtyards. In many places construction is going on or repairs to houses and shops are in progress, with little heed for city planning regulations. The UNMIK police station and some buildings

⁶ No studies have appeared so far on the sociolinguistic characteristics of the people of Kosovska Mitrovica, but work has been done on the rural Serbian vernacular of some areas in the town's broader surroundings (Ibarski Kolašin, Srednji Ibar, Vučitrn).

are fenced off with barbed wire, an unavoidable reminder that this is a town controlled by foreign forces, and that incidents may happen.

The town's Christian Orthodox cemetery is located in the southern part of Kosovska Mitrovica, around the Christian Orthodox church. The Orthodox community is no longer buried there but in the adjacent village of Veliko Rudare, where there has been a village cemetery. Besides a Muslim cemetery in the south Kosovska Mitrovica, there is another in the northern part, on Šukovac Hill, where Muslims from this part of the divided town are buried.

The streets and shops evince a great liveliness and the townspeople are very curious about all goings-on. There is no sign of despondency. Well-armed three-man patrols and UNMIK vehicles slowly cruise the town, drawing little attention from passers-by. Police and others in foreign uniforms are a regular sight in coffee-shops and restaurants; they talk in loud voices, laughing and watching everything around them in an easy manner, turning uninhibitedly to look at the women. The atmosphere in these places is relaxed, yet everyone is aware that it could change in a second, above all by a sudden incident on the bridge. Trepča Hotel in Zvečan is very popular, and weddings are held there on weekends – events which took place even during the 1999 bombing. In the yards and gardens of North Kosovska Mitrovica and in Zvečan, babies' nappies can often be seen drying, and the locals say that the birthrate has not diminished.

The University – the Serbian-speaking part of the former University of Priština – dispersed to Blace, Prokuplje, Kruševac and Vranje in inner Serbia between the bombing of 1999 and 2002 – was rehoused in North Kosovska Mitrovica. The new prefabricated buildings of the University and the Faculty of Philosophy, the wing where the teachers sleep, seem to testify to the prospects of this institution. Teaching staff come mainly from other university centres, among them those who in 1999 left their homes in Priština and other places in Kosovo and Metohija and settled in central Serbia. Some lecturers have permanent homes in Goraždevac near Peć, or around Leposavić, Novi Pazar and Berane. Most of the students come to this university from places outside Kosovo and Metohija, even from Belgrade and the Republika Srpska (eighty percent of students at the Faculty of Philosophy, for instance). The families of some faculty staff also live outside North Kosovska Mitrovica, travelling on weekends to Leposavić, Kraljevo, Kragujevac, and even to Belgrade.

The shops offer an array of goods from central Serbia and at the same prices. The currencies in use are the dinar and the euro. Suppliers go to the wholesale vegetable market in Novi Pazar, which also sells all other kinds of goods from Kosovo and Metohija and the entire Republic, from Macedonia and other countries. Novi Pazar Bosniaks truck goods up from Priština,

playing an important intermediary role even in such restricted provincial trade.

On the streets of North Kosovska Mitrovica the traffic is lively, although there is no public transport. Taxi cabs drive without license plates, usually as far as Zvečan, which is only three kilometres away from the bridge on the Ibar. There are regular bus lines to Kraljevo, Kragujevac, Smederevo, Belgrade and Niš along the Ibar valley, and to get to Rožaje and Berane there is a roundabout road through Raška and Novi Pazar or the new road through Zvečan, Zupče and Zubin Potok. Since the 1999 bombing, when the bridges across the Ibar were destroyed, there has been no railway connection between Kosovska Mitrovica and Raška, from where there is a train to Kraljevo and Belgrade.

Transport to Serb villages on the road to Vučitrn (Gojbulja, Slatina) is by special UN buses. UNMIK funds have helped restore the railway station in Zvečan from where there is a “multiethnic train” twice a day to Kosovo Polje. (Until then, passengers on this route were transported by tarpaulin-covered UNMIK trucks.) On the train route to Priština are the Serbian village enclaves of Svinjare, Priluzje and Plemetina, and the town of Obilić. Of course, there are majority Serbs in the vicinity of Priština – in Kosovo Polje, Gračanica, Čaglavica and some other villages. A special minibus service runs from North Mitrovica to Gračanica (which is also where a department of the University from North Kosovska Mitrovica is situated), and the bus line from Mitrovica to Štrpce also passes here. Buses and convoys to the Serbian Orthodox Patriarchate in Peć, Dečani Monastery and the Serb enclave of Orahovac travel (Friday–Tuesday) under military escort, while escorts have been discontinued to the somewhat closer enclaves in north Metohija (Goraždevac, Osojane, Crkolez and Suvo Grlo).

A couple of years after the events that led to the division of the town (1999) North Kosovska Mitrovica is living its life according to the regime of an urban settlement with dual links: to UNMIK and the temporary authorities and institutions of Kosovo and Metohija, where Albanians dominate, and to the authorities and institutions of the Republic of Serbia. In the meantime, the purged ranks of the political forces of North Kosovska Mitrovica make an authoritative appearance on the political scene, desirous to influence the prospects of their town and the entire Province. All inhabitants of North Kosovska Mitrovica, however, are preoccupied with the daily concerns of surviving, feeding their families and educating their children while maintaining morale and preserving their spiritual identity.

Scholarly research on Kosovska Mitrovica and its surroundings

At the beginning of the twentieth century, renowned students of the Kosovo-Metohija areas and towns: Branislav Nušić, Jovan Cvijić and Jefto Dedić were writing in the Serbian language about Kosovska Mitrovica and its environs. More detailed anthropogeographic insights into the past and population of Kosovska Mitrovica, its urban and economic development, emerged only after World War II. First it was Milisav Lutovac, with a series of interesting details on Zvečan, Trepča and Kosovska Mitrovica, followed by Atanasije Urošević, who published a brief study on Kosovska Mitrovica. At the end of the 1970s, an in-depth monograph appeared by twelve authors dealing with various aspects of the past and development of Kosovska Mitrovica and its surrounding area up to World War II, and including an overview of the period of the war, 1941–1945. A synthetic study of the economy of Kosovska Mitrovica and its surrounding area can also be found in an article written in the late 1980s by Djordje Mikić on social and economic circumstances in Kosovo and Metohija in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Environmental pollution in the Kosovska Mitrovica area has recently attracted renewed attention and field research was recently undertaken by Miljana Stojanović-Milosavljević. In what follows, the most important information and observations contained in all these works will be paraphrased or quoted directly.

As a first reference to this literature, we may turn to a particularly graphic description of Mitrovica from the pen of the *Carigradski glasnik* (Constantinople Herald) correspondent at the end of the nineteenth century (1898):⁷

The town of Mitrovica is very beautifully situated. It lies in the foothills of three mountains, where the last outlying spurs of *Kopaonik*, *Rogozna* and *Čičavica* meet. The spurs of *Kopaonik* stretch above the town to the north,

⁷The first periodic publication in the Serbian language in Ottoman Turkey was the *Golub* (Pigeon), an almanach published in Constantinople from 1890 to 1911. The *Carigradski Glasnik* (Constantinople Herald) was the first Serbian newspaper in Turkey, printed in Cyrillic (the name of the paper was written in both the Arabic and Latin scripts). It was published weekly in Constantinople from 1895 to 1909 (with a lengthy interruption in 1897), and permission for the weekly's publication was granted by the Sultan Gazi Abdul Hamid himself. The editor was Nikodim Savić, originally from Peć. It covered current news and various contributions from the Ottoman Empire, Serbia and other countries. The vilayet newspaper *Prizren* was also published in Turkish and Serbian from 1871 in Prizren, and when the administrative seat of the vilayet was moved to Priština, the paper changed its name to *Kosovo* (Mikić 1983: 297; Mala Enciklopedija Prosveta 1986; Bovan 1998: 101, 102). The *Constantinople Herald* also published literary contributions by over 160 Serbian authors; among the latter, 13 were from Kosovo and Metohija (Bovan 1998).

northeast and east and are called: *Sokoličko Brdo*, *Majdan*, *Stari Trg* (underneath which is old Trepča) and *Crnuša*. The spurs of Rogozna are on the north-west and western side, and of those the most striking is the tapering peak of Zvečansko Brdo, where stands the old ruined town of Zvečan. From Čičavica a low ridge runs due north and as far as the Sitnica, touching Mitrovica on the south side and separating it from Kosovo-Polje. At Mitrovica, this low ridge from Čičavica is called Karagač (*kara-agač*: black wood). [...] The Ibar and Sitnica, leaving the town behind, diverge a little from each other only to meet again fifteen minutes further on, almost north of Mitrovica, where the Sitnica flows into the Ibar. The small piece of land between Mitrovica, the Sitnica and the Ibar is called *Sandič-Polje*. Karagač rolls very gently downward towards the Ibar, and very steeply towards the Sitnica and Kosovo. On the gentle slope of the ridge as far as the Ibar, lies Kosovska Mitrovica with its 1500 houses and 8,000-9,000 inhabitants. The town is new and therefore the streets are quite wide and the houses pleasing. There are many fine buildings built according to the new plan, of which the most striking are: the barracks (*kšla*) for the army, which is situated on Karagač, and the large house of Jusuf-Aga Nikšićanin on the Ibar. There are three mosques, a couple of Turkish primary schools and one *ružđija* (half-secondary school). The Serbs have one fine primary school, with two male teachers and one female.⁸ They have practically no churches, and what is now called the church is a very low building in which services are held. Now the Serbs of Mitrovica have set to work building a new church which is to be dedicated to the first Serbian teacher and educator, St. Sava; God and St. Sava willing, this great and difficult enterprise will soon be carried to completion! Through the middle of Mitrovica flows the river *Ljušta*, which rises on the northern slopes of Čičavica by the village of Ljušte. This small river flows into the Ibar immediately on exiting the town. Because the forest around its source diminishes with every passing day, it too shrinks smaller and smaller. In the autumn and spring, after heavy rain, it swells to an angry

⁸ Since the Ottoman Empire did not recognise Serbian nationality, until the middle of the nineteenth century Serbian schools in the Eparchy of Raška-Prizren were run by the church-school municipalities, and so a primary school was opened in Kosovska Mitrovica before 1886. The Consulate of the Kingdom of Serbia in Priština (opened in 1889) encouraged the founding of new schools in Kosovo and Metohija, and so a girls' school was also opened in Mitrovica. In 1892, an imperial *irada* (decree) permitted the founding of Serbian schools, indirectly recognising the Serbian nationality in the Kosovo Vilayet. By 1894 all the existing Serbian schools in the vilayet had been recognised and acquired the right to put up plates on their buildings bearing the Serbian name alongside the Turkish: *Serbian Orthodox Primary School*. For more detail, see Mikić 1883: 294-299. In 1901 Velibor Dragišić from Priština made an educational map of the Eparchy of Raška-Prizren. A list of all schools in this eparchy for 1904/5 shows that in the Mitrovica district there were Serbian Orthodox schools in Mitrovica (with classrooms for boys and girls), in the villages of Duboki Potok and Brnjaci, and in the Monastery of Crna Reka. For more, see Nikolić 1996: 557; Pejin 1998.

flood and then does the town much damage.⁹ Across the Ibar, beneath the brightly coloured hills, which separate themselves from Zvečan and where the vineyards of Mitrovica are, is the Bošnjačka Mala [Mahala, or quarter], where the population is entirely made up of Bosniaks, who have fled from Bosnia. In that *mala* there is a mosque and a Turkish primary school. It is connected to the rest of the town by a bridge across the Ibar. [...] Arriving from the Kosovo direction, you cannot see all of Mitrovica until you reach Karagač just above it, whereupon the location on which this lovely town rests presents itself in all its beauty. From here you can see Mitrovica with its buildings and orchards as in a kind of hollow, across from it is the tapering peak of Zvečan, and underneath the vivid rolling hills dotted with vineyards; beneath them again the Ibar meanders up to Sokoličko Brdo to the north, where it receives the Sitnica. Up to its confluence with the Ibar extends Sandič-Polje with its meadows and fields. On the west side again there is a broadish field along the Ibar river, ending in wooded hills. A truly beautiful sight!

Of course, the *Constantinople Herald* reporter from Mitrovica did not fail to point out the importance of the railway line from Skoplje to Mitrovica, which was opened in 1873¹⁰ and led to the economic revival of the entire area around Mitrovica:

The railway line from Skoplje passing through Kosovo ends at Mitrovica. The railway station is fifteen minutes south of the town close by the Sitnica. From the station the road first leads along the Sitnica, and then over Karagač. The fact that the railway line ends there lends this town a great air of liveliness and bustle, not to be found in any of the other towns in this area. Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays are particularly lively because on those days the train arrives from Skopje, carrying passengers for Peć, Novi Pazar, Sjenica, Nova Varoš, Prijepolje, Bijelo Polje and Pljevlja, and on the same days passengers arrive from the said towns, travelling to Skopje and Thessalonica. Mitrovica is therefore the busiest junction (apart from Skopje) in the entire Kosovo Vilayet.

From reports by the *Constantinople Herald* correspondent in Mitrovica we can follow closely the construction of the new church in Mitrovica

⁹ The *Constantinople Herald* brings news of great floods in Mitrovica at the end of 1896 and the beginning of 1897, due to the flooding of the Ibar (issue no. 44 of 21 November 1896) and the Ljušta (issue no. 4 of 23 January and no. 6 of 6 February 1897). On this the Mitrovica correspondent writes: "This year can be called a flood year for us, since this is the third or fourth flood this autumn".

¹⁰ This line connected the Kosovo towns of Mitrovica (the last stop to the north), Vučitrn, Priština, Lipljan, Uroševac and Kačanik, with Skopje, Gevgelija and Thessalonica. With the opening of the Belgrade–Niš–Vranje railway in the Kingdom of Serbia in 1884, connecting to that of the Vardar valley, the Kosovo line lost some of its importance, but continued to be of great influence on trade and commerce in Kosovo and the surrounding areas (Nušić 1902: 45, 46; Urošević 1965: 133; Lutovac 1972: 3, 4).

which commenced in the summer of 1896, graced by the presence of the Raška-Prizren Metropolitan, Dionisije.¹¹ On 30 July 1896 we read that: “After the service there was a procession to the new enclosure where the new church will be raised”,¹² and that on 4 August the foundation stone was laid for the temple of St. Sava, on which occasion the archbishop “performed a very formal ceremony, such as has never been seen in Mitrovica before.”¹³ Several issues printed a detailed list of donors for the new church, not only people from Mitrovica, but also from Vučitrn, Svinjare, Lovac, Korilje, Žitkovac, Jagnjenica, Rudare, Žerovnica and Zupče.¹⁴ The gifts were made in kind, cattle, wheat and labour.¹⁵

As consul of the Serbian Kingdom, Branislav Nušić¹⁶ spent three years (1893–96) in Priština, having previously spent two months there in 1890. During these years Nušić visited many places in Kosovo, travelling as far afield as Scutari (Shkodër) and later publishing several travel books and a synthetic work: *Kosovo. An Account of the Country and People* (Novi Sad, 1902). Speaking of Kosovo towns, Nušić says that even though Priština (“as the most populated and surrounded by the richest villages”) has the “most lively market”, Ferizović (Uroševac) and Mitrovica are already “threatening to surpass Priština”, because of their favourable position on the railway. Besides these two “Kosovo railway towns” (as they were termed by J. Cvijić) the towns of Lipljan and Obilić developed at the same time. At that time trading in grain was the most lucrative business in Kosovo, and according to Nušić’s estimate “to the Thessalonica market alone Kosovo annually sends over 10 million *okas* [1280 wagons] of grain, and in addition a part of it also

¹¹ The Eparchy of Raška-Prizren belonged to the Constantinopolitan (Ecumenical) Patriarchate until the outbreak of the Balkan Wars, so the Metropolitans appointed to this old Serb diocese were Greeks. At the request of numerous Serb deputations, in February 1896 the Constantinopolitan Patriarch was forced to appoint a Serb, Dionisije, as the Raška-Prizren Metropolitan. Availing of his patriarchal privilege, the archbishop began to open Serbian schools, and also encouraged the building of new churches, a case in point being the construction of St. Sava’s church in Mitrovica (Mikić 1983: 300–306).

¹² *Constantinople Herald* no. 31, 19 August 1896.

¹³ *Constantinople Herald* no. 32, 29 August 1896.

¹⁴ *Constantinople Herald* no. 33, 5 September; no. 34, 12 September; no. 43, 14 November 1896; no. 6, 6 February 1897.

¹⁵ By the time the foundation stone was laid, 12 labourers’ wages were already secured (*Constantinople Herald* no. 33, 5 September). Later, Rista Veselinović and Srećko Radisavljević from Zupče “gave five workers each” (*Constantinople Herald* no. 34, 12 September 1896).

¹⁶ Branislav Nušić (1864–1938), a renowned literary figure and member of the Royal Serbian Academy, famous for his short stories and plays and one of Serbia’s greatest comedy writers.

goes to markets closer by". Nušić also wrote: "Mitrovica is the last stop on the Skopje–Mitrovica line. This is where trains arriving from Skopje spend the night. It also has a repair shed, an engine shed, loading platforms, a store for the coal, and three sidings. Besides this, Mitrovica as a 'ferry' is a very lively town and judging by its progress, may be considered to be a town of the future. From it an important road runs to Novi Pazar, and there is a connection with Peć thanks to the railroad. Through this station two or three administrative districts obtain their goods and ship their produce out. For this reason Mitrovica station is almost the most important stop for traffic on the entire line." Nušić noted that on the slopes of Kopaonik around Mitrovica were traces of numerous mines of which Trepča was the most famous, and that on Mt. Draga above the town, there was a sawmill where firwood was cut into planks and beams which were then transported on rafts down to Mitrovica, and that good millstones were exported to Serbia from a quarry above the town. At the end of the nineteenth century, Nušić pointed out, Mitrovica was the seat of a *kaza* (district) within the Priština (Prištevački) Sanjak, which along with another five sanjaks (of Skopje, Prizren, Peć, Pazar and Pljevalja) belonged to the Kosovo Vilayet (formed after 1878). According to the Ottoman statistics, at the time the *Kaza* of Mitrovica, to which Ibarski Kolašin and Rogozna mountain also belonged, had 8344 people, of which 4434 Mohammedans and 3910 Orthodox. Among the Mohammedan population of Mitrovica, Ferizović (later Uroševac) and the village of Mazgit, Nušić identified numerous *muhajirs* or displaced Muslim Albanians from Bosnia-Herzegovina. Nušić observed that Mitrovica occupied "a very beautiful position, at the confluence of the Ibar and the Sitnica, surrounded by interesting peaks," and that "the streets are wide, quite straight and cleaner than in other towns" (Nušić 1902: 69, 52, 57, 59, 66, 77–78, 75).

Soon after Nušić these regions were explored by Jovan Cvijić. In a major work, *Basic Geography and Geology of Macedonia and Old Serbia* (published in three volumes 1906–11) he too noted that Mitrovica "is becoming the main business centre in Kosovo, such as only Ferizović can compete with in the future", and that as recently as 1871 it had been nothing more than a village with 150 thatched houses. According to Cvijić, at the beginning of the twentieth century Mitrovica already had 1100 houses, of which 180 belonged to Christian Orthodox Serbs (although in fact many were *zadrugas* or extended households), while the rest were Muslim. Among the Orthodox at the time there were some Vlachs and Greeks, while among the Muslims there was a significant number of *muhajirs* from Bosnia-Herzegovina (who "spoke the Serbian language and formed the largest *mahala* [quarter] in the northern part of Mitrovica") and from Serbia ("Arnauts" [Albanians]). At the time Mitrovica was near the border with the Kingdom

of Serbia, and thus had a 10,000-strong garrison (Cvijić 1996: 254, 524). Jefto Dedijer, in his study *New Serbia* (Belgrade, 1913) published soon after the Balkan Wars and liberation of Kosovo and Metohija, Stara Raška and Macedonia from the Ottomans, repeated verbatim Cvijić's information on Mitrovica. The author obviously had no time for any additional research of Mitrovica and its environs, and the Serbian readership of the time expected popular presentations of all the regions that had recently become part of Serbia.

Milisav Lutovac (1950: 87), in his study "Zvečan, Trepča and Kosovska Mitrovica" suggested that the Zvečan fortress on a conical elevation above Mitrovica was the oldest historical settlement, first mentioned in 1091 as a border fort of Raška, and that the second settlement to have appeared in this area was Trepča, first mentioned as a mining and trading settlement in 1303. Speaking of the origins and development of Mitrovica, Lutovac (1950: 91–93) pointed out that the town had developed within the microregion of Dimitrijevo Polje, on the estate of the Church of St. Demetrios donated to Banjska Monastery by King Milutin, and that this settlement, first mentioned in the late fifteenth century, probably owed its origin to the fact that there was a caravanserai beside the said church. In his opinion the strategic importance of Zvečan suddenly decreased after the fall of the Serbian Despotate in 1459 and the Bosnian state in 1463, when the Ottoman Empire extended its borders far to the west. This favoured a swifter development of the local markets, first Trepča, and then Mitrovica. Identifying several phases in the historical and territorial development of Mitrovica up to modern times, Lutovac described the town's dramatic change after the building of the railway line. The town then spread out "a little in all directions, but especially in two: towards the railway station and along the Peć road", and the "third, new part of the town appears just across the bridge, on the left bank of the Ibar" (this is in fact the *Bošnjaka Mahala*, founded by *muhajirs* from Bosnia-Herzegovina, who arrived there in 1879 and 1908). Repeating Cvijić's information on the population of Mitrovica up to the Balkan Wars, Lutovac suggested that the ethnic profile of Mitrovica had gradually changed after the formation of the Yugoslav state in 1918: a significant number of Turks and *muhajirs* from Bosnia-Herzegovina moved to Turkey only to be replaced by new settlers from the country and by white-collar workers. Following the opening of the Trepča mine, new people poured in from various places, chiefly from Kosovo-Metohija and Old Raška (Bijelo Polje, Plav and Gusinje).

Atanasije Urošević¹⁷ begins his study *Kosovska Mitrovica – An Anthropogeographical Research* (1955) by saying that this town “lies on the old Bosnia–Macedonia road, which once led from Bosnia-Herzegovina via Rogozna to Kosovo and Macedonia”, and that “two important communications converge at Mitrovica from the west: one along the Ibar valley to Mitrovica, connecting Kosovo with places along the river, Stari Kolašin and Rožaj, and the other, Peć–Mitrovica, connecting Kosovo with the northern parts of Drenica and Metohija, and via Peć with the eastern areas of Montenegro.” These communications, Urošević believes, predetermined Mitrovica’s future, although its development was for a long time hampered by the nearby towns of Banjska (on the caravan route to Novi Pazar and Bosnia) and Vučitrn (the seat of the Vučitrn Sanjak). Urošević also suggests that the town does not belong to Kosovo proper, which “ends three kilometres south of Mitrovica, where the spurs of Čičavica and Kopaonik draw very close together” (Urošević 1957: 187).

Urošević points out that under Ottoman rule, along with other towns of the subsequently established Sanjak of Novi Pazar (Novi Pazar, Nova Varoš, Sjenica and Bijelo Polje), Mitrovica administratively belonged to Bosnia, and not to Rumelia, “which ended before Mitrovica”, and that only in 1890 did it begin to be called *Kosovska* instead of *Pazarska*, as it was then that it was included in the Sanjak of Priština instead of the Novi Pazar Sanjak (Urošević 1957: 190). In a detailed examination of the economic growth of Kosovska Mitrovica and the changes in structure and number of its population, Urošević pays particular attention to the impact of the railway built in 1873 and its later expansion into the surrounding areas, as well as to the political situation in the second half of the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth century. His conclusions are very precise, and worth quoting verbatim:

The arrival of these *muhajirs* in 1879 signalled livelier growth for the town and the rapid development of the economy. Some of them continued to practise their crafts, and some commenced trading, which possibly is what they did in the towns where they lived before. They came from various areas of Bosnia-Herzegovina (Sarajevo, Banja Luka, Travnik, Foča, Višegrad etc.), from the liberated parts of Montenegro–Nikšić and Podgorica, and the liberated parts of Serbia–Niš, Leskovac and Kuršumlja. Hard on their heels came a good number of Djakovica Muslims, tradesmen and merchants among them. As the newly-settled *muhajirs* swelled the population of Mitrovica, under their influence the economy grew and diversified, attracting businessmen not only from the nearby towns of Vučitrn, Peć, Djakovica

¹⁷ Atanasije Urošević (1898–1992) was a Serbian geographer whose main field of study was Kosovo. He was a follower of Jovan Cvijić’s school of anthropogeography and professor at the universities of Belgrade and Skopje.

and almost all the towns in the Sanjak of Novi Pazar, but also from distant places. Soon after the *muhajirs*, during the 1890s, several Tzintzar families from Bitolj and Kruševo in Macedonia and a few Macedonian families from Veles arrived. At the end of the last [19th] century as Mitrovica grew to a solid economic market, it began to attract Jews, who from that time on started moving here from Priština and continued to do so up to the end of Ottoman rule. (Urošević 1957: 194)

Urošević also notes that with the liberation of Mitrovica from the Ottomans in the Balkan War of 1912, Bosnian and other Muslims began moving to Turkey, but concludes that this did not cause any slowdown in Mitrovica's economy, "since their places were almost immediately taken by businessmen from neighbouring towns", especially since industry had begun to develop.

According to Djordje Mikić the first forms of industry made their appearance during the building of the railway. At that time Ali Bey Draga, in collaboration with Tzintzars (Hellenized Vlachs) from Epirus, contracted with the Railway Construction Society to deliver sleepers. The timber was supplied by the forests in the upper Ibar (Mojstir), where a sawmill was also built. Another sawmill was built in Mitrovica in 1897, and the wood transported down the Ibar to the town. Ali Bey Draga, breaking off his partnership with the Tzintzars, continued producing sleepers and other building materials such as planks and beams, and expanded his business by supplying the army and merchants in Thessalonica. Mikić also points to a longstanding tradition of millstone production in the Kosovska Mitrovica area (Mikić 1988: 252, 282). In the nineteenth century this work was done by Serbs from Rudare, Grabovac, Srbovac and Sočanica, and *Arbanasi* from Vlahinja, Grabovo and Boljetin. In 1902 a leading *Arbanas* businessman, Isa Boljetinac, succeeded in obtaining from the manufacturers a quarter of all the output from the quarries, thus gaining control over the production of millstones, which were exported to Thessalonica and to Serbia. At that time, there was also an active chromium mine three hours from Mitrovica. Mikić speaks too of the growth of crafts in Kosovska Mitrovica after the railway was built (Mikić 1988: 247, 248). Before that, Mitrovica had had a few score shops ("where the wares of each individual shop would not have amounted to 1000 groschen"). When the railway was inaugurated, however, the first craftsmen to arrive were smelters and brass-workers from Djakovica, and quilt-makers from Peć. Later, after 1879, the most successful craftsmen were the *muhajirs* from Bosnia, especially the cutlers. The railway also revolutionized many other areas of economic life: horse and camel caravans became a thing of the past, and small Adriatic ports were replaced by the great port of Thessalonica. Later, transversal roads were built on both sides of the railway line, leading towards the stations and including the Mitrovica–Priština and Mitrovica–Peć roads. A road already existed from Mitrovica, via Novi

Pazar, Sjenica and Pljevlja, to Sarajevo, and much of the traffic of goods was bound for Mitrovica as the last station on the Kosovo line. As trade flourished, so did the building of the town of Mitrovica, previously “more of a village than a small country town” (Mikić 1988: 305, 306). In only five or six years its *čaršija* or centre could boast 50–60 shops, craft and tradesman’s workshops and restaurants, and 500–600 pack-horses came and left every day for Metohija, the Novi Pazar Sanjak and Bosnia. A large number of *kiridžija* (people who owned and drove wooden carts for hire) influenced the development of local trade, handicrafts and commerce. At the beginning of the century there were more than a hundred bakers in the town, and half the town sold tobacco, both legal and smuggled, the latter being known as *kotroban*. Turning to agrarian conditions, Mikić notes that the vicinity of Mitrovica did not produce a surplus of grain, except for oats. Ploughing was primitive up to 1912, and the only man to own an iron plough was a Bosniak from Mitrovica. However, at the end of the nineteenth century Mitrovica was annually importing, 400–500 wagons of wheat, some 300 wagons of beans, and in bumper years about 200 wagons of maize, mainly from around Peć, and 150–200 wagons of oats from Novi Pazar and the surroundings of Mitrovica. The surroundings provided considerable quantities of hides from domestic animals and martens. Fruit-growing at the time was still undeveloped in Mitrovica. Plum orchards were scarce, grafted pears and apples could be found in the fields and meadows, but they were mostly old trees. The apples, pears, grapes, nuts and plums found at the market in Mitrovica were mainly from Peć. Especially attractive were apples known as *dušanke*, which the Turks called *sheresliye*. Local legend has it that the emperor Dušan had obtained them from distant France. In the gardens and yards of Mitrovica there was an occasional apricot and plum tree, and in some places even a grapevine. Vineyards, however, were much more numerous. With 287 *dönüms* (one *dönüm* is about 900 sq m) under vines, the town of Mitrovica annually produced 20,000 kg of grapes. There were still *agas* in Mitrovica, or Ottoman feudal landowners who owned estates in Ibarski Kolašin, along with others in Vučitrn, Novi Pazar and Rožaj. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the *agas* were Salija Barjaktarević, Zenel Memišević, Raif Adži-Alijagić, Asan Ćorović, Šućurija Rušitović and a Nezir, but their wealth differed considerably. Mikić also provides information on the early days of banking in Kosovo and Metohija, including Kosovska Mitrovica. Financial trading, as the youngest branch of the economy, had its beginnings in these parts in the credit unions of the trade and crafts guilds. Like their elders, the young traders and craftsmen began to set up their own funds for minors, the so-called *bećar* unions. According to the *Salname* (yearbook in Ottoman Turkey) of the Kosovo Vilayet for the year 1898,

there were two banking offices in town: the *Kasa Maloletnika* or Minors' Bank and the *Kasa Špedicije* or Hauliers' Bank. An important role was also played by the *St. Sava's Church Fund* (founded about 1907), which enabled Serb merchants to obtain more credit from bigger trading houses. In 1911, a banking office, *Mitrovačka Zadruga za Kredit i Štednju* (Mitrovica Credit and Savings Cooperative), was opened in Mitrovica with the aim of protecting the interests of Serbian businessmen.

A voluminous monograph on Kosovska Mitrovica (1979), with contributions by nineteen authors, does not cover the development of the town in the postwar period, but it gives us a clear insight into how the economic and demographic base of modern Kosovska Mitrovica was formed, enabling it to develop into the second largest town in the Province. What follows on the economic growth of Mitrovica comes from this monograph.

According to information from 1912 there were in the town 120 shops plying various trades, which accounted for seven percent of the total number of craftsmen's workshops in Kosovo and Metohija. Despite the departure of a part of the town's population in 1914, the number of shops increased to 195, which is explained by a fall both in trade and the import of industrial goods due to the preceding state of war. After the war, in 1920, there were as many as 280 registered shops (13.5 percent of all the shops in Kosovo and Metohija), placing Kosovska Mitrovica just behind the old urban and trade centres of Prizren, Peć and Djakovica. According to the 1931 census, there were 583 craft and merchant shops in the town. However, this was a time of a swift industrial rise which changed the economic structure: manufacturing trades declined while the service trades prospered.

The wood industry continued to flourish in Mitrovica after World War I. A forest railroad for the transport of logs was built, and when the level of the Ibar was high enough the logs were transported downstream. However, the old Mitrovica sawmill went into bankruptcy in 1928 and a new one was set up in 1930, the *Ibar* sawmill, owned by the immigrant entrepreneurs Lazar and Djordje Žarković, Gligo Dabović and Mita Marina. Five years later, Džafer Deva from Kosovska Mitrovica opened a steam sawmill. The two Žarković brothers also built a steam mill, and in early 1936 Lazar Žarković and Mita Marina opened a tile factory.

In 1927 the town got its first electrical power plant, located on the Ibar and later transferred to the Čečavska river in Ibarski Kolašin. An especially strong boost to the economic development of the town was the opening of the *Trepča* mine in 1930. After several years of prospecting and with a significant investment of British capital, in 1927 the British company *Selection Trust* opened a separate company – *Trepča Mines Limited*, followed in June 1930 by another: *Kopaonik Mines Limited*, taking over the

concessions from the previous owners, the family of the by then deceased Prime Minister Nikola Pašić,¹⁸ for the exploitation of rich deposits of lead and zinc, containing veins of silver and gold, in the sub-Kopaonik Basin. And so in 1930 production began at the Stari Trg mine, 10 km northeast of the town. The ore was transferred by electric cablecar to the flotation built in Zvečan. As the railway at Mitrovica already had a branch line to Raška and Kraljevo, a railway station was also opened in Zvečan, so that the concentrated ore could be transported onward to Belgrade. In 1939, a smelting works and lead refinery were built in Zvečan, and for these *Trepča Mines Limited* founded a stock company: *Lead Smelting Zvečan*, thus continuing the history of mining and metallurgy in this ore-rich basin, exploited from the beginning of the fourteenth to the end of the seventeenth century.

Swift industrial development in Kosovska Mitrovica in the 1930s led to significant change in the professional structure of its population, which continued to grow apace, although some of the workers (especially miners) were recruited from the surrounding countryside. The British companies also brought their own technical personnel, for whom special housing was built. Thus Kosovska Mitrovica – only fifty years before an insignificant market town – became a mining and industrial centre of importance for the development of the entire country. On the eve of World War II, Nazi Germany showed great interest in Trepča. Both the mine and the processing plant in Zvečan worked uninterruptedly throughout the war. Because of Trepča's importance for the German war economy, Kosovska Mitrovica came under special German administration within occupied Serbia.

Trepča's development after World War II was based on maximum exploitation of the ore and an increased production of lead and zinc, including small quantities of silver and gold. This was achieved by expanding the production capacities. However, in recent decades, industrial plants in Kosovska Mitrovica and the surrounding area have seriously endangered the environment in this part of the Ibar valley. Trepča's lead smeltery, refinery, zinc electrolysis, artificial fertilizer factory, electric battery factory and other installations have constantly been polluting the Ibar and its surroundings. This has had an effect on the health of the people living in Kosovska Mitrovica and in the area. Because of air pollution, even the birds have migrated elsewhere. In the 1980s, experts from Columbia University in New York established, as part of a study on the impact of lead on newborn babies and pregnant women in Kosovska Mitrovica, that Mitrovica was the second most polluted town in the world, immediately after the Monongehela

¹⁸ Nikola Pašić (1845–1926), prominent Serbian politician and statesman, several times Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Serbia, and after 1918 Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes.

Valley in Pennsylvania, USA (Stojanović & Milosavljević 2004: 4). The pollution of the environment in Kosovska Mitrovica and its effects are also discussed in a recent extensive study (2004) based on field research by Miljana Stojanović-Milosavljević, as part of the project *The Environmental Situation in the Kosovo-Mitrovica Enclave and Proposed Measures for its Preservation, Improvement and Advancement*.

Demographic development and changes in the town's ethnic structure

Besides regular statistical publications on the population census in the country in the interwar period and after World War II, there is a fairly comprehensive literature in Serbian and Albanian on population and demographic movements in Kosovo and Metohija (see Lutovac 1950; Urošević 1957; Krasniqi 1963; Hadri 1967; Lutovac 1972; Hivzi 1977; Bogdanović 1985; Zbornik radova 1991; Etnički sastav 1993; Krstić 1994). These publications provide an insight into the demographic development of Kosovska Mitrovica, noting the change in the ethnic composition of its population. Here statistics for the entire Municipality of Kosovska Mitrovica must be separated from figures for the town. It should also be remembered that for a time, from the mid-1960s until the end of the 1980s, the Municipality of Kosovska Mitrovica also included those of Zvečan and Zubin Potok, which had previously been, as they are today, separate municipalities. We are interested in Kosovska Mitrovica as an urban settlement, so the data given here concerns only the town, and not the municipality as a whole.

Atanasije Urošević (1957: 197–204) provided a fairly precise reconstruction of the demographic growth of Kosovska Mitrovica and the changes in its ethnic structure, summarised here. According to Urošević's findings, until the building of the Kosovo Railway, Mitrovica (at the time still called *Pazarska*) had no more than 2000 inhabitants. Although sources of the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries give no information on the ethnic composition of its population, from the date of the building of the first mosques in the town it can be deduced that there were Muslims living there as early as the mid-fifteenth century, when the Ottomans (1455) seized the domains of the Brankovići, to which Mitrovica belonged, and the entire southern part of the Despotate of Serbia (medieval Serbian state after the Battle of Kosovo). In the first centuries of Ottoman rule the Muslim population was entirely Turkish, but after the invasion and subsequent withdrawal of the Austrian army between 1683 and 1690 it began to be populated by Islamized Albanians, who soon adopted the Turkish language, and even began to consider themselves Turks. The first mention of the town's Serbian inhabitants comes from the early decades of the eighteenth century. These are the Serb families of Prekazi, Terzići and Ćamilovići, who adopted Islam

soon after settling, but the language they spoke at home remained for a long time Serbian. Even in the last decades of the twentieth century they were believed in Mitrovica to be the oldest families of Serbian ethnic origin. In the nineteenth century, before the arrival of the *muhajirs* from Bosnia-Herzegovina and other regions, several Serb families arrived from the town's environs (the villages of Žitkovac and Korilje) as well as from Rožaje and Bitolj. In Mitrovica there are families from Drenica of whom some are believed to be of Roma origin, even though they have always spoken Serbian and consider themselves Serbs. They all celebrate St. Basil (Vasilije) as their *slava* or patron saint's day. Prior to the Balkan Wars there were about 200 houses of Serbian-speaking *muhajirs* who originally came from Banja Luka, Travnik, Sarajevo, Gračanica (near Doboj), Nikšić, Kolašin and Podgorica. They were soon joined by Muslims from the Mojstir area. There were significantly fewer Turkish and Albanian *muhajirs* from the liberated parts of Serbia. At the end of the nineteenth century, Catholic Albanians began to arrive from Djakovica, originally from Skadarska Malesija. About that time Orthodox Serbs also began settling in rather larger numbers from nearby villages and the Kosovo-Metohija towns of Priština, Vučitrn, Peć and Prizren. Jewish families too arrived from Priština. Some Macedonian families came from Tetovo and Veles and several Tzintzar families from Kruševo and Bitolj. In the town there were also several houses of both Christian Orthodox and Muslim Roma (Gypsies). The Orthodox Roma spoke only Serbian as their native language, while the Muslim Roma spoke both Romani and Albanian.

According to Ottoman registers, in 1910 Kosovska Mitrovica had 9354 people (Urošević 1957: 203), and according to foreign and domestic scholars of the time (Cvijić 1996: 524), on the eve of the Balkan Wars Mitrovica had about 10,000 people, and the same number of soldiers manning the town's military garrison. In 1914, the number of people dropped to 8000, mostly due to the Muslim population – Turks, Albanians and Bosniaks – moving to Turkey.

The 1921 census shows (Krstić 1994: 89) that even with the emigration of the Muslims, the number of inhabitants of Kosovska Mitrovica did not diminish due to the sudden influx of Serbs and *Arbanasi* from the surrounding areas and other parts of Kosovo-Metohija: there were 10,045 people living in the town. This census did not register the population according to nationality (ethnicity) but according to religious affiliation and native language. These criteria stand somewhat in the way of comparison with censuses taken after World War II, although statisticians have tried to translate the pre-war data to fit post-war criteria. Thus it was determined that in the census of 1921 there were 3287 persons living in Mitrovica who spoke Turkish, followed by 1860 Albanians, 3887 Serbs, 104 Slovenians, 56

Tzintzars, 5 Russians, 3 Italians, 1 Englishman and 831 others (which probably included Jews and Roma). Urošević observes, however, that in this census many *Arbanasi* who had “under the influence of Turkish culture and an urban way of life” adopted the Turkish language, also declared themselves as Turks (Urošević 1957: 203).

In the ten years between two censuses, the population of Kosovska Mitrovica increased by 1250: in 1931 there were 11,295 inhabitants (Urošević 1957: 203). At that time the Serb-Montenegrin population numbered 4067, the Turkish 2696, the *Arbanas* 1748, and there were 2784 others. It is probable that in this census a number of ethnic *Arbanasi* also declared themselves Turks. At this time the town had several families of Montenegrin colonists, Russian emigrants and those who had arrived from various places as technical personnel and entrepreneurs. There were even several houses belonging to Circassians who had moved here from Vučitrn. Of course, the census did not register the (British) foreigners temporarily working in Trepča and Kosovska Mitrovica, who were quite numerous at that time.

After World War II the Albanians in Yugoslavia declared themselves as *Šiptari* (Shiptar, Shqiptar), which was accepted by the official statistics. According to the census of 1947, the town had 13,901 inhabitants. Of that number, 7500 declared themselves as Shiptars, there were 4689 Serbs, 851 Montenegrins, 231 ethnically undecided Muslims, 54 Turks, 95 Russians, 80 Macedonians, 66 Slovenians, 135 Croatians and a total of 183 other people (Lutovac 1950: 95; Urošević 1957: 204). Both Urošević and Lutovac point out that 2116 of those who declared themselves as Shiptars stated that their native language was “Gypsy”. This means that the formally registered number of 95 members of this ethnic group was significantly larger, and that a realistic figure for the Shiptars would have been about 5400. Besides, there was a small but visible number of ethnically undecided Muslims. As Serbian-speaking Muslims were by that time an important component in the town’s ethnic structure, it can be assumed that some of them declared themselves as Serbs (“Serb-Muslims”), and some as Turks.

The census of 1961 showed that the population of Kosovska Mitrovica had doubled in the meantime: by then it already had 26,721 inhabitants. Among them were 10,020 Serbs and Montenegrins, 13,574 Shiptars, and 3,127 people of other nationalities (no one declared themselves to be of Turkish nationality, which did not correspond to the actual situation since a Turkish population appeared subsequently). At the end of the 1960s a new term was adopted into political vocabulary and legal regulations to denote Shiptars in Yugoslavia – *Albanians*, and this was used in the censuses that followed. From 1961 to 1981 the town population of Kosovska Mitrovica also doubled, so that in 1981 it numbered 52,866 inhabitants. Of that

number there were 10,436 Serbs and Montenegrins, 32,390 Albanians, 789 Turks and 9,295 others. These facts show that in the said period the number of the Serb-Montenegrin population in Kosovska Mitrovica had remained approximately the same (a little over ten thousand), but in the meantime it had oscillated. The number of Serbs and Montenegrins in the town grew in the period from 1961 to 1971, and dropped from 1971 to 1981, as a consequence of their moving to other parts of the Republic (Petrović 1989: 101–103; Krstić 1994: 83). At the same time the total population in the town increased swiftly as did the percentage of Albanians.

The census of 1991, on the eve of the break-up of Tito's Yugoslavia, is not entirely reliable as far as municipalities in Kosovo and Metohija and the municipalities of Bujanovac and Preševo in inner Serbia are concerned, since the Albanian population boycotted it. A professional estimate was therefore made of the size of the Albanian population in each individual municipality, but not in the villages belonging to them. In this way a figure of 104,885 people living in the municipality of Kosovska Mitrovica was arrived at, of which (according to the estimate) 82,837 were Albanians. However, no estimate was made for the number of Albanians living in the town area of Kosovska Mitrovica (only a symbolic number took part in the census). According to these incomplete figures, in 1991 the town had 18,595 inhabitants, of which 8112 were Serbs, 1127 Montenegrins, 319 Yugoslavs, 561 Albanians (those that agreed to take part in the census), 2790 Muslims, 4760 Roma, 89 Croats and 863 people of other nationalities. To these figures we should, in the interests of realism, add about 40,000 Albanians, as in the previous census (1981) there were 32,390. This means that in 1991, the town of Kosovska Mitrovica had at least 60,000 inhabitants.

These demographic and ethnic changes together with a steady economic development influenced the topographic and urban characteristics of the town. Atanasije Urošević provides a concise description of urban development in Kosovska Mitrovica in the first half of the twentieth century.

As for the town of Mitrovica, it differs in that it is not clustered round the centre as in the old Balkan towns, such as it used to be before the railway, but rather extends along the main streets and beyond the centre. Its principle part is even now in the central area between the bridge on the Ibar and the bridge on the Ljušta and between the latter and the Market. Beyond this main part it stretches along the Peć road as far as the bridge where the Ljušta cuts across the road, and on towards the railway as far as the loading platform. The town also stretches along the left bank of the Ibar, through the middle of the *Bosniak Mahala*, along the road to Raška, as far as the Upper mosque. [...] The *Bosniak Mahala* is no longer Bosniak since almost all the Bosniaks have moved to Turkey. And in all the other Muslim *mahalas* Serbs and Montenegrins have replaced the Muslims who moved away. The town *mahala* has always been, as it is now, purely Serb, and the Gypsy *mahala* is

purely Gypsy. Here Gypsies speaking the Gypsy language live in the upper part, Shiptar-speaking Gypsies in the lower. (Urošević 1957: 208)

This urban physiognomy of the town underwent significant internal changes with the sudden regrouping of the population in 1999. What used to be one town has now practically become two, each of them encircling its centre and spreading out towards the outskirts according to whatever space is available. In this way North Mitrovica too is changing its appearance and taking on the appearance of its new population, with its financial abilities, living habits and cultural inheritance.

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Helena Zdravković

Historical Victimage of Kosovo Serbs and Albanians

This paper uses ideological criticism to examine how and why victimage, identity and nationalism are produced through everyday discursive practices of Serbs and Albanians in Kosovo.¹ The narratives in this study can be regarded as competing vernacular memories representative of Serbs and Albanians in Kosovo. The participants invoke personal and collective memories with official national histories to explain contemporary victimization as a continuation of historical victimage. This use of the past can serve to legitimize their national and political claims, as well as to justify violence against the other group, since historical victimage provides a rationale for hating the other group and perpetuating a vicious cycle of spiraling violence.

It is imperative to look at how personal and collective memories interact with official national histories and how they are mutually reinforced and entangled to produce coherent victimization narratives. Through constant reproduction of historical victimage in vernacular discourse (Hauser 1998, 1999), participants re-affirm their respective identities, realities, claims, and righteousness. Some researchers have documented the positive aspects of victimage narratives and identity (Sturken 1998; Zelizer 2002), but unfortunately the narratives that are examined here foster hatred toward the Other. However, this extreme feeling does not arise out of primordial tendencies, but out of fear from the Other (Vujacic 1996) and a desire to eliminate the perceived threat.

Traditionally, work on Kosovo (Kosovo and Metohija) and the former Yugoslavia has tended to follow this kind of reasoning, dwelling on the notions of factual truth, objective history and victimage, and how these get distorted and used for political purposes. Therein, collective memories of the groups within Kosovo and the former Yugoslavia are contrasted with objective history, and “true victims” are clearly distinguished from “proven villains” (Carver 1998). Many authors write about the “destructive” power

¹ This paper is an abridged version of Zdravković 2006.

of collective memories in Kosovo and the rest of the former Yugoslavia, and how activating some of them has been the cause for the civil war in the 1990's. For example, some authors, disregarding historical data, have even argued for a monolithic Serbian culture that is somehow pathological (Anzulovic 1999; Kaplan 1993; McAllester 2002).

However, most of the studies on Kosovo and the former Yugoslavia have looked only at official discourses, such as elite political speeches, media coverage and history books, and have used these as representative of all groups and voices. To my knowledge there have been few studies of Kosovo (Mertus 1999), and the former Yugoslavia, which focus on the analysis of daily discursive practices through which ideologies of historical victimage are reproduced. Even less attention has been devoted to how personal and collective memories interact and amalgamate with official historical narratives in vernacular rhetoric to create the historical victim identity.

From an ideological perspective the issues outlined above are highly problematic, because they not only silence and delegitimize certain voices, while ratifying others, but also provide for simplistic understandings of how vernacular memories interact with official histories to produce conflict-sustaining narratives. This leads to ineffective conflict resolution, of the kind we are witnessing in Kosovo and Bosnia (Bird 1999; Chomsky 2000; Cohen 2000), and helps perpetuate the cycle of violence.

Therefore, this critical study analyzes vernacular discursive practices of historical victimage instead of focusing on privileged and dominant discourses. Rather than judge the truth value of the participants' narratives, it aims to illustrate how their claims are constructed in discourse and the pragmatic aspect of the historical victim identity, in terms of affording symbolic, emotional and political resources on a personal, collective and national level.

This ideological essay is divided into several sections. The first segment engages the debate over the relationship of history and memory, as it relates to victimage. The next part analyzes the Serb and Albanian vernacular rhetoric in terms of discursive strategies used in creating the historical victim identity. The third section explores the functions of these historical victimage narratives, and an attempt to demonstrate why examining them is important in understanding not only the intractable conflict in Kosovo, but also other conflicts around the world. By the end of this paper I hope to demonstrate the importance of problematizing explanations that posit singular, preferential, and "objective" victimage in relation to conflict intervention and resolution.

The relationship of history and collective memory to victimage

Nevertheless, it can be argued that reasoning of the type outlined above has led not only to black-and-white explanations of the conflict in Kosovo and the former Yugoslavia, but has had significant implications in international diplomacy, NATO intervention (Chomsky 2000) and conflict resolution efforts in the region (Mertus 1999). It has helped solidify and legitimize certain narratives of victimization, while silencing and delegitimizing others. As Montalbano-Phelps (2003) explains, narratives of victimization are judged according to societal standards of who can be the victim and what victimization is like; narratives and victims that don't conform to the norm are discarded as being fabricated and fake. A clear example, if we look at both media coverage and academic interest concerning Kosovo, is the prolific and widespread writing about the victimization of Albanians at the hands of the Serbs, in stark contrast to the scant and unpopular, even contested, writing about the victimization of Serbs at the hands of the Albanians (Erlanger 1999; Fisk 1999; Gray 1999; Israel 2004).

Traditional writings on Kosovo and the former Yugoslavia (Banac 2002; Gerolymatos 2002; Glenny 1999; Judah 1997, 2000; Kaser & Halpern 1998; Magaš 1993; Malcolm 1998; Ramet 2002; Silber & Little 1995; Woodward 1995) tend to pay significant attention to the power of collective memories, and activating them for political purposes. Yet, in a general attempt to disprove certain versions and legitimize others, they point out the validity/invalidity of claims and narratives in relation to an "objective" and "unbiased" history. Former Yugoslav historians have been accused of playing a significant role in the wars, because their writings engaged them, and their respective nationalist political elites, in power struggles over renditions of history. As history is vital to the existence of a nation, disproving the Other's history is tantamount to denying the Other's national identity (Kelman 1999). Yet, most of the writing by "outsiders" (primarily Western authors) on former Yugoslavia has been plagued by the same contestations over who is and who is not telling the truth.

The connection between collective memory and official national histories has been examined in a top-down manner exclusively, looking at official political discourses, media coverage and history books as representative. The assertion is that political elites were the ones who tailored the nationalist historical discourse, which people bought into. This presents collective memory as static, and denies agency to the people who create, reproduce, negotiate and contest official discourses through narratives of vernacular memories. Few studies have analyzed vernacular discourses in Kosovo and former Yugoslavia, wherein personal and collective memory fuses with official historical discourse.

The importance of such an analysis is crucial, because, as Judah points out, in Kosovo “history is war by other means” (Judah 2000: 9). History is not a subject that is confined to books, the classroom, and academic debates – it is a live and wild creature, that is shaped according to present realities and influences their interpretations. While the boundary between collective memory and history is blurred, both Serbs and Albanians make a distinction, which reflects their acceptance of history as objective and memory as fabricated, and their preoccupation with denying validity to the Other’s history, nation and identity. When referring to their own version of events, participants call it history, while when explaining the Other’s side, they term it memory, emphasizing its constructed, and therefore false, aspect. This exemplifies the point that the very notion of what constitutes history and what comprises collective memory is determined politically (Hasian & Frank 1999), that it is indicative of power struggles in society (Gallagher 1995) and that it has significant political connotations. One of the key factors in such power struggles in Kosovo has been the destruction of Serb Christian Orthodox heritage, as a means of disputing the Serbian claim to the land.

Because of the problems arising out of the false dichotomy between history and collective memory and its relation to conflict and victimage, I rather agree with Sturken who proposes that memory and history should be regarded as *entangled* (Sturken 1997: 5, emphasis in original). History and memory are highly selective, impartial and constructed. They are social, rhetorical constructs, changeable in relation to time and place, which make the past coherent and usable in the present.

Moving away from epistemology

Instead of examining official narratives and ascertaining the truth value of collective memories and national histories, this ideological study looks at vernacular discourse as a site where historical victimage is created and reproduced. It rejects the notion that objectivity is the property of history, whereas collective memory is laden with mythical, fabricated and distorted elements. It aims to demonstrate how truth and meaning are accomplished in vernacular rhetoric, and what kind of truth the participants want to be associated with. As Sturken acknowledges, “the debate over truth and falsity is irresolvable”; instead of ascribing falsehood, narratives should be examined for the fears and desires they express (Sturken 1998: 104, 122).

The following excerpts of Serb and Albanian vernacular narratives are taken from a larger corpus of 100 ethnographic interviews that I collected in Kosovo, from June to August 2002. They are a purposive sample, chosen for the brevity and coherence of the narratives, and because they are

representative of the vernacular rhetoric of Kosovo Serbs and Albanians in the larger corpus. While this ideological criticism uses selected passages, these may be considered characteristic fragments of larger historical victimage narratives in Kosovo. I realize that this claim invites criticisms of ignoring multiple voices, perspectives, identifications, and the existence of various vernacular memories, but in the interest of space and brevity I could not include them. I view these selections as representative because the participants identified and spoke as members of their respective ethnic and national groups, expressing official national history and Kosovo's collective memory.

I suggest that the narratives in the following section arise out of a daily repetition or rehearsal of "our version of events." This is a crucial discursive practice, and quite literally so in an area like Kosovo. The everyday discourse about suffering can thus be regarded as a commemoration ritual, or as Burke (1967) has termed it a "victimage ritual," which serves not only to express and release trauma, but to crystallize, reconfirm and solidify it. This vernacular discourse is imperative because it becomes the place, or as Kenny (1999) suggests the milieu, where victimization is repositioned – the place where telling about victimization not only makes it vivid, present and meaningful, but also where it becomes larger than life; indeed it becomes historical. Burke's (1967) concept of victimage rhetoric posits that such narratives are necessarily melodramatic.

They serve to instill hatred and fear of the Other, to justify violent actions, because the desire that arises out of the narratives ultimately aims, as Blain says, "to destroy the destroyer," (Blain 1991: 356) either physically or symbolically. The melodramatic aspect of the victimage rhetoric in these narratives is exemplified in the claim to absolute historical victim status and the use of great national tragedies to support this. The national tragedies are incredibly complex ideological configurations, and are very often associated with the notion of moral victory.

The narratives of suffering exemplify the amalgamation of personal and collective memories with official national histories. As Kenny says, personal memory becomes collectivized and collective memory is instantiated through autobiographical recollection (Kenny 1999: 420), which is further reinforced through official discourses. Hasian (2001a) argues that the polysemic nature of memorializing works additively, bringing together both particular and universal memories. Thus, the participants mirror to a certain extent the official history, but do not reproduce it exactly; rather they appropriate and embellish it, making it contemporary and personal. Accordingly, the victimage rhetoric of these narratives is not monolithic, but can be viewed as combining three different levels: the personal or familial, the regional or Kosovan, and the national, i.e. Serb and Albanian.

It is important to explain here the significance of regional collective memories, because the vernacular narratives in this study make use of collective memories specific to Kosovo, which Serbs and Albanians from other regions do not necessarily know or share in. The variation is not only due to divergent historical experiences, but also because collective memories, as notable narratives of who we are and who we were, are not just about ourselves, but necessarily include the “Other” (Browne 1995; Bruner 2002). These memories are thus regionally different, because the Other is not necessarily the same for the entire national group. The flow of history forms and re-forms groups and brings them into contact with a shifting range of significant Others. Thus regional, as well as other, variations are significant.

In Kosovo, as Valtchinova (2002) and Kostovicova (2002) suggest, the Albanian national identity was, and is, clearly delineated in opposition to the Serbs as the ethnic Other. On the other hand, for Albanians living in the southern part of Albania, the Others are both the Greeks and the northern Albanian Ghegs (Rapper 2002). Likewise, for Serbs living in Bosnia, the Others are Croats and Bosnian Muslims – Bosniaks, while the Serbs living in Kosovo have constituted their identity in opposition to the Albanians. As there is no unitary, national identity that is identical and variation-less across groups (Appadurai 1999; Bhabha 1994; Duijzings 2000; Hall 1996), so there is no single Other. And as identifications and their anchoring Others (Hall 1996) are diverse, so are collective memories. Therefore, the narratives in this study are not representative of Serb and Albanian arguments in general, but of the Kosovo Serb and Albanian claims.

Fears and desires in competing narratives of historical victimage

In the following excerpts participants express their fear of the Other and a desire for symbolic or physical annihilation through constructing competing and opposing narratives of historical victimage. All the injustices and troubles, sometimes real and sometimes imagined, are blamed on the Other. Duijzings (2000) remarks that the Serbs and Albanians in Kosovo, as other groups in the former Yugoslavia and elsewhere in the world, each have their own catalogue of victims, atrocities, destruction and endured injustices, although not capacity to admit and grieve for the hurts of others. And Silber and Little (1995: 390–391) explain:

To work in former Yugoslavia is to enter a world of parallel truths. Wherever you go, you encounter the same resolute conviction that everything that had befallen the region is always someone else’s fault, except one’s own side. [...] Each nation has embraced a separate orthodoxy in which it is uniquely the victim and never the perpetrator.

The narratives in this study embody this rigidity, as they are accounts of total and absolute historical oppression. Because this ideological study looks at vernacular memory, it is not concerned with determining the veracity of claims, or reproducing previous work on the former Yugoslavia. I will not try to give an “objective” historical account for the reader, but will allow for the multivocality of Kosovo Serb and Albanian voices in the following analysis.

In the first subsection of this second segment I present the narrative of an Albanian interviewee and in the second subsection a dialogue between two Serb speakers. I have not included their names, not only for confidentiality purposes, but also because the participants are speaking here not only as individuals, but as members of their respective ethnic groups. They are therefore identified as such.

Victimization of the Albanians as a historical injustice

In the following excerpt the speaker summarizes, using very strong language, the main points of the general and official Albanian argument of centuries-long oppression (Berisha 1993; Blumi 2002; Costa 1995; Frasherri 1964; Kaleshi 1973; Krasniqi 1996; Logoreci 1984; Maliqi 1998; Repishti 1984; Skendi 1956, 1967). He emphasizes that there are two sources from which he draws his claims, and those are personal experience and what he calls history. Albanian history for him is the officially ratified version of events, which connotes and implies legitimacy and authenticity.

Albanian speaker:

The Albanians have always been humiliated, oppressed, victimized and discriminated against. I mean everyone has direct experience with that. And then there's history. Our history teaches us that, too. The Serbs have always been our enemies. They are aggressive, and you can't trust them. They always, throughout the centuries, they always hated us. They colonized Kosovo, and they oppressed us. They have been oppressing us for centuries. I know that for a fact. I know it both from my experience and from our history.

In support of his claim, the speaker then continues to give specific examples. He refers to the victimization of Albanians as common knowledge, when he says “we all know, everyone knows.”

We know what the *četniks*² did to us during World War II, and before that. They killed and burned and looted. Nothing was left. And then after the war,

² These were monarchists who were loyal to the exiled King Peter, and who fought against the Nazi occupiers. Because the Albanians joined the Nazis in World War II, these troops fought against them. It is derived from *çeta*, a term used for the guerilla

we all know, everyone knows what [Aleksandar] Ranković did. His policy was to kill as many Albanians as he could, and more than that.

The selective memories that he is invoking are not very detailed, and are considered to be tacit knowledge, in no need of further explication. Yet, they are the most politically volatile. The name *četniks*, even though it is not of recent origin, was used during the 1990s Yugoslav wars, both by radical Serbs to characterize themselves in a heroic light, as the keepers of the Serbian nationalist tradition, and by other groups to label their brutal and primitive behavior (Judah 1997, 2000). Therefore, while for the Serbs, the word *četnik* is positive, because it reminds of Serbian heroic opposition to Nazism, for other ethnic groups in the former Yugoslavia it is very negative, and has strong connotations of irrational, aggressive and allegedly genocidal behavior. Similarly, the Albanian speaker mentions Aleksandar Ranković, the hated head of UDBA (the secret police), interior minister (until 1963) and Tito's vice-president, until 1966 (Judah 2000), accusing him of conducting a campaign of "extermination".³ He is cast as a Hitler-like figure, and he comes to embody the Serb people and their intentions throughout the centuries.

The speaker then continues to maintain that the Albanians were not victimized only during the Milošević period, and asserts that Serbs and Albanians had never lived together peacefully and had never liked each other. He gives a brief disclaimer though, saying that there were some individual exemptions, although he points out that they were not very common. Such narratives tap into what both Serb and Albanian official histories say, but they also acknowledge the polysemic vernacular memories. Most of the participants in the larger study, Serb and Albanian, avow that while group relations were never amicable or peaceful, there were individual interactions that were (Suflyay 1990). However, they are careful to stress that these are exceptions.

I mean, so it's not just the Milošević period. No, no. Before that, long before that. For a long time, a very long time. I mean, I think I can say that the

units who fought against the Ottoman Empire in the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century.

³ However, Ranković imprisoned people and conducted secret investigations to prevent 'counter-revolutionaries' and 'Albanian irredentists' from operating in Yugoslavia, as Albania at that time was strictly aligned with the Soviet bloc. Ranković's measures were as much directed against and felt by Serbs and other groups in Yugoslavia, as the Albanians. The years after the war in Yugoslavia were marked by frequent and brutal purges within the Communist Party and its leadership, so that all groups were equally the victims of a paranoid and dictatorial regime, which aimed to pacify all its subjects. The speaker's claim is representative of the collective memory of Albanians, who claim that after Tito fired Ranković they started getting their freedom (Judah 2000).

only golden years for the Albanians in Kosovo were maybe between 74 and 80. Maybe. That's when the local Serbs supposedly felt that the Albanians got more rights and more privileges, but everything else, I mean people feel and remember only bad things, only bad memories. There are some people who talk about friendships and mixed marriages, but it wasn't like in Bosnia, or other republics. Here, no, I mean the distance was always very big, very big, because there was always so much injustice. Always. For centuries the Serbs oppressed us as the colonizers, as the occupiers of Kosovo. They even changed our names and tried to convert us. I mean, that's how it was. The Serbs weren't the oppressed *raya*⁴ in the Turkish empire. Don't believe that. Don't believe anything they say, because Serbian history is a big lie. Our folk poetry says that the Serbs occupied Kosovo, that they were always the aggressors, the evil people. Kosovo is Albanian land. I mean, Albania was recognized only in 1912 as an independent state, but Kosovo always had a majority Albanian population. Always. And the Serbs always oppressed them, subjugated and exploited them. We remember everything the Serbs did to us, through the centuries, in this century, in this recent period. Everything.

The speaker contends, as he did before, that the Serbs always hated the Albanians. On the other hand, he does not say that the Albanians hated the Serbs, but simply that there was a very big distance, for which the cause was the "injustice" done to the Albanians. He then progresses further along the timeline, going back centuries and repeating his main argument about Serbian colonizers and occupiers of Kosovo, which he derives from Albanian romantic historic interpretation (Berisha 1993; Blumi 2002; Costa 1995; Frasheri 1964; Kaleshi 1973; Krasniqi 1996; Logoreci 1984; Maliqi 1998; Repishti 1984; Skendi 1956, 1967).

The speaker counters the standard Serb claim of victimization by the Ottomans and the Albanians, and accuses Serbian history of being "a big lie." Thus, he tells a polarizing and totalizing victimage narrative, without the possibility of even partial truth or validity of Serbian claims of victimization. He is implicitly disputing not only Serbian historiography, but general historiography about the Ottomans and the conditions of Christians within the Ottoman Empire. He allows only for singular suffering, wherein he relies, as he says, on national history, folk poetry, and both collective and personal memories.

Invoking the Other's history in order to refute it is a strategy that almost all participants in the larger study use. It is meant to point out inconsistencies and falsities in the Other's history and argument. Participants thus engage the Other in an imagined dialogue, and directly dispute the

⁴ Turkish word signifying ordinary people. The *reaya* were a specific class in the Ottoman Empire, which was Christian and had to work for the wealthy Muslim landowners, *spahis*.

opposing version of events. Bakhtin (1981) calls this the dialogizing of another's discourse, wherein the speaker dialogues between his own position and the position of others.

The Albanian speaker in this excerpt invokes collective memory in the form of folk poetry to corroborate his accusation against Serbian victimage, and refers to the memory of the people several times. He portrays it as the memory of constant, perpetual and centuries-long oppression, as well as of the denial, by the Serbs, of their tyranny. It is exemplary in being an invented tradition (Hobsbawm & Ranger 1983), which is part of the enduring memory that I mentioned earlier.

To provide a solid historical basis for his assertions, the speaker goes further back in time, to give the story of origin, as it is postulated by official Albanian historiography (Berisha 1993; Blumi 2002; Costa 1995; Frasherri 1964; Kaleshi 1973; Krasniqi 1996; Logoreci 1984; Maliqi 1998; Repishti 1984; Skendi 1956, 1967). The myth of ethnic origin and primordial claims to territorial possession are vital to all nations and their endeavors, but in Kosovo they are especially relevant, contested and explosive, because both groups claim to be the first settlers and therefore the rightful owners of the land (Mertus 1999; Ramet 2002). The questions "who came first" and "who is the guest of whom" figure quite prominently in both official and vernacular discourse (Roux 1992). As Ramet points out, the Kosovo debate is much like the Israeli-Palestinian issue: "Two ethnic communities with distinct languages and religious traditions lay claims to the same territory with competing historical arguments as evidence" (Ramet 2002: 174).

Burke's (1967) notion of the melodramatic is especially exemplified in the Albanian speaker's claim that the history of the Albanian people has been one of constant struggle for freedom and liberty. In the next excerpt, he says "you see, from the very early history of our people, we have always been under attack." This notion of being attacked and under threat exemplifies the fear that motivates historical victimage narratives, and is intimately tied to the innocence of the victim who suffers unjustly. It invokes romantic martyrdom and noble sacrifice for the nation.

The Albanians are the oldest people in the Balkans. That's the truth. Our ancestors are the Illyrians, and we are older even than the Greeks. I mean, some famous people, like Aristotle, weren't Greek at all. They were Albanian. Then the Romans came and colonized us. Then the Slavs attacked us and they colonized us. You see, from the very early history of our people, we have always been under attack. All this was once ours, the whole region. Albania, Kosovo, parts of Greece, Macedonia, Montenegro, and also some parts of Bulgaria. I mean, the whole Balkan region was Albanian before all these others came and conquered us. We have archeological sites to prove it, and our language is living proof. Our language is the oldest. It's ancient. So we

have all the rights to Kosovo, as Illyrians and as the majority that has always been oppressed.

The speaker argues that Albanians have rights to the land because they are the first to inhabit it, and also because they have been the victims for so many centuries. The Serbs are not only cast as ancient villains, but are also charged with ‘stealing’ Albanian territory. There is a lot of repetition in the speaker’s narrative; “always” is repeated thirteen times in his narrative. It emphasizes the constancy of the victim/villain dichotomy and serves to firmly establish the veracity of the speaker’s claims (Van Dijk 2000).

The Albanian speaker’s narrative presents an internally coherent and persuasive argument about the unjust historical victimization of the Albanian people. It is constructed through powerful and selective stories of oppression, derived from personal and collective memory, and reinforced through appealing to official national history. It is important to note however that while official national history provides facts and legitimacy to the personal and the collective, the relationship is reflexive. The speaker’s narrative is a testimony to the veracity of the national history and the dominant narrative, and how it figures in vernacular rhetoric.

“History is repeating itself for the Serbs”

In this subsection, the two Serb dialogue partners, relate their immediate (post 1999) suffering to such instances in the past, and claim that historically it has always been this way for Serbs in Kosovo. They expound on their current oppression in detail, but I have decided not to include that part of their dialogue here for the purposes of brevity; the excerpt chosen speaks directly about historical victimage, which is the focus of this ideological study. In the larger study, all Serb participants invariably follow the same line of argumentation, describing in detail their present situation and then linking it to a larger historical context of Serb–Albanian relations. Therein they compress several centuries into the claim that the Serbs have continually been oppressed, thus elevating their status to eternal victims as opposed to the perpetual Albanian aggressors. The speakers in this dialogue maintain that “history is repeating itself” in terms of the oppressor–oppressed relationship and the Serbs’ contemporary predicament. The past is used not only to make sense of the present, but also to reinforce victimization claims.

Serb speaker 1:

You know, it has always been this way. Under the Turks, they [Albanians] killed our men and raped our women, then the same happened when the Germans and Italians came, in both world wars, and even during Tito, there were so many incidents of kidnapping, killing, and raping, just like today. But

everything got covered up, just like now. You know, they always hated Serbs. Always wanted just to kill us all.

The speaker summarizes the main points of the Serb argument, which maintains that the Albanians have always been the villains, while the Serbs have always been the victims. He repeats the same claim that the Albanian makes, namely that of the Other always hating the in-group. He then uses a personal, or rather familial memory to back up his claim.

Speaker 1:

You know, for instance, they killed my great grandfather while he was working in his field. The Shiptars⁵ [Albanians] slaughtered him. And then, later, you know a Shiptar came to take weapons and food and money from my grandfather one day, but my grandfather wouldn't give him anything and he threw him out. But then his brothers, who knew what this Shiptar was capable of doing, they ran after him and gave him what he wanted and pleaded with him to spare my grandfather because of his wife and children. They pleaded with him for a long time, and they barely saved him. But we remember all that. We know who our great grandfathers and grandfathers were, what it was like then, what they did and how they suffered. We know all that.

The speaker's choice of words, such as "slaughtered," in contrast to "pleaded" paints a vivid image of the aggressor/innocent dichotomy. Speaking about his great grandfather and grandfather as victims of Albanian terror is likewise most powerful because in Kosovo, as in the rest of the Balkans and many other areas around the world, grandfathers are revered elders and patriarchs. They are considered the embodiments and containers of national wisdom, courage and honor. They are the guardians of the national spirit and its memories. Therefore, metaphorically, by killing elders, such as the speaker's great grandfather and grandfather, the Albanians are thought to be killing the Serbian identity and collective memory. However, the speaker demonstrates how memories are kept alive, despite such attempts; he

⁵ *Shiptars* is a word that Serbs use to refer to Albanians. It is now a pejorative term, derived from the Albanian name for themselves *Shqiptars*. This term was widely used before 1974, and did not have negative connotations. After 1974 though, when the Serbs in Kosovo started feeling threatened, the term acquired derogatory and negative connotations. The Albanians associate the term and its usage with the rise of Serbian nationalism and subsequent violence, considering it a mark of disrespect and denigration. However, I interviewed several Albanians, mostly those living in Serbia proper, who did not like being called Albanian, but requested to be called *Shiptars*. One interviewee said: "I am not Albanian. Pu, pu, pu [spitting]. No way. Albanians are from Albania. I am from Kosovo – I am Shiptar." Likewise, there are some Serbs who do not use the term with negative or derogatory intentions, but use it out of habit. As one Serb interviewee in Kosovo said: "they [Albanians] are Shiptars for us, and they will always be Shiptars for us. Albanians are in Albania. Shiptars are ours."

says “but we remember all that,” asserting that collective memory is alive and well and does not forget such injustice. He is not specific in what it is that people remember, because it is implied that every Serb in Kosovo has similar family stories, and shares the same memories. This suggests that the ideas Serb speaker 1 espouses are not idiosyncratic, but are much more complex ideological configurations. His partner in dialogue uses this “exemplary” incident to paint a wider historical picture and emphasize the pattern of victimization. The speakers together construct, what is for them, a strong, coherent and logical argument. They amplify and confirm each other’s arguments.

Serb speaker 2:

In every war they went about creating a Greater Albania. When the Turk came, they accepted Islam, so the Serbs were the subjugated *raya*. Under the *zulum*⁶ of their mercenaries and *zulumčari*⁷ Serbs were forced either to suffer or to leave. Then in 1912 when we took back Kosovo we accepted all those mercenaries and *zulumčari*, and we didn’t treat them like second-class citizens, but wanted to help them, because we knew what pain, misery and suffering were like. But because they never felt those things, they never knew torture and suffering, they didn’t know how to appreciate that, just like today they don’t know how to appreciate everything that Yugoslavia has given them. They constantly think that they have to torture someone.

He argues that the Albanians have always sided with the conquerors, and have always taken advantage of their privileged position to destroy Serbs and their claims to the land. On the other hand, like the Albanian speaker before him, and many other participants in the larger study, he does not mention some of the reciprocity in this process, but contends that after Kosovo was won back in 1912 the Serbs were merciful toward the Albanians, because they understood what being victimized means. The dichotomy is between the compassionate Serbs and the ruthless Albanians, who “constantly think that they have to torture someone.” The speaker gives specific historical instances when this was especially prominent further on.

Speaker 2:

During the First World War when Serbia was attacked by Austro-Hungarians, Germans and Bulgarians, they used our weak state to kill more of us and chase us away from our homes. The same (happened) during the Second World War. They created Greater Albania, they had their SS Skanderbeg unit, and they killed so many of us, and expelled everyone. And then the

⁶ This is a Turkish word, which signifies intense, unbridled, unrestrained violence and brutality; it has similar connotations as today ‘ethnic cleansing’ does.

⁷ These are the men that conducted the crimes and persecutions (*zulum*).

worst enemy of the Serbs, Tito, didn't allow (Serb) people to come back (to Kosovo).

The speaker selectively invokes memories, including and leaving out memories according to their usefulness in constructing a coherent and positive argument about his group. This does not allow for the inclusion of competing or divergent memories, such as those that come from the historiography or the collective memory of the Other. The process of glossing over memories that speak negatively of the in-group, and supplanting them with positive ones, is exemplary of the process, inherent to creating histories and collective memories, of selective remembering and forgetting.

Milošević “tapped into” and raised to the official level, previously repressed collective memories of the Kosovo Serbs and their latent antagonism and resentment toward the Albanians (Schierup 1991). In former Yugoslavia, especially under Tito's rule, vernacular memories of ethnic hatred and strife were not allowed to circulate, because under the official banner of communist Yugoslavia, “brotherhood and unity” prevailed over ethnic discord (Magaš 1993). This did not mean that vernacular memories were forgotten. Ratifying some memories as official, Milošević acquired a solid electoral support for claiming power. This move on his part is most often cited as the most powerful impetus to the subsequent Yugoslav wars (Magaš 1993).

One of the memories that had previously been repressed, but has since the 1990s been re-circulated and renegotiated is that of the prohibition Tito⁸ put on Kosovo Serbs, who were exiled during World War II, to return to their land. This is an event that is specific to Kosovo. Therefore, while many other Serbs might agree with the speaker in his characterization of Tito as the “the worst enemy of the Serbs,” they might not share the same vernacular memories that are the basis for this speaker claiming so. The Serbs in Kosovo always resented Tito for giving the Albanians too much power and too many privileges (Bogdanović 1985), so that this regional memory arises out of a different experience than the one other Serbs in former Yugoslavia have.

However, the Serbian speakers also evoke the official historical version of World War II, one that has been legitimized by the rest of the world, by remembering the Albanian-Italian-German alliance, and the atrocities the Albanians committed as Nazi fighters. The Albanians are thus placed on par with the Nazis, which is the most vivid and powerful image of a villain. This is a common and rhetorically effective strategy for creating authorita-

⁸ Tito, a lifetime communist dictator of Yugoslavia was the secretary general of the Communist party and the president of Yugoslav federation (in all its various forms) from 1945 until his death in 1980.

tive victimage narratives, not only in the discourse of Serbs and Albanians in Kosovo, but many others around the world.

Thus, Holocaust imagery figures prominently in the vernacular discourse of both Serbs and Albanians. We have seen how the Albanian compares Tito's second in command A. Ranković to Hitler, and portrays scenes of ethnic cleansing and genocide. Likewise, the Serbs use the same tactic, because it is one of the most effective ways of immediately delineating between the victims and the villains. Building on the momentum, the first speaker immediately reinforces this image of the suffering Serb nation. He exemplifies Burke's (1967) melodramatic aspect of victimage, by using the word *stradalnici*, which translates literally as "universal historical sufferers." It connotes suffering of historic and heroic proportions, and is only used in an epic context. The word merges martyrdom with innocence and injustice in historically transcendent suffering. Speaker 1:

In each war, and we've had too many of them, we were the greatest *stradalnici* and the most ardent fighters for freedom. In every war the Serbs suffered the most. In World War II, every third Serb was killed. Houses, families destroyed, the intelligentsia murdered, the *raya* was left only to work. Serbia is small, but she has given the most lives and victims for the freedom of Yugoslavia, and the rest of the world. I don't know of another nation that has suffered so much and forgiven so much. After 1389 and the Kosovo Battle, the Serbs have continually been suffering, forced to abandon their ethnic space, where the first royal thrones were, at Prizren and Novo Brdo, where their spiritual and cultural heart started beating. I mean, since that battle, we have just been going downhill.

The melodramatic is further strengthened through the speakers "poetic" words about Kosovo and the ancient royal thrones of Serbian kings, as the places where the Serbian "spiritual and cultural heart started beating." The speaker refers to the pivotal element of Serbian victimage, memorialized through Serbian historiography, epic poetry, and national collective memory – the famous Battle of Kosovo (1389). This battle is engraved into the "conscience collective" of the Serbian people, like the Jewish Masada, and is considered a "turning point" (Zerubavel 1994), because five centuries of subjugation under Ottoman rule follow it (Ostrogorsky 1991). The battle is the foundational national claim, and its political, symbolic and emotional significance has been analyzed or at the very least mentioned in, to my knowledge, almost every work that has been written about the Serbs (Boose 2002; Emmert 1981, 1999; Zirojević 2000).

For reasons of space I will not go into detail about this battle, but it is important to note that it embodies and symbolizes the Serbian spirit of fighting for Christianity against the "Turkish infidels", dying for freedom and spilling their blood for their sacred land (Emmert, 1981, 1991;

Zirojević, 2000). Therefore, the appeal to this battle not only uses official Serbian historiography, but it calls on the vast repository of national collective memory to create the contrast between the heroic Serbs and their sad history, with that of the Albanians, who “never stood up to anyone.” The disparity here is not simply between the victim and the villain, but between a people who fight for their freedom and principles, and a people who don’t have morals and who prefer the easy way out, as Serb speaker 1 elaborates further.

Speaker 1:

In each war they never stood up to anyone. They always sided with the strongest and most ruthless – the Turks, Italians, Nazis. History is the same, only the victor changes. When the Turks ruled, they were with the Turks, then the Austro-Hungarians, the Italians, the Germans, now the Americans, and when they leave, they’ll find someone else.

Speaker 2:

No change whatsoever – everything that was happening then, is happening now. Everything that was before is going on today. That is really a quagmire. I often read a letter that Father Sava [Dečanac] sent to the Berlin Congress in 1878. The same thing is happening today. The things that were going on then ... Father Sava was the official representative of the Serbian people in Kosovo, and he wrote a letter to the ambassadors of the Great Powers at the Berlin Congress. Then, and now, there is no difference for us Serbs – we are being killed, kidnapped, molested, our churches and monasteries destroyed, there is no life here, as there was none then.

The speakers here refer to, and cite as proof of oppression, the letter to the Congress of Berlin (1878), which is another vernacular memory specific to Kosovo. The 1878 Kosovo Serb petition has been reprinted and I have seen it circulated through and read in the remaining Serb houses in Kosovo.

Speaker 1:

When you read that letter then you really understand that everything is the same, the powers at play, the events, everything is the same. Some of the actors have changed, but the stage is the same, and the plot is the same. Everything is the same. Even though Kosovo is ours, we have to suffer.

The dominant notion that history is repeating itself is most clearly expressed by Serb speaker 1, who says “history is he same, only the victor changes,” and then later, “some of the actors have changed, but the stage is the same, and the plot is the same.”

The vernacular discourses in this section illustrate how the rhetoric of victimage as melodramatic is accomplished by integrating personal and collective memories with officially ratified history, wherein each is invoked and used in support of the other. There is true interdependence of these parts,

and the boundaries between them are not clear-cut, but overlap and intermix, in creating for these participants coherent, well-supported and rational arguments about the historical victimage of their respective group.

While the preceding analysis has been mostly descriptive in illustrating how victimage narratives are constructed through vernacular discourse, the next segment deals with the significance and the functions of claiming historical victimage for the Serbs and Albanians in Kosovo.

First function of historical victimage: Making sense of the present

As Zelizer says “the past compels us for what it tells us about the present” (Zelizer 2002: 697). The participants construct symbolically their victim identity through using the past to make sense of their contemporary situation. They situate their personal and collective trauma within a broader context, and do not see it as novel, but as a repetition and continuance of the pattern of the nation’s victimization. They also do not see the conflict as new, but view it as the perpetuation of “age-old hatreds,” and therefore intractable. The Other then becomes the perpetual villain and perpetrator, mired as the “ancient enemy.” The participants not only relate to the centuries-long national suffering at the hand of various Others, but locate themselves within it, as witnesses and participants. They seek meaning and confirmation to their present victimization in historical victimage, and their personal and vernacular testimony provides another building block in the construction of the historical victim identity. This rhetoric is powerful, because it helps confirm self-perceptions and identity, but it also legitimizes national historiography. Since the national histories of the Serbs and Albanians are incompatible and conflicted, this leads to the second function of historical victimage.

Second function of historical victimage: Denying the Other

As the above narratives illustrate, histories and memories of the Serbs and Albanians in Kosovo are in complete contrast and opposition to each other. Thus, claiming that one’s version of events is truthful inherently implies that the Other’s is not. The Albanian speaker directly asserts this, when he says “don’t believe anything they say, because Serbian history is a big lie,” but even without such open statements, this sentiment is implied throughout the narratives. Because history is vital to the existence of a nation or a community disputing the Other’s history means denying the very identity of the Other. Therefore, as participants strive to validate their historical victim status, and simultaneously and inherently the Other’s perpetual villain sta-

tus, they are also struggling over the legitimacy of identity, memories, and even their very nation.

The NATO bombing campaign and UN governance of Kosovo, which gave de *facto* independence to the Kosovo Albanians (Chomsky 2000), seriously challenged the Serb nation and its perception of being the historical victim, while ratifying the Albanian claims to this status. However, in the Serbian case, because NATO was cast as the villain (Jansen 2000), and because the KFOR troops did not protect the Serbian population from Albanian violence after the intervention (Judah 2000), it also simultaneously confirmed and reinforced the victimage master narrative (Gee 1996; Hackett & Zhao 1994). In the Albanian case, NATO's endorsement of their historical victimage provided a basis for justifying violence against the Serbs (Feldman 2003), which is the third function examined in this ideological study.

Third function of historical victimage: Justifying violence

Unfortunately, the rhetoric of victimage is used not only to satisfy the moral demands of a community, but is instrumental in justifying oppression, discrimination and violence against the Other. Since revenge is the privilege of the victim, this becomes the most prized, and yet most dangerous identity to lay claims to. Mertus explains that this is because "once we see ourselves as victims, we can clearly identify an enemy. Steeped in our own victimhood, we no longer feel bound by moral considerations in becoming perpetrators" (Mertus 1999: 1). In Kosovo, "both sides now feel like victims; both sides now feel entitled to take some liberty in "taking back" what is rightfully theirs" (Mertus 1999, p. 7). Siber similarly argues that "the selective interpretations of history and experience, always provides abundant "reasons" for rationalizing one's own behavior, and proof of guilt can always be found in history, if one looks hard enough" (Siber 1997: 106). This dynamic leads not only to the inability to empathize with the Other, but to the further intractability of the conflict, through the perpetuation of a vicious cycle of violence (Pick 1997).

The relatively frequent power shifts in the region provide the opportunity for the victim to take "revenge" on the villain. In the course of the protracted conflict in Kosovo, the ethnic minority often becomes the majority, and vice versa, due to changes in state borders, political systems and demographic factors. In such circumstances the new majority always seeks to "even the score" for the discrimination to which its group had been previously subjected (Goati 1997). This ideological position is an anchor for both groups' identities and is useful in pursuing particular political goals

and claims. It is especially functional in justifying acts of violence by the in-group as warranted retribution.

In my larger sample, when Serb participants are reminded of the policies of Slobodan Milošević, they respond by recalling the centuries of Serbian plight under Muslim Albanian terror and their dominance during the communist rule. Similarly, when confronted with the violent crimes perpetrated by the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) against Serbs, and other minorities, as well their cultural and religious heritage (Israel 2004; Judah 2000), the Albanians invoke their suffering in the 1990s, under Milošević's rule, and the long-standing oppression suffered at the hands of the Serbs.

Unfortunately, these tragic kinds of exclusionary victimage narratives are not only used to justify, but also to motivate and provoke violent action. This is not specific only to the Balkans, but is visible and problematic in other conflicts around the world. They are part of the reason why thousands of people die and their deaths are justified as revenge. However, it is important to note that participation and justification are not identical, and that justification does not necessarily lead to involvement. Even though there is a thin line, as Feldman (2003) contends, between violence and inaction, spectatorship and partaking, sharing in the vernacular rhetoric of historical victimage, and reproducing it through everyday discourse, does not guarantee that people will be propelled to action, as several authors writing about Kosovo and the former Yugoslavia have suggested (Anzulovic 1999; Kaplan 1993).

Concluding remarks

This ideological study has attempted to problematize explanations that posit singular, preferential, and "objective" victimage in relation to conflict intervention and resolution. It has questioned the interrelationship between claiming historical victimage and using national histories, personal and collective memories to substantiate it.

First, it has argued that looking at history as objective in contrast to collective memory as distorted and mythical, leads to selective sanctioning of victimage narratives and rigid definitions of victims and villains, which leads to ineffective conflict intervention and resolution, helping to perpetuate violence.

Second, looking at vernacular discourses of Kosovo Serbs and Albanians this ideological study illustrated how historical victimage is created and reproduced in everyday melodramatic "commemoration rituals" (Burke 1967). The analysis demonstrated how official historiographies amalgamate with personal and collective memories, both regional and national, to produce coherent and rational victimage narratives for the speakers.

Third, it has been pointed out that the historical victim status is desirable because it affords emotional, symbolic and political resources, while being the villain implies guilt and punishment. Narratives of historical victimage invoke the past to make sense of the present, serve to create harsh dichotomies of oppressor/oppressed, through which the Other is delegitimized and becomes the target of violence, justified as revenge.

Intractable conflict and the inherently hostile relationship toward the Other, become embedded in everyday life through vernacular narratives of historical victimage. Multi-generational trauma is translated into a victim identity, which is given historical proportions. The conflict becomes mired in fixed binary oppositions of victim versus villain. It is conceptualized and understood as a continuous struggle of the innocent sufferers against the tyranny of the Other. Such rationalizations sustain and perpetuate conflict, making it even more intractable and impervious to resolution; not only is there no room for empathy and implicature, but there is no room for divergent voices and inclusive discourses of victimage.

Instead of looking solely at the surface – that is the official and elite rhetoric – examining the deep and underlying structures of vernacular discourses uncovers the interplay of multiple memories and rhetorical strategies in establishing the Other as the source of all tragedies. Lack of critical attention to the complexities of historical victimage rhetoric leads to claims of primordial hatred and antagonism, and fails to understand how these extreme emotions arise out of the vernacular discourse of the groups involved. This ideological study shows that the conflict in Kosovo is not propelled by such primordial instincts, but that hatred and violence are constructed as legitimate responses to centuries of oppression. By uncovering the complex rhetoric of historical victimage in Kosovo it aims to make a modest contribution to the understanding of intractable conflict dynamics, which revolve around historical victimage. The implications of this study can be applied in other conflicts, such as Bosnia, the Middle East, Northern Ireland, Spain, Chechnya, Cyprus, East Africa, East Timor, Turkey, Iraq, and various others. The goal is to move us away from simplistic rationalizations, remedies and perpetual cycles of violence in these areas.

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Valentina Pitulić

Folklore in the Serb Enclave

PRESERVING IDENTITY IN HOSTILE ENVIRONMENT

Huge social and economic upheavals in the Balkans throughout the ages have shaped the mentality of the Serbs in Kosovo and Metohija. A continual struggle for survival under long centuries of decaying Ottoman rule, Fascist Italian and Nazi German occupation, and the preservation of both life and identity, is encoded in the individual and collective unconscious as an archaic legacy. These forms of collective consciousness are expressed by way of established forms of formulaic narration, through folklore. There we find the archetype as a reflection of the unconscious manifestation of the human psyche.¹

As changes in the identity of a people depend on external and internal factors, there is also a certain adjustment to the given circumstances. In areas once under foreign control the patriarchal way of life was preserved. In such an atmosphere, of nurturing stoicism and confronting evil, certain archetypal models of behaviour came to predominate where pride of place is held by the archetypal hero.

It is the task to show that a series of archetypes is a main constituent of mythology, that they stand in an organic relation to one another, and that their stadial succession determines the evolution of consciousness. In the course of its ontogenetic development, the individual ego consciousness has to pass through the same archetypal stages which determined the evolution of consciousness in the life of humanity. The individual has in his own life to follow the road that humanity has trod before him, leaving traces of its journey in the archetypal sequence of the mythological images we are now about to examine. (Neumann 1994: 7)

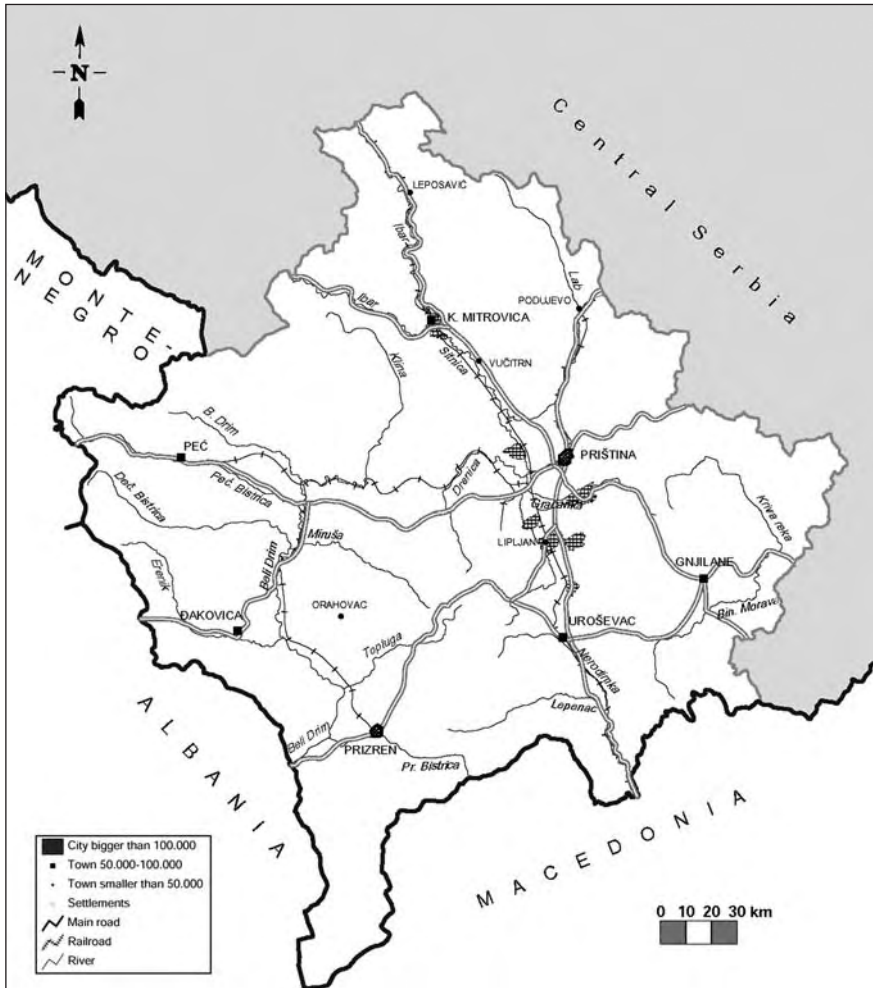
Following ethno-psychological research (notably B. Jovanović 1991: 10, according to whom the elements that become most important in periods of crisis are spiritual culture, mythology, religion, ritual practice and folklore),

¹ A revised version of Pitulić 2005.

we shall attempt to establish a correlation between the traditional heritage of Serbs in Kosovo and Metohija and the current situation arising after the severe NATO bombing of 1999. The question is how the people from this territory accept the new situation and how it preserves the ancestral heritage.

As our interest is in oral literature, we shall begin with a short review of what has been preserved in the folklore writings of Kosovo and Metohija. Prior to Vuk [Stefanović] Karadžić who in the early nineteenth century collected Serb epic poetry from previous centuries of Ottoman domination there are no reliable records. Only from the written records of the last hundred years can we gain a better idea of the folklore of the region. The Battle of Kosovo (1389) and its aftermath must first have made strong impact on the Christian Orthodox Serb population of Kosovo and Metohija. With the fall of Novo Brdo and Prizren to the Ottomans in the mid-fifteenth century (1455) a new period marked by centuries-long Ottoman domination began for Serbia as a whole and for her mineral-rich southern region of Kosovo. Serb epic songs that emerged from the Ottoman period, “an oral history” of anti-Ottoman struggles, referred directly to historical events marked by epic heroism, while its lyric — especially ritual singing — has been preserved up to our days almost intact.

In these conditions in the second half of the nineteenth century the Serb folk song in Kosovo and Metohija fulfilled its function without losing any of its freshness. National propaganda from Serbia not only did not prevent the preservation and nurturing of these forms of poetry, but on the contrary fostered to cultivate folk songs and the oral tradition as strongly as possible. The folk song in Kosovo and Metohija in the second half of the nineteenth century was enlivened by many new themes, whether singing of the new situation, describing important events taking place locally, or taking ideas and motifs from the great number of song books and publications of folk songs printed at the time. The heroic song especially gained in new content. The new culture of rising class of bourgeoisie was slow to penetrate the patriarchal Serb environment in Kosovo and Metohija, even in the towns. The lyric folk song continued to live on within the ancient pagan rituals and customs, in various celebrations of daily life: during work, in the family and *zadrugas* [extended families consisting of thirty to eighty members on average], among young people. New songs from Serbia and other places were also accepted, even those of the emerging bourgeois class, but their influence was still rather limited. The patriarchal Serb environment in Kosovo and Metohija was not yet prepared to embrace new forms at the expense of its own folk culture and art. The second part of the nineteenth and early twentieth century represent a period when it became easy to follow the life of the Serbian folk song, both lyric and epic, with their individual categories. (Bovan 1977: 16)



In lyric and epic folk songs of the Serbs from Kosovo and Metohija we can easily recognize the important symbols which reflect both the essential national and cultural identity of the Serbs.² Ritual songs evince a predominance of agrarian symbols. The frequent appearance of plants indicates a deep connection to nature and the need to establish a bond with the cosmic rhythm. Certain symbols indicate antiquity, especially the solar character, the domination of light and man's need for it (the sun going down; with that white wheat; to carry white churches; what shows white down there; they supped on a pure white *pogača* [round bread]; make me a hero of gold; a golden apple flew down; Debeljković 1984).

² For more, see *Serbian Dictionary of Mythology*.

Many researchers who have come in personal contact with Serbs from Kosovo and Metohija have written of the strong emotion contained in their folksongs. This region has been the scene of great conflicts and clashes of civilisations, beginning with the Battle of Kosovo and continuing up to imperial wars, national and modern ideological conflicts combined with growing inter-ethnic confrontations until the present day, causing the observer to wonder whether the folklore had any kind of influence on the preservation of the identity of Serbian nation. For modern ethnopsychology, open “to a new cognitive approach to the national mentality and psychological aspects of traditional culture”,³ this is an opportunity to research the influence of folk creativity on the preservation of identity in the difficult context of prolonged periods of ethnic strife and failed efforts of reconciliation, and, on top of it, the terrible Serbian suffering in post-1999 Kosovo and Metohija, which, unlike the huge and often exaggerated coverage of the previous Kosovo Albanian sufferings, remained totally obscured to the influential world media: as if the Serbs were not a distinct nation with a strong national identity, creators of a splendid medieval culture with churches that are on the world heritage list, and makers of modern and contemporary Serbian culture. Their cultural heritage on Kosovo and Metohija comprises 1,300 churches and monasteries, at least one third of them of a medieval date. They were and still are not only a vital element of the national identity of Kosovo Serbs, but are a constituent element of the identity of the whole Serbian nation.

Following the NATO bombing, there was a mass migratory wave of Serbs from Kosovo and Metohija: within the context of fear caused by the retribution and discrimination by the Kosovo Albanians returning from their temporary exile in neighbouring countries after the 1999 war was over. Amidst the general chaos, the inevitable question was the very survival of the remaining Serbs. In June 1999 some 130,000 were in several isolated enclaves with ghetto-like living conditions, surviving only due to continuous humanitarian and logistic support from Belgrade, and occasional protection of KFOR forces in the most endangered areas: in Metohija, ethnically cleansed of Serbs within weeks (Peć, Istok, Dečani, Djakovica, Prizren); and, cleansed at a slower pace, in central (Obilić) and eastern Kosovo (Gnjilane, Vitina, Vrbovac, Parteš, Klokot).

The Serb community that accounted for approximately 20 to 22 percent of the overall population of Kosovo and Metohija until 1999 (making with Montenegrins, Muslim Slavs Goranians and Roma at least 30 percent of the overall Kosovo Province population), was facing difficult choices.

³ *Ethnopsychology Today*, 15.



This great exodus from the cradle of the nation resulted in the migration of not only the Serb population but also of an entire language corpus, or rather dialect, and with it also a great part of the folklore. In the collective consciousness of the people who remained in their ancient homes there has been a revival of the opposition models up/down, there/here, good/evil, us/them, tradition/globalization. Finding themselves caught between the fully armed Kosovo Albanians committed to achieve an independent state through post-1999 ethnic cleansing, and UN administration (UNMIK) still unable to provide basic protection, facing collective revenge of the armed Kosovo Albanian extremists, the disarmed or unarmed Serb civilians have become confused and fearful of an unknown future threatening not only their vital interests, but their identity and their very survival in the hostile environment.

What do we see today on the faces of our [Serb] compatriots, what do they mutter to each other, what do they strain to hear, what is happening to them. Do we not hear that they talk of treason, of possible persecutions, some fear retribution, others again are depressed, and the third are frantically celebrating. There is frequent talk of divisions, differentiation, a fear of bloodshed, other people's actions 'reek of inhumanity'; some are prepared to sacrifice themselves, and others to make sacrifices. Very often the imperative of decision is imposed, from within and by ourselves and from without by others. However, isn't all this already familiar from somewhere, do we not speak, do we not live, do we not feel, do we not fear, do we not suffer someone else's words, lives, feelings, fears and wounds? How much are these psychological states ours, and how much those of others?

It is probable that they are both. These are all our personal problems, but at the same time they are supra-personal, collective. This is therefore an archetypal content embodied in our ideas, symptoms, views, feelings. As they are not exclusively our own but archetypal, we must take ourselves back, as personalities and the psychological material of which we are made, to our archetypal foundations. Archetypal psychology believes that the basic ideas, feelings and sufferings of the soul are personified in the hero-personality, the Mother, Fairy, Child, Wise Man, Traitor, Father, Scapegoat, Young Boy and many others, numerous and individual prototypes who are the protagonists of tales of gods and heroes. These characters form the roots of metaphor; they permeate the patterns and foundations of our thought, but also of our feelings, illnesses, perceptions and memories. (Popović 1991: 58)

As the demographic chart of Kosovo and Metohija (after the expulsion of more than 60 percent of the overall Serbian population of the Province) has completely changed, the discriminated Serb population, faced the most difficult problem: how to organise a normal life with minimal semblance of dignity. Changing place names from Serb to Albanian one, followed by the forced change of ethnic composition of many previously Serb settlements (after the expulsion of Serb population, the abandoned villages and urban centres were gradually resettled by Albanians), the constant pressure by Albanian extremist to be expelled from Kosovo and Metohija as well as the most dangerous situation: both the absence of rule of law and absence of freedom of movement have driven the Serb population to concentrate in villages in order to re-organise their shattered life there. The joint problem of all these remaining Serbs, both natives of the freshly ghettoised villages and influx of expelled ones (who joined them hoping to find the asylum and relative security within remaining predominantly Serb-inhabited Kosovo enclaves), whatever their age, was to find a new meaning to severely reduced life conditions. Misfortune that shook the whole families, with often losses of both property and family members, has left deep traces on their physiological stability.

Concern over an uncertain future combined with a latent sadness has resulted in a constant cry for meaning. The feeling of having been abandoned, the crumbling of ethical norms which lived on in the oral narration of the Serb Kosovo people has resulted in a search for signposts to show the way. The presence of foreigners, as ruling elements in the Province, defining political and economic conditions, with all their material and mental machinery, has led to a complete disorientation within the reduced community of roughly 130,000 Kosovo Serbs remaining in the Province since June 1999, one-third of the pre-war population.

From the need to preserve their mental health, and revive their language, cultural traditions and rituals that are lifetime pillars of their iden-

tity, the Serbs soon felt the urge to “take a step out of time” in the form of holidays celebrations as both family and national rituals, primarily the most venerated saints’ days, Holy Week [Easter as the symbol of resurrection being the main religious stronghold], in addition to more popular celebrations of Christmas and St George’s Day (6 June, Old Style). These customs became a kind of important, if not essential psychological shelter for the Christian Orthodox Serbs Community, strongly attached to their religious traditions, interwoven into their everyday life, in particular in rural areas. These customs were, in addition, an ancestral knowledge and memory which had the lifesaving function as a “regression to paradise”.

Serb students from North Kosovska Mitrovica School of Philosophy’s Department of Serbian Literature and Language (which has an outlying department in Gračanica, a Serb enclave near Priština), were assigned to write an essay on folklore, requiring field research and the recording of old and new folk stories. This was an opportunity to come face to face with the tradition handed down from one generation to another. The faces of these young people lit up as they received instructions for their initial work. For them, it was a joy to meet folk singers, or rather “visit their ancestors”, who came in contact with the national matrix through formulaic narration. By taking an interest in the folk customs and way of life they unconsciously revived a dormant sense of joy. The language of folk stories in a miraculous way raised dejected spirits. It transpired that both the young Serb researches (the recorders) and the older ones (the narrators) experienced the same sudden rush of happiness during their encounter with the wealth of the folk language, particularly while talking about Christmas [1], Easter [2] and St George’s Day (*Djurdjevdan*) [3]. Their discoveries in the field were mostly lyric folk songs, oral folklore and certain forms of folk beliefs.⁴

[1] Before, Christmas used to be celebrated differently than it is today. On Christmas Eve the head of the household would rise early and alone or with a son would go into the woods to cut the Yule log and bring it home. He would also bring a bottle of brandy and of wine. Before he cut the Yule log he would cross himself three times and pray to God for health, kiss the wood and then cut it. He would then drink brandy with the other men who had also come to fetch a Yule log.

In the evening they would place the Yule log in front of the house door and the family would say to it: “Good evening, Yule log, you are welcome, God give us good.” Then they would take it and bring it into the house. Inside the house, straw would be spread around

⁴ Essays: Ljubinka Lemajić, *Folklore of Dobrotin Village*; Radmila Ristić, *Folklore of the Villages of Babuš and Skulanevo*; Ana Micić, *Folklore of Ravovci Village*; Mirjana Petković, *Folklore of Gračanica and Surroundings*; Mirjana Stolić, *Folklore of Novo Selo*.

the Yule log and on the floor, and a drill would be used to pierce the Yule log and a bit of the floor and the children would cup their hands to wait for the sawdust from the Yule log and throw it on themselves like a swarm of bees. Then the head of the house would cross himself and put lard on the Yule log, then take a walnut and crack it and place the shells on the Yule log, and so on with any fruit that there happened to be in the house. First the children take a bite and then place it on the Yule log and say to it "To your health, Yule log, yours and ours". When the ritual with the Yule log is finished they "sing around" the house. First goes the head of the family carrying the Yule log, then the mistress of the house with a sifter in her hand (in the sifter she puts wheat and then throws it around the house), followed by the children with nuts, chestnuts, pears, apples. And they imitate a rooster, a hen, a cow, a dog, oxen, and God gaveth bread and "with bread" in the house and cattle in the pen, and prosperity. Afterwards they lay out the meal on the floor and sit down to eat. All the food used to be fasting food then, on Christmas Eve the mistress of the house bakes *krsnik* and *večernja* breads, makes cabbage pie, beans without meat or fat, and then these are eaten, and fruit also. But before the meal everyone has a little lick of salt ammoniac to avoid the sore throat. Afterwards the head of the household roasts meat and the others go to bed. If not they play the game *na parče* – you place a coin on a nail and throw nuts at it, whoever topples the coin gets the coin and the nuts. In the morning the *polaznik* [first foot] comes to the house. He takes a stem from the Yule log and throws it on the fire to burn and if the stem crackles and sprays sparks around he says: "God give us as much money as there are sparks". And he says to the head of the house: "Christ is born, mine host." And the host replies: "Indeed He is born!" So they sit down, and nibble a piece of sparrow meat to break their fast and then they drink wine and brandy. The mistress of the house presents him with fruit, and woollen socks. The first child to rise on Christmas morning is called *ranče*. There is a race to see who will be first to put on new socks which their mother has knitted for them, since the one who puts on his or her shoes first will be first for the whole year. On Christmas morning, when the *polaznik* leaves, we used to go to the fields. A cross was made of the Yule log and they would take a little straw from the house and leave it in the fields for God to grant prosperity and protect the field. And the man would frighten the fruit trees. He would pretend to attack an apple tree with an axe and then ask his wife, or someone else: "Should I cut down this fruit tree?" And they would answer: "No, no, it will bear fruit, it will bear fruit!" And so with every tree. Then he makes crosses from the Yule log, and places them in the windows of the buildings in the yard and on the roof of the house. On that day it is not good to beat the children nor is it good that they fight amongst themselves, nor for the man and wife to fight or beat each other because if they do they will break out in boils. The girls of the house should not crack nuts at

Christmas since they will then break everything around the house. That day the house is not swept at all as long as the red letter days are on the calendar. At Christmas we sing:

Božić, Božić, bata,	Christmas, Father Christmas
Nosi kitu zlata	Bearing a string of gold
Da pozlati vrata	To decorate the door
Sve od boja do boja	All the house from wall to wall
I svu kuću do krova.	And the entire house up to the roof.
U Božića tri nožića	Father Christmas has three little
knives	
Jedan seče sečenicu	One to cut the sausage
Drugi seče pečenicu	The second to cut the meat
Treći seče nekomatnicu.	The third to cut the Christmas
bread.	
Niti jela, niti pila	No food, no drink
Treba čovek da se čuva	Man must take care of himself
Jerbo nema dva trbuva.	Since he doesn't have two stomachs.

(Narrated by Ljubica Stojanović, born in 1933 in Lipljan; recorded by Mirjana Petković, student of Serbian Literature and Language at Gračanica)

[2] At Easter some people colouring eggs on Friday and some on Saturday. We mostly died them red with onion peel. Red was for happiness. Sometimes we used wax to paint the eggs. Mother would take a red egg and paint the children's foreheads and cheeks for them to be red and healthy. For Easter we would tap each other's eggs and the one who broke the other's egg would get the egg. When we gave them to the Shiptars [Albanians] and Turks, I don't know why, they liked them a lot. The same when you gave them some fruit at Christmas

(Narrated by Djordje Artonović, Gračanica; recorded in 2004 by Mirjana Petković, student of Serbian Literature and Language at Gračanica)

[3] When Djurdjevdan came we'd go to pick willows. We'd take pails and adorn them with flowers. For God to adorn and for the cattle to provide a bountiful harvest. In the pails we'd take water from the river and with the willow branches we decorated the whole yard. The decorations were for everything to be fruitful and ample, prosperous. With the water from the river we'd refresh the cattle so that everything would be good and prosperous.

We sang songs:

Djurdevo leto, preleto,	St George's summer, summer,
Djurdevo cveće cvetalo,	St George's flowers have bloomed
Djurdevo moma beraše,	St George's lass has picked them,
U skut ga sebi stavljaje.	And put them in her lap.

Young girls place blue and red flowers under their pillows so that they will dream of whom they are going to marry. On *Djurdevdan*, before the sun comes up, children bathe for their health so that

Djurdjevdan may take away all the bad and bring everything good. Before sunrise we clean the house and throw the dirt in the river. This is how we in Crkvena Vodica celebrated *Djurdjevdan*, but now indeed it is not like that, the young don't respect that custom. (Narrated by Vidosava Bojković-Milić born in 1927) from Crkvena Vodica, married in Skulanevo village, which was completely destroyed after the arrival of the NATO/led KFOR peacekeeping forces, so that today not a single Serb lives there.

(Recorded in 2004 by Radmila Ristić, student of Serbian Literature and Language at Gračanica)

The awakening of individual archetypes (the archetype of the Saviour is dominant) has resulted in the establishment of a certain harmony in the micro-world of the enclave. Entering into the world of customs and traditions is purifying and healing, especially in the physical and mental confinement in which the Serbian people of Kosovo and Metohija now find themselves. The occasional use of folklore has an almost healing power since it reminds us of the time of paradise and the finding of the Saviour archetype.⁵ In folklore from these parts there are images with associations to life, dignity, happiness, universal beauty. Their presence in certain customs represents a return to essential life. It also happens that the KFOR soldiers stationed in the territory of Kosovo and Metohija, find themselves surprised and confused by the kindness of the Serb host, especially if by some chance they happen to find themselves at a Serbian *slava*, or family patron saint's day (among the Serbian people the arrival of a guest had the significance of a visitation from a deity).⁶

In this last instance of folklore from Kosovo and Metohija we find verses which preserve the original language matrix:

St George's summer, summer / St George's flowers have bloomed /
Djurdja lass has picked them; shine on moon until the dawn / don't

⁵ "The wealth of possibilities contained in the Christian message to man, to the nations of the world, more than two thousand years ago, and which are a magnificent challenge to man, have barely been understood, and even less used for the benefit of mankind. Two thousand years ago the face of human history was changed utterly by the powerful setting in motion of a wheel of events. The circular flow of history, seen and experienced in pagan pantheistic philosophy and religion in the pre-Christian world, opens up into a linear path from Alpha to Omega, from God, through Christ, to the Holy Spirit, since Alpha and Omega are one and the same. It cannot be a coincidence that the two greatest human migrations in the known history of the world, one at the beginning of the Middle Ages and one today at the end of the modern age, take place in the Christian age of mankind's culture" (Jerotić 1991: 127).

⁶ As is shown in the customs of many peoples, some actions on the occasion of receiving a guest have a religious significance, since the arrival of a guest once meant the arrival of the deity itself (theophany), cf. *Serbian Dictionary of Mythology*, 91.

go down it's early yet; whoever gives presents to the Lazarke / may
all be healthy in his house; hey, girl, rosy-faced / you are white and
rosy / you are slender and tall.

The resilience of the folk entity which withstands the challenges of time is particularly reflected in the preservation of customs. An obvious confusion and disorientation is observable, which on contact with the original heritage becomes transformed into a sudden radiance which points to a primeval encounter with the "time of paradise".

The importance of a sense of belonging during crucial events in the history of a people is also indicated by the way the narrators usually ended their reminiscences of past times by concluding: "Yes, those were good times!" A radiance was noticeable during their remembrances of holidays and the songs that were sung during that time, although there were also reminiscences of unhappy events:

I had an older brother, then me, my sister, and the youngest brother. My older brother was married, I had a sister-in-law. The Šiptars saw my younger sister and wanted to take her. My sister was fourteen, it was a Monday. The gate to the pen wasn't closed, and someone was shouting. My mother went to see who it was. It was the Arnauts [Albanians] at the gate. They came in. My father closed us in the room, *uf, kuku mene* [ritual expression of grief.] They tell my father: "You know what it is, give us the white girl!" Father says: "I don't have one, I only have this one". And he brings out the small child. They won't have it. And my brother, *kukavac i lastavac* [poor devil], opens the door to see what's happening. One of them takes out a gun and shoots my father and brother. With one bullet, *kukavice mene*. My mother screams: "*Kuku mene*, they've killed my Blago and Mita." The neighbours and family gather round. They shout, so that the dogs will not return. They carried us to the stable, and my mother takes a pitchfork and waits for the Šiptars in case they come back.

(Narrated by Budimka Rašić, born in 1922 in Dobrotin; recorded by Ljubinka Lemajić, student at Gračanica).

An occasional "visit" to the treasure that is the national folklore acquires a new significance, reminding us of Viktor Frankl who speaks of man's constant "unheard cry for meaning".

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Harun Hasani

Migrations of Goranies

From social stimulus to political pressure

The name of Gora, a region situated in the Šar Mountain area, was mentioned back in 1348 in the charter of Serbian Emperor Stefan Dušan.¹ It was a chrysobull, the imperial document bearing a golden seal, by which the Emperor bestowed seven villages in the Gora region to his main endowment — the monastery of the Holy Archangels near Prizren.² Among these villages was Brod, the main Slav settlement in the area. The name of Gora as a distinct geographic area reappeared in the official documents immediately after the Ottoman conquest in the middle of the fifteenth century: Prizren, the main Serb centre in this area was eventually conquered by the Ottomans in 1455.

The District (*nahi*) of Gora (subdivision of a larger Ottoman administrative unit — *vilayet*) was mentioned between 1452 and 1455 in Ottoman *defters* (census records comprising income and property data) as a part of the newly-established *Sanjak* of Prizren. Almost all the villages of Gora, including total numbers of houses, first and family names of house or household owners, individual or in some villages' total income, were recorded in these comprehensive Ottoman documents. First or family names listed in the first Ottoman *defters* are of significant importance as they give reliable evidence on religious, ethnic and linguistic identity of the families in this area, which were predominantly Slavic.³

¹ This paper is a revised version of Hasani 2002.

² Chrysobull of Emperor Stefan Dušan in *Glasnik društva srpske slovesnosti* (Belgrade 1862), 282.

³ Information communicated in 1992 by Mitar Pešikan, member of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts.

Geography and politics

The region of Gora, covering an area of 385.6 sq km, is located in the southernmost mountain gorge of the Republic of Serbia, south of Prizren, between the highest peaks of the mountains Šar, Korab and Koritnik. Its natural and ethnic boundary is the Albanian mountain Galaic.

After the First World War, within the newly established Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, the region of Gora remained part of Serbia as it was the case after the First Balkan War (1912). Nevertheless, the natural ethnic boundaries of Gora had been significantly changed due to the final settlement of a border dispute with Albania. The final border with Albania was decided by “corrections” brought in by the International Commission on Delimitation in 1925. To the disappointment of its inhabitants, the district (*župa*) Gora, inhabited by Goranies (Muslim Slav, Serb-speaking population) of the Šar Mountain region, was divided. Nine predominantly Gorani-inhabited settlements with over 15,000 residents (Borje, Zapod, Košarište, Novo Selo, Orgosta, Orešek, Pakiša, Crneljevo and Šištevac) were allotted to Albania.

The International Commission on Delimitation, dealing with different border disputes, certainly did not take into account the natural and geographical framework, ethnic structure and relevant historical data, nor the rightful wish of the Gorani community to remain united in a single region within a single state — Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. Political interests and strategic aspirations of Italy, exerting decisive influence in the southern Balkans at that time, were dominant in Albania and among Albanians in general (Lutovac 1955: 233).

The Muslim Slav population of Goranies in independent Albania was not recognized as a separate minority. They were denied their distinct identity and collective rights, and their culture and language were exposed to the intense process of assimilation, which led to forced displacement from their villages that had existed in the area for centuries. In that way almost all of their specific cultural, linguistic, and ethnic characteristics were erased forcibly by the central authorities of Albania, while contacts with their native area of Gora was disrupted for decades to come.

Demographic structure: From Ottoman times to the present

The name Goranies (*Goranci*) stands for the Islamized Serbian-Slavic population. Jovan Cvijić (1911:1098) and some other eminent experts in the ethnographic past of the western Balkans considered that the process of Islamization in Gora under Ottoman domination was completed as early as the sixteenth century, with occasional conversions in later centuries. In

contrast, extensive field research done during the nineteenth century by renowned experts for the region (Petar Kostić from Prizren, Ivan Stepanovich Yastrebov, a scholar and Russian consul in Prizren) collecting first-hand evidence, or half a century later (Milisav Lutovac), as well as by other contemporary researchers, describes the process of Islamization in Gora as lasting longer than in other areas of present-day Kosovo and Metohija and being completed in the second half of the nineteenth century.⁴

According to Petar Kostić, a Prizren scholar with family ties in Gora, the last Christian resident, an elderly lady named Božana, was buried in the village of Brod in 1856 because she could not bear to be separated from her already Islamized children. Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries Goranies remained a separate ethnic group in Kosovo and Metohija, with their own distinct culture, specific dialect and folk traditions. Whether in their homeland or abroad they always describe themselves as Goranies, while their local dialect of the Serbian language is usually referred to as “our fellow countrymen’s speech”. They have managed to remain a distinct community in changing political contexts and to preserve their identity.

The Muslim Slav population of Gora was not affected by the so-called Great Migrations that followed a series of wars between Ottomans and Habsburgs waged in the region of Kosovo and Metohija, i.e. southern Serbia, during the late seventeenth century and the subsequent military campaigns that marked the eighteenth-century political history of the region. The Muslim Slav settlements in Šar and Koritnik Mountains remained to be relatively isolated areas, situated away from the main directions of Habsburg military campaigns, Ottoman incursions and frequent post-war reprisals perpetrated by irregular troops of the Ottoman army. This is the main reason why the Slav population of Gora was not forced into mass migrations as were their immediate neighbours, the Christian Orthodox Serbs.

Nevertheless, a certain migratory movement of the Goranies did begin after Islamization and went on in two main directions: 1) towards the prosperous town of Prizren, commercial centre of the region, including the neighbouring Sirinička *župa*; and 2) towards Tetovo, a town on the other side of Šar Mountain (in present-day FYR of Macedonia), and the villages Dolno, Palčište and Tearce. Residents of several villages of Gora, carried by a migration wave, eventually settled down in Urvič and Jelovjane, on the eastern side of Šar Mountain, forming a subgroup of the Gora settlements (Trifunovski 1952: 413).

Another larger migration of Goranies occurred after the First Balkan War, i.e. after the liberation from the Ottomans in late 1912. At that

⁴ Kostić 1928: 47–48; Jastrebov 1879; Lutovac 1955: 269.

time significant numbers of Muslim Slav Goranies left their homes for both socio-economic and political reasons and settled in Ottoman Turkey. The First World War and the military defeat of Serbia in the autumn of 1915 were crucial for the decrease of the Muslim Slav population of Gora.

It was because of the famine and grinding poverty caused by the Second World War that masses of Goranies left their homes anew and went to settle in Prizren and Tetovo. Records show that many of them died of hunger and disease not only in the villages of Gora but on the way to Prizren and Tetovo as well.

After the Second World War many Gorani families left their homeland forever because of the new socio-economic relations and the imposed ideological framework, i.e. political circumstances marked by Soviet-type collectivization and forced expropriation of crops by the communist authorities in their villages. Land was often abandoned and sold very cheaply. One group of families went to the nearest towns: Prizren, Priština, Tetovo, Skopje and Belgrade, while another group emigrated to Turkey. Intensive migratory waves of Goranies caused by economic reasons resumed during the 1950s. Consequently, the 1961 census showed that a number of Gorani settlements had a negative balance in comparison with the results obtained by the 1948 census.

Since their sustainability in Gora did not depend on agriculture but on cattle-breeding as the dominant sector of economy, and therefore on rich pastures, it is believed that the Goranies first started to move abroad when the balance was disturbed between summer pastures on the vast slopes of Šar Mountain and winter quarters in areas alongside the Vardar River. Robbers (*haramije*) and outlaws (*kaçaks*) coming from Albania (the Luma area) were more and more often waiting for shepherds on their way back from winter quarters and were grabbing whole flocks from them. Cattle breeding in the settlements around Gora rapidly decreased whilst the number of emigrants increased. Most of the young male population went away in search for work, very often accompanied by elder men as well as children. As soon as the children turned seven, they would go away with their fathers, relatives or neighbours to become small-scale tradesmen in the streets of the Balkan towns, as recorded both by oral tradition and many folk songs composed by migrant workers:

Come, me Mom, at crack of dawn
 To see off thin tiny seven-year sonny,
 Going to serve them bloody haves,
 Leaving to earn them bloody quid's,
 Far, far from thee, me Mom.

(Hasani 1987:14, transl. Smiljana Naumović)

The first generations of post-Second World War Gorani migrants left their families behind in Gora, while bringing home most of the salaries they earned abroad. Under conditions of typical economic underdevelopment and poverty the work abroad seemed to be a specific way to preserve both the distinct character of Gora and its traditions. The wives of migrant workers did heavy manly work at home, raising children and supporting families at the same time. It should be stressed that Gorani women succeeded to preserve their specific vernacular (a distinct dialect of the Serbian language), as well as epic and lyric popular songs, and the colourful folklore, which contributed significantly to the continuity and preservation of both their culture and identity.

Comparison of the last census statistics (obtained for Gora in 1991), with the previous censuses reveals that interesting and important demographic, ethno-social, economic and other processes are currently ongoing. A great number of elderly households, the rapidly decreasing number of school children and population in general in spite of an equalized birth rate, i.e. of the natural increase of population, lead to the conclusion that in the last decades intensive migration movements have been taking place in Gora.

Migratory processes have continually been going on in Gora for more than fifty years. The migrations were rather intensive in the 1970s when Goranies, often a second generation of guest workers in Western Europe, succeeded in creating more favourable living conditions (apartments, houses) in their 'second homelands' and therefore decided to bring over their family members. They would usually come to Gora for *Djurdjevdan* (St. George's Day festivities lasting six days in the spring) or for the summer holidays. They did not want to work in the fields and to collect crops, work that the migrant workers had used to do in the past. Instead they would come back to spend summer vacations, to visit relatives, and to take part in traditional wedding ceremonies, rich in local rituals. Traditionally, this was the occasion to negotiate arranged marriages in order to prepare wedding ceremonies for the next summer.

Social origin of contemporary migratory waves

One would expected the Gorani migrant to prefer areas or city quarters with Muslim majority population. On the contrary, data collected and presented in Table 1 show that their settlement in urban centres was not motivated by the presence of their fellow Muslims. Economic reasons, better salaries and improved living conditions were of crucial importance for the choice of their residence.

In the former Yugoslavia about 12,000 Goranians distributed in 234 settlements took part in migratory movements. The main migration objectives were to find jobs in the urban centres of Serbia or elsewhere in Yugoslavia. More than 8,552 immigrants settled in it in the course of several decades. More than half of the Gorani migrants (53.8 percent) settled in seventy-nine smaller or bigger urban centers in central Serbia.

More than 4,500 Goranians who stayed in Gora after the 1999 NATO bombing campaign were, in general, considered to be ill-fated. They believed that Kosovo and Metohija, as the southern province of Serbia, remained to be their proper homeland and that this conviction, despite ethnic conflict, could be shared with all other fellow countrymen. Unfortunately, under the pressure of Albanian extremists in the late 1990s, and continuing in the next decade, a significant number of Goranians were forced to leave Kosovo and Metohija and settle permanently in their second homeland abroad. Their private property, including houses, apartments and shops, was often plundered, destroyed, or, in many cases, usurped, mostly by Albanians from the neighbouring Opolje area. The persecuted Goranians, escaping Albanian extremism, were forced to seek shelter with their relatives, friends and neighbours, most often in central Serbia, or in the towns of her northern province, Vojvodina.

Further analysis of the migrants from Gora shows that over 34 percent settled in Belgrade with their families, finding different, frequently demanding, jobs, with the exception of about ten pastry makers who had their own shops. Members of the second and third generation of Gorani settlers in Belgrade are generally fully integrated into Belgrade cosmopolitan society and quite satisfied with their social position. They all consider Belgrade as their second homeland, while in parallel remain devoted to their native Gora region.

Other migration directions led towards other republics of the former Yugoslavia.

It has been verified that all settlements of the Gora region were more or less caught by migratory movements of varied scope and intensity. In the Gorani-inhabited settlements of Brod, Vranište, Leštane, Mlike, Kukuljane, Orčuša, Dikance and Bačka the migratory segment of the population has been significantly larger than the stationary one. For example, over 72 percent of the inhabitants of the village Mlike reside and work in places beyond the boundaries of their native region, 85.4 percent of them in Belgrade. Another striking example is the following: in the village Bačka there had been 116 Gorani-owned houses before the 1999 NATO bombing of Yugoslavia, 94 of which uninhabited and closed for most of the year. And yet, after Albanian-dominated PISG and UNMIK took power in the area from June 1999, of 650 local Gorani residents only 84 remained to reside there.

The region of Gora was also marked by strong and continuous waves of economic migrants to Western European states, most intensive, as elsewhere in Serbia and Yugoslavia, during the late 1960s and early 1970s. Large numbers of guest workers (*gastarbeiters*) from Gora went to temporarily work in other countries.

During the last two decades of the twentieth century, the Albanian Muslim population, previously insignificant in Gora, had intensively been settling in Dragaš, the seat of the Municipality of Gora. It is difficult to identify the accurate number of Muslim Albanians who moved to Dragaš, because they boycotted the last Yugoslav census of 1991. Nevertheless, the number of Albanians in Dragaš doubled in the period following the 1999 NATO bombing, when Kosovo and Metohija was placed under international administration, and Dragaš, until recently populated predominantly by Goranies, was divided into two separate urban areas along ethnic lines: upper Dragaš, where Albanian settlers have recently become the dominant population, and lower Dragaš, where native Goranies have remained to reside.

Return to Gora?

Possibilities of Gorani migrants coming back were and still are quite limited due to the fact that the Municipality of Gora was, and still is, one of the most underdeveloped regions of Serbia. The mass return of the internally displaced Gorani population, scattered all over the rest of Serbia, after the current status talks between Belgrade and Priština are concluded, will largely depend on their future status within Kosovo and Metohija as the substantial autonomous entity of the Republic of Serbia. The basic preconditions for the return of internally displaced Goranies, as for the other non-Albanian population of Kosovo and Metohija, is a stable political framework for their long-term security in contrast to the post-1999 orchestrated, Priština-sponsored discrimination and expulsion by means of both administrative pressure and unrestrained violence. For the Goranies, these conditions include their personal safety, return of private property, and sustainable development. If these conditions, in full compliance with basic human rights and European standards of dignified life within the rule of law, are not met, the majority of Goranies and other non-Albanians will continue to leave because they speak the Serbian language, or the Serb dialect of "our language", and regard Serbia as their native country.

The number of Goranies who have already left their native area or are in the process of leaving is growing, and has reached at this point almost 6,500 persons. Considering that Gora is a region both geopolitically and geostrategically very important to the integrity and sovereignty of the

Republic of Serbia, the full impact of their forced post-1999 migrations is impossible to predict. As a Šar Mountain *župa* at the southernmost tip of Serbia, Gora is presently experiencing tragic historical moments with far-reaching consequences likely to affect the chances of Goranians to preserve and assert their distinct ethnic identity.

A report of Benedict Givier, the head of the OSCE Regional Group for Prizren and its surroundings, published by the *New York Times*,⁵ underlines that “Albanians are allowed to threaten and even kill unprotected members of the national minorities” in Kosovo and Metohija, including Serbs, Roma, and other non-Albanian population, especially “Slavic Muslims — Goranians” in the southernmost part of Serbia.⁶

Since the beginning of her statehood Serbia has been committed to protecting the safety and security of all her citizens, and now, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, she finds herself deprived of that right despite the fact that democracy has been restored in Belgrade in October 2000. The Gora region has during the whole twentieth century shared its destiny with Serbia as the only guarantor of the Gorani ethnic and cultural rights and their only homeland. It has managed to survive down the ages withstanding assaults of Albanian outlaws. Therefore Gora should not be now left to itself or taken as a matter of some political agreements that would lead to its separation from Serbia. By defending themselves throughout history the population of Gora has defended the state of Serbia and its continued existence. This is why Emperor Dušan granted the people of Gora exceptional privileges: “Goranians should not pay tax per head or cattle. They should pay annual tax per household. We order them to do so because they are the greatest devotees of our state and the most faithful element of our population.”

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⁵ *Politika*, 6 November 1999, p. 16.

⁶ Lacking protection from both UNMIK and KFOR, some Goranians have tried to avoid assimilation by declaring themselves as Bosniaks, due to language relatedness, or even as Bulgarians, in order to secure passports enabling them to travel abroad. Nevertheless, most Gorani students in both primary and secondary schools in Gora in 2007, just as in the previous years under international administration, only accept the curricula and textbooks provided by the Republic of Serbia and reject those proposed by Albanian-dominated Provisional Institutions of Self-Government for Kosovo.

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APPENDIX

**Internally Displaced Persons
from the Gora Municipal Area**

According to the data and records of the local United Nations and OSCE missions in Serbia, the current Slav population of Gora (*Goranaci*) is below 7,000, that is to say, more than 10,000 people have left (or were forced to leave) their homes after June 1999 with no immediate prospect of return, indeed, with a trend towards further displacement for reasons of insecurity regarding their personal safety, legal protection and property rights over usurped houses, apartments and shops.

According to a survey conducted by the National Community of Goranians of Kosovo and Metohija, the temporarily displaced persons have found shelter in eighty towns in central Serbia, and twenty towns in her northern province of Vojvodina.

Number of internally displaced Goranians by towns:

1) Belgrade	6750
2) Novi Sad	850
3) Novi Pazar	430
4) Niš	170
5) Subotica	145
6) Pirot	80
7) Kragujevac	86
8) Jagodina	45
9) Zrenjanin	70
10) Trstenik	45
11) Other towns	1900

Based on the survey and registers, children and youth make up a population of 4,500 within this community of internally displaced Goranians. The Project for Return would include the Gorani population currently housed in Belgrade, Novi Pazar and Novi Sad. The number of persons to be encompassed by the Project is:

	Total	Age 8-14	Age 15-18	Age over 18
1) Belgrade	1535	580	365	590
2) Novi Pazar	117	32	27	58
3) Novi Sad	262	84	61	107

Compiled by Dr. Harun Hasani and Ibro Sait

Goranians in the Twentieth Century

	1913	1948	1961	1971	1981	1991
Brod	2624	2248	1604	1488	1578	1588
Bačka	410	222	259	311	381	210
Vraništa	634	755	815	884	924	726
Dikance	450	318	349	392	281	256
Kukaljane	506	543	482	605	777	629
Mljike	326	461	428	455	505	335
Orčuša	376	415	395	431	427	219
Dragaš	224	408	612	694	1088	1008
Krstec (G. and D.)	637	465	475	562	798	832
Lještane	417	537	598	658	755	666
Ljubojšta	316	344	384	541	692	794
Radeša	457	753	837	884	1277	1215
Rapča (G. and D.)	711	889	885	1125	1647	1797
Globočica	607	648	757	813	1012	957
Zlijpotok	914	486	532	568	625	609
Kruševo	405	281	377	513	646	710
Resteljica	2279	1393	1772	2576	3473	4011
Total	12,331	11,166	13,397	16,886	16,580	16,562

Radivoje Mladenović

The Sirinička Župa: Štrpce Municipality
HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND CURRENT FIELD RESEARCH

Geographical, anthropological and historical background

In the second half of April 2003, I spent two weeks in the Sirinić area, the southernmost Serb enclave of Kosovo and Metohija, on the northern slopes of Šar Mountain. My visit there was funded by the project *A Study of Slavic Speech in Kosovo and Metohija* of the Institute for Serbian Language of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Belgrade, and financed by UNESCO. The goal of this project was to record local vernacular material suitable for multidisciplinary research in dialectology, ethnolinguistics, sociolinguistics, sociology, ethnology and musicology. About seventy hours of autochthonous vernacular was recorded on site. Prior to this, I had spent at least ten days in Sirinić in 1990, also gathering language material.¹

The Šar Mountain region, of which Sirinić is a part, is situated between the Prizren basin and the narrow Polog valley and is a region of great anthropological and ethno-cultural complexity. By way of the Lepenac river valley Sirinić is geographically connected to southern Kosovo and further to Skopska Crna Gora, an area of today's northern Macedonia. Two monographs have been published on the dialect of the other two Serbian districts on northern Šar Mountain, Gora and Sredska (Pavlović 1939; Mladenović 2001). My study into the vernacular of the third Serb-inhabited enclave of the Sirinić area is in progress.

The interest in the Sirinić area and its local vernacular (speech) was encouraged by its long history of contact with heterogeneous speech types that were once typologically very different. Thus, there was contact with Serbian and Slav Macedonian speech types, with those of southern Kosovo, of southern Metohija, of the northern Šar Mountain, with south Slavic Macedonian, western Slavic Macedonian and those dialects spoken in the Skopje valley. In addition to the Serb/Slav regions and speeches, there was contact

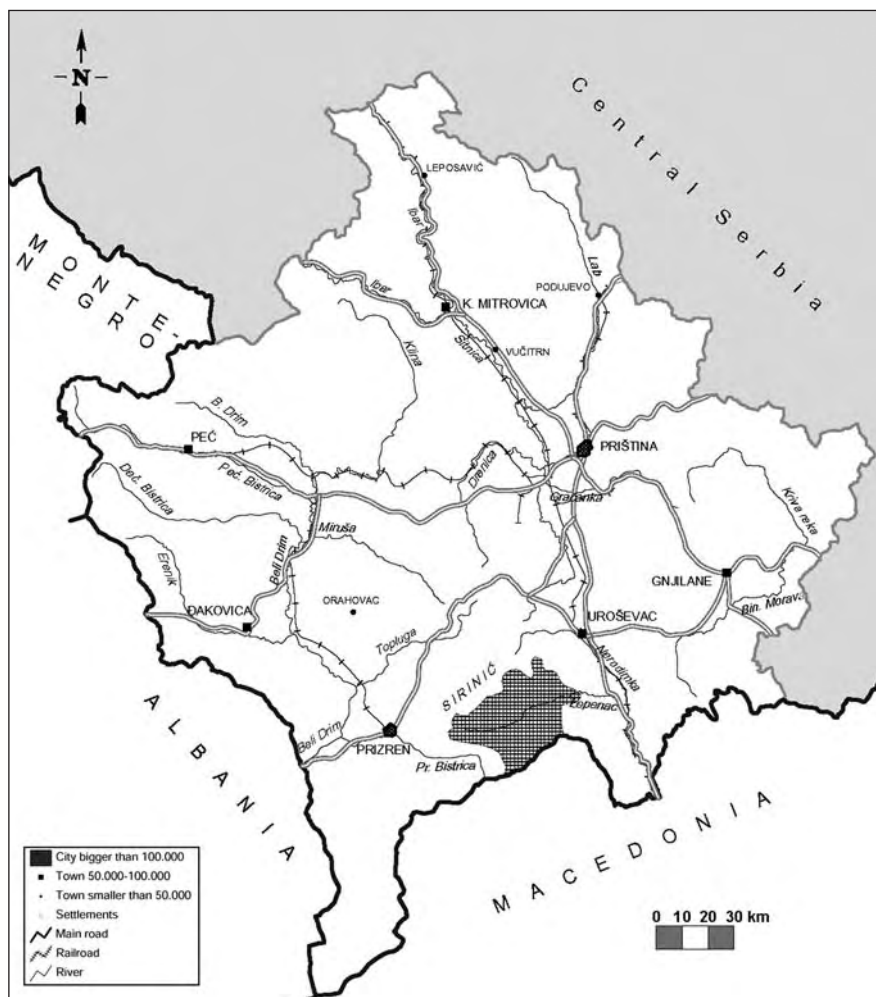
¹ This paper is a revised version of Mladenović 2005.

with non-Slavic speech systems: Vlach (often called Tzintzar) and Albanian vernaculars. This dynamic ethno-linguistic exchange led to the emergence of a specific Serbian vernacular with a singular dialect of its own.

The April 2003 visit aimed to gather sufficient data for a dialectological description of Serbian vernacular of the area known as *Sirinička župa*. The observation of certain segments of language structure in the field was aimed to discover the mechanisms by which a peripheral Serbian speech had evolved. Therefore, questionnaires were used for some of the research subjects. The topics of discussion for recording speech material were channeled towards various forms and aspects of everyday and spiritual culture.

Because of its abundant pastures and plentiful supply of water, the northern Šar Mountain, to which Sirinić belongs, has been inhabited from the earliest times. There were permanent settlements and migrant movement by semi-nomadic or nomadic pastoralists of the ancient Balkans. In summer they moved to Šar, while spending the winters with their herds in milder climate to the south. This semi-nomadic or nomadic life on Šar Mountain disappeared probably in the late nineteenth century. Although the Serbian element by far predominates in Sirinić in both geographical and the clan names (pointing to a predominant Serbian ethnographic and culture), traces of paleo-Balkan (Old or ancient Balkans) Aromanian Vlach-type names indicate the presence on this territory of non-Slavic paleo-Balkan peoples who gradually merged into the Serbian ethno-cultural majority. Since the focus here is not a detailed analysis of the substrate, it is obvious that with non-Slavic elements it is hard to say with certainty which is of diachronic and which of recent origin. The density of Romance onomastics varies in the Slav part of the northern Šar Mountain where Sirinić lies. Most of the confirmation comes from the Muslim Slav-inhabited Gora region southwest of northern Šar, whose geographical hinterland is western Macedonia, where the concentration of non-Slavic onomastics is higher than in the northern Šar Mountain area.

The ethnic and cultural Slav group of Sirinić considers themselves in every way Serbian by both language and identity while *Sirinićans* is their local sub-regional identification, whether their clan name is of Slav or non-Slav origin. Clans whose names bear traces of a non-Slav idiom frequently insist that they were and are indigenous. The ethnic and cultural mixture found in Sirinić is a result of its geographical location. The sites of early Byzantine fortifications point to its importance in communications during medieval times. They were built along an important route which led from Scupi (today's Skopje), crossing the Lepenac river and running parallel to it, along the edge of Šar Mountain, descending to the Lepenac near the present Sirinić village of Gotovuša where there is an early Byzantine fortification locally known as Zidinac. A little to the northwest, the road made a turn towards the Vrbeštica valley. Where the Vrbeštica joins the Lepenac there are traces of another early Byzantine fortification (known locally by two names – Čajlije and Rimsko [Roman] Gradište). Nearby are traces of a Byzantine structure – Grčka (Greek) Gradina. Northwest of Sirinić, traces of a pre-Slav presence have been preserved at a place called Gradac. An ar-



archaeological study of the early Byzantine monuments mentioned above has begun but is not yet complete. The strength of early Byzantine presence in this area, the monuments and the territory warrant more detailed research.

Near Sirinić, in a place called Ravna Gora (about 1530 meters above sea level), between the peak of Mt. Ostrovica and the pass towards Šar Mountain, *gromile* (stone mounds) have been found – the remains of Serb tombstones predating conversion to Christianity. They were discovered about 500 metres from the former Skopje–Sirinić–Prizren road, and are the oldest known Serbian site in this southernmost area of Serbia. They date from the late sixth to the mid-ninth century, when the Serbs eventually embraced Christianity, thus abandoning the cremation of their dead. It is not clear whether the present-day custom in Sirinić of using a sledge to

bring the deceased to the cemetery is a trace of an earlier Slavic burial ritual, or is of more recent date, or whether it owes its origin to the vagaries of the mountainous terrain. The cult of the dead is very prominent in Sirinić.

The established administrative term *Sirinić* has been used throughout this paper, although the district is known by local people as *Siriniće*. *Sirinić* as a district is mentioned for the first time in 1331, when the Serbian King Stefan Dušan, future “Emperor of Serbs and Greeks” bestowed on the Serbian Monastery of Hilandar (Chilandar) on Mount Athos in northern Greece “the mountain of Mlečni Ot, above Sirinić”.² It is also mentioned in other Serbian medieval documents as a Serbian *župa* or district (Emperor Stefan Dušan’s chrysobull to the Holy Archangels of 1355). Dušan endowed the tower (*pyrgos*) of Hilandar Monastery with “a small village above Sirinić”. The oldest known village of this district is Berevce, referred to in three places in a thirteenth-century Serbian gospel book.³

Its widespread name – *Sirinička Župa* (the Sirinić district) – which occurs in local usage and derives from the previous one is of more recent origin. It is the most widespread term used in recent publications on Sirinić. The local name of this district of Šar Mountain is *Siriniće*, with its recognizable morphological pattern, commonly found in the names of hamlets and Ottoman founded quarters or neighbourhoods (*mahalle*) in this district: *Šarkoće*, *Orloće*, *Pećinoće*, *Gradoće* etc. The current local name of *Sirinička Župa* is the same as it was in medieval Serbia. It was in the post-1950s that the whole district was eventually renamed *Štrpce*, after the administrative centre located in the town of Štrpce.

The Serbian population of Sirinić call themselves *Sirinićani* – Sirinićans. The population of the *Sretačka Župa*, Prizren and surrounding areas in southern Metohija call them *Šopovi* – Šops. The name has somewhat pejorative connotation and does not appear as an ethnographonym in the way the Serb population of Sirinić define themselves.⁴

Sirinić is a mountainous district, situated in one of the northeast foothills of Šar Mountain, in the upper course of the Lepenac river. It stretches to the Brodska Klisura (the Brod Canyon), which emerges in the southernmost part of Kosovo. Sirinić spreads out in a west-east direction. To the west, the district is connected to the *Sredačka župa* district by the Prevalac Pass, and to southern Metohija by the valley of the Prizrenska Bistrica. To the east, it is connected to southern Kosovo by the canyon of the Lepenac. To the north and south, the mountains separate Sirinić from other neighbouring regions. To the south are the high ridges of Šar, with a pass at over 2,000 metres. The

² Cf. more in *Zadužbine Kosova* [Endowments of Kosovo], 344.

³ As recorded in *Zadužbine Kosova*, 397.

⁴ The use of the term *Šop* with a primarily pejorative meaning appears in the central Balkans, including regions in Bulgaria, Serbia and Macedonia. Its use in the Kumanovo area is of importance for Sirinićans, since there are some interesting parallels in the vernaculars of these two tiny areas. On the question of *Šopluk* and Šops, cf. the informative but incomplete study by Bulgarian ethnologist P. Hristov (Hristov 2004).

communication with the Prizrenski Podgor area to the north is much better than with the Polog area. Thus most local migration took place between the Sirinić and Podgor areas, in both directions, notably until the mid-nineteenth century when Albanians began to inhabit some of the villages of Podgor. Frequent contact with Serb inhabitants of Prizrenski Podgor, especially the upland villages, resulted in the appearance of certain characteristic language traits in these villages. These features are typical of Sirinić speech and are unknown elsewhere in southern Metohija.

Sirinić encompasses sixteen villages within its geographical boundaries. Travelling from west to east along the right bank of the Lepenac are the following places (see map: Štrpce Municipality, Tourist Map⁵): Sevce, Jažnice, Brezovica (*Brezojca*⁶), Štrpce, Gotovuša, Drajkovce, Firaja, Brod. On the left side of Lepenac are: Vrbeštica, Berevce (*Berejce*), Donja Bitinja (*Dognja Bitinja*), Gornja Bitinja, Sušiče (*Šušiče*), Viča, Koštanjevo and Ižance. The administrative centre is in Štrpce, which is the largest populated area. Most villages are old, confirmed in sources mainly from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Brezovica is the only new village, emerging in the 1960s on the site of former herdsmen's shelters and old mining settlements. As tourism developed, the last three decades of the twentieth century saw the expansion of the Brezovica ski resort; it is there or in the immediate surroundings that most of the hotels and summer homes were built.

In 2003 two-thirds of the Sirinić population were Christian Serbs, and one-third were Muslim Albanians. Serbs inhabit the middle and western part of the district, while Albanians live mainly in the east. The Serbian villages were and still are: Sevce, Jažince, Vrbeštica, Brezovica, Štrpce, Berevce, Gotovuša. Villages with mixed Serbian and Albanian populations are: Donja Bitinja, Gornja Bitinja, Sušiče, Viča, Drajkovce. The Albanian villages are: Firaja, Brod, Ižance, Koštanjevo.

If Serbs and Albanians inhabit the same village, they tend to remain in separate hamlets. These hamlets are sometimes so remote that they could be regarded as separate villages. During the NATO bombing campaign in 1999, most of the Albanians from the mixed villages of central Sirinić area left their hamlets. Nevertheless, they returned in 2003. With the exception of Viča, Serbs remained to be the majority in all ethnically mixed villages of Sirinić.

In April 2003, roughly 13,000 Serbs were living in Sirinić. Until mid-2004, this number had not changed significantly. After the March 2004 Albanian-led pogroms against the local Serb population throughout Kosovo and Metohija, several armed attacks on Serbs followed – mainly

⁵ The map *Štrpce Municipality Tourist Map* is taken from Srećko Nikolić, ed. *Štrpce Municipality, Sirinić District*, Geographical Institute „Jovan Cvijić“, Sp. Ed., Vol. 37/III (Belgrade: Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1991), 148 ff.

⁶ Within the brackets is the local name, if different from the administrative name.

on the road which runs through the Albanian villages of Sirinić. It was the rising concern for their safety that forced Sirinić Serbs to begin moving out from Kosovo and selling their property. The killing of two and wounding of two other Serbs in August 2005 made inter-community relations more difficult, only to become more estranged after an improvised bomb exploded on 17 November 2005 in the central Green Market in Štrpce. In 2006, after numerous ethnically motivated attacks, frequent harassments and overall discrimination by the Kosovo Albanians, most of the Serbs started to rethink their future in an area deprived of basic security and human rights guarantees and were even taking into consideration to leave the Sirinić district for central Serbia.

According to both Serbian medieval sources and Ottoman land registry records, Sirinić was populated by Christian Orthodox Serbs. Practically all the villages of Sirinić which still exist today were mentioned in the first Ottoman census of 1455 (except for Drajkovac and Sušiče), which points to the continuity of the population of this district. According to this census, the largest village was Selce (86 houses), and the smallest was Koštanjevo (20 houses). Mid-fifteenth-century Ottoman *defters* also confirm that Sirinić was a densely populated rural area, mostly by a Christian Orthodox Serb population.

Until the mid-eighteenth century there were no Albanians living in this district. The oldest Albanian clans appear in the villages of Firaja and Gornja Bitinja. Most of today's Muslim Albanian clans came to the Serbian villages of Sirinić from northern Albania during the nineteenth century. The Sirinić Albanians are mostly the descendants of Islamized and eventually Albanized Serbs who, although few in number, passed on the existing place-names to the Albanian newcomers. Until the recent renaming into Albanian, the percentage of place-names of Serb origin in Albanian-inhabited villages was considerable.

The grazing lands, the largest and best of that kind in the Balkans are located on the north side of Šar Mountain, making both an orographic and hydrographic watershed. It is no wonder then that Šar Mountain has been well populated from the earliest times. The name Šar, used locally today, derives from its ancient name of Scardus, as noted by the Greek geographer Strabo at the beginning of the Christian era.

In ancient times, Šar Mountain was inhabited by an Illyrian tribe known as the Dardanians. There are traces of pre-Slavic settlements in Sirinić at several locations. When Serbs moved to the area, the Old Balkan population became partly assimilated, as the preserved non-Serbian toponyms testify. The very name of the district (*Siriniće*) is of Serbian origin. The names of villages, whether populated by Serbs or Albanians, are Serbian. The name of the Albanian village Firaja was *Papračina/Papradina*

(Ferns) until the end of the nineteenth century; while its current name is a translation of the Serbian. In contrast, Albanians kept other Serb names: *Brod* (meaning a ship) is at a river crossing, *Koštanjevo* took its name from the chestnut tree (the local Serbian term is *koštanj*).

A number of toponyms point to a non-Slav substrate, and bear witness to peoples who once lived here. In the name of river *Muržica*, the first part of the word is Romance and the second (*-ica*) is Serbian. The meaning of the name becomes clear when we know that the river flows through an area of dark grey rocks, and when we compare it to local names for domestic animals with a recognizable Vlach substratum: *murga* is a sheep with black fleece; *murdžo* is a dog with grey-black hair. The names of some Serbian clans from Sirinić, such as the Cuculevi, Lingurci, Cumpalevi, Budurini etc. point to a non-Slavic, Vlach substratum. The presence of other elements in the substrate, however, does not dispute the pre-dominance of the Serbian ethno-cultural type in Sirinić.

The presence of heterogeneous anthropologic types may be traced throughout the Sirinić area. The variety of speech speaks of the continuity of different ethno-cultural groups and contact among different populations over a lengthy period of time. Unfortunately, no morphological research has been carried out in Sirinić.

There have been no migrations of any significance to Serb-inhabited Sirinić in recent times. Hence, the present Serbian ethno-cultural type in Sirinić area has been both stable and prolific. As the villages of Sirinić were off the main roads, the area was not greatly depopulated, as other parts of Kosovo and Metohija were during the series of Serb migrations to the Habsburg Empire from neighbouring areas from the late seventeenth to the mid-eighteenth century. Sirinić Serbs moved mainly out of villages in the neighbourhood of southern Kosovo, following the main currents of migratory movements. Albanians settled into these partially emptied villages, which explains why they are to be found mostly in areas in the vicinity of southern Kosovo.

A smaller number of Serbs settled in the Sirinić area, mostly from the border regions of southern Kosovo, southern Metohija and north-western Macedonia, and more rarely, they were coming from the more remote areas of northern Albania and Montenegro (Gusinje, Kuči, Boka). Most of these small-in-number migrations took place between the mid-eighteenth and the second half of the nineteenth century. Apart from Montenegrins, immigrants brought ethno-cultural and language characteristics to Sirinić that did not differ much from the language of the native Serb population. In Sušice, which had a significant number of Montenegrin immigrants, the *ijekavian* variant of Serbian they introduced resisted adjustment to local speech for a pretty long time. Even though by now Sušice has integrated to

a great extent with the rest of Sirinić, it still has not adjusted completely to the local ethno-cultural type.

Travelling to Sirinić and back

Travelling to Sirinić by one of several regular bus lines from Belgrade is interrupted at Merdare checkpoint, where lies the boundary of the Autonomous Province of Kosovo and Metohija, under UNMIK (United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo) control since 1999. That checkpoint, although an administrative boundary inside Serbia, differs little from a border crossing. After the customs control, every Serb convoy must be additionally protected from possible attacks of Albanian extremists by Kosovo Force (KFOR) soldiers. Escorted by KFOR we set off towards the city of Podujevo, cleansed of Serbs already in 1999. The convoy passed it by, and continued towards Miloševo, by-passing the provincial capital Priština, cleansed of Serbs and other non-Albanians in 1999, and stopping outside the Serb-inhabited enclave of Gračanica. The convoy (i.e. bus full of Kosovo Serbs, escorted by KFOR) then took the main road to Kačanik and Skopje until it had passed Uroševac, where it turned on to the road that leads to Sirinić through the Brod Canyon. The military escort remained with us as far as Drajkovac where, following the River Lepenac, begins the Serbian part of Sirinić.

The Albanian-inhabited villages we passed through were usually fairly devoid of people and vehicles. It was obvious that they got out of the way when Serb convoys escorted by KFOR soldiers and armoured vehicles were passing. In some of the gardens of the houses by the road, Albanian children by mime and gesture mimicked cutting the throats of the passengers in the convoy. A few stones were thrown at the bus I was travelling in and towards other vehicles as well. The KFOR soldiers did not react to these provocations.

As a former citizen of Prizren (until 1989), and a frequent traveler throughout Kosovo and Metohija, I noticed the striking change in the landscape that had taken place between 1999 and 2003. The burnt-out villages and neighbourhoods that were Serb-inhabited up to mid-June 1999, all became abandoned. The abandoned houses of the expelled Kosovo Serbs testified to centuries-old Serbian-Albanian misunderstandings, rivalries and antagonism. While the burnt Serbian villages remained deserted, in the burnt-out Albanian villages new houses were rebuilt from the ashes – most of them without whitewashed façades. I could see from the bus many Albanian-owned new buildings of different sizes, intended for different purposes and with Albanian flags.

The stretch of the main road to Skopje from Priština to Uroševac was particularly different. Former crop fields were after June 1999 transformed into one long street. Apart from houses, there are hotels, motels, petrol stations, shopping malls. The buildings were for the most part empty and in the gaps between, cows and sheep were frequently to be seen, grazing contentedly. Almost all the larger buildings were flying the flags of Albania in the first place, showing that Albania comes first, with occasionally US, German, NATO or EU flags as well, covering total disregard for both urban planning and environmental protection.

When the Serb convoy turned off the main road onto the road leading to Sirinić through the Brod Canyon a tense silence was felt in the bus. There had been many armed attacks on convoys carrying Serbs in this part of the canyon after June 1999, even when they were under KFOR escort. Fear of a possible Albanian attack was more than visible among the passengers.

In Sirinić itself, by the same road the convoy took, near the Albanian village of Firaja, the so-called Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) had built a monument to their fallen, a familiar iconography with flags of neighbouring Albania. As the convoy passed, there were about a hundred Albanian primary-school children who had been brought there to visit the monument.

I did not return to Belgrade the same way but went via eastern Kosovo, passing the Gnjilane area through Klokot, Gnjilane, Končulj and further into central Serbia – to Bujanovac in the Preševo basin. There was no KFOR escort on this road,⁷ although the *Niš-Express* bus kept its large Serbian logo. Frequent traffic jams in the overpopulated residential areas are due to a high birth-rate and the influx of the rural Albanian population into the urban areas. At Gnjilane, after 1999 gradually cleansed of its Serbian population, the bus was halted for twenty minutes and encircled by a group of hostile Albanians threatening us with frightening verbal provocations.

Sirinić can also be reached from Prizren via the Sredačka Župa district. Since the upper (Serbian) part of Sirinić and the Sredačka Župa are populated by Christian Serbs and Muslim Slavs, local inter-ethnic communication, given the fact that the two communities speak the same language and share the fear of Albanian extremists, is considered as vital, while mutual relations have remained decent and almost friendly.

⁷ At the beginning of 2004, the obligatory KFOR escort from the Merdare checkpoint direction was also abolished, leaving Serb passengers to travel, security-wise, on their own responsibility.

Sirinić, April 2003

At the hotel *Narcis* on Brezovica most of the guests were foreigners, members of various organizations and UN contingents. There were also some Albanian tourists enjoying the natural splendour of Sirinić. As I was told by the hotel staff, they hosted numerous meetings attended by Kosovo Albanians and members of international organizations stationed in Kosovo. Albanians were in and passing through the Serbian part of Sirinić without meeting any inconvenience.

The all-Serbian hotel staff was struggling with short-term hot water supplies and unpredictable shortages of electricity often ten hours long. Since the hotel had a power unit, this inconvenience was mitigated. The heating was satisfactory, the food well-prepared, the service adequate. It was noticeable that foreigners avoided eating green salad and apples. A Ukrainian KFOR officer advised me to avoid eating food that might have come from the Kosovo area because of the increased radiation caused by tons of cluster bombs with depleted uranium that were used during the 1999 bombing campaign.

I spent most of my time spent in Serbian villages and hamlets, recording language material. The hotel staff arranged transport to the more remote places, while to villages not far from Brezovica I went on foot, aware of the danger of ethnically motivated attacks by Albanian extremists. Although the road through Sirinić from the Uroševac, Skopje and Prizren direction was reopened, there were several ethnically motivated murders of local Serbs by the Albanian extremists between June 1999 and April 2003. Despite the discomfort due to the security concerns, I walked the ten kilometres between the westernmost village of Sevice and the hotel at Brezovica, along the foaming Lepenac River, on a sunny day under the deep blue sky of the mountain. I found the local Serb population very frightened, fearing ethnically motivated attacks, and reluctant to leave inhabited areas without military escort. Driving at night through this area was avoided even by members of the fully armed KFOR contingent.

This uncertainty means that most of the farming fields and meadows in the Serbian part of Sirinić are abandoned and overgrown with brush. Local Serb farmers do not dare to work in their own land unless they are located next to the villages. A KFOR military base manned mainly by Ukrainian soldiers had taken over the hotel *Breza*, not far from the *Narcis*. The soldiers behaved well and did not interfere much in the life of the Serb Sirinićans. Visible was the Kosovo police force that included Albanians and local Serbs as well.

How do people live in the Serbian part of Sirinić? There was no major migration from the district in 1999. Nevertheless a certain number of displaced Serbs moved into this area from the surrounding regions: the



Sredračka Župa, Prizren, Uroševac and from villages in southern Kosovo and southern Metohija. According to current estimates, the number of displaced Serbs varies from 750 to 1250, including fourteen Krajina Serb refugees from Croatia and one extended Roma family. Serbs were mainly placed in four collective centres for internally displaced persons. Some of the Serb IDPs were settled in rented apartments and houses, while a small number of these Serbs found refuge in summer houses located above the mountain of Brezovica.⁸

Hotels and holiday villages belonging to Serbian state-owned companies from Kosovo and Metohija have been turned into refugee centres. Life in them is difficult: too many of the sad and desperate, the sullenly staring, the red-eyed, those whose voices break when they speak, crammed into a space too small for them. During my many pre-1999 visits in Sirinić and Brezovica both the refugee centres and the displaced persons inhabiting them were miserable and prematurely aged.

According to information from March 2006, living conditions in the collective centres for internally displaced persons have not improved. On the contrary, they have had no electricity or heating since December 2005. In this way, the Albanian-dominated Kosovo institutions are trying to force out the Serb IDPs in order to sell off the hotels and resorts.

⁸ According to data from March 2005, Serbian owners sold these summerhouses to Albanians, and the internally displaced Serbs were eventually compelled to leave the area.

What are the living conditions of the Serbs in Sirinić? The metal industry in Štrpce ceased to function in the early 1990s. Only those whose salaries were financed from the Serbian state budget were paid a minimal wage. Nevertheless, in order to encourage Serbs to stay in the area, the wages for Serb state employees were doubled. In 2003, both Serb medical doctors, and elementary and secondary school teachers were paid three times more than their colleagues in Kragujevac or Belgrade. Two-thirds of the salary came from the budget of the Republic of Serbia, while the remaining third was supplemented by UNMIK.

As in the decades prior to 1999, most Sirinićans work in tourism and the hotel business. Apart from large hotels such as the *Narcis* or the *Molika*, there are also smaller private tourist facilities, some built after 1999. More comfortable buildings, mainly in Štrpce, have been rented to various international organizations, and for the same renting purpose (to be rented solely to internationals) several new buildings owned by the local Serbs were recently constructed in Štrpce. However, there were no construction sites for anything of a different nature, which reflects widespread insecurity among the Serb community.

Until the mid-1990s there were many local and foreign guests to be seen skiing in Sirinić. The number was sharply reduced during and after the 1999 NATO bombing. Many foreigners are back, this time solely consisting of the members of the UN mission. Nevertheless, more Albanians are on the ski slopes than prior to June 1999. In January 2004, the first three groups of tourists from Belgrade had managed to come in Sirinić. In the meantime, according to data from March 2006, the Albanian-controlled Kosovo government as a part of PISG has been preparing to pursue the privatization of Serb state-owned tourist facilities, with Albanians interested in buying the important Inex Ski Centre. Albanians, as the new masters in the area, have bought up almost all the summer houses along the river Muržica from their previous Serb owners, either expelled from state-owned companies or simply displaced from Kosovo and Metohija. Therefore, some Sirinićans are in the trade business. Their well-supplied shops offer prices lower than in Belgrade since they pay no tax. Modest trading has been re-established with Albanians from nearby areas, in towns from which the Serbs were driven out in 1999.

Until the 1950s, the main branch of the economy in Sirinić was herding. Very few people are still engaged in this while the number of sheep has been significantly reduced since 1999. The reason is that – due to Albanian violence – grazing lands have been reduced to the land within a village, and hay is no longer cut in remote meadows. During my visit, there were hardly any *bačilo* left in the Serbian part of Sirinić. These were groups of Old Bal-

kan-type mountain huts where sheep were kept and milk processed in the traditional way.

Much of Sirinić is covered in forest, so barrel making, cart making and charcoal burning used to be highly developed business, while today, it is only the legends that are left. In the vicinity of Jažince and Vrbeštica traces of old chromium mines are still visible. The mines were closed down several decades ago.

During the nineteenth century, due to the decreasing number of herds caused by increasing violence in Ottoman Turkey-in-Europe and attacks by Albanian bandits from neighbouring areas, including the Albanian-inhabited area of Luma, some Sirinićans turned to migrant labour during the nineteenth century. They went to nearby areas as tailors (*terzija*), masons and diggers. In the late nineteenth century they began emigrating to Romania and both Americas. During the last decades of the twentieth century they often went to Western Europe looking for work. The inhabitants of Kosovo, including the population of Sirinić, receive financial aid from UNMIK according to certain criteria.

Local institutions in Sirinić

a) A dual system of payment transactions functioned in Sirinić – one under the Republic of Serbia, the other under the provisional Kosovo institutions. People received their pensions as usual from the Pensions Fund of the Republic of Serbia, with both Serb dinars and euros in circulation.

b) There was a rift among Serbs in Sirinić over the functioning of the local authorities. The real power resides in the hands of those Serbs who participated in Kosovo local elections of 2002. The others, lacking real competence, were in power before June 1999.

The Štrpce Municipal Assembly was elected before June 1999. Albanians boycotted these elections. After June 1999, new local elections organized by UNMIK were, in turn, boycotted by the Serbs. The Albanians, although a minority in the municipality, went to the polls and won all municipal seats. A major disagreement blew up between UNMIK and local Serbs who would not allow the Albanian representatives to enter the Assembly building. At the same time, those holding power prior to June 1999 remained in office.

In order to ease tensions, UNMIK held local elections in 2002. The Serbs of Sirinić took part, won two-thirds of the seats in Štrpce Municipal Assembly and thus hold the reins of power at local level. However, some of those elected prior to June 1999 refused to recognize the new elections, which led to a split among the Serbs. So it happened that in January 2004,

supporters of both local authorities celebrated *Savindan* (the feast of St. Sava) in the same hall of the local cultural centre at the same time, but on opposite sides of the room. Squabbles of this kind are not rare.

c) In the Serb-inhabited parts of Sirinić, teaching in schools follows the curriculum and textbooks of the Republic of Serbia, and recognized school documents and administration remain within the same system. The number of pupils in primary and secondary schools is sufficient. Requests by the temporary administration and UNMIK to confine teaching to the Kosovo educational system are ignored. Some of the teaching staff are displaced persons from the surrounding Serb-inhabited regions of Kosovo, bringing the level of qualification higher than it was in 1999.

Living as they do within a relatively compact unit of Serbian villages and relying to the west on the Serbian (Slav) district of the Sredačka *Župa*, Sirinićans live in better conditions than Serbs in other parts of Kosovo and Metohija, and certainly better than Serbs in enclaves in Metohija. However, the anxiety caused by the ghetto-like situation is present in Sirinić as well. Reluctantly, they speak of constant fear. There is bitterness over some Sirinićans who died because the nearest medical assistance was in the Serb-hospital of Kosovska Mitrovica. The only safe way to reach Mitrovica, without being harassed or attacked by the Albanian extremists was and remains to be with a KFOR escort. A week after my arrival in Sirinić a thirty-year-old woman was buried. She had died in childbirth because the KFOR vehicle that was supposed to take her to Mitrovica came about ten hours after receiving the call. Serbs are frustrated because they cannot freely move around outside Sirinić. Frustration and unemployment have increased the number of alcoholics and neurotics in this district.

In April 2003, the Sirinićans did not want to move out and settle elsewhere. The Serbs from this area were ready to fight for both their human and collective rights, protecting their very survival in the area. They often expected more assistance and additional understanding from their fellow countrymen in other parts of Serbia. Their expectations were sometimes unrealistic, while sometimes, due to the ghetto-situation they reacted very emotionally.

In the meantime, after several Serbs had been attacked, wounded and murdered, and after bombs had been planted, the number of those who believed that survival was possible decreased. They said that if Kosovo became an independent state, they would collectively move out. Their hopes are that the local Serbian administration will remain in any future arrangements for Kosovo status within the territorial integrity of the Republic of Serbia.

Villages and buildings

In Sirinić, villages were built along the River Lepenac or its streams. The houses are usually clustered together, often with detached *mahalas*. Wooden, or less frequently wattle-and-daub, houses were once predominant. Roofs were often thatched. Such houses no longer exist in Sirinić. Since the great fires of the nineteenth century, stone houses began replacing wooden ones. Traces of earlier wattle-and-daub homes can be found on the village outskirts, mainly in upland areas. They are used today as outhouses for sheep and goats or for storing hay. Local water supply systems have been installed in all villages in Sirinić, both Serbian and Albanian.

Apart from houses, there are also some small sheds for farm animals within the village boundaries, usually within the same yard as the house. Outside the villages are long cow-byres where greater numbers of cattle used to be kept. Many families had a *bačilo*, places where animals were kept in summer. On a *bačilo*, there was a *bačevina* (*bačejnja*), a building in which the *bačica* made cheese. Meadows and fields are fertilised by rotating stock from one to another (“the mobile pen”). Each flock had several shepherd dogs – the local *Šarplaninac* breed.

Since hunting was banned in 1999, there has been an increase in the number of wolves, foxes and wild boars. Sirinićans say that there are more bears too. In Sušić, I came across two bear cubs, three or four months old, frolicking freely in a garden with some children. Members of this household claimed that the mother had walked off and left the helpless offspring who were only a few days old. Whether the mother had really abandoned her offspring or something else happened, I do not know. UNMIK would not allow the cubs to be taken out of Kosovo and Metohija. In November 2003, they were still in Sušić. In mid-2005, they were purchased and taken to a private zoo near Priština.

Studies of Sirinić

Sirinić has been researched from the geographical, anthropological, geographical, ethnographic, archaeological and linguistic aspects. However, in view of the wealth of ethnographic material, the ethno-cultural periphery and the fact that this district has been well populated since ancient times, it is not getting the attention it deserves. Among earlier studies of this district, the works of the nineteenth-century Russian scholar and diplomat Ivan Stepanovich Yastrebov are of exceptional importance. In the second half of the nineteenth century he was stationed in Prizren as Russian consul to Ottoman Turkey-in-Europe. During his stay, he visited Sirinić and provided ethnographic data on the district in the nineteenth century in several

books: *Obychai i pesni turetskikh Serbov* (Yastrebov 1886), *Staraya Serbiya i Albaniya* (Yastrebov 1904), *Information for a History of the Serbian Church* (Yastrebov 1879). Research by Jovan Cvijić (Cvijić 1911) and Atanasije Urošević (Urošević 1948) has helped understand the geographical and anthropogeographical processes. As part of the “Štrpce Municipality, Sirinić District” project (Štrpce 1990), The *Jovan Cvijić* Geographical Institute of the Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences dealt, among other things, with the demographic development, social characteristics and socio-economic development of Sirinić. Mileta Bukumirić (Bukumirić 1984) has gathered and edited material on contemporary onomastics in Sirinić. Important data on the onomastics and ethnic structure of Sirinić in the mid-fifteenth century can be found in a land registry census of the Branković Province of 1455 (*Popis (Census) 1455*). M. Pešikan (Pešikan 1984) made another valuable contribution to historical onomastics, with data on Sirinić in the Middle Ages. The most complete historical and geographical description with information on villages and people, the anthroponomy and toponyms of the Branković Province in 1455 can be found in *Naselja i stanovništvo oblasti Brankovića 1455. godine* (Villages and People of the Branković Realm in 1455).

Not many authors have studied the speech of Sirinić. In approximately fifteen papers, the present author has written on certain features of the language. However, only the forthcoming monograph can give a true picture of this speech.

Sirinić speech

The speech spoken by any group bears witness to its passage through various stages of historical, ethnographical, ethnic and social life. It is not the intention of this work to give a detailed description of Sirinić speech. Hence the information it contains is confined to its general dialect composition, including its relation to other speech types in the surroundings.

a) Sirinić lies along the linguistic and ethnic border of the Serbian people and their language. A geographical barrier of high mountain ranges along the border of what is now the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) has made contact between Sirinić and the nearby Slav-Macedonian areas difficult, but not impossible. However, an earlier ethno-language connection between Sirinić and the border regions of north and northwest Macedonia is identifiable in regions and speech types in Macedonia where the inherent connection to the Serbian language and people is obvious. These regions are primarily Skopska Crna Gora, the Kumanovo

region and Donji (Lower) Polog. The link through the Lepenac river valley to the speech of Skopska Crna Gora is of special importance.

b) The geographical, economic, ethnographic and linguistic connection to neighbouring Serbian regions on Šar Mountain, in southern Metohija and southern Kosovo had most influence on the forming of Sirinić speech. Hence, a speech type was formed that to a great extent resembled surrounding types of Serbian speech, while containing faint traces of the contiguous Serbian-type Macedonian. The general pattern of Serbian speech in Sirinić confirms the existence of a large south-Slav ethno-cultural and linguistic area in this part of the Balkans more interrelated in the past than it is today.

c) Despite traces of the influence that the Serbian language had on neighbouring Slav-Macedonian idioms, the Serbian base of Sirinić speech is specific and almost unique with its characteristics. In the roots of words it retains the inherited Serbian patterns. Local migrations and contacts with southern Kosovo meant the appearance of certain traits in Sirinić speech that are not characteristic of southern Metohija, but exist in southern Kosovo. The Sirinić speech differs in some of its features from the surrounding Serbian types of Metohija and is more similar to those of the southern Šar Mountain.

d) Since Sirinić is at the very edge of Serbia and the southernmost border of the Serbian language (with several Serbian speeches in today's northern and western FYROM), some archaic characteristics, enhanced by a certain geographic isolation from neighbouring areas have survived that cannot be found in most other Serbian speech types. Traces of different migrant groups who moved towards Sirinić may be heard in the speech of this region.

The Serbian character of Sirinić speech is unquestionable. When compared with contiguous and more distant types, however, it is clear that non-Slavic types have had an influence in Sirinić, as on other Serbian speech types in this part of the Serbian ethno-linguistic area. These non-Slavic types are mainly Balkan-Romance, while some minor elements may have come from Albanian Geghs speech types of northern Albania.

In the basic structure of its dialect, Sirinić speech is the Serbian language of Prizren and the wider south Morava River region, with innovations characteristic of Šar Mountain. There are linguistic differences within Sirinić itself. They are the result of local migrations and immigration into the area from far and near. Hence, two trends are evident in Sirinić speech: one from the villages on the lower reaches of the River Lepenac and another from the more peripheral upland villages. These differences are not so numerous or pronounced as to separate Sirinić speech (vernacular) into

two different types, but they are sufficient to make an obvious grouping of villages by linguistic elements.

Some ethnographic details

The visit to Sirinić discovered a wealth of local Serb tradition related to different aspects of Christian-inspired spiritual and everyday life. Further research will provide answers to many questions on the emergence of the current ethno-cultural matrix. Nowhere in the surrounding areas is the traditional culture of the Serbs as diverse and well-preserved as it is in Sirinić.

Sirinić is not compact either linguistically or ethnographically. There is a parallelism of ethnographic and linguistic coincidence.

a) The language material for the project “Study of Slavic Speech in Kosovo and Metohija”, centred on a Serbian speech, was intended for an interdisciplinary study of Sirinić, so recordings were made of speech referring to different areas of everyday life and spiritual culture. This channeling of our research yielded some interesting data. Two ethnographic details testify to the anthropologic-geographic peculiarities of certain villages. One is the way of warding off hailstorms [*krušac*]. In Sirinić, but not in Sušić, a low table [*sofra*] is taken outside and a spoon [*ložica*] and a dish with food [*ćanak, kaljanica*] are placed on it. The demon is called upon to eat in order to propitiate him. The first-born child lies down in the hail and takes a piece of it. This form of warding off hailstorms is typical of southern Kosovo. In Sušiće, however, they shoot at the hail-carrying cloud so as to kill the demon (people in Sušiće say: “We brought that from Montenegro”). Another detail has to do with taking the *bride* from her parents’ home. In Sušiće, the bride must not turn around and look at her parents’ house so as not to be chased out of her new family and returned to her parents. In the rest of Sirinić, the bride should turn around so as not to break off the connection to her parents’ house, and so that the offspring may resemble members of her family.

b) There are about ten families of the Serb Ljubići clan in Štrpce. Ancestors of the Ljubići moved from the Šar Mountain district of Gora in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. They kept their *slava* or patron saint’s day, the only ones in Sirinić to celebrate St. Barbara (*Sv. Varvara*). The Ljubići completely adopted the Štrpce vernacular. An ethnographic micro-detail, however, confirms their Gora origin: when there is a hailstorm (*krušac*), only members of the Ljubići clan bring out an axe in front of the house and place it with the blade facing up. In the surrounding districts, this is done only in Gora, a neighbouring area settled by Muslim Slav Serb-speaking population with its own culture and traditions. Customs

related to the calendar have survived in Sirinić much better than in the adjacent Serb-inhabited areas of Metohija and Kosovo.

Sirinić is known for the ritual processions called *lazaricas*. Compared with the Sredačka Župa district, Prizrenski Podgor and southern Kosovo, the procession and singing are different, while the words are somewhat similar. In Sirinić itself there are differences in the procession and singing between the upper and lower villages along the River Lepenac. This difference is followed by a number of distinguishing linguistic features.

Women's dress in Sirinić is a mixture of Serb costumes from the Šar Mountain and southern Kosovo. The influence of southern Kosovo dress is manifested by the introduction of black skirts, especially in the lower villages. Women no longer wear traditional dress, even though many older Sirinićan women still keep their traditional costumes to wear on special occasions. Men wear fairly conventional dress on all occasions, without any particular local features. Until the Balkan Wars (1912–13), to give themselves improved freedom of movement, within hostile environment, Serb men in Sirinić and in other adjacent areas had taken to wearing a costume similar to the Albanian, with pronounced elements of Balkan shepherd dress. After the Balkan Wars, when most of Kosovo, and the Prizren area, including Sirinić, reunited with Serbia, conventional European-type suits were accepted as a mark of their Serb identity as well as to further distance them from the Muslim Albanians and their Ottoman and Oriental habits.

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Mirjana Menković

The Enclave of Velika Hoča

*CULTURAL HERITAGE AS A MEANS OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC
RENEWAL AND PRESERVATION OF SERBIAN IDENTITY
IN KOSOVO AND METOHİJA*

Introduction

Velika Hoča¹ is one of the oldest Serbian villages in the Beli Drim River basin; in 2007, it is the largest Serbian enclave in this part of Metohija, an area almost completely ethnically cleansed of Serbs by Albanian extremists after 10 June 1999, from Istok and Peć to Djakovica and Prizren and

¹ Sources of information used in this paper: *Velika Hoča: ranija istraživanja*, Beograd: Republički zavod za zaštitu prirode Srbije, 1995; *Kulturno nasleđe Kosova i Metohije*, Beograd: RZZSK, 1999; *Project Urgent Protection of Natural and Cultural Heritage in Metohija: Final Report*, Belgrade: MNEMOSYNE, 2003 (with parallel Serbian and English texts); *Velika Hoča: The Pearl of Metohija*, Belgrade: MNEMOSYNE, 2003; *Guidance for the Development of Legislation and Administration Systems in the field of Cultural Heritage*, Council of Europe, 2000; Mnemosyne's documentation. Velika Hoča has been a subject of research by Mnemosyne's experts since 200. The results of the project *Urgent Protection of Natural and Cultural Heritage in Metohija* were presented to both domestic and international audience in April 2003, has been continued. Velika Hoča has also been a subject of ethnographic research undertaken by Department of Ethnology and Anthropology of the Faculty of Philosophy in Belgrade during 2003–2004 in cooperation with Mnemosyne. The results of this research, as well as older and more recent studies dealing with different aspects of this village have also been taken into consideration. Cf. G. Jovanović, *Kosovo i Metohija u svetlu etnologije: prilog bibliografiji*, Beograd: Etnografski muzej, 2004. We also used four reports submitted during 2006 to responsible institutions by Mr Dejan Baljošević, coordinator for the Municipality of Oraovac and the village of Velika Hoča. As a curator with the Ethnographic Museum in Belgrade and a member of Mnemosyne, the author of this paper was involved in field research in Kosovo and Metohija during past twenty years. The city of Prizren and the village of Velika Hoča have been the subject of a separate research project the results of which will be published in a two-volume study *Bases for Policy and Planning Documents for Velika Hoča* (Mnemosyne in cooperation with the Coordination Centre of the Republic of Serbia for Kosovo and Metohija, 2007).

their hinterland towards Drenica.² Velika Hoča is situated at a distance of six kilometres south-east of the little town of Orahovac, and twenty-five kilometres from Prizren, a historic city ethnically cleansed of Serbs already in mid-1999. Gentle slopes of the surrounding hills, favourable altitude and mild climate along the Beli Drim River valley have created a centuries-long setting for strong agricultural activities and have had beneficial effects in particular on vine-growing hills covering more than 160 hectares.

After the latest wave of forced migrations, large-scale destruction during the 1999 NATO bombing and the arrival of the UN Mission to this part of the Republic of Serbia's territory, the Serbian enclave of Velika Hoča has remained a special case. This is the only Serb-populated village in Metohija with fourteen old Serb churches decorated with frescoes from the thirteenth to eighteenth century, either fully preserved or in ruins.

Apart from Velika Hoča, there were only two villages on the edge of Metohija, in Prizrenski Podgor, with thirteen or fourteen churches: Mušutište near Suva Reka, and Ljubižda adjacent to Prizren's eastern rim. The church of the Mother of God *Hodegetria* in Mušutište (with the preserved donor's inscription dating from 1315) was mined by Albanian terrorists on several occasions and finally razed to the ground in July 1999. Some of the churches in Ljubižda were swept away and it is now very difficult to identify the sites at which they once stood (for example, the church of St John).³

The only refuge for the Serbs from Metohija is Velika Hoča with its numerous churches – St Nicholas', St John the Baptist's, St Luke's, St

² "Soon after the settlement of the Slavs in the sixth and seventh centuries, Metohija developed into one of the most desirable and the most densely populated Serbian medieval lands. The crucial role in the rapid assimilation of the old [pre-Slav] Balkan ethnic substrate into the Serbian ethnos was played not only by the numeric predomination of the Serbs but also by the powerful development of the Serbian state and Serbian Orthodox Christian civilization based upon Byzantine tradition and exposed to certain western influences spreading for centuries from the Mediterranean and the Adriatic coast towards Metohija and particularly towards the Prizren region. Apart from that, there were other important means that contributed to the development of Serbian material and spiritual culture; these include an economy and culture based on farming, order in villages and districts (*župe*), regulated proprietary and class relations, the rise of rich monastery estates – principally those belonging to Dečani and the monastery of the Holy Archangels near Prizren, a dense network of permanent settlements concentrated in Prizrenski Podgor, Podrima, Hvosno, the surroundings of the monastery of Dečani, and Pečki Podgor. In the period of the most vigorous development of medieval Serbia, Metohija with Kosovo became her nucleus, ethno-cultural, spiritual, economic, demographic and political." (M. Radovanović, *Kosovo i Metohija u Republici Srbiji i Saveznoj Republici Jugoslaviji* (Valjevo 1993)

³ *Project Urgent Protection of Natural and Cultural Heritage in Metohija: Final Report* (Belgrade: Mnemosyne, 2003).

Stephen's, St Elias', St Peter's, St Anne's and St Cyriaca's; the remains of the churches of Holy Archangel Gabriel, St Paraskeve of Tirnovo and the Mother of God; the ruins of the church dedicated to an unknown saint at Dugi Rid, as well as the churches of St Basil and St Saviour, whose location has not been identified, and the monastery of Izbište, deserted and destroyed a long time ago.

In order to get the picture of the centuries-long significance of Velika Hoča and its still considerable natural and religious heritage and to outline a proper scheme for its protection in the future, it is necessary to make a brief outline of the development of the village and describe the present situation in the enclave and among its remaining population.

The village of Velika Hoča

The village of Velika Hoča, together with eight other villages, was first mentioned in a twelfth-century charter issued by *veliki župan* Stefan Nemanja – namely, in 1198, when he established the “*Metochion* of Hoča” and granted it to the monastery of Hilandar on Mt. Athos.⁴ In that charter, the grand župan specified the number of villages granted to the monastery and listed them mentioning also Velika Hoča, where he “planted two vineyards”. The *metochion* was further enlarged when King Uroš I Nemanjić (1243–1276), the grandson of Nemanja, granted to Hilandar two more villages, one of which is present-day Zočište, four-kilometres from Velika Hoča.

The two Hilandar charters of Serbian King Stefan Uroš II Milutin (1282–1321) confirmed the donations of his father and contributed new estates to the monastery, whereas on 8 February 1327, King Stefan Uroš III Dečanski granted to the monastery of Hilandar two villages in the immediate surroundings of Velika Hoča. By King Dušan's charter of 1342, an estate near Sofia in Bulgaria was granted for lifelong possession to Jovan, the *oconom* of Hilandar's *metochion* in Velika Hoča and its farms, vineyards, wine-cellars and lodgings. New grants of land came from a high royal dignity, *čelnik* Miloš Pović, the lord of Zvečan, during the reign of Emperor Stefan Dušan. It was on 15 October 1406 that Lady Mara, the widow of Vuk Branković, with her sons (future despots of Serbia) Djurdj, Grgur and Lazar, made an important financial contribution to Velika Hoča, charged as tax on the “marketplace in Hoča”.

As for the status of the village, the situation remained unchanged until the Ottoman conquest in the mid-fifteenth century. The fact that it was Hilandar's *metochion* played a crucial role in its further development. The great part of the valley of the Beli Drim (White Drin) River was the

⁴ Cf. *Velika Hoča: The Pearl of Metohija* (Belgrade: Mnemosyne, 2003), 24–36.

property of this monastery, and owing to its favourable geographic position and the vicinity of the medieval road from Prizren to Ras, the village soon became the centre of the large *Metochion* of Hoča (*Hotčka Metohija*), which also encompassed large portions of Prekoruplje (the central part of Metohija). In addition, the south-facing and fertile slopes made possible the planting of vineyards in large areas adjacent to Velika Hoča.

Trade, wine export and viticulture developed to such an extent that Emperor Stefan Dušan imposed a customs duty on wine in the mid-fourteenth century. Almost every landowner in the village had his own winery (*vinica*) for grape processing. Those temporarily staying in the village, also engaged in wine making, built numerous lodgings (*konaci*), mansions, summer-houses and other buildings (monks from other monasteries, like Dečani and Devič, wealthy individuals, etc.). Velika Hoča had become a regional, cultural, trade and handicraft centre of late medieval Serbia.

Stagnation and decline of Velika Hoča came with the Ottoman conquest, i.e. after 1455. The process was accelerated by the rise of Orahovac as the seat of local authorities. In the late sixteenth century, Velika Hoča witnessed another period of prosperity under the auspices of the Patriarchate of Peć, in wine production in particular. Its development was brought to an end by the mass Serb migration from Metohija and Kosovo in the early eighteenth century, opening a period of continuous stagnation. With the exception of a brief episode of consolidation and prosperity after the Second World War, this situation has continued into the present.

Present-day Velika Hoča is an enclave, a ghetto, as are several other Serb-populated enclaves in Kosovo and Metohija, with living conditions beneath human dignity. What still makes Velika Hoča an outstanding cultural site is the great number of preserved or ruined churches, as well as its vernacular architecture. By their antiquity, number and artistic qualities (remains of fresco paintings, other artistic decoration and icons in particular), they make an exceptionally valuable cultural and historical complex. By revitalization and legal protection of its neglected resources, through their sustainable use, the enclave of Velika Hoča could develop into a desirable tourist destination – a “Pearl of Metohija”. The same scheme of the protection and preservation of cultural heritage could be applied to several other Serb-populated areas in Kosovo and Metohija – namely, Sredačka župa or the previously Serb-inhabited quarter of Prizren known as Potkaljaja (“below the fortress”).

*SERBIAN ENCLAVES ON THE METOHİJA RİM: VELİKA HOČA. ORAHOVAC AND OTHERS⁵**Population and habitation*

The Municipality of Orahovac is situated in the southwestern section of Kosovo and Metohija in the Podrimlje area, named after the Beli Drim, a river passing by Orahovac (about ten kilometres from the city). It is a part of the *Prizren District* and is bordered by five municipalities: Klina (to the north), the newly-established Municipality of Mališevo (to the east), Suva Reka (to the southeast), Prizren (to the south) and Djakovica (to the west). The municipality has a total population of 71,000, an average altitude of 395 metres above sea level, and covers 279.30 sq kilometres.⁶

Until mid-1999, 4,800 Serbs resided in the Municipality of Orahovac. The majority of them lived in the town of Orahovac, whereas the rest were dispersed in nine villages belonging to the municipality.

NO.	SETTLEMENT	TYPE	SERBIAN POPULATION
1	Orahovac	town	2,710
2	Velika Hoča	village	1,400
3	Zočište	village	375
4	Opteruša	village	95
5	Retimlje	village	90
6	Zrze	village	45
7	Bratotin	village	40
8	Velika Kruša	village	30
9	Brnjača	village	10
10	Ratkovac	village	5
Total			4,800

Nowadays, eight years after the war, no more than 1,150 Serbs, or 23.4 percent of the total Serbian population before the war, have remained in the Municipality of Orahovac. They are concentrated in two isolated enclaves – Upper Orahovac (485 Serbs) and the village of Velika Hoča (665 Serbs). Apart from Serbs, the population of Upper Orahovac includes 230

⁵ Within each topic (population and habitation; village and the village area; urban and functional specifics; economic activities and facilities; administration; public services; infrastructure) we will present the data obtained in 2003, during the implementation of Mnemosyne's research project, and information provided by Municipal Coordinator's official reports written during 2006.

⁶ After the arrival of the UN Mission in June 1999, the territory of the province was administratively divided into five districts. Apart from the Prizren District, these are the districts of Peć, Kosovska Mitrovica, Central Kosovo, and Gnjilane.

Egyptians, 84 Roma, a three-member Bosniak family and a certain number of Albanians. It should be pointed out that the members of the Egyptian and Roma communities have absolute freedom of movement.

The above-mentioned data show that 3,650 (76 percent) Serbs left the Municipality of Orahovac after the 1999 NATO bombing campaign and ethnic cleansing carried out by Albanian extremists. Although its intensity decreased considerably, forced migration can still be observed. Out of the total number of displaced Serbs, 3,385 (92.74 percent) have the status of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Serbia, whereas 265 persons (7.26 percent) were displaced to Montenegro.

The formation of Serbian enclaves

Serbian enclaves on the rim of Metohija – Upper Orahovac and the village of Velika Hoča – were established after the war and the withdrawal of Serbian military and police troops from Kosovo and Metohija in June 1999. In order to protect themselves from attacks by KLA extremists advancing with KFOR troops from Albania, Serbs, already reduced to small groups within the ethnically mixed population of villages and the dominantly Albanian “lower” part of Orahovac, were forced to leave their homes and concentrate in predominantly Serb-inhabited Upper Orahovac and the nearby village of Velika Hoča. Wartime horrors and decades-long persecution by the Albanian majority resulted in the formation of Serb-inhabited enclaves throughout the Province. After UNMIK took full control, Serbs were deprived of freedom of movement, while the Albanians, dominant in number and never disarmed (in addition considered as allies of both UNMIK and KFOR during the 1999 war) were allowed to move freely through all the Serbian enclaves.

Two homogeneous Serbian enclaves in this area have become a provisional solution for the self-protection of Serbs and bridged the so-called “security vacuum” that preceded the deployment of KFOR troops. Numerous unresolved cases of murder, kidnapping and illegal confinement of Serbs, systematic burning of houses, destruction of Serb Christian Orthodox churches and monasteries, and usurpation of private property belonging to Serbs, as well as Serbia’s socially-owned and state-owned property, demonstrated that international military and civil authorities failed to establish control and ensure the safety and security of all citizens of the Autonomous Province of Kosovo and Metohija.⁷

The future status of these enclaves, small-in-number but highly important as Serbian cultural sites, needs to be clearly defined in terms of

⁷ See the reports of the KiM Info-service.

basic security, self-government and sustainable development. Prior to the 1999 war, Zočište was the third largest Serbian settlement in the area, after Orahovac and Velika Hoča. In October 2004, three Serb monks returned to the monastery (leveled to the ground by Albanian extremists in October 1999) in order to commence its reconstruction. This project is expected to encourage the displaced villagers to return to their homes. UNMIK has commissioned the Ministry of Community and Return of the Albanian-controlled Provisional Institutions of Self-Government in Kosovo to build 39 out of 44 planned houses for the Serbian returnees, as well as a small hospital and necessary facilities. Having in mind that the distance between these enclaves is between four and seven kilometres, their strengthening and linking into a kind of network is desirable and seems feasible.

The village of Velika Hoča officially remains a constituent part of the Orahovac Municipality. Until July 2006, it was the seat of the Community Office, established by UNMIK, in charge of Velika Hoča and the Serb-inhabited part of Orahovac. In July 2006, the responsibility for the Municipality of Orahovac and Velika Hoča was transferred to a Serbian Municipal Coordinator, a representative of the Coordination Centre of the Republic of Serbia for Kosovo and Metohija. Between 1999 and 2005, the village was protected by German armed forces within KFOR. Encircled by barbed wire, bunkers and observation posts, the inhabitants of the village have not left their homes despite the growing pressure of the neighbouring Albanian majority expecting them to move to central Serbia. In 2005, check-points were removed. At present, the village is protected by a single observation bunker, KFOR patrols and forces of the newly-established Kosovo Police Service (KPS).

Before 1999, there were 300 households, including 1,500 Serbs and several Roma families. According to the data provided by the Community Office of 23 October 2001, gathered for UNMIK, there were 622 inhabitants in Velika Hoča: 324 (52.1 percent) of them were male, 298 (47.9 percent) female. It has been estimated that there are up to 720 people living in the village. All of them are Serbs, with the exception of 16 Roma, four of whom came to the village after the bombing in 1999. Despite the considerable number of internally displaced people, the population shows quite favourable age distribution: 320 people (51.1 percent) fall into the 16–60 age group. However, a great disproportion in the sex ratio in the 6–18 age group is evident: there are more boys (out of 127 persons, 80 or 63 percent are male).

The support coming from various international organizations is insufficient and both overt and “quiet” (unannounced) migrations are still visible. The process of migration is expected to extend to school-age children,

who, having completed primary school, will continue their schooling somewhere in central Serbia.

With the exception of a minor part of the population employed in public service, the rest of the inhabitants subsist on farming or on humanitarian aid provided by the Republic of Serbia or, to a lesser degree, by subsidies of UNMIK. The economic situation varies from family to family. Single-parent families, elderly households, and families living in inadequate housing, which as a rule are of the greatest interest for the protection of architectural heritage or preservation of the cultural identity of Velika Hoča, are in a particularly difficult situation.

Most residential and auxiliary buildings were built prior to or immediately after the Second World War. Most older buildings are deserted and dilapidated, i.e. unfit for habitation. This particularly applies to subsidiary objects and those used in the domestic economy. The traditional use of wood and stone as chief building materials, as well as the practice of covering roofs and fences with stone slates, has been abandoned.

The village and the surrounding area

The figures presented in the table below illustrate the modes of land use in the village of Velika Hoča categorized by owner or occupant.⁸

Land ownership by category of owners/occupants – Cadastral Municipality Velika Hoča

OWNER / OCCUPANT	ha/acre/sq m	
State-owned land		
1 Public Company "Srbijašume"	547.65.88	
2 Ministry of Religion	7.38.98	
3 Public Water Company "Srbijavode"	17.55.92	
4 Velika Hoča	44.20	
5 Municipality of Orahovac	13.34	
6 Municipality of Orahovac	21.10.96	
TOTAL	594.29.28	43.94 %
Socially-owned land		
1 Municipality of Orahovac	26.36.22	

⁸ Source: materials for the study *Bases for Policy and Planning Documents for Velika Hoča* (in preparation; Mnemosyne in cooperation with the Coordination Centre of the Republic of Serbia for Kosovo and Metohija, to be published in 2007).

2 Municipality of Orahovac	35.78	
3 Municipality of Orahovac	1.38.82	
4 Municipality of Orahovac	26.97	
5 Agroindustrial Company "Orvin", Orahovac	84.34.51	
TOTAL	112.72.30	8.33 %
Church-owned land		
1 Parish	4.12.54	
2 Estate of the monastery of Devič	3.12.46	
3 <i>Metochia</i> of the monastery of Dečani	8.27.21	
4 Church of the Holy Virgin	8.55	
TOTAL	15.60.76	1.15 %
TOTAL	722.62.34	3.43 %
Privately-owned land		
Serbian	512.83.91	37,92 %
Other	117.02.27	8.66 %
TOTAL	629.86.18	46.57 %

Privately-owned land

Serbian	81.42 percent
Other	18.58 percent

Urban and functional features of the village

The village of Velika Hoča took shape around the main medieval road running along the Hoča River (*Hočanska reka*). An archaeological survey of the entire village area to determine the extent of the inhabited area in the Middle Ages has not yet been undertaken. However, the position of the existing and recorded religious structures and medieval wineries suggests that the location of the present settlement corresponds to the one from medieval sources – limited to the centre of the village area. Spatial and functional determinants of the village are the following: public buildings, religious structures, and nineteenth-century residential buildings. The historic division of the settlement into *Gornja* (Upper) and *Donja* (Lower) *mahala* (quarter), dating from the period of its formation, and the organic traffic matrix, possibly developed during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, have been preserved. However, it is not possible to establish historical phases in terms of urban development. It is a compact settlement, with few recently built objects along the road or in the field in its immediate vicinity. All structures of public significance, with the exception of the cemetery and sports

grounds, which were recently built, are directly related to the main traffic line.

Churches and wineries are recognized as the historic nucleus of the village.⁹ It is not possible to establish which of the identified locations had priority over the others. At the present moment, it is evident that the area delimited by the *Dečani Winery*, *St Stephen's Church* and the *Parish House* is the most developed in urban terms and that it resembles a square. In terms of the present development requirements of the village, the area between the school and the *Serai* (listed as heritage by Mnemosyne's experts, 2001–2003), uphill and downhill from the road, appears particularly significant. On the one hand, it is unarranged and on sloping terrain, but on the other it is spacious and has preserved sufficient architectural and urban features to become the centre of the village in the future. Recently built structures are related to new community programmes; consequently, the area around the Cultural Centre on the edge of the old nucleus of the settlement could become a new meeting-point.

Economic activities and facilities

A portion of Velika Hoča's population used to work in the plant producing plastic packing materials, in the distillery "Orvin" in Orahovac, and the handicraft workshop that employed about fifty women. However, for the majority of the population the main source of income has been agriculture, more precisely, viticulture. Private vineyards surrounding the village covered an area of 120 ha. Owing to favourable ecological conditions, vinegrowers could plant between 10,000 and 12,000 vines per hectare. *Prokupac*, *Vranac* and *Gamai*, among red, and *Smederevka* and *Riesling*, among white grapes, were the most thriving and the most often cultivated sorts. Most of the produced grapes was sold to the distillery "Orvin", and a part was used for

⁹ Preserved wineries are monuments characteristic of Serbian traditional culture, testifying to a century-long tradition of vine-growing. They are also a testimony to the Church's role as a landowner and wine producer ever since the Middle Ages. The famous complex of buildings belonging to the *metochion* of Dečani Monastery since medieval times is situated in the very centre of the village. The monastery was granted large vineyards as early as the reign of Stefan Dušan, in the mid-fourteenth century. The significance of "Emperor Dušan's vineyard", belonging to the monastery, was particularly highlighted in written documents because the wine made of grapes from that vineyard has been used for the Eucharist. It has remained so until the present... In the inter-war period the monastery of Dečani possessed about 20 hectares of vineyards in Velika Hoča alone. These estates are now considerably smaller but the tradition of "Emperor Dušan's vineyard" is still maintained. See *Velika Hoča: The Pearl of Metohija*, 82–86.

hor home production, consumption and retail. Wine production has been accompanied by the production of home-made brandy.

Animal husbandry has always had a secondary significance (poultry and cattle), as well as tillage, fruit-growing and vegiculture – wheat, maize, walnut, apple, plum, pear, tomato, cabbage, onion and beans have been the most often cultivated species.

As far as *economic activities* are concerned, it must be pointed out that almost all of them have ceased since 1999 and that the village of Velika Hoča is in a very difficult position. The youngest population cohort, including, according to the municipal coordinator, about 70 people, is particularly vulnerable. The condition of the existing economic/industrial facilities in the village can be illustrated by the following facts:

- A well-known, modern factory of plastic packing materials was closed until 2006 because it had been demolished and all the machines and equipment, as well as factory transformer station, had been taken away; in 2006, “Plant C” within the socially-owned company “18 Novembar” – Orahovac, situated in Velika Hoča, was rented to the company “Fresket”, owned by Ibrahim Jupa of Orahovac, by the Kosovo Trust Agency; the new “owner” plans to establish a meat production facility there and, through several development stages, employ some thirty workers from Velika Hoča.
- The branch factory “Moda” – Veliko Gradište was closed.
- Business arrangements with major wholesalers of grapes, wine and brandy (which are the most important trade product) are broken; uncoordinated individual production of grapes and wine is still existent and the *metochion* of Dečani, geared for larger-scale grape processing, is the leading wine manufacturer in the village.
- Those who worked in Orahovac were expelled from their jobs; the management of the “Orvin” winery was taken over by representatives of the Albanian majority; employees from Velika Hoča were dismissed.

With considerably limited local production, the village’s capacity for self-sustainability is put in question:

- For security reasons, farming (tillage in particular) has almost ceased; fruit-growing and vegiculture can be practised only in gardens in the immediate vicinity of houses.
- A small number of cattle have remained in the village since it is difficult to provide food (cattle cannot be pastured because of the threat of attack by Albanians; no stock-feed supplies are provided).
- In 2001, cultivated vineyards covered an area of 37 hectares (out of 120 hectares under vineyards); these were the vineyards in the immediate vicinity of the village and KFOR’s control points. During the past five years, it has been impossible to cultivate those located at a greater distance from the village and the vines withered. During 2005, the mon-

astery of Dečani and a number of villagers planted new vineyards, owing to which the total vine-growing area increased by five hectares. A major part of the vines and the stakes that used to support them were taken away by Albanians from the nearby villages.

- Irregular electricity supply and inability to provide supplies of firewood from the nearby privately-owned woods led to the practice of cutting walnut trees in the village.

Apart from agricultural resources, there are other important assets in the broader village area:

- an old quarry at the foot of Milanovac Mountain, and
- a slate quarry on the boundary between Velika Hoča and Milanović.

For centuries, these locations have served as sources of building materials for construction in Velika Hoča and the nearby villages.

Administration

The Community Office in Velika Hoča, established by an UNMIK Regulation, operated until July 2006 and was responsible for the village and the Serb-populated part of Orahovac. The Office employed 29 people, the majority of whom (17) decided to terminate the temporary service contract with UNMIK and take their salary only from the Republic of Serbia in July 2006. All the public services in the village and Orahovac are funded from two sources: the budget of the Republic of Serbia and that of UNMIK. Between 2000 and 2005, the Community Office was in charge for petitions to and contacts with the Municipality of Orahovac. The opportunity to take part in predominantly Albanian municipal administration was taken by the inhabitants of Velika Hoča; since 2005, their representative is Vice Mayor of Orahovac. Since July 2006, the position of the Municipal Coordinator, established by the Coordination Centre of the Republic of Serbia for Kosovo and Metohija immediately after the arrival of the UN Mission, has attained increasing importance. All calls for assistance, interventions regarding public and private buildings and infrastructure, and investments are submitted to the Serbian Municipal Coordinator and the Serbian representative in the municipal administration.

Public services and facilities

Velika Hoča has all public services expected to be available in an inhabited place of its rank. The problem arises as to where an assessment of the condition of the premises, the quality of human resources, and equipment should be made.

Cultural Centre – The older wing of the building was constructed after World War II on the scheme typical for that building type. The construction of an annex attached to the existing building, undertaken in the 1990s, funded by the Republic of Serbia, was resumed owing to funds provided by UNMIK and other international organizations active in the Province (e.g. International Organization of Migration). Considerable funding for the reconstruction of the Cultural Centre was provided by the Executive Council of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina through the National Chancery Office of the President of the Republic of Serbia.

The Cultural Centre includes a cinema hall with 300 seats, the office of the former Department for Local Self-Government, a library, an outpatient hospital with a pharmacy, the office of the Red Cross, and UNMIK's office.

As an illustration of the cultural activities in the village of Velika Hoča and Orahovac we shall quote some figures from the Municipal Coordinator's report.¹⁰ Various cultural projects, aiming to facilitate the life of Serbs, confined to living behind barbed wire and under strong KFOR protection, included the festival organized in Velika Hoča on the occasion of the feast of St Cyriac (*Miholjdan*); art colonies with the participation of Balkan artists; the commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the heroic death of Lazar Kujundžić, an anti-Ottoman Serb guerrilla leader of the early twentieth century from Velika Hoča.

Primary School "Svetozar Marković" – established in 1846 and functioning within the Parish House. Its premises, including two buildings on a Church-owned lot were constructed in 1926. There are still about a hundred students in comparison with 150 before the 1999 war. The staff (teachers, principal, technical staff) includes between 16 and 20 persons. Upper Orahovac also has a primary school (resulting from the fusion of two primary schools, "Dositej Obradović" and "Vuk Karadžić"), and a grammar school.

Infrastructure

For the most part, the village of Velika Hoča is covered by the communal infrastructure network. However, in some aspects the network does not meet quality standards. *Water-supply*: the water is supplied from a basin in Orahovac to a water-tank in Velika Hoča, constructed upon a ridge above the village. It has been estimated that about 95 percent of houses have access to this water-supply constructed in 1991/2 owing to funding provided by the Republic of Serbia. However, the construction was poorly done and

¹⁰ Source: Report of the Municipal Coordinator submitted to the Coordination Centre of the Republic of Serbia for Kosovo and Metohija on 24 March 2006.

here and there the pipes are leaking. Apart from that, the village does not have access to the regional water-supply system in Orahovac any more. All the houses use water from their own wells, in most cases by means of a water pump (when electricity is available). The poor quality of the water from these wells is the most difficult problem. There is a spring called Vrelo at the edge of the village; it supplies the school with water. *Sewage*: the village is partly covered by the sewage system. The major part of houses in the lower part of the village is connected to the sewage accumulator. Like the water-supply, the sewage system was constructed in 1991/2 owing to funding provided by the Republic of Serbia. Although UNMIK allocated funds necessary to resume the work, nothing has been done so far. *Electricity supply and postal service*: there are three substations in the village. It has been estimated that the available electrical power could meet the present needs of the village, as well as those dictated by its development, if the regularity of the electricity supply was to be ensured and the rationing scheme made less severe. The village is connected to the telephone network but its quality is not satisfactory. Some 200 users are connected to the telephone exchange in Orahovac. *Traffic*: only a minor part of the streets in the village are asphalted. Several major streets were paved with concrete blocks, whereas all the other tracks are unpaved or stone-paved with remains of macadam. The width of the streets does not conform to any planned classification; it is dictated by the position of houses and fails to meet the present needs. Only the main street has a sidewalk. The village does not have a parking lot and for that purpose is used the area in front of the Parish House and the Dečani Winery in the centre of Velika Hoča.

Spatial planning and building regulations

Neither an urban plan for the village of Velika Hoča, nor a spatial plan for the Municipality of Orahovac that could provide a framework for the development of the village, has been devised. Building licenses are issued through the Community Office and UNMIK. The repeated attempts by the Albanians of the Orahovac Municipality to gain access to the village, considered as an attempt to impose their domination, remains to be a source of both rising fears and serious security concern among the remaining Serb inhabitants of Velika Hoča.

The UN mission

In 2000, UNMIK initiated the establishment of the Group for Village Development Planning under the auspices of the Community Office in Velika Hoča. In seminars organized in Orahovac and Prizren, participants were

trained to take an active part in planning projects, data processing, development and implementation of democratic principles, etc. During our visits to Velika Hoča we were informed that a study titled *Profile of the Village* was being prepared within a project aimed at the drafting of the *Framework for the Development of the Municipality of Orahovac*. The study including a plan for the village, identification of the needs, and an action plan was probably never completed – we did not have the opportunity to see its full text.

Fully aware of the poor and often humiliating living conditions in the ghettoized enclave of Velika Hoča, the internationals have undertaken numerous actions aimed at their improvement. The most important are:

- An association of vine-growers was established in Velika Hoča; international assistance was provided for the revitalization of vine-growing and wine production (manure, pesticides, twenty vats for wine, seedlings, etc.); the International Organization of Migration (IOM) provided a portion of the equipment for the vine-growers association and various small-business and handicraft enterprises; it also provided viticulture and tillage mechanization.
- NGO *Amica*, of Orahovac, engaged women from Velika Hoča in handicraft production; on the premises of the branch factory “Moda”, women knitted, sewed and wove clothing and accessories.
- Construction work in the Cultural Centre, remodelling of three offices to be used by UNMIK.
- The roof of the primary school was reconstructed; the school was supplied with central heating; the schoolyard was embanked; the school and public fountains were switched to a water line, etc.

Municipal Coordinator's reports – 2006

Through considerable funding provided by the Republic of Serbia for Velika Hoča – the two latest projects have been the *Reconstruction of the Cultural Centre* (sponsored by the Executive Council of the Assembly of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina through the National Chancery of the President of the Republic of Serbia) and the *Installing the Cable Distribution System in the Upper (Serbian) Part of Orahovac and the Village of Velika Hoča* (funded by the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Serbia) – and humanitarian aid coming from various sources, practically all households in the enclave received some sort of assistance. However, not a single serious and complex project funded by either the internationals or the Republic of Serbia managed to yield expected results: the bakery was closed; the fish-pond and greenhouses are not operating; the vineyards are only partially enlarged (some individual manufacturers and the monastery of Dečani man-

aged to expand their vineyards during the past several years); the integration of women into economic life has reached the lowest level; the infrastructure has not been improved. For all these reasons, despite available resources, the enclave, still within a hostile Albanian environment, is in continuous stagnation — it is on the edge of sustainability. Overall insecurity paralyzes creative and efficient mechanisms. Movement restrictions have limited the universe of the inhabitants to 13.5 square kilometres.¹¹

No.	Inhabited place	Area (sq km)
1	Orahovac	49.00
2	Velika Hoča	13.50
3	Zočište	5.20
4	Opteruša	9.00
5	Retimlje	9.80
6	Brestovac	5.50
7	Mala Hoča	7.00
8	Nogavac	3.20
9	Velika Kruša	10.40
10	Bela Crkva	11.00
11	Zrze	10.10
12	Gedže	3.20
13	Radoste	10.90
14	Ratkovac	11.80
15	Danjane	6.40
16	Dobri Do	3.50
17	Čiflak	4.00
18	Kramovik	10.30
19	Mramor	3.20
20	Petković	10.00
21	Koznik	8.80
22	Zatrić	15.20
23	Drenovac	8.10
24	Sanovac	6.50
25	Pusto Selo	5.40

26	Poluža	5.70
27	Bratotin	3.00
28	Vranjak	5.00
29	Našpale	0.60
30	Gornje Potočane	2.30
31	Donje Potočane	3.50
32	Brnjača	4.50
33	Sopnić	5.00
34	Celine	5.70
TOTAL		276.50

¹¹ The list of inhabited places in the Municipality of Orahovac and their areas (in sq km), according to the Report of the Municipal Coordinator submitted to the Coordination Centre of the Republic of Serbia for Kosovo and Metohija of 4 July 2006.

- Regular bus convoys with UN labels plying between Velika Hoča and Zvečan twice a week (Tuesdays and Fridays), as well as the so-called “shopping tour” to Gračanica once in a fortnight (on Saturdays), *escorted by the Kosovo Police Service patrols*, are not, despite a hostile Albanian environment, burdened by more serious threats.
- The electricity supply in Upper Orahovac and Velika Hoča still conforms to an irregular rationing scheme with power interruptions lasting for several hours (max. 4 hours) and *shorter periods when electricity is available (1–3 hours)*; the Serbian population wonders what is to be expected during the winter when they have such long power interruptions during the summer.
- *As far as water supply is concerned, the present situation is typical of this part of the year: drinking water is available only in the morning, i.e. between 03.00 and 10.00 a.m.;*
- Workers of the Post and Telecom of Kosovo connected the monastery of Sts. Cosmas and Damian in Zočište to the telephone system; after a long period of time, the monastery finally got a fixed telephone line owing to the intercession of the Islamic Community in Orahovac with the responsible officers in the Post and Telecom of Kosovo.
- A commission including education and health surveyors of the Sector for Social Issues, Health and Education within the Coordination Centre for Kosovo and Metohija visited Orahovac, i.e. schools and health institutions in Upper Orahovac and Velika Hoča on 7 July 2006.
- Serbs in Lower (Albanian-populated) Orahovac whose flats were usurped by Albanians after 1999 are prevented from visiting their property: an owner must submit a request in writing to the Albanian dominated-police station in Orahovac, specifying the address; if the answer by the operational police headquarters (examining requests once a week) is positive, he has to provide a vehicle to take him there since members of the KPS are not allowed to take civilians in their cars; when he finds a vehicle, he goes to the police once again; the police sends him to the Municipal Assembly of Orahovac whose duty is to arrange a meeting with the usurper and check whether he is willing to let the owner into the flat: as they say, police merely escorts the owners to the flat — it is not on them to arrange meetings between owners and usurpers; the officers of the Municipal Assembly instruct the owner to apply to the Municipal Court, explaining that only a court can resolve his problem, since it is actually a legal issue; officers of the Municipal Court send him to HABITAT as the only organization responsible for housing issues; caught in a vicious circle, the owner loses his patience and gives up the idea of visiting his own property. Such cases usually end in the selling of property, which seems to be the best solution for representatives of international organizations, enabling them to free themselves of responsibility.

- The monk Miron Kosać of the monastery of St John in Velika Hoča, submitted to the Local Self-Government in Orahovac a request for support in providing an additional housing facility for the monastic brotherhood. Presently, four monks share two available rooms in the monastery.
- Owing to the funds provided by the European Agency for Reconstruction within its Civil Society Call for Proposals, the Belgrade-based Mnemosyne Center, has opened a national cuisine restaurant in Velika Hoča. The restaurant was established in a remodelled room in the Parish House, to which an annex containing a kitchen and a toilet was attached. It has been announced that the restaurant will be blessed by His Grace Bishop of Raška and Prizren Mgr. Artemije. Together with priest Milenko Dragičević, the Bishop will decide to whom among the interested inhabitants of Velika Hoča and Upper Orahovac to entrust the management of the restaurant.
- On 5 July 2006, Deputy UN Special Envoy Amb. A. Rohan and a team of international heritage experts visited Velika Hoča; at a meeting with local representatives of the Serb community, the priest and monks of Velika Hoča, the possibility of designating the status of a protected zone to the village (as a cultural and historical ensemble) was discussed. During the preparatory arrangements for the meeting, UNMIK's representatives in the Municipal Assembly of Orahovac advised me to prepare for Amb. Rohan some written materials highlighting the most important facts and figures concerning the Serbian population and information about Velika Hoča as a cultural and historical ensemble in order to persuade him that the village meets the conditions to get the status of a protected zone.
- On 5 July 2006, 11.00 a.m., the restored memorial house *Gospodarska kuća – Serai* in Velika Hoča was inaugurated. The restoration was carried out by the Swedish NGO *Cultural Heritage without Borders* funded by the European Agency for Reconstruction and the Swedish International Development Agency, on the basis of the Project *Protection, Preservation and Revitalization of the Village of Velika Hoča*, drafted by the Belgrade Mnemosyne Centre, and the Memorandum of Understanding and Cooperation in the Protection of Cultural Heritage in Kosovo and Metohija, signed between the Swedish NGO and the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Serbia.
- On Saturday 8 July 2006, Upper Orahovac was visited by an American delegation of politicians involved in research projects carried out for the U.S. Senate and Congress [...] I met them in the centre of the enclave and acquainted them with the appalling living conditions of the Serbian community. A walk through the streets of the upper part of the town gave them a realistic picture of an isolated enclave, as well as a sense of tensions burdening the life of Serbian families near the demarcation line with the Albanian parts of the town. The American delegation took the opportunity to talk with Austrian KFOR soldiers about security and

discrimination of the Serb community. They were provided with written materials in which the basic data on the living conditions of the Serbian community in the Municipality of Orahovac and the lists of murdered and kidnapped Serbs, burnt houses, seized flats, etc. were presented in full detail.

- On 11 July 2006, I wrote a letter to the Coordination Centre in which I informed the responsible officers that Serbian employees of the Local Self-Government in Orahovac resigned from the Kosovo PISG, i.e. from the Community Office [...]

- On 14 July 2006, a church festival was held in the monastery of Sts Cosmas and Damian in Zočište on the occasion of the monastery's patron saints' day.

From his own point of view, the Municipal Coordinator summed up the results of numerous visits by foreign delegation in the following words: "Numerous delegations visiting our enclaves just come and see, i.e. merely take a snapshot of the situation, get acquainted with our hardship, and go away to draft their stories and moving reports in a more comfortable environment, believing that it would soothe their conscience, while the helpless population – the young in particular, are left to themselves, their unresolved problems, and an uncertain future." (Municipal Coordinator's Report of 24 March 2006)

* * *

Living in enclaves protected by barbed wire and military contingents at the beginning of the third millennium in Europe is more than a paradox. Deprived of the freedom of movement and the right to work, facing an insecure future, the Serbian population in Kosovo and Metohija living in these enclaves, ghettos on Europe's soil, is trying to develop a model of survival. Bewilderment, anger, despair, but also perseverance and persistence, reflect the complex and basically ambivalent attitude of those who directly or indirectly participate in the prolonged human and political drama. Once again we can see that without a goal, development prospects, organized assistance and human solidarity, i.e. certainty and security, life becomes a real drama. Too many unknown and unforeseeable factors make the inhabitants of this enclave (as well as those living in other Serbian enclaves in Kosovo and Metohija) feel insecure and frustrated.

Viniculture, the major industry of the Serb population in Velika Hoča, their main occupation for centuries, has been reduced to the cultivation of safe vineyards (those not usurped by the local Albanians or close enough to the houses to be tended without security concerns), thus resulting in limited-scale production in private wineries. The technological level of wine production varies from winery to winery. Accordingly, the retail of products is limited to "private distribution" through relatives and caterers. Endeav-

ours of international organizations to enhance the production by providing seedlings and professional assistance in viticulture or by supplying modern equipment, failed to yield the expected results. The centuries-long practice of individual production opposes the spirit of cooperation. Consequently, support provided to any one individual producers generates tensions and conflicts within the community. The only successful wine producer, with an ever-increasing output, is the *metochion* of the Dečani monastery. Its success rests upon a well-organized production process run by the monastery's brotherhood. The renting of the premises of "Orvin" to an Albanian company intent on establishing a meat production facility there, disturbs centuries-long peace and harmony in the village. Negative consequences of this decision are inevitable.

As it was becoming more and more obvious that the "provisional solution" of living in an enclave could become a final one, the cohesive forces within the community, very strong in 2000 and 2001, considerably weakened. The transitional period of accommodation to the new living conditions was marked by a deep distrust of everyone and lack of discipline. The grave socio-psychological situation in the village affected directly the implementation of all projects. Organized and developed health and education programmes of the Republic of Serbia have made the situation even more complicated by putting these occupations into a more favourable position. The social structure of the population in the Serbian enclaves has not been thoroughly studied; no overall strategy covering all the aspects of life has been devised. No vision of the future development of the enclaves and cohabitation has ever been taken into consideration. Irresponsible and corrupt members of international organizations and some of Serbia's institutions see such developments merely as a good opportunity for personal promotion and profit making. Their own irresponsibility hits them back like a boomerang. A deceptive impression that the people living in the enclave do not care for the quality of their lives prevails. The inclusion of poorly prepared Serb representatives into the predominantly Albanian municipal administration in Orahovac was a severe blow to the vital issue of survival and sustainable return of the Serb community – namely, the problem of management in an utterly hostile Albanian environment, facing intimidation that has put in danger both their individual and collective integrity. Faced with numerous training programmes offered by international organizations, along with partly wrong explanations of the situation which inevitably lead to wrong solutions, the people living in the enclave are forced to cope with a culture that "drives them mad". The "procedure" of visiting one's own usurped house is so complicated that it makes one want to go away and never come back.

When we take into consideration all these facts, do we have any right to condemn the Serbs living in the enclave of Velika Hoča for not seeing the

cultural heritage surrounding them as an advantage and a resource capable of ensuring a far better life in the future? Vinegrowing, practised for centuries, and the man-made ambience are definitely such resources. It must also be borne in mind that the majority of the people living in the enclave believe that their decision to stay is also “God’s will expressed in three tokens”: the belief in sacred places surrounding them was recognized and gratified by free will and the choice to be the guardians of this important spiritual heritage that is a legacy of the whole Serbian nation.

The enclave of Velika Hoča – a protected ambience, a cultural and historic ensemble

The valorization of natural/landscape and cultural, historic/heritage values of the village of Velika Hoča and its surroundings (Final Report: Project Urgent Protection of Heritage in Metohija, Belgrade: Mnemosyne Center, 2003), has shown that the village and its environs i.e. the village area, meet all the conditions for protection as an ambience, a cultural and historical ensemble of extraordinary importance for both Serbian and European cultural heritage. Moreover, certain objects and parts of the village should be subject to a special system of protection.

There are twenty listed, protected, categorized and published cultural assets in Velika Hoča:

<i>Protection category</i>	<i>Number of cultural assets</i>
World Heritage	/
Extraordinary importance / First category St John’s Church; St Nicholas’ Church	2
Great importance / Second category	/
Protected / Third category St Luke’s Church; <i>Metochia</i> of the Monastery of Dečani; Winery of St Stephen’s Church; Lazar Kujundžić Memorial Tower; The Hadžispasić Family House	5
Recognized heritage St Stephen’s Church; the churches of St Cyriaca, St Anne, St Paraskeve, St Elias and the Holy Virgin; the Patrnogić Family House with a winery; the Lodgings of the Monastery of St Marko of Koriša; <i>Serai</i> ; the houses of the Stolić, Simić, Micić and Stašić families	13
Total	20

Priority issues and tasks to be dealt with within the protection plan for the village of Velika Hoča, of utmost importance at this moment, can be divided into two groups:

1. Protection of all natural and man-made values including:

- Preservation of the authenticity of the village in its urban, architectural and landscape aspects.
- Protection of deteriorated structures which are or should be listed as heritage on the grounds of their historical, ambiental, architectural and artistic values.
- Protection of indigenous plant species characteristic of the vegetation zone, and preservation of the authenticity of the landscape.
- Special protection for viniculture areas, vegetation of river banks and walnut-trees.
- Prohibition of land parcelling, i.e. the bulking of small parcels, aimed at the preservation of the landscape features of the area.
- Prohibition of any activity that could result in pollution or threaten the environment.

2. Ensuring conditions for the development of the village and for the normal life of its inhabitants, which includes the following:

- Physical protection of the Serb population and their usurped property while, and the ensuring of normal and safe work in their fields where they have often been victims of armed attacks of Albanian extremists.
- Revitalization and planting of vineyards destroyed after the arrival of international military and civil authorities in all the areas formerly used for vine-growing.
- Ensuring political, financial, and professional support for the revitalization and enhancement of local micro-economy in accordance with both regional needs and available resources.
- Ensuring funds, technical conditions, and professional support for the improvement of living standards in the village through the recovery of public and communal funds and equipment provisions.

Revitalization of the economy is one of the crucial preconditions for the rehabilitation and development of Velika Hoča. These activities, expected to yield positive socio-economic effects in a short time and ensure the return and sustainability of displaced families, are at the same time compatible with the expected protected status of the village and its surroundings. The attention will be drawn only to the most important production activities that should be revitalized and supported:

- Re-establishment of traditional wine production in compliance with international standards, the reconstruction of old private wineries that should develop into major grape collection and processing centres, and establishment of a production line for bottling wine with protected geographical origin.
- Initiating a small-scale handicraft production of clothing, souvenirs, traditional food, i.e. the promotion of *Velika Hoča* as a desirable tourist and cultural destination.
- In the future, production is expected to absorb raw materials coming from a wider area; the product range could be expanded to include brandy, must, juices and traditional local food (under present extremely unfavourable conditions it is possible to market some 60,000 litres of wine).

The involvement of the local community should be encouraged by the *establishing of a proper institutional, administrative framework in charge of the Serbian enclaves* of Upper Orahovac, Velika Hoča, and possibly the village of Zočište. The fact that the position of Velika Hoča can be described as “drifting” on the rim of Metohija, inaccessible to any of the administrative levels of decentralized Serbian local self-government, may be used as a pretext for untenable solutions overlooking the basic fact that any decision regarding the protection of cultural heritage, including the designation of Velika Hoča as an ambiental, cultural and historic ensemble, is firmly founded in European common practice. Temporary suspension of relevant legislation of the Republic of Serbia does not justify willful suspension of European legislation and common practice. The situation is very difficult and demands complex and novel solutions compatible with common European practice. Cultural heritage has a well defined, undisputed, and very important place in European culture; therefore its protection and preservation cannot rest upon arbitrary solutions and volunteer engagement of nongovernmental organizations. The civil society sector in Serbia could significantly help to put in place proper heritage protection mechanisms and facilitate their implementation (or could provide expert assistance in the conservation of buildings and monuments) but it does not and could never assume the prerogatives of the state and its institutions. It is a matter of political benevolence whether these fundamental facts will be acknowledged and put into operation, which would yield immeasurable benefits for a genuine reconciliation process between the Serbs and the Albanians.

Consequently, the administration of the Velika Hoča enclave (including Upper Orahovac and, possibly, Zočište) must be entrusted to people living in the enclave organized within a local self-government that would be part of a wider decentralized Serbian self-government structure in the Province of Kosovo and Metohija. The administration of the enclave must

be part of a system with which it could establish efficient relationships based on mutual responsibility. That system is a decentralized Serbian self-government structure in Kosovo and Metohija, which could in prospect become a compatible part of some future administrative system in the province. Placing the enclave under the responsibility of the Albanian municipal administration in Orahovac would enable long-term discrimination followed by subversive actions against the Serb community: the Albanian municipal administration would use “exclusive privileges” to create an illusion of allegedly fair interethnic cohabitation in the Kosovo and Metohija Province among the “reasonable” inhabitants of the enclave on the one hand, whereas the spurious exaltation of the Serbian officials, corrupted by these privileges, would end in severe disillusionment before their compatriots and their reasonable demands.

To clarify, the prospects and chances of Velika Hoča rest in its vast natural resources entwined with the ambience that has been created for centuries. Some of the structures in the village are listed heritage sites – they were designated that status by institutions of the Republic of Serbia in compliance with its legislation. Accordingly, a relevant institution must be responsible for the continuity of heritage management in Velika Hoča and its designation as an ambiental, cultural and historic ensemble; that institution is the *Regional Centre for the Study and Protection of Cultural Heritage in Kosovo and Metohija*. Only with such an institution would the disempowered and perplexed populace of the enclave feel that their fate is in their own hands and that their hardship is not in vain. The heritage protection process would be brought back to the course of European common practice endorsing one of the fundamental human rights – the right of the heirs to protect their own cultural heritage.

To deprive the Serbs of that right, i.e. to deprive them of that segment of organized institutional action, would mean the furtherance of the agony and a total fiasco of European norms and values.

Who is ready to take responsibility for such a sequence of events?

SERB WORLD HERITAGE IN KOSOVO AND METOHIJA

Notes:

- The lists were compiled on the basis of the Central Register of the Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments of the Republic of Serbia
- * Further information: *Project Urgent Protection of Natural and Cultural Heritage in Metohija: Final Report*, Belgrade: MNEMOSYNE, 2003, 370–384; Coordination Centre for Kosovo and Metohija
- ** Further information: *Project Urgent Protection of Natural and Cultural Heritage in Metohija: Final Report*, Belgrade: MNEMOSYNE, 2003, 370–384.
- ◆ – Interventions by the Reconstruction Implementation Commission for Orthodox Religious Sites in Kosovo; source: Serbian Orthodox Church
- CC – Coordination Centre for Kosovo and Metohija; MC – MNEMOSYNE Center; IPCMRS – Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments of the Republic of Serbia; SOC – Serbian Orthodox Church; CoE – Council of Europe

No	Object	Municipality	Date of construction	Protection category	Owner	Proof of ownership	Documentation after 1999.	Interventions	
								Implemented 2001–2006.	Planned
1	Monastery of Dečani	Dečane	1327–1335	SK 1368 Extraordinary importance UNESCO World Heritage List	SOC	Cadastral extract*	Archaeological research; Construction project for a kitchen; Reconstruction project for Leontije's Dormitory**	Archaeological research of the kitchen Construction of Leontije's Dormitory (pending)	Rearrangement of the churchyard Reconstruction of the heating facility Fire-fighting measures

No	Object	Municipality	Date of construction	Protection category	Owner	Proof of ownership	Documentation after 1999.	Interventions	
								Implemented 2001–2006.	Planned
2	Patriarchate of Peć	Peć	13 th c.	SK 1370 Extraordinary Importance UNESCO World Heritage List	SOC	Cadastré extract*	**	Geodetic survey Partial conservation of frescoes in the church of the Holy Virgin <i>Hodegetria</i> (Pilot project in cooperation with INTERSOS)	Damp sanation project; Consolidation of the perimeter wall Consolidation of ancillary buildings Repairation of the water-supply and the construction of a well Fire-fighting measures
3	Holy Virgin of Ljeviška Pogrom, March 2004	Prizren	11 th / 13 th / 14 th c.	SK 1369 Extraordinary Importance UNESCO World Heritage List	SOC	Cadastré extract*	Rearrangement of the ancillary building in the churchyard ^{1 **}	◆ Repairation of the lead roofing Consolidation of the belfry, exonarthex and the gallery (pending)	To complete the restoration of the belfry
4	Monastery of Holy Archangels Pogrom, March 2004	Prizren	1343–1352	SK 1366 Extraordinary Importance UNESCO World Heritage List	SOC	Cadastré extract*	**	Construction of a heating facility in the dormitory	

APPENDIX III
DAMAGED AND DESTROYED CULTURAL PROPERTIES

A) In Albanian-Populated Areas

No.	Object	Municipality	Date of Construction	Protection category	Owner	Proof of ownership	Documentation after 1999	Interventions	
								Implemented 2001-2006	Planned
1	Mušutište Church of the Holy Virgin Hodegetria Destroyed in 1999	Suva Reka	1315	ISK 1414 Extraordinary importance	SOC	Cadastral extract*	Reconstruction project for the church Photographs**		Rehabilitation project for the churchyard and ancillary objects
2	Monastery of Zočište Destroyed in 1999	Orahovac	14 th / 16 th c.	III Protected	SOC	Non-existent*	Reconstruction project for the church Photographs**		Reconstruction of the church Rearrangement of the churchyard Commencement of the construction of a dormitory Verification of the project
3	Djurakovac Church of St Nicholas Destroyed in 1999	Istok	16 th c.	ISK 1381 Extraordinary importance	SOC	Cadastral extract*	Photographs**		

No.	Object	Municipality	Date of Construction	Protection category	Owner	Proof of ownership	Documentation after 1999	Interventions	
								Implemented 2001–2006	Planned
4	Dolac Monastery of the Presentation of the Holy Virgin in the Temple Destroyed in 1999	Klina	14 th / 17 th c.	ISK 1383 Extraordinary importance	SOC	Cadastre extract*	Photographs**		
5	Gornje Nerodimlje Monastery of Holy Archangels Destroyed in 1999	Uroševac	14 th / 17 th c.	ISK 1420 Extraordinary importance	Public Company "Srbija šume" SOC	Cadastre extract*	Photographs**		
6	Dobra Voda Monastery of SS Peter and paul Damaged in 1999	Klina	14 th / 16 th c.	ISK 1382 Extraordinary importance	Public Company "Srbija šume" SOC	Cadastre extract*	Photographs**		
7	Čabici Church of St Nicholas Destroyed in 1999	Klina	Late 15 th or early 16 th c.	ISK 1386 Extraordinary importance	Municipality of Klina SOC	Cadastre extract*	Photographs**		

No.	Object	Municipality	Date of Construction	Protection category	Owner	Proof of ownership	Documentation after 1999	Interventions	
								Implemented 2001–2006	Planned
8	Drsmik Church of St Paraskeve Damaged in 1999	Klina	16 th c.	ISK 1384 Extraordinary importance	SOC	Cadastral extract*	Photographs**		
9	Kijevo Church of St Nicholas Destroyed in 1999	Mališevo	14 th c.	ISK 1385 Extraordinary importance	SOC	Cadastral extract*	Photographs**		
10	Mlečane Church of St Nicholas Destroyed in 1999	Mališevo	14 th c.	ISK 1385 Extraordinary importance	Municipality of Klina SOC	Cadastral extract*	Photographs**		
11	Ločane Danilović's Log Cabin Destroyed in 1999	Dečani	1710s	ISK 1386 Extraordinary importance	Branko Danilović	Existent*			
12	Prizren Kaljaja Fortress Pogrom, March 2004.	Prizren	11 th c.	ISK 1399 Extraordinary importance		Cadastral extract*	Photographs**		

No.	Object	Municipality	Date of Construction	Protection category	Owner	Proof of ownership	Documentation after 1999	Interventions	
								Implemented 2001–2006	Planned
13	Prizren Church of St Saviour Pogrom, March 2004	Prizren	c 1330	ISK 1401 Extraordinary importance	SOC	Cadastral extract*	Photographs**		.
14	Prizren Church of St Nicholas ("Tutić's") Pogrom, March 2004	Prizren	1331–1332	ISK 1402 Extraordinary importance	SOC – Monastery of Dečani	Cadastral extract*	Photographs**		.

No.	Object	Municipality	Date of Construction	Protection category	Owner	Proof of ownership	Documentation after 1999	Interventions	
								Implemented 2001–2006	Planned
15	Monastery of Devič Pogrom, March 2004	Srbica	1434	ISK 1413 Extraordinary importance	SOC	Non-existent*	Photographs**	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Reconstruction of the old guest house; Reconstruction of collapsed retaining wall Repairs in the interior of the church – Conservation of frescoes – Plastering of walls in the narthex – Electrical installations 	<p>Paint works Boiler house</p> <p>Installation of lighting equipment and lightning protection system. To complete the reconstruction of the retaining wall and the perimeter wall. Reconstruction of the floor in the church. To complete electrical installations and lightning protection system</p> <p>To install gutters and rainpipes</p> <p>Reconstruction of the central guest house and lead roofing of the winter chapel</p>

No.	Object	Municipality	Date of Construction	Protection category	Owner	Proof of ownership	Documentation after 1999	Interventions	
								Implemented 2001–2006	Planned
16	Mušutište Monastery of the Holy Trinity Destroyed in 1999	Suva Reka	Before 1465; 1837.	ISK 1414 Extraordinary importance	SOC	Non-existent*	Photographs**		
17	Rečane Church of St George Destroyed in 1999	Suva Reka	Second half of the 14 th c.	ISK 1415 Extraordinary importance	SOC	Cadastre extract*	Photographs**		
18	Šajkovac Church of the Dormition of the Holy Virgin (Monastery of Holy Emperor Uroš) Destroyed in 1999	Uroševac	Late 14 th c.	ISK 1419 Extraordinary importance	SOC				
19	Buzovik Monastery of Holy Archangel Michael Destroyed in 1999	Vitina	16 th c.	III Protected	SOC				

No.	Object	Municipality	Date of Construction	Protection category	Owner	Proof of ownership	Documentation after 1999	Interventions	
								Implemented 2001–2006	Planned
20	Vučitrn Church of St Elias Pogrom, March 2004.	Vučitrn	1834	III Protected	SOC			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Removal of provisional roof Restoration of plaster in the narthex Construction of the roof on the narthex 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drainage Roofing Joinery Reconstruction of the floor Paint work Electrical installations
21	Samodreža Church of Holy Prince Lazar Destroyed in 1999	Vučitrn	1932	III Protected	SOC				
22	Žegra Church of St Elias demolished in 1999	Gnjilane	1931.	III Protected	SOC				
23	Koš Tomić's fortified house (kulla) Destroyed in 1999	Istrok	Late 19 th c.	III Protected		Existent*	Photographs**		

No.	Object	Municipality	Date of Construction	Protection category	Owner	Proof of ownership	Documentation after 1999	Interventions	
								Implemented 2001–2006	Planned
24	Kaçanik Church of St Elias demolished in 1999	Kaçanik	1929	III Protected	SOC				
25	Sićevo Church of St Nicholas Destroyed	Klina	1452	III Protected	SOC				
26	Kosovo Polje Church of St Nicholas Pogrom, March 2004	Kosovo Polje	1940	III Protected	SOC				
27	Kosovska Mitrovica Church of St Sava Pogrom, March 2004	Kosovska Mitrovica	1896–1912	III Protected	SOC				
28	Brnjača Church of St Cyriaca Pogrom, March 2004	Orahovac	First half of the 14 th c..	III Protected	SOC	Non-existent*	Photographs**		

No.	Object	Municipality	Date of Construction	Protection category	Owner	Proof of ownership	Documentation after 1999	Interventions	
								Implemented 2001–2006	Planned
29	Peć Mira Protić's House Destroyed in 1999	Peć	c. 1860	III Protected	Inheritors of the Protić family	Cadastral extract*			
30	Peć Stara čaršija (Old marketplace) Devastated in 1999	Peć	16 th / 18 th / 19 th c.	III Protected		Non-existent*	Photographs**		
31	Peć Siga Church of St George Damaged in 1999	Peć	1937	III Protected	SOC				
32	Podujevo Church of St Andrew (St Elias) Pogrom, March 2004	Podujevo	1930	III Protected	SOC				
33	Podujevo Rakitnica Church of Holy Archangel Michael Damaged in 1999	Podujevo	15 th c., 1936.	III Protected	SOC				

No.	Object	Municipality	Date of Construction	Protection category	Owner	Proof of ownership	Documentation after 1999	Interventions	
								Implemented 2001–2006	Planned
34	Koriša Monastery with St Mark's Church Destroyed in 1999	Prizren	15 th c., 1882.	III Protected	SOC				
35	Ljubizda Church of St Nicholas Destroyed in 1999	Prizren	16 th c.	III Protected	SOC	Non-existent*	Photographs**		
36	Prizren Church of St George – ("Runović") Pogrom, March 2004	Prizren	14 th –16 th c.	III Protected	SOC	Non-existent*	Photographs**	◆ Removal of damaged elements Restoration of plaster on interior walls Stonework	Restoration of the floor Lead roofing Joinery New grave slabs Electrical installations
37	Prizren Theological seminary of ss Cyril and Methodius Pogrom, March 2004	PRIZREN	1872	III Protected	SOC				

No.	Object	Municipality	Date of Construction	Protection category	Owner	Proof of ownership	Documentation after 1999	Interventions	
								Implemented 2001–2006	Planned
38	Prizren Potkaljaja, Pantelija and Potok mahala complex Pogrom, March 2004	Prizren	19 th c.	III Protected		Non-existent*	Photographs**		
39	Prizren Church of St Cyriaca Pogrom, March 2004	Prizren	1371; 1966	III Protected	SOC	Non-existent*			
40	Prizren Church of St Nicholas ("Rajkova") Damaged in 1999	Prizren	First half of the 14 th c.	III Protected	SOC	Non-existent*	Photographs**		
41	Priština Stara čaršija (Old Market-place) Devastated in 1999	Priština	19 th –20 th c.	III Protected					

No.	Object	Municipality	Date of Construction	Protection category	Owner	Proof of ownership	Documentation after 1999	Interventions	
								Implemented 2001–2006	Planned
42	Priština Church of St Nicholas Pogrom, March 2004	Priština	1830	III Protected	SOC			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Restoration of the church <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Removal of damaged elements – Consolidation of mural decoration – Construction of a scaffold in the interior – Stonework – Construction of the foundations for new pillars – Construction of new pillars and ceiling Reconstruction of the parish house, baptistery and belfry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Roofing (timber construction covered with roofing tiles) Lead roofing on the dome and apses Timber gallery in the interior Joinery Construction of new marble floors Paint work Electrical installations and lighting protection system

No.	Object	Municipality	Date of Construction	Protection category	Owner	Proof of ownership	Documentation after 1999	Interventions	
								Implemented 2001–2006	Planned
43	Popovljane Church of St Nicholas Destroyed in 1999	Suva Reka	1626	III Protected	SOC	Non-existent*	Photographs**		
44	Donje Nerodimlje Remains of a fortress and the Church of St Nicholas Destroyed in 1999	Uroševac	1983 (on earlier foundations)	III Protected	SOC		Photographs**		
45	Štimlje Church of St Nicholas DEvastated in 1999	Štimlje	1926	III Protected	SOC				
46	Štimlje Church of Holy Archangel Michael Pogrom, March 2004	Štimlje	1920–1922	III Protected	SOC				

APPENDIX III
DAMAGED AND DESTROYED CULTURAL PROPERTIES
b) In Serb-Populated Areas

No.	Object	Municipality	Date of Construction	Protection Category	Owner	Proof of Ownership	Documentation After 1999	Interventions	
								Implemented 2001-2006	Planned
1	Gnjilane Church of St Nicholas	Gnjilane	1861	III Protected	SOC				
2	Cernica Church of St Elias	Gnjilane	1933	III Protected	SOC				
3	Kosovska Kamenica Church of St Nicholas	Kosovska Kamenica	1862	III Protected	SOC				
4	Slovinje Church of St Nicholas	Lipljan	16 th c; 1997	III Protected	SOC				
5	Belo Polje Church of the Presentation of the Holy Virgin in the Temple Damaged in 1999 Pogrom, March 2004	Peć	1866-- 1868	III Protected	SOC	Unavailable*	Consolidation project Photographs**	Consolidation of the church ♦ Removal of damaged elements Drainage of the terrain around the foundations of the church Restoration of the plaster on outer walls of the church	Construction of a footpath around the church Restoration of the floor Joinery Paint work Electrical installations
6	Novake Lodgings Destroyed	Prizren	Mid-19 th c.	III Protected					

APPENDIX IV/1
RELIGIOUS OBJECTS WITHOUT HERITAGE STATUS
Damaged and Destroyed Churches and Cemeteries

A) In Albanian-Populated Areas

No	Object	Municipality	date of construction	Protection category	Owner	Proof of ownership	Documentation after 1999	Interventions	
								Implemented 2001–2006	planned
1	Binač Cemetery church of St Paraskeve	Vitina	1973	-	SOC				
2	Grmovo Church of the Holy Trinity	Vitina	Late 20 th c.	-	SOC				
3	Grnčar Church of St Nicholas (St Paraskeve)	Vitina	1976	-	SOC				
4	Žitinja Church of the Holy Trinity	Vitina	1980	-	SOC				
5	Podgorce Church of the Holy Virgin	Vitina	Before 1996	-	SOC				
6	Banjaska Church of St Nicholas	Vučitrn	14 th c.; reconstructed	Recognized heritage	SOC				

No	Object	Municipality	date of construction	Protection category	Owner	Proof of ownership	Documentation after 1999	Interventions	
								Implemented 2001–2006	planned
7.	Velika Reka Church of the Holy Trinity	Vučitern	1997	-	SOC				
8.	Gornji Livoč Church	Gnjilane		-	SOC				
9.	Dobričane Church of St Paraskeve	Gnjilane	After 1918	-	SOC				
10.	Donji Ratiš Church of the Holy Trinity	Dečani	1935	-	SOC				
11.	Bistražin, Church of St Elias Pogrom, March 2004	Djakovica	1918–1941	-	SOC				
12.	Djakovica Holy Trinity Cathedral Pogrom, March 2004	Djakovica	1994–1999	-	SOC				Reconstruction of the perimeter wall
13.	Djakovica Church of the Dormition of the Holy Virgin Pogrom, March 2004	Djakovica		-	SOC				

No	Object	Municipality	date of construction	Protection category	Owner	Proof of ownership	Documentation after 1999	Interventions	
								Implemented 2001–2006	planned
14.	Piskote Cemetery church of Holy Prince Lazar	Djakovica	1991–1994	-	SOC				
15.	Djurakovac Church of all Serbian Saints	Istok	1997	-	SOC				
16.	Istok Church of Holy Apostles Peter and Paul Pogrom, March 2004	Istok	1929	-	SOC				
17.	Koš Church of Holy Prince Lazar	Istok	1969	-	SOC				
18.	Ljubovo Church of St Vasilije Ostroški	Istok	1939	-	SOC				
19.	Grebnik Church of St Jeremiah	Klina	1920	-	SOC				
20.	Klina Church of St Mark	Klina	Late 19 th c.	-	SOC				
21.	Bresje Church of St Catherine	Kosovo Polje	After 1945	-	SOC				

No	Object	Municipality	date of construction	Protection category	Owner	Proof of ownership	Documentation after 1999	Interventions	
								Implemented 2001–2006	planned
22.	Petrovce Church of Holy Apostles	Kosovska Kamenica			SOC	-			
23.	Obilić Church of Holy Archangel Michael Pogrom, March 2004	Obilić		-	SOC			Fund-raising for an iconostasis	
24.	Zočište Church of the Presentation of the Holy Virgin in the Temple	Orahovac	20 th c.	-	SOC				
25.	Opteruša Church of St Nicholas	Orahovac	1934	-	SOC				
26.	Opteruša Church of St Savior	Orahovac	1925	-	SOC				
27.	Retimlje Church of the Dormition of the Holy Virgin	Orahovac		-	SOC				
28.	Veliko Kruševo Church of the Presentation of the Holy Virgin in the Temple	Peć	1980–1981	-	SOC				
29.	Vitomirica Church of St Luke	Peć	1912	-	SOC				

No	Object	Municipality	date of construction	Protection category	Owner	Proof of ownership	Documentation after 1999	Interventions	
								Implemented 2001–2006	planned
30.	Naklo Church of the Holy Virgin	Peć	1992	-	SOC				
31.	Petrič Church of the Holy Trinity	Peć	1992	-	SOC				
32.	Peć Church of St John the Baptist	Peć	1982	-	SOC				
33.	Peć Church of St Paraskeve	Peć	1912	-	SOC				
34.	Pecka Banja Church of St John the Baptist Pogrom, March 2004	Peć	1998	-	SOC				
35.	Gornja Pakaštica Church of Holy Apostles Peter and Paul	Podujevo	1925	-	SOC				
36.	Gornja Srbica Church of St Basil the Great	Prizren	1863	Recognized heritage	SOC				

No	Object	Municipality	date of construction	Protection category	Owner	Proof of ownership	Documentation after 1999	Interventions	
								Implemented 2001–2006	planned
37.	ŽiviNjane Church of St Cyriaca Pogrom, March 2004	Prizren	1936	Recognized heritage	SOC	Unavailable		Photographs**	
38.	Koriša Church of the Veil of the Holy Virgin	Prizren	16 th or 17 th c.	Recognized heritage	SOC				
39.	Ljubizda Church of St Paraskeve	Prizren	Late 20 th c.	Recognized heritage	SOC	Unavailable*	Photographs**		
40.	Ljubizda Church of St Elias	Prizren	1979	-	SOC				
41.	Ljubizda Church of St Cyriaca	Prizren	19 th c.	Recognized heritage	SOC	Unavailable*	Photographs**		
42.	Prizren Edifice of the Episcopate Pogrom, March 2004	Prizren	c. 1960	Recognized heritage	SOC				

No	Object	Municipality	date of construction	Protection category	Owner	Proof of ownership	Documentation after 1999	Interventions	
								Implemented 2001–2006	planned
43.	Prizren Cathedral of St George Pogrom, March 2004	Prizren	1856–1857	Recognized heritage	SOC	Unavailable*	Photographs**	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Removal of damaged elements Construction of a scaffolding in the interior of the church Construction of the foundations for new pillars Construction of steel pillars and the roof structure Construction of the stone vaults and dome Construction of the new floor Lead roofing Construction of a timber gallery in the interior Electrical installations Paint work Construction of the porch 	
44.	Prizren Church of St Pantheon Pogrom, March 2004	Prizren	1937	Recognized heritage	SOC				
45.	Prizren Church of Holy Doctors Cosmas and Damian Pogrom, March 2004	Prizren	Late 19 th c.	Recognized heritage	SOC	Unavailable*	Photographs**		
46.	Rudnik Church of St George	Prizren	14 th / 16 th c.	Recognized heritage	SOC				

No	Object	Municipality	date of construction	Protection category	Owner	Proof of ownership	Documentation after 1999	Interventions	
								Implemented 2001–2006	planned
47.	Smač Church of St Elias	Prizren	1994	-	SOC				
48.	Pomazatin Church of St Elias	Priština	1937; 1964	Recognized heritage	SOC				
49.	Priština Church of St Savior (Cathedral)	Priština	Late 20 th c.	Recognized heritage	SOC				
50.	Dvorani Church of St Savior	Suva Reka	Late 20 th c.	-	SOC				
51.	Mušutište Church of St Paraskeve	Suva Reka		-	SOC				
52.	Mušutište Church of St Savior	Suva Reka		-	SOC				
53.	Mušutište Church of Holy Archangel Michael	Suva Reka		-	SOC				
54.	Suva Reka Church of the Holy Virgin	Suva Reka	1938	Recognized heritage	SOC	Unavailable*	Photographs**		
55.	Baljak Church of the Holy Trinity	Uroševac	1996	-	SOC				

No	Object	Municipality	date of construction	Protection category	Owner	Proof of ownership	Documentation after 1999	Interventions	
								Implemented 2001–2006	planned
56.	Gatnje Church of St Nicholas	Uroševac	1985	-	SOC				
57.	Gornje Nerodimlje Church of the Holy Virgin	Uroševac	1925	-	SOC				
58.	Donje Nerodimlje Church of St Stephen	Uroševac	1996	-	SOC				
59.	Zaskok Church of St Paraskeve	Uroševac	Late 20 th c.	-	SOC				
60.	Nekodim Church of St Elias Pogrom, March 2004	Uroševac	1975	-	SOC				
61.	Softović Church of the Nativity of the Holy Virgin Pogrom, March 2004	Uroševac	1918–1941	-	SOC				
62.	Srpski Babuš Church of the Holy Trinity	Uroševac		-	SOC				

No	Object	Municipality	date of construction	Protection category	Owner	Proof of ownership	Documentation after 1999	Interventions	
								Implemented 2001–2006	planned
63.	Talinovac Church of Holy Apostles Peter and Paul Pogrom, March 2004	Uroševac	1840	Recognized heritage	SOC				
64.	Uroševac Church of Holy King Uroš Pogrom, March 2004	Uroševac	1926–1933	Recognized heritage	SOC	Unavailable*	Photographs**		
65.	Šarenik Monastery of Holy King Uroš with the church of the Dormition of the Holy Virgin	Uroševac	Second half of the 14 th c.	Recognized heritage	SOC				

Miloš Luković

**Tzintzars in Uroševac, Lipljan, Obilić, Priština
and Kosovska Mitrovica**

Introduction

For more than 120 years, a sizeable community of Hellenized Vlachs, known as Tzintzars¹ has lived in Uroševac (Ferizović, Ferizaj), on the southern rim of the Kosovo Basin.² There was in fact a “Tzintzar Alley” near the main

¹ *Tzintzars* (alternative names [doublets]: *Vlachs, Aromanians/Arumanians*, and in Tzintzar: *Arămăn, Aromăn, Romăn, Răman*) are mostly Hellenized Vlachs, and have been a familiar subject of historiography on Serbia, Old Serbia and both Slavic and Greek Macedonia. Recent decades have seen a profusion of literature on Tzintzars in various Balkan countries (Macedonia, Bulgaria, Romania, Greece, Turkey); see also useful but not always reliable information provided by the websites on Tzintzars www.vlachophiles.net and www.aromanian.net. The work of organisations such as the Belgrade-based *Serb-Tzintzar Society “Lunjina”* (*Lunjina*= “Light”), and the Skopje-based *Union for the Culture of Tzintzars from Macedonia* (*Unija za kultura na Vlasite od Makedonija*) has contributed to this. Regulations on cultural and language rights of Tzintzars (Aromanians) have been included in acts of the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly in Strasbourg in 1997 and 1998; see web site: [www.coe.int/T/E/Human_Rights_Minorities/1.GENERAL_PRESENTATION/PDF_DH-MIN\(98\)3.pdf](http://www.coe.int/T/E/Human_Rights_Minorities/1.GENERAL_PRESENTATION/PDF_DH-MIN(98)3.pdf).

² The term *Kosovo* (alternatively the *Kosovo Basin*) is used in this paper not in its political but in its geographical meaning as defined by Jovan Cvijić, Branislav Nušić and Atanasije Urošević. Cvijić defines Kosovo as a “sizeable basin extending in a meridian direction, its longest longitudinal axis being 84 km from Kačanik to Zvečan above Mitrovica, and the widest latitudinal 14 km between Priština and Drenica (see Cvijić 1996: 368; cf. Urošević 1965, Nušić 1902: 4, 5). Therefore, the term *Kosovo* refers here neither to an administrative subdivision of the Ottoman Empire nor to an autonomous subdivision of the post-Second World War Republic of Serbia (first the Autonomous Region of Kosovo and Metohija 1945–1963, then the Socialist Autonomous Province of Kosovo 1967–1990, and finally the Autonomous Province of Kosovo and Metohija 1990–1999.) The territory of this province was placed under the administration of UN and NATO-led military forces (KFOR) in June 1999. In Serbian tradition, Kosovo as

street, where all the Tzintzar families, usually at least bilingual, Serb- and Vlach-, but sometimes Greek-speaking as well, were originally grouped and lived there until the 1999 expulsion of both Serbs and non-Albanians by Albanian extremists. Uroševac remained cleansed, without its previous Serb and Serbo-Vlach Tzintzar population. Facing violence, they left prior to or soon after KFOR took control of Kosovo and Metohija in June 1999. Only three women of the Nikolić family have remained (two sisters with their aged mother). And so it happened that there are hardly any Tzintzars left in Uroševac, despite their visible role in its origin and development.³

In lesser numbers, Tzintzars (*Cincari* or *Цинцари*) also inhabited other Kosovo towns along the railway line opened in 1873: Lipljan, Obilić, Priština and Kosovska Mitrovica. Lacking basic security for Christian population, another two towns along the same railway line, Vučitrn and Kačanik, did not attract the Tzintzars, traditionally traders (Jugović 1906: 126; Cvijić 1996: 523). **This railway line connected the Kosovo towns Mitrovica (the last station to the north), Vučitrn, Priština, Lipljan, Uroševac and Kačanik with Skoplje, and further south along the Vardar Valley with Gevgelija and with Thessalonica in the Salonica Bay.** With the opening in the Kingdom of Serbia in 1884 of the railway from Belgrade via Niš to Vranje, and its connection with the railway in the Vardar Valley (via Skoplje), the Kosovo railway lost some of its previous importance, while retaining certain influence on trade and economy within Kosovo (cf. Nušić 1902: 45, 46; Urošević 1965: 133; Lutovac 1972: 3, 4). These Kosovo “railway towns” – as termed by Jovan Cvijić⁴ – were marked by their business-oriented Tzintzar communities, who usually intermarried with Serbs and Greeks. The landmark area of their presence was Uroševac – known as the “youngest town in Kosovo” (Vidačić 1967: 7; Maloku 1957: 25). Their presence is recorded by various sources, including both published and oral ones.

a geographical area is clearly differentiated from the neighbouring geographical areas of Drenica, Metohija, Ibarski Kolašin, Srednje Poibanje and Gornja Morava, which together make up the Autonomous Province of Kosovo and Metohija. Albanians from this territory insist on the monomial term *Kosovo* or, in Albanian, *Kosova* for this administrative unit, and these appellations are also accepted, at least the first Serb one, by the international community.

³ This paper is a revised version of Luković 2004, published in Serbian.

⁴ Jovan Cvijić (1865–1927) was the leading Serbian and internationally recognized geographer and anthropogeographer, expert on the geography of the Western Balkans and interethnic relations within Turkey-in-Europe. Cvijić classified all Kosovo towns into: 1) *Kosovo railway towns*, and 2) *remote towns*. Neither he nor other Serbian scholars have counted as Kosovo towns those in the adjacent area called *Metohija* by the Serbs, Vlachs and other non-Albanians, and *Dukagjin* by the Albanians. Cf. Cvijić 1996: 519, 522–526.

This paper relies on ample information provided by Nikola (Niko) and Meropi Nikolić, a couple from a prominent Uroševac family, well-informed on other Tzintzar families. **Nikola Nikolić (b. 1924, Uroševac)** and his wife Mrs. Meropi Nikolić (b. 1928, Uroševac, of the Tzintzar Dedić family) lived in Uroševac until the arrival of NATO-led international forces in Kosovo in June 1999, when they were forced to move out, arriving eventually in Belgrade. Their native language remained to be Vlach or Tzintzar.

Uroševac (Ferizović)

1) Published sources

Data on the Tzintzar community in Ferizović (renamed to Uroševac after the First Balkan War 1912) is available in the various publications of the older generation of anthropo-geographers (J. Cvijić, Jefto Dedijer, Atanasije Urošević), political analysts (Branislav Dj. Nušić, Boško Jugović), historians (Dušan Popović [1937]), travel-writers or Kosovo Serb culture historians (Petar Kostić), with occasional data in the consular dispatches of B. Nušić and Milan M. Rakić, both Serbian consuls in Priština in the last decades of Ottoman rule. The most detailed data is provided by Urošević, while the post-Second World War monographs regarding the Tzintzar community in Uroševac were based mostly on earlier results (Vidačić 1967; Kaleshi 1975), and on studies on Serbia in general (Vlahović 1999: 88) and on Tzintzars in particular, in the rest of Serbia (Petrović 1996: 78).

Prior to the building of the railway, the location where Uroševac was founded was in the fens and forests of Nikodim village. There was an Ottoman inn (*han*) there, belonging to Feriz Šešivar, an ethnic Turk whose family eventually moved to Turkey after the Balkan Wars (1912–13). The local peasants called the newly-formed settlement *Tasjan* (a metathesis of the French word *station*). Soon afterwards the name *Ferizović* (with the Serbian extension *-ić*) established itself among the inhabitants of the town and the vicinity. In 1900 the town was raised to the level of *mudirluk* (district station), the Ottoman authorities discarded the name *Ferizović* from public use on account of its Serbian form and introduced the name *Feriz Bey* after an Ottoman hero who in the late fourteenth century had seized Zvečan from the Serbs and become its commander (*kefalija*). The new name was not easily accepted by the population, either Albanian or Serb, and the old name *Ferizović* remained in widespread use. After Kosovo was reintegrated into the Kingdom of Serbia in 1912 the town was renamed *Uroševac*, after the Serbian Emperor Uroš I, the last ruler from the House of Nemanjić who died in the nearby royal residence of Nerodimlje in 1371. In the post-Second World War period, along with the name Uroševac, the Albanian

form *Ferizaj* was in use as well (cf. Urošević 1936: 266–267; Vidačić 1967: 14–17; Kaleshi 1975: 59, 63).

In his major work on Ottoman-held Old Serbia and Macedonia,⁵ Cvijić concludes that among the railway towns, Ferizović became “the most important as a crossroads and important trading station”, since at that time this little town was the “stop for Prizren, Podrima, Prizrenski Podgor, Obica, Lugovi and Gnjilane”.⁶ He also notes that “there are but a few Albanians in it” and that it is “a comparatively safe little town”. Cvijić points out that Ferizović “originated from the time when the Kosovo railway line passed through it”, and records its swift development. At the time of Cvijić’s visit in 1901 Ferizović already had about 400 households and 200 shops with large warehouses, especially for Kosovo grain, as well as for transport of imported European goods to other locations.

Writing on the population of Ferizović, Cvijić identified three religious groups: Christian Orthodox, Muslim and Roman Catholic. Among the Christian Orthodox population, mostly Serbs, there were eighteen Tzintzar houses (Cvijić 1996: 285, 286, also uses the alternative Serbian term *Aromuni* i.e. Aromanians). They were originally from the Tzintzar-inhabited area of Bitolj–Kruševo (Bitolj, Gopeš, Magarevo and Kruševo) and were “very active” at the time. However, Cvijić fails to mention the names of these families (Cvijić 1996: 454, 523).

As vice-consul of the Kingdom of Serbia, Branislav Dj. Nušić spent three years (1893–96) in Priština, after his first two-month sojourn there in 1890. During those years Nušić visited many places in Kosovo, traveling as far as Scutari in northern Albania. As a result, he published several important travel books and a richly documented monograph on Kosovo (Nušić 1902). In *Kosovo* Nušić notes that “Ferizović is a very lively station”, which led to “a village, which used to be very small and a long way off from the station, develop quite a little town around it with a proper *čaršija* (downtown), stores, inns, shops and uninterrupted trade” (Nušić 1902: 47, 48). Grain trading was a profitable business in Kosovo. “To the Thessalonica market alone, Kosovo sends over ten million *okas* of grain annually [1,280 wagons], as well as some to markets nearer home” (Nušić 1902: 52). Even though Priština (“as the most populous town and surrounded by the richest

⁵ Cvijić 1996: 522. Cvijić’s monumental research on the whole of Old Serbia and Macedonia was published in three extensive volumes by the Royal Serbian Academy 1906–1911 (second edition in 1996).

⁶ In the 1880s solid roads from Ferizović to Štimlje (on the road to Prizren) and from Ferizović to Gnjilane were constructed, considerably facilitating local traffic, while the road to Prizren was reconstructed in 1930–32, as was the road to Sirinička Župa (Jugović 1906; Maloku 1975: 60).

villages”) had “the liveliest trade”, at that time Ferizović and Mitrovica were already “threatening to surpass Priština” (Nušić 1902: 69).

In referring to Kosovo, Nušić describes the Tzintzars as *Vlachs*, a name much used for Tzintzars in other languages as well. Nušić says that there are “considerable numbers” of Vlachs in Kosovo, that they all are Christian Orthodox, and that they are engaged in trade; there are some in villages, “but they mostly gravitate towards better markets, such as those in [Kosovska] Mitrovica, Priština and Ferizović”. Pointing out that people call them *Goge*,⁷ Nušić concludes that they, however, are “mostly from the Vilayet of Monastir, from those same villages that send them to Serbia”.

In his 1906 travelogue B. Jugović, an employee at the Serbian consulate in Skopje (in 1905 he travelled from Skoplje through Kosovo as far as Devič monastery in the Drenica area), notes that Ferizović is “the centre of all the trade for those areas” (those of Prizren, Djakovica and Gnjilane) in which Greek or Tzintzar merchants are involved. He provides a more thorough explanation of their business success: “Fleeing from oppression in their homelands, they settled here one by one. With their skills they soon became the masters of trade. Their moving here may be observed even today in Kosovo. One refugee opens a small shop and trades in everything, buys and sells everything, lends everything, bears everything: the scorn, the sneers and beatings. His first concern is money; he is as diligent as a mole. When he has stood on his own feet, he sends for his wife and children; and when they have settled in, it will be their relatives’ turn, his and his wife’s. And so their colony strengthens gradually” (Jugović 1906: 127).⁸

The renowned expert for Kosovo inter-ethnic relations Atanasije Urošević, in his short prewar volume *Uroševac, a Town in Kosovo* (1936), lists the names of all the prominent families in Uroševac, in particular those involved in trade and commerce. Among the quite numerous settlers from Prizren, there was a single Tzintzar family, by the name of Konstantinović. However, according to Urošević, the Tzintzar group of the Bitolj [Monastir] area moved there in far greater numbers: the Santić, Kurtić,⁹ Nikolić, Dedić, Dinić, Dorča, Erka and Cingar families from Gopeš, the Parafest family

⁷ The name *Goge* was a common expression used only for the Tzintzars of Prizren (Kostić 1925).

⁸ Obviously lacking time for additional research, Cvijić’s disciple Jefto Dedijer simply reiterates Cvijić’s observations and data on Ferizović in his book *Novi Srbija* (The New Serbia), published in 1913 after the Balkan Wars to cover the areas of Old Serbia and Slavic Macedonia reintegrated into the Kingdom of Serbia. See Dedijer 1913: 263, 264.

⁹ The Tzintzar Kurtić family should be distinguished from the Albanian Catholic Kurtić family in Uroševac. Both lived in Uroševac at the same time.

from Nižopolje near Bitolj, the Mazni family also came from Gopeš and moved to Skopje in 1910.¹⁰ The arrival of *muhadjirs* [displaced Muslims] after the 1877–78 war between Serbia and the Ottoman Empire – Bosniaks from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Albanians from Toplica and Jablanica and Circassians from Niš – forced the Ottomans to provide greater security for the inhabitants of the newly-formed settlement. Therefore, the merchants from Prizren commenced moving their families to business-promising Uroševac (Urošević 1936: 270).

The settling of the Tzintzars in Uroševac began with the arrival of the Kurtić and Santić families from Gopeš, who “took over the entire grain export business”; due to the profitability of this business, the grain merchants multiplied, and between 1890 and 1900 new Tzintzar families arrived from Slavic Macedonia (these are not mentioned by name, but there are sporadic references to the Nikolić family, cf. Vidačić 1967: 17–19).

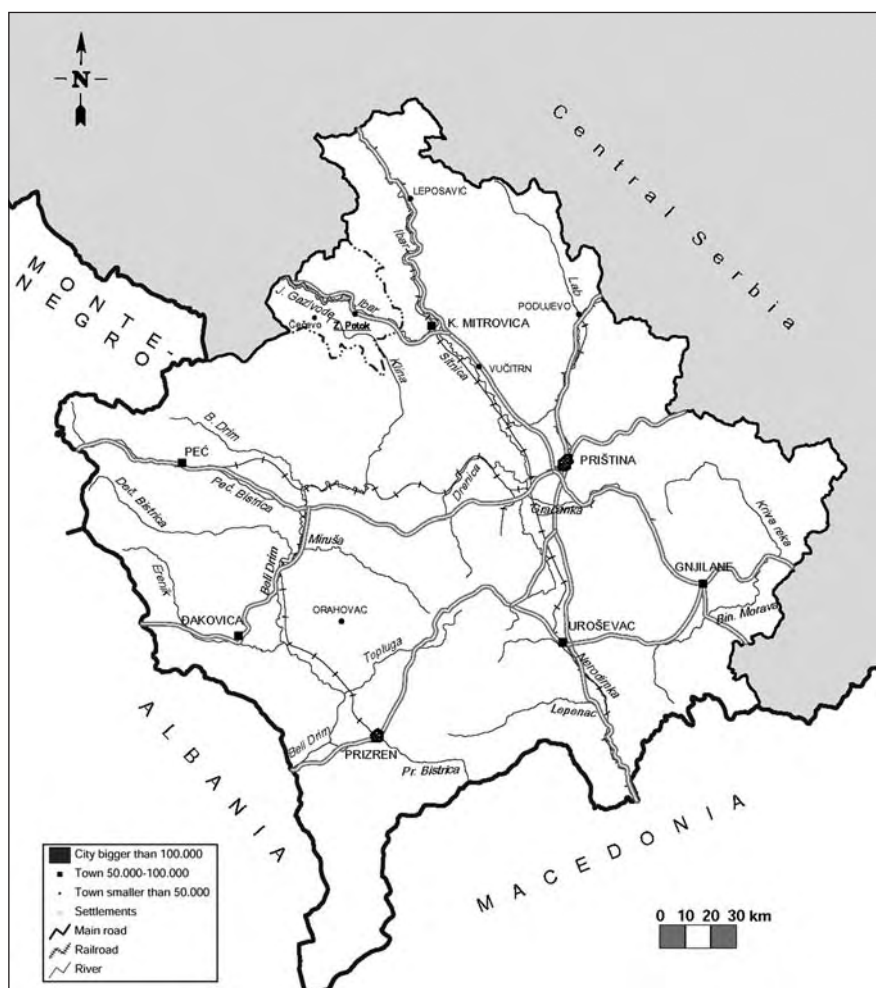
The same data is confirmed in *Ferizaj dhe rrethina* (Uroševac and its Environs) published in Albanian in 1975, where the “famous Tzintzar merchant families of Kurtić and Santić from the vicinity of Bitolj, from the village of Gopeš” are mentioned (Maloku 1975: 26), as well as the piece of information that Tzintzar families, such as the Nikolićs, continued to arrive throughout the late nineteenth century (Zdravković 1975: 215).

2) Oral histories: Families and destinies

The Nikolićs point out that the first families to move to Uroševac were the Santićs and Kurtićs (the Kurtić family left the area a long time ago), while most of the Tzintzar families in Uroševac came from Gopeš. These were the Santić, Nikolić, Atanasijević, Dedić and Jovanović families, as well as some persons without their extended families. The surnames of families originally from Kruševo and Prizren are also known. Information given by the Nikolićs is fragmented and not of equal detail for all Tzintzar families, but it is useful for further research and will, therefore, be given here in its entirety.

In the interwar period Dimitrije Santić was in the grain trade. He had two sons and a daughter. Even before the Second World War, they owned a large apartment building in Thessalonica and farmland near Uroševac. After the war, they first moved to Skopje and eventually on to Thessalonica. For a time one of the Santićs was the representative of the Yugoslav *Tehno-promet* Company in Thessalonica. The present day surname of the Santićs in Greece is not known.

¹⁰ Urošević 1936: 265–271. Urošević also lists the families of other settlers in Uroševac.



Djordje Atanasijević was brought from Gopeš by his brother-in-law and sister, Nača and Santa Nikolić, who had already lived in Uroševac. When he arrived, they helped him develop his business in the grain trade. Djordje and his wife Kostandina (also from Gopeš) had no children of their own, but they adopted a boy and a girl from among their relatives. Djordje and Kostandina were buried in Uroševac. Their adopted children moved from Uroševac to Belgrade, which is where they died.

Aleksa Dedić in the interwar period traded in “colonial” or mixed groceries and metal products (ploughs, tools, hardware products etc.). On the eve of the world war he went bankrupt (“a good man, he signed too many promissory notes for others”), so the bank foreclosed on his house,

which was mortgaged. After the death of his wife Kostandina, Aleksa remarried. From his first marriage he had five children: two sons – a) Djordje (nicknamed Djoka), and b) Dimitrije; and three daughters – c) Agapi; d) Sterija (called Teža in Uroševac and Terdjo by the Tzintzars); and e) Marika. Aleksa's second wife was Vasilika, originally from Gopeš. In Gopeš, Vasilika was formerly married to Djordje (Djordjaki in Tzintzar) from the Pagenaki family (Djordje's father was a priest in Gopeš), who died. A daughter, Antula, was born of this marriage (1915). From his marriage to Vasilika, Aleksa had two children: a daughter, Meropi (1928), and a son, Nikola (1931). Antula (the Serbian equivalent of her name is Cveta) also lived with them. Aleksa Dedić and his two wives were buried in Uroševac.

Atanas Jovanović lived for a short while in the village of Babljak (on the railway line to Kosovo Polje) where he traded in “colonial goods”. Then he moved to Uroševac, where he expanded his business to the grain trade. Atanas's wife had died before the Second World War, and he remarried. He had four sons from this first marriage: Kosta, Aleksandar, Djordje and Mihailo. From his second marriage, he had two more sons and a daughter. He lived in Uroševac where his business was, while his wife and their three children remained in Gopeš. Atanas supported and visited them there. However, during the war, Atanas's entire family moved from Uroševac to Gopeš, and after the war those who had lived in Uroševac returned there. Later on they all dispersed, so that Kosta was buried in Kovin, Aleksandar in Belgrade, Djordje in Kruševac, and Mihailo in Uroševac. The Nikolićs also remember some individual Tzintzars in Uroševac (without an extended family), originally from Gopeš (their surnames are also mentioned by A. Urošević in his work on Uroševac published in 1935).¹¹

Panta Dorča worked as a bus driver on intercity lines maintained by the transport company owned by Rogošić. He moved with his sister to Skopje. Vandjel, nicknamed Sotir (his surname was probably Lerka), was in the trade business. After he went bankrupt, he moved to Romania. Prior to 1941, Kosta [al] Dina, previously a small-scale merchant in the nearby village of Babljak, lived in Uroševac.¹²

Nikola Cingara worked in the Nikolić family bank in Uroševac. After 1945 when this private bank was liquidated, he moved to Skopje and married a Greek woman. Nikola died and was buried in Skopje. Their son Koča (Kosta) studied technology in Zagreb, settled there and was joined by his

¹¹ Among the settlers from Gopeš, A. Urošević cites the Dorča, Erka, Dinić and Cingar families, and the Parafest family settlers from Nižopolje (near Gopeš).

¹² *Dina* is a female Tzintzar name, and the preposition *al* before it is used to give it the possessive genitive form; hence *Kosta al Dina* means “Dina's Kosta” and this is undoubtedly the *Dinić* family cited by A. Urošević.

widowed mother Alik. Atanas Kostić (his wife's name was Vita) was, as a "literate man", the president of the tradesmen's association in Uroševac after 1945. Atanas's brother took the surname of Dimitrijević and his descendants carry this name.

Panta Sotirović lived on for some fifteen years after 1945 and was buried in Uroševac. He never married and lived from renting apartments in his house.

Prior to 1941 Nikola Parafesta, originally from Nižopolje (Nižepole) near Bitolj, used to be the municipal "organ of order" (night watchman) in Uroševac. He died and was buried in Uroševac.

The Ristić family originally came from Kruševo. Between the two world wars Jovan Ristić (who also married in Kruševo) worked as a coppersmith. He had seven children: three sons – Vasilj (the copper-smith businessman in his father's shop, moved to Skopje and married a girl from Kruševo), Tomislav (bank clerk, died very young) and Hristaki (or Rista, an electrician), and four daughters – Filomena, Ljubica (born about 1920), Marija and Antina.

The Zabunović, Konstantinović and Bilicarević families were originally from Prizren. In Uroševac (as in Prizren) these Tzintzar families were called the *Goge* community. In the beginning these families were craftsmen. Later one of the Bilicarević family became a lawyer and a judge.

Again according to the Nikolićs, several Tzintzar families lived, for various periods, in the village of Babljak near Uroševac and in places a little further away: in Štimlje and Štrpce. As we have mentioned already, the Jovanović family lived for a short period in the village of Babljak (on the Kosovo Polje railway line). They traded in "colonial merchandise", and then they moved to Uroševac, expanding their trade to the grain business. The same goes for the Dina family. In the late nineteenth century, Spira Kostić, originally from Gopeš, settled in Štimlje, where he traded in "colonial merchandise" and liquor, as owner of a wine and brandy cellar. His children left Štimlje. At the same time, Nikola Maću, also originally from Gopeš, owned an inn (*han*) in Štimlje, which he subsequently sold and opened a shop selling assorted goods. After 1945 his descendants moved to Skopje. The Nikolić and Dedić families also first came to Štrpce, and after a couple of years of working in the retail trade they moved to Uroševac.

Lipljan

In the early twentieth century, J. Cvijić recorded that in a new settlement around the railway station at the village of Lipljan there were eight Tzintzar houses, who had moved there during the previous two decades, and all of them from Gopeš (Cvijić 1996: 523). In his 1906 travelogue, B. Jugović

says that in the “small dirty village” of Lipljan beside the railway track there are several shops and *kafane* (coffeehouses-cum-restaurants) “mostly belonging to Tzintzars” (Jugović 1906: 235). And in March 1907 M. Rakić (Rakić 1985) reported that there are “nine houses” belonging to Tzintzars and Greeks in Lipljan.

According to research by A. Urošević (1957b: 341–345), until the opening of the railway line in 1873, Lipljan was “an ordinary village, but well known as a road junction”. With the opening of the railway, merchant shops (primarily for the export of grain from Kosovo to Thessalonica) and workshops opened around the station, on the spot where a grove used to be, and in this way the *čaršija* (a street of shops) sprang up. The first building with a *kafana* was built in 1875 by a Tzintzar immigrant from Gopeš, Djordje Peško. After him, during the same year, grain merchants of the Dorča family, also from Gopeš, built houses and shops. There were some other Tzintzar families there too, but during the 1877–78 Serbian-Ottoman war they left Lipljan. Until that war the railway station in Lipljan was also used for grain export by other Tzintzars who had grocery stores in the neighbouring villages. However, the war brought turmoil, so the Tzintzar families of Peško, Dorča and others (and a Serb merchant family, the Markovićs) fled to Bitolj and Gopeš. When the war was over, the Dorčas did not return to Lipljan (although the Markovićs did) but settled in Uroševac. However, new settlers from Gopeš arrived in Lipljan: the Romo and Veljan families (the latter then took on the surname Kuzmanović). A couple of years later (1885) two more Tzintzar merchant families settled in Lipljan: the Trpu family from Gopeš, who ran a grocery store in the surrounding villages as far back as 1868, and the Trpče family from Gopeš, who in 1926 moved to Romania (Turnu Severin).

Urošević also writes that in 1913 the Tzintzar Janković family moved to Lipljan from Malovište village near Bitolj, and opened a wine, grocery and grain shop. After the First World War (1919) two houses of the Tzintzar family of Torbu (Djordjević), originally from Gopeš, who ran grocery stores in Janjevo and the neighbouring village of Dobrotin, moved to Lipljan and opened grocery-cum-grain stores. During that period in Uroševac there were also some Serb families from Prizren and Lipljan and the vicinity, immigrants from around Veles (Macedonia) and an Albanian family from Priština (Sejefedini) who also traded in grain (and other goods). During the period between two world wars there was an increase in the number of Serb families in trade and some of them received financial support from the Tzintzar Trpče family. Tzintzar families continued living in Lipljan (in 1948 Lipljan only had 1479 inhabitants). However, according to Urošević, these families were already becoming Serbianized. In the Veljan (Kuzmanović) family, where the mother was Serbian, Tzintzar was no longer spoken. At

that time, two Serbian girls married into the Torbu (Djordjević) family, so that Tzintzar was not the only language spoken in the house.

According to the Nikolićs, there were two Tzintzar families living in Lipljan: Djordjević and Jovanović; the latter moved to Skopje after 1945. They can also verify the information given by A. Urošević that the Djordjević family previously lived in the village of Dobrotin.

Obilić

The station in *Globoderica* village, some ten kilometres from Priština, at first the only one on the Lipljan–Vučitrn railway line, became a station for Priština (the village was named *Obilić* after the Balkan Wars, cf. Urošević 1951: 11; Urošević 1965: 38). After the opening of a new station for Priština in Kosovo Polje in the early twentieth century, Globoderica remained an important railway station for the area of the Kosovo Basin around the confluence of the Lab and the Sitnica, while for the Lab and Drenica areas it was especially important as a grain market (Urošević 1965: 257). According to earlier research, four Tzintzar families settled in Globoderica, but the names of only three are available: Jovanović, Erkoivić and Trpčević (Urošević 1965: 80–81, 258). The first Jovanovićs arrived as early as 1873, but they did not bring their families from Gopeš until after the Balkan Wars, when the whole of Kosovo and Metohija were reintegrated into the Kingdom of Serbia. During the Great War they temporarily withdrew to Gopeš. The Erkoivić family arrived in 1912, returned to Gopeš during the Great War, and then back to Obilić in 1918. The Trpčević family came from Gopeš only in 1921 (Urošević 1965: 83).

According to the Nikolićs (and based on information from descendants of the Trpčević family), the first to arrive in 1900 were the two Trpčević brothers: Telemah and Janačko. Telemah never married, and Janačko brought his family from Gopeš only after the Great War. His two sons continued the family merchant trade. Besides them, according to the Nikolićs, other Tzintzar families in Obilić were: Maznić (probably that fourth family in Obilić left unnamed by Urošević) and Jovanović (who moved away to Skopje after 1945).

Priština

Today's settlement of Kosovo Polje was formed in the interwar period around the Priština railway station. Only with the opening of a new railway line to Peć in 1936 was the station officially named Kosovo Polje, the same as the Serb-inhabited village around the station with no Tzintzar families (Urošević 1965: 222).

There were Tzintzars, however, in nearby Priština, which in 1877 became an important Ottoman administrative centre, the seat of the newly-established Vilayet of Kosovo. After the seat of this vilayet was moved to Skopje in 1888, Priština remained the centre of one of its sanjaks. Back in 1852, travel writer Jukić recorded that with the economic decline of the town, many of its thirty Tzintzar families moved away to Skoplje (Uskub). In the 1850s the Tzintzars were mostly immigrants from Prizren with only few families from Gopeš and one from Uroševac. Prior to the Balkan Wars there were twenty-five Tzintzar houses in Priština, mostly Serbianized but aware of their ethnic origin. The families of Vančetović, Lazić, Nastić, Nikolić and Djordjević, with their roots in Prizren, spoke only Serbian. The Topal and Ganga families were from Gopeš, while the Kočović family came from Uroševac (Urošević 1951: 22). **After 1945, among Priština's 14,338 inhabitants there were only seventeen persons declared as Tzintzars (Urošević 1951: 20).**

Kosovska Mitrovica

Mitrovica developed much in the same way as Ferizović (Uroševac). It was the last stop on the Kosovo railway line. "In 1871 still a village with 150 thatched houses", Mitrovica, as seen by Cvijić in the early twentieth century, "is becoming the main trading place in Kosovo, with which only Ferizović will be able to compete in the future" (Cvijić 1996: 524). **Relying on the data provided by the traveller Ippen in 1890 (that year Mitrovica had just begun to be called *Kosovska* instead of *Pazarska*, because it was made part of the Priština sanjak instead of the Novi Pazar sanjak; Urošević 1957a: 190), Cvijić says that along with the Greeks "there is a small number of Vlachs" (i.e. Tzintzars) in Mitrovica.**

Atanasije Urošević confirms that among the numerous families living in Kosovska Mitrovica after the opening of the railway and the 1877–78 Serbian-Ottoman War there are also Tzintzar families: the Nikolićs from Bitolj, and the Karamika, Pirikli and Marina families from Kruševo. The Tzintzars traded in consumer goods and exported timber (timber was transported down the Ibar from the Rožaje area). Only one Tzintzar (Mijalče Nikolić) was in the grain business, which was at the time in the hands of Serb, Ottoman and Albanian tradesmen. The Tzintzars later moved from Mitrovica, but some of the houses belonging to these families remained even after 1945 (Urošević 1957a).

The Nikolićs mention two Tzintzar families who continued to live in Kosovska Mitrovica after 1945: the Karamika family, originally from Kruševo, and the Vaka family from Prizren. They also know about families

originating from Gopeš, but only remember the name of the Hentu family.

Data contained in the published sources and oral traditions presented in this paper lay the groundwork for genealogies of the Tzintzar families that once lived in Kosovo and Metohija. Such genealogies may be of broader relevance than just to the historical past of the families or the identity of their members, present and future; they may provide distinctive evidence for the Tzintzar component of the multiethnic structure of Kosovo and Metohija in the past.¹³

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Dušan T. Bataković

Surviving in Ghetto-like Enclaves

THE SERBS OF KOSOVO AND METOHİJA

1999–2007

The legal position of Serbia's troublesome autonomous province of Kosovo and Metohija was redefined after the seventy-eight days of NATO bombing campaign (from 24 March to 10 June 1999). The bombing campaign, lacking UN approval, consisted of a massive air-strikes operation in order to stop the "humanitarian catastrophe" of the Kosovo Albanians and their fighting units (KLA) confronted by the Yugoslav armed and police forces. The Military-Technical Agreement between NATO and Yugoslav military representatives was signed in Kumanovo (FYROM) on 9 June 1999.

Under the Kumanovo Agreement, Kosovo and Metohija — constitutionally an autonomous province within Serbia, a member state of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia — was to be entrusted, after the eventual withdrawal of all Yugoslav military and police personnel, to the military protection of a NATO-led 48,000-strong Kosovo force (KFOR). The bilateral Military-Technical Agreement that finally ended the bombing campaign was a prerequisite for UN Security Council Resolution 1244, adopted on the East River in New York the following day, 10 June 1999. Kosovo and Metohija (referred to only as Kosovo by the UN Resolution) were placed under the administration of the United Nations.¹

Calling for the disarmament of Albanian paramilitary units (the Kosovo Liberation Army), UNSC Resolution 1244 reaffirmed the sovereignty of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia over Kosovo and Metohija and foresaw the return of an agreed number (less than 1,000) of Yugoslav (i.e. Serbian) security and military forces to the Province. The UN Resolution also envisaged the establishment of "a substantial autonomy" for Kosovo

¹ D. T. Bataković, "Kosovo: from Separation to Integration", *Serbian Studies. Journal of the North American Society for Serbian Studies*, vol. 18, No 2 (Washington DC 2004), 311–320.

and Metohija within Serbia — since June 2006 the legal successor of both the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (April 1992 – February 2003) and the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro (February 2003 – June 2006).² The main purpose of UNSC Resolution 1244 — at least the one officially declared as such — was not to bring about the separation of Kosovo and Metohija from the rest of Serbia, but to rebuild this war-torn area into a new democratic, tolerant multicultural society that would eventually, enjoying the highest possible degree of autonomy, be reintegrated into a future democratic framework of the Republic of Serbia.

Under UN administration since June 1999, the Autonomous Province of Kosovo and Metohija and its Albanian-dominated Provisional Institutions of Self-Government (PISG) were under obligation to restore the protection of fundamental human rights and to ensure freedom of movement for all of Kosovo inhabitants, regardless of their ethnic origin or religious affiliation. Furthermore, according to UNSC Resolution 1244, they were obliged to provide for the fast and safe return of internally displaced persons and to create a stable legal framework as the main precondition for the restoration of multicultural, multi-ethnic society in compliance with fundamental UN and European standards regarding human rights, property rights, and so on.

However, none of these solemnly proclaimed goals have been achieved, not even partially, within the first eight years of UN administration, despite the fact that democracy was finally restored in Belgrade after the ousting of the authoritarian regime of Slobodan Milošević in October 2000, and the new authorities were eager to co-operate closely with both the United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) and NATO-led KFOR. Furthermore, both the federal and Serbian governments were offering serious negotiations with the legitimate representatives of Kosovo Albanians, to support the fulfillment of the requirements of UNSC Resolution 1244. Belgrade's democratic approach to the Kosovo problem was manifested in the rapid liberation of all Kosovo Albanian civilian prisoners of war detained in Serbian prisons, while efficient cooperation with KFOR was established in managing the security in the Ground Safety Zone established between Kosovo and the rest of Serbia after June 1999.

In contrast to the open and democratic policy of Belgrade, the whole post-June 1999 process of rebuilding Kosovo and Metohija as a democratic, multi-ethnic society failed, as it made little or no progress in most of the sensitive areas that involved multi-ethnic cooperation or inter-ethnic rec-

² The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, renamed the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro on 4 February 2003, was eventually succeeded by the Republic of Serbia on 5 June 2006, after the referendum on independence of Montenegro.

conciliation. UNMIK administration and KFOR forces, focused on helping Albanians, perceived as the main victims of civil conflict, failed to provide efficient protection for non-Albanian communities and minority groups from the highly orchestrated large-scale campaign of ethnic cleansing directed primarily against Serbs, a constituent nation in Kosovo and Metohija. Carried out by Albanian extremists led by former warlords, this new wave of post-war ethnic cleansing against the Serbs, Roma, Goranians and other non-Albanian ethnic groups was tacitly approved not only by the majority of Kosovo Albanians, but by their political leaders as well.

The ethnic cleansing against the Kosovo Serbs was openly justified both by Albanians and by their supporters throughout the international community as a kind of ugly and regrettable but inevitable revenge for all the criminal acts against local Albanians previously committed by the Serbian police or paramilitaries under the Milošević regime while fighting the KLA and its supporters during the fifteen months of armed clashes before and during the NATO bombing campaign.³ In compliance with the Kumanovo Agreement, the Yugoslav army took all its military equipment out of Kosovo and Metohija, while KLA fighting units remained armed, despite occasional, mostly symbolic, handovers of arms to KFOR. The complete disarmament of the KLA was never accomplished although it was one of the main prerequisites in UNSC Resolution 1244. Thus, fully disarmed, the Kosovo Serbs could find protection only with KFOR, while Albanians, using the reluctance of KFOR to confront the KLA, a major NATO ally during the bombing campaign, were free to take their revenge against the Serbs and the members of those ethnic groups considered as having been loyal to Serbia during the 1999 conflict.

It is not a surprise then that despite the massive military presence of international (KFOR) troops, the overall security situation concerning personal safety and freedom of movement for the Serbs and non-Albanian minorities has been constantly deteriorating since June 1999. The major positive achievement of the UN mission in Kosovo was the quick and safe return of hundreds of thousands of Albanians who had fled or had been forced to leave Kosovo during the 1999 NATO bombing campaign. They safely returned to their often destroyed homes within weeks after KFOR and UNMIK took full control over the administration of the Province. As confirmed by independent sources, however, along with them came dozens of thousands of Albanians from the economically backward areas of north-

³ The Albanian testimonies to wartime sufferings, extensive but not always fully reliable, are available in *Under Orders. War Crimes in Kosovo* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 2001).

ern Albania in order to pillage the abandoned property of the Serbs who, in fear of spiralling violence, had fled to central Serbia or to Montenegro.⁴

Post-1999 ethnic cleansing

Conversely, most of the Kosovo Serbs and other non-Albanians were forced out of the Province by Albanian extremists, while the remaining ones were and still are deprived of their fundamental human rights. The chronology of post-war developments as far as the Serbs and other non-Albanians are concerned is the following: prior to the establishment of UNMIK, at least 30,000 Serbs hastily left Kosovo and Metohija fleeing from Albanian persecutions, retribution and attacks. During the first three months of UNMIK-KFOR administration, approximately 150,000 Serbs were expelled from Kosovo and forced to find refuge in central Serbia or in Montenegro.

After KFOR officially took over in Priština on 12 June, busy with finding suitable accommodation for the incoming troops, “a wave of unprecedented violence, looting, murders and abductions spread throughout the Province, especially in the cities, the victims of which were the remaining Serbs, Roma, Goranians and Muslim Bosniacs”.⁵ Furthermore, tens of thousands of Roma, and thousands of Muslim Slavs (mostly Goranians), whose houses were also burnt or usurped by Albanians, also fled the Serbian province freshly entrusted to UN.⁶

The very difficult situation for the Serb and non-Albanian population became critical, going from bad to worse. Thus, on 17 June 1999, about 5,000 Kosovo Serbs left Uroševac, an important town in the south of the Province, escorted by a strong KFOR contingent. According to the data offered by the Serbian police and eventually confirmed by UNMIK, since 1 January 1998 there were 1,303 missing persons: 944 Serbs, 210 Muslim Roma and 149 ethnic Albanians. According to other data provided by The Hague Tribunal (ICTY), 547 Serbs were killed and 932 Serbs and non-Albanians kidnapped in June 1999 alone.⁷

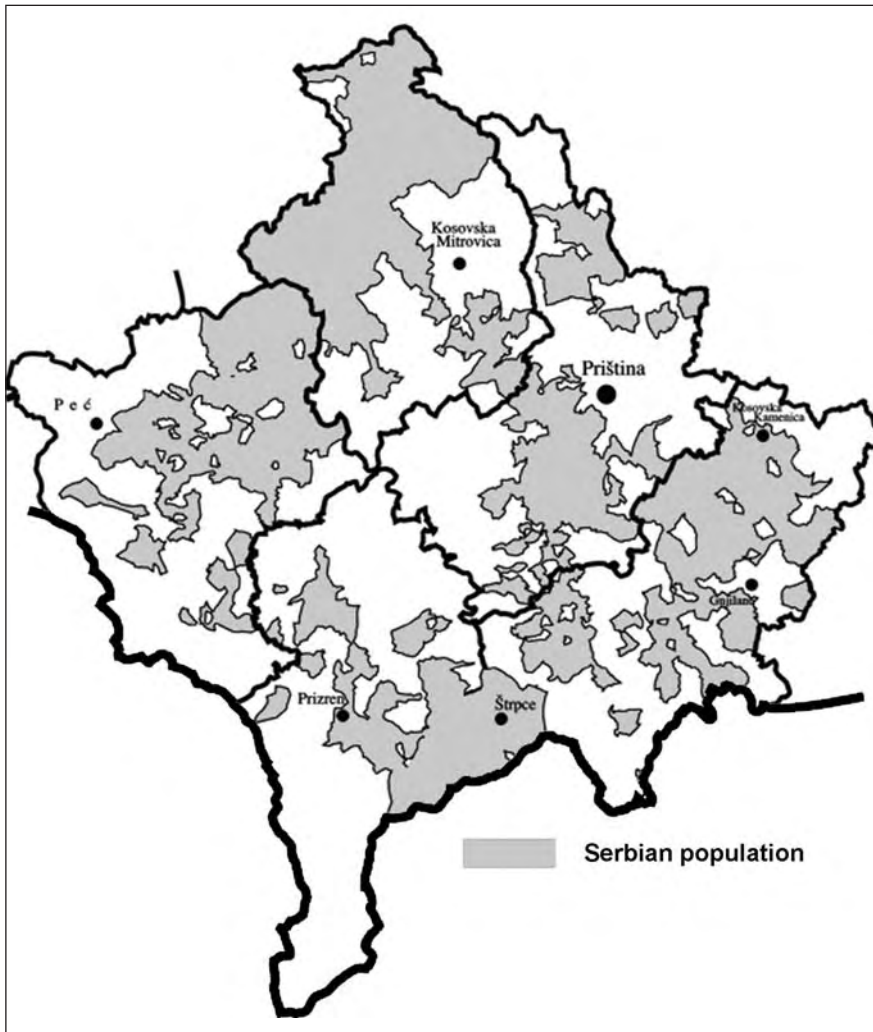
⁴ The first UNMIK administrator Bernard Kouchner warned publicly on 2 August 1999 of “the presence of gangsters coming from neighbouring Albania and amplifying the already existent chaos in Kosovo”. Despite 36,500-strong military forces and civilian personnel, with only 555 international policemen and 20 judges, it was impossible to deal with a KLA-sponsored Albanian mafia in UNMIK-administrated Kosovo.

⁵ Cf. more in the *Memorandum of the Serbian Orthodox Church on Kosovo and Metohija*.

⁶ Cf. the documentation in “Ne ubijaju Srbe tamo gde ih nema” [Serbs not being killed only in places where there are none], *Blic*, Belgrade, 22 August 1999.

⁷ Cf. detailed documentation on 932 missing persons in *Abductions and Disappearances of non-Albanians in Kosovo* (Belgrade: Humanitarian Law Center, 2001).

The first five Serb civilians were abducted on the streets of Priština as early as 12 June 1999, while news kept arriving of an orchestrated campaign of terror against both the Serb and Roma populations. The Serb population of the village of Zočište near Orahovac fled on 14 June after their homes and the fourteenth-century Serbian monastery of Sts. Kosmas and Damian were set on fire by a group of Albanian extremists. After that, the small but historically important medieval monastery church was blown up. Between 14 and 16 June in Orahovac (a vine-growing area of Metohija) about 600



Kosovo and Metohija in early 1999

Serb residents scattered in various parts of the town all fled to the Serbian quarter in the vicinity of the church, ready to organize joint resistance to Albanians who were setting fire to all Serbian houses, one after another. On 24 June 1999 roughly 3,200 Serbs were forced to leave Orahovac escorted by KFOR: of 6,000 prewar Serb residents barely 2,000 remained ghettoized in the Serb-inhabited quarter. A 1,200-Serb-strong enclave in neighbouring Velika Hoča, a historic Serb village with fourteen churches dating from various periods, monuments of Oriental architecture and the well-preserved fourteenth-century wine cellars founded by the Serbian Emperor Stefan Dušan (1331–1355) and presently in the ownership of the monastery of Dečani, managed to survive at that moment, protected, as the Serbs of Orahovac, by KFOR tanks and barbed wire.

Another notable fourteenth-century Serb monastery, the Holy Trinity in Mušutište was looted and burned to the ground on 12 June, while the nuns barely managed to escape. Four days after German KFOR troops entered Prizren, on 16 June 1999, a KLA group kidnapped Fr. Chariton Lukić, a monk of the monastery of the Holy Archangels near Prizren, in charge of the evacuation of Serb nuns from Mušutište and monks from Zočište. More than a year later his beheaded, mutilated body was found near Prizren. On 15 June 1999, German KFOR finally decided, though not until the Albanian mob had destroyed most of the Serbian monuments around the seat of the Eparchy of Raška-Prizren, to provide military protection for the besieged Serbian cathedral and bishopric.

The other areas of Metohija, with significant Serb settlements, were rapidly emptied as the ethnically motivated terror of armed Albanian extremists continued unhindered, from abduction and expulsion to torture and random killings. Belo Polje and Vitimirica near Peć were completely emptied of Serbs. Driven out of their houses, the Serbs of Belo Polje near Peć left for neighbouring Montenegro on 19 June, after three of their compatriots were found slaughtered. Between the middle of June and late July 1999, the Metropolitan of Montenegro and his monks, authorized by the Serb Patriarch to provide protection for the Patriarchate of Peć and its flock, found and buried some thirty bodies of Serbs, mostly elderly men and women, civilians brutally massacred throughout the Peć area. The monastery of Dečani, famous for giving shelter to civilians in danger regardless of their ethnic origin, especially to Albanians during the 1999 war, now provided shelter not only to Serbs but also to fifty Roma whose houses in the neighbouring area were torched by the Albanians. Another family sheltered in Dečani was from the Muslim-Slav Gorani (*Goranci*) community. The tiny Christian Serb community of Djakovica, living in a single street, known as Serbian Street (*Srpska ulica*), totalling roughly 700 persons, gathered around the walls of the parish church of the Mother of God. A series of migrations

reduced the presence of Serbs to six old ladies, living in complete isolation under the protection of Italian KFOR forces.⁸

As reported on 15 August 1999 the situation in the British-controlled area of central Kosovo was the following: “Looted houses, banished senior citizens, stolen cars, racketeering, murders, abductions, rape, trafficking: the KFOR troops are facing crime, both organized and uncontrolled, committed by Kosovars and Albanian Mafia. In two months, in the British Sector only, there were 127 murders (accounted for), 378 arsons, 504 known robberies. Kosovo has only been under UNMIK administration for six weeks, and the word ‘mafia’ emerged into media reports. A coincidence?”⁹

According to the verifiable sources of the Kosovo and Metohija diocese of the Serbian Orthodox Church (Raška-Prizren Eparchy), the number of Serbs remaining in the larger cities in August 1999 was as follows:

Gnjilane: 25,000 Serbs reduced to about 5,000
K. Mitrovica: 27,000 Serbs reduced to 15,000
Kosovo Polje: 20,000 Serbs reduced to less than 10,000
Peć: 12,000 Serbs reduced to less than 100
Pristina: 30,000 Serbs reduced to 500 to 1000
Prizren: 5,000–6,000 Serbs reduced to 600¹⁰

During the first three months of UN administration approximately 250,000 Serbs and other non-Albanians (Roma, Muslim Slavs, Croats and the tiny Jewish community) were driven out and displaced from Kosovo, finding refuge in the rest of Serbia or in Montenegro, the other constituent republic of the FRY. Abductions and random killings of Serbs in all parts of the UN-governed Province became the predominant contents of hundreds of exhaustive and well-documented reports of local priests and church-people’s councils, covering the events involving Serb victims from the Gnjilane, Vitina, Lipljan, Klina, Uroševac, Prizren, Orahovac and Peć areas.¹¹ A significant number of Serbs left Kosovska Vitina on 19 July 1999, after

⁸ These ladies were eventually evacuated by Italian KFOR on 17 March 2004 when thousands of Kosovo Albanian rioters attacked their parish seat and church hurling stones and petrol bombs. After their evacuation to the monastery of Dečani, the parish church and seat were looted and set on fire. In the following days all remains of the church were completely removed.

⁹ Report by *Agence France-Presse* of 15 August 1999.

¹⁰ For a detailed account, see D. T. Bataković, “Kosovo: From Sparkling Victory to Troublesome Peace” in D. Simko & H. Haumann, eds., *Peace Perspectives for South Eastern Europe*, Proceedings of the Symposium 2000 Basel, Switzerland, 29–30 June 2000 (Academia: Prague 2001), 127–147.

¹¹ These *Reports*, covering especially the first post-war months (July–October 1999), sent from Gnjilane, Vitina, Lipljan, Prizren, Orahovac and Peć, have been partially reproduced in the collection of documents on post-war crimes against Serbs and non-Al-

the random attacks by Albanian extremists culminated in a group of Serbs being injured by a hand grenade thrown near the Serbian Orthodox church in the town.

Hieromonk Stefan Puljić of the monastery of Budisavci (a dependency of the Peć Patriarchate) was abducted with one other Serb civilian by extremist Albanian Roman Catholics, only to be tortured and eventually killed.

Metohija, the fertile plain stretching from Peć to Prizren and bordering Albania, was the first area to become ethnically cleansed of Serbs as early as August 1999, with tiny surviving enclaves, apart from Orahovac and Velika Hoča, remaining as small pockets (village of Goraždevac near Peć, the villages of Suvo Grlo, Banja and Crkolez east of Istok). The Serbian cemeteries in all the abandoned villages — such as Belo Polje near Peć, and the villages of Seča, Brestovik and Šakovica in the vicinity — were either desecrated or totally destroyed.

The worst crime in the first weeks of large-scale terror and violence against Serbs committed by the Kosovo Albanians was the “Harvest Massacre”. On 23 July 1999, fourteen Serbian farmers from the village of Staro Gracko in the Lipljan area of eastern Kosovo were killed by local Albanian extremists while harvesting their crops in the early evening hours. The UN-HCR official report stressed that “a wave of arson and looting of Serb and Roma homes throughout Kosovo has ensued. Serbs and Roma remaining in Kosovo have been subject to repeated incidents of harassment and intimidation”, while “more seriously, there has been a spate of murders and abductions of Serbs since mid-June, including the late-July [Staro Gracko] massacre of Serb farmers.” Despite official scaling-down of the level of discrimination and persecution against Kosovo Serbs, it was the *Philadelphia Inquirer* that reported “a sinister pattern of violence and intimidation” where “Serb houses are bombed and set ablaze” and where the scale of violence amounts to “systematic ethnic cleansing.”¹²

The Albanian perpetrators of the “Harvest Massacre” have not been identified, apprehended or tried, as in thousands other similar cases of ethnically motivated crimes against members of the Serbian community. It became a practice that additionally forced the Kosovo Serbs still surviving in the mixed Serb-Albanian areas to leave the Province. Despite a huge international civilian and military presence, they remained deprived of the rule of law and minimal guarantees for both their security and property. Ruled by the criminal gangs that emerged from the highest ranking of-

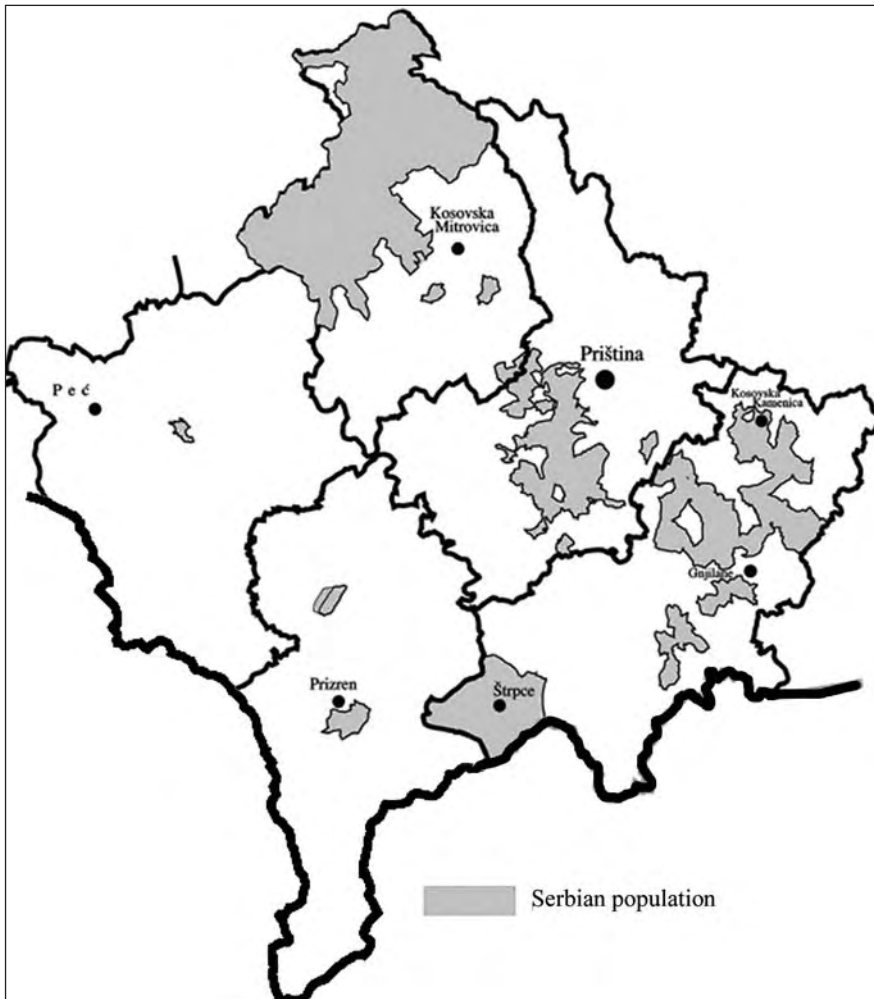
banians *Nova Srpska Golgota* [A New Serbian Golgotha], vols. 1–3 (Cetinje: Svetigora, 2000).

¹² *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 18 November 1999.

officials of the KLA guerrilla, Albanian-dominated Kosovo was turned into a law-free area for all sorts of criminal activities and illegal trafficking, but its dominant political agenda remained to be ethnic and religious discrimination, abductions, property usurpations and random killings of Serbs and non-Albanians.

Mixed villages gradually emptied, urban areas completely cleansed

During the last months of 1999, the pre-war Serbian population of 40,000 of Priština, the provincial capital — urban (30,000) and suburban (up to 10,000) — decreased to less than 1,000 only to be additionally reduced,



Kosovo and Metohija in 2002

within months, to barely 120, all confined to a single apartment building (YU Program Building), heavily guarded by KFOR, but fully deprived of freedom of movement through the city.¹³ Priština, previously the main economic, cultural and university centre for the Kosovo Serbs, became totally devoid of Serb intellectuals, professors, medical doctors, engineers etc. Tens of thousands of Roma of urban and suburban Priština, a distinct component of the provincial capital's population, virtually disappeared under orchestrated Albanian violence. Both Serbs and Roma mostly were replaced by rural Kosovo Albanians, who rushed to settle in Priština, moving with their extended families into the vacant houses and apartments of the expelled Serbs and other non-Albanian groups.

Furthermore, during the last months of 1999 and in early 2000, the urban Kosovo Serbs were first reduced and eventually completely evicted from all other major Kosovo towns such as Peć, Prizren, Djakovica and Uroševac. Of the original several thousand Serb inhabitants of Prizren, only few dozen persons remained, mostly elderly, surviving by hiding in churches or in the Serbian Orthodox Theological School (*Bogoslovija*), as elsewhere owing to the protection of KFOR units. At least 200 Serb, Roma and Muslim residents of Prizren found refuge in the Serb Theological School in Prizren under German guard, along with a group of Kosovo Albanians who received death threats from their compatriots for supporting Serbs.¹⁴

The formerly flourishing community of 12,000 Serbs and Montenegrins in the town of Peć, successful in trade, business and crafts, was completely driven out by early 2000, while the number of Serbs in Prizren, already reduced to less than 200 in 2000, further declined to 68, mostly elderly people in 2002. The first wave of attacks on Serbs in Gnjilane started on 24 July 1999. The first wave of destruction targeted the monument to the Holy Prince Lazar, the hero of the 1389 Battle of Kosovo, while six mutilated Serb bodies were found on the local hospital garbage dump. Once numerous, strong and prosperous, the Serb urban residents of Gnjilane and Orahovac, lacking efficient and continuous protection from international forces, were eventually forced to flee Kosovo in 2000: in early 2001 their number was reduced from pre-war 12,000 to 400 in Gnjilane and approximately 450 in Orahovac.

The monastery of Devič, in the Drenica area, venerated by the Christian Serbs and a privileged target of Muslim Albanian extremists (set ablaze

¹³ Jean-Arnault Dérens, *Kosovo, année zero* (Paris: Ed. Paris – Méditerranée, 2006), 214.

¹⁴ For more detail, see Dušan T. Bataković, "The Serbs in Kosovo and Metohija: War, International Protectorate and National Catastrophe", *Eurobalkans* 36–37 (Athens, Autumn/Winter 1999), 23–40.

in 1941 and reconstructed after 1945) was held for three days under the KLA siege in mid-June 1999, and restored to its sisterhood only after nuns from Kosovo's northernmost monastery, Sokolica, brought French KFOR forces to establish military protection of this oldest medieval Serb endowment in the Drenica area. The monastery of Devič, famous in medieval Serbia and during Ottoman rule, venerated by pilgrims from all neighbouring states for the relics of the local saint St. Joanikije Devički, was desecrated anew by the KLA in 1999.

The revengeful wave of ethnic cleansing, carried out by Albanian extremists against Serbs and other non-Albanian populations became a by-product of the new political landscape dominated by Kosovo Albanians and controlled by extremists: "Amid this anarchy, the question has to be asked: can the shameful campaign of 'ethnic cleansing' and murder of Serbs that continues under KFOR's eyes still be explained away as revenge attacks, as retaliation for the mass atrocities committed against Albanians by Serb forces before and during the Kosovo war? A growing number of Albanian intellectuals, including several courageous journalists on the [Albanian] daily *Koha Ditore* newspaper, fear that the murders and dispossession of Serbs are now being organized."¹⁵

Most of the remaining Kosovo Serbs have since June 1999 been confined to ghetto-like living in virtual segregation within the KFOR-protected enclaves in Kosovo and Metohija. The Kosovo Serbs' enclaves located south of the Ibar River in particular were all deprived of basic security provisions, lacking freedom of movement and other fundamental civil rights. Only several predominantly Serb-inhabited areas north of the Ibar River, owing only to the direct territorial link with the rest of Serbia, in the Kosovska Mitrovica area (districts of North Mitrovica) as well as in the municipalities of Zubin Potok, Zvečan and Leposavić, have managed to escape the discrimination and isolation that the Serbs confined in smaller or larger enclaves (Štrpce, Kosovska Vitina, Gračanica, Gnjilane, Goraždevac, Novo Brdo, Velika Hoča and others), usually bordering predominantly Albanian-inhabited areas, could not.

¹⁵ "Armed Albanians take revenge with campaign of murder, house-burning and intimidation that has driven out thousands Serbs murdered by the hundred since 'liberation'" reported Robert Fisk from Priština to *The Independent*, 24 November 1999. Other eye-witnesses whose reports have been published: Mike O'Connor, "Rebel Terror Forcing Minority Serbs Out of Kosovo", *New York Times*, 31 August 1998; R. Jeffrey Smith, "Kosovo Rebels Make Own Law", *Washington Post*, 24 November 1999; Peter Worthington, "NATO's Reputation a Casualty of War", *The Toronto Sun*, 18 November 1999. Cf. also Max Boot, "U.N. Discovers Colonialism Isn't Easy in Kosovo", *The Wall Street Journal*, 2 November 1999.

The imposed regrouping of the remaining Serbs into several KFOR-protected enclaves keeps about 130,000 Serbs in four separate zones: 1) the northern zone, north of the river Ibar and Kosovska Mitrovica (encompassing Zubin Potok, Zvečan and Leposavić municipalities), to which the citizens of the Vučitrn region resorted; 2) the central zone, encompassing the area between the village of Gračanica and the town of Lipljan with thirteen Serb-inhabited villages, to which a certain number of Serb citizens from Priština and the neighbouring villages fled and found refuge; 3) the zone from Kosovska Kamenica to Gnjilane and Novo Brdo, where the Serb majority exiled from the Gnjilane area has found temporary shelter; 4) the Štrpce municipality (*Sirinička župa*) with Brezovica Mountain, where a number of Prizren's Serbs and the people from the neighbouring areas (*Sredska* or *Sretačka župa*) inhabited by Muslim Slavs fled from violence and persecution by Albanian extremists. Remaining Serb enclaves covering the areas of Kosovska Vitina, Ranilug, Parteš or Vrbovac in eastern Kosovo remained to be highly vulnerable to ethnically motivated violence ranging from random attacks and arson to abduction, despite significant KFOR presence and numerous check-points or enhanced patrolling in areas with a mixed Serb-Albanian population.

Between June 1999 and December 2000, all judges and prosecutors were Kosovo Albanians, while seven subsequently appointed Kosovo Serb judges were forced to resign and flee to inner Serbia as a result of threats by Albanian extremists. The appointment of international judges, although welcomed, proved to be insufficient due both to constant pressures and to the reluctance of the predominantly Albanian environment to cooperate in finding the perpetrators of ethnically motivated crimes. According to the report of 26 June 2003 of the Secretary-General on UNMIK, there were only fifteen international judges and ten international prosecutors serving in the local justice system, capable of dealing with only three percent of criminal cases. The inevitable consequence of the inefficient judiciary was the emergence of a culture of impunity surrounding violence against the non-Albanian population, Serbs in particular.¹⁶

In addition, thousands of houses, apartments (approximately 45,000) and estates owned by non-Albanians were in 2006 still under the occupation of squatters after usurpation by local Albanians, while an additional 30,000 dwellings and other property were either robbed or damaged. In comparison to approximately 70,000 Albanian-owned properties that were burned, damaged or destroyed by Yugoslav forces during the fighting in 1998 and the NATO bombing campaign in 1999, this post-war record of Kosovo under the weak and inefficient UNMIK administration is an obvi-

¹⁶ Bataković, "Kosovo: From Separation to Integration".

ous evidence of a large-scale revenge, a nineteenth-century-style collective vendetta against the Serbs, the Albanians' main rivals, as well as against other non-Albanian ethnic communities.

"Vandalism with a mission": The orchestrated destruction of the Serbian cultural and religious heritage

In parallel with the persecution of the Serb civilian population, the target of Albanian retaliation were numerous Serbian Orthodox churches and monasteries, ranging from medieval Byzantine-style monuments to more recent churches built between the sixteenth and the twentieth century. Until the end of 1999, more than seventy Serbian Orthodox churches and monasteries were plundered, desecrated and, in most cases, levelled to the ground. One-third of these churches were important cultural monuments dating from the medieval period with invaluable frescoes, sculptures, and icons.¹⁷ As stressed by a Western eyewitness "...this demolition cannot be just 'revenge' — NATO's usual excuse for the destruction under its auspices. You do not just fill with rage and spend days gathering explosives to blow up churches. This is vandalism with a mission".¹⁸

A renowned British war correspondent reported that "the Serb Church has issued its own list of destroyed or partly demolished buildings. Between 13 June — when NATO troops entered Kosovo — and 20 October, they say, seventy-four churches have been turned to dust or burnt or vandalized. The fifteenth-century monastery of the Holy Trinity above Mušutište, begun in 1465, has been leveled with explosives. The monastery of the [Holy] Archangels near Vitina, built in the fourteenth century, has been looted and burnt. So have the church of the Archangels in Gornje Nerodimlje; and the church of St. Paraskeva near Peć: and the church of St. Nicholas in Prekoruplje — razed and its nine sixteenth-century icons lost, including that of the apostle Thomas. The rubble of Orthodox churches across Kosovo stands as a monument to Albanian vandalism. After declaring that Kosovo must remain a 'multi-ethnic society', 40,000 troops from K-For cannot, it seems, look after its historical heritage against the violence of those whom its spokesmen treated as allies in the war against Yugosla-

¹⁷ Cf. bilingual Serbian-English publication: *Crucified Kosovo. Destroyed and Desecrated Serbian Orthodox Churches in Kosovo and Metohija (June–August 1999)*, ed. Fr. Sava Janjić (Belgrade 1999); revised and updated Internet edition: www.kosovo.net; French and Russian editions are available at www.yunet.com/destruction.html and www.kosovo.net.

¹⁸ Robert Fisk [from Djakovica], "NATO turns a blind eye as scores of ancient Christian churches are reduced to rubble", *The Independent*, 20 November 1999.

via's President, Slobodan Milosevic, only five months ago."¹⁹ The destruction continued in the Suva Reka area: the Serb parish church in the town and the impressive medieval church in Mušutište, dedicated to the Mother of God and beautifully frescoed (built in 1315, immediately after the monastery of Gračanica), were both levelled to the ground.

During the second half of 1999, an additional number of centuries-old Serb religious centres were destroyed in a highly orchestrated action, focusing primarily on the living Serb communities around certain churches and monasteries. The church of Petrič near Peć, Nerodimlje near Uroševac, the monastery of Binča near Vitina, and another fifty churches and monasteries were destroyed or levelled to the ground, dozens of Serb cemeteries desecrated or devastated, in addition to an unknown number, mounting to thousands, of abandoned Serb homes routinely looted, torched and destroyed, in order to prevent the return of their rightful owners.

A series of renewed attacks on civilian convoys took place in February 2001 in order to reinforce fear and insecurity within the Serb-inhabited enclaves of Kosovo. The most criminal, among several others, occurred on 14 February 2001 between Merdare and Podujevo, when Albanian extremists, applying Sicilian-mafia methods, planted explosive beneath the road and destroyed a whole bus with 56 Serb civilians travelling home under the escort of Swedish KFOR troops. Among 44 heavily injured victims, fourteen Kosovo Serb passengers perished, including two children. KFOR and UNMIK played down the whole incident, not naming the ethnic origin and number of the civilian victims of the "bus bombing massacre" near the village of Livadice.²⁰

From June 1999 to June 2003 the number of destroyed and desecrated Serb Orthodox churches — at least one-third of them important Byzantine-type medieval Serbian monuments — amounted to 117, while the most important medieval monasteries, from the Patriarchate of Peć and Visoki Dečani to Gračanica and Prizren's Cathedral of the Mother of God Ljeviška, were after June 1999 put under continuous KFOR protection. The general impression is that after the establishment of UN administration there was an orchestrated attempt by Albanian extremists to evict not only all of the Serbs, but also to remove all traces of their cultural and historical

¹⁹ *The Independent*, 20 November 1999.

²⁰ A detailed report by Bishop Atanasije Jevtić in the Diocesan archive in Gračanica Monastery describes the attempt by UNMIK to scale down the number of Serbs killed in this Albanian-organized attack. Although it was known right away that eleven passengers died on the spot, UNMIK claimed only seven deaths. Less than ten killed is considered a crime, while more than ten is considered an act of terrorism.

heritage, something perceived by them as an important precondition for obtaining independence for an Albanian-dominated Kosovo.

As stressed on many occasions by representatives of the Raška-Prizren Eparchy of the Serbian Orthodox Church, this is a strategy of cutting off Kosovo Serbs from their historical and religious traditions. Only in November 2002, for instance, a day before UN Secretary General Kofi Annan's visit, two separate explosions blew up two Serbian Orthodox churches in western Kosovo: a church in Ljubova was razed to the ground, while the interior of the church in nearby Djurakovac sustained serious damage. In addition, during the same month, several cemeteries in Dečani and Kosovo Polje were vandalized by Albanian extremists, raising the toll of desecrated Serbian cemeteries all over the province of Kosovo to several dozen.²¹

In May 2003, Spanish and Greek soldiers of KFOR were attacked with hand grenades while protecting Serbian churches in Istok (monastery of Gorioč) and Uroševac respectively. On 26 July 2003, the discovery of a powerful explosive device in the vicinity of the Holy Archangels near Prizren prevented the massacre of at least one thousand Serbian pilgrims who came, under heavy KFOR escort, to celebrate the 650th anniversary of the monastery. A detonation rang out on the hillside above the Holy Archangels during the Divine Liturgy. The nine kilograms of powerful explosive were planted in the hillside in order to bring the huge cliff down on the gathered Serb pilgrims and the monastery. The next target was the Serb church and community in Klokot (Vitina area in eastern Kosovo).

Although the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the UN High Commission for Refugees stressed in their reports that 2002 saw a continued fall in ethnically motivated crime, this was only due to the fact that many Serbs had simply disappeared from many previously mixed areas after continuous threats, attacks and assassinations perpetrated

²¹ Info Service of Serbian Raška-Prizren Eparchy of Kosovo and Metohija (ERP KIM), report from Gračanica of 28 November 2002. The report related to the destruction of cemeteries is as follows: "Marking the national holiday of Albania, the so-called Flag Day, in the night between 28 and 29 November, local Albanian extremists destroyed a total of 46 gravestones at the [Christian] Orthodox cemetery in Kosovo Polje [...] the gravestones of prominent Serb families and Serbs killed after the arrival of the international mission in Kosovo and Metohija. On most gravestones the photographs of the deceased were completely destroyed and their names removed. [...] Following the attack on the cemetery of Dečani two days ago, this latest act of vandalism demonstrates the intent of the Albanian extremists to fully achieve their goal and erase the last traces of Serb graves and holy places in Kosovo and Metohija. In all of this, especially upsetting is the fact that the UN mission and KFOR have no solution to this problem and that cemeteries and more recently built churches have been completely left to their fate and the barbarism of the 'Balkan Taliban'." (ERP KIM, report from Gračanica, 30 November 2002).

by Albanian extremists. Since May 2002, KFOR has begun to scale down its presence in the so-called 'minority areas', which was a signal to Albanian extremists to resume their strategy of ethnic cleansing, persecuting Serbs from all parts of Kosovo and Metohija, through a new series of ethnically motivated crimes, in order to force them to leave the province, and, additionally, discourage those willing to return.

Freedom of movement, after three years of KFOR presence, remained unattainable for Serbs and non-Albanians. Among dozens, if not hundreds of examples, this is a striking one: a group of some fifty retired Serbs transported by UNMIK bus from Osojane to Peć were heading for the local bank on 11 October 2002, but experienced a brutal attack by over 600 Albanians in the streets of Peć. Their bus was stoned and additionally demolished by Molotov cocktails, while at least fifteen elderly Serbs were injured and subsequently evacuated by Spanish KFOR to a temporary refuge in the nearby building only to be hastily escorted back to their village.²²

The decreased number of ethnically motivated killings in 2002 showed, however, that the targets were not any more large Serbian communities, but usually smaller and more vulnerable ones, mostly in ethnically mixed areas. On 6 January a Serb was killed by a grenade in front of his house in Kosovska Kamenica. On 23 February, a Serbian woman in Lipljan was shot and killed by an unknown perpetrator. In August, five Serbian houses in Klokot near Kosovska Vitina were destroyed by planted explosive devices while several persons were injured, including two members of US KFOR troops. In October, a woman from the same village was assassinated. In December, a Serbian peasant from the village of Cernica, near Gnjilane, was killed. The number of attacks that did not end up in killings was considerably higher. The number of ethnically motivated attacks against Serbs, resulting in serious injuries had increased from 274 in 2001 to 454 in 2003.²³

The ghetto-like situation is typical for smaller Serb communities (villages, parts of villages or groups of villages): the village of Cernica in the Gnjilane area previously had 85 Serb households amidst 400 Albanian. From 2000 to 2003 Serb residents were frequently attacked by the local Albanian extremists, including arson and assassinations. Five Serbian families in Cernica lost their members, including a child; dozens were wounded, their houses burned or destroyed, while the church of St. Elijah was devastated. After four years of international rule, at the end of 2003, in 6,391 ethnically motivated attacks by Albanian extremists, 1,192 Serbs were killed,

²² Additional data in the *Memorandum of the Serbian Orthodox Church on Kosovo and Metohija*.

²³ More in Bataković, "Kosovo: From Separation to Integration".

1,303 kidnapped and another 1,305 wounded. Nevertheless, few perpetrators have been identified, let alone arrested, tried and sentenced.²⁴

On 12 April 2003 Albanian extremists planted 40 kilograms of explosive under the railroad bridge of Ložište near Banjska and Zvečan. Due to an error made during placement and activation, the explosive only slightly damaged the bridge but killed both Albanian perpetrators, members of the “Kosovo Protection Corps” and the terrorist group known as the “Albanian National Army”. An UNMIK police investigation established that the purpose of the attack was to blow up the train carrying Serbs from the central Kosovo enclaves to Serb-inhabited Leposavić in the north, on its way to its final destination, Belgrade.

It was rightly observed that “neither United Nations police forces nor NATO Kosovo peacekeeping forces (KFOR) were willing to acknowledge that as early as the previous summer there had been an increase in ethnic and criminal violence against minorities and police that had raised the total expulsions of Serbs, Roma and other minorities since 1999 to 240,000. Regardless of the warnings of minority leaders, checkpoints and sentries protecting Serb settlements and churches had been withdrawn. The number of KFOR personnel had been prematurely reduced, to 17,500 troops. Neither civilian officials nor the military command were prepared for the two-day pogroms by majority Albanians against non-Albanians. There simply were no contingency plans for such an emergency.”²⁵

The March pogrom of 2004

In March 2004 it became obvious, at least to international observers, that some leaders of the Kosovo Albanians believed that by several orchestrated waves of ethnic cleansing of all the remaining Serb population from the Province they could present the international community with a *fait accompli*. The incentive for the next wave of ethnic cleansing was the mild international reaction to the previous ethnic cleansing of two-thirds of Kosovo’s Serbs that had begun in mid-June 1999. Although Kosovo’s Serbs had been warning of the real nature of Albanian nationalism in Kosovo for years, both the UN and the West assumed they were exaggerating, only to receive

²⁴ For detailed data on the victims of Albanian terror in the period between June 1999 and November 2001, see I. Simić, ed., *Žrtve albanskog terorizma na Kosovu i Metohiji* (Belgrade: Committee for Gathering Information on Crimes against Humanity and Violations of International Law, 2001).

²⁵ Quoted from Marie-Janine Calic, “Standards and Status. Violence against minorities a year ago scared everyone”, *Internationale Politik*, Munich 2005.

a confirmation of almost all Serbian claims in just three days of orchestrated violence — the March pogrom — Kosovo's *Kristallnacht*.

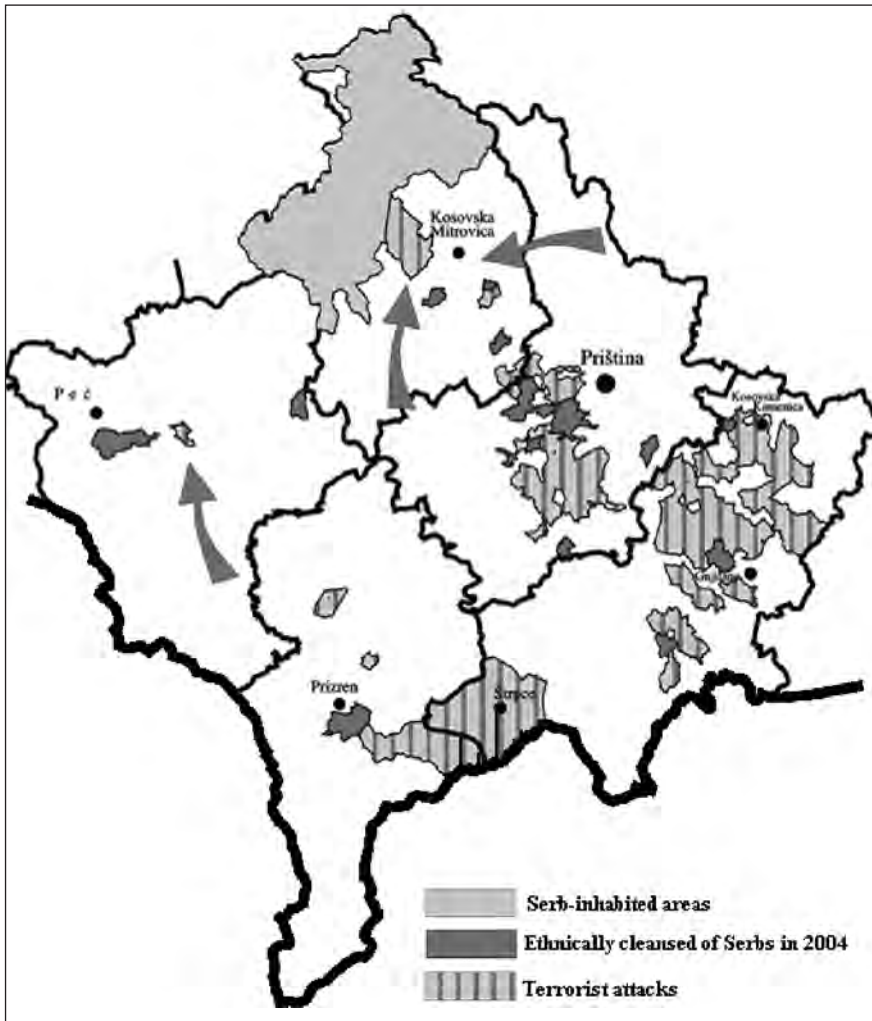
The previous destruction of at least 117 Serbian cultural sites, mostly churches and monasteries, passed almost unnoticed or was mildly criticized everywhere except in Serbia, Russia and Greece. Ethnic purity, as envisaged by Kosovo Albanian extremists, however, is not a concept that can be accepted as the legitimate foundation for either democracy or state independence. It became evident that none of the values of the West would eventually take root in the lawless, illegal trafficking paradise of mafia-ruled Kosovo, a "Balkan Columbia", as it was named by international experts for drug trafficking routes to Western capitals.²⁶

The official pretext for the three-day campaign of violence against the Serb-inhabited enclaves triggered on 17 March 2003 was the tragic drowning of several Albanian children in the Ibar River near Kosovska Mitrovica. The allegations that the Albanian boys drowned after being chased by local Serbs turned out to be false, and this was later confirmed by UNMIK. Quite the opposite, as observed by Derek Chappell, the UNMIK spokesman, "the wave of violence has been too coordinated to be a spontaneous, popular reaction to rumors [...] It was planned in advance."²⁷ More than 51,000 Albanians participated in the thirty-three areas where there was mass ethnically motivated violence, while 163 of them were arrested, as reported by UNMIK on 22 March for arson, murder and other criminal acts.

Busloads of Albanians were transported to Serb-inhabited areas, clashing occasionally with KFOR units on the way, while targeting in particular those enclaves that stood in the way of controlling the main transport and railway routes in Kosovo. For this reason, entire Serb villages in central and eastern Kosovo were razed to the ground, and some 4,000 Serb civilians became homeless within two days of unconstrained violence. The UN evacuated its missions from at least three cities in Kosovo. In two of them, Serbian Orthodox churches were set aflame. The only functioning Serb Orthodox church in Priština, St. Nicholas (*Sv. Nikola*), dating from

²⁶ "International agencies fighting the drug trade are warning that Kosovo has become a 'smugglers' paradise' supplying up to 40% of the heroin sold in Europe and North America. NATO-led forces, struggling to keep peace in the province a year after the war, have no mandate to fight drug traffickers; and – with the expulsion from Kosovo of the Serb police, including the '4th unit' narcotics squad – the smugglers are running the 'Balkan route' with complete freedom." (Maggie O'Kane [from Belgrade], "Kosovo drug mafia supply heroin to Europe", *The Guardian*, 13 March 2000). Cf. also Nick Wood [from Pristina], "Kosovo 'mafia' strikes", *The Guardian*, 13 September 2000.

²⁷ Cf. reports and analysis of Raška-Prizren Diocese, ERP KIM 17–19 March 2004. Cf. also Special report on violence on Kosovo by B92, Belgrade (*Specijal B92: Nasilje na Kosovu. Hronologija događaja (16–22. marta 2004)*).



Kosovo and Metohija: March pogrom 2004

the 1830s, was eventually set ablaze, as another act of denying the Serbs the very possibility of living or returning to the provincial capital of Kosovo and Metohija.²⁸

²⁸ Upon hearing the news of the pogrom and the burning of churches in Kosovo, a small but aggressive crowd of Belgraders surrounded the Bairakli mosque. In retaliation, the windows were broken, and a fire started. (A similar retaliation against the local mosque took place in Niš, the second largest city of inner Serbia.) In contrast to the scene in Kosovo and Metohija, the Serbian government dispatched police forces. However, they

While insisting that they are capable of governing an independent state, the Albanian leadership in Kosovo and Metohija also claim that they were unable to control their compatriots and to halt the pogrom against the Serbs. Hence, while the most influential Albanian party leader in Kosovo, Hashim Thaçi, travelled overseas preaching the virtues of multi-ethnicity and a civic-based identity, the five most important medieval Serbian sites in his hometown of Prizren were burned or heavily damaged by his supporters in the raging Albanian mob, in front of a passive German KFOR contingent, lacking orders from Berlin to act against the perpetrators.²⁹

The March Pogrom of 2004 was labelled by Admiral Gregory Johnson, NATO commander for Southeastern Europe, as “ethnic cleansing”, while he was still sending additional troops to halt the two-day outburst of violence against Serbs.³⁰ As confirmed by Italian General Alberto Primiseri, the whole campaign was planned in advance, forcing Kosovo into blood and fire.³¹ UN ombudsman Marek Antoni Nowicki called this pogrom a real “drama of the Serbs”, while the correspondent of *Le Figaro Magazine* titled his detailed report *Kosovo Serbs: Suitcase or Coffin (Les Serbes du Kosovo : la valise ou le cercueil)*.³²

were not entirely successful in dispersing the angry mob. A Serbian Orthodox bishop joined his fellow Muslim clerics in Belgrade in trying to prevent the crowd from attacking the mosque. These were isolated incidents in reaction to the Kosovo pogrom, not a systematic campaign of destruction as in Kosovo and Metohija.

²⁹ “Murder upon murder, kidnapping upon kidnapping, arson upon arson, and now finally this pogrom, have led the Serbs to the realization that they are at the mercy of barbarians. This is ethnic aggression of the worst sort ‘in the heart of Europe’ (as Madeleine Albright famously called Kosovo before she bombed Serbia). Today, we see the true face of the ‘multiethnicity’ of which all spoke so highly. And all this is happening under U.N. and NATO administration. Imagine how bad it could get if Kosovo becomes independent.” “Senator Sam Brownback (R., Kan.), after having met Bishop Artemije of Kosovo several weeks ago [before March 2004] in Washington, wrote a letter to President Bush in which he concluded: ‘We should not consider advancing the cause of independence of a people whose first act when liberated was to ethnically cleanse a quarter of a million of their fellow citizens and destroy over a hundred of their holy sites.’ This week’s dismal events have proved him all too right. Perhaps this pogrom will force the Bush Administration to take seriously the warnings of Belgrade, and help stop the rivers of Kosovo from flowing red with blood.” (Quoted from “Kristallnacht in Kosovo. The burning of churches raises questions about independence”, 19 March 2004, by Damjan Krnjevic-Miskovic, on www.nationalinterest.com).

³⁰ *Voice of America* News, 19 March 2004. Cf. also IWPR (Institute for War and Peace Reporting), London, Report of 19 March 2004; *Danas*, Belgrade, 20 March 2004.

³¹ *Italijanski general: Albanci imali smišljen plan*, FoNet & B92, 19 March 2004.

³² Jean-Louis Tremblais in *Le Figaro Magazine*, April 2004. Cf. also Marek Waldenberg, “Why Kosovo should not be independent” in *Kosovo and Metohija. Past, Present, Future*

The series of subsequent reports of Kosovo ombudsperson Nowicki about negative trends in multi-ethnic relations, as well as the detailed November 2005 report of UN Special Envoy in Kosovo, Ambassador Kai Eide, about the situation in the Province have shown that very little or no progress has been recorded for the last seven years, i.e. since June 1999. Kai Eide reported that the position of Serbs, and of other non-Albanians, was “grim”³³ and that Kosovo Serbs chose to stay outside the PISG of Kosovo and to maintain direct (“parallel”) links with Belgrade for both health and educational services. He described that the Kosovo Serbs feared that they would be, as they had been before, simply a decoration to any PISG of Kosovo, with little ability to achieve tangible results or to protect their rights. In turn, Eide confirmed that the Kosovo Albanians had done little, if anything, to dispel this widespread fear.³⁴

Moreover, the Kosovo Albanians’ condemnation of ethnically-motivated violence against the Serbs since June 1999 has always come tardily, reluctant and mildly phrased, and exclusively under strong pressure from UNMIK or Contact Group representatives, who demanded public condemnation from the Kosovo Albanian leaders of orchestrated campaigns of ethnically motivated crimes perpetrated by Albanian extremists.

The return of at least 230,000 internally displaced persons expelled from Kosovo and Metohija since June 1999 remains an unresolved issue. The main obstacle to their sustainable return is strong opposition from both local Albanian communities and the Albanian-dominated PISG. According to UNCHR, for the eight years of UN administration (June 1999

(Belgrade: Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, 2006), 428.

³³ With regard to the foundation for a multi-ethnic society, the situation is grim. Kosovo leaders and the international community should take urgent steps in order to correct this picture. The overall security situation is stable, but fragile. The level of reported crime, including inter-ethnic crime, is low. However, on the ground, the situation is complex and troubling, especially for minority communities. There are frequent unreported cases of low-level, inter-ethnic violence and incidents. This affects freedom of movement in a negative way. To correct this situation, it will be important to prosecute crime more vigorously. When perpetrators remain at large, a sense of impunity prevails.

³⁴ “The continued existence of camps inside Kosovo is a disgrace for the governing structures and for the international community. The Roma camps in Plementina and Žitkovac are particularly distressing. They should be dealt with on an emergency basis.” “The Serbian Orthodox religious sites and institutions represent a critical element of the spiritual fabric of Kosovo Serbs. They are also part of the world cultural heritage. There is a need to create a ‘protective space’ around these sites, with the involvement of the international community, in order to make them less vulnerable to political manipulation.”

– June 2007) only 7,100 IDPs returned, most of them elderly peasants. Furthermore, despite joint efforts by both KFOR and UNMIK, the systematic persecution of the Kosovo Serb population and of non-Albanians in general carried out by extremists and tacitly approved by the majority of Albanians, has continued to be the main impediment to any viable progress towards rebuilding a tolerant multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and multi-religious Kosovo society that would function under the rule of law. According to the UNMIK office for returnees, more than 1,467 of 4,100 Serbs forcibly displaced in March 2004 were still outside of their previous households more than a year later.³⁵ According to a Beta-Press report quoting the UNHCR representative in Belgrade, in mid-2005 there were 226,000 Serbs and members of other non-Albanian communities and ethnic groups still living as displaced persons in central Serbia and more than 25,000 in Montenegro.³⁶

Concluding remarks

The orchestrated ethnic cleansing of the Kosovo Serbs, organized and carried out in several waves after June 1999, has continued throughout 2006 and 2007 with occasional attacks, bombing of churches and random killings. The final goal of Albanian extremists was to reduce radically the number of Serbs in Kosovo and Metohija from eighteen to less than ten percent, in order to be able to present them as an insignificant minority not entitled to the rights of a constituent nation that they have elsewhere in Serbia. The number of Serbs remaining in northern Kosovo (in several municipalities with a Serb majority, Zvečan, Zubin Potok, Leposavić and the northern part of the city of Mitrovica) and within several KFOR-guarded, variously-sized enclaves scattered throughout the Province (Gračanica, Novo Brdo, Štrpce) is between 130,000 and 146,000. Hence, roughly sixty percent of the Serbian population has been expelled from Kosovo and Metohija during the last eight years of international rule; most of them still live as IDPs in central Serbia. The actual number of registered displaced and expelled persons is 212,781 in Serbia, and 29,500 in Montenegro.

All of the province's cities, with the exception of the Serb-controlled northern part of Kosovska Mitrovica, were ethnically cleansed of Serbs in 1999, and remain so today. There are practically no Serbs left in large cit-

³⁵ Beta-Press, Belgrade, 16 June 2005.

³⁶ Beta-Press, Belgrade, 21 June 2005: "Roughly 220,000 Kosovo citizens are still living as internally displaced persons in other parts of Serbia and Montenegro". According to UNHCR, after the arrival of international peacekeeping forces in 1999, 230,000 Serbs and Roma left Kosovo, while 800,000 Albanians returned to Kosovo.

ies such as Priština, Prizren, Uroševac or Peć. In Priština, there were about 40,000 Serbs prior to 1999, while today there are less than a hundred of them living in a single building, under appalling conditions and constantly guarded by KFOR. The conditions in different Serb enclaves in terms of personal security and freedom of movement are still precarious. There is rampant unemployment among Serbs (up to 93 percent) and extreme poverty, while the living standards in general remain far below the average in the region and the Province itself. The number of returnees, despite many written agreements with UNMIK and frequent promises by both UNMIK and the Albanian-dominated provisional institutions, remains insignificant. So far, only 5.5 percent of the total number of internally displaced Serbs and other non-Albanians have returned to the UN-administered Province since June 1999, and in practice, very few of the returnees have been permanently resettled.

The export of the Kosovo war model of ethnic domination, first, in 2000, to the mixed Serb-Albanian municipalities in the Preševo Valley in southern Serbia, and then, in 2001, to the predominantly Albanian-inhabited areas of neighbouring Slavic Macedonia (FYROM), demonstrated that the anachronistic concept of Albanian nationalism in the region is not motivated by the noble struggle for human, civil, collective or any other internationally sanctified rights, which is how it is usually presented to internationals, but by a narrow-minded long-term project of establishing full and uncontested ethnic domination over a territory through systematic persecution, pressure and discrimination of all other, numerically weaker ethnic groups.

In essence, the Albanian war concept means making life impossible for members of every other national group or ethnic community until they become numerically and politically so negligible that they no longer represent any threat to the whole strategy of exclusive ethnic domination. The concept of full control over a certain territory is combined with some seemingly democratic political demands, which, however, are paving the way to the creation of an independent Kosovo and, in the next phase, most probably, of a single, ethnically unified Greater Albania, if not *de iure*, at least *de facto*.

For years the extremists among the Kosovo Albanians have found crucial logistic support in the extended, and dominant in Europe, Albanian-controlled trafficking in drugs, arms and humans. Thus, organized crime gave a strong economic stimulus to the war concept of the Kosovo Albanians, while endemic lawlessness additionally boosted illegal businesses, especially drug smuggling.³⁷

37 Xavier Raufer (avec Stéphane Quééré), *Une menace pour l'Europe. La mafia albanaise. Comment est née cette superpuissance criminelle balkanique?* (Lausanne: Favre, 2000).

According to reliable data gathered by the German Intelligence Service (BND), filed in the sixty-seven pages of the confidential report of 22 February 2005, recently partly published by the Swiss weekly *Weltwoche*, the leading political figures of Kosovo Albanians, former KLA warlords Hashim Thaci, Ramush Haradinaj (indicted by the ICTY tribunal at The Hague) and Djavid Haliti, are, for years now, deeply involved in organized crime in the Province, from arms and drugs smuggling to human trafficking and money laundering.³⁸

The same report includes the statement of Klaus Schmidt, chief of the European Mission for Police Assistance of the EU Commission in Albania (PAMEC), that “through Kosovo and Albania 500 to 700 kilos of drugs are smuggled daily, and that a part of it is refined in Kosovo laboratories.” The lack of control over borders and the movement of people and goods between UN-controlled Kosovo and Albania additionally strengthen organized crime, which further increases the concerns of the international community.³⁹

Over the last eight years, the KLA war commanders, doubtlessly involved in criminal activities and accused of war crimes, have become the leaders of the most influential Kosovo Albanian political parties. They continue to be the main representatives of the war concept as the only effective method of resolving the Kosovo status problem, by harassing and discriminating Serbs, in order to change the prewar ethnic structure and thus delegitimize all the claims of Serbia to Kosovo and Metohija.

Within such a context, the Serbs and non-Albanians in Kosovo and Metohija, sharply diminished in number, are still living under the strong, permanent and highly discriminating pressure of extremist Albanians, most often fully deprived of basic security, individual and collective rights, legal and ownership protection and the right to maintain and further develop both their national and cultural identities. The protection of their identity, including the right to return, as stressed not only by UNSC Resolution 1244, but also by the eight standards of the international community, set to develop the rule of law, inter-ethnic tolerance and democracy, and to provide for the Province’s sustainable development. Thus, Kosovo and Metohija remains very far from the minimal standards required for a society to be modern, tolerant and civilized and to function in accordance with the most fundamental European values.

Violence against the Serbs has somewhat diminished due to the UN-sponsored negotiations on Kosovo’s future status in Vienna (2006–2007), but the general trend of covert or overt pressures aiming at an Albanian-

³⁸ Jürgen Roth, “Rechtstaat? Lieber nicht!”, *Weltwoche* 43/05, pp. 48–50.

³⁹ *Ibid.*



Land Property in Kosovo and Metohija

dominated and ethnically cleansed Kosovo is still underway. On European soil, under the UN flag, the Serbs, members of one of the oldest European nations, still live in ghetto-like conditions, in areas guarded by international military forces, their armoured vehicles and, in some places, by barbed wire. For the majority of them, the only solution for their very survival, for their demographic recovery, sustainable return and both political and economic sustainability is to maintain Kosovo within Serbia, on the path towards the European Union.

Appendix
Documents and Opinions

Fr. Sava Janjić

Chaos and Disorder
KOSOVO AND METOHİJA FOUR YEARS LATER

Four years after the deployment of the UN Mission and KFOR troops in Kosovo and Metohija one can hardly claim that the war-torn southern Province of Serbia is on the right track to become a democratic and multi-ethnic society. Quite on the contrary, UNMIK's policy of constant concessions to Kosovo Albanians and their political goals has made life for the Serbs and other non-Albanian communities extremely difficult and without true perspectives in the future. UNMIK's constant ignoring of UNSC Resolution 1244 and legitimate claims of the Serbian people on one hand and the creation of temporary "multiethnic" institutions without any link to Serbia-Montenegro on the other, have turned Kosovo and Metohija into a virtually independent ethnic Albanian state prior to any negotiations at all. In fact, it appears that the goal of some international circles and Kosovo Albanian leaders is to pursue a policy of *fait accompli* and practically leave independence as the only remaining option to which Serbia is expected to agree pushed along by certain concessions on the other side.

The willingness of Kosovo Serbs to participate in the building of multi-ethnic institutions along the lines stipulated by UNSCR 1244 has only been exploited in order to give a false legitimacy to the institutions which in reality remain under the complete control of Kosovo Albanians and have become tools of institutional repression. If such policy of UNMIK is continued in the future and if there is no constructive revision of the Constitutional framework to return the process of institutionalization inside the limits of UNSCR 1244, Kosovo may not only become an independent state but also a state in which all traces of the Serbian people and its culture will be completely eradicated. Four years of the internationally enforced peace with a terrifying record of crimes and destruction of cultural heritage are only a shadow of what the Province might look like once Kosovo Albanians are given full and unrestrained power. Last but not least, this "state" may become the main destabilizing factor for all of South-eastern Europe,

which will seriously obstruct the process of European integration and democratization of the Balkans. As a focal point for future ethnic Albanian integrations, independent Kosovo may become a dangerous precedent for redrawing political maps of Europe according to ethnic lines.

Changes for the better for only one community

Frankly speaking, in Kosovo and Metohija much has changed for the better in the last four years but only for the Albanian community. Under UNMIK's rule, however, changes are only slightly or not at all reflected in Serb areas where less than 100,000 remaining Serbs are hard pressed to see any essential improvements since the end of the war. While it is true that many hospitals have been restored, Serbs cannot seek treatment in them; numerous roads have been tarmaced but Serbs lack the freedom to travel on them; tens of thousands of houses have been renovated but only about one hundred of them are owned by Serbs. After the war, all mosques were repaired and many new ones built while over one hundred Serbian churches still lie in ruins and not one has been reconstructed; there are many new supermarkets, gas stations and restaurants, but what use are they to Serbs when only Albanians and foreigners can safely enter them. In short, based on his first-hand experience, the average Serb feels that UNMIK has come to help only one community while Serbs appear fated to live as second-class citizens on the margins of society.

Nevertheless, the greatest failure of UNMIK is that in three years it has not managed to stop the negative development of creating an ethnically pure and divided society where citizens are divided into the privileged and those who lack basic human rights. This system is being perpetrated largely due to the fact that UNMIK is simply not ready to implement the basic provisions of Resolution 1244. The overwhelming majority of Kosovo Serbs still lack civil freedoms and rights, as well as free access to public institutions in urban centers: hospitals, schools and cultural institutions. The cities and towns of Kosovo and Metohija, except in the north of the Province, have been almost emptied of their Serb population. In Priština today there are only about 250 Serbs remaining; an equal number are in Gnjilane; in Orahovac, there are about 450; in Prizren, 65; in Djakovica, 5; in Peć there are none, with the exception of some 20 elderly nuns in the Peć Patriarchate. Towns such as Uroševac, Srbica, Glogovac and Klina have already become ethnically pure Albanian settlements. All assessments suggest that these small Serb communities in urban centers will soon be extinguished unless the provisions of UNSC Resolution 1244 are implemented.

In a particularly difficult situation are Serbs living in "multiethnic" areas such as Obilić and Vitina. In these areas systematic pressures, attacks and



murders have left the remaining Serbs without true prospect of normal life. Everywhere around the Province, institutions and settlements are decorated with flags of the Republic of Albania and posters of Adem Jashari; monuments to new heroes from “the war of national liberation” are springing up everywhere, along with kitschy statues of new Kalashnikov-armed “Albanian heroes”. At the same time, Serb cemeteries are being transformed into public garbage dumps and the ruins of destroyed churches are overgrown with weeds. Everywhere signs in the Serb language have been obliterated, and towns are being given new fangled names which have never existed before in history. History itself is being falsified with the goal of creating a new artificial identity in order to destroy centuries of history and cultural

development. Once known as the cradle of Orthodox Christianity, medieval churches and frescoes, Kosovo now more resembles Afghanistan.

UNMIK and its virtual reality

From UNMIK's comfortable and well-protected headquarters one cannot see the Serb ghetto in Priština's "YU Program" building, nor the forsaken Serb villages near Obilić where every day brings uncertainty and Serb children live in daily fear. From their virtual reality, well-paid international bureaucrats do not see the hospitals, schools, movie theaters and restaurants which have been inaccessible to Serbs for the past four years despite the presence of UN and NATO forces. Nevertheless, the number of crimes is decreasing, proudly claim UNMIK officials. This claim is not incorrect but the statistics do not explain that this positive trend is largely the consequence of the isolation of the Serb community in their protected enclaves. According to the distorted logic of some UNMIK officials the cities in which there are no Serbs are the safest and the most stable places in Kosovo. For example, the city of Peć was seen as such a place too. That is why half a year ago, international caretakers hurried to take a group of 50 elderly Serb pensioners from the neighbouring Serb enclave to that city to claim their pensions. Of course, they barely managed to get them out alive under a hail of Molotov cocktails and stones from the local Albanians. "But how can this be?" surprised UNMIK officials asked themselves. "According to our assessments Peć is a safe city for Serbs; not a single Serb has been killed there in the past two years." What they forget to take into account is that there are no more Serbs in Peć since the war. According to the same logic, the city is equally safe for Inuit and Chinese. Statistics and real life differ considerably.

For many internationals in Priština the situation seems to be quite normal and they fail to notice that some courageous young Serbs, usually interpreters who work for UNMIK or OSCE, appear in public places exclusively using English and ID cards with international names to avoid risks. This has become so normal that certain international offices regularly organize cultural events and presentations with translation only in Albanian since it is assumed that even if any Serbs dared attend such events they would naturally speak only English. The remaining Serb native residents of Priština who cannot buy bread normally in Albanian shops and are not good at English do not have much choice but to stay in their homes. Such is the life in the city in which to be and to stay a Serb is an adventure.

Returns only on paper – Serbs forced to give up return

The second greatest failure of UNMIK is the lack of return of the Serb population. Only several hundred Serbs have been able to return to their homes, most of them elderly people whose names were first listed and carefully filtered by local Albanian staff and KLA veterans. UNMIK's inflated figures of thousands of Serb returnees are inaccurate and refer to returnees of other at-risk communities, primarily Roma. Frequently even those who come to visit their relatives from Serbia are registered as returnees while those who leave Kosovo and Metohija in the meanwhile are not. Despite all efforts and programs, the returnee villages of Osojane and Bica near Istok continue to live under siege, surrounded by KFOR protective forces. Are 30,000 KFOR troops and several thousand UNMIK policemen really unable to ensure the return of expelled persons to their homes? Obviously, that would not be met with approval from Albanian extremists, and UNMIK and KFOR have no intention of getting involved in a conflict with them and endangering the safety of their own personnel. This generates a vicious circle with UNMIK increasingly becoming a passive sponsor of an ethnically cleansed society in the eyes of the Serbs; the very kind of society (according to the official interpretation) the international community sought to prevent by dropping tons of bombs on Serbia in 1999 and killing thousands of innocent men, women and children. Since judge and prosecutor in Kosovo and Metohija are one and the same, the blame for these problems apparently falls again on Serbs such as Bishop Artemije, who, it appears, stubbornly refuses to acknowledge what a good life his people are living. Perhaps we should blame the last remaining Serb grannies in Djakovica. According to a "lucid" interpretation of an arrogant international bureaucrat, they are "provoking the Albanian population by their isolation, consequently justifying their refusal to accept them"? Thus five old ladies are provoking 100,000 Albanians, who on the other hand refuse to allow them to buy bread in the store, let alone to live the last years of their lives in peace.

Several returnee projects in the Peć region, pompously announced by UNMIK last year, have been practically abandoned simply because UNMIK "does not want to create new enclaves". In fact this is just an excuse to avoid responsibility for the protection of returnees and deployment of additional troops able only to provide a minimum of security for the returnees. Officially, displaced Serbs are kindly invited to return individually. In reality, not even groups of Serbs are safe from Albanian extremist attacks, which makes this invitation nothing but a bitter irony. When displaced Serbs complain and say that their return is impossible under such conditions, UNMIK officials interpret their words as a lack of willingness to return at all. Planned reductions of troops in many parts of Kosovo and Metohija, in which Serbs

used to live before, practically bring hopes of return to zero, because in the existing security situation their return is absolutely not possible.

For example, UNMIK has announced the closing of the local office in Dečani Municipality, the transfer of competencies to the local municipal administration (which, by the way, consists of ethnic Albanians only), while KFOR plans to cut down the number of troops to a minimum, which will probably be enough to provide a certain level of security only for the monastery of Dečani. In such a situation 1000 displaced Serbs from this town practically have no hope for return and are thus forced to sell their property. With such a policy UNMIK and KFOR are indirectly pressing displaced Serbs to give up the idea of return. On the other hand some Western governments (like the USA) donate money for the integration of refugees in central Serbia, which additionally discourages returns. The logic seems to be clear – the less willing the Serbs are to return, the easier it will be for KFOR to reduce troops and for UNMIK to accomplish its exit strategy and pull out; the less Serbs in Kosovo and Metohija, the less problems for the international community and Kosovo Albanians.

During the past years, Kosovo Serbs were exposed to hundreds of various extremist attacks, and thousands of provocations and threats. Houses were blown up, land mines exploded, people were killed and wounded. Ethnically motivated crimes still continue. The recent massacre of a Serb family in Obilić and the murder of a Serb teacher near Vitina are not exceptions but indicators of the prevailing atmosphere of ethnic terror. Not one member of the former KLA has been brought to justice for any of the crimes committed against Serbs during the war. A few have been arrested, but only for crimes against their own Albanian compatriots. Despite all this, UNMIK insists that Serbs “accept this new reality and become integrated” in a society where there is no room for them. There is so much irony and injustice in this claim by which UNMIK hopelessly tries to hide its own responsibility for failure.

Serbian Orthodox Church under persecution

The destruction of Orthodox Christian churches and Serbian cultural monuments also continues and their restoration is still not possible because they might be destroyed again. Indeed, Kosovo and Metohija is a unique postwar area in which, four years after the conflict, the restoration of the Christian holy sites is impossible due to the prevailing intolerance of the Albanian Muslim majority. While at the same time dozens of new mosques have been built, many of them with ample funding from Arabian states, Orthodox Christianity remains under persecution: nuns are stoned and verbally abused, priests cannot normally visit their flock, parish churches are stoned,

and the theological school in Prizren, which worked even in the times of the Ottoman Empire, is closed without any hope of reopening. Cemeteries are being systematically desecrated, crosses are broken and holy icons burnt. Half a year ago one Serbian Orthodox church was blown up and another seriously damaged. The perpetrators of these attacks have never been found, just like in other attacks in which 110 churches were blown up, burned or damaged. Medieval churches which survived five centuries of Ottoman rule perished under the internationally “granted” peace, in the presence of thousands of peacekeepers. Now the Serbian Church struggles to preserve the ruins of these churches because local Albanian municipal councils would gladly see these ruins removed and replaced by their own monuments to the “war heroes”.

Serbs without economic prospects

While enormous financial resources have been invested to meet the needs of the Kosovo Albanians, Serb villages and enclaves continue to live in poverty and misery. People are without jobs; thousands of hectares of Serb-owned land remain uncultivated due to lack of security. Grazing one's livestock in a meadow involves a serious safety risk, let alone contemplating the sale of farm products at the local farmers' market. Daily pressure continues on the remaining Serbs to sell their property, especially in cities and towns where the Albanians have illegally occupied thousands of Serb-owned private houses, apartments and businesses. They often use this usurped property without any compensation to the owners before UNMIK's very eyes and sometimes with its tacit approval. At the same time, thousands of hectares of state-owned land and forests have been devastated by looting and illegal lumbering.

Every appeal to the court is condemned to fail from the start because the justice system in the Province is a tragicomic parody of law and (dis)order. Due to a lack of witnesses, who are under enormous fear of Albanian extremists, not one major incident against the Serbs has been positively resolved. At the same time, dozens of Serbs are wasting away in the interrogative jails of UNMIK, completely against all existing laws, because the courts lack evidence to sentence them as war criminals. Restitution of property is a near impossibility; in the few cases where, by some miracle, a Serb manages to get back his confiscated house, he is immediately forced to sell it because it is not safe for him to return with his family to live in it. UNMIK has an explanation for this, too. Recently the deputy civil administrator for Priština stated nonchalantly that the Serbs in fact “do not want to return to their homes at all despite UNMIK's invitation to do so”. How

are they supposed to return to constant danger, uncertainty, injustice and poverty?

Privatization legitimizes injustice done in the past

After the Second World War and the establishment of Communist rule in Yugoslavia large tracts of arable land and forests were confiscated from the Serbian Orthodox Church, primarily in Kosovo and Metohija. The Church has failed to restitute its property ever since because it was viewed as one of the strongest opponents of the Communist rule. After the confiscation in 1946, a part of the Church land was simply distributed to Albanian farmers, many of whom had immigrated to Kosovo and Metohija from Albania during Nazi occupation. The other part was kept as state-owned property or assigned to socially-owned companies. Kosovo Albanians who benefited the most from this confiscation now understandably want to avoid restitution of the Church land by all means and press UNMIK to pursue a hasty privatization which will finally bring the former Church property into their private hands before a law on restitution is drafted.

The latest UNMIK regulation on privatization threatens to allow Kosovo Albanian companies and private owners to “legally” privatize the former Church property and thus make restitution impossible. To the Church, which has lost more than 100 holy sites since the beginning of the UN Mission in Kosovo, this is an additional blow and discouragement. The Serbian Orthodox Diocese has therefore already asked the Coordination Centre and UNMIK to take into consideration its rightful claims, but so far no assurances have been given that former Church property will be spared from privatization and restituted to its owner.

Institutions: A smokescreen for false multiethnicity

However, the greatest misconception in Kosovo and Metohija is that the constitutional framework, supposedly free elections and institution-building will enable the Serbs to improve their position through the institutions of the system. For a year representatives of the Serb Return (*Povratak*) Coalition participated in the work of the Kosovo parliament without being able to achieve a single concrete result. Is Kosovo any closer to being a multiethnic society? Have better conditions been created for the return of expelled persons, the goal from which the Coalition took its name? Is Resolution 1244 being more effectively implemented? The answer to all three questions is NO. Incidents continue to occur and Kosovo does not even remotely resemble a multiethnic society; instead, it has become a classic model of institutionalized apartheid and intolerance. Only a few hun-

dred out of about 200,000 expelled persons have a roof over their head in their isolated enclaves. And as far as Resolution 1244 is concerned, it has never been more trampled on and disregarded. Kosovo Albanians are using institutions which Serbs have joined to prove that Kosovo and Metohija is indeed “multiethnic” and that it should become independent. Occasionally their leaders, accompanied by UNMIK officials, take a stroll through a Serb enclave, snap a few photographs and immediately run to Western capitals to show pictures which supposedly prove their concern for “the Serb minority”. In fact, hiding behind this false façade of the UN mission and the new Kosovo institutions is a tragic reality of unbridled violence, organized crime, corruption and bureaucratic chaos. UNMIK has not only tarnished the moral reputation of the international community in the Balkans but is now consciously turning a blind eye to the destruction of an entire people and their culture for no other reason than to rationalize its own failure.

In the past four years the Kosovo Albanians have done absolutely nothing with regard to respect for human rights of the Serb community. Although Kosovo legislation contains many provisions guaranteeing, theoretically, the rights of minorities, Kosovo Serbs can hardly make use of them, simply because they live on the margins of law and order, isolated in their poor enclaves and exposed to daily threats by Albanian extremists. So far UNMIK has not even been able to guarantee the free public use of the Serbian language, let alone other rights. Almost all Serbian signs bearing the names of towns put up by the UNMIK administration have been obliterated by black spray paint. Many Serbs deduce correctly that if the Albanians cannot even accept our language, then how can they accept and respect our other rights and ensure our free and dignified life?

In search of an exit strategy

Despite all difficulties and problems which they endure from the local Albanians, what hurts Kosovo Serbs the most is the unscrupulous propaganda conducted by UNMIK, which rudely falsifies the actual situation in Kosovo and Metohija. The goal of this campaign is to rationalize the tremendous failures of this mission, whose purported “successes” are increasingly coming under fire in New York and Brussels. The current unofficial goal of the Mission appears to be to finally implement an effective exit strategy that includes transferring all authority to the local authorities, i.e. institutions overwhelmingly dominated by the Albanian majority, prior to the withdrawal of the international community from the Province and the pronouncement of the successful conclusion of the Mission. As the logical consequence of this strategy, local Albanians and some international circles are expecting recognition of an independent Kosovo, i.e. a second ethnic Albanian state in

the Balkans, which will supposedly guarantee Serbs all rights “according to the highest European standards”. Taking into account that areas inhabited by Albanians are the cleanest ethnic territories in the Balkans, it is difficult to expect an exception to the rule in an independent Kosovo where ethnic and religious tolerance are out of the question. Such a creation would be in fundamental contradiction with everything which contemporary Europe represents and wishes to achieve today. It is not necessary to comment on the economic sustainability of a society largely based on smuggling and illegal activities. Without friendly relations with their next-door neighbours, Serbs and Macedonians, the Kosovo Albanians can depend only on poverty-stricken Albania, which has enough problems of her own.

It is very important to emphasize that the active presence of Serb deputies in provincial institutions is seen as a key element for a successful exit strategy and the eventual secession of the Province from Serbia, because this would be the strongest argument before the world that the Serbs are really able to shape their future independently, freely and effectively through the multiethnic institutions of a future independent state. Of course, these Serb deputies, who commute to parliamentary sessions in armoured police vans and who do not dare to step outside the building for a simple coffee break, are themselves beginning to understand what and whom they are in fact serving. This is why further participation in such institutions, under extremely discriminatory and humiliating conditions, is not possible any longer. Without essential changes in the institutional system, which must be brought to compliance with UNSC Resolution 1244, Serb participation in the Parliament will only make additional damage to the position of the Serbian people and help Kosovo Albanians create their independent state.

Despite everything said above, the Serbian people still hope that UNMIK will finally abandon the policy of double standards and begin building a truly free and multiethnic society in accordance with Resolution 1244 and international law. In the institutions of such a society, where all citizens regardless of religion and ethnicity will have a right to a dignified and free life, the Serbian people will be quite ready to participate with all other citizens and to offer their constructive contribution. However, if UNMIK intends to continue building a new ethnic Albanian state in which Serbs would continue to live as second-class citizens or disappear completely, it is illusory on the part of the international community to expect Serb cooperation and support for such a project.

ADDITIONAL ANALYSIS
(September 2003)

App. 1

Precise figures of post-conflict ethnically motivated crimes in Kosovo

Fr. Sava Janjić

ERP KiM Info-Service

Devastating figures of 1,192 killed and 1,303 kidnapped Serbs since the UN/KFOR arrival in Kosovo clearly demonstrate that the sufferings experienced during the conflict have simply been replaced with an organized Kosovo Albanian campaign of ethnic terror against Serbs and other non-Albanians in times of “peace”. Although some UNMIK officials stubbornly try to minimize the post-conflict tragedy of Serbs, Roma, Bosniaks, Croats etc. and to justify their ethnically biased mission, the families of the Serbs killed or abducted despite the UN/NATO presence audaciously bear witness to Albanian ethnic terror and injustice which continues under the UN and NATO flags.

Instead of stopping violence and disarming KLA gangs, UNMIK allowed KLA to legalize its existence, entering the political life of Kosovo and using the UN-sponsored institutions as a smokescreen for ethnic discrimination. Instead of implementing a requirement of UN SC Resolution 1244 (Ch. 10, Annex II, 5) to establish “a substantial autonomy (of Kosovo) within the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (i.e. Serbia-Montenegro)” and re-establish a multiethnic society prior to the final status settlement, the UN Mission de facto created an ethnic Albanian quasi-state without any links with the internationally recognized state to which the Province officially belongs. The inability of UNMIK and KFOR to prevent ethnic Albanian extremism and to isolate their leaders politically has resulted in the largest ethnic cleansing during the period of a peace mission.

In the beginning of the second millennium of Christianity the UN-administered Kosovo Province is the only part of the civilized world in which Christian shrines (churches and cemeteries) are exposed to unrestrained destruction and desecration by Muslim Albanians. At the same moment that more than 100 demolished churches lie in ruins despite the international presence, some Western politicians still speak of a European future of the Province which more resembles Afghanistan than any European country.

Perhaps, if we should say what the real success of the Kosovo peace mission is, we can frankly admit that the situation on the ground after the withdrawal of the former Yugoslav forces would have been much worse without their presence, humanitarian assistance and protection of Serb enclaves and some Orthodox Christian holy sites. All its other “successes” are purely relative and concern primarily the ethnic Albanian community.

KOSOVO — FRAGILE PEACE IN THE SHADOW
OF CONTINUAL ETHNIC TERROR

App. 2

Unwillingness of Kosovo Albanian leaders to confront extremists in their own ranks makes them accomplices in the ethnic cleansing of the Province

Fr. Sava Janjić

ERP KiM Info-service

Gračanica, 5 September 2003

In the past ten years or so the Balkans have seen too much blood, suffering, refugees and destroyed holy shrines. The common characteristic of all regimes under which crimes against members of other ethnic communities are committed is their complete unwillingness to face the fact that there are crimes committed against others and that others have the right to live in their homes even if they have a different ethnic background and speak a different dialect. Stories that were regularly circulated by members of the Milošević, Tudjman and Izetbegović regimes are so similar to each other that they seem to have been written by the same people. In fact, these regimes based on crime as a means for achieving political goals were creating the same type of consciousness, one recognizing or consciously denying committed crimes as a legitimate method of deceiving the public. Unfortunately, very few people had the strength to openly oppose this policy, but there were some nevertheless. Let us remember the thousands of young Belgraders and citizens of Serbia who ran to meet billy clubs and tear gas in the streets because, for them, the future did not lie in the rule of terror and lies.

Things change but not in Kosovo

At long last, things began to change, slowly and self-consciously, but nevertheless they changed. The new political establishments in Belgrade, Zagreb and Sarajevo are increasingly and more courageously opening the bloody files of their predecessors in the attempt to bring the period of darkness and madness to its final close, and to replace it with a new period of mutual cooperation and trust. Of course, the wounds will not heal quickly, but the process has begun and the results are increasingly visible. The new generations of politicians understand that the Balkans burdened by its bloody legacy can only remain a black hole in Europe and the world, and that otherwise thousands of young and educated people will leave their homes in search of a place where people are valued on the basis of their human qualities, not on the basis of their ethnicity.

In this Balkan story, Kosovo seems to live in a different time and place even though it is in fact the only part of the territory of Tito's former Yugoslavia under the administration of a United Nations civil mission and a NATO-led peacekeeping force. In Kosovo, crimes not only continue to occur but for the past four years they have been a silently accepted legitimate means of pursuing the policy of ethnic cleansing which Kosovo Albanian extremists are carrying out against Serbs and non-Albanian minorities. Their goal is to achieve what dictators such as Milošević and Tudjman failed to accomplish: to carry out a revision of the Balkan borders along ethnic lines and to divide the towns and villages that not even the five centuries of Turkish rule or Milošević's regime were able to divide. While in Belgrade, Zagreb, Banja Luka and Sarajevo politicians are painfully and with difficulty, but also with increasing courage and determination, confronting the legacy of the past with the intent of joining the rest of Europe, in Kosovo key figures among the Kosovo Albanians not only persistently deny ethnic terror against Serbs but, in the case of the most recent attacks resulting in the deaths of children and helpless old people, are once again accusing phantom Serb forces, as if time for them had stopped back in 1999 when Milošević ruled the fate of Balkan peoples. Many Kosovo Albanians simply cannot accept the fact that the new government in Serbia has sent almost the entire Milošević establishment to The Hague Tribunal and that Serbia is not governed by those who brought them pain, but by those who themselves suffered under Milošević's regime.

Living in a nightmare

Serbs in Kosovo continue to live in the nightmare of the 1990s when the blood of innocent civilians flowed from Knin and Sarajevo to Peć and

Uroševac. Investigations of crimes committed against Serbs are at a standstill; for them there is no freedom of movement or life; their children live in perpetual fear; and old people enclosed in their isolated homes await every twilight in fear. Under the so-called "internationally guaranteed peace" Orthodox Christian churches and cemeteries continue to be destroyed and desecrated as if Kosovo were not in Europe but in the land of the Taliban. While Albanian journalists compete in producing the most fantastic theories about invisible Serbian paramilitary units making diversions in various parts of the Province, unnoticed and unseen by thousands of NATO-led troops and almost two million ethnic Albanians, their politicians doggedly accuse UNMIK and KFOR, claiming that they would do a better job themselves of dealing with "Serbian criminals." Thus yet another attempt is being made to deceive the international community with the already frayed story of how the Serbs are to blame if it snows in the month of October. At one time, when the first diversions by members of the KLA began in 1996 and 1997, Ibrahim Rugova, the present president of Kosovo Province, swore that they were carried out by the Serbian secret service although everyone in the world knew about the shadowy rebel group of Albanian extremists. After June 1999 the same story was warmed up again in newspaper articles in order to prove to the world that despite the fact that ethnically motivated crimes were occurring every day, Kosovo was now "free." In fact Kosovo was becoming more and more a Serb-free territory. Albanian politicians who in June 1999 were absolutely certain of their complete victory are now growing increasingly nervous and fearful because they have demonstrated that their vision of Kosovo is not much different from Milošević's. With their narrow ethnocentric and anachronistic views they are hardly welcome as a future part of Europe.

The creators of these fantastic tales of Serbian phantoms have begun to believe in them themselves. When the recent massacre of Serb children in Gorazdevac occurred, a chorus of Albanian language newspapers wrote that the Serbian children were playing with "a bomb that exploded". Albanian physicians in Peć, seeing multiple gunshot wounds of children before them, nonchalantly diagnosed them as bone fractures and proceeded to put casts on the children's arms and legs that still contained machine-gun bullets. When the truth could not be hidden after all, the journalists and politicians who had been lamenting the demise of Kosovo's image more than the loss of young lives began to sing in chorus how the Serbs had in fact shot their own children because, as one Albanian journalist wrote: "They are ready to kill their own children if necessary to prevent the independence of Kosovo." On the same day the Serbian children were massacred, the world received news of a young Albanian girl allegedly wounded in the attack. Later it was "explained" that she was not injured in the attack but in fact "stoned by

angry Serbs". In the end, no one was able to give the name of the Albanian girl or confirm that she was hurt anywhere nearby.

In the same period, a similar case was that of a Serb, Vladimir Jovanović of Ibarska Slatina, arrested with great fanfare under suspicion of having killed a UNMIK policeman from India. Some of the foreign media went so far as to triumphantly explain to their readers that there was not only Albanian extremism in Kosovo but also "Serbian terrorists." The news of Jovanović's release because of the fact that since the very beginning there was no evidence against him went almost unnoticed. The balance of crime had already been achieved and a concerned Berlin Institute for International Relations published an obscure analysis on how Serbian and Albanian extremists rule in Kosovo using the vacuum of the interregnum. The biggest problem lies in the fact that neither Kosovo Albanians nor the international community can clearly state who these "Serbian extremists" really are and publish at least a few names. But this hardly matters because any Serb who loves his country and does not want to see it divided cannot be anything but "an extremist advocating a Greater Serbia." In the end, stereotypes from another time and reality must be distinguished.

Unmik's virtual reality

In the whole story of covering up the real situation in Kosovo, some representatives of the UN civil mission and KFOR have also played a shameful role in that their ambiguous and unclear attitude toward the ethnic terror that has been unfolding in front of their eyes for four years has actually contributed to creating an atmosphere of confusion and indirectly emboldened Albanian extremism, which goes unpunished. The master in this sort of activity is UNMIK's propaganda minister Simon Haselock, who miraculously missed the bomb attack on the UN mission in Baghdad by only one hour and quickly rushed back to Priština to declare to the world how the security situation in Kosovo really was much improved and indirectly accused Belgrade of creating more tension. The same Albanian politicians who have been blind for four years to all crimes committed against Serbs, if in fact they did not support or organize those crimes themselves, are now suddenly demonstrating touching concern for "the Serb citizens of Kosovo" whom they are protecting from the Belgrade government that, much to their horror, is sacrificing its own people and killing them just to spoil "Kosovo's image" (as if Kosovo even had one). It is becoming increasingly apparent that the international UN civil mission and KFOR are unprepared to confront Albanian extremism, the existence of which they are more than aware. If Albanian extremism was confronted with anywhere near the determination of a few years ago to topple the regime of Slobodan Milošević, international

forces might be forced to risk similar tragedies to that which recently occurred in Baghdad.

All in all, the bloody drama of Kosovo continues. The Kosovo Serbs, with an Albanian knife at their throat on the one hand and the “grave concerns” and hypocrisy of Western peacemakers around them on the other, continue to suffer and perish. Their government in Belgrade can do little to assist them because the smallest gesture of solidarity and concern for Kosovo is immediately interpreted as a form of new Serbian territorial hegemony. For many Albanians, Kosovo Serbs are just a minority that, hopefully, will go away eventually and leave Kosovo solely to the Albanian people. Members of UNMIK and KFOR regularly ask them how they see their future, as if to indirectly say: Why don't you leave and make life easier for both yourselves and for us? Truthfully, the mission that has completely failed and lost all sense continues only because of “a handful of stubborn Serbs” who refuse to leave. If only they would leave so everyone could shed the obligatory tear of sympathy and finally turn over a new page by proclaiming a new ethnic state of Albanians whose borders are already under discussion by leading politicians in Priština, Tetovo and Tirana, and in the process of being carved out in the field by terrorists of the so-called Albanian National Army, Kosovo Liberation Army, Liberation Army of Preševo, Medvedja and Bujanovac and who knows what other bands of opportunists. In the end it appears that the fistful of Serbs and the few Macedonians who remain in the western parts of this southern republic are the chief obstacle to the realization of the centuries-old Albanian dream of building the only ethnically pure state in the Balkans.

It remains to be seen whether the West will sacrifice the Balkans to its global interests in the Middle East. It is possible that this might result in some sort of balance of interests but it is also certain that it would enable the flourishing of the most dangerous terrorism and crime right in the bosom of Europe which will hit Europe like a boomerang.

Rajko Djurić

Roma in Kosovo and Metohija

ARGUMENTS AGAINST INDEPENDENCE OF KOSOVO AND METOHİJA

The Roma of Serbia, like Roma in many European and non-European countries, who have been, along with Jews, the biggest victims of wars and a “bargaining chip” in armed conflicts between majority peoples, follow attentively and anxiously the start of negotiations about the future status of Kosovo and Metohija, an autonomous province of Serbia under UN administration (UNMIK) since June 1999.

The United Nations, whose previous Secretary General Kofi Annan had the opportunity to converse with a representative of the International Roma Organisation, are not unfamiliar with facts and data concerning the overall position of 12 million Roma, currently the largest ethnic minority in the world. Nor is it unknown that until June 1999 Roma were the largest ethnic minority in Kosovo and Metohija.

The Göttingen-based *Society for Threatened Peoples* (Germany), *Caritas International* and other important non-governmental organizations across Europe have been supplied with detailed reports on the tragedy of the Kosovo-Metohija Roma after their mass expulsion by Albanian extremists in June 1999 and ever since such reports have been published almost regularly in the Cologne-based Roman Catholic Church magazine *Good Afternoon*.

European Union, OSCE and the whole international community have been dully informed, then, that the so-called Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA/UÇK) not only committed crimes against Kosovo Roma, but carried out a radical “ethnic cleansing” of Kosovo and Metohija of its largest minority. Of about 260,000 Roma in 1999, now only 29,656 are left! Of 193 Roma settlements in Kosovo and Metohija, there now remain only 26!

This may be described as an almost total annihilation of the Romani ethnic minority, unprecedented in the history of Kosovo and Metohija, not even during the horrible Nazi-sponsored persecutions against Serbs and Roma of Kosovo and Metohija in the Second World War, although

there were present, altering in the role of persecutors, SS Nazi forces, Italian Fascist and various Albanian collaborators subsequently. It convincingly confirms the truth of Hannah Arendt's notion that "Totalitarianism destroys totally!"

For further explanation, the following facts drawn from some reports verified by internationals but available for further assessment will be presented: a Romani citizen of Obilić (T.T.) and his wife, abused on 5 July 1999, have made the statement "that the very same Albanians that had tortured them" later killed the Krasnici family. In their own home, Alija, his wife Muljazima, Djulja, Fadilj, Cerim and one-year old Nedzmedin were burned alive. Romani infants were thrown alive into the fire in Priština.

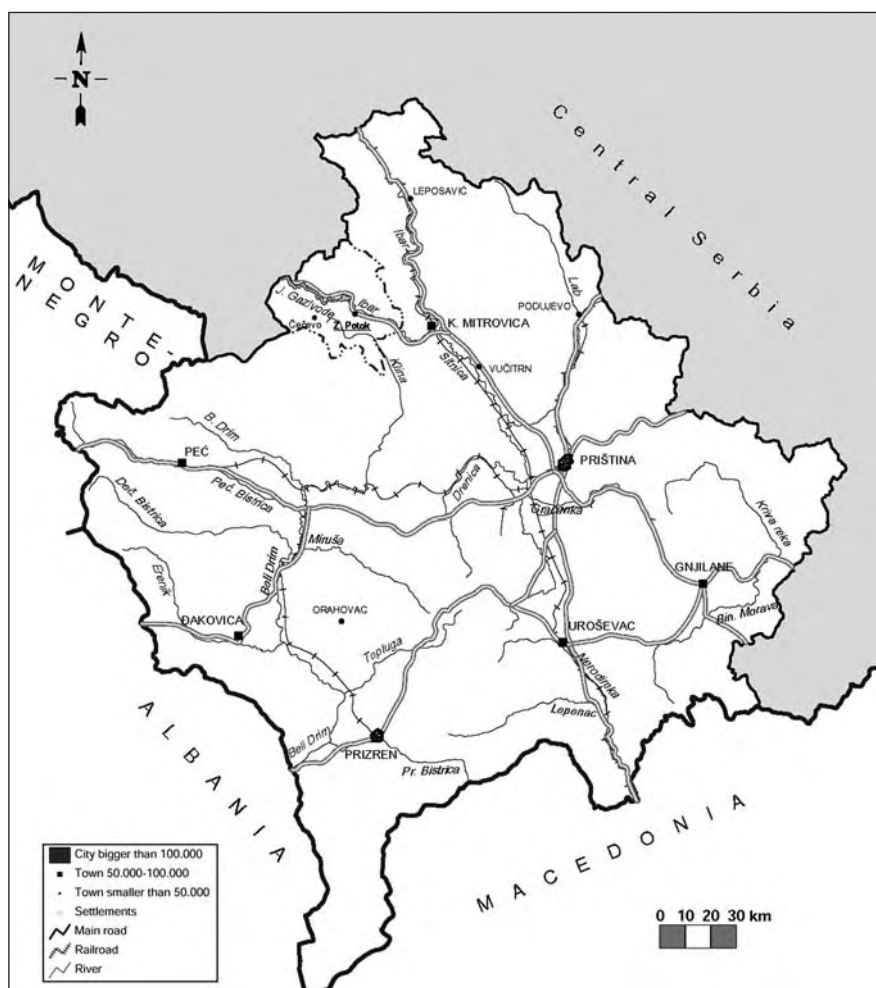
The KLA, consisting exclusively of Albanians and labelled as "fascist" by several Albanian intellectuals of Kosovo and Metohija, killed a large number of Roma in Priština, Peć, Obilić, Djakovica, Lipljan, Prizren, Podujevo, Uroševac and Gnjilane.

Among the 240,000 inhabitants of pre-1999 Priština there were at least 22,000 Roma while the latest data shows that only 1,300 of them still live in the provincial capital of Kosovo and Metohija. The numbers of Roma remaining in larger cities are as follows: in Peć, only 1100 of 22,000; in Obilić, only 500 of 7,000; in Gnjilane, only some 250 of 7,000 are left; in Vučitrn, of 5,000 Roma only 300 remain.

Long and painful is the list of abused, of raped women and girls, of missing persons, and some reports refer to mass grave-pits, as yet undiscovered, of Romani victims killed by Kosovo Albanian extremists.¹ The UNMIK administration is positively aware of what Albanian extremists have been doing to the Roma who have remained in Kosovo and Metohija.

In spite of everything, the Roma from central Serbia, together with the Roma from Kosovo and Metohija and 116,000 registered Roma refugees from the province – firmly believing that the truth is on the side of the underprivileged – put their trust in the international community, and especially in the UN-led process, to provide security, return of usurped property and sustainable life for all citizens of Kosovo and Metohija. We shall see what solutions Martti Ahtisaari, Special Envoy for Future Status Process appointed by the United Nations Secretary General, will propose to the negotiating teams of Belgrade and Priština. In his capacity as president of Finland, Ahtisaari showed great concern for Roma in his country. The current president of Finland Tarja Halonen has continued his work and opened

¹ Günter Grass, German Nobel Prize laureate, has warned of the tragic destiny of the Kosovo-Metohija Roma in his speeches collected in his book *Voicelless* (Göttingen: Steidel 2000).



the doors to Roma in Finland and Europe, which earned her the highest recognition from the Roma of Europe in 2003.

The Roma of Serbia overtly state the names they associate themselves with, thereby defining their position much more convincingly than they would have by referring to those who deserve harsh criticism. Committed to peace and stability, the members of this ethnic minority sincerely expect the international community to support and defend during negotiations about Kosovo and Metohija only those stands and views that are in accordance with the established principles and norms of international law.

To grant independence to Kosovo and Metohija, in any form, would mean to acknowledge and reward those who have committed the most appalling crimes against Roma in European history since Auschwitz, the symbol of Jewish and Romani holocaust.

On the other hand, in the year declared in a UN appeal as the year commemorating the sixtieth anniversary of victory over Fascism, to close the eyes to the Romani victims of Kosovo and Metohija and to deprive their children of their right to a future would mean the international community's tacit approval of the regimes committing atrocities against this people and brutally abusing their national, civil and human rights of which the UN, its bodies and major European institutions are guarantors.

From the international community are expected solutions that will secure peace, security, stability and prosperity for the people, citizens and all ethnic groups of Kosovo and Metohija. In all that, the fact must not be forgotten that ethics calls for justice, and without justice there can be no lasting peace. Justice must not depend on the will of the evildoers, and the will or threats of criminals must not influence the negotiations about the culpability of evildoers.

It is up to the wisdom and decisions of the international community whether the dawning new millennium will bring new hope and faith to the people, citizens and nations of Kosovo and Metohija and the Balkans, where there have been cooperation, mutual understanding and friendship even under emperors and sultans, black and red terror. These peoples, as many eminent European historians and writers have described and explained, have not lacked virtue, they have lacked conditions for the exercise of their rights and liberties. Historical experience testifies to the fact that on the borders between divided nations and ethnical minorities only the weeds of distrust and poisonous hatred can thrive.

Today the words of Willy Brandt, spoken on a different occasion, could show the way to politicians and diplomats, who are expected to avoid the point at which a future in Kosovo and Metohija would become impossible to plan: "Now only grows together what belongs together!"

Julian Harston

Belgrade Valedictory : March 1, 2007

1. Altogether, I have spent nearly six years as political representative of the United Nations in Serbia. Two periods separated for me by time in Haiti, East Timor and New York, and for Serbia by the trauma of the NATO bombing, the departure of Milosevic, the dawn of a new and largely democratic order blighted by the murder of a Prime Minister, and the painful and lonely business of tidying up the remaining historical flotsam left on the beach at the end of the Balkan storms: Kosovo, Montenegro, and the Swiss Siren in the Hague.

2. In my first incumbency I watched and commented on the beginnings of the epic struggle of the Serbs to rid themselves of Milosevic, a process which the NATO bombing in fact delayed not accelerated. The logic of that intervention was an unrecognised harbinger of the policy of muddle-headed compromise and inconsistency that was to follow. A policy which led to the involvement of the UN in its fifth major operation in the Balkans, and my return to Belgrade to deal with Kosovo.

3. As it has in many other places, the United Nations came into the dual role of mediator and administrator in Kosovo not by choice. When the world's great powers run into difficulties, they tend to assign the most intractable issues to the UN. Particularly the extraordinary role of a "transitional administrator." This responsibility is taken on with ambivalence by the United Nations as an organisation. Member States, also hesitate to invite the Security Council, with its coercive authority, into delicate questions of internal governance. For the wealthier Member States, there is also concern that expansion of any UN role along these lines can only incur further demands on resources. This reluctance has meant that the UN has never been formally equipped to undertake administrative functions; when it does so, as in Kosovo, it does so in an ad hoc manner. And when, as in Kosovo, the clouded mirrors of the selection process on the 38th floor of the Sec-

retariat clear not once but seven times in seven years to reveal the figure of a new Administrator from a very mixed bag of politicians and bureaucrats, only two with UN experience and none from Peacekeeping, then the inbuilt deficiencies of the UN system are, at the very least exacerbated.

4. In Kosovo, the political context itself was much more delicate, and less clear cut, than in other cases in the world where temporary UN administration has been deployed. Politically, the Security Council's mandate for Kosovo offered no definitive indication of the "end-state" of Kosovo, it simply postponed the issue. The late night, hasty adoption of Resolution 1244 with its now notorious ambiguity – affirming the *de jure* sovereignty of the FRY (now Serbia), while performing the *de facto* excision of any practical vestiges of this sovereignty – has had predictable results.

5. Whatever the final outcome, this case will, I believe, fundamentally influence integration processes in the EU, in NATO, in the global economy, each of which is directly linked to even wider dynamics: the post-Cold War relations of East to West; the United States and Europe; Russia and Europe. Thus the people of Serbia and Kosovo find themselves looking for resolution of their own conflict while at the same time face to face with the changing tides of high politics. In the discussions on Kosovo's future status which are continuing in the faded grandeur of Vienna's gilded palaces, the condition of Kosovo's Serb population has been recognised as a *sine qua non* of success. But the continuation of insecurity for the Serb population constantly threatens to turn on their head each and every one of the justifications for, and achievements of, the international intervention in Kosovo. The shadow, haunting international policies in Kosovo, remains the real possibility of Kosovo becoming mono-ethnic. Should this come to pass, the credibility of international policies, not only in the Balkans but elsewhere, will be fundamentally undermined. Perhaps belatedly, the opening of discussions on future status have brought these issues back into the light, at the centre of the entire effort, where they belong.

6. Serbia's strategic importance in the future of Europe should make its emergence from isolation one of Europe's highest priorities. Yet, Europe's vision of Serbia seems frozen in time, drifting with an international policy born when Belgrade was at its isolated nadir.

7. I believe the Serbian people to be more aware of the facts of the Kosovo issue than most outsiders presume. They are aware that the difficult circumstances of Kosovo were not created in the last seven years, that the sum of huge political errors upon more errors added up to produce the given circumstances. Fortunately, the Serbian people also seem to know instinctively that, whatever is to be done, their present interests lie in peace, striving to improve their own prosperity rather than perpetuating an historical

grudge. Yet they also want to be convinced that their state and nation is being given fair treatment.

8. Part of the discussion of Kosovo's future status is about facing basic truths. Serbia has had no direct role in governing most of Kosovo for the past seven years, and the Kosovo Albanian population will likely never again consent to governance from Belgrade. None of us are afforded the luxury of indulging in what is after all a philosophical argument whether the Serbian State (whichever iteration) "forfeited" its rights in Kosovo. The present facts speak for themselves. The question for all of us has been how to move beyond the recent cycle of conflict toward a future that will be different. One which has the potential to make life better for each individual, regardless of the side on which they sit. From here, I have argued for more creativity from my colleagues in the UN and further afield, I am hopeful that, at the end of the day, this will prove to have made a difference.

9. During my time representing the United Nations in Serbia, I have witnessed the best and the worst sides of diplomacy. I have realised that, ironically perhaps, the United Nations, as a mediator of conflict, has fewer tools with which to work than do many countries. However what the UN does have is the experience of committed people, and the moral stance that people and States are better served pursuing their interests through peaceful means rather than by violence. The strength of the UN is derived from a basic faith in the superiority of dialogue, that this is the only road to balance and to ensure the real future interests of all are met. But, in order for this strength to be expressed, a deep understanding of the positions of both sides must be built up.

10. In their different way, Serbia's present leaders, the Kosovo Albanian leaders, and we as international mediators have consistently failed to reach the standard of dialogue that is demanded. Each of us should think very hard about what can happen in the future if this is not remedied.

11. Serbia's present leaders have fallen short in accounting for policies of the past. They cannot simply avoid them by explaining that, as individuals, they were not involved in creating them. There is nervousness about being blamed, understandably, but true leadership demands risk. The alternative is more harm to Serbia itself, and reinforcement of stereotypes rather than a change of prism. As a diplomat working in Serbia, I have to remind my interlocutors too often that there are two sides. It is often not easy to be a friend of Serbia, which I consider myself to be. "We are a country, not a colony" is the crude protest often heard from exasperated Serbian leaders. Instinctive defiance of external forces, one of the prominent characteristics of Serbian culture, is frequently also one of its most destructive. There is a frequently voiced, and mostly unfounded suspicion that most offers of assistance are in truth acts of perfidy. Serbia's leaders are too often psychologi-

cally unwilling to accept the real limitations they face, and to make reasoned judgements based upon those limitations.

12. To no less extent, the present ethnic Albanian leaders in Kosovo have fallen short of accepting the responsibilities required within a peace process. This too a product of nervousness, a shortfall in leadership that doesn't bode well for their own future. Too little pressure has been placed upon them to acknowledge the most basic tenet: that in pursuing their own interests and ends, they are not excused from dialogue. Their own best hope for the future requires putting the past more clearly behind them, no less than this is the case for Serbia. Alas, most of their international mentors arrived on the scene when the Albanians were cast very firmly and rightly in the role of victims. The new arithmetic of Kosovo has done little to change this perception and nothing at all to encourage real dialogue and even negotiation.

13. Thus we, the international mediators, have fallen short as well. Too often into the easiest trap, which is seeing this conflict only through the lens of one side. This kind of laziness undermines one of the UN's most fundamental principles, that it is our role to help the parties in any conflict to communicate, not to dictate terms nor to hide from the facts by relying on simplistic or biased assumptions. There has been far too little real dialogue by international decision-makers with Serbia's present leaders, a shortcoming which unfortunately has only reinforced suspicions and prejudices, inside and outside of Serbia. Jessen Petersen visited Belgrade four times. Ahtisaari three. The psychological dimensions have been substantially neglected in the present negotiation process; this has been a very costly omission, and a process which started with the public proclamation, in 'Private messages', of a forgone conclusion was doomed to reinforce the view of Serb politicians that the theatre in which they were being asked to perform would do little for them externally and nothing at all internally.

14. But perhaps the greatest omission of all has been a refusal by those most directly concerned, the common institutions of Europe, to acknowledge the level of continuing commitment required in this part Europe, if the European ideal means anything at all.

15. A significant strategic objective was set forth right at the beginning of the intervention: Namely, to integrate Kosovo into a functional regional community (including Serbia and Albania); a community that would promote efficiency in development funding, create the foundation for political cooperation, and provide all regional states with a realistic road map to EU integration. These lofty but important objectives, set in the world political context of late 1999, receive far shorter shrift in the weary world of early 2007. The drive to resolve Kosovo status has coincided with an exhaustion of EU idealism.

16. Since the 2004 referenda on the European Constitution, we have witnessed a distressing shift away from the prime directive to produce stability in the Balkans, and its replacement by the prime expedient to avoid any appearance of sliding backwards, or any obvious manifestation of instability, whilst at the same time not frightening taxpayers, and the constitutional naysayers, with the prospect of a further 'European Grand Project'.

17. The prevailing wind in Brussels has set against any major project or initiative which might risk further alienation of the people from the European Idea. While still claiming to develop policies that would be more "inclusive," and to involve the citizens of Europe more directly, in practice the EU apparatus has come closer to a standstill. Thus in Kosovo the EU appears now to be as much or more the "reluctant administrator" as was the UN in the spring of 1999.

18. The EU has pronounced that it wishes to see democracies in Kosovo and in Serbia which are capable of respecting the principles of human and minority rights, and are economically viable. What in that is not most sincerely to be wished for? However, Statesmen know that wishing itself is not sufficient. What is at stake in the Balkans is no less than one of the keys to the EU's survival as a geo-political project. Is Brussels ready to step up to the commitment that its own future interest requires?

19. The jury is still out, and the UN, as an institution, needs to be mindful that its own principles are being tested again now. A reactive and ill-resourced transition period, allowing the balance of hostilities to shape the next chapters in the Kosovo drama, will do credit neither to the United Nations nor to the European Regional capacities, still in their infancy. Far too little is being done now to safeguard a huge investment. This is a failure of will and purpose which will be judged in the future to have made absolutely no political, economic, or human sense. It is hard to believe that we have not learned more from this decade plus of interventions in the Balkan Peninsula.

20. As I depart to involve myself in another even older debate on self determination or wide autonomy, where the great and the good in the Security Council are at least acquiescing to, if not encouraging, exactly the opposite solution to the one offered in Kosovo, I could be perhaps forgiven for taking a cynical view of the tasks given to the UN and its peacekeepers. However, I will permit myself only one sadness and that is the lack of vision shown by the Contact Group and others over the years, coupled with reactive rather than proactive statements and policies, in an area worth so much more real attention and care.

21. But I am so often reminded of the good that we do, and the positive influence that we have on the day to day lives of so many round the world, that I rejoice in our diversity, and the dedication of so many of

our people young and old; and press on, hoping to make that difference that we were destined to try to make by our grandfathers in San Francisco. And now, in the words of Bing Crosby in the eponymous Road Film, “Like Websters dictionary, I’m Morocco bound.”

* * *

Note: In this as in so many of my weekly and other reports from here I owe a large debt to Paul Mecklenburg . The complementary skills we have built result in our mutual analysis being crafted seamlessly together.

Fr. Sava Janjić

Kosovo and Metohija at the Crossroads

10 May 2007

Status before standards — Road to stability or a new tragedy?

Eight years after the beginning of the UN Mission in Kosovo, the southern Serbian province finds itself between different options ranging from the internationally supervised autonomy offered by Belgrade to the supervised independence proposed by the plan of the Special Envoy of UN SG Martti Ahtisaari and supported by the USA and the EU. In both cases, the *status quo* seems to be untenable because the UN Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) is no longer in the position to resolve the crucial issues that await the Province.

The strategy of the international community expressed by the motto “standards before status” was abruptly replaced by the new motto “standards and status” after the outbreak of the 17th March 2004 violence in which 4,000 Serbs and Roma were driven out of their homes, and another 35 Serb Christian Orthodox churches torched within only two days. The March violence was hardly a simple consequence of the Kosovo Albanians’ impatience, but rather an organized campaign against the Serbs and international officials intended to speed up the process of status resolution. Although the first Western reactions to the March violence acknowledged that it had been organized and planned, since mid-2004 the riots have been practically exonerated as an understandable social reaction of Kosovo Albanian youth frustrated because of the unresolved status of the Province. Since then, the international efforts have been even more intensively directed toward the transfer of competencies despite the fact that only some individual perpetrators of the March 2004 violence were brought to justice and the main organizers remained unpunished. In those days Kosovo institutions demonstrated an astounding lack of accountability, with some of the leaders even trying to justify the violence with arbitrary accusations against the Serbs, falsely blamed for the death of three Kosovo Albanian boys who had drowned in the Ibar River.

UNSC Resolution 1244 was considered by the West difficult to implement from day one because Milošević was still in power in Belgrade and any development of Kosovo institutions within the framework of the “substantial autonomy” envisaged by the UNSC Resolution was often dismissed as unrealistic. After the democratic changes in Belgrade in October 2000 there were attempts to revert to the spirit and letter of UN Resolution 1244. One of them was Čović–Haekerrup agreement on cooperation between Belgrade and UNMIK reached in Priština in 2001, but barely any of its provisions were ever implemented. Belgrade lacked a clear idea of full reintegration of Kosovo amidst a variety of political challenges marking the first years of democratic government, while provisional Kosovo institutions had already been developed in such a way that no link with Belgrade could be easily established. Since the end of 2004, throughout 2005 and 2006, Albanian-controlled Kosovo provisional institutions have been given more and more powers, and the international efforts have not been focused on developing the provisional institutions along the lines of substantial autonomy envisaged by the UNSC in 2004, but as political institutions of a future independent state. Some analysts have concluded that the March pogrom against Serbs in 2004 was a crucial point in the post-war Kosovo period because the Kosovo Albanian leaders saw democratic developments in Serbia as a growing threat that would eventually force the international community to implement UN Resolution 1244 and to give up the idea of creating a new Albanian-dominated state in Kosovo. At the same time the slow dynamics of democratic development, hampered by the failure to cooperate with the ICTY, and lack of readiness to dismantle security structures inherited from Milošević’s times seriously damaged the credibility of Serbian democracy *vis-à-vis* the future of Kosovo and Metohija.

The replacement of the “standards before status” strategy with the latest notion of “status and standards” brought barely any improvements to the life of Serbs and other non-Albanian ethnic groups in Kosovo and Metohija. Although the provisional Kosovo Government pledged financial support in the reconstruction of destroyed Serb homes and holy places, very few Serbs who fled from the Albanian rioters in March 2004 have returned to their homes. On the other hand, the return process for IDPs from central Serbia and Montenegro has generally stalled with the exception of a few hundred returnees in isolated villages, primarily in the western part of Kosovo.

The main concern of Kosovo Serbs remains security because the March riots that turned into a *pogrom* seriously disillusioned the Serbs from believing that the international peacekeepers and Albanian-controlled Kosovo institutions would give them any protection in the event of renewed acts of ethnically motivated violence. Although the number of incidents

since March 2004 has significantly decreased, with occasional random killings and attacks, in practice the safety situation for Kosovo Serbs has not been improved. Many hopes of Kosovo Serbs have been shattered forever, while local Kosovo authorities have done little, if anything, to win their confidence. Kosovo Serbs oriented themselves more towards Belgrade and parallel structures, particularly after the decision of Serb representatives in the Kosovo Parliament to withdraw from these institutions after the 2004 riots.

Negotiations on the future status of Kosovo during 2006 have brought the issue of standards into focus again. The Serbian side insisted that not even a minimum of standards had been achieved, while the Kosovo representatives pledged full protection for Serbs only if Kosovo was granted independence. Many Kosovo Serbs interpreted this offer as blackmail, particularly after some Kosovo leaders warned that anything but independence would surely trigger a new series of ethnic violence.

At the same time, the Kosovo Serb community has remained disorganized as ever. In the last seven years Kosovo Serbs failed to create credible political organizations which would fully articulate legitimate interests of all the factions of Kosovo Serbs in front of homogenized Kosovo Albanians and the international community. The local branches of the political parties simply continue the policies of their Belgrade-based party leaders, which in many instances fail to understand the everyday problems of Kosovo Serbs and to provide them with satisfactory assistance. The system of parallel institutions in the Kosovo Serb enclaves did provide employment for one part of Kosovo Serbs and enabled hundreds of families to survive in their ghettos. It also retained a certain level of institutional links with Serbia, crucial to their survival. Isolation and discouragement are the result of previously failed efforts to articulate their needs through the Albanian-dominated Kosovo institutions despite all difficulties and the overwhelming discrimination which became an Albanian practice in treating all the problems concerning the Kosovo Serb community. The decision to boycott Kosovo parliamentary elections in 2004 additionally isolated the Serbian community and widened the gap between the communities. True, the Serbs had many reasons to boycott the institutions which failed to prevent or stop the March riots, but neither did their choice to remain out of the institutions bring any concrete benefit. Many laws were passed without any Serbian participation and to their detriment, which is now very hard to remedy. Many Kosovo Serbs feel that their willingness to take part in the building of multiethnic institutions along the lines stipulated by UNSCR 1244 has only been exploited in order to give false legitimacy to the institutions which in reality remain under complete control of Kosovo Albanians and have become tools of institutional repression.

Let us take a brief look at the situation surrounding the implementation of standards now that the UN Security Council is expected to come out with a new resolution on Kosovo which will pave the way either for its independence or for a new series of negotiations whose dynamics will depend on the implementation of standards. Kosovo Serbs logically conclude that if Kosovo Albanians have failed to implement the basic standards under the UN protectorate, it is quite unlikely that they will do so if Kosovo is granted independence.

Returns: Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)

The safe and secure environment for a sustainable return has never been fully implemented for Kosovo Serbs and other minorities given that more than 220,000 Serbs and other non-Albanians remain in displacement. UNHCR has reported 16,000 returns since 1999, but only 5,000–6,000 of these are Serbs. At the same time, hundreds of Serbs have left Kosovo, many of them the Serbs displaced after the March 2004 riots. The urban return has been little more than symbolic. At the moment, the major Kosovo cities remain without their pre-war Serb population.

Cities	1999	2007
Priština	30,070	86
Peć	12,000	5
Gnjilane area	25,000	15
Uroševac	5,300	0
Prizren	8,300	31

While the return process has been more or less stalled, many of the remaining Serbs, Goranians, Turks and Roma are thinking of leaving under the present conditions, and claiming that they will be forced to leave eventually should Kosovo gain independence.

Relatively successful return processes have been achieved in the Peć, Istok and Klina municipalities, primarily to villages where Serbs lived before the war and which were devastated in summer 1999. However, the number of returnees in the last two years has not exceeded a few hundred. Difficult economic conditions and uncertainty still discourage younger people from returning. Although the number of physical attacks has ostensibly decreased, Serb returnees complain of administrative obstacles and the inability of local institutions to resolve numerous property issues. The remaining Serbs in the Albanian majority areas are reporting regular petty discrimination against Serbs and other non-Albanians at the level of local officials. Kosovo Serbs say that the basic obstacles to their return include the continued

existence of terror networks linked to the KLA (masked groups, criminal clans, mafia and some KLA war-veteran groups). These groups display their symbols openly, frightening the Serbs off in many parts of Kosovo. There is even, in the Kosovo Prime Minister's office, a photo of Adem Jashari, a KLA militant who terrorized the local Serb community before the war. Meanwhile, Jashari has become a political icon of post-war Kosovo and one of the greatest ethnic Albanian heroes. There has been complete impunity for criminal acts and organized crime activities, especially those committed against non-Albanians. The minimally competent Kosovo Police Service (KPS) has demonstrated a very poor capacity to solve or prevent crimes. Regrettably, since the 1990s the majority of the Albanian community have been living in a culture that promotes intolerance and little or no moral obligation toward non-Albanians. Serbs are often treated as second-rate citizens who, according to many, deserve to be punished for the actions of the former Belgrade regime. A discriminatory privatization scheme has deprived of any compensation countless Serb, Roma and Gorani workers formerly employed in socially-owned companies. The privatized companies as a rule do not offer jobs to Serbs, who generally remain limited to agricultural activities. Even these activities are very reduced because of inadequate freedom of access to their fields located farther from their villages. An overall economic, security and social collapse has proved inappropriate for the reintegration of returnees.

Human rights situation

Since 1999 the human rights of Serbs and non-Albanians in Kosovo have been systematically violated, and the UN Mission has generally failed to improve the situation on the ground despite some anti-discriminatory laws and regulations which have never been or have been only partly implemented at the local municipal level.

Language rights are generally not respected in Kosovo. Despite the laws many documents are issued only in Albanian with the regular excuse that there is a lack of translators. In every Ministry in the PISG, in all departments within the KPS, signs are exclusively in Albanian or with some English. The same situation is also in Kosovo's major hospitals, which are supposed to serve all citizens equally. Courts regularly violate the obligation to provide documents to clients in the Serbian language or do so only at explicit request. Signs on public institutions (such as bus stations, banks, sports stadiums, etc.) are almost exclusively in Albanian too. The use of the Serbian language in public is often limited as a result of fear and intimidation. The message seems clear: Albanian is the only public and accepted language. It

took months to mount a three-language road sign for the Dečani Monastery in the town of Dečani, despite very strong international insistence.

Freedom of movement is limited for many communities in most of Kosovo. Besides the limited access to agricultural land, escorts are still provided for the monastic communities in western Kosovo. Serbian convoys (buses and cars) have often been stoned or otherwise harassed by Albanian youth (particularly the Istok and Srbica areas).

Free access to mayor cities is limited if not impossible for a large number of Serbs. In response to this, UNMIK has promoted the establishment of Court Liaison Offices and Police Sub-Stations in non-Albanian enclaves, thereby indirectly solidifying the segregation of Serbs and other non-Albanians, rather than building a sustainable multi-ethnic society. In addition to systematic changing of geographic and place names, the PISG is carrying out a systematic revision of the history and cultural landscape of Kosovo by publishing books and texts that deny Serbian cultural and ethnic identity and its heritage. Names of historic towns and villages have been changed, and in such a way that instead of pre-war Albanian names completely new names have been invented, e.g. Novo Brdo (pre-war Novoberde in Albanian) to Artana, Kosovska Kamenica/e to Dardana, Leposavić/Leposaviq to Albanik, Obilić to Kastriot, Suva Reka/Suhareke to Theranda etc. The Serb toponyms that had survived for centuries, even throughout Ottoman times, are now being changed to erase every trace of Serbian historical presence. Paradoxically, the number of Slavic toponyms is now much higher in Albania than in Kosovo.

Within the provisional institutions of self-government, such as Kosovo Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport, brochures have been published that completely deny the Serbian cultural heritage in Kosovo and Metohija. A scandal occurred in UNESCO in May 2005 when the Ministry officials distributed these materials during a Donors' Conference for the destroyed heritage in Kosovo. Serbian Orthodox monasteries were presented as Kosovo Orthodox monasteries in which "Albanian Christians prayed in the past". In particular the Ministry is developing archaeological programmes which try to prove a direct link between ancient Illyrians and modern Albanians and the media often publish articles claiming that the Serbian Orthodox churches were once Albanian Christian sites subsequently occupied by Serbs. Particular provisions in the Ahtisaari's protecting the identity of the Serbian Orthodox Church in Kosovo reflect a great concern of the Church that Kosovo institutions may launch even stronger campaign of "Kosovarization" or "Albanization" of the Serbian patrimony in Kosovo.

The judicial system is corrupt and dysfunctional, especially as regards the protection of the rights of Serb property owners. In addition to the illegal occupation of Serb-owned property, dozens of Serb properties in Klina,

Peć and Istok have been sold on the basis of falsified sale contracts. These cases still remain unsolved, and many Serbs cannot access their property they never sold to the present Albanian “owners”. Arbitrary changing of cadastral records is a particular concern. Church property is particularly targeted and it seems that there is a systematic campaign to privatize the former Church property, nationalized by Communist authorities, to prevent restitution one day. Some individual cases of the return of Church property by the previous Serbian administration are generally not recognized by the present Kosovo authorities, which seriously jeopardizes the economic sustainability of some monastic communities.

Tens of thousands of Serbs and other non-Albanians have been waiting for seven or more years to reclaim their usurped property. Often, when illegal occupants are evicted, they simply return to the property and no further action is taken against them. Serbs who insist on claiming their property have been the victims of violence and attacks (i.e. Pavlović murder in Klina, attack on the Radosavljević family in Klina, and many more documented cases). No arrests have been made for the attacks that have taken place so far, thus leaving a general impression of impunity. Criminal sentencing is often lenient or inadequate, especially when it comes to the few cases involving serious crimes against Serbs or non-Albanians actually brought to court.

The Kosovo Police Service (KPS) generally functions poorly. Not a single major crime committed against Serbs and non-Albanians has been solved, e.g. Staro Gracko massacre of 14 Serb peasants, Niš Express bus bombing, Goraždevac killings of two Serb teenagers, Stolić family assassination, still by unknown perpetrators, many other documented murders and serious ethnically motivated crimes and assaults against the Serbian community. Serious investigation is carried out only under international political pressure, as is the case of recent rocket attack on the Dečani Monastery (30 March 2007). The perpetrator was identified (a Kosovo Albanian suspect from a neighbouring village), but after the prosecutor issued a warrant for him, the suspect ran away.

The KPS often follows a static and rigid form of policing with limited investigative capacities. In many cases the KPS is unable or simply unwilling to carry out investigations. Most Serbs and non-Albanians, especially following the performance of the KPS during the March riots of 2004, have no confidence in this police force. Police sub-stations have been set up ostensibly to provide additional security guarantees for minorities as a priority standard. In reality, the sub-stations are equipped and staffed poorly, with very limited authority and ability to act on the ground, and often ignored or abandoned by the relevant KPS station commanders.

At the same time international police presence has been significantly reduced and only monitors remain present in some local police stations. The present capacity of the KPS for law enforcement and the influence of local clans and criminal structures on KPS do not allow efficient struggle against the organized crime and mafia.

Security

The main obstacle to a peaceful and safe environment for Serbs and non-Albanians in Kosovo is lack of security. The establishing of law and order has generally totally failed because the KLA structures have never been demilitarized after the war. The KLA was supposed to transform into a civilian protection corps, the so-called Kosovo Protection Corps (KPC, or TMK in Albanian). But the TMK retains the uniform and insignia of the KLA and simply changed the acronym "UÇK" to "TMK", and maintains the military structure of command corresponding to the former KLA organization. Since the so-called "transformation" of KLA into KPC, many KPC members have been dismissed because of their criminal activities. Despite all efforts to put this organization under firm control, the KPC has retained the ideology of the KLA, obvious in the names of their barracks and iconography. The officers of the KPC received military ranks not corresponding to their training and knowledge. At the same time, the KPC has armed personnel and is known to have important caches of arms, including heavy arms that do not correspond to its civil emergency role.

Some KPC members are known to participate in terrorist activities, notably the smuggling of weapons, intimidation of non-Albanians, attacks against non-Albanians (attempted mining of a train transporting Serbs in North Kosovo, 2003, among other acts). The KPC retains very firm links with the KLA war-veteran and other paramilitary groups that have committed attacks against Serbs, other minorities, freethinking Albanians and some international personnel.

Immediately after the war, the still existing KLA carried out a systematic campaign of ethnic cleansing against Serbs and other non-Albanians. So-called "Black Eagles" in western Kosovo and "The Black Hand" in the Priština area are only some of criminal groups who executed dozens of Serbs, Roma, ethnic Albanians and other citizens. Although there is credible proof that KFOR had information on the activities of these groups, NATO-led peacekeepers avoided any confrontation with the KLA paramilitaries in the first months of their mission. It is only now that some NATO classified information has leaked about the activities of these groups and their leaders, some of whom have meanwhile become leading Kosovo politicians.

After 10 June 1999 the KLA looted, destroyed and usurped more than 40,000 estates owned by Serbs and other non-Albanians. In a systematic campaign of terror, these groups took power in all the towns and cities of Kosovo in order to empty them of their Serb and non-Albanian population. These systematic attacks on Serbs and non-Albanians were often branded by UNMIK and KFOR as “spontaneous acts of revenge by frustrated Albanian civilians”.

The KLA adopted a two-prong approach of attacking vulnerable persons on the one hand, and notables, intellectuals and other community leaders on the other. This explains the large number of missing physicians, teachers and professors from the Serb community in the major towns.

According to the Office of Missing Persons and Forensics (OMPF) and the ICRC, more than one thousand Serbs and other non-Albanians have gone missing since 1998/99.

To date, only 253 bodies have been recovered, identified and returned to their families. Most other Serbs and non-Albanians who disappeared in the presence of NATO and UN have not been found yet.

No one has been found guilty for the crimes against Serbs. Some local KLA leaders and individuals have been indicted and sentenced for killing fellow Albanians, but crimes against Serbs have generally remained unpunished.

KLA-related paramilitary Albanian structures have orchestrated the destruction of more than 150 Serbian Orthodox churches and monasteries in peacetime (some irreplaceable medieval heritage sites). By the time KFOR put the most important heritage sites under military protection, almost all Serb churches and cemeteries in Albanian majority areas (i.e. those from which Serbs were previously cleansed) had been devastated and desecrated. Particularly brutal was the destruction of Serbian Orthodox cemeteries, many of which were turned into garbage dumps, dozens of tombs opened and the bones scattered around. The destruction of the Serbian sacral heritage and cemeteries had two goals: to eradicate the centuries-old traces of Serbian culture and tradition (which Kosovo Albanian extremists see as an obstacle to their revised history of an ethnically pure, Albanian Kosovo) and to discourage returns. The major Serbian Orthodox sites have been preserved thanks only to KFOR protection although the Prizren Cathedral of Bogorodica Ljeviška, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, was burned during the 2004 March riots despite a KFOR presence in the city. Other Prizren churches which had survived the first post-war years were burned and desecrated, turning the historic core of the city into rubble.

After the riots the provisional Kosovo Government pledged funds for the reconstruction of patrimonial sites destroyed in March 2004, and the process of reconstruction begun in March 2005 after a Memorandum

of Understanding was signed with UNMIK mediation between the Serbian Orthodox Church and the PISG. The Council of Europe has led the process. During the last two years, several partly reconstructed sites were attacked again, which has raised concerns on the Serbian side about how sustainable the reconstruction is under the existing security conditions. At the moment, the Church, the Council of Europe and the PISG are all intensifying efforts to overcome the obstacles and resume the process of reconstruction which is seen by the Church as an important effort to encourage returns and preserve its historical presence in Kosovo.

Weak institutions and organized crime

Kosovo provisional institutions, controlled by the Albanians, with only a symbolic presence of other ethnic groups and without legal representatives of the Kosovo Serb community, are still very weak and unable to respond to challenges before them. They generally serve the interests of the majority ethnic i.e. Albanian community. The basic problem in the Province is its chronic political instability. The largest party, led by the late President Ibrahim Rugova, has split into two competing parties, while the other two parties are led by former KLA commanders, one of whom, Ramush Haradinaj, the former Kosovo Prime Minister, is an ICTY indictee and is currently at the ICTY in The Hague. Moderate Albanian forces are represented by the rather small party ORA led by Veton Surroi. The liberal Albanian intelligentsia in Kosovo is too weak and “wafer-thin” (as one ICG report remarked) to compete with the nationalism spread by the main leaders of KLA background. The parties of KLA origin are burdened with older generation politicians who were KLA warlords and commanders and who are rightfully seen by many Kosovans as corrupted. They are being criticized for having accumulated considerable personal wealth, for building large villas with swimming pools, while on the other hand, most ordinary people remain in poverty and without employment. The younger generation of Albanian politicians in these political parties — some of them educated in the West — is still not strong enough to take power and lead the society towards European standards and the rule of law. Generally, the Kosovo Albanian political elite lacks the European vision of democratic society in which all citizens would be equal regardless of their ethnicity and religion.

A specific problem in Kosovo is the existing Albanian clan structures, traditional family clans and mafia clans that have divided the territory into clearly defined interest zones. The clan structures are deeply involved in organized crime: arms and drug trafficking, prostitution, racketeering, etc. The clans want to preserve control over Kosovo institutions and would like Kosovo state bodies to serve as a smokescreen behind which they could

continue to accumulate their illegally gained wealth. In order to cool the social tension, these structures and their political representatives (leaders) claim that the main reason for the difficult social and economic situation is the unsettled status of the province. Serbs are often labelled as the “fifth column”, the main obstacle to a free and prosperous Kosovo. In order to cover up their illegal activities, these structures are spending large sums of money on building monuments to “war heroes and martyrs”, organizing KLA memorial services and other extremist events. The clan structures among Albanians are also the greatest obstacle to the implementation of the UNMIK regulations and the Kosovo-wide political decisions on the municipal level.

Recently the former KLA structures have shown intense interest in preserving their accumulated wealth and political power through an independent Kosovo. At the same time, they are challenged by a younger generation of extremists who claim that the former leaders have betrayed the original KLA ideals and become “Western political puppets”. These extremist groups increasingly tend towards the extremist KLA ideology characteristic of this movement in its beginnings — the unification of all Albanian-inhabited territories and the complete ethnic cleansing of non-Albanians from Kosovo. These groups (LPK, LPKC, FBKS and their military wing, the AKSh) are acting in close connection with radical elements in the KPC and war veterans. In some parts of Kosovo these structures have a very strong impact on the local police and judiciary. Most recently they have been joined by the ultra-radical Self-Determination “youth” movement led by Albin Kurti. So-called “institutionalized KLA structures”, i.e. leaders of the biggest political parties and their extended families, fear that in the event Kosovo is not granted independence, they may lose popular support. That is why they systematically claim that the failure to deliver independence to Kosovo would immediately trigger massive riots against the internationals and Kosovo Serbs. The new-generation nationalists, together with some older-generation ideological leaders from Kosovo and the FYR of Macedonia, are intensively preparing themselves for extremist actions. Their ideology is increasingly reverting to the irredentism of communist times, and some of their leaders still venerate former communist dictator of Albania Enver Hoxha and his Marxist-Leninist ideas about Western imperialism and colonialism, which they now recognize in the international presence of NATO troops and UN Mission.

An additional problem in Kosovo is the increasing danger of Islamic radicalism. Although generally secular Muslims, Kosovo Albanians are gradually falling under the influence of some international Muslim charity organizations and Wahhabi groups spreading their influence to Kosovo through Macedonia, Albania and the Raška (Sanjak) region in Serbia adjacent to Bosnia-Herzegovina. The involvement of four Kosovo Albanians

in a terror plot against the US military base at Fort Dix in New Jersey in May 2007 has demonstrated again that extremist groups close to Al-Qaeda have found a foothold in Kosovo as in other Muslim-inhabited parts of the Western Balkans. Under the inherently weak provisional, Albanian-dominated institutions, clan structures and mentality and a highly developed organized crime network, terrorism with Islamic background may become one of the most dangerous threats not only to Kosovo and the Balkans but to other European countries as well.

Conclusion

The overview of the situation in Kosovo and Metohija eight years after the beginning of the UNMIK Mission shows a very bleak picture. The planned EU Mission in Kosovo will inevitably face serious challenges that UNMIK failed to resolve. The belief generally accepted in many Western countries that Kosovo independence would trim down the accumulated social and economic tensions may have only a short-term effect, lasting only as long as the initial euphoria. On the contrary, it has become obvious that an independent Kosovo with its inherently weak institutions and powerful clan structures would hardly be able to function according to the rule of law and to consolidate economically and politically for years to come despite strong international presence. In such a situation, the thriving organized crime and terrorism may seriously worsen the situation in the region and destabilize EU efforts to bring long-term stability to the western Balkans. Should attacks on Serbs and ethnic discrimination continue, and there are not many indications that this may change after the status settlement, Kosovo will hardly ever establish normal relations with Belgrade, without which its economy cannot develop normally in the future. Attempts by Kosovo ultra-nationalists to boost Albanian secessionist movements in Montenegro, Macedonia, central Serbia's Preševo area, to reopen the question of Chams in northern Greece, will further complicate interethnic relations and put in danger long-term stability in Serbia and elsewhere in the western Balkans.

The Visoki Dečani Monastery Land Issue

*Long-term survival and protection of the monastery
Historical significance of Dečani Monastery*

Since its founding, the Monastery of (Visoki) Dečani, one of the most important Serbian Orthodox monasteries, has been of great historical and spiritual significance for the survival and life of the Serbian Orthodox Church and its faithful people in the region of Kosovo and Metohija. In order to ensure the economic and spiritual survival of the monastery, its founder, the Holy King Stefan of Dečani, issued in 1330 the famous Dečani Charter, endowing the monastery with numerous properties and estates, including 89 villages throughout the regions of Polimlje, Metohija and Altin, the southern slopes of Prokletije in today's Albania. In Ottoman times, a large portion of this property was confiscated, so that the brotherhood retained ownership of only a small part of the monastery lands.

According to land registry data, prior to 1946 Dečani Monastery owned 808 hectares of land (1996 acres; 1 hectare = 2.47 acres), of which 208 hectares of arable land, and 600 hectares of forest. This land was located in the immediate vicinity of the monastery and in the former districts of Podrimlje, Djakovica, Peć and Istok. The monastery was also the owner of a house in Dečani called "Mermer" (Marble).

Unjust confiscation of monastery land in 1946

All this property was owned and used by the Dečani Monastery until 1946, when it was confiscated, without any compensation, by a decision of the "Executive District People's Assembly for Kosmet" (No. 2649 dated 28 June 1946). The monastery administration filed an appeal against this decision to the "District Agrarian Court for Kosmet" in Prizren, which issued a decision (No. 1716 dated the same day) upholding the decision of the Executive District People's Assembly and finally took away almost the entire property of the monastery. The monastery was allowed to keep for its use a maximum

of 60 hectares, of which 30 hectares under forest and 30 hectares of cultivable or tillable land, but in scattered locations and largely in areas already inhabited by Albanian immigrants from Albania who had settled on the Serb-owned land during the Second World War. Thus, through these decisions the monastery obtained: 5 hectares of vineyards, 0.5 hectares of forest and 0.5 hectares of gardens in Velika Hoča; 9 hectares of cultivable or tillable land in Dečani near the monastery; 15 hectares of land in the village of Istinić, and 30 hectares of forest near the monastery. In reality, however, the monastery had control over just a portion of the land left.

A good part of the land received in the village of Istinić had already been illegally appropriated by the Albanians who had built their houses on it and farmed it. Deprived of any legal or economic protection or any possibility of exercising its right to use its land, the monastery administration had no choice but to accept the status quo and to sell its land in Istinić to the usurpers for symbolic prices given by the squatters themselves, which means below the market value of the property. Thus the monastery was left with only 15 hectares of cultivable or tillable land.

Of the nine hectares of land left to the monastery in the immediate vicinity, one part includes the ravine near the Bistrica River. Thus the monastery makes active use of only 7.5 hectares (18.53 acres) of cultivable land.

Communist authorities build on monastery land

Clearly observable discernible behind all this is the intent of the authorities at that time to undermine the economic and spiritual subsistence of the monastery as much as possible. Instead of allowing the monastery to keep 30 hectares of cultivable land in its immediate vicinity, the state split up the monastery estate, confiscating 12 hectares of its best land, and allocated it to a poultry farm in Dečani. Later on, a modern honey-packing facility was built on this land by the "Apiko" Beekeepers' Cooperative. The production process in this formerly successful cooperative has not taken resumed for more than 10 years due to its enormous debts and the it can de facto be considered bankrupt. In addition to this, a tract of land in the middle of the property was also subsequently confiscated and in the 1950s turned over to B. Vulić, administrator of Dečani Municipality; consequently, seeking to preserve the integrity of its estate, the monastery was forced to buy back its own land. The land that not even the Ottomans had confiscated from the monastery during the centuries of enslavement was unjustly taken away during the post-Second World War period and then sold back to the monastery at a dear price.

In the immediate vicinity of the monastery, 200 m above it, several tracts of pine forest, planted at the beginning of the century by Russian

monks, were also taken, as well as the area up to the infirmary in Dečani. Evidence confirming that this land has always been owned by the monastery includes the remains of the small church of St. Nicholas as well as the existing land registers. After expropriation on this land was constructed a small hotel called Visoki Dečani. In 1984, the construction of a larger hotel began, but it soon ceased (in 1988), and the building has remained unfinished. Visoki Dečani Hotel has not been used as a tourist-hospitality facility for years. First the building was appended to the Priština-based "Sloga" hotel-tourist company in a very murky manner; later this relationship was severed by Decision 1102 of 5 October 1994. Afterwards the hotel was used by the "Rad" construction company to house the workers who were building refugee settlements for Serb immigrants from Albania in the vicinity of Dečani. During the recent war the building was partially damaged and looted; today, three years after the war, the hotel is completely abandoned. Several times local KFOR has encountered local Albanian villagers removing the roof beams and anything else remaining in the hotel. Due to its condition, the building is no longer suitable for use.

Behind the attempt to build a tourist-hospitality facility near the monastery was the obvious intent to transform this area into a tourist and hotel complex and thus directly endanger the survival of the monastery which would have finally been transformed into a museum.

In addition to this, the house known as "Mermer" in the centre of Dečani was taken away from the monastery. The ground floor of the building housed the town library while the upper floor was divided into eight rooms where four Serb families lived. These "apartments" were not converted to private ownership. After the war, the house was inhabited by Albanians, and a year ago, in the summer of 2001, it was demolished by the local municipal authorities, although at that point it was already in the ownership of the monastery.

Monastery brotherhood requesting restoration of its property

Since its property was taken away the brotherhood of the Monastery of Visoki Dečani has repeatedly requested that its illegally seized property be restored by the state, but the authorities remained steadfast in their determination not to hear the appeals. An especially strong request was made by the former Dečani Abbot Fr. Justin in 1991, but it was flatly declined by the Milošević-controlled administration.

In 1992 the monastery experienced a spiritual and material rebirth, and today about thirty monks working and living here constitute the largest monastic community of the Serbian Orthodox Church. In addition to a series of spiritual and missionary activities, the new brotherhood has initi-

ated several tasks with the aim of comprehensively restoring the existing monastery buildings.

The land in the immediate vicinity of the monastery has always had a great significance to the monastery because of the possibility that state-owned property could one day be privatized or used for purposes detrimental to the survival of the monastery. In that case it would be much more difficult for the monastery to reclaim its property and to preserve the conditions suitable for the monastic life.

For this reason the Monastery of Visoki Dečani initiated a campaign to get back at least the nearest former monastery land tracts which still had not been privatized from the Government of the Republic of Serbia.

Deed of the Serbian Government and Visoki Dečani Monastery

After negotiations with representatives of the Government and the brotherhoods' determined efforts to demonstrate the urgent need for solving this problem, on 6 November 1997 a Deed of Gift (No. 04 464-2914/97) was concluded between the Republic of Serbia as donor and the Serbian Orthodox Monastery of Visoki Dečani as recipient. The Deed of Gift was chosen as the adequate legal form due to the fact that a law regulating the restitution of land illegally confiscated from religious communities after 1945 had not been enacted yet. This form is also used in other parts of the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in order to return to religious communities' the buildings and land of particular importance for their survival.

The Deed of Gift was executed with complete agreement and understanding that the land being returned to the monastery was land which had once belonged to it and not land belonging to anyone else. Because the monastery land was illegally taken from the monastery by a repressive measure and used for many years, all buildings which had been built on the land, i.e. all real property, was returned to the monastery as compensation for use of the land. The Deed of Gift was executed by the Abbot of Visoki Dečani Monastery, Father Teodosije Šibalić, on behalf of the recipient, and by the Director of the Serbian Housing and Property Directorate, Dr. Milan Jovanović, on behalf of the donor.¹

¹ The above cited Deed of Gift returned the following property to the monastery: 1. The land property of the "Visoki Dečani" tourist facility (tracts registered under Nos. 494, 495, 502, 503, 522, 523, 524, 528, 1104, 1105, 1106), total surface area of 11 hectares, 40 ares and 51 square metres, including the existing hotel buildings which were currently not in use; 2. The land property of the „Apiko" honey-packing facility (tracts registered under Nos. 301, 302, 303, 304, 305, 306, 307, 308, 309, 310, 311, 312), total surface area of 12 hectares, 5 ares and 12 square metres, including the buildings on the

Deed is duly registered in land registry books and land registry office

On 3 February 1998 the Land Registry Office in Peć of the Serbian Surveyor's Office issued a decision (No. 02-952-01-1/98-2) confirming the changes in the land registry local office in Dečani on the basis of the Deed of Gift between the Republic of Serbia and the Monastery of Visoki Dečani. It confirmed the right of transfer of ownership of state-owned land from the previous owner, the Republic of Serbia, to the Serbian Orthodox Monastery of Visoki Dečani. The decision repeats the tract numbers listed in the Deed of Gift between the Government of the Republic of Serbia and the Monastery. The Land Registry Office in Peć found that there were no obstacles to the implementation of this deed. Nevertheless, in accordance with the law, a period of 15 days was set for appeals to the Serbian Surveyor's Office; however, no appeal was filed during this period or afterwards.

The monastery has a valid Deed of Title issued by the Land Registry Office in Peć of the Serbian Surveyor's Office, Dečani branch office, No. 952-901-1/97, in which all tracts privately owned by the monastery are listed by number and surface area.

New Albanian municipal authorities contest monastery property, while Dr. Bernard Kouchner and TDTI defend monastery rights

After the war, however, Dečani municipality, in which Kosovo Albanians now assumed sovereign authority, immediately began to contest the right of the monastery to the restituted land.

During the year 2000 the monastery was the target of two mortar attacks immediately following the monastery's clear and unambiguous statements that it had no intention of renouncing its land. Finally, as a result of increasing pressure by the municipality demanding that the monastery renounce its land through the local UNMIK administrator, Dr. Bernard Kouchner, the UN special representative for Kosovo, stepped in and, on 28 June 2000, sent a letter to Alain Le Roy, the regional UNMIK administrator for the Peć region. In this letter he gave specific instructions aimed at "providing for security, serenity and peaceful life in Dečani Monastery". Dr. Kouchner authorized the monastery to make free use of its land as far as the cemetery, i.e. in accordance with the boundaries of its property, and prohibited any form of economic activity at the "Apiko" site as well as in the hotel area near the monastery. Dr. Kouchner proposed that movable property be relocated and used in another place, which the monastery had

site; 3. The „Mermer” house in Dečani (tract No. 943), total surface area of 0 hectares, 1 are and 92 square metres.

proposed to the municipality several times through the local UN administrator. Furthermore, Dr. Kouchner specifically prohibited the destruction and cutting down of forests near the monastery given that after the war the Albanians had begun cutting down and stealing timber from the monastery forest without any control.

What is most important is that Dr. Kouchner gave instructions that all disputes over the ownership of the land and of these socially-owned companies (Apiko and Dečani Hotel) should be ultimately adjudicated by the appropriate authorities, namely, the Housing and Property Directorate set up by UNMIK Civil Administration. Later UNMIK regulation 2000/3 transferred jurisdiction in matters relating to former state-owned property and state-owned buildings to the Transitional Department for Trade and Industry (TDTI). Therefore, legal resolution of this issue certainly does not belong in a local municipal court.

After this decision by Dr. Kouchner the monastery was left alone for a brief while; however, notices soon began to arrive from the municipal court in Dečani. On the basis of Dr. Kouchner's letter, it is clear that this land issue cannot be resolved in municipal or district courts, and therefore the monastery did not appear before the court because court officials had obviously exceeded their legal authority. The monastery was, furthermore, advised to take this course by authorized representatives of TDTI who looked at the issue in greater detail at the beginning of 2002. In March 2002 the monastery was visited by Mr. Fernand Saksik from the regional TDTI office in Peć and Mr. Tschoepke, the head of TDTI from Priština, who clearly explained that local and regional courts are not competent in this issue.

On 6 March 2002, Mr. Saksik wrote a letter and forwarded it to all relevant UNMIK representatives and municipal authorities in Dečani, reiterating that the municipality and especially the municipal court cannot get involved in matters related to companies with buildings on present-day monastery land.

Dečani municipal court nevertheless illegally "resolves" Visoki Dečani land issue

However, the municipal court in Dečani obviously disagreed with this view and soon the entire case was forwarded to the district court in Peć which once again, for unknown reasons, returned the case to the local municipal court in Dečani.

On 7 August, Dečani Monastery learned from the Albanian press ("Koha Ditore") that on 28 June 2002 (more than a month earlier) the Albanian-controlled municipal court in Dečani had issued two decisions voiding the 1997 Deed of Gift between the Serbian Government and the

monastery and affirming the alleged right of the “Apiko” honey-packing facility to the land of which it was the registered owner in 1996, as well as of a tourist company now called by a new Albanian name of “Ilirija”. According to this decision, Dečani Monastery was obliged to release the property of „Apiko” and the „Ilirija” tourist company within a period of 15 days, i.e. before the monastery and local UNMIK authorities were even informed about the court decision.

It is important to note that the monastery did not receive the decision from the court which, by the way, has never been translated into the Serbian language so at this time the monastery has only a translation into English prepared for UNMIK. Furthermore news of the court decision was released with a delay of more than a month in order to forestall a timely appeal; “Koha Ditore” published news of the decision on 7 August, even though the decision was apparently made on St. Vitus’ Day, 28 June 2002 (exactly 56 years after the monastery land was confiscated by the communist authorities).

The decision cites certain facts regarding land ownership from 1932 which are not known to the monastery and which are seriously suspected of being falsified with the aim of justifying the court’s decision. In Dečani municipality there are no Serbs working and there is no control over the land registers.

Municipal court oversteps its authority and declares Dr. Bernard Kouchner’s decision invalid.

The decision relating to the “Apiko” site contains a sentence which states that the municipal court in Dečani has confirmed that it is the only court which has jurisdiction in this matter and unilaterally declares that the letter of Mr. Kouchner is of a temporary nature. This decision is in open contradiction with existing UNMIK regulations and represents an open example of exceeding its authority on the part of the court in Dečani which has usurped the right of adjudicating the decisions of the SRSG (Special Representative of the UN Secretary General).

At the time the Deed of Gift was concluded neither the “Apiko” Beekeepers’ Cooperative nor the Visoki Dečani Motel were in operation nor were any employees affected by the decision since both companies were effectively in bankruptcy, without any organization or administration. When the Deed of Gift was recorded in the land registry books, the Albanians no doubt had information regarding this decision since a significant number of Albanians were employed by the Land Registry Office at that time. No appeal was filed against the deed nor was this issue even raised.

False and twisted claims in the "decision" of Dečani municipal court

The specific reason why local Albanians are contesting the agreement between the Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the monastery is the fact that it was concluded during the time of „the repression”. At the same time, however, a great number of other contracts and decisions made at the same time which are to the Albanians’ benefit are not questioned and are considered to be perfectly valid. It is obvious that different criteria are being applied in a completely arbitrary manner.

Although UNMIK’s regulation 1999/24 proclaims as the Applicable Law the law which was in power until 22 March 1989, it does not mean that the repressive decisions made by the former Communist authorities in 1946 can be considered as a valid basis for today’s legislation. Quite on the contrary, one of the most important rules of the Roman Law says that: *Ex iniuria ius non oritur* (The right and law cannot be defined on injustice).

In the decision relating to the matter of the Visoki Dečani Hotel, mention is made of a certain contract which the “Sloga” Hotel Tourist Company from Pristina concluded with the monastery in 1993 and which the Government of the Republic of Serbia allegedly confirmed by the Deed of Gift. This contract between “Sloga” and the monastery was legally unbinding and was not registered in the appropriate land registry books. The monastery quickly understood that “Sloga” was not authorized to perform a transfer of ownership in this manner and that is why the monastery approached the Government of the Republic of Serbia to reclaim the property in accordance with legal norms and to legally record this in the land registry books.

Conclusion

Visoki Dečani monastery considers the decision of the Municipal court in Dečani, which consists only of Albanians, as an example of institutional repression against the last remaining Serb community in Dečani Municipality and a provocation in front of international administration in Kosovo and Metohija. Supporting the right of local Kosovo Albanian-dominated courts to adjudicate land issues concerning the property of religious communities and former socially owned property would make a dangerous precedent which would inevitably result in legal disorder and usurpation of large tracts of Serb owned land.

This decision is therefore in direct function of further destabilization of the security situation and is seriously challenging confidence building between Kosovo’s communities.

*Serbian patrimonial sites in post-war Kosovo and Metohija
Survival of the monastery in newly created conditions*

Regardless of the above cited decisions of the municipal court in Dečani, which the monastery considers to be illegal and tendentious, it is very important to keep in mind the broader issues of the survival and protection of the Monastery of Visoki Dečani and other Serb patrimonial sites in Kosovo and Metohija under the existing conditions.

Following the end of the 1999 war in which the brotherhood of Visoki Dečani played a very constructive role, appropriate to Christian tradition, offering shelter and protection within its walls not only to Kosovo Serb civilians but to Albanians and Roma as well, the monastery found itself completely besieged due to the fact that all Serb residents of the municipality were forced to flee from their homes after June 1999. The monastery managed to survive solely due to the protection of KFOR troops from Italian contingent which established a security zone around the monastery where unauthorized movement is limited. This was the only way of protecting the monastery from Albanian extremists who used all possible means to bring the last remaining piece of land owned by Serbs under their control. Despite all this the Dečani brotherhood is exposed to constant harassment, including verbal attacks, curses and stone throwing by Albanians who visit the nearby mineral spring. Also frequent are instances of theft and destruction of the monastery forest. In the first ten months of the post-war period the monastery was left without electricity and only upon KFOR insistence was electricity restored. Telephone service was resumed only after three years and several interventions with municipal organizations and the local telephone company (PTK).

Dečani Monastery is one of the most important Serb monasteries and Serb cultural monuments not only in Kosovo and Metohija but also beyond, in both Serbia and the Western Balkans as a whole. In order for the monastery to survive as an oasis of peace and spirituality under newly created conditions, it is of enormous significance to institutionally protect it and its entire property which it owns according to both law and restitution right. The best way of protecting the monastery is by creating a special protection zone which would encompass the monastery itself and the land of which it is the legal and registered owner. In order to protect the monastery from destruction of its natural resources, excessive noise and industrial and economic development it is essential to place the entire area of the monastery, i.e., the Dečanska Bistrica River valley, under special protection as a zone of specific natural and cultural significance not only for Dečani municipality but for all of Kosovo and Metohija. It is the opinion of the

Serbian Orthodox Church that the following steps should be taken to enable the long-term survival of the monastery:

- Legally defend the monastery and all its property from every form of usurpation and illegal use.
- Introduce separate regulation to prevent the development of industry and other economic activities and tourism in the immediate vicinity of the monastery because these would have a negative impact on its spiritual ambience and indeed on its very survival, especially considering the existing relations between ethnic communities.
- Consider the possibility of declaring a special exterritorial status for the Monastery of Visoki Dečani (as well as other important monasteries such as the Pec Patriarchate, Gračanica, Holy Archangels, Devič, Gorioč) as well as making all monuments of global significance exempt from the jurisdiction (and arbitrary actions) of local municipal structures and placing them under the special protection of appropriate bodies under the direction of international figures and UNESCO

According to UN Resolution 1244 of 1999 Dečani Monastery is a special place of cultural, spiritual and historical significance for the Serbs, a patrimonial site that deserves, the same as other medieval Serb monasteries throughout Kosovo and Metohija, special security protection. It is the opinion of the Serbian Orthodox Church that under these conditions it is best for the security of the monastery and other cultural monuments of the Serbs to be entrusted to KFOR and that activities related to the protection of these precious national and world heritage sites are regularly harmonized in cooperation between UNMIK and the Belgrade-based Coordination Center for Kosovo and Metohija.

Some Western governments have also shown special interest in the survival of the monastery, especially the Government of the Republic of Italy, which approved a special fund for the conservation of frescoes and the reconstruction of the monastery residential quarters.

Taking all this into account, it is of urgent importance to prevent the further continuation of institutional repression as practiced by the municipal court in Dečani in disregard of all existing UNMIK regulations. The monastery is therefore justified in seeking appropriate protection from UNMIK.

Dečani Monastery

13 August 2002

**Institute on Religion and Public Policy, Washington D. C.
on Kosovo Future Status**

Joseph K. Grieboski
Founder and President
Institute on Religion and Public Policy
Washington DC

February 14, 2007

Kosovo Future Status: The Puerto Rico Option

On February 2, 2007, United Nations Special Envoy on Kosovo, Mr. Martti Ahtisaari, presented his plan regarding the future status of Kosovo. The proposal, endorsed soundly by British and American authorities, as well as by the EU, does not use the word “independence” to describe a future Kosovo entity. However, in the absence of any reference to continuing Serbian sovereignty, there is little doubt that the Ahtisaari proposal provides for definitive detachment of Kosovo from Serbia and independence in all but name, as the proposal offers Kosovo its own national symbols (including flag and anthem), the right to join international organizations such as United Nations and International Monetary Fund, and other items usually reserved for sovereign independent states.

The quasi-independent Kosovo entity described by Mr. Ahtisaari would be supervised for an interim period by an international envoy mandated by the UN and European Union with power to intervene in the government. It would also retain NATO and EU forces in military and policing roles to protect the non-Albanian communities – the Serbs in particular – which would have a guaranteed role in government, police and civil service. Also laid out are protections for Serbian Orthodox Church sites and the Serbian language.

The challenge of balancing legitimate Serbian sovereignty and the desire of Kosovo Albanians for self-government is not insurmountable. A third option exists for the province of Kosovo other than the only two which the international community seems to believe are available: protection of Serbian sovereignty over the province (which in principle means

daily control and management from Belgrade) or a fully independent Kosovo Albanian state.

The elusive third option is one similar to the status of Puerto Rico within the United States: full internal autonomy within the sovereign territory of the United States. Puerto Rico is a self-governing commonwealth in association with the United States. The chief of state is the President of the United States of America; the head of government is an elected Governor. There are two legislative chambers, the House of Representatives and the Senate.

Puerto Rico has authority over its internal affairs. The United States controls interstate trade; foreign relations and commerce; customs administration; control of air, land and sea; immigration and emigration; nationality and citizenship; currency; maritime laws; military service, military bases, army, navy and air force; declaration of war; constitutionality of laws, jurisdictions and legal procedures; treaties; postal system; and other areas generally controlled by the federal government in the United States. Puerto Rican institutions control internal affairs unless U.S. law is involved, as in matters of public health and pollution.

Under such an arrangement, Kosovo's Albanians could and must have active representation in the National Assembly in Belgrade in order to advance their rights and interests. A Kosovo militia like the National Guard in Puerto Rico and purged of elements responsible for violence against non-Albanians, must train and serve side-by-side in the Serbian national army and air force in order to build a functional military structure as well as moving toward a greater state unity rather than pressure toward separation.

While the situations of Puerto Rico and Kosovo are not perfectly aligned, the international community can learn from the Puerto Rican experience and draft a model that includes significant internal autonomy for Kosovar institutions while still upholding Serbian sovereignty. Most importantly, it is a model that can help protect the human rights and freedoms of all inhabitants of Kosovo, regardless of ethnicity.

**UN Special Envoy Calls for Kosovo Splitting From Serbia;
“Recommendation Dangerous for Global Security,
Counter-terrorism, and Human Rights Efforts”**

Washington DC, February 2, 2007

Washington, D.C. – United Nations envoy, former Finnish President Martti Ahtisaari, today released his proposal for the future of Kosovo. The proposal, as one anonymous Western diplomat stated, “amounts to ‘independence, subject to international supervision.’” The major points of the plan include:

- No reference to Serbian sovereignty or independence for Kosovo;
- Blocking Kosovo from joining Albania, or having its Serb areas split off and join Serbia;
- Giving Kosovo right to use national symbols including flag and anthem;
- Giving Kosovo right to join international organizations such as UN and IMF;
- Creating international envoy mandated by UN and EU with power to intervene in government;
- Retaining NATO and EU forces in military and policing roles;
- Protecting non-Albanian minority with guaranteed roles in government, police and civil service;
- Protecting Serbian Orthodox Church sites and Serbian language.

“The complete ignorance of Serbia’s sovereignty in the proposed plan and the imposition of such a future independence without a negotiated process demonstrate that a new concept of sovereignty – based on capitulation to acts of violence and the ghetto-ization of minority populations – is the new model,” commented Institute on Religion and Public Policy President Joseph K. Grieboski. While the British foreign office believes that a solution ‘should be acceptable to the great majority of the people of Kosovo, and I think that speaks for itself,’ it does not take into consideration the rights of the minority who have found themselves as the victims of violence and persecution since the UN began its mandate.”

Publication of the Kosovo plan was postponed from the end of 2006 to prevent it from influencing a parliamentary election in Serbia. The election failed to produce a clear majority and Serbia now looks headed for lengthy coalition talks just as the fateful plan for its province is launched. Serbia’s main party leaders all reject independence but are divided on how to resist an international solution.

“The expected independence of Kosovo will guarantee a new European state that does not support fundamental rights, that thrives on corruption and illegal activity, and will only serve to engender independence movements in Chechnya, central Europe, and elsewhere. This is not and will not be an isolated affair: the graduated independence of Kosovo, a problem for Europe in and of itself, will lead to countless other security and human rights problems across the globe,” concluded Mr. Grieboski.

ABSTRACTS

Dušan T. Bataković

KOSOVO AND METOHİJA. IDENTITY, NATIONALISM, IDEOLOGY

Kosovo and Metohija, a southern Serb province bordering Albania, during medieval times marked by the splendid Serbian cultural and economic growth, after the Ottoman conquest of 1455 has had, as a main characteristic of its history, continuous waves of spiraling violence. Kosovo is considered to represent both the national and cultural identity of the whole Serbian nation with 1,300 churches and monasteries scattered all over this densely inhabited area, presently with an Albanian majority population. The Serbo-Albanian rivalry in Kosovo and Metohija, as a phenomenon of a *longue durée* marked by socially motivated religious conflict and ethnic strife, produced several waves of mass migrations since the late seventeenth century up to the late twentieth century. Albanian highlanders, freshly converted to Islam, were gradually settled by Ottomans from northern and central Albania, the poorest region of Turkey-in-Europe, to the fertile agrarian plains of Christian Serb-inhabited Metohija and Kosovo. The main adversaries of Albanian highlanders, from the 1690 Great Serb Migration onwards, were Christian Orthodox Serb peasants, who possessed most of the arable land in Kosovo and Metohija.

Sporadic manifestations of inter-ethnic and inter-religious cooperation, as well as the rare attempts of mutual communal assistance — usually of short-term or only symbolic significance — were not the prevailing political practice, even after Kosovo was reincorporated in Serbia (1912) and Yugoslavia (1918). Despite certain efforts throughout the last century, for the two main Kosovo communities, the Muslim Albanians and the Christian Serbs, as well as for the other non-Albanians in the area (Goranies, i.e. Slav Muslim, Serb-speaking community of Gora region; Roma with several

names and denominations; ethnic Turks, other Muslim Slavs, renamed after 1999 into Bosniaks: ethnic Croats), inter-ethnic communication remained highly limited and in practice failed to survive the mounting conflicts at the end of twentieth century, marked by inter-ethnic rivalries and communist ideology. Inter-ethnic distance in Kosovo and Metohija remained to highest within the whole of Serbia, with no tangible improvements after the Albanian rebellion provoked a severe NATO bombing campaign in the spring of 1999 (38,000 combat sorties from 24 March to 10 June 1999) and the establishment of the UN administration (UNMIK) in June 1999.

Miloš Luković

KOSOVSKA MITROVICA: PRESENT AND PAST

Drawing on the extensive literature and field research relevant to North Kosovska Mitrovica, we have presented, in a long historical retrospective, the urban, ethnic and demographic characteristics of the development of Kosovska Mitrovica, and the conditions surrounding the formation of the northern part of town as a separate urban entity, a kind of enclave. Conclusions are provided on the multi-ethnic and multi-lingual character of Kosovska Mitrovica up to the present division of the town into two separate entities: the north and the south.

Helena Zdravković

HISTORICAL VICTIMAGE OF KOSOVO SERBS AND ALBANIANS

This ideological criticism study examines the vernacular discourses of historical victimage of Kosovo Serbs and Albanians. The participants amalgamate personal and collective memories with official national histories to explain present victimization as a continuance of historical victimage. This use of the past legitimizes their national and political claims, and also justifies violence against the other group. Historical victimage offers a rationale for hating the Other and perpetuating a vicious cycle of violence in intractable conflict.

Valentina Pitulić

FOLKLORE IN THE SERB ENCLAVE: PRESERVING IDENTITY IN HOSTILE ENVIRONMENT

Based on ethno-psychological research an attempt will be made to establish a correlation between the traditional heritage of Serbs from Kosovo and Metohija and the current situation arising after the bombing of 1999. The question is how the local people accept the new situation and how they

preserve their ancestral heritage. Students from the Kosovska Mitrovica School of Philosophy's Department of Serbian Literature and Language (which has an outlying department in Gračanica enclave), wrote an essay on folklore, requiring fieldwork and the recording of folk stories.

Harun Hasani

MIGRATIONS OF GORANIES

Gora is the southernmost municipal area of Serbia, located in the Šar Mountain region of Kosovo and Metohija, bordering northeast Albania. Gora is inhabited mostly by Goranies (*Goranci*), a Muslim Slav, Serb-speaking population, calling their specific vernacular "our language". Traditionally migrant workers, well integrated into other areas of Serbia, Goranies have, after the 1999 NATO bombing, under the Albanian-dominated PISG, been exposed to various types of persecution, ethnically motivated crimes, expulsion and continuing pressure by Albanian extremists. Their own Gora municipality was after 1999 merged with neighbouring majority-Albanian area into a new Dragaš municipality, in order to alter the demographic balance and enhance eventual assimilation of Muslim Slav Goranies into Muslim Albanians. The Goranies, as described in this paper, were rather choosing to leave their native land than to accept gradual assimilation, expecting the mutually acceptable compromise of Belgrade—Priština status talks on Kosovo, in order to restore their pre-1999 self-governing municipality within the Republic of Serbia.

Radivoje Mladenović

THE SIRINIČKA ŽUPA: ŠTRPCE MUNICIPALITY – HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND CURRENT FIELD RESEARCH

The ethno-cultural periphery of the northern Šar Mountain Sirinić area (*Sirinička župa*), a specific, predominantly Serb-inhabited area since the medieval period with its geographic, economic, ethnographic and linguistic connections to neighbouring Serbian regions in Kosovo and Metohija has given rise to a specific spoken dialect. Its particular features differ from the vernacular in neighbouring Serb-inhabited areas. Some similar, transitional speech types can be traced in the immediate vicinity, in the northern areas of Slavic Macedonia (FYROM). The linguistic separation of the Serbian language into two vernaculars follows the ethnographic division of Sirinić.

Mirjana Menković**THE ENCLAVE OF VELIKA HOČA: CULTURAL HERITAGE AS A MEANS OF
SOCIO-ECONOMIC RENEWAL AND PRESERVATION OF SERBIAN IDENTITY
IN KOSOVO AND METOHİJA**

The Serbian enclave of Velika Hoča in the Orahovac area in Metohija is a unique cultural environment consisting of the most valuable examples of cultural heritage in Kosovo and Metohija dating from different periods. Cultural heritage is often treated by a local community merely as a technical means the value of which is determined by its practical purpose. The remaining Serbs of Velika Hoča, despite the difficulties of living in an isolated enclave, surrounded by barbed wire and under constant KFOR protection, are gradually becoming aware of the broader significance of the cultural heritage that is interwoven in their everyday life. However, having in mind their grave economic and social situation, awareness alone will not suffice. It is crucial that the population of the village have some benefit from its safeguarding. By drawing attention to the centuries-long social and economic significance of the village of Velika Hoča and through a brief overview of the most recent studies of its population, urban and functional planning and economic activities (2001-2006), the author points out feasible solutions aimed at ensuring self-sustainability of the local community and keeping the inhabitants of this Serbian enclave in their households and on the estates that have for centuries belonged to their families.

Miloš Luković**TZINTZARS IN UROŠEVAC, LIPLJAN, OBILIĆ, PRIŠTINA AND KOSOVSKA
MITROVICA**

The paper describes the origins and economic activity of Tzintzars (Hellenized Vlachs) in Uroševac and other “Kosovo railway towns” (as they were named by the geographer Jovan Cvijić): in Lipljan, Obilić, Priština and Kosovska Mitrovica, and how they came to settle there. Two migratory currents of the Tzintzar population intersected in these settlements: from the Tzintzar-inhabited area of Bitolj — Kruševo in today’s FYROM and from today’s Serbia: Prizren and the neighboring Metohija area. Predominantly urban, Christian Orthodox population the Tzintzar in the course of time merged into the Serb community, while preserving memory of their Vlach origin and identity, using both Serb and Vlach, and occasionally Greek language.

Dušan T. Bataković**SURVIVING IN GHETTO-LIKE ENCLAVES: THE SERBS OF KOSOVO AND
METOHIJA 1999–2007**

After the seventy-eight day long NATO bombing campaign that lasted from March 24 to June 10 1999 against Serbia and Montenegro (constituent states of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia), caused by the Kosovo Albanian rebellion and the pending humanitarian catastrophe, the Province of Kosovo (Kosovo and Metohija) was put under UN administration by UNSC Resolution 1244/99, while military rule was entrusted to 48,000-strong NATO-led KFOR units. Within weeks, roughly 800,000 Albanians returned home, while 246,000 Kosovo Serbs and members of other ethnic communities and minority groups left or were brutally expelled. The post-war record of Kosovo throughout the next eight years remained grim. The provisional authorities (PISG) entrusted to the Kosovo Albanian leadership were used not to promote democracy and rebuild the war-torn province, but as a powerful tool to enact a collective vendetta against non-Albanians, with the Kosovo Serbs and their cultural heritage as the main target. This paper is devoted to a general analysis of this post-war phenomenon marked by discrimination, ethnic cleansing and forced migration that made Kosovo predominantly, if not purely, an Albanian-inhabited province, while still officially being within the Republic of Serbia.

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