

ALBANIAN DILEMMA IN THE BALKANS:
NATIONALISM AND GLOBALIZATION

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Preface

Land of Albania! where Iskander rose,
Theme of the young, and beacon of the wise,
And he his name-sake, whose oft-baffled foes
Shrunk from his deeds of chivalrous emprise:
Land of Albania! let me bend mine eyes
On thee, thou rugged nurse of savage men!
The cross descends, thy minaret arise,
And the pale crescent sparkles in the glen,
Through many a cypress grove within each city's ken.

(From Lord Byron, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*)¹

This thesis examines the interaction of globalization and nationalism in the Balkans and, more specifically, in the Albanian case. The thesis arose from the present day situation of the Albanians in the Balkans. Three Albanian communities conscious of their ethnic/national identity live beside each other, but in separate states. The situation is perilous for the Balkans, where claims for “greater states” have been always present. The situation of the Albanians is extremely delicate in this context as it can provoke and revive all these claims, opening the way to a chain reaction of border changes in the Balkans and with a more pessimistic scenario throughout Europe.

The Albanians are not willing to live in states where their rights are not fully granted. The international community has intervened to provide them their rights yet is unwilling to open the way to changes of borders. However, the gain by Albanians of all their rights would probably open the way to changes of border; the status of Kosovo will be more than anything a decision about border revisions in the Balkans. In this context, much has been written about the future of the Balkans and the Albanians in the Balkans. This study tries to offer insight into the present situation and a closer view at the

¹ H.T. Norris, *Islam in the Balkans Religion and Society between Europe and the Arab World* (London: Hurst and Company, 1993), p. 1.

Albanians. This thesis argues that the present day Albanian situation in the Balkans is a result of the interaction of nationalism and globalization. It is a dilemma of the Balkans coming from the past as much as generated from the present day conditions.

Some major incentives pushed me to write this thesis. The first incentive can be explained as the desire and need to know more about the homeland; to know not only what has been written or said, but also something beyond this. To gain knowledge that would be the sum of what is written, said and lived for real. I felt and witnessed that the major part of the knowledge about the Balkans consists of a net of “myths” and “misperception” in which the Balkan people have come to believe even themselves. I wanted to see what was beyond this net of prejudice. I cannot say that this thesis achieved this goal. However, I can sustain that it has been the consequence of such an effort and I regard it as a first step in my process of understanding the “incanted area – the Balkans” more fully.

The second incentive consists of my determination to become a part of the Balkans scholars who would help in elucidating the reality of the Balkans. I would be pleased if in the future I can achieve to be a part of what Vesna Goldsworthy describes as follows: “With a new generation of Western historians of the Balkans debunking the ‘myths’ that Balkan peoples may have about themselves, and Balkan scholars pulling the rug from beneath some complacent Western certainties about the Balkans, there is now, for the first time since the Second World War, an ongoing dialogue and an unprecedented exchange of ideas. Should a new set of definitions of the Balkans emerge out of this debate, they might, perhaps for the first time, be a shared creation of East and West

provided, that is, that once the wars of former Yugoslavia have run their bloody course, the peninsula is not forgotten, as it often has been in the past.”²

In order to materialize what these major incentives pushed me toward in this research, I made use of western as well as Balkan scholars’ works. I tried to use in a balanced way western, Balkan and the Albanian “thought”. I used in majority secondary sources, books and articles. However, I did not neglect to make use of primary material, such as the statistics of different Albanian institutions, interviews of scholars and political leaders, various news articles and newspapers, periodicals and speeches of Albanian intellectuals and political leaders. I tried to include in this research the most important works on the Balkans and Albania as well as the work of new researchers in the field. The theoretical conceptualization is focused on the interaction of globalization and nationalism. It is strictly related to the other chapter, as the following chapters reflect in “ground” what is conceptualized in theory. However, it is strongly related also to the conclusion as the conclusion, using the data of the previous chapters, resumes what the theoretical framework has started.

The fourth chapter is conceptualized in three main sections, according to the main breakdowns as well as starting points of Albanian Post-Communist history. The first section covers a six-year long period from 1990 to 1996 (Political Developments, Economic and Social Trends, Foreign Policy) and is concerned with its major political, economic and social dynamics, while the second section analyses the dynamics and the results of the second major break down with the past of Albanian society: the Albanian

² Vesna Goldsworthy, *Invention and in(Ter)Vention: The Rhetoric of Balkanization* (www.eurozine.com, 2003 [cited]).

Pyramids and their effects on Albanian society. The last section is a general analysis of Albania after 1997 and a search for the dynamics of “Greater Albania” within Albania.

The Albanian Pyramids are included as a separate section in this theses for four reasons: first, the way this crisis affected the Albanian society; second, the relation they have with the Kosovo conflict and the Great Albania question; third, the potential 1997 has in the today’s Albania politic balances; and fourth the clues it provides about the affect of foreign states in Albanian policy.³ Consequently, this section serves to throw light on all of these issues as well as to make the correlation of before 1997 and after 1997 Albania. From 1990 until 1997, Albanians became immersed in a process of destruction; revenge for the past and a refusal to see the future clearly. After 1997, tired of all the terror, Albanians began to build the future; the problems were huge, but at least the movement forward had began.

The fifth chapter – National Identity in Albania - seeks to extract from these years the situation of nationalism and national identity. What happened to the Albanian national identity? What did the Albanians think and feel about their national identity after several years under pressure? Did they became more nationalist than ever, or did they no longer care about nationalism? Did they aim to build a bigger Albania uniting all their compatriots living near them in Kosovo and Macedonia, or did they just want to improve their living standards? What were their children taught in the transition period? What happened to religion in this country where at least three different religions existed? What was the reaction of the intellectuals toward all that happened and especially toward national identity? These are the questions this thesis will seek to answer. After a brief analytical view of the post-1997 events, the fifth chapter examines the present day

³ Paulin Kola, *The Search for Greater Albania* (London: C. Hurst & Co. Ltd., 2003), p.321.

Albanian national identity focusing on four elements: education, religious identity, intellectual reflections and cultural dynamics.

The sixth chapter is focused on the Albanians in Kosovo and Macedonia. This chapter helps to understand better the dimensions of the Albanian situation in the Balkans and Albanian nationalism. It is especially valuable for the opportunity it gives to compare the three major Albanian communities in the Balkans: Albania, Kosovo, and Macedonia. It also can be regarded as a snapshot of a part of the western Balkans.

The thesis has a special focus on Albania for two main reasons: first, because as the unique states Albanians have in the Balkans it is crucial to understand the Albanian attitude toward nationalism and greater Albania. Second, because in spite of its importance in the whole question there are fewer works about present day Albania than about present day Macedonia and Kosovo. This situation is understandable taking into account the developments in Kosovo and Macedonia. However, this thesis sustains that the Albanian question, which underlines the developments in Kosovo and Macedonia cannot be understood properly without understanding Albania.

Much remains to be done in order to complete a study on nationalism and globalization in the Balkans as well as in a specific case as the one chosen by this thesis: the Albanian case. I have made an effort to make a first acceptable step in this way. Let me hope that in spite of all its problems this thesis has succeeded in offering valuable insight into the Balkans and the Albanian question. A proper analysis of the Albanian question would be valuable in three main ways: first, it would be a valuable case to witness the interaction of globalization and nationalism. Second, it would be crucial in constructing a peaceful future for the Balkans and consequently for all Europe. Third, it would help debunk the “myths” about the Balkans and represent an example of

“destroying” misperceptions and constructing realistic and practical conflict resolutions. The degree to which I have been able to achieve all of these remains to be decided by the reader.

Introduction

but it's a hard place to live when you're not taking sides
so little truth so many lies
and when they rewrite the facts how can you decide
there is no proof just the numbers of the heroes that died
everybody has the same martyrs
the same uprising drowned in the blood
of the same fathers
while their sons fought on through the winter mud...

to build heaven on earth with stars on their caps
to free the nation and redraw the maps
but now the summer sun shines on new realities
new invaders armed with hard currency
where the mountain meets the sky
hero city Cetinje tell me why
Crna Gora are you the key to the door
To why so many always had die...

(Skopje 1983)⁴

“Take a look at this map”, President Clinton urged the American public on the eve of March 24, 1999, as NATO pilots prepared for the first bombing raids against Yugoslavia. “Kosovo is a small place, but it sits on a major fault line between Europe, Asia and the Middle East, at the meeting place of Islam and both the Western and Orthodox branches of Christianity,” he continued. “To the south are our allies, Greece and Turkey; to the north, our new democratic allies in central Europe. And all around Kosovo there are small countries...” Inviting his compatriots to examine the map of Southeastern Europe, an area that – he obviously assumed – they were not overly familiar with, the American president chose some well-known tropes of Balkan representation. In a seismological metaphor, he described the peninsula as a fracture zone, a clash point of religions and civilizations. Kosovo and its surrounding “small countries” are – according to this presidential mini – lecture in Balkan political geography – uneasily sandwiched between Europe, Asia and the Middle East, while at the same time separating America’s old NATO allies from her new Central European friends.⁵

⁴ Hugh Poulton, *Balkans Minorities and States in Conflict* (London: Minority Rights Publications, 1993), p.1.

⁵ Vesna Goldsworthy, *Invention and in(Ter)Vention: The Rhetoric of Balkanization* (www.eurozine.com, 2003, p.1).

“As is often the case, the Balkans are thus defined not by identity traits of their own but by their position on the fault line, their fate predetermined by their explosive ‘in-betweenness’.”⁶ A definition of the Balkans includes as main elements the in-betweenness, ethnic hatred, violence, small states, dangerous conflicts and so on. The Balkans “referred to ‘the creation, in a region of hopelessly mixed races, of a medley of small states with more or less backward populations, economically and financially weak, covetous, intriguing, afraid, a continual prey to the machinations of the great powers, and to the violent promptings of their own passion.’”⁷ The Balkans represent all what the Western Europe is not and cannot be; the other, the bad example. Consequently, it is permanently defined as violent, ferocious, and backward. Everything is built on a logic that allows no escape as a blind circle: these people are different, backward and criminal, furthermore the victims of conflicting interest. As a result, they fight and generate conflict.⁸

Such a high degree of abstraction in the Balkans’ subjectivity did not exist prior to the nineteenth-century introduction of the nation states. Because the state borders were drawn between populations of diverse ethnicities and religions and did not reflect real divisions, they were abstract, unstable, and held by violence. Although the Balkan states carried out this imposition, national borders and a civic subjectivity ironically point to European ideology and the European nation state apparatus. For example, the British Turkophilic aristocrats, saw the Balkans as agents of Russian interest and the Balkan people as barbaric, while they saw the Ottomans as civilized. For the English liberal middle-class, the Balkans Christians – not the Ottomans – occupied the place of civilization. Where should the Balkans’ borders be and should such contested borders define Balkans identity? Europe did not have a unified view on this question. While conflicts of opinions such as those between Tries and Romantic fell within the normal bounds of democratic competition in the countries they occurred, they were inevitably internalized into the Balkan self-identity.

⁶ Ibid.p.2

⁷ Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans* (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), p.37.

⁸ Milica Bakic Hayden, "Nesting Orientalisms: The Case of Former Yugoslavia," *Slavic Review* 54, no. 4 (1995).

R.D Lading, the founder of anti-psychiatry, defined schizophrenia as a split identity caused by conflict within the family. In the same way, the competing interests within the family of European nations split the Balkan self identity, and are largely responsible for the violent history of the Balkans becoming its internal destiny.⁹

It is clear that the Balkans as an identity, as a geography, as a concept, and as a problem in international relations includes many subjectivities, inventions and imaginary identifications. In the middle of such a mess, how can the “real Balkans” be grasped? What is inherent in the “real” everyday life of the Balkan people? How do their politics, their identifications, their identities operate? What does nationalism mean in their everyday lives and why would they fight for a “nation”? What if the Balkans are seen outside the rhetoric of violence and hatred? What if their political parties and social life were studied as phenomena of a “normal” not a priori defined and “condemned” society? What if their reactions were studied and analyzed by a combination of inner and outer factors without pre-defining the people as backward and barbaric? What if their history were studied under the light of inner dynamics and outside developments without having to see this zone as a predestined area of clash of conflicting interests or opposite identities?

Actually, this is what this thesis attempts to do: choosing a case study from the Balkans, it tries to reveal the “real” dynamics inherent in Balkan societies. It tries to see what is really going on in the Balkans without prejudices toward the Balkan people. Nonetheless, it is an effort to understand the present questions better without blaming “Westerners” for the present situation in the western Balkans. It is an attempt to analyze reality balancing the effect of the insider and outsider factors. The Albanian case is

⁹ Dusan I. Bjelic, *The Balkans' Imaginary and the Paradox of European Borders* (<http://www.eurozine.com/article/2003-12-15-bjelic-en.html>, 2004 2003 [cited 15/12/2003 2003]), p.2.

especially important in this context as it is an actual question in the western Balkans and it reflects properly the main dilemmas of the Balkans. The in-betweenness of the Balkans is deeply reflected by the Albanians who have a Muslim majority, yet include important and influent Christian minorities that represent the Albanian identity as much as the Muslim majority does. This mosaic of religions makes the Albanians project “the most in-betweenness” of the Balkans “in – betweenness”.

The dangerous civil unrest that erupted in 1997 in Albania, the Kosovo war in 1999 and the revolt of the Albanians in Macedonia in 2001 made the Albanians the most “backward” and “violent” of the already “unsatisfied,” “backward” and “violent” Balkans. They sometimes have been accused of being ultra nationalists and other times Muslim fundamentalists.¹⁰ What is the reality of the Albanian nationalism? Is there any fundamentalism? And if there is an Albanian question in the Balkans, what does it consist of, what are its historical roots, how do Albanians react to the Albanian question, is it a viable solution, and what do Albanians perceive as a viable solution?

This thesis maintains that there is an Albanian question in the Balkans. However, it claims that the present day Albanian question in the Balkans is related to the interior dynamics of the Albanian societies as well as to the exterior impact on the Balkans. The present day Albanian question in the Balkans can be detected in a geographical triangle: Albania, Kosovo, and Macedonia. Albania is the nation state of more than three million Albanians; Kosovo is the homeland of more than two million Albanians who make up more than ninety-five percent of its population and in Macedonia live more than five

¹⁰ Hayden, "Yugoslavia," p.926. See also Christopher Williams Thanasis D. Sfikas, ed., *Ethnicity and Nationalism in East Central Europe and the Balkans* (Aldershot, Brookfield USA, Singapore, Sydney: Ashgate, 1999), pp.169-93.

hundred thousand Albanians that are calculated to be more than twenty-five per cent of the population.

The Albanians in Kosovo and Macedonia have solid ethnic identities. The Albanians in Kosovo, after decades passed under what they called “foreign rule” ask for a Kosovo republic. The Albanians in Macedonia ask for greater rights within Macedonia, taking into account the percentage they hold in the total population and the importance they have in the everyday life in Macedonia. Kosovo is now under the supervision of the UN and its moving toward a final status. What this status will be is still unclear, however. The Albanians in Kosovo have declared they will not accept any superiority and rule of the Serbian Montenegrin central authority. The Albanians in Macedonia are obtaining greater rights and this makes them move toward a possible autonomy.¹¹

The scene makes everyone observing the developments think about the materialization of a “Greater Albania” in the Balkans. The border conflicts in the Balkans have a long and ancient story. All of the Balkan nations have a “Greater” ideal. Every greater ideal includes claims on the neighboring state borders. The idea of the creation of a “Greater Albania,” “inspires and inflames” the other “greaters.” Furthermore, it enhances border changes that provoke and revive all the claims Balkans countries have on neighboring states. The result of all this is a chain reaction of border claims all around Europe or violent conflicts in the Balkans, and so in Europe. In the heart of this delicate situation in the Balkans is the Albania, Macedonia, Kosovo triangle, and so the Albanian question.¹² On the one hand, the international community is worried about a possible

¹¹ Lene Hansen, "Past as Preface: Civilizational Politics and the 'Third' Balkan War," 2000 *Journal of Peace Research* 37, no. 3 (2000).

¹² It must be noted that there is an Albanian minority in Montenegro that is left out of the inquiry in this study. Albanians in Montenegro are the biggest minority of the country, however, they do not have any important friction with the central authority in the present day. They would be

modification of borders in order to materialize a “great” in the Balkans, on the other hand the worldwide economic and political development push toward “changes of traditional borders.”¹³

Albanians are trapped in a dilemma: on the one hand, exterior developments push forward changes of borders and they see natural collaboration and integration with their neighboring compatriots. On the other, in order to integrate properly with the Euro–Atlantic structures – the EU and NATO – they have to resist what the economic-political reality moves forward. They have to show that they have no irredentist or ultra-nationalist aims or inclinations to be “eligible” for adherence to North Atlantic structures and membership in the EU. Yet developments in the region show that it is almost impossible for people with such a solid ethnic and national identity in a “global world” where borders become every day more “permeable” to stay divided by some artificial borders. Consequently, those borders would be useless or imposed forcefully, and so violent and conflict generating.¹⁴

This thesis focuses on the “triangle” claims that the Albanian question is a matter of the past as much as of the present. It comes from the past, but is transformed in the

affected by developments in Macedonia or Kosovo, yet they are not a key dynamic of the Albanian question in the Balkans. For detailed information, see Poulton, *Balkans Minorities and States in Conflict*, pp.75-87; Also Georg Brunner, *Nationality Problems and Minority Conflicts in Eastern Europe* (Gutersloh: Bertelsmann Foundation Publishers, 1996), pp.74-78.

There is also an Albanian minority in Greece. It is also consciously left out this inquiry. The relations of Albania and Greece need a special research and the issue of the Albanian minority in Greece as well as of the Albanian immigrants can be the topic of a thesis. Consequently, this thesis left them out of the general research on the Albanian question. However, this minority would be affected by the Albanian question, but it also is not a key dynamic of this question. For further information see Poulton, *Balkans Minorities and States in Conflict*, pp.188-89.

¹³ Bjelic, *The Balkans' Imaginary and the Paradox of European Borders*.

¹⁴ Slavoj Zizek, *Ethnic Dance Macabre* (The Guardian Manchester (UK); Aug 28, 1992) (<http://www.egs.edu/faculty/zizek/zizek-ethnic-dance-macabre.html>, 1992 [cited 2004]). Also: Slavoj Zizek, *The Morning After* (<http://www.eurozine.com>, 2001 [cited]).

conditions of globalization. As such, it can be understood properly in the light of nationalism and globalization. Actually as Milan Bufon¹⁵ explains,¹⁶

from this point of view, the Central European experience in terms of ethnic fragmentation and inter-ethnic relations between cultural coexistence and national conflicts, could give a response which maybe useful to understand how the current transformations concerning globalization and deterritorialization effect the persistent maintenance of regional, ethnic and national identities, and the corresponding cultural spaces. One of the key questions in future European political-geographical developments is thus to find a new way between convergence and divergence tendencies in the social, cultural, economic and political sphere, the other, to work out if the European programme, which could be summarized in terms of 'unity in diversity', is not only practicable, but also exportable on a world-wide scale. Otherwise, nationalism, as a pre-eminent European phenomenon, will have to face and be absorbed by a new global 'melting pot' future development.¹⁷

This study attempts to combine nationalism, globalization and the present day Albanian reality in order to explain, understand and offer some different insights into the Albania question in the western Balkans. The thesis enhances a larger insight on Albania as it is regarded as the "mother land" of the Albanians in the focus. As such, this thesis perceives it at the "heart" of the Albanian question in the Balkans. Nonetheless, the analysis on present day Albania has shown that the dynamics of a "Greater Albania" are not enhanced in Albania and it would not be the locomotive of a "greater Albania". It without any doubt would be the center of a Greater Albania, yet it would not produce "lawyers or warriors" in this cause. This deduction made this thesis provide a special focus on Albania, as an outsider's view would suppose or pretend just the opposite. This thesis underlines the facts that the Balkans imagination is built on many myths and Albanians are an example of people being perceived according to myths, not according to

¹⁵ Ph.D., Lecturer, University of Ljubljana ZRS – Science and Research Centre of the Republic of Slovenia

¹⁶ Milan Bufon includes also the Balkans in his Central European definition.

¹⁷ Milan Bufon, "Nationalism and Globalization: A Central European Perspective," (Ljubljana: ZRS - Science and Research Centre of the Republic of Slovenia), p.1.

what they really are. They are people about whom much is imagined and asserted, but little is comprehended or understood. This is especially true while speaking about religion and nationalism.¹⁸ In this context, the thesis gives a larger space to Albania, believing that it helps understand better also the Albanians in Kosovo and Macedonia.

More detailed research into the dynamics inherent in Albanian society in Albania will make it easier to understand their attitudes toward nationalism that to the surprise of all the “imagination” about the Balkans and Albanians result in the opposite of ultra nationalism to the extent that an “anti nationalism” can be discussed. The sixth chapter deals with the Albanians in Kosovo and Macedonia. It focuses on the Albanian nationalism in these societies. It tries to underline the importance of nationalism and its characteristics in these societies and the forms it takes under the pressure of political and economic developments. Another point of this chapter is the comparison of Albanian nationalisms in Albania, Kosovo and Macedonia. It is an attempt to show the differences and similarities of nationalisms in Albanian societies that are conscious of their ethnic/national identity and have lived side by side for years, but never together. In these contexts, although neighbors, each of them has been exposed to different and specific experiences. Consequently, this thesis underlines the fact that there are different Albanian nationalisms in “the Albania, Kosovo, Macedonia triangle” and that each of these nationalisms has been affected individually by globalization as well as by each other.

The thesis will move the reader forward from a general theoretical framework of globalization and nationalism, relating both of them with the Balkans and the Albanian case to the background of what is called the Albanian question and to the dynamics prior

¹⁸ David A. Norris, *In the Wake of the Balkan Myth Questions of Identity and Modernity* (London, New York: Macmillan Press Ltd.; St. Martin's Press, Inc., 1999).

to the present situation. Afterwards, the present day Albanian societies are analyzed mainly in terms of nationalism in order to see how the heritage of the past and the dynamics of a globalization operate on the “ground.” All of this will be finalized in a conclusion, taking into account the past, the present day global dynamics and the Albanian reality, in an attempt to deduce the way the Albania question can be brought into the most logical solution possible, if there is any.

Theoretical Framework: Nationalism and Globalization

Day by day the gods decline,
Their images slipping over
The years and centuries,
And now, no one knows who is god and who is man.
In the brain of mankind god is crouched,
Fingertips pressed to his temples
In sign of remorse
And his bitter regret cries out:
What, oh what have I created?
Man does not know
Whether god is his creation
Or he a creation of god,
But he sees that it is folly
To mediate upon an idol
That answers not.
And now, no one knows who is god and who is man.
A time has come
When men understand one another well enough
To build the Tower of Babel-
And at the top of the tower, to the highest throne
Man will mount
And thence cry out:
God! Where are you?

Migjeni¹⁹

After the collapse of the communist regimes, the Balkans entered a process of reshaping national identities and to a smaller extent of redrawing national boundaries. The process of redrawing/redefining national boundaries was clearly visible in the former Yugoslavia where unfortunately it was accompanied by violent clashes and large-scale atrocities.²⁰ The last step of this process was the status of Kosovo. It represented a critical issue that resolved improperly would restart clashes in the former Yugoslavia and threatened to provoke a chain reaction of ethnic conflicts throughout Europe. As

¹⁹ Migjeni, *Preface of Prefaces* (<http://letersi.homestead.com/migjeni2.html>, 15.08.2005 [cited 05.2005 2005]).

²⁰ Besnik Mustafaj Remzi Lani, Piro Misha, ed., *Lufta Kunder Luftes (The War against the War)* (Tirane: STEVLA - ISHM (Instituti Shqiptar i Medias), 1999).

explained in the introduction section, this thesis regards the Kosovo status question and this stage of the reshaping of western Balkans national identities and boundaries as a part of a larger Albanian question in the Balkans.²¹

Despite the roots of this question, which are analyzed in the third section, this thesis proposes that the present-Albanian question in the Balkans can be understood properly within the context of nationalism and globalization. The intersection of these two dynamics against the background of the Balkans and Albanian societies gives to an old question a different positioning. The Albanian question, without losing its historic characteristics, has developed in a specific environment in which the old dynamics operate with new ones. This opens the way to the rise of dilemmas in which Albanians have to be actors even though they have no important roles in the creation of the scenario or the scene.

In order to throw some light on the relation of globalization and nationalism in the Albanian case, the theoretical conceptualization will focus particularly on the relation of globalization and nationalism and globalization and the nation state. In the case of globalization and the nation-state relation, a special stress will be put on the effect of non-state or supra-state actors over the state authority underlying the role of the European Union. In the case of globalization and nationalism, the interaction will be analyzed according to three different perspectives: Albanian nationalism in Albania, Albanian nationalism in Kosovo, and Albanian nationalism in Macedonia. Each case can be defined respectively as nation-state nationalism,²² majority nationalism,²³ and minority

²¹ ICG (International Crisis Group), "Pan - Albanianism: How Big a Threat to Balkan Stability?" *ICG Europe Report*, no. 153 (2004).

²² Referring to the nationalism in Albania, "the nation-state of the Albanians."

nationalism. However, while detecting the main characteristics of nationalism in the Albanian case, it is possible to speak about an Albanian nationalism including all the three perspectives.

All the features of Albanian nationalism, the Albanian nation-state as well as the Albanian communities in Kosovo and Macedonia are affected by globalization. Nationalism²⁴ in each of these regions, although preserving its key characteristics, is being reshaped by the dynamics of globalization. The forces of globalization redefine the position and relation of these communities with the central authority, with each other and the nationalist dynamics within them. In this context, the Albanian question in the western Balkans is not only a matter of nationalism and nationalist dynamics but also of globalization and its dynamics. Globalization is a complex process that has important

²³ Referring to the Albanian nationalism in Kosovo where the Albanians constitute the absolute majority, but do not have their own state and do not identify with the state they “de jure” are a part of it.

²⁴ A separate discussion of theories of nationalism is not included in this theoretical framework. However, during the preparation of the thesis the major theories and its representatives has been studied focusing especially on Hobsbawm, Gellner, Anderson and Smith. Benedict Anderson, "Imagined Communities," in *Nationalism*, ed. Antony D. Smith John Hutchiston (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1994); Ernest Gellner, *Encounters with Nationalism* (Oxford, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers, 1996); Ernest Gellner, *Nationalism* (London: Phoenix, 1998), Ernest Gellner, "Nationalism and High Cultures," in *Nationalism*, ed. Antony D. Smith John Hutchiston (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1994); Ernest Gellner, "Nationalism and Modernization," in *Nationalism*, ed. Antony D. Smith John Hutchiston (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1994); Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1983); E. J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Eric Hobsbawm, *Interesting Times a Twentieth-Century Life* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2002); Eric Hobsbawm, "The Nation as Invented Tradition," in *Nationalism*, ed. Antony D. Smith John Hutchiston (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1994); Eric Hobsbawm, *On the Edge of the New Century. Eric Hobsbawm in Conversation with Antonio Polito*, trans. Allan Camcron (New York: The New Press, 2000), Eric Hobsbawm, "Tarihe Yonelik Yeni Tehdit," in *1993 Guzunde Budapeste'de acilan Orta Avrupa Universitesi'nde Akademik Yili baslatan ders olarak verimistir* (Budapest: 1993); Anthony D. Smith, *Myth and Memories of the Nation* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1999); Anthony D. Smith, *National Identity* (London, New York, Toronto: Penguin Books, 1991); John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith, ed., *Nationalism* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1994). Especially valuable to this theoretical framework has been the work of Anthoy Smith, Antony D. Smith, *Nations and Nationalism in a Global Era* (Oxford, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995).

political, economic, social and cultural implications. The complexity of the phenomenon makes its analysis difficult and its definition even more problematic. In its broadest and briefest sense, globalization can be evaluated as follows: “The term globalization can be used to refer both to a historical process and the conceptual change in which it is – belatedly and still completely – reflected. Globalization in the first and broadest sense is best defined as ‘the crystallization of the entire world in a single place’ and as the emergence of a ‘global human condition’.”²⁵

The beginning of the process and its present day phase are matters of dispute among academics. Actually, it would be difficult to delineate precisely its phases, as it would easily open the way to reductionism. However, in order to understand better the process a general description of the path toward globalization is possible:

Phase I – the germinal phase, lasting in Europe from the early fifteenth until the mid-eighteenth century. Incipient growth of national communities and downplaying of the medieval transnational system. Phase II – the incipient phase, lasting – mainly in Europe – from the mid-eighteenth century until the 1870s. Sharp shift toward the idea of the homogenous, unitary state; crystallization of conception of formalized international relations, of standardized citizenly individuals and a more concrete conception of human kind.²⁶

Phase III – the take-off phase, lasting from 1870s until the mid 1920s. Increasingly global conceptions as to the ‘correct outline’ of an ‘acceptable’ national society; thematization of ideas concerning national and personal identities; inclusion of some non-European societies in ‘international society’; international formalization and attempted ideas about humanity. Phase IV – the struggle-for-hegemony phase, lasting from the early 1920’s until the mid-1960s. Disputes and wars about the fragile terms of globalization process established by the end of the take-off period. Phase V – the uncertainty phase, beginning in the 1960s and

²⁵ Johann P. Arnason, "Nationalism, Globalization and Modernity," in *Global Culture Nationalism, Globalization and Modernity a Theory, Culture & Society Special Issue*, ed. Mike Featherstone (London: Sage Publications, 1990), p.220.

²⁶ Roland Robertson, "Mapping the Global Condition Globalization as the Central Concept," in *Global Culture Nationalism, Globalization and Modernity a Theory, Culture & Society Special Issue*, ed. Mike Featherstone (London: Sage Publications, 1990), p.26.

displaying crisis tendencies in the early 1990s. Number of global institutions greatly increases. Societies increasingly face problems of multiculturalism and polyethnicity. Conceptions of individuals rendered more complex by gender, ethnic and racial considerations.²⁷

The process of globalization traced by Robertson to the early 1900s embraced the world in the mid-nineties and was “hegemonic” worldwide by the late nineties. It is disputable if its real impact or the starting point is economic, politic, social or cultural. Probably it is a sum of all of these. However, whatever its incentive, globalization is characterized by a constant flow and exchange.²⁸ Luke writes that, “plainly, a ‘transnational’ flow of goods, capital, people and ideas have existed for centuries; it antedates even the rise of modern nation-states. However, this historical flow, at least until the 1950s or 1960s, tended to move more slowly, move less and more narrowly than the rush of products, ideas, persons and money that develops with jet transportation, electronic communication, massive decolonization and extensive computerization after 1960. It is these greater intensities, rates, densities, levels and velocities in the post-historical flow, which have transmuted it quantitatively into something qualitatively new, complex and different.”²⁹ This theoretical conceptualization regards globalization as this “qualitatively new, complex and different thing”.

The immense “flow” that characterizes globalization has an important impact on the nation state. It opened way to the emergence of non-state actors that has a direct effect on the citizens and can orientate or even limit the influence the national central authority has on them.³⁰ These non-state actors are international, such as multinational corporations, international organizations, or “national,” such as non-governmental organizations and ethno national movements.³¹ Theoretically, the effect of these actors on the nation-state is destructive as it weakens, the central authority, and makes deeply permeable the boundaries of the nation-state. Many researchers regard these

²⁷ Ibid. p.27.

²⁸ Timothy W. Luke, "New World Order or Neo-World Orders: Power, Politics and Ideology in Informationalizing Globalities," in *Global Modernities*, ed. Scott Lash Mike Featherstone, Roland Robertson (London: SAGE Publications, 1995).

²⁹ Ibid., p. 99.

³⁰ Paul Taylor, *International Organization in the Modern World: The Regional and Global Process* (London: Pinter Publishers, 1993).

³¹ Ibid.

developments as the evaporation of nation-states, or at least of the classic nation state.³² This assertion is realistic explained from an economic or political point of view.³³ In both of these aspects, the classic nation state experienced a withdrawal against the power of non-state actors. However, this assertion is disputable if the problem is analyzed in terms of national identity.

The flow of what Appadurai calls ethnoscaples, mediascaples, technoscaples, financescaples and ideoscaples³⁴ weakened the central authority and confronted citizens', various ideas and identities. On the one hand, many of these previously secondary identities came to be as important as the national identity for individuals. On the other hand, ethnic and national identities have not lost their importance and the Yugoslav case is an example of a struggle of the formation of a nation-state in the years of globalization when the end of the nation state was being theorized and predicted. Keating argues that the global process, instead of weakening nationalism, has opened way to the re-emergence of nationalism although in some specific forms: "Contrary to Hobsbawm and

³² Luke, "New World Order or Neo-World Orders: Power, Politics and Ideology in Informationalizing Globalities." Also: "Writing at the end of 1980s, Eric Hobsbawm claimed confidently that it was not only national minorities that were being absorbed by the new supranational structuring of the globe but all nations and nation states: 'the very fact that historians are at last beginning to make some progress in the study and analysis of nations and nationalism suggests that, as so often, the phenomenon is past its peak. The owl of Minerva which brings wisdom, said Hegel, flies out at dusk. It is a good sign that is now circling round nations and nationalism.'" Hobsbawm in Michael Keating and John McGarry, ed., *Minority Nationalism and the Changing International Order* (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p.4.

³³ K. Ohmae, *The End of the Nation-State: The Rise of Regional Economies* (New York: Free Press, 1995).

³⁴ Arjun Appadurai, "Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Culture Economy," in *Global Culture Nationalism, Globalization and Modernity a Theory, Culture and Society Special Issue*, ed. Mike Featherstone (London: SAGE Publications, 1990).

the others, we believe that the process associated with globalization, rather than undermining minority nationalism, helps explain its strength.”³⁵

Keating explains that the “flows of process associated with globalization” weakened the state, but empowered nationalism. “State restructuring and global change thus encourage the re-emergence of nationalism within the established states. This is not a paradox but represents two sides of the same phenomenon. Some of these new re-emergent nationalisms are state seeking movements in the traditional sense, wanting to substitute new states for the old.”³⁶ Therefore, it can be sustained that ethnic identity has resulted among the strongest within the various identities came to be prominent for the individual as a result of the “flows” characterizing globalization. If there is a revival of ethnic nationalism as Keating and others claim,³⁷ the response to this one would be also nationalism. Those who are threatened by ethnic nationalism would respond to it by embracing another ethnic nationalism or their state’s/the threatened state’s nationalism. In this case, globalization transforms the nation-state and multiplies the identities of individuals, especially some “global identities,”³⁸ but it does not weaken or expose them to radical changes in ethnic or national identity.

“Furthermore, this is not to imply that the increased cultural flows will necessarily produce a greater tolerance and cosmopolitanism. An increased familiarity with ‘the other,’ be it in face-to-face relations or through images or the representation of the other’s world-view or ideology, may equally lead to a disturbing sense of engulfment and immersion. This may result in retreat from the threat of cultural disorder into the security

³⁵ McGarry, ed., *Minority Nationalism and the Changing International Order*, p.6.

³⁶ *Ibid*, p. 28.

³⁷ Margaret Moore, "Globalization, Cosmopolitanism, and Minority Nationalism," in *Minority Nationalism and the Changing International Order*, ed. John McGarry Michael Keating (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2001).

³⁸ for example, gender.

of ethnicity, traditionalism or fundamentalism, or the active assertion of the integrity of the national culture in global cultural prestige contests (e.g. the Olympic games).”³⁹ The present day’s reality witnesses ethnicity, traditionalism and fundamentalism. Not all the cases of ethnic conflict, traditionalism or fundamentalism are caused by the “cultural flows” of globalization. Such an assertion consists in an oversimplification of the complexity of these conflicts. However, it is true that globalization enhances the incentives of such conflicts.

The interaction of globalization with nationalism in the Albanian case has to be analyzed from three different perspectives: Albanians in Albania have to be considered from the perspective of the effects of globalization on the nation-state and its nationalism; Albanians in Kosovo as the effects of globalization on the nationalism of groups that even a majority in their territory do not have their nation-state, at least de jure, and the effects on the nation-state, Serbia-Montenegro; and Albanians in Macedonia and the effects of globalization on ethnic minorities as well as on the nation-state, Macedonia. However, the Albanian question in the Balkans in spite of the different positioning of the nationalisms in each of the Albanian communities in the Balkans can be seen as a part of a larger discussion on globalization and nationalism: will nations and nationalism or national identity survive in the age of globalization?

Before finishing this chapter with the discussion on the question asked in the previous paragraph, the effect of the non-state actors or supra-state actors on each of the Albanian communities, more precisely that of the European Union,⁴⁰ will be examined.

³⁹ Mike Featherstone, *Undoing Culture Globalization, Postmodernism and Identity* (London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi: SAGE Publications, 1995), p.91.

⁴⁰ Osman Olcay, "Is It Possible in a 'Balkanizing' World to Have a Less Balkanization in the Balkans?" in *Balkans a Mirror of the New International Order*, ed. Kemali Saybasli Gunay Goksu Ozdogan (Istanbul: Eren Yayincilik ve Kitapcilik Ltd. Sti, 1995).

The discussion about the effect of the European Union is crucial as the aim of being a member of the EU is an important ideal and, as a result, a decisive socio-political dynamic in these societies (Albania, Kosovo, Macedonia). The effect of the EU in these societies is regarded here as a dynamic of the globalization process. It has had different effects in Albania, Kosovo and Macedonia. However, it can be detected a general trend of the EU effect in these societies; the importance of the EU integration weakens the ultra nationalist trends and facilitates the dialog between the conflicting parts.

Nevertheless, it must be noted that many problems of the present day Balkans are a reflection of misperception and neglect of the real dynamics of the Balkans by the EU.⁴¹ Yet the integration into the EU as an ideal has a significant effect on each of these societies. Furthermore, in spite of the “insufficient intervention” and misperception of the Balkans by the international community, its intervention has been essential in many cases. On the other hand, the role of the EU in these essential interventions is disputable. Would the EU have intervened in Bosnia as well as in Kosovo without the initiative, pressure, support and participation of the US and NATO?⁴² The Balkans has been a testing ground for the EU’s security policy and the joint military force.⁴³ The EU also in the present day is making efforts in endorsing the peacekeeping missions in the

⁴¹ Philip Gordon, "Europe's Uncommon Foreign Policy," *International Security* 22, no. 3 (Winter, 1997-1998) (2004).

⁴² Simon Peterman, "Europe and the Balkans: The New Challenge," in *Balkans a Mirror of the New International Order*, ed. Kemali Saybasli Gunay Goksu Ozdogan (Istanbul: Eren Yayincilik ve Kitapcilik Ltd. Sti, 1995).

⁴³ Alina Mungiu-Pippidi, "Of Dark Sides and Twilight Zones: Enlarging to the Balkans," *East European Politics and Societies* 17, no.1 (2003), p.83.

Balkans.⁴⁴ In this context, “the South-East Europe remains the Europe’s main test of strength.”⁴⁵

⁴⁴ “The idea that the European Union should speak with one voice in world affairs is as old as the European integration process itself. But the Union has made less progress in forging a common foreign and security policy over the years than in creating a single market and a single currency. The geopolitical changes following the collapse of communism, and the outbreak of regional crises in the Balkans and beyond, have led EU members to redouble their efforts to speak and act as one. In the last 15 years the Union has renewed its efforts to perform a political and security role more in line with its commercial and economic power. The regional conflicts that erupted after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and, more recently, the need to fight international terrorism have convinced EU leaders that they should create formal instruments of both diplomacy and intervention. One of the problems was to agree how much authority for vital issues of foreign policy and security should be vested in the EU and its institutions and how much should be retained by member states. In the end, essential authority remains with the member states, although the European Commission and, to a lesser extent, the European Parliament, are associated with the process. However, the formula agreed on still requires that key decisions be taken by unanimous vote – hard to achieve when there were 15 EU members, even more difficult with 25. The principle of a common foreign and security policy (CFSP) was formalised in the Maastricht treaty of 1992. But the Union and the member states had done little to implement it when war broke out in former Yugoslavia a few months later. The Union tried unsuccessfully to broker a diplomatic deal to end the fighting. Without a European intervention capacity, EU countries could only intervene as part of the UN peacekeeping force and subsequently, under US leadership, as part of a Nato force – as they did in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. To give it diplomatic clout and visibility, the Union has created the post of High Representative for Foreign and Security Policy and provided him with a far-reaching support structure, including a policy unit to provide assessments and early warnings on crisis situations, a political and security committee and a military committee. As part of the CFSP, the Union also created a European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) with the potential, if agreed later on, for creating a common defence structure. In December 2003, EU leaders adopted a European Security Strategy and have since agreed on its basic mission and priority areas for action: the fight against terror; a Middle East strategy; a comprehensive policy on Bosnia-Herzegovina. To give it a credible intervention capability, the EU identified a number of tasks a military force could undertake, including humanitarian and rescue missions, peacekeeping, crisis management and even peacemaking. To implement these tasks, the Union created a rapid reaction force, whose military strength will be built up gradually over several years. It also agreed to provide up to 5,000 police officers for the civilian aspects of crisis management of whom 1000 could be deployed within 30 days. It is perhaps fitting that the first three ESDP missions have been in the former Yugoslavia, the scene of earlier frustrations. The first began on 1 January 2003, when the European Union Police Mission of 500 officers took over in Bosnia-Herzegovina from the UN’s International Police Task Force. The mission, which will remain for a period of three years, is training local police officers and establishing sustainable policing arrangements in line with European standards and practice.

The second operation followed later in 2003, when a small NATO force in Macedonia was replaced first by an EU military force, and subsequently by a 200-strong EU police mission, which is still in place. The biggest of the three started in December 2004, when an EU military force (EUFOR) took over from the previous NATO-led Security Force (SFOR) in Bosnia-

The Balkans is not only a geography of test but also of “competition” of the Great Powers.⁴⁶ Although the EU integration is an important ideal to the Albanian societies in the Balkans, they are extremely friendly to US.⁴⁷ Actually, NATO as well the US have played crucial roles in the Balkans. The US has been extremely active in Albania, Kosovo as well as Macedonia. The importance of the NATO intervention in Kosovo and Bosnia in spite of all the criticism about it is indisputable. The engagement of NATO in the area has been decisive, as after the nineties the Balkans experienced a security vacuum.⁴⁸ NATO intervened vigorously and adherence to NATO also became an important goal for these societies and their governments. It has been regarded as the solution of the security problems of the area as well as an important step toward EU integration. Essentially, integration in the EU and adherence to NATO have been merged into one and called “Euro-Atlantic Integration.” The Euro–Atlantic integration is regarded as something more complete than only one of them.

Herzegovina. SFOR had been in place since the end of hostilities in 1995. EUFOR has a total of 8,000 troops.” See, *Common Foreign and Security Policy* (http://europe.eu.int/pol/cfsp/overview_en.html, March 2005 [cited 1.05.2005 2005]). For the interaction of CFSP and NATO see NATO Handbook, *The Common Foreign and Security Policy (Cfsp)* (<http://www.nato.int/docu/handbook/2001/hb150302.html>, 04.10.2001 2001 [cited 1.05.2005 2005]).

⁴⁵ Mungiu-Pippidi, "Of Dark Sides and Twilight Zones: Enlarging to the Balkans."

⁴⁶ Andrew C. Janos, "From Eastern Empire to Western Hegemony: East Central Europe under Two International Regimes," *East European Politics and Societies* 15, no. 2 (2001).

⁴⁷ Albanians sees European Great Powers responsible for their partition in different neighboring states and the US as a historical supporter of their union. The Berlin Congress in 1878 where Albanian inhabited territories were given to Serbia and Montenegro is regarded as the historical symbol of European betrayal to Albanians. The “self-determination” doctrine of President Wilson and his assertions that such a right must be known also to Albanians is regarded as the historical symbol of US good intentions toward Albanians. The Kosovo crises and the US vigorous engagement in stopping Milosevic is regarded as the most recent example of the support US gives to Albanians.

⁴⁸ Dr. Jeffrey Simon, *Partnership for Peace: Charting a Course for a New Era* (<http://usinfo.state.gov/journals/journals.htm>, june 2004 [cited june 2004 2004]).

The EU marathon of Albania began in 1992 with the assignment of the Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA). An important step was made just after the crises of Kosovo in 1999 with the formation of the Stability Pact to which Albania is one of the adherents. In the official website the Stability Pact is defined as follows:

“On June 1999, at the EU’s initiative, the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe was adopted in Cologne. In the founding document, more than 40 partner countries and organizations undertook to strengthen the countries of South Eastern Europe “in their efforts to foster peace, democracy, respect for human rights and economic prosperity in order to achieve stability in the whole region”. Euro-Atlantic integration was promised to all the countries in the region.”⁴⁹

The other important step was the opening of negotiations for the Stability and Association Agreements (SAA) in 2000. The European agenda has had an extreme effect on the Albanian public opinion that regards its past as an awfully difficult and traumatic one and evaluates a possible membership in the European Union as a historical success and a “revenge” on all the suffering experienced in the past. In this sense the public opinion and the political class are ready to implement all the “directives” of the European Union in order to realize the membership as soon as possible.

In spite of the recent problems the EU has been confronted with - the rejection of the draft of the European Constitution in some key member countries, e.g. in France and Holland - and the crisis it is experiencing, Albanians do not regard it as a threat to their membership. Although the enlargement has been confronted with much discussion and even dissatisfaction in the European public opinion and its effect on the Union is a

⁴⁹ *About the Stability Pact* (<http://www.stabilitypact.org/about/default.asp>, 2005 2004 [cited February 2004 2004]).

disputable issue in Albania it is regarded as extremely positive.⁵⁰ In these sense in Albania a weakening of the nation state and its concessions toward the intervention of a supra state authority is detected. At the same time, the tendencies toward extreme nationalism are weakened. Actually, the Albanians have not inherited any tradition of ultra nationalism. The aspiration of being part of a “denied Europe”⁵¹ and the idea that in a united Europe the “Greater” would become useless has weakened even the incentives of ultra or extreme nationalism.⁵² However, it must be noted that there is also another reason that weakens the Greater Albanian nationalism in Albania, as well as in Kosovo or even Macedonia; integration into the EU is regarded as a materialization of a culturally Greater Albania. In this case, many regard a greater Albania nationalism as useless and meaningless.⁵³

The case of Kosovo is even more complicated. The effect of the EU as well as NATO can be regarded from two different perspectives; the effect on a nation state that of Serbia and Montenegro, and the effect on nationalism, that of Albanian nationalism in Kosovo. The two perspectives are interrelated. On the one hand, the international community clearly has weakened and intervened with the authority of a sovereign state

⁵⁰ See Andrew Moravcsik and Milada Anna Vachudova, "National Interest, State Power, and EU Enlargement," *East European Politics and Societies* 17, no. 1 (2003).

⁵¹ Zizek rightly claims that the Balkans has been the others of the Europe and the bearers of many negative connotations that helped Europe be more “civilized” and “be better” toward those who were “primitive and backward”. See Zizek, *Ethnic Dance Macabre* ([cited]). Also see Zizek, *Zizek* ([cited]). However, the Balkans people never believed in being the outsider and “imagined” themselves as a part of the West, a part of a denied West. See Todorova, *Todorova*.

⁵² The stress on the effect of EU does not include a neglect of the effect of the other state and organizations and especially US. US have an important effect and is perceived positively by the Albanian public opinion. Furthermore, it is regarded as supporter of Albania in the international community much more than EU is and all the EU countries could be during the Albanian history. However, as focused on globalization this chapter makes a specific stress on the EU regarding it as one of the dynamics of globalization.

⁵³ This is a general belief of the Albanian public opinion and an attitude clearly visible in the speeches of politicians and analysis of different Albanian intellectuals.

mutilating its capacity to deal with what in a classic international system would be called “an domestic problem.”⁵⁴ Nowadays, the Serbia-Montenegrin authorities have in power on a region that de jure is a part of the Serbia and Montenegrin Federation. On the other hand, ultra nationalism in Kosovo is weakened and “discouraged” as Kosovo Albanians also regard the European Union as important for their future and the International Community crucial in the decision of Kosovo’s status. As a result, they avoid taking any step that would be disapproved by the international community. However, it must be noted that the ideal of EU membership in Kosovo is not as strong as in Albania, as the priority of Kosovo Albanians is the definiteness of the final status of Kosovo.⁵⁵

In the case of Macedonia, the effect of the international community is especially visible and effective in the relations of the Macedonian government with the Albanians. The government is pressed to give greater rights to Albanians. This as some believe, would push forward federalization and after even a partition of Macedonia. Nonetheless, the ideal of the integration into the EU makes the Albanian nationalists in Macedonia take steps back and give priority to the integration into the EU. Macedonia has made important steps toward the EU integration. In 2000 the SAA (Stability and Association Agreements) negotiations were opened. In 2001, the treaty was signed and in 2004, Macedonia made application for a membership treaty. The remaining steps are the assignment of a membership treaty and after membership according to the phases fixed

⁵⁴ In the paragraph the “positivity” or “negativity” of the phenomenon are not discussed. If the international community did “good or bad” intervening in Kosovo. That is a completely different issue, which in my personal view, for different objective and subjective reasons, owes a completely positive evaluation. The paragraph is concerned with the fact of intervening with what is known in the classic literature of nation state as the “nation state’s sovereignty.”

⁵⁵ For a more detailed analysis of the EU enlargement in the Balkans, see Kristi Raik, "Eu Accession of Central and Eastern European Countries: Democracy and Integration as Conflicting Logics," *East European Politics and Societies* 18, no. 4 (2004).

on this treaty.⁵⁶ In spite of the important disagreements between the Macedonian government and the Albanians in Macedonia, both of the parts agree that membership in the EU as well as in NATO must be priorities. Therefore, in this case the EU is a unifying factor.

In each of the cases, in Albania, Kosovo and Macedonia there is a suitable atmosphere for the revival of the idea of a greater Albania as well as of a greater nationalism due to the present day situation in Kosovo and Macedonia where Albanians have consolidated their position. The dynamics of such a revival are inherent in these Albanian societies as well as in the globalization process as it is this process that makes possible/thinkable changes in borders and brings these societies nearer. On the other hand, this revival is restrained and limited by the present day dynamics and historical experience of these societies, especially in Albania, but also by the dynamics of the process that made possible its revival, the globalization process. The following chapters will focus on the present day and historical experience of the Albanians underlying the present day dynamics and the historical heritage and its impact on Albanian nationalism.

The key point of the present-Albanian dilemma in the Balkans is the paradox inherent in the globalization process; it embraces contradictory and conflicting dynamics in the same altitude. This contradictory aspect of globalization is detectable in the discussion of the survival of nations and nationalism in the global era. Globalization makes feasible the idea of changing of boundaries⁵⁷ in order to materialize the aspirations of divided communities/nations or ethnic groups. It is like destroying some nations for some other nations. On the other hand, while making feasible such ideas so offering

⁵⁶ The prospect of EU membership is behind the Europe Agreements, the SAP (Stability and Association Process) and SAA (Stability and Associations Agreements)

⁵⁷ The changing of boundaries in Yugoslavia constitutes an example of changes in boundaries with the intervention of International Community.

incentives to nationalism it weakens the classic nation-state, not only by strengthening “irredentist nationalism,” but also its economic dynamics. Therefore, the “new nation states” will be different somehow from the “classic nation states,” not only in their ethnical formation, but also in their economic and political authority. Actually, all this is a part of the dispute about the nation state and nationalism in the global era. The strict relation the Albanian case has with nationalism and globalization makes it offer a precise example to the dispute about the survival of nations and nationalism in the global era.

The discussion on the survival of nations and nationalism is a large one and includes many aspects. This thesis has chosen two major views to represent the dispute. One of them is that of Hobsbawm, who evaluates the disappearance of a world of nations and nationalism:

Globalization is undoubtedly irreversible and in some ways independent of government action.”⁵⁸ “Politics, parties, newspapers, organizations, representative assemblies, and states: none of these operates in the way used to and in which we supposed they would go on operating for a long time to come.”⁵⁹ “The stubborn rearguard action of France in defense of the global role of her language and culture may be doomed, but it is also a necessary defense, by no means predestined to failure, of every language, and national and cultural specificity against the homogenization of an essentially plural humanity by the process of globalization.”⁶⁰

Contrary to Hobsbawm, Anthony Smith sustains that “a world of nations and national identities is not without hope.”⁶¹

I have argued that, despite the capacity of nationalisms to generate widespread terror and destruction, the nation and nationalism provide the only realistic socio-cultural framework for a modern world order. They have no rivals today. National identity too remains widely attractive and effective and is felt by many people to satisfy their needs for cultural fulfillment, rootedness, security and fraternity. Many people are still

⁵⁸ Hobsbawm, *On the Edge of the New Century. Eric Hobsbawm in Conversation with Antonio Polito*, p.69.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p.167.

⁶⁰ Hobsbawm, *Interesting Times a Twentieth-Century Life*, p.334.

⁶¹ Smith, *National Identity*, p.176.

prepared to answer the call of the nation and lay down their lives for its cause. Finally, nations are linked by the chains of memory, myth and symbol to that widespread and enduring type of community, the *ethnie*, and this is what gives them their unique character and their profound hold over the feelings and imaginations of so many people.⁶²

The dispute at this point is still vivid and actual. The Albanian case supports both of the views. In the case of Albania and Albanians in Albania, the point of Hobsbawm is more realistic. However, in the case of Kosovo and Macedonia Albanians, it is disappointing and the analysis of Smith is far more precise. The Albanian question in the Balkans has brought from the past many features that have been mutilated by the dynamics of globalization. In spite of all the features, nationalism is the crucial point the Albanian question enhances in the present day. Without a proper “appeasement/satisfaction of the Albanian nationalist feelings” it is impossible to speak of a final solution in the western Balkans. At this point, the interaction of nationalism with the globalization process and dynamics is crucial. This interaction has weakened the Albanian state and the national identity in Albania, while on the contrary it has strengthened nationalist feelings and the idea to form an ethnic nation state in Albanians in Kosovo and Macedonia. The following chapters analyze this interaction. However, this remains a crucial point of the Albanian dilemma in the Balkans, the weakness/weakening of the nation-state versus the rise of nationalism.

⁶² Smith, *Nations and Nationalism in a Global Era*, p.159.

Historical Background: Albanian Nationalism

I lack the time to forget
And clean eternally many things,
For the old tragedies and sorrows
I need at least two years.

. . . .
Can I free the shoulders?
Where and how throw the burden?
Cannot go down there with
Neither let it up longer.
Ismail Kadare⁶³

The Albanian National Awakening

1878-1912

The period between 1878-1912 is called the Albanian national awakening. The major part of Balkans' researchers agrees on such a nomination taking into account the efforts of Albanians to be known as a distinct ethnic identity. Those were critical times for the Albanian inhabited territories that risked to be divided within the new Balkan states.

Albanians are though to have Illyrian origins. The majority of the analysts working on the field agree on this fact.⁶⁴ As such, they can be enumerated within the oldest habitants of the Balkan Peninsula. Christianity spread among the Albanians

⁶³ Ismail Kadare, *Ftese Ne Studio* (Tirana: Shtepia Botuese "Naim Frasheri", 1990), p.49. (S'kam kohe te harroj shume gjera/Qe nga mendja ti nxjerr perjete./Per tragjiket e vjeter dhe shkretimt/ Do me duhen te pakten dy vjet. ... Nga supet sit a heq kete barre./Ku, ta hedh kete peshe, si./Me te s' mund te zbres atje poshte/por as lart dot s'e le kurrsesi.)
Petrika Thengjilli, *Historija E Popullit Shqiptar 395-1875* (Tirana: Cabej, 2002), p.19. Also Barbara Jelavich, *History of the Balkans (Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century)*, vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), p.4. Also Tajar Zavalani, *Historia E Shqipnis Mendimi Shqiptar (Albanian History the Albanian Version)* (Tirane: PHOENIX, 1998), p.1.

between the fourth and sixth centuries.⁶⁵ The Albanian church was directly dependent on the Pope in Rome. The conflicts between Rome and Constantinople affected also the Albanian church, yet Albania remained loyal to the Pope. However, with the weakening of Rome and the permanent pressure of Constantinople to have them under its jurisdiction, the major part of the Albanian churches passed under the control of Constantinople, especially those in the south of the Albanian – inhabited territories.⁶⁶

This opened the way to the division of the Albanian churches in to “South Christians” and “North Christians.” The Albanians of the North remained Catholics loyal to Rome, while the southern Albanians became Orthodox, dependent on Constantinople.⁶⁷ During the nineteenth century, the question of the dependence of the Orthodox Church of Albania would be a serious problem for the Albanians. During the Ottoman period, the Albanian Orthodox church continued to be under the jurisdiction of the Patriarchate of Constantinople. This opened way to / supported the Greek claims over South Albania. As the Albanian church was under the Constantinople jurisdiction and the Southern Albania Orthodox Christians, the church and after Greece claimed southern

⁶⁵ Albanian under Romanian rule: Zavalani, *Historia E Shqipnis Mendimi Shqiptar (Albanian History the Albanian Version)*, p.32. The church in Albania: Zavalani, *Historia E Shqipnis Mendimi Shqiptar (Albanian History the Albanian Version)*, p.94.

According the Albanian History Series prepared by a group of Albanian studiers in 1977 in the sixth century Albanian inhabited territories had a well organized church structure. All the churches were under the jurisdiction of the Pope of Rome that was represented in this region by his vicar in Thessalonica. The churches passed under the jurisdiction of the patriarchate of Constantinople in 732 with a decision of the Byzantine Emperor Leon III. The influence of Rome continued especially in the North region of Albania as the economic and social relations with Italy were dense. For detailed information see Prof. Dr. Selim Islami Prof. Dr. Muzafer Korkuti, Prof. Dr. Frano Prendi, Prof. Dr. Skender Anamali, Prof. Dr. Edi Shukriu, *Historia E Shqiperise (Albanian History)*, 2 vols., vol. 1, *Historia E Shqiperise (Albanian History)* (Tiran: Shtepia Botuese 28 Nentori, 1985).

⁶⁶ Georges Castellan, *Histori E Balkanit (Shekulli Xiv-Xx)* (Tirana: Cabej, 1991), p.21.

Zavalani, *Historia E Shqipnis Mendimi Shqiptar (Albanian History the Albanian Version)*, p.78.

⁶⁷ Jelavich, *History of the Balkans I*, p.27.

Albanian to be Greek and South Albania to be Greek territory. Still in the present day the Greek Orthodox Church attempts to have under its control the Albanian Orthodox church.⁶⁸

Although, Islam is claimed to have reached the Albanians even before the Ottoman invasion, the majority of Albanians were converted to Muslims during the Ottoman rule. The reasons for such a mass conversion are various and require a separate study.⁶⁹ However it would be of interest to note that the majority of Albanians became Muslims but in some cases, a part of them preserved both of the religions.⁷⁰

As religion was a basic division in the Ottoman Empire, Albanians were trapped between the Greek Orthodox and Serbian Orthodox churches. The *millet* system was based on a religious division and no “Albanian” *millet* was known within the Ottoman millets.⁷¹ Consequently, the Albanians remained under the pressure of the Greek Orthodox and Serbian Orthodox churches. Albanians are counted within the peoples

⁶⁸ Ibid., p.80.

⁶⁹ The reasons to embrace Islam must not be restricted and limited to a few explanation. The Islamization was a long process that began in the 15th century, reached its peak in the 17th century and continued with slower steps in the eighteenth century. This reasons explained here are more concise in order to reflect some major incentives without including ulterior details. Furthermore, the thesis is limited to explain the reasons that have a general agreement within the Balkan scholars. However for a detailed work of Islam in Albania, see Nuray Bozborra, *Osmanli Yonetiminde Arnavutluk Ve Arnavut Ulusculugunun Gelisimi* (Istanbul: Boyut Kitaplari, 1997); H.T. Norris, *Islam in the Balkans Religion and Society between Europe and the Arab World* (London: Hurst and Company, 1993). About the sistem prior to the Ottoman invasion p.42; About the Land lords Ottoman relations p.53; about a the reasons of conversions p.65 See also Bernd J. Fischer, pp.52-55

⁷⁰ “An interesting phenomenon that emerged mainly in the north and in the middle of the Albanian lands was crypto-Christianity. The crypto-Christian usually inhabited areas near to those inhabited by the Muslims. They professed Islam but practiced Christianity in private. They appeared at the times when anti-Christian feelings were high. In south –central Albania, in Shpat, there were Orthodox crypto-Christians while the Catholic crypto Christians were to be found in the North mainly around Pec (Ipek) and on the plain of Kosovo.” Skendi in Aydin Babuna, "The Bosnian Muslims and Albanians: Islam and Nationalism," *Nationalities Papers*, vol.32, no. 2 (2004): p.290.

⁷¹ For the *millet* system in the Balkans, see: Jelavich, *Histor of the Balkans I*, p.39.

known for their strong ethnic identity.⁷² Dependence on the Greek or Serbian church would not have been of their choice, as both of these negated the existence of an Albanian ethnic identity. In this case, conversion to Islam would be more applicable a choice, as it did not clash with their ethnic conscience/identity.

In 1878, the Albanians were divided by three religions, Catholic Christians in the North,⁷³ Muslims in Middle Albania that constituted the majority and the Orthodox Christians in South Albania.⁷⁴ This religious division came across as a dialectical division. Although, divisible in some subgroups, the North Albanian dialect and South Albanian dialect have important differences within each other.⁷⁵ The Northern Albanians (the upper side of the Shkumbin River) speak a dialect called Gheg, while the Southern Albanians (south of the Shkumbin River) speak a dialect called Tosk. It must be noted that this is a very rough division as the Albanians of the Middle Albania, so the people in the territory around the Shkumbin River speak a different dialect also. However, the main dialect division is within Tosks (as are called the Southern Albanians) and Ghegs (as are called the northern Albanians). The majority of Tosks are Muslims, but an important part of them are Orthodox. The majority of Ghegs are also Muslim, but a meaningful part of them are Roman Catholics.⁷⁶

⁷² G. Y. Hobsbawm, *1700'den Gunumuze Milletler Ve Milliyetçilik*, trans. Osman Akinhay (Istanbul: Ayrinti Yayinlari, 1995), p.64.

⁷³ Not all the northern Albania, the great part of the Albanians in Kosovo were Muslims.

⁷⁴ This does not mean that there are not Muslims in the south Albania or Catholics or Orthodoxies in Middle Albania. This is a general division taking into account the majorities of these religious communities.

⁷⁵ Jorgji Gjinari, "Struktura Dialektore E Shqipes E Pare Ne Lidhje Me Historin E Kombit (the Albanian Dialectic Structure Related with the Nations History)," in *Shqiptaret Dhe Trojet E Tyre (Albanians and Their Territories)* (Tirane: Akademia e SHkencave e RPS te Shqiperise, 1982).

⁷⁶ Jelavich, *History of the Balkans I*, p.83.

The division in alphabets accompanied the division in dialects. Until 1908, Albanians used three different alphabets. Orthodox Albanians used the Cyrillic alphabet, Catholic Albanians the Latin while the Muslim Albanians used the Ottoman alphabet. As is clear from the historical and cultural legacy of the Albanians, they were divided by religion and language.⁷⁷ Taking into account all these divisions, historians and sociologists rightly evaluate the 1878-1912 as the Albanian National Awakening, because even if an Albanian Nation had existed, the seeds of such a Nation had to “awaken” and surpass these divisions. Before focusing on the period of the national awakening, it would be meaningful to explain the reasons of such a national awakening. What were the specific causes that provoked the Albanian national awakening? What were the incentives forcing the Albanians to join a common national platform?⁷⁸

The first incentive came from the neighboring communities. The Serbian and Greeks were among the first to come up with some national claims and separate from the Empire.⁷⁹ This put pressure on the Albanians, as neither the Serbs nor the Greeks accepted the existence of an Albanian identity. As a result, they had territorial claims on the territories inhabited by the Albanians. Their nationalist attitudes instead of suppressing had the opposite effect and provoked Albanian nationalism.⁸⁰

Another incentive came from the center of the Empire. Reforms attempting centralization were not welcomed in Albania. The appointment of foreign officials, the ban on bearing arms, the obligatory military service, were important sources of anger within the Albanian populace and especially irritated the big land lords. Yet the most

⁷⁷ Stavro Skendi, *The Albanian Awakening, 1878-1912* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1967), p.30.

⁷⁸ For further and detailed information on the Albanian inhabited territories in this period see, Edith Durham, *High Albania, a Victorian Traveler's Balkan Odyssey* (London: Phoenix, 2000).

⁷⁹ Jelavich, *History of the Balkans Twentieth Century* , p.172.

⁸⁰ Bozbor, *Osmanli Yonetiminde Arnavutluk* , p.169-76.

important source of tension was the attitude the Empire adopted toward the “*Ayans*”, the big land lords.⁸¹

After long years of collaboration, Albanian landlords at the beginning of the seventeenth century found themselves to be the “enemies” not the “collaborators” of the Grand Porte. The sultan was no longer willing to permit them the large authority they had over their people and over the land. Used to having an unchallengeable authority over their people and their lands the Albanian landlords would not easily surrender the loss of their traditional authority.⁸²

The will of the Porte to eliminate any challenge to its authority became clear in its attitude toward two important Albanian centers of power: the Bushatlis⁸³ in the North and Ali Pasha Tepelena or Tepedelenli Ali Pasha (The lion of Ionia)⁸⁴ in the south. They were almost contemporaneous: Bushatlis (1757-1796)-Ali Pasha (1741-1822). Both of them had expanded the zone of their authority against the will of the Sultan, challenging the Porte seriously. Many times, they had disobeyed the orders of the Porte and overcome the armies sent to defeat them. After long years of continual tension and clashes, the Porte defeated both of them.⁸⁵ Although without enhancing important nationalist feelings,

⁸¹ For a general explanation on the reforms and its effects see: Ilber Ortayli, *Imparatorlugun En Uzun Yuzyili* (Istanbul: Iletisim Yayinlari, 2002), pp.123-69. Although not focused on the Balkans the Ortayli's explanations match the Balkans reality of the period. It was very useful to me also the work of Halil Inalcik Halil Inalcik, *Application of the Tanzimat and Its Social Effects*, vol. 1, *Ottoman Social History* (Belgium: The Peter De Ridder Press, 1976); Halil Inalcik, *The Middle East and the Balkans under the Ottoman Empire* (Indiana: MIT Press, 1987).

⁸² Bozbor, *Osmanli Yonetiminde Arnavutluk*, p.150. For an “Ottoman explanation” of the *Tanzimat* effects in Albania see: Suleyman Kultce, *Osmanli Tarihinde Arnavutluk* (Izmir: 1944).

⁸³ Stavri Naci, *Pashalleku I Shkodres Nen Sundimin E Bushatllijve (1757-1796)* (Tirane: Universiteti Shteteror i Tiranes Instituti i Historise, 1964).

⁸⁴ K.E Fleming, *The Muslim Bonoparte, Diplomacy and Orientalism in Ali Pasha's Greece* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1999).

⁸⁵ Bozbor, *Osmanli Yonetiminde Arnavutluk*, p.131.

both constituted examples of a changing situation and the inadequate position would find itself anyone forcing the rules of the Porte.⁸⁶

An additional incentive toward “the national awakening” was the effect the Nationalist currents and movements made on the Albanian intellectuals.⁸⁷ Many of them, inspired by the French Revolution and its nationalist influence, began thinking about an Albanian nation and an Albanian nation-state. These intellectuals were of different religions: for example, Ndre Mjeda, Pashko Vasa and Gjergj Fishta were Catholic Christians; Jeronim De Rada was an Orthodox Christians; and Naim Frasheri, Sami Frasheri (Semsetin Sami),⁸⁸ and Ismail Qemal were Muslims. What all of them had in common was the belief in an Albanian nation in spite of religious divisions. Their ideas and works were among the unique road maps to the Albanian nation-state. Furthermore, their work during these years remained the basic inspiration and formulation of Albanian Nationalism.⁸⁹

The final incentive was the Russo-Ottoman War of 1877. Russia imposed on the defeated Turks the Treaty of San Stefano (March 3, 1878), which gave to the Balkan Slavic nations large pieces of Albanian inhabited territories.⁹⁰ “The Albanian reaction to the San Stefano Treaty was swift and in the course of time was intensified.”⁹¹ They

⁸⁶ As a predominantly Muslim group Albanians were well-integrated with the Ottoman system. The Albanians were a part of the state; being Muslims they represented the state. Many Albanians became “sadrzams” (premier) and many other had prominent roles in the Ottoman bureaucracy. This was an important factor that delayed the nationalist reaction of the Albanians.

⁸⁷ Skendi, *Albanian National Awakening*, p.115.

⁸⁸ Semsetin Sami is a typical example of the *Tanzimat* Period Ottoman intellectual. He is a crucial intellectual of the Albanian National awakening as well as a prominent for the Turkish literature. Ortayli explains thoroughly his character and work in Ortayli, *Imparatorlugun en Uzun Yuzyili*, p.237.

⁸⁹ For further information about each of these intellectuals see: Skendi, *Albanian National Awakening*, pp.111-28.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p.31.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p.34.

became aware of the fact that regarded as Slavs they were going to be divided within the new created Slavic Balkan states.

The Berlin Congress of June 1878, which gathered in order to revise the decisions of San Stefano, was considered a good chance by the Albanians, who thought that the Great Powers would take into account the existence of the distinct Albanian identity. This final incentive brought together the landlords and intellectuals of Albania on the same platform. They became aware that this was a critical moment for Albanians. The Great Powers had to be informed about the existence of another ethnic identity that refused to pay for the conflicts between Russia and the Ottoman Empire.⁹²

The intellectuals were influenced by nationalist ideas, while the landlords had some additional reasons to oppose San Stefano. Used to having large control on their lands and people they were not willing to be a part of another state that would intervene with their authority. In spite of the Grand Port's reforms, they had been able to preserve their authority. The weak Empire was another chance they did not want to lose passing under the control of a strong central authority. Actually, all the Albanian governments from 1912 until the communist era had to deal with the landlords and would not survive for a long period without gaining their support.⁹³

These were the main incentives that gathered the landlords, intellectuals and clergymen in Prizren⁹⁴ on June 10, 1878. Most of the delegates came from the North of Albanian inhabited territories, as those coming from the South could not reach the assembly in time. However, among the Southern delegates reaching Prizren was Abdyl

⁹² For the Eastern Crisis and its effects in the Balkans, see Castellan, *Castellan*, p.336.

⁹³ While King Zog found the ways to collaborate with them, Enver Hoxha destroyed them.

⁹⁴ Prizren is in Kosovo- so north of the Albanian inhabited territories.

Frasheri, a member of the Frasheri family, which gave the Albanian Nation its most important nationalist leaders,⁹⁵ whom usually are referred to as the fathers of the Nation.

The assembly gathered in Prizren decided to form an organization for the protection of the rights of Albanians, which became known as the Prizren League,⁹⁶ with a central committee in Prizren and its branches all over Albania. The assembly elected the heads of the various branches and central committee members: Ali Bey Guçija, Iljaz Pasha Dibra, Mejderiz Omer Efendi Prizreni, Sulejman Vokshi and the president Sheh Mustafa Tetova. Consequently, cultural societies were formed in the places where Albanians lived: Istanbul, Bucharest, Cairo, New York, Boston, Sofia and so on.⁹⁷ All these societies publicized several newspapers or magazines.⁹⁸ The Prizren League sent a memorandum to the Great Powers gathered in Berlin. The core of the memorandum is explained clearly by this extract: “As we are not and don’t want to be Turks,⁹⁹ so we will oppose with all our might anyone who would like to make us slaves, or Austrians, or Greeks. ... We want to be Albanians.”¹⁰⁰

Decisions in the assembly were not taken easily as there existed many diverse wings. A “pro-Turkish” group insisted underlining the relations of the Albanians with the Empire and fiercely opposed any idea about an independent Albania. Another group was a more nationalist one and proposed that Albania would gain its independence gradually. For the moment, they agreed that a request of independence was not realistic for Albania.

⁹⁵ Kristo Frasheri, *Tre Vellezer Pishtare (Abdyl Frasheri, Naim Frasheri, Sami Frasheri) (Three Amazing Brothers)* (Tirane: Shtëpia Botuese "8 Nentori", 1978).

⁹⁶ Lidhja Shiptare e Prizrenit per Mbrojtjen e te Drejtave te Shqiptareve.

⁹⁷ Skendi, *Albanian National Awakening*, p.112.

⁹⁸ For the analysis of one of these magazines, see Falma Fshazi, "Istanbul'da İlk Arnavutca Dergi: "Drita" Ve "Dituria" (Osmanli'da Bir Arnavutca Derginin Macerasi)," *Muteferrika* 2002/1, no. 2002/1 (2002).

⁹⁹ As the majority of Albanians were Muslims, they feared to be regarded by the Great Powers as Turks.

¹⁰⁰ Skendi, *Albanian National Awakening*, p.45.

Yet they sustained that this had to be the final aim of the League. A more radical group proposed immediately demand independence; otherwise, Albanian-inhabited territories would be divided within the Slavic states of the Balkans.¹⁰¹

The final resolutions of the League represented an intermediate way between the positions of the different wings. The League requested that the Berlin Congress take into account the Albanian factor and prevent Albanian-inhabited territories from being divided among the Slavic states. On the other hand, it asked the Port to collect all the Albanian inhabited territories under one *vilayet*.¹⁰² This request was not fulfilled.¹⁰³ This situation did not yield the Albanians from the nationalist struggle. They continued the struggle, which in 1912 was finalized with the declaration of an independent Albanian state.

Although the Port first supported the Prizren League, later the Ottomans decided to abolish the League and sentenced many of its leaders with the death penalty, which in many cases was changed to life in prison.¹⁰⁴ The League was abolished and some of its leaders imprisoned, yet its branches and the cultural organization continued through the country as well as in Bucharest, Sofia, Boston and so on.¹⁰⁵ Although abolished, the League gave a start on important groundwork. It constituted the “start” of the “Albanian national awakening.”

¹⁰¹ Ibid., pp.165-99.

¹⁰² Bozbor, *Osmanli Yonetiminde Arnavutluk*, p.192.

¹⁰³ According to Jelavich the Porte had made some concessions in the fields of education, military recruitment and taxation. Yet the request about collecting all the Albanian inhabited territories in one vilayet did not take any positive answer from the Porte. See Barbara Jelavich, *History of the Balkans Twentieth Century*, vol.2 (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983), p.88.

¹⁰⁴ Bozbor, *Osmanli Yonetiminde Arnavutluk*, p.197.

¹⁰⁵ Constantine Chekrezi, *Albanian Past and Future* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1919), p.57.

In the following years, clashes with Serbian and Montenegrin forces in North Albania were continual. In addition, revolts against the Porte and Ottoman officials became frequent.¹⁰⁶ The most important way opened by the Prizren League was that of education. Although the Albanians used Albanian in their daily life, Albanian schools were not allowed.¹⁰⁷ One of the decisions of the Prizren League was to open schools in Albanian. Many schools were opened. Their conditions were primitive, as they lacked financial support. Most of them operated in secrecy as they continued to be forbidden by the Porte and were opposed strictly by Greece.

The league somehow surpassed the problem of religion, as many different clergymen were present at the Prizren gathering on a nationalist platform giving the message that the Albanian nationality embraced different religions. Yet the question of the language and the common alphabet would continue to be an important challenge to the Albanian Nationalism as it stressed and provoked the North- South division. This question was resolved in 1908 at the Manastir Congress. Many prominent Albanian intellectuals gathered there to decide on a common alphabet. Two proposals of alphabets emerged at the congress. A priest from Shkodra Ndre Mjeda proposed the first alphabet, while Naim Frasheri proposed the second one.¹⁰⁸ The crucial issue was to formulate an

¹⁰⁶ Stefanaq Pollo, *Ne Gjurme Te Historise Shqiptare* (Tirana: Akademia e Shkencave e R.P.S. te Shqiperise Instituti i Historise, 1990), p.259.

¹⁰⁷ The first Albanian School was opened on March 7, 1887 in Korca. This date is a national holiday in Albania, The Teachers Day.

¹⁰⁸ The alphabet proposed by Ndre Mjeda, a well-known writer of the Albanian National awakening, was composed mainly the letter representing the sounds of the Gheg dialect, while that of Naim Frasheri also a prominent writer of the national awakening period was composed mainly of letters representing the sounds of the Tosk dialect. The alphabet of the Manastir congress was an amalgamation of these two main versions. The alphabet accepted as well as the alphabets proposed were Latin alphabets.

alphabet embracing all of the sounds of both of the Albanian dialects. So, the alphabet accepted was a mixture of the alphabets of Mjeda and Frasheri.¹⁰⁹

This was a very important step on the way to consolidation as a nation. In this way, the nation would have a unique alphabet and a standard Albanian language. The intellectuals gathered in Manastir decided about a standard Albanian language called the “Letters Language” (*Gjuha Letrare*) that would be used in schools and every public institution as well as in written Albania. This language is used for the aims mentioned above also in present day Albania. It is some kind of amalgamation of the two dialects in one.¹¹⁰

As previously mentioned, Albanians were aware of the deep problems of the Albanian economy and society. Consequently, after the Prizren League until 1912, they did not ask for independence from the Empire.¹¹¹ Yet they insisted on the collection of Albanian inhabited territories into one *villayet* and the autonomy of this *villayet*. The Porte never fulfilled or attempted to fulfill this request. As a result, many Albanians were involved in what they regarded as opposition to the government, the Young Turk movement.¹¹² Albanians were among the founders and important activists of this movement. They thought that as soon as the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP)

¹⁰⁹ About the historic moment of the formulation of the new Albanian alphabet see: Babuna, *The Bosnian Muslims and Albanians: Islam and Nationalism*, p.296.

¹¹⁰ Eqerem Cabej a well-known Albanian scholar of the Albanian language explains thoroughly the structure and formulation of the Albanian language in his Eqerem Cabej, "Problemi I Vendit Te Formimit Te Gjuhes Shqipe (the Question of the Place of the Formation of Albanian Language)," in *Shqiptaret Dhe Trojet E Tyre (Albanians and Their Territories)* (Tirane: Akademia e Shkencave e RPS te Shqiperise, 1982). Also see Prof. Dr.Aleks Buda, "Rreth Disa Ceshtje Te Historise Se Formimit Te Popullit Shqiptar, Te Gjuhes E Te Kultures Se Tij. (Some Questions About the Origin of the Albanian Nation and the Structure of Its Language and Culture)," in *Shqiptaret Dhe Trojet E Tyre (the Albanians and Their Territories)* (Tirane: Akademia e Shkencave e RPS te Shqiperise, 1982).

¹¹¹ Skendi, *Albanian National Awakening*, p.88.

¹¹² Ibrahim Temo, *Ibrahim Temo'nun Ittihad Ve Terakki Anilari* (Istanbul: Arba Yayinlari, 2000).

formed its government, the attitude of the Empire would change and their requests would be fulfilled.¹¹³ Nothing like that happened. The government of the CUP was a real disappointment to the Albanians. Now they had no choice but to demand independence.¹¹⁴

In spite of the will, efforts and struggles of the Albanians, independence was hard to realize. All the neighboring countries as well as the Ottoman Empire and Russia were opposed to this independence. However, the Albanians had the chance to gain the support of Austro-Hungaria and Italy. Both of them were interested in stopping the Slav expansion to the Mediterranean. The Albanian coast was crucial to each in order to take the Mediterranean under control. They wanted to prevent at any cost the Serbs and Bulgarians from reaching these coasts. Consequently, these two powers supported the struggle of the Albanians. This made the declaration of independence of the Albanian state on 28 November 1912 easier.¹¹⁵

The Albanian nationalist rhetoric of the Albanian National Awakening Period was inspired deeply by the Bektashi belief. The Bektashi order was widespread in Albania, especially in the southern regions. The spread of the Bektashi belief among the

¹¹³ For detailed information on the Comitee of Union and Progress as well as its relations with the Albanians see: M. Sukru Hanioglu, *Bir Siyasal Orgut Olarak Osmanli Ittihad Ve Terakki Cemiyeti Ve Jon Turkluk* (Istanbul: Iletisim Yayinlari, 1989). Also M. Sukru Hanioglu, *Preparation for a Revolution: The Young Turks, 1902-1908* (Oxford, new York: Oxford University Press, 2001).

¹¹⁴ Bozboru, *Osmanli Yonetiminde Arnavutluk*, p.264.

¹¹⁵ The independence of Albania was internationally recognized in 1913. Skendi, *Albanian National Awakening*, pp.287-315.

It must also be noted that the independence was declared while the Balkan wars were going on. This was a delicate moment that could harm the government, weakening its ability to rule the country. On the other hand, it would be an opportune moment to obtain some changes or even enlargement of Albanian borders in order to include the Albanian inhabited territories left to the Serbian state. The war conditions did not help in making any border changes in favor of the new formed Albanian state. Furthermore, the chaos created in the country weakened the government.

Albanians¹¹⁶ is related to the attitude of the Albanians toward religion. Used to co-exist in spite of the different religious beliefs, Albanians were tolerant of religion. They were used to accepting and respecting the religious beliefs of each other. The Bektashi belief system enhanced all these religious habits of the Albanians. It mixed many components of Christianity and Islam and enhanced tolerance and respect of each other.¹¹⁷

This attitude was important to the Albanian nationalist rhetoric that had to find a way to bypass the religious differences between Albanians. The Bektashi beliefs were mostly spread in Middle and South Albania. The Bektashi order served Albanian nationalism “morally and materially”: its way of belief inspired Albanian nationalism while the Bektashi *tekkes* spread throughout Albania became centers of nationalist propaganda.¹¹⁸

The Albanian nationalist awakening period Nationalist rhetoric underlined three main points that can be summarized as follows: Albanian religion is Albanian-hood. This was not an expression of atheism, but of religious tolerance. It pointed to the fact that being on Albanian did not require belief in a precise religion. Albanians could be Muslim or Christian. However, this connotation contained a warning; although, being an Albanian did not require adherence to a precise religion, it required the subordination of the religious identity to the (Albanian) national identity.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁶ For a thorough analysis of the relations of the Bektashi to Albanians see Babuna, "The Bosnian Muslims and Albanians: Islam and Nationalism," p.295.

¹¹⁷ N. Y. Ozturk, *Tarih Boyunca Bektasilik* (Istanbul: Yeni Boyut Yayinlari, 1990).

¹¹⁸ Ger Duijzings, "Religion and Politics of 'Albanianism': Naim Frasheri's Bektashi Writings," in *Albanian Identities: Myth and History*, ed. Bernd J. Fischer Stephanie Schwandner-Sievers (London: Hurst & Company, 2002).

¹¹⁹ Nathalie Clayer, "The Myth of Ali Pasha and the Bektashis: The Construction of an 'Albanian Bektashi National History'," in *Albanian Identities Myth and History*, ed. Bernd J. Fischer Stephanie Schwandner-Sievers (London: Hurst & Company, 2002).

The second crucial point of Albanian nationalism was language. The problem of the North-South dialect division was an important handicap, so the nationalist rhetoric put special stress on the Albanian language. Speaking Albanian/being a native speaker of Albanian was the first condition of being an Albanian. Many writers dedicated verses in the “pure” and “beautiful” Albanian language. The stress on the language was also based in the fact that all the Albanians in spite of the dialectic divisions and although they wrote it with different alphabets, spoke Albanian and called their spoken language Albanian. The third important point of these years Albanian nationalism was the fact that Albanians belonged to a distinct Albanian ethny that had no relation to the Greek or Slav or any other origin, but Illyrian. The continual assertion of Greek and Slav nationalists that an Albanian ethnicity did not exist was the primary reason for this stress.

The nationalist rhetoric of the 1878 – 1912, can be clearly detected in the work of the Albanian intellectuals of the period. The Works of Naim Frasheri,¹²⁰ Pashko Vasa¹²¹ and Sami Frasheri¹²² are the most explicit declarations of the Albanian Nationalism. The works of Naim Frasheri are still among the basic inspirational sources of Albanian nationalism. His prose and poems are perfect lyrics dedicated to the Albanian language, history, nation and country. His brother, Sami Frasheri, also made an important contribution to Albanian nationalism with his, “Albania, What Is, What Was and What

¹²⁰Naim Frasheri, *Vepra Letrare (Collection of His Works)*, vol. 3 (Tirane: Shtepia Botuese "Naim Frasheri", 1995).

¹²¹ He is the author of the famous poem, “Albania”, that became the symbol of the Albanian National Awakening. The poem begins with a call for Awakening: “Albanians wake up!” (*Conuju Shqiptar prej gjumit, Conuju*). The poem is a perfect literary work in Gheg dialect.

¹²² For the bibliography of his works in Albanian as well as in Ottoman see Zyber Hasan Bakiu (Kruja), *Bibliography E Zgjeruar E Veprave Te Sami Frasherit (Detailed Bibliography of the Works of Sami Frasheri)* (Tirane: Shtepia Botuese "8 Nentori", 1982).

will Be?"¹²³ However, to the same degree was prominent the work of many other Albanian intellectuals who worked entirely for the Albanian nation. The first great achievement of their efforts was the declaration of the independent Albanian state on 12 November, 1912.¹²⁴

The declaration of the independence was a turning point in Albanian national history.¹²⁵ The newly created state had to confront serious problems in its borders and important challenges within the country. The Northern border of the state was unclear and the struggle continued to include Kosovo in the newly created state. A similar situation was going on in South Albania where Greek forces tried to push forward to the border of Middle Albania. The border disputes and clashes would continue until the late 1920s.¹²⁶

Inside the country a harsh competition for power continued. Different wings tried to take the newly created state under control. The landlords were unwilling to have a

¹²³ Sami Frasheri, *Shqiperia C'ka Qene, C'eshte Dhe C'do Te Behete? (Albania What Was, What Is, and What Will Be?)* (Prishtine: Dijs, 1999).

Bulent Bilmez (Honorary Research Fellow SSEES, UCL, Londra) after a detailed work with Albanian and foreign sources claims that Sami Frasheri is not the author of this book. He maintains that someone else from his family may have written it and that the book may have been subject to changes in its different reprinted editions. See Bulent Bilmez, "Yazari Tartismali Bir Kitap: Arnavutluk Neydi, Nedir Ve Ne Olacak? (1899)," (Istanbul: 2004).

This is an important claim that without any doubt would be examined seriously by Albanian scholars of the field. However, many scholars of Albanian culture and history would not accept easily such a claim as the work of Sami Frasheri have been subject to serious academic work.

The most well-known Albanian scholars of this field are Prof. Dr. Jup Kastrati and Prof. Dr. Ziya Xholi. Both made amazing academic work on Sami Frasheri. Accepting some unimportant transformation in the reprinted editions due to some lingual problems neither of them claimed that the work may have not been written by Sami Frasheri.

I had the chance to meet Prof. Dr. Jup Kastrati two years before his death and discuss with him the Albanian National Awakening. His information and evaluations about the Albanian National Awakening would be an Albanian "national treasury". We discussed also Sami Frasheri and his works and he did not express any doubt about the author of the "Albania What Was, What is and What will Be?" See also Ziya Xholi, *Sami Frasheri Jeta Dhe Vepra (Sami Frasheri Live and Works)* (Tirane: Shtepia Botuese "8 Nentori", 1978).

¹²⁴ The Albanian State was internationally recognized in 1913

¹²⁵ Skendi, *Albanian National Awakening*, p.463.

¹²⁶ Castellan, *Historia e Balkanit*, pp.390/450.

strong central authority. After failing to take control with force over the Albanian territory, the Serbs tried to take under control the Albanian government, supporting some Albanian landlords to come to power.¹²⁷ The Islamist wing was another important opposition to the government. The secular attitude of the government seemed to them inadequate for a country where the majority of the population was Muslim. The nationalist wings of the period can be divided in two: one of them defendant of a moderate attitude claiming that Albanians had to stop the struggle for Kosovo and other Albanian inhabited territories and consolidate the state. The other wing argued that Albania would never form a solid state living behind half of its territories.¹²⁸

Fan S. Noli, an Orthodox priest, man of letters and politician, led another important group of the period. During the summer of 1923, Noli came in contact with members of a committee formed in Vienna by a former Ottoman military official in Albania, Aqif Pasha.¹²⁹ Important Albanian nationalist leaders such as Hasan Prishtina, Zia Dibra and so on were part of this group that aimed at the abolition of the Zogu government. They regarded Ahmet Zogu, in that period premier of Albania, as a representative of Serbian interests. The loss of the support Zogu had within the country was a good incentive for this group that was being led by Fan Noli.¹³⁰ In July 1924, the

¹²⁷ The head of this movement was Esad Pasha Toptani and it is known in the Albanian Historiography as the Esadist Movement. See Zavalani, *Historia E Shqipnis Mendimi Shqiptar (Albanian History the Albanian Version)*, p.236.

¹²⁸ The territories of the newly formed Albanian state were reduced to the half of the Albanian inhabited territories after the regulations of its North, East and South borders by the Great Power. Especially by the North to the West the Albanian territories seemed divided in the middle; one part to the Albanian state and the other to Serbian kingdom (after the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes).

¹²⁹ This is how his name is written in Albanian. In Turkish it is read as Akıf Paşa.

¹³⁰ For a detailed analysis, see Bernd Fischer. pp.76-81

Noli group came to power with the intention to realize what they called the “Democratic Revolution”.¹³¹

Noli aimed to form a democratic Albanian state. The communist historiography pretended that he was inspired by the Bolshevik Revolution and wanted to form a socialist state. Bernd J. Fischer, in his detailed work about the Zogu period, claims that Noli was inspired by the western liberal democratic state.¹³² Whatever the truth remains the fact that the government led by Fan S. Noli lasted only sixth months. The reasons for the short live of the Noli government are various. First of all, it must be said that the chaotic situation ruling in Albania in those years would not permit long-lasting governments.¹³³

Fischer sustains that the Noli government was short-lived for four main reasons: first, the support of the Noli government had within the country was not solid. The various factions had supported the group led by Noli and after their government as they were against Ahmet Zogu, not because they supported his program. Second, Noli was unable to acquire international support. The United Kingdom did not acknowledge his government due to a conflict about concessions on a petrol refinery in Albania. Italy did

¹³¹ Zavalani, *Historia E Shqipnis Mendimi Shqiptar (Albanian History the Albanian Version)*, p.278.

¹³² Fischer, p. 77

¹³³ Just after the declaration of independence and the formation of the temporary government led by Ismail Qemal, the Great Powers appointed a foreign Prince to govern Albania, the German Prince Wied. His “reign” lasted only one year (7 March 1913-September 1914) due to the chaotic situation in Albania. See Zavalani, *Historia E Shqipnis Mendimi Shqiptar (Albanian History the Albanian Version)*, pp.237-49. Zavalani. After the 1914 until mid-1922 when Zogu was elected premier Albania had changed seven premiers. Zogu was from mid-1922 until the beginning of 1924. After this was formed the Vercali government yet Zogu was the man who affected all the decisions of the premiership. In July 1924 after the revolt of nationalist leadrs supported by ex Ottoman military official Verlaci resigned. Zogu fled to Serbia and Noli became the premier of the new government.

For detailed information about this period and the Albania under the rule of Zog, see Joseph Swire, *Albania: The Rise of a Kingdom* (New York: Richard R. Smith, 1930). Also Joseph Swire, *King Zog's Albania* (London: R. Hale and Co., 1937).

not give him the financial help vital for the government. Zogu promised some concessions on Albanian ports that Noli was not willing to offer to the Italian government.¹³⁴ The positive attitude Noli had toward the Bolshevik Russia was another reason for the lack of support from the Western powers.

Third, Ahmet Zogu was supported by Serbia, which fiercely opposed the Noli government as it was supported by nationalist leaders and many nationalist factions in Kosovo. Serbia used any mean to sabotage the Noli government. Zogu had financial and military help from Serbia. Fourth, the different wings of the Albanian politics of the period could not easily understand the program of Noli that included important democratic and economic reforms. Nevertheless, Albania remained an agrarian society in these years. Fischer also underlines the fact that Noli made some political mistakes that damaged his government.¹³⁵

On 24 December 1924 Zogu entered Tirana with an army, taking the control of the capital. Leka Zogu, a landowner from the north of Albania, initially supported by the Serbs, systematically consolidated his authority and restored the authority of the government. He gained the support of the big landowners, eliminated his rivals one by one and did not challenge Serbia along the north frontiers. As a result, he managed to achieve a stabile situation within the country and soothed the clashes along the borders. After imposing his power as president of the country, he declared himself the King of the Albanians (King Zog), and Albania as a Kingdom in 1928.¹³⁶

¹³⁴ Fischer, pp.75-93.

¹³⁵ Fischer, 77-80

¹³⁶ For an interesting and detailed explanation of the National Awakening period and the first days of the newly created Albanian, state, see Ismail Kemal Bey, *The Memoirs of Ismail Kemal Bey*, ed. Sommerville Story (London: Constable and Company LTD, 1920).

The Albanian Kingdom constitutes the basis of the modern Albanian state. The government succeeded in extending its authority throughout the Albanian territory and managed to organize and apply a single education system, security network, central and local institutional network and so on. It was an authoritative regime where no opposition was allowed. The authority of the landlords was preserved and the peasant continued to live in misery. However, the situation was improving and the central cities developed in a meaningful way. Furthermore, the country was lifted out of chaos and was trying hard to situate itself within the other Balkan nations in such hard days for the Balkans and the entire European continent.¹³⁷

The nationalist rhetoric of this period can be divided in two main streams: the government nationalist rhetoric and the opposition nationalist rhetoric. The government nationalist rhetoric continued in the line of the National Awakening Period with its stress on the language, religious tolerance and Albanian ethnicity. However, it was cautious to focus the nationalist pronunciation on the Albanians in Albanian. It tried to avoid claims about the territories left outside Albanian state borders.¹³⁸

The opposition nationalist rhetoric accused King Zog of betraying the Albanian cause. The opposition in this period was abroad¹³⁹ as it was impossible for the adversaries of Zogu to live in Albania without being persecuted. The opposition accused King Zog of exploiting the Albanian peasantry and forsaking Kosovo in order to preserve his own

Also see Visar Dodani, *Memorjet E Mija, Kujtime Nga Zhvillimet E Para Te Rilindjes Te Kombit Shqiptar Ne Bukuresht (My Memoirs, Memories from the First Days of the Albanian National Awakening in Bucaresth)* (Albania: Shtypshkronja Kostanza, 1930).

¹³⁷ For a thorough analysis of the period, see Bernd J. Fischer, *Mbreti Zog Dhe Perpjekja Per Stabilitet Ne Shqiperi (King Zog and the Struggle for Stability in Albania)*, trans. Krenar Hayderi (Tirane: Cabej, 1996).

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, p.114.

¹³⁹ It was especially concentrated in Boston, US, where Bishop Noli went after he fled from Albania.

authority. The opposition nationalist rhetoric did not take into account any border, but was directed at all the Albanians living in the Balkans.¹⁴⁰

In spite of the improvements of the Albanian economy, the country was continuously in need of foreign economic support. This support was provided from Italy, which was interested in having the Albanian coasts under control. Zogu achieved rule until 1939 due to the support of the Italy of Mussolini. Italy acquired important concessions. On 20 January 1924, the Albanian and Italian governments signed a secret pact giving to Italy the status of the favorite nation in Albania.¹⁴¹ This was followed by many trade concessions. Very important to Italy were also the concessions it obtained in the Albanian ports.¹⁴²

The close economic relations opened the way to Italian influence in Albania. King Zog made all the possible efforts to control and staunch the Italian influence, yet it was impossible as it came as a result of the close economic relations.¹⁴³ Italy was eager to extend its influence in Albania and even add Albania to its territory. King Zog, aware of the danger, made clear to the Italian authorities that Albania did not intend to become part of Italy. However, the Italian government was aware of the vital importance the Italian economic aid and support had for Albania. As a result, no explanation or reaction against the Italian hegemony in Albania was taken into account and Italy directed its war ships to the Albanian coast in April 1939.¹⁴⁴ Albania was invaded by Italy and the King Zog left

¹⁴⁰ Zavalani, *Historia E Shqipnis Mendimi Shqiptar (Albanian History the Albanian Version)*, p.300.

¹⁴¹ Fischer, p. 99.

¹⁴² For a concise study of the Italian interests in the Balkans see Rivista Italiana di Geopolitica liMes, ed., *Italy and the Balkans* (Washington, D.C: The CSIS Press Center for Strategic&International Studies, 1998).

¹⁴³ Zavalani, *Historia E Shqipnis Mendimi Shqiptar (Albanian History the Albanian Version)*, p.291.

¹⁴⁴ Italy in the Balkans

the country, to continue his opposition outside Albania. This was the end of the Albanian Kingdom.¹⁴⁵

During these years, the Albanian inhabited territories left outside the Albanian state were “integrated” into the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. In this period Albanians were subjected to an extreme suppression. “Vardar Macedonia and Kosovo became parts of the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes after World War I. In this new state, Macedonia was referred to as ‘South Serbia’ and Kosovo as ‘Old Serbia’. The Serbs suppressed the identity of the Albanians of Kosovo and Macedonia, like that of the Bosnia Muslims, and the Albanians were not recognized as a distinct nation. The use of the Albanian language was prohibited and Albanians were forced to emigrate. Armed resistance was widespread in Kosovo and Macedonia in the 1920s with the Albanian *kacaks* (outlaws) fighting against Serbian rules. The *kacak* movement was suppressed by the Serbs in the second half of the 1920s, but it nevertheless contributed to the development of a national consciousness of the Albanians.”¹⁴⁶

All the suppression and the denial of the Albanian identity by the Serbian forces instead of weakening the Albanian national feelings did just the opposite and intensified them. The Serbians first tried to rid the Albanians from the territories they inhabited by forced immigration and widespread atrocities. This resulted in failure, so after they adopted another tactic, to create a differentiation between the Albanians in Albania and those in these territories. They claimed the Albanians in Albania to be *Albanci* and those in the kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, *Shiptari*.¹⁴⁷ These were claimed to be two different people, which had none but neighboring people similarities within each other. Even this did not work as the Albanian had a well-established ethnic identity. On the contrary, the pressure did nothing, but made them more related to Albania. It

¹⁴⁵ For a brief analysis of the Albanian Kingdom, see Jason Tomes, "Monarchy in Albania 1928 - 1939," *History Today* Vol. 51, no. 9 (2001).

¹⁴⁶ Vickers in Babuna, "The Bosnian Muslims and Albanians: Islam and Nationalism," p.298.

¹⁴⁷ Aydin Babuna, "The Albanians of Kosovo and Macedonia: Ethnic Identity Superseding Religion," *Nationalities Papers*, no. Special Topic Issue (2000): p.70.

buttressed their belief that Albania was the motherland and they had been divided from their compatriots against their will.¹⁴⁸

The most important opposite movements to the Italian invasion of Albania were the communists (the Communist Party of Albania),¹⁴⁹ the National Front¹⁵⁰ and the Movement for Legality.¹⁵¹ The Albanian Communist party was formed in November 1941.¹⁵² The communist movement in Albania was not new: in the early 1920s, the Albanian communist groups operated in Albania. Yet these groups were very small weak and divided.¹⁵³ The transformation of these groups into the Albania Communist Party of Albania is still a matter of dispute between scholars.¹⁵⁴ The socialist historiography eliminated all the traces of dispute and offered a perfect picture of the formation of this party, claiming the different communist groups joined the party due to the ability of some Albanian communist leaders.¹⁵⁵

Whatever the truth, the aspect that concerns this thesis is the relation between the Albanian and Yugoslav Communist Parties. They had close relations until 1948, when Yugoslavia interrupted relations with Stalin's Russia.¹⁵⁶ The close collaboration of the Albanian and Yugoslav communists would affect the fate of Kosovo. As explained in some sources, Tito was not so insistent on having Kosovo within the borders of

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., pp.69-71.

¹⁴⁹ Partia Komuniste e Shqiperise.

¹⁵⁰ Balli Kombetar.

¹⁵¹ Levizja per Legalitet.

¹⁵² Bernd J. Fischer, *Shqiperia Gjate Luftes, 1939-1945*, trans. Krenar Hajderi (Tirane: Cabej, 2004), p.171.

¹⁵³ Ibid., p.144.

¹⁵⁴ Some western scholars claim that the formation of the Albanian Communist Party was a merit of the Yugoslav Communist Party.

¹⁵⁵ Intituti i Studimeve Marksiste-Leniniste Prane KQ te PPSH, *Historia E Luftes Antifashiste Nacional Clirimatore Te Popullit Shqiptar 1939-1944 (the History of the Albanian Anti-Fashist - National Liberation War 1939-1944)*, 2 vols., vol. 1 (Tirane: Shtepia Botuese "8 Nentori", 1975).

¹⁵⁶ Paulin Kola, *The Search for Greater Albania* (London: C. Hurst & Co. Ltd., 2003), p.96.

Yugoslavia.¹⁵⁷ Yet the Serbian sensitivity on the Kosovo case did not permit him to make any concessions. The interruption of the relations with Stalinist Russia negatively affected the opportunities of Kosovo.¹⁵⁸

Enver Hoxha, the leader of the Albanian Communist Party from 1941-1985, would not accept the influence of the YCP (Yugoslav Communist Party) after the war. The collaboration of the interwar (and war) period can be regarded as a pragmatist attitude of the ACP (Albanian Communist Party) and its leader Hoxha, who was aware of the fact that the Albanian communists needed the support and guide of the YCP.¹⁵⁹ Kosovo remained hostage to the relations of Albania and Yugoslavia and once again “paid for” the stability of Albania.¹⁶⁰

The relations of the two countries changed according to the practical necessities of each of them. In these changing relations, Kosovo sometimes was used as a bridge uniting these two countries and sometime as a taboo that must not be mentioned. Actually, Hoxha was a perfect pragmatist and opportunist. He made use of all the movements and foreign services in Albania to pave his way to power. Once in power he eliminated all the real and potential opposition regardless of the support that they had given him to obtain power. As so, his nationalism must be questioned if it was a pragmatist formulation to obtain power or a real nationalist attitude.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., p.40.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., p.61.

¹⁵⁹ “The annexation of Kosova, as Tito was well aware, would , at best, prompt negligible opposition in Albania. Indeed, as has been outlined above, the Albanian communists had given clear indication during the war of their commitment to abide by the agreement to leave this issue to Tito’s discretion. ... Albania did not even object to the clearly unequal treatment visited upon Kosova in comparison with the treatment reserved for Yugoslavia’s other autonomous unit, Vojvodina.” Ibid., p.65.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., pp.94-97.

¹⁶¹ Miranda Vickers, *The Albanians a Modern History* (London, New York: I. B. Tauris, 1999), pp.163-73.

The communist movement grew stronger toward 1940 and especially after 1941. It was supported by the middle class in the towns and by the peasantry. The part of the opponent group that disagreed with the Italian regime, but did not believe in the communists formed a group called the National Front -NF (BK – *Balli Kombetar*).¹⁶² The group was supported by nationalist, liberals, republicans and big land owners. The head of the group was Midhat Frasheri, son of Abdyl Frasheri. The most important difference between the National Front and the ACP was in the attitude toward Kosovo and Great Albania. The NF declared as its first aim the collection of the Albanian inhabited territories in a greater/ Great Albania. The member of the NF even after the war and in exile outside Albania defended the Greater Albania. Although weak and much more passive than the ACP, the NF never yielded defending a Greater Albania and claiming that a divided Albania would never develop properly. This was the point crucial NF opposed the ACP, accusing it of using Albania nationalism for its own interests.¹⁶³

Hoxha invited all the opponents to a conference in Peze, a small village near Tirana.¹⁶⁴ With this, he tried to take under the same umbrella as well as under his control all the opponent movements outside the communist party. Many liberals, land owners, heads of different groups, republicans and supporters of King Zog responded to the call, going in the conference. The socialist historiography reports that this conference was a great success collecting all the diverse thoughts on a common platform.¹⁶⁵ However, many analysts of Balkan history do not agree and maintain that the conference served to

¹⁶² Fischer, *Shqiperia Gjate Luftes, 1939-1945*, p.184.

¹⁶³ For a detailed analysis about the works and life of Mid'hat Frasheri a prominent intellectual in Albanian history, see Uran Butka, *Kthimi I Mid'hat Frasherit (the Return of Mid'hat Frasheri)* (Tirane: PhOENIX, 1997).

¹⁶⁴ Fischer, *Shqiperia Gjate Luftes, 1939-1945*, p.180.

¹⁶⁵ Instituti i Studimeve Marksiste-Leniniste Prane KQ te PPSH, *Historia E Partise Se Punes Se Shqiperise (the History of the Labour Party of Albania)* (Tirane: Shtepia Botuese "Naim Frashri", 1968), p.99.

ensure the place of the communist party as the biggest opposite force in Albania. They sustain that no common agreement was reached. None of the NF members attended the conference while Abaz Kupa declared that his movement did not adhere to the National Liberation Movement created after the conference of Peze, under the leadership of the ACP and Hoxha.¹⁶⁶

Abaz Kupa was a supporter of the king and the head of the Movement for Legality that supported the restoration of the kingdom in Albania and return of King Zog. Yet the Kingdom of Albania supported by the Legality movement was larger than the Albanian Kingdom of King Zog. This was because in these years it was easier to believe in a Greater Albania as the Italian invasion of Serbian territories had gathered Albanians within the same borders for a short period. Although the NF and the LM (Movement for Legality) had strong support within the Albanians, they could not succeed at the organizational level of the ACP. Enver Hoxha for many years succeed in masking his real aims and Stalinist attitude, obtaining the support of many prominent intellectuals and patriots, the biggest part of whom he would eliminate as soon as he came to power or during the war years.¹⁶⁷

It is interesting to note that Hoxha succeeded in obtaining also the support of the British secret service that for many years failed to understand his real aims and character.¹⁶⁸ However, it must be noted that the movement led by Tito was extremely successful against the Nazis in the Balkans. The movement led by Hoxha in Albania was

¹⁶⁶ Fischer, *Shqiperia Gjate Luftes, 1939-1945*, p.254.

¹⁶⁷ Nicholas Pano, *The People's Republic of Albania* (Baltimore: The John HopkinPress, 1968).

¹⁶⁸ An interesting explanation of the secret services Hoxha relations is that of Reginald Hibbert a British Secret Service member arrived in December 1943. In 1992 Hibbert became ambassador of Great Britain in France. See Reginald Hibbert, *Fitorja E Hidhur Lufta Nacional Clirimtare E Shqiperise (Albania's National Liberation Struggle, The Bitter Victory)*, trans. Xhevat Lloshi (Tirane: Shtepia Botuese e Lidhjes se Shkrimtareve, 1993).

directly related to and supported by Tito. Hoca was also effective against the Nazis in Albania. Despite their ideological formations British support to these groups was a war necessity in that period. On the other hand, Enver Hoxha's personal skills in manipulation and political maneuvers should not be ignored. Due to his astonishing personal skills fed by his immense thirst for power Hoxha and the party he led managed to be the key element of the war against invasion and the "absolute favorite" to govern an independent Albania. Actually, on November 29, 1945 Hoxha entered Tirana leading a group of partizans. He was applauded as a hero, as a savior, as the leader of a nation. From 1945 to 1985, he remained as the unique leader of the Albania.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁹ The memories of Safet Butka (1901-1943) who was an activist during the war period collected by Uran Butka offer a sound insight to the history of the first to the end of the second world war period in Albania. See Uran Butka, ed., *Safet Butka* (Tirana: Maluka, 2003).

Nationalism in Communism

After 1945, Hoxha first guaranteed his position as the highest authority of the country, head of the party, and head of the state. Consequently, he began to eliminate all the opponents or the potential opponents of the “Hoxha-like” communist regime he planned to establish in Albania.¹⁷⁰ He was unique in designating intrigues and accusations that would send to prison many intellectuals, patriots and as well as his collaborators.¹⁷¹ The two main enemies of the regime were religion and the big landowners. Religion was a potential divisive element for the nation. Hoxha succeeded in replacing the belief in God with belief in the party, claiming that religion did nothing but divide people and spread ignorance. He claimed it to be an ideological tool of all who wanted to exploit others. He paved the way in order to provoke the least reaction possible and religious activity and cults were forbidden in the 1963.¹⁷²

This had a double effect on nationalism: on the one hand, the weakening of religious belief was not damaging, but contributing as it closed the gap Albanian nationalism had always tried to surpass. On the other hand, it closed the door to an important inspiration of Albanian nationalism. The Bektashe order was one of these; hundred of works of the nationalist clergy were banned. As a result, the national speech of this period was completely “cleansed” of religious connotations and inspirations. It was never mentioned that the Bektashi inspired the Albanian nationalist speech. The

¹⁷⁰ Pano, *The People's Republic of Albania*.

¹⁷¹ O' Donnell makes a thorough analysis of the character and work of Hoxha. He argues that although an illuminist; a very cultured man effected by the western illuminists he had a Stalinist approach toward the opposition. O' Donnell calls him the “illuminist dictator”. See James S. O' Donnell, *A Coming of Age Albania under Enver Hoxha*, East Europea Monographs (New York: Boulder distributed by Columbia University Press, 1999), p.211.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, p/p.130/80.

Bektashe belief of Naim Frasheri was never mentioned although he was represented among the unique leaders of the national awakening.¹⁷³

The other “enemy” of the regime was the landowners. Hoxha took their land and put it under the ownership of the state, claiming that it was collectively owned and impossible to be under the property of some individuals. The communist regime in Albania applied the most strict collectivist policies ever experienced in a communist regime.¹⁷⁴ Actually, the major part of the big land properties was collected in the hands of members of the NF and the LM. So in this way Hoxha obtained two major gains: first, he made the peasants happy freeing them from the land owners and making them the “owners” of the land on which they worked. Second, he eliminated an important source of resistance and took from them their economic strength. In this way, he had eliminated also the fiercest supporters of the Great Albania and this was an important gain in the way of applying his nationalist ideology.¹⁷⁵

Another key point of the “Hoxha–communism” that affected the nationalist rhetoric was the continual existence of an enemy. The inside enemy was the clergy and the landowners, while the outside enemy was capitalism and all the capitalist states that were presented as constantly plotting against Albania. On the one hand, this created a continual pressure on the citizens, justifying many of the actions of the state while it united them against the common enemy; a common enemy ready to destroy all the

¹⁷³ Hysamedin Feraj claims that the nationalism during the communist period was not nationalism, but “Enverism”: an ideology that was against the real Albanian Nationalism and the real Albanian Nationalist. He argues that it provoked regional and religious division in Albania. See Hysamedin Feraj, *Skice E Mendimit Politik Shqiptar (A View on the Albanian Political Thought)* (Tirane: Shtepia Botuese Koha, 1998), pp.275-361.

¹⁷⁴ Donell, *A Coming of Age Albania under Enver Hoxha*.

¹⁷⁵ M. J. Alex Standish, "Enver Hoxha's Role in the Development of Socialist Albanian Myths," in *Albanian Identities Myth and Hystory*, ed. Bernd J. Fischer Stephanie Schwandner-Sievers (London: Hurst & Company, 2002).

achievements of the Albanian nations became a new item of the Albanian national speech of this period.¹⁷⁶

The Nationalist rhetoric of the communist period was inspired by the National Awakening Period nationalist rhetoric. Yet it changed it in some key issues: the nationalism of this period enhanced some paranoid aspects sustaining the existence of various dangerous enemies. Cleansed of religious inspiration it focused on the Albanian borders, avoiding any claim on Kosovo or any other Albanian territory. The communist period nationalism never denied the existence of the compatriots on the other side of the border. It never negated the place of Kosovo in Albanian history. Furthermore, when it was possible to support and cooperate with Kosovo University, Tirana was always ready. Yet communist Tirana was sensitive on any claim about Kosovo or Great Albania because such claims would not only disturb Yugoslavia and its supporters, but also shake the roots of the regime in Albania.¹⁷⁷

The communist regime in Albania also made all the efforts to erase the North-South differences and North-South consciousness. This was important for the Albanian Nationalism, as well as for the legitimacy of the regime. As a southerner, Hoxha was careful to eliminate the claims of hegemony of the Southern Albanians on the Northern Albanians. He was eager to underline that the state, the party, and the properties were of the Albanian people. Moreover, that must not be any difference of language, region or belief between these people.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁶ Bernd J. Fischer, "Perception and Reality in Twentieth-Century Albanian Military Prowess," in *Albanian Identities Myth and History*, ed. Bernd J. Fischer Stephanie Schwandner-Sievers (London: Hurst & Company, 2002).

¹⁷⁷ All the studies made on Kosovo as well as the support to Kosovo intellectuals and Prishtina University are the best proofs of this claim.

¹⁷⁸ Feraj claims just the opposite in his Feraj, *Skice e Mendimit Politik Shqiptar*, p.348. However, this does not seem logical, as a support to regional divisions would shake the basis of the regime.

The communist period affected Albanian nationalism in some precise aspects: it weakened the role of religion, which always had been regarded as a divisive factor for the Albanian nation. It also weakened the belief in Greater Albania: The total lack of communication between the Albanian communities in Albania, Kosovo and Macedonia increased the cultural differences between them.¹⁷⁹ The regime weakened the North – South division meaningfully. In this period, nationalist ideology was spread throughout Albania by a school network and a developed educational system. In this sense communism played an important role in the spread of a national identity and consciousness throughout Albania.¹⁸⁰

Yet the penetration of the Party in all aspects of the individual life shocked the individual identity. The opened intervention of the Party/central authority in the individual private life began with what is called the Cultural Revolution. The Cultural Revolution began in late 1960s, inspired by the China's Cultural Revolution. In those years Albania had a close relationship with China. The collaboration of China was very important to the Albanian communist leaders, as Albania would remain without any international support: it had break down with Tito's Yugoslavia in 1948, after the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia it withdrew from the Warsaw Pact, deteriorating the relations with the Soviet Union. On the other hand, the regime had phased out all relations with Western countries.¹⁸¹

In the case, that Albania would not find any foreign allies that would support its economy as well as represent guaranties for its security the government/the party would

¹⁷⁹ Vickers, *The Albanians a Modern History*, p.185.

¹⁸⁰ The pressure applied to the citizens during the communist regime is clearly explained in the memoirs of Uran Kalakula one of the thousands innocent victims of the communist regime. See Uran Kalakula, *21 Vjet Burg Komunist (1961-1982) 21 Years of Prison in Komunism* (Tirana: 2001).

¹⁸¹ Vickers, *The Albanians a Modern History*, p.193.

experience serious trouble internally and internationally. In order to surpass this perilous situation the communist leadership applied four solutions: first, to escape a complete international isolation it tried to improve relations with neighbors such as Italy, Greece, and Yugoslavia, which until that period had been a national enemy. Second, to provide economic support it strengthened its relations with China. Third, to reduce the need for foreign help in security and afraid of any attack, it built throughout the country thousands of concrete underground shelters. Fourth, to distract its citizens' attention from the problems and to persuade them to believe in the meaningless politics of the government/party, the communist leadership gave start to what was called the Cultural Revolution and the "creation of a new individual."¹⁸²

The Cultural Revolution was explained as have been inspired by the "brother country," China. The cultural revolutions had a precise goal: to create the "new individual." The new individual was thought to regard the Party as an indivisible part of everyday private and public life and a leader for every personal or collective decision of every kind. The spiritual inspiration and the "leading sagacious" of the individual life could be no one and nothing else but the Party.¹⁸³ The ban of religion, the intervention in the family until deciding who would marry whom, the hard ideological indoctrination of education¹⁸⁴, and the pressure was made to the citizens to accept a priori and apply the

¹⁸² Ibid., p.196.

¹⁸³ Enver Hoxha, *Per Rinine (for the Youth)*, vol. 1, *Vepra (Works)* (Tirane: Shtepia Botuese 8 Nentori, 1985). Enver Hoxha, *Vepra (Works)*, vol. 24, *Vepra (Works)* (Tirane: Shtepia Botuese Mihal Duri, 1977).

¹⁸⁴ The first poesy taught to children in crèches had to be the one that follows: O dear friends, I have three mothers; one at home, one at school, and the other is my mother, the Party. It would be hard to find any Albanian at least 25 years old who was not taught this poesy in the first days of crèche. As soon as one of us says; oh dear fiends, a coeval almost automatically continues; I have three mothers...

requirements of being “the new individual”/“the individual of the Party,” profoundly damaged the spiritual, social, and cultural individual integrity of every Albanian.

The Party made collective every single piece of individual life. It robbed the citizen of all personal property and made it prey to an absurd collective will, a play of political interests and an ordinary mean in the hands of the central authority. The immense pressure it exerted over the citizens would open the way to the loss of important social values, such as respect toward the state, nation, history, society and feeling of responsibility toward each other. The loss of such values reduced to useless the role of national consciousness and identity, as people were aware of their nationality, but were not proud of it. They came to define their society as Albanian without any doubt of this fact, but disrespected it. As a result, communism while improving the national identity and national consciousness of the Albanians, made them useless.¹⁸⁵

Meanwhile, a strong sense of reality (or betrayal), due to lack of deep roots of these myths and disillusion arising from their manipulation, has been very influential in making Albanians skeptical toward their myths. ... That duality and the lack of critical spirit towards their mythology has made Albanians to continue to live divided between the glory of their virtual world and the misery of their real world, even thought not in the dramatic form of the communist time. One of the most eloquent expressions of that separation is the paradox in which on the one hand Albanians express their pride in being Albanians, considering themselves to be natural superior while on the other hand, they regularly defame their country and try to escape from it in the search of a better life.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸⁵ Hobsbawm argues that this situation as a common characteristic of the post-communist European countries. “Oyleyse, ozetle Orta ve Dogu Avrupa halklari gecmislerinden kesinlikle, hallerinden de muhtemelen genis olcude hayal kirikligi duyarak, geleceklerineyse belirsizlikle bakarak kendi ulkelerinde yasamaya devam edeceklerdir.” (Hobsbawm, "Tarihe Yonelik Yeni Tehdit.")

¹⁸⁶ Fatos Lubonja, "Between the Glory of a Virtual World and the Misery of a Real World," in *Albanian Identities Myth and History*, ed. Bernd J. Fischer Stephanie Schwandner-Sievers (London: Hurst & Company, 2002), p.103.

Post Cold War Albania

We had no time to write of love
Thought we were impetuous lovers,
The country needed songs of freedom,
The country needed songs of grain ripening in the fields.
The country demanded us poor poets,
That we teach courses to fight illiteracy,
That we built dams on the rivers,
That we light the flame of socialism in the mountains.
Do not wonder, oh poets yet to be born,
And do not judge us for what we have not accomplished.
Compared to you, we will look like simple monks
Laden with grain and heavy iron chains.
We, who spent many sleepless night,
We, who accomplished many a great deed,
Could we not at least have written a couple of love poems,
Could we not have stammered, 'Oh, my beloved?'
Do not believe we were heartless! If only you could have seen
The passions we felt for the girls we love and heard
What sweet nothings we whispered in their ears on those radiant
Evenings! But we lacked the time to publish those sweet nothings.
Our printers were busy with more important things.
Dritero Agolli

In 1992, the Albanians broke out once and forever from the chains that had suppressed them physically and mentally for fifty years. The reaction had begun in 1989, but the real divorce with the past took place in March 1992, when the Democratic Party of Albanian won the elections and formed a government elected by the free vote of the Albanian citizens.

March 1992 was a happy end after the terrifying 1990-1992. Although it was a step forward, in a short period, the Albanians would understand that it was not so easy to break completely with their communist past. The totalitarian mentality hung like a ghost over all social, political and individual enterprises. In 1997, another terrific nightmare

shocked Albanian society showing them that democracy was not the field full of flowers they had been dreaming of for long years.¹⁸⁷ Barely avoiding a civil war, Albanians had to give a new start to their lives after 1997.

The 1990-1997 period is called The Transition Period of Albanian society. Briefly summarized; “this is the post-communist time contemporaneous with continuous massive changes in the spheres of society, communication and economy politics. While being set adrift into the global flows of ‘ethnoscapes’, ‘mediascapes’, ‘financescapes’, and ‘ideoscapes’, Albanians experienced the repeated collapse of government and state in periods which may be labeled ‘chaos’, ‘war’, and ‘crisis’.”¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁷ Albanians had a relatively naïve or better to say simplified notion of democracy. In the early 1990s democracy was thought to be the solution to every problem, while communism was the source of all torments.

¹⁸⁸ Stephanie Schwandner-Sievers, "Times Past References for the Construction of the Local Order in the Present Day Albania," in *Balkan Identities Nation and Memory*, ed. Maria Todorova (London: Hurst and Company, 2004), p/pp.105/05-28, Maria Todorova, ed., *Balkan Identities Nation and Memory* (London: Hurst and Company, 2004), pp.105-28.

First Steps in Democracy

Political Developments

The death of Enver Hoxha in 1985 opened the way to some relief in the pressure the state exerted over society. Ramiz Alia,¹⁸⁹ who succeeded him as the head of the state in 1982, was somehow more tolerant a character than Hoxha ever was. Although Albanian as well as foreign analysts offer controversial claims¹⁹⁰ about the character of Alia,¹⁹¹ it is clear that he differed much from Hoxha.

¹⁸⁹ Born in 1925 in Shkodra. Graduated from the Party School in Moscow (1954), Mr. Alia is one of the most important personalities of the Albanian Labour Party. He led Albania between the years 1944–1990. During this period, Mr. Alia performed high duties in the course of conducting the Albanian Labour Party, consequently, the Albanian State. Among the most important duties were: First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Youth Branch of the Albanian Labour Party (1949 – 1955), Minister of Education and Culture (1955 – 1958), member of the Political Bureau and Secretary of the Central Committee of the Albanian Labour Party for the ideology (1961 – 1985), member of the parliament, Chairman of the Presidium of the Popular Assembly (1982 – 1990), First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Albanian Labour Party (1985 – 1990) and Chair of the Presidential Council (1991).

¹⁹⁰ The political profile and real aims of Alia are still a matter of dispute among analysts. Some claim him to have been the unique leader capable of securing stability in the most critical moments of Albanian history, while others accuse him of consciously delaying democratic developments. The role of Alia as the last leader of Communist Albania needs a wider and deeper analysis. The politics or decisions of Alia cannot be judged outside the national and international political context of those days. Furthermore, to come to a sound decision about his political carrier and his intellectual formation must be taken under inquiry. How could Alia be the trusted man of Hoxha? Was he a “Hoxha-like” communist, just a communist, or even a tolerant communist? A calm and calm character was Alia a silent devil as some want to show him or was he a man who made all efforts to guarantee his compatriots as smother a transition as possible to democracy?

¹⁹¹ Ramiz Alia collected his memoirs of the first days in democracy in: Ramiz Alia, *Shpresa Dhe Zhgenjime* (Tirana: Dituria, 1993).

Alia was a communist leader who had to endorse the enormous tempest waiting outside the doors of his country. Entrapped by his past and shocked by an uncertain future he tried the best his conditions and the Albanian reality permitted him. What is his share in the immense suffering communist regime was responsible for in Albania is a question still to be answered, yet it is a question every Albanian who lived through the communist era has to ask to him/herself.¹⁹² The same question stands before all the political leaders of Albania and concerns them as much as Alia himself. In fact, it seems that no leader of the 1990s could have prevented the chaos, poverty, death, suffering and blood shed in Albania. Moreover, it would be a terrible mistake to seek the reasons of all these problems in only one individual's mistakes or failures.¹⁹³

While many other East European countries had overthrown dictatorial regimes still in the 1990, Albania had way to go before shaking the roots of its dicta. The communist regime in Albania was living its last days. The images of more than 6,000 Albanians seeking asylum in Western embassies¹⁹⁴ in Tirana on 2 July 1990 and the departure of Ismail Kadare,¹⁹⁵ a prominent figure of Albanian letters as well as of the

¹⁹² For a critical view toward the role of Alia in the early 1990s see Elez Biberaj, *Shqipëria Ne Tranzicion: Rruga E Veshtire Drejt Demokracise* (Tiran: Ora, 2001), pp.73-112. Also see Qemal Sakajeva, *Qendercikloni* (Tirane: Enti Botues Poligrafik "Gjergj Fishta" and Bujar Leskaj, 2002), pp.11-56. For a more impartial analysis, see Servet Pellumbi, "Ramiz Alia Nje "Deshmi" Tjeter Per Historine (Another "Testimony" for History)," *Politika dhe Shoqeria* 5, no. 2 (12) (2003): pp.85-94.

¹⁹³ For an impartial analysis of Alia's politics and decisions, see James Pettifer Miranda Vickers, *Shqipëria Nga Anarkia Te Nje Identitet Ballkanik*, trans. Xhevat Lloshi (Tirana: Botimet Toena, 1997), p.37.

¹⁹⁴ I was ten years old at that time, and I remember the images of desperate people jumping over the walls of the embassies. Many of them waited down there in the streets for days. Many others turned backed desperate and afraid of what would happened to them. I remember that everybody watching those images was disappointed and at the same times afraid of what was going to happen. We were very surprised and relieved learning that many of those waiting in the doors of the embassies were transported outside the country. Yet contradictory news was arrived and we were not sure about their fate in immigrant camps.

¹⁹⁵ Ismail Kadare (b.1936), born and raised in the museum-city of Gjirokastra, studied at the faculty of History and Philology at the University of Tirana. He began his literary career in the

Albanian intellectual world¹⁹⁶ seeking asylum in France on October 25 showed that the end was near.

“The Times of Dark Forces,”¹⁹⁷ as are known the period between November 1990 and March 1991 in Albania, represent the days of the final struggle between the people and the regime. The Group of the Widow,¹⁹⁸ as the group of the “hard line” lawyers of the Albanian Labor Party (PPSH) led by the widow of Hoxha were known, put pressure

1950s as a poet with verse collections such as the modest “Frymezimet Djaloshare,” Tirana 1954 (Youthful Inspiration) and “Enderrimet,” Tirana 1957 (Dreams). His influential “Shekulli im,” Tirana 1961 (My century), helped set the pace for renewal in Albanian verse. “Perse Mendohen Keto Male,” Tirana 1964 (What are these Mountains thinking about), is one of the clearest expressions of Albanian self-image under the Hoxha dictatorship, and one of the most famous works praising Hoxha. In the sixties, Kadare turned his creative energies increasingly to prose, of which he soon became the most popular writer of the whole of Albanian literature. He was thus the most prominent representative of Albanian literature under the dictatorship of Enver Hoxha and, at the same time, its most talented adversary. Kadare was one of the Albanian writers who criticized more than any other in the Communist System did. With his published and unpublished works he definitely was the one who had the monopoly on criticizing the system and the party without “being a dissident.” His close relation with Hoxha and his family was a fact that he also admits. However, this relation did not give him the guarantee of life. Kadare explained that he “took the Albania’s dictatorial regime half-seriously.” In fact Kadare could take chance of such a luxury as he was one of the favorite writers of Hoxha to the extent he could discuss his works with him. While the writings of many authors across communist Eastern Europe went no further than their desk drawers, Kadare wrote for state-owned publishing houses that translated and published his works in major foreign languages. His works were extremely influential throughout the seventies and eighties. At the end of October 1990, two months before the final collapse of the dictatorship, Ismail Kadare left Tirana and applied for political asylum in France, a move that, for the first time, gave him an opportunity to exercise his profession with complete freedom. His years of Parisian exile were productive and have accorded him further success and recognition, both as a writer in Albanian and in French. He has published his collected works in ten thick volumes -The General of the Dead Army (1963), The Wedding (1968), The Castle (1970), Chronicle in Stone (1971), The Great Winter (1977), The Three-Arched Bridge (1978), Broken April (1978), On the Lay of the Kings (1979), The Autobiography of the People in Verse (1980), Doruntine (1980), The Palace of Dreams (1981), The Concert (1988), Albanian Spring (1991), The pyramid (1991), L’ombre (1994), Albanie (1995), La Legende des Legendes (1995), Visage des Balkans (1995), Froides fleurs d’avril (2000), Elegy for Kosovo (2000) - each in an Albanian and French language edition, and has been honored with membership in the prestigious Academie Francaise.

¹⁹⁶ More about Kadare and his political attitude, see Andrei Plesu, "Intellectual Life under Dictatorship," *Representations* Special Issue: Identifying Histories: Eastern Europe before and after 1989, no. 49 (1995): p.63. Also: Jalyon Noegele, *Author Ismail Kadare Speaks on Preserving "Inner Freedom"* (<http://www.rferl.org>, 2001 [cited 2003]).

¹⁹⁷ Miranda Vickers James Pettifer, *Shqiperia, Nga Anarkia Te Nje Identitet Ballkanik*, trans. Xhevat Lloshi (Tirana: Shtepia Botuese Toena, 1998), p.133.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 33.

on the more tolerant members to block the changes in the course of the state and to play deaf before social unrest. In spite of all their efforts it was impossible to stop “the winds of change,” as by this time social unrest was growing and the protests of the students in Tirana were now being supported by the reaction of workers throughout Albania and especially in Shkodra, Durres and Kavaja.¹⁹⁹ In November and December 1990, social turmoil became uncontrollable; throughout Albania, public institutions were assaulted, set on fire or vandalized.²⁰⁰

The government made efforts to soothe the social anger, making changes in the Penal Code and Constitution, lifting bans on religion, declaring amnesty to all who had been punished for crimes of religion, politics or though, and legalized political pluralism.²⁰¹ Yet it was too late. On 21 February 1991, more than 100,000 people gathered at the center of Tirana assaulted the enormous statue of Hoxha, demolishing it. As a result, on February 22 was formed a new government that would lead the country to elections decided for March 31. By this time different political parties had been formed: The Republican Party (RP) of Albania, led by Sabri Godo,²⁰² the Social Democrat Party

¹⁹⁹ For detailed information about the protests, see Kola, *Great Albania*, pp.194-205.

²⁰⁰ On December 13 in Shkodra, I witnessed some kind of civil war; tanks rolled through the city, automatic gun shots could be heard often, shops, public institutions, parks, streets everything that was thought to have even a vague relation with the state was assaulted and destroyed. A kind of social heresy and an enormous anger reigned in the city. We hardly go near the windows to see what was happening. The day after, I remember going outside to get some bread with my grandfather: it was like a destructive wind had swept through the streets. People were looting goods from the destroyed shops. Everyone was in a hurry. I remember praying that my grandfather would permit me take something from the goods lying strewn in the destroyed door of the shop just in front of his house, but he got angry and shouted: “Run home without even touching anything!” I was so embarrassed that I can remember the scene and everything as if it were today.

²⁰¹ On December 11, 1990, the legalization of political parties was announced. In the following day the first opposition political party was formed, the Democratic Party of Albania (DP)

²⁰² A well – known Albanian historian and political analyst.

(PSD) of Albania, led by Skender Gjinushi,²⁰³ the Union for Human Rights of Albanian, the Agrarian Party of Albania, the Communist Party of Albania, the Demo-Christian Party of Albania and so on.²⁰⁴ The winner of the March 31, 1991 elections was the Labor Party of Albania.

The victory of the Labor Party of Albania was not surprising for many reasons:²⁰⁵ It had all the means necessary to prepare and succeed at a political campaign, while this cannot be said for any of the opposition parties, the major part of which had not been able to be represented with candidates in many electoral zones. Citizens were shocked by the developments and a general indefiniteness ruled. They were traumatized by the present and insecure about the future. In such a situation, the voters, although eager to get rid of communism, would not easily vote for the opposition parties.²⁰⁶ There have been some accusations of manipulation of the poll results,²⁰⁷ and it would not be so hard to believe that the Labor Party tried to manipulate the results; hitherto this was not as large in scale as to affect radically the polls results. It is important to analyze the opposition parties in order to be able answer the question of how after all the social revolts, the Labor Party of Albania still won the majority in the first Albanian post-communist pluralist parliament.

²⁰³ Prof. Dr. Skender Gjinushi has been the Speaker of the Parliament of the Republic of Albania. Previously, he was the Minister of Education. Well-known university teacher and scientist. From 1992 and on he has been a Member of Parliament.

²⁰⁴ James Pettifer, *Vickers*, p.299.

²⁰⁵ For a debate on the reasons of the victory of the Labor Party in the 1991 elections, see Ndue Gjoka, *Sfida Te Nje Tranzicioni Te Veshtire* (Tirane: Globus R., 2003), p.15. Also Afrim Krasniqi, *Shoqeria Civile Ne Shqiperi (Historia E Lindjes, Zhvillimit Dhe Sfidat E Saj)* (Tirane: GEER, 2004), p.38.

²⁰⁶ For more than 40 years Albanians were used to voting under pressure and with open ballots. Refusing to vote was regarded a serious offense to the regime.

²⁰⁷ Biberaj, *Biberaj*, pp.138-80.

As previously explained, Albanian society was experiencing traumatic moments that prevented sound reasoning. Furthermore, the newly created political parties lacked the means of campaigning, the national television – the only television legally permitted to the Albanian.²⁰⁸ Only the voice of the Labor Party leaders could reach every corner of the country.²⁰⁹ In addition, the hard days of 1990-1991 would have been frightening, preventing citizens from voting against the Labor Party. Moreover, after fifty years of controlled voting, it would not be so easy for the Albanians to get used to a free vote.

Surprising is the fact that Albanians permanently, as well as from time to time the international community, believed that one part of the new Albanian political spectrum was communist, and so the embodiment of evil, while the other part was “democrat,” and so the “messenger” of right and truth. Albanian society failed to understand that in fact all of “us”²¹⁰ were more or less in the same way responsible for all of the suffering and more or less equally effected by the indoctrination of the regime. If anything would make any difference between Democrats, Socialists, and Republicans and so on, it was only their agenda of democracy and the potential to reach the goals on this agenda. Actually, none of them had such an agenda in the 1990s. The anger of the Albanians prevented them from seeing that the regime was not a ghost imported from some inferno by some devils in the “land of the eagles,”²¹¹ but it was a monstrous creation they nourished transforming

²⁰⁸ For a detailed debate on the 1991st elections in Albania, see ; also Vickers, *The Albanians a Modern History*, pp.221-25.

²⁰⁹ The Socialist Party that in the 10th congress of the Labor Party of Albania spread out as a transformed version of the Albanian Labor Party. It can be discussed if it was an effort or a real transformation of the Communist Part that after the 1945 would be called the Albanian Labor Party (PPSH – *Partia e Punës e Shqiperise*). However, in present day Albania there is a Communist Party formed by some former members of the Albanian Labor Party.

²¹⁰ I use “us” in meaning all the Albanians living in Albania during the communist regime, although may be I am too young to be part of that “us”.

²¹¹ Albanians call their country the Land of Eagles. For more information about the reasons and the source of such a nomination see: Eqrem Cabej, *Shqiptaret Midis Perendimit Dhe Lindjes*

it into a devil. It means that many Albanians failed to understand that in destroying and negating the past, they damaged the future that had too much to learn from that precise past.

The victory of the Labor Part of Albania in March 1991 was a demonstration of the immense trauma Albanian society had been exposed to for nearly fifty years, while the victory of the Democrat Party in the elections of March 1992 was a result of anger, revolt and the inability to judge soundly. In fact, the forthcoming years would show how dangerous voting in the name of revenge without being sure of who, what and why they were voting could be. Albanian intellectuals could understand that they were in a situation with almost no choice. Therefore, instead of materializing their choice, they stayed or were forced to remain spectators to the major part of the political developments. Actually, many of the real leaders of the student movement had left the Democratic Party as early as 1992. Some of them became members or created new parties while others made individual opposition or even left the country. In the first pluralist elections in Albania, the Labor Party reached a two-third majority, because of the general shock and uncertainties of society, inequalities in the possibility of campaign of the other parties, the manipulation and pressure of the state apparatus,²¹² fear of a big part of the peasant population that democracy would leave them without any property,²¹³ the passivity of the

(Tirane: MCM, 1994), p.24. Also Robert Elsie, *A Dictionary of Albanian Religion, Mythology, and Folk Culture* (London: Hurst & Company, 2001), p.78.

²¹² The situation in 1991 is described in a detailed manner by Kadare, see Ismail Kadare, *Albanian Spring*, trans. Emile Capouya (London: Saqi Books, 1995).

²¹³ The communist regime had taken the land from its owners and passed it in the property of the state. The peasants used these lands altogether in cooperatives. Many of them were afraid that with a change of regime the lands would turn back to their natural owners. In this case, their majority would remain without any source of income. The land property problem in Albania is still unresolved. It remains a big source of tension in the society, a challenge for every government, and among the first issues the EU wants Albania to resolve.

intellectuals in the war against communism and after their inability to create a real intellectual democratic political opposition.

In 1992 the Albanians had to make a choice between the Democratic Party, which claimed to be the symbol of Albanian democracy and the real fighter against communism,²¹⁴ the Socialist Party, which was trying to persuade the citizens that it was not a fan of communism and did not want a return to communism,²¹⁵ and some other small parties, each maintaining that it had the right solution to real democracy. Actually, some of them had important solutions, but they lacked the means to apply and sometimes even explain their solutions.²¹⁶ The social problems entrenched with economic factors, international effects and the political mistakes of the leadership would bring Albania to the verge of civil war in 1996, risking the total collapse of the country. The government formed after the March 1991 elections and led by Fatos Nano²¹⁷ was unable to endure domestic and international pressure. Very weak and left alone to overcome the economic situation it was forced to go for new elections within one year. In March 1992, Berisha²¹⁸

²¹⁴ The most important leaders of the student movement had problems with the leader of the party Berisha and many of them were out of the party still in 1992. Those remaining would be fired from or leave the party in a few years. In addition, the politics of Berisha in the forthcoming years would show that he also was a victim of the totalitarian mentality. See Vickers, *The Albanians, a Modern History*, p.230.

²¹⁵ Many members of the communist state apparatus were also members of the socialist party and the party inherited many members of the Labor Party, a part of which many had still believed in communism. Yet the major part of its members as well as its leaders had no reason to want return to communism. In the forthcoming years, they would show to be comfortable with market economy and "more capitalist" than the democrats themselves are.

²¹⁶ Many small parties were formed and directed by important intellectuals that could understand the problems of Albania and even offer important solution to these problems, but they were too weak to affect the political scene of Albania that was and remains divided in two, the Socialist Party and the Democratic Party.

²¹⁷ For critical evaluations on his work see: Rexhep Qosja, *Demokracia E Shperdorur* (Tirane: Botimet TOENA, 2005).

²¹⁸ Born on October 15, 1944, in Tropoja and graduated from the University of Tirana, Faculty of Medicine (1967), he completed his advanced studies in Paris (France). In 1968, he was elected member of

announced its victory whereas the Socialist Party accepted defeat and began its journey as the biggest opposition party of Albania.²¹⁹

the European Committee for Research on Medical Sciences. He was a lecturer at the University of Tirana (1980 – 1990). His political career started with the students' movement of December 1990. In 1991, Berisha was elected chair of the Democratic Party. He was elected member of the parliament in the Albanian Assembly in 1991, 1992, 1997, 2001. He was elected President of the Republic on April 9, 1992, and re-elected on February 3, 1997. He resigned one month after the loss of the elections of the DP and the victory of the left coalition. Since then he has been chair of the DP, the biggest opposition party.

²¹⁹ Another important question about 1990-1992 in Albania is the involvement of foreign intelligence services in this period. Did any of these affect or were any of these involved in the process and with what aims? Furthermore, what did the foreign intelligence services report about Albania? Some speculations have been made about the Yugoslav intelligence service activities in north Albania and those of the Greek in south Albania. According to these speculations, the Yugoslav intelligence service was responsible for troubles in Shkodra, the Greek one for damages in south Albania. However, all this remains speculations and cannot be proved without solid research in intelligence reports. Such a research would reveal important clues about the Albanian situation in the 90s and the developments in the following years.

Economic and Social Trends

Berisha became the first president of the Republic of Albania with Meksi²²⁰ as his first premier. They took over the government in a very difficult situation. The Albanian economy was near collapse. There was almost no production and many of the factories had been destroyed. The country had an immediate need for foreign aid and radical economic and structural reforms. The basis of all these transformations was legal reforms and at the base of the legal reforms lay in the constitution. In fact, the first obligation put forward by the EC to the Albanian government was a new constitution.

In spite of the vital importance of this issue, the government failed to perform this step. The reasons for this failure are various: in the electoral campaign, the Democrats promised everything Albania lacked at that moment regardless of the feasibility of these promises. The Democrat Party would bring everything communism had taken away from Albania to them. In a situation of economic stagnation and social unrest, the government could not risk upsetting some the parts of society that would be affected by the reforms. Furthermore, long term reforms risked being misunderstood by the citizens without having an immediate effect so the government was more inclined to perform fast effect sensational steps than important structural reforms. Instead of deciding on a structural reform agenda, the government was preoccupied with only reforming some institutions, such as the intelligence service and other central institutions of the Labor Party, turning the reform process, as many analysts call it, into “witch hunt.”²²¹ The economy was left at the mercy of the individuals who were free to do what they wanted, wherever they

²²⁰ Aleksander Meksi, one of the most important members of the DP and Premier of Albania between April 11, 1992 – July 13, 1996

²²¹ Vickers, *The Albanians a Modern History*, pp.235-42.

wanted. Different regulations and some legal transformations were made, but none of these or only a few were essential or structural. The two vital issues for the Albanian future, the land reform and the new constitution were consciously abandoned for immediate political interests. The course of politics was naturally more sensitive to immediate political profits, especially in a moment of social unrest and chaos, yet this was not justification for transgressing vital issues.²²²

The Democratic Party had many internal problems. The problems between Berisha and many important members of the party such as Gramoz Pashko,²²³ Neritan Ceka,²²⁴ even Azem Haydari²²⁵ and many others would seriously affect the performance of the party. Day by day, the party was becoming the state, while both of them were becoming concentrated under the control of one man, Sali Berisha. The authoritarian attitude of Berisha would push many prominent intellectuals away from the party. Furthermore, his obsession about having personal control of everything became a real obstacle for the work of many ministries and alienated many important specialists from the party as well as from the government. The attitude of Berisha was disapproved largely by the major part of the Albania intellectuals. The pressure applied on the foreign press present in Albania, and the opposition party members and the freehanded way in which Berisha decided everything he wanted, whenever he wanted provoked discontent among the citizens. This discontent was expressed clearly in the constitution referendum in 1994.

²²² For a thorough analysis of the Democrat Party rule, see Servet Pellumbi, *Sprova Ne Sociologjine Politike* (Tirane: Botimet DUDAJ, 2002), p.53.

²²³ One of the most important economists of Albania, lecturer at the University of Tirana as well as at New York University and one of the founders of the Democratic Party of Albania.

²²⁴ A well-known archeologist and politician. Leader of the Democratic Alliance. One of the Founders of the Democratic Party. Minister of Interior Affairs between 1997-1998.

²²⁵ He was among the most important leaders of the Student Movement and the founders of the Albanian Democratic Party. More about Haydari, see Sakajeva, *Qendercikloni*, p.262.

Under the pressure of the international community and especially that of the EU/EC, the government had to approve a new constitution as soon as possible. Without being able to prepare a complete constitution the government prepared a reformed draft of the old constitution and tried to pass it through the parliament. The Democrat Party did not have the required two-third majority and needed the vote of the small parties, but as the relations of these parties with the PD were tense, Berisha could not secure the mandatory majority to change the constitution. The pressure of the international community was growing and he had to provide a constitution. Certain of victory, he decided to pass the constitutional draft with a referendum. The draft was criticized widely by all the opposition parties for giving a large authority to the head of state. To the great surprise of Berisha, who had put forward his personal authority in the campaign, the Albanian voters rejected the constitution. As a result, he failed to give the EC what it wanted. Moreover, the government failed to perform a very important task and Albania would remain without a new constitution until 1998.²²⁶

In this period, because of an extreme “*le saiz fare le se passé*,”²²⁷, the general economic situation was improving although this was only a superficial improvement. The only good aspect it had was the possibility it gave to individuals to accumulate capital, even though this capital for long years would not be invested in production and an important part of it would be swept away by pyramid financial schemes. The Democrats succeeded in responding to the immediate needs of Albanian society between 1992 to 1996 and achieved in improving peace and security in Albania, but failed in performing

²²⁶ For a thorough analysis of the Albanian constitutions, see Prof. Dr. Ksenofon Kristafi Prof. Dr. Aleks Luarasi, Prof. Dr. Zenulla Balanca, Prof. Dr. Ismet Elezi, Prof. Dr. Luan Omari, Prof. Dr. Fetih Gjilani, Prof. Dr. Xhevahir Zaganjori, *Historia E Shtetit Dhe Se Drejtes Ne Shqiperi* (Tirane: Shtepia Botuese A. Luarasi, 2001). For a detailed analysis of the Albanian Constitution, see Natasha Shehu Aldo Loiodice, *La Costituzione Albanese* (Bari: Cacuci Editori, 1999).

²²⁷ “Let them do, let them go.”

long-term vital structural, economic and legal reforms. In addition, what is worse Albania was still deeply affected by one person's authority, a fact that damaged its image profoundly in obtaining economic as well technical and political support from the international community and especially the EC²²⁸.

²²⁸ For detailed information about the aid, see UNDP (United Nations Development Programme), *Country Programme Evaluation (2002-2004 Albania)*, (<http://intro.undp.org.al/ext/elib/download/?id=699&name=country%2DEval%D2005%D2Denglish%2Epdf>, 2004 [cited 01.03.2005 2005]).

Foreign Policy

After fifty years of isolation in the early 1990s, Albania experienced a boom in international visits.²²⁹ US and European diplomats and international organizations representatives visited Albania, meeting with the highest authorities of the country. Albanian politicians believed²³⁰ that the USA and the EC were eager to welcome a democratic Albania. This seems to have been more an “Albanian fantasy” than reality. The main concern of the international community was the stability of the region. The European Union was not as eager to welcome Albania as many Albanians believed. The repeated refugee crisis seriously concerned the European Union, especially Italy and Greece. As a result, to prevent as much as possible the flow of refugees to their countries, Italy and Greece extended important economic aid to Albania.²³¹ The economic aid other of countries never reached the amount and was within the parameters of the economical, military, and social support Italy, Turkey and Greece extended to Albania.

Yet the political effect these countries had on Albania was not in right proportion with the economic and social support they provided. The most important country for Albanian politics was and still is the USA.²³² The US provided Albania with military and technical support yet the economic aid provided by the USA was not even comparable with that of Greece and Italy.²³³ The political support the USA provided to the Albanian leaders was vital for their political and governmental careers. Many analysts sustain that from 1991 to more or less 1995, the USA was the main supporter of Sali Berisha and his

²²⁹ Kola, *Great Albania*, p.225,31.

²³⁰ Vickers, *The Albanians a Modern History*, p.210.

²³¹ Kola, *Great Albania*, p.205.

²³² Lisen Bashkurti, *Albanian Diplomacy between the Past and the Future*, trans. Gjon Borici (Tirana: GEER, 2004), p.77.

²³³ *Ibid.*, p.90.

Democratic Party. According Vickers,²³⁴ the USA in those years was convinced that stability in Albania could be achieved by supporting the extended authority of one party and of one man within the party. Until 1995, it seems that the man was Berisha and the Party, the Democratic Party.²³⁵ Many questions remain unanswered or vaguely answered: What was the role of the USA in the abolition of the Communist regime in Albania? Is it true that every decision of the Albanian political leaders after 1990 had to be approved by the US State Department? If something like this did happen, what were the aims of the US policy in Albania? Can we sustain that the EC was interested in the stability of Albania regardless of the identity of the state leadership? Were US and European interests compatible in Albania?

Each of these questions could be the subject of a separate study. The point here is that after the 1990s, Albania started a close relationship with the USA. Relying on the US made Berisha stronger in front of many EC members, yet it seems that he transcended a vital element of the Albanian reality; the necessity of economic aid for the Albanian economy, and the major sources of this aid were Italy and Greece.²³⁶ Relations with Italy deteriorated because of the continual accusations of Berisha about to the socialist government of Craxi²³⁷ being a collaborator of Nano, and a supporter of communism in Albania. Italy reduced its amount aid and sent back many Albanian immigrants. The

²³⁴ James Pettifer, *Vickers*, p.224.

²³⁵ It would be meaningful for international studies as well as for research on Albanian history to focus on the role of the US in the early 1990s. Some important politicians of the period claim that Berisha was not only appointed by Alia to lead the Democrat Party, but also by the USA. Furthermore, they claim that Alia would not have appointed someone of whom the USA did not approve. All these remain on a speculative status until a serious research is conducted into the issue. Vickers, *The Albanians a Modern History*, p.47,225. For an opposite view, see Mero Baze, *Realitete Shqiptaro - Amerikane* (Tirane: Shtepia Botuese Koha, 1997).

²³⁶ Vickers, *The Albanians a Modern History*, p.80.

²³⁷ James Pettifer, *Vickers*, p.253.

relations with Greece also grew tenser, reaching their peak with the accusation and the punishment of two Omonia (Democratic Union of Greek Minority) members²³⁸ as Greek agents. The reports of growing pressure on the press and the opposition in Albania seriously damaged the Albanian image as well as shook the basis of the international support for Berisha. As a result, Berisha found himself at the end of 1995, and especially after the elections of 1996, without serious international support.

The lack of sufficient economic aid from EC members and the decrease in US support pushed Berisha toward the Islamic countries.²³⁹ Albania became a member of the World Islamic Conference and opened the door to close relations with Islamic countries. The close relations and the free hand the government gave to Islamic foundations and organizations would open way to many terrorists finding refuge in Albania.²⁴⁰ It would be a mistake to assume that Berisha had any interest in supporting terrorist Islam in Albania. His politics toward closer relations with Islamic countries was a result of pragmatist politics: Albania needed financial aid and it had to be found somewhere and in some way. The biggest mistake in Berisha's foreign policy was its attitude toward neighboring countries.²⁴¹ Albania for years had lived generating animosity toward its neighbors, accusing them of obstructive aims against Albania. These claims may have been true as well as they may have been exaggerated. Yet the feasibility of such claims does not necessarily have to be reflected in hostile relations between the

²³⁸ Ibid., p.195.

²³⁹ Ibid., p.105.

²⁴⁰ Ibid., p.102.

²⁴¹ The deepest problems were with Greece. For a work focused on the Greek Albanian relations in the 1990s see: Tuba Unlu, "The Greek Albanian Dispute in the 1990s" (MA Thesis Bilkent Universitesi, 1998).

countries, moreover when Albania was in desperate need of economic aid and the security in Albania fragile.²⁴²

The bankruptcy crises would signal the end of the Democrat Party governance and Sali Berisha's presidency at least for the next eight years.²⁴³ The reasons for the development of the disastrous pyramid structures, their bankruptcy and the effects it had on the Albania society will be discussed in the next section. The first steps on the road to democracy in Albania can be summarized shortly as follows: after two years (1990-1992) characterized by social unrest and economic collapse and ending with the elections of 1992, Albania opened a new page in its history. The Democrat Part and its leader Sali

²⁴² Gulhan Ovalioglu Mary Cathryn Andrews, *Albanian and the World Bank* (Washington, D.C.: The World Bank, 1994). A general overview of the Albanian economy also, see Vajeera Dorabawila Mansoor Rashid, Richard Adams, *Household Welfare, the Labor Market, and the Social Programs in Albania*, vol. No.503, *World Bank Technical Paper* (Washington D. C: World Bank, 2001). Also see: Rafaella Y. Nanetti Gloria La Cava, *Albania Filling the Vulnerability Gap*, vol. No.460, *World Bank Technical Paper* (Washington D. C: World Bank, 2000).

²⁴³ The July 3, 2005 elections ended with the victory of the Coalition for Victory (Bashkimi per Fitore). The Coalition For Victory led by the Democratic Party of Sali Berisha. The victory of Berisha was widely discussed by the analysts. Many of them insist that the victory of the Democratic Party was result of the Albanian election system and the pragmatic use Berisha made of this system. See Bashkim Kopliku, *E Verteta Kushtetuese (the Constitutional Truth)* (<http://www.balkanweb.com/gazeta/faq2425/2.htm>, 01.08.2005 2005 [cited 01.08.2005 2005]). The coalition tactic of the Socialist Party resulted to be technically wrong. See Altin Kreka, *Kandidatet E Majte, 93662 Vota Me Shume Se Rivalet (Left Candidates Had 93662 Vote More Than Their Adversaries)* (<http://www.balkanweb.com/gazeta/faq2-3/1.htm>, 1.08.2005 2005 [cited 1.08.2005 2005]). Furthermore, the Socialist leaders could not manage the coalition in order to be represented with as a unified front in the elections. The Party of Ilir Meta LSI (Movement For Integration) took a good deal of votes from the left. Ilir Meta has been one of the most important leaders of the Socialist Party, his divergences with Nano the leader of the Socialist Party led to the resignation of Meta from the Socialist Party and formation of a new party that included many important leaders of the Socialist party. See *Skema E Berishes Mposhti Te Majtet (the Schema of Berisha Defeated the Left)* (<http://www.balkanweb.com/gazeta/faq2-3/2.htm>, 1.8.2005 2005 [cited 1.8.2005 2005]). The Albanian president Alfred Moisiu declared that he would call the parliament on September 3. Berisha declared his government and during the first week of the September, this government would be voted in the parliament and approved by the president. The importance of this election consists in that fact that they were held in a peaceful and democratic environment. The rotation of the political forces was made peacefully and democratically. After 2000, the country entered a phase of development surpassing a traumatic transition. The steps forward are clear all around Albanian. The new government would be extremely successful if it is committed to further these developments.

Berisha marked the following four years of Albanian history. While in 1990-1992 the political struggle took place among hard liners and reformist in the Labor Party and between the opposition (the Democratic Party) and the Labor Party, in the 1992-1996 the political struggle was between the Democratic Party, and between the Democratic Party and the opposition (the Socialist Party).

The hard liners in the Labor Party, who were also known as the Group of the Widow, were led by Nexhmije Hoxha, the widow of Hoxha. The reformists were a big group with important sub-groups. Alia, Nano²⁴⁴ and some other names that in the following years would be in the leadership of Socialist Party were part of this group. The fight within the Democrat Party was a struggle mainly between Berisha and the other important members of the party leadership who did not agree with his politics. The first one to challenge Berisha was Pashko, yet all the most important intellectuals of the Party experienced such a situation and one by one they left the Party or were expelled from it.

The foreign policy in the 1990-1992 can be considered as a slow and insecure effort for re-integration into the international community. The foreign policies from 1992 to 1996 at the beginning were euphoric and conceived a naïve believe that the USA and Europe were as happy as Albania to re-integrate Albania into the international community. The Albanian policy makers soon understood that the EU would not offer them important political support so they turned their faces to the USA. Actually, the indifference of the Europeans was compensated by the interest of the United States. The

²⁴⁴ Fatos Nano: born in Tirana on September 16, 1952. Graduated in the University of Tirana, Faculty of Economy. Prominent economist and politician. December 1990, General Secretary of Council of Ministers. 1991 chosen as chairman of the newly formed Socialist Party. Premier of Albanian between February 22, 1991- June5, 1991. July 24, 1997 – October 20, 1992. July 31, 2002 – 12 September 2005

growing discontent²⁴⁵ the Europeans showed about Berisha combined with the dissatisfactions the USA showed after the continual reports of pressure on the opposition and the free press and the serious problems deduced in the 1996 elections would leave Berisha without a serious international support. The lack of support from the international community along with the social unrest provoked by the bankruptcy crises brought to an end the government of the Democrat Party and the presidency of Berisha.

The Albanians in Kosovo and Macedonia also (especially those in Kosovo) were enthusiastic about the change of regime in Albania as they believed the “mother land” could be an important support to their cause.²⁴⁶ As a matter of fact, still in 1990, with the Labor Party in power, the Albanian government expressed deep concerns about the situation of Albanians in Kosovo. This was a big shift from the Communist regime’s Kosovo policy. Later, in 1992 Berisha seemed to be a devoted supporter of the Albanian cause. This appearance allowed him to attract important support from the Albanian Diaspora as well as from important political leaders in Kosovo.²⁴⁷ Yet it seems that the support Berisha gave to the Albanian cause as far as to express claims about “all Albanians in the Balkans and Greater Albania”²⁴⁸ were more a result of misperceptions of international expectations and political pragmatism than a result of belief in the “Albanian cause or Greater Albania.” In fact, the nationalist faction in the Democratic Party left the party, claiming that it had failed to include in its agenda nationalist goals.²⁴⁹

²⁴⁵ James Pettifer, *Vickers*, p.225.

²⁴⁶ Kola, *Great Albania*, p.322.

²⁴⁷ James Pettifer, *Vickers*, p.150.

²⁴⁸ Kola, *Great Albania*, p.223.

²⁴⁹ The Party of National Unity, an ultra-nationalist party was formed by Abdi Baleta. For detailed information about the party and its activities, see Enis Sulstarova, *Ligjerimi Nacionalist Ne Shqiperi (Nationalist Pronunciation in Albania)* (Tirane: Shtepia Botuese Aferdita, 2003). Sulstarova, E. (2003).

Important Kosovo intellectuals later would accuse Berisha of using and even damaging “the Albanian cause.”²⁵⁰

By the middle of 1995, the euphoria of the Albanian politicians settled and they clearly saw that priorities were different for each of the Albanian communities. While Kosovo Albanians primary were concerned with their struggle for a Republic status within Yugoslavia,²⁵¹ Macedonian Albanians were primarily concerned with their rights and status within the Macedonian society and Albania proper Albanians were concerned with the economical situation and political stability in Albania. The dissolution of Yugoslavia and the democratization process in Albania made Albanians aware of the “Pan-Albanian” potential in the Balkans. On the other hand, the increased contacts between the communities increased their awareness of each other. This process had two important results: First, the Albanians managed to create a joint cultural sphere. Second, the permanently increased contacts especially made them aware of the differences between each other. Although, not as radical as to effect the feelings of a common identity, there were important cultural differences. As a result, although in Albania ultranationalist factions existed during these years,²⁵² they were too weak politically and far from representing the real feeling of the Albanians.²⁵³

²⁵⁰ The open letter the well-known Albanian academic Rexhep Qosja sent to Berisha in James Pettifer, *Vickers*, p.160.

²⁵¹ Mehmet Emerllahu, *Nyja Shqiptare (Intervista:1990-1997) (the Albanian Node Interviews:1990-1997)* (Tirane: Shtepia Botuese L, 2001), p.65.

²⁵² Sulstarova, Enis Sulstarova, *Ligjerimi Nacionalist Ne Shqiperi (Nationalist Pronunciation in Albania)*.

²⁵³ About the attitude of Albanians in these period, see Schwandner-Sievers, "Times Past References for the Construction of the Local Order in the Present Day Albania," p.106.

Bankruptcy Crises: Albanian Pyramids

If 1992 was a turning point in the history of Albania, 1997 was another one. The suffering and sorrow the Albanians experienced in the first months of 1997 was even more than all the troubles experienced in the 1990-1992. The aim of this section is to analyze the social, political and economic dynamics that brought the Albania to the verge of civil war in 1997. It is organized as a separate section because of the break down this year represents in Albanian social, economic and political history. Albanian society was not the same after 1997.

During the early 1990s and especially in 1990-1992, the Albanian economy collapsed.²⁵⁴ Economic crises in Albania had begun in the 1980s when Albania remained without a “big brother,”²⁵⁵ an economic supporter in the international community. The economic relations developed with other countries were sporadic and insufficient. The mistaken macro-economic politics and the total isolation with which Albania was immersed prevented the country from developing a sound economy or creating the basis of sound economic development. The mentality that “nothing is individual everything is collective” on the one hand had reduced efficiency in work while on the other, had damaged individual initiative and mutilated the concept of the respect of individuality. It had formed a kind of society in which collectivity was hated as it was posed violently by

²⁵⁴ Gulhan Ovalioglu Mary Catherine Andrews, *Albania and the World Bank* (Washington D. C: World Bank T, 1994).

²⁵⁵ Big brother is called ironically whatever major state was supporting Albania in different periods of its history. Hoxha developed a conscious politic of “big brother”. In different moments according the economic, security and strategic interests of the communist regime, the government developed strong relations with a state that was presented as the “brother country.” After the second world war to 1948 this “status” was held by Yugoslavia. Yugoslavia was replaced by Russia and in the early 60’s Russia was replaced with Popular Republic of China. In the late 70s the relations with China deteriorated and in the early 80s Albania had no “big brother.”

the regime, but at the same time where individuality was realized and respected with great difficulty.

In the 1990s, the hatred for everything collective spread like a destructive wind throughout Albania. Groups of people full of hate for everything collective and related to the past destroyed factories, libraries, official institutions and even trees and streets. This demonstrated the degree of shock to which this society was exposed.²⁵⁶ All those who did not agree with this destruction had to shut up, because they would automatically be accused of being communists and being a communist was regarded as a crime in that period. Moreover, for some it still is. There are still important groups in Albania society that react almost hysterically when the communist past is mentioned.²⁵⁷

After the 1990s, it was as if everything had to start from the beginning. Creating and managing an effective production process was more difficult than those who had destroyed the factories could ever have realized. The only ones who could invest or start any production activity in Albania were foreign entrepreneurs or the diaspora members. The diaspora members invested more politically than economically, especially in 1992 to 1995, while foreign investment was scarce and unable to meet even a part of the needs in Albania. The instable political situation and the insecurity in the region as well as in Albania proper did not permit any serious foreign investment.

In a situation when an economy cannot even, perform its basic functions, when inflation was unchecked galloping and unemployment was rampant, Albanians found two solutions to acquire capital: first, trade, taking everything from everywhere and selling it.

²⁵⁶ Progame), *Country Progame Evaluation (2002-2004 Albania)* ([cited),p.12.

²⁵⁷ I cannot forget the reaction of a 40 year old Albanian businessperson who replied nervous, almost shouting; “How can you the youth that are educated abroad still be communists, be red?” when I said, “We must take the required lessons from our past and avoid repeating them in different contexts. Communism was not imposed to us by foreigners. We constructed and fed it.” (The conversation took place in Istanbul at the The Marmara Hotel Restaurant on 12.01.2005)

Small tradesmen brought into the country or different international organizations donated as aid everything Albanians ate or wore.²⁵⁸ In this way, many tradesmen were able to acquire a considerable amount of capital. The other part of society able to acquire capital from trade was customs and tax office employees. All the taxes and customs regulations were decided on an individual basis. The state lacked the authority as well as the will to intervene in regulating these systems. Still in 2000, many businesses did not pay any taxes to the state. Tax evasion was, and in some cases still is, regarded as a right of the citizen in poor and insecure countries. 1992-1996 were golden days for tradesmen who, without being subject to any tax obligation, brought goods into a country where domestic production was almost zero.²⁵⁹ The state lacked the means and the authority to intervene, but it also lacked the will. The way the economy was working although it would damage the country badly in the long-term, in the short term it made people happy and obtained the political support necessary for the government.

The second way people could make money was pyramid organizations schemes.²⁶⁰ As reflected to the citizens, in a pyramid financial scheme people put in money and in a short period took back this money with very high interest. Consequently, this became a way of accumulating capital for those who did not have any trade activity,

²⁵⁸ I consciously did not use the word “import”, as the costumes were almost no effective in that period. In the customs, individuals made the law. Goods were passed according to the agreement between the customs and the tradesmen. In this way was possible to bring into Albania almost everything.

²⁵⁹ For detailed economic and financial data about Albania, see INSTAT (Instituti i statistikes - Albanian Statistics Institute), *Albania in Figures* (http://www.instat.gov.al/graphics/doc/downloads/shqipëria_ne%20shifra.pdf, 05.2005 2004 [cited 03.03.2005 2005]). Also Programme), *Country Programme Evaluation (2002-2004 Albania)* ([cited].p.13. Also SEDA(Sustainable Economic Development Agency) UNDP (United Nations Development Programme), *Pro-Poor and Pro-Women Policies and Development in Albania* (<http://intra.undp.org.al/ext/elib/download/?id=698&name=hdr%202005%20english%2Epdf>, 05.2005 2005 [cited 03.03.2005 2005]).

²⁶⁰ For information about these organizations, see Kola, *Great Albania*, p.322.

or a way to double and triple money for those who had trade activity or a profitable official position. The function of the Albanian money pyramids cannot be explained with a pure economic analysis. Yet economists sustain that the key issue in the function of financial pyramids is the permanently increasing number of the investors. As long as the number of people who put money into the pyramid grows, the pyramid is able to give back money to earlier investors. The moment that the inflow of money is less or even equal to the outflow, the pyramid collapses.²⁶¹ However, questions arise like: was the inflow of the Albanians' money in pyramids as high as to support the very high outflow, or if not, where did the supply of money come from, or if yes, how could people with such scarce accumulation support incredibly high interests?

The Albanians became immersed in the euphoria of making money easily. It seemed as if they could earn money they could not make in fifty years. An important point in all this is that the government did not do anything to stop this social heresy.²⁶² It is true that it would have been extremely difficult for the government to intervene in an activity so profitable for everyone. The main reasons for this were that it was a way to accumulate capital, and that the citizens were content and regarded this way of earning money easily as a benefit of democracy. In addition, this perception strengthened the political position of the Democratic government as the bringer of democracy in Albania.

In this case, some other questions arise: Did the Albanian government actually realize what was happening? If yes, then why did they not intervene to stop the heresy

²⁶¹ Financial pyramids in Albania see: Progame), *Country Programme Evaluation (2002-2004 Albania)* ([cited]:p.13.

²⁶² For the Albanian Government attitude toward the pyramids, see Accuses to the opposition for all what happened in 1997 in Albania: Sakajeva, *Qendricklioni*, p.325. Accusations that the government was unable to manage the situation: Servet Pellumbi, *Te Mendosh Ndryshe* (Tirane: Botimet DUDAJ, 2001), p.53.

that would destroy the country? If not, did they make any effort to understand the situation? What were the relations of the pyramid runners with the government? Many supporters of the Democratic Party answer all these questions pointing to the Socialist Party leaders as the architects of all this. If that is true, when did the government realize this and why did not they warn the citizens? After the collapse of the pyramids until today, socialist governments have ruled in Albania. But is this a proof enough to blame the socialist leaders? What was the real responsibility of the opposition in the financial pyramids?

In spite of all the discussions and analysis remains the fact that in 1997 the Albanian pyramids collapsed. How and why did they collapse? The why is clear: every financial pyramid is condemned to collapse. However, why did they "fall" at that precise moment? Is it enough of an economic analysis of inflow and outflow to explain this? What gave the start to the chain reaction of bankruptcy? The answers to these questions are a complex of economic, social and political factors. The answer to all of them requires a separate study. Yet, more than the answer to these questions, this study is concerned with the result of the bankruptcy.

Bankrupt Results

The real chain reaction in the populace began with the people who returned from the offices of the financial pyramids without the money that expected to receive on a previously fixed date. The number of these people grew daily. As the number of those who lost their money grew, the financial pyramids began declaring one by one bankruptcy. The citizens turned their eyes to the state, hoping that something about their money could come from there, but it was in vain. The government could do nothing, but reassert that their money was gone. Furious at having lost all their saving, thousands of Albanians demanded revenge and this revenge had to be paid for by institutions, trees, streets, shops and thousands of innocents.

Jails were opened, gun depots attacked, and state authority again was destroyed. As a result, in the first months of 1997, Albania²⁶³ was a place where state authority was almost nonexistent, where the street law ruled and every citizen had to protect him/herself. Guns were purchased easily on every street corner for a small amount. Hundreds of people were killed by bullets flying in the air and hundred of others were killed by criminals out of prison for revenge or teenagers with Kalishnakofs on street corners looking to rob the passersby.

Under domestic and international pressure, the government resigned. A new government called the National Reconciliation was formed under the leadership of Bashkim Fino.²⁶⁴ The president, Berisha, insisted on keeping his position and refused to

²⁶³ For further information, see Dr. M. A. Smith, *Albania 1997-1998* (<http://www.da.mod.uk/CSRC/documents/Special/S42>, 05.2005 1999 [cited 20.04.2005 2005]).

²⁶⁴ Actually, Minister of Public Works and Tourism. He is 39 years old. Fino graduated from Tirana University, the Economic Faculty. March - July 1997, he was elected Premier, National

resign. With the formation of the National Reconciliation government and of the support international community, especially Italy was alarmed by the situation in Albanian, toward the summer of 1997 security was relatively restored and the country was preparing for new elections.²⁶⁵

The collapse of the pyramids swept away the capital Albanians had been able to accumulate during five years of democracy and capitalism, destroyed definitely what had remained from the production chain and infrastructure of the communist period and what is the worse allowed guns to spread throughout the country in the hands of adults as well as minors. As a result, with guns everywhere and a weak state authority it became almost impossible to perform any normal legal or economic activity.²⁶⁶

Another important result of the bankruptcy crises was the “regeneration”²⁶⁷ of the North-South conflict. As mentioned in the second chapter,²⁶⁸ the North-South conflict had been almost erased during the Communist era. The Communist leadership had been

Reconciliation Government. From '97-'98 Mr. Fino served as deputy/ premier and from '98 until 2001 as Minister of the local government.

²⁶⁵ “For three weeks following the parliamentary election, Berisha then remained holed up in his presidential palace until, on 23 July, he finally announced his long-awaited resignation just hours before the first meeting of the new parliament dominated by his Socialist opponents. He stressed that his decision to step down had been taken on a ‘moral plane’, since there was no constitutional obligation for him to resign. Nevertheless, his departure had been inevitable once the Socialists had won such a huge parliamentary majority, and he had adamantly declared his refusal to govern along with them. Berisha’s resignation, which was greeted with celebratory gunshots in Tirana and in anti-Berisha strongholds like Berat and Vlora, brought to a close five years of deeply controversial government. Koha Jone’s front page had a photograph of a wild-eyed Berisha giving a stiff-armed Hitler salute to a rally with the headline ‘July 23, 1997 – The end of the dictatorships.’ Having squandered his support by autocratic rule, Berisha’s lack of tolerance toward dissident even in his own party, and use of the courts and secrete policy to intimidate and imprison political opponents cost him dear.” Vickers, *The Albanians a Modern History*, p.251.

²⁶⁶ For a full report about the situation see: Smith, *Albania 1997-1998* ([cited]).

²⁶⁷ A separate study must be done on the reality of the North – South conflict in Albania. Does it really exist such a conflict or is it only an invention or fantasy of specific political interests? If such a conflict exist what is its character? For some evaluations on this issue see: Group), "Pan - Albanianism: How Big a Threat to Balkan Stability?" p.5.

²⁶⁸ Ibid., p.31

extremely sensitive of such a differentiation and worked hard to erase the Northern or Southern identity from the conscience of the citizens. The Communist regime insisted on establishing an Albanian identity cleaned from the North-South division.²⁶⁹ Under the North-South division lies the claim that communists are from the south and “anti-communists” from the North²⁷⁰.

Enver Hoxha and some of its nearest collaborators were from the south, while the fiercest resistance to the regime was claimed to have come from the north. This presumption was regenerated in the 1990s with the majority of the Socialist Party leadership being from the South and the majority of the Democratic Party of Albania being from the North. Furthermore, the Socialist Party had its fiercest supporters in the South while the Democratic one in the North. The revolts because of pyramids bankruptcy began in South Albania. Afterwards, they spread throughout the country. Consequently, the Democratic Party accused the Socialist of provoking Southern Albanians against the state and the Northern Albania as the base of the support to government came from North Albania.

It is true that the revolts began in the South and the basic support of the Socialist Party is in the South Albania, but is this sufficient to deduce that Northern Albanians are Democrats while Southern socialist are not. It is more an oversimplification of the truth than reality. Furthermore, the implication of political interests makes the situation more

²⁶⁹ Actually, before starting my education in Turkey in 1995 I was not aware of such a division. When someone asked me if I was from North or South Albania I answered north thinking the geographic position of my birthplace. Some time after I came to know that the North populace of Albanian is regarded as Gheg and the South as Tosk and that this connotation had some political implication. Previously, I regarded Gheg and Tosk were nothing more than dialects of the Albanian language. My education in Albania (1987-1995) as well as my family never made me aware of such a division.

²⁷⁰ As explained in the second chapter (p.2) the division North – South enhances many claims the majority of which are related to situations much more previous than the communist regime. The claim of “socialists” being from the south and “democrats” from the north is a new “presumption” added to the old ones.

complicated than it really is. Actually, the bankruptcy crises helped in the generating divisions between Northern and Southern Albanians. However, these divisions remain more in the status of issues that are provoked by the political tensions in the country than real national identity problems.²⁷¹

The worst effect of the bankruptcy crises was the shock that society experienced. The communist regime had been a traumatic experience; the 1990-1992 had been painful, while 1997 was the ultimate blow to state and society. Discussions about 1997 have a great potential to provoke tensions in Albanians politics: reciprocal accusations of arms trafficking and implications of dealings organized crime is a normal routine of Albanian politicians. Much is said, but nothing proved.²⁷² The relations of organized crime with

²⁷¹ It would be interesting to note that the a configuration of the last election's results according the colors of the two major parties shows the North to be in blue which is the symbol of the right, the Democratic Party and the South in red, the symbol of the left, the Socialist party. In spite of some of some exceptions that did not effect the general figure Albania seemed divided just in the middle with the North blue and the South red. Various Albanian intellectuals commented this fact as the "present of Albanian politicians" to Albanian people. The reasons for this separation are various: the South has traditionally been supportive to left wing parties while the North has generally made opposition to the left. Many leaders of the majority of the leaders of the Democratic Party are from the North while those of the Socialist Party are mainly from the South. However, this division of North and South was not made an issue in the Albanian public opinion and Albanians are more concerned about the reforms of the new government than about his Northern or Southern formation. It would be a neglect of reality to claim that there is no north and south differences in Albania. Yet, at the same time, the way a part of the literature on Albania presents these differences is a transformation of reality. The differences between them do not provoke a crack in the national identity. The national identity is undoubtedly more important than any Southern or Northern identity. Furthermore it is disputable if there is any Northern or Southern identity or if such a definition can be made. The north or south identity does not affect the Albanian national identity. The differences of Northern and Sourthern Albania and their effect on Albanian history, politics and social life would be an interesting research subject. However, nowadays they do not represent any fraction of or threat to the Albanian national identity. In this context any stress on this divisions must be placed carefully in the Albanian reality.

²⁷² Some months before the director of the daily, Koha Jone Nikolle Lesi made public a tape record of a foreign intelligence service in which the leader of the Socialist Party, Fatos Nano and the Chairman of the Constitutional Court, Fehmi Abdiu discussed illegal traffic of arms from Albania to Kosovo. Nano wanted the Albanian Attorney Generalship to investigate offering proves that he was not in Albania in that precise day. Fehmi Abdiu also denies the existence of such a conversation, while all the implicated maintain that all the signatures in the typescript are false. The Attorney General did not find any proof that verified the claims of Lesi.

arms trafficking in Albania during those days are inevitable as Albania was like a “black hole.” Everything could come in and out, disappearing without any control and such places are more likely to be heavens of every kind of illegal traffic.²⁷³ Yet was all that happened in Albania a conspiracy that ended with the war in Kosovo, as some claim?²⁷⁴

It is important to note that the EU and the NATO were important factors in the re-establishment of security in Albania. NATO sent a multinational force that was settled in a military zone near the port city of Durres. The NATO soldiers patrolled all over the country in order to help the police force and Albanian army, in that period in alert, to restore the security in the country. Without the help of the multi-national force would be much harder for Albania to reinstate security as the police force was under the pressure of criminal elements that having destroyed the army depots had taken possession of the weapons. On the other hand, the army was experiencing a deep crisis after the collapse of communism, as such it was not able to intervene effectively in restoring security.

The multinational force is still located in the military zone near the beach of Durres. Yet the number of soldiers and military staff is reduced and the task of the

For an interesting research on the conspiracy theories in Albania, see Fabian Schmid, "Conspiracy Theories in Albanian Politics and Media," in *Albanian Identities: Myth and History*, ed. Bernd J. Fischer Stephanie Schwandner-Sievers (London: Hurst & Company, 2002).

²⁷³ For research about organized crime and Albania see: UNDP (United Nations Development Programme), *Pro-Poor and Pro-Women Policies and Development in Albania* ([cited].):pp.79-83

²⁷⁴ The conspiracy theory has not been proved and it serves to relieve the share Albanians and the Albania leadership had in all that happened. The economic explanation of the facts is true, but not all the truth as it leaves many important questions unanswered and serves to hide the implications of organized crime with the Albanian pyramids. A sound analysis would have to take into account both of these aspects.

The conspiracy theory sustains that the revolts in Albania were a tool to make easier the transport of arms into Kosovo. The transportation of arms would lead to the Kosovo crises of 1999, and the deployment of multinational troops in Kosovo: so, the dismantling of Kosovo from Serbia. Who is behind this conspiracy theory is still unclear. Albanians make allegations about foreign intelligence services taking advantage of the crises. Yet the feasibility of such a theory is a big question mark.

For a thorough study on this conspiracy theory see: Kola, *Great Albania*, p.329.

remaining group is to assist the Albanian army to reach the standards for adherence in NATO. They do not intervene with security matters in Albania. The intervention of the International community was vital also in the political specter. The Reconciliation Government was formed under the supervision and pressure of the International Community, the representatives of US and EU. Nevertheless, the role of the international community must not be exaggerated as in the 1997 many Albanian politicians made immense efforts to prevent deterioration of the situation and the elections that represent the first step toward a final settlement of the situation were succeeded mainly due to domestic dynamics.

However, the point concerning the theses is that of the shock to which society was exposed. It opened the way to more waves of migration and insecurity. Furthermore, it provoked hatred and anger toward a country where innocents were killed and violated and the state could not even raise a hand to protect them.²⁷⁵ It also provoked anger and discontent toward a history full of sorrow and suffering. After 1997 Albania became a place where people struggled to believe again in their country, in themselves, to re-find “their identity” and to begin accumulating all their capital lost once more.²⁷⁶

²⁷⁵ For the psychological effects 1997 had on the Albanian society, see Artan Fuga, *Ikja Nga Kompleksi I Rozafes. Politika E Komunikuar Ne Shqiperine E Tranzicionit* (Peje: Dukagjini, 2001), p/p.75/334.

²⁷⁶ Another interesting work on the Albanian transition: Dilaver Arikan Acar, "Albania: Anatomy of a Traumatic Transition" (Middle East Technical University, 2000).

National Identity in Albania

The others were on the hills brightened by the sun.
Their fires dazzled and laughed thence,
They did not want to know what happened hence,
What sacrifice needs a fire borne within the darkness!²⁷⁷
Ismail Kadare²⁷⁸

After 1997, Albania closed the door on the transition to democracy²⁷⁹ and made a step forward to the consolidation of the democratic system. The problems were still there, enormous, yet the hardest part was over, and the process of “destruction was out,” while the process of ‘building was “in.” The Socialist Party, winner of the 1997 elections,²⁸⁰ was faced with the difficult task of restoring state authority; bringing further economic, social and institutional reforms; and renovating Albania’s image in the international community.

The first socialist government since 1992 was created after the June 1997 elections led by Fatos Nano.²⁸¹ In fact, it was a coalition government formed mainly by left parties although there were also some right and center parties in it.²⁸² The

²⁷⁷ *Te tjeret maje kodrash ku dielli kishte rene./Te tyret zjarre ndrisnin dhe qeshnin qe pertej./Se s'donin te kuptonin se c'behej ketu brenda./Se c'fli kerkon nje flakez qe lindet ne nje terr.*

²⁷⁸ Kadare, Kadare, p.58.

²⁷⁹ Fuga, *Ikja Nga Kompleksi I Rozafes. Politika E Komunikuuar Ne Shqiperine E Tranzicionit*, p.334.

²⁸⁰ Election of June 29, 1997, seats in the Albanian Parliament: 101 the SP, 54 the DP, 9 the Social Democratic Party, 4 the Union for Human Right, 3 the National Front, 2 the Democratic Alliance, 1 the Republican Party, 1 the Demo-Christian Party, 1 the Agrarian Party, 1 the Liberal Union (Ibid., p.309.)

²⁸¹ Fatos Nano was released from prison by an amnesty decree issued by Berisha in 1997, the same Albanian President who had “encouraged” Nano’s imprisonment in 1993, accusing him of illegal profits in state tenders/adjunctions. The imprisonment of Nano was regarded as a pure political revenge of Berisha, who traditionally has been focusing his party’s political line on accusations at Nano. He was released with a presidential decree in the 1997. For detailed information and evaluations about Nano’s imprisonment, see James Pettifer, *Vickers*, p.240.

²⁸² The coalition was called “Aleanca per Shtetin” – “Alliance for the State” and was made up of Socialist Party, Social-Democratic Party, Democratic Alliance Party, Agrarian Party and National Unity Party.

government of the coalition was interrupted in 1998 after the protest the Democratic Party organized accusing the Socialist Party and the Albanian Premier Nano of the death of Azem Hajdari, one of the leaders of the Democratic Party.²⁸³ The funeral of Hajdari, organized for the September 14, turned into a “coup e’etat” more than a funeral.²⁸⁴ The funeral procession after the ceremonies at Hajdari’s house instead of going to the cemetery turned its route toward the Premiership. The office of the Prime Minister was assaulted. At the same time, some other rogue PD members assaulted and occupied the National Television (TVSH) station, interrupting its programs and using its live connection. For several hours in Tirana, armed people in rebellion against the government occupied the roads.²⁸⁵ Tirana experienced a day of terror. The tension continued for several days until the Premier resigned.

Nano was replaced by Pandeli Majko,²⁸⁶ who led the country for about one year, especially through the difficult days of the Kosovo crises. A young politician, Mayko, was one of the new faces of the Albania politics. He came from the leadership of the Albanian Socialist Youth Forum.²⁸⁷ As a very young politician, he could not easily be accused of corruption as the major part of the Socialist leadership and especially Fatos Nano had been. The large public in Kosovo and Albania appreciated Majko’s attitude

²⁸³ On September 12, 1998, at 9.15 PM in front of the center office of the PD in Tirana, Azem Hajdari, one of the leaders of the PD as well as one of the leaders of the Student Movement in 1990 was shot dead. There were some official accusations and imprisonments for the murder of Hajdari, yet still the real actors and those who ordered the murder are unknown.

²⁸⁴ For evaluations about September 14, see Fuga, *Ikja Nga Kompleksi I Rozafes. Politika E Komunikuar Ne Shqiperine E Tranzicionit*, p.315; Also Kola, *Great Albania*, p.344.

²⁸⁵ For analysis and description about the 98s crises, see Smith, *Albania 1997-1998* ([cited]).

²⁸⁶ Pandeli Majko, 33 years old, is a distinguished figure of the political life of the country. He was Prime Minister of Albania during the Kosova crisis and Minister of Defence during February 2002 – July 2002. He was the Socialist Party Secretary General and Head of the Socialist Party Parliamentary Commission. He participated in the students’ movements of December 1990 and is one of the founders of the Forum of Euro-Socialist Youth of Albania. From 1992 and on he was Member of the Parliament of Albania.

²⁸⁷ The Socialist Youth Forum is an organization of the Socialist Party. The young supporters of the party adhere to the forum. Many important leaders of the Socialist party such as Ilir Meta or Pandeli Majko came from the leadership of the Socialist Youth Forum (FRESH).

during the Kosovo crises greatly. His sensitivity to human right in Kosovo as well as to the final status of Kosovo made him a figure loved by the Kosovo Albanians, while at the same time his positioning as a politician sensitive to human rights not as a nationalist one made him acceptable and appreciated by the international community. His representation of Albania during the Kosovo crises was a big chance for Albania that succeeded in improving its international reputation.²⁸⁸

After the elections of October 27, 1999 Ilir Meta,²⁸⁹ previously vice-premier, became the premier. He would lead Albania in this position for the next four years. Fuga²⁹⁰ evaluated²⁹¹ the leadership of Majko and after Meta as the last step of a “double transition.” He says that the first transition process had finished in 1997 when the Socialist Party formed the coalition government. In this way, the rotation of the political forces had come to an end and Albania was ready for a new start. The second transition process, according Fuga, had ended in 1998, with Majko as the head of government. In this way, claims Fuga, the rotation of the political generations in Albanian history was also over. A new generation, vaguely related with the communist past and without any implication in the positions of power during the communist period, was now leading the country.

²⁸⁸ For detailed information about the situation in Albania during the Kosovo crises, see Kola, *Great Albania*, p.302. Also Smith, *Albania 1997-1998* ([cited].):p.4.

²⁸⁹ Ilir Meta was born on March 24, 1969 in Skrapar. He graduated in Political Economy from the Faculty Economics, University of Tirana. Ilir Meta is currently a member of Parliament, founder and President of the Board of Directors at the Institute for Peace, Development and Integration, and a member of the International Commission on the Balkans and leader of the newly formed political party LSI (*Levizja Socialiste per Integrim* – Socialist Movement for Integration). Premier between October 1999 – February 2002 and Minister of Foreign Affairs during 2002 – 2003.

²⁹⁰ Artan Fuga is a well-known professor of Philosophy at the University of Tirana.

²⁹¹ Fuga, *Ikja Nga Kompleksi I Rozafes. Politika E Komunikuar Ne Shqiperine E Tranzicionit*, p.318.

The evaluations of Fuga embrace perfectly the Albanian reality. However, while the first one was a transition, the second one was a phenomenon still not as complete as to realize a total transition of generations in Albanian politics. In 1998, the leadership of Majko was an indication that a new class of Albanian politicians was ready to challenge the Albanian reality as well as the Nano–Berisha hegemony. After the transition period, Albania had to adopt a proper governmental program and bring further economic and institutional reforms. It had to consolidate its democracy as well as improve its international reputation. The most important step in this way was the reformation, and democratization, of political parties, and especially that of the SP and the DP.

Resignations and the newly formed parties demonstrate that there was not enough space within the “old” parties for diverse thought.²⁹² The premiership of Majko and, after that, of Meta demonstrated that the new elements of Albanian politics could be successful and need more space. From this point of view, the second process, which Fuga regards as the second part of the double transition, was not a complete political renovation of generations. The Nano–Berisha hegemony on the Albanian political life continues at the time of this writing. Some prominent Albanian intellectuals²⁹³ regard Nano and Berisha as usurpers of the Albanian political life, asking them to “log out” of political activity.

With Meta’s government (October 29, 1999 – February 22, 2002), Albania gave start to its normal life as a country dealing with “normal” political, economic and social

²⁹² LSI (*Levizja Socialiste per Integrim*– Socialist Movement for Integration) The leader of the party is Ilir Meta. Many important deputies of the PS are among the founders of the Party. The party was formed in 2005 and participated in the July 3, 2005 elections. On the July 3, 2005 elections the LSI could not reach a meaningful result. Only Ilir Meta was directly elected deputy (majority votes), while his party could gain only one deputy from the votes in the country from his party (the proportional votes).

²⁹³ Ismail Kadare as well as Rexhep Qosja strongly emphasizes the fact that Nano and Berisha have to “retire” from the politics. See Qosja, *Demokracia E Shperdorur*, p.32.

problems.²⁹⁴ The problems were huge and serious, yet the country was now out of anarchy, security had been restored and reforms had taken start. From this point of view, social, political and economical life had returned to normal and the next challenge was improvement, not survival. Political tensions and problems with corruption and reforms many times had frightened Albanians as the awful transition period hung like a ghost over the memories of all, yet it did not happen; the insecurity and the instability seemed as matters of the past, especially in the capital Tirana, which with enormous steps began running to reach “European Standards.” In fact, the transformation of Tirana is so amazing that one who has not visited the city since 1997 can hardly remember its old look.

In 1999, the government of Albania not only had serious professional plans and programs,²⁹⁵ but also the presidency had a new look. Berisha, who had been Albanian president from 1993 to 1997, proved unable to remain a purely impartial figure. The figure of the president was strictly related with the party. It was as if one man, controlled the majority party, the government, as well as the presidency. Albania needed an impartial presidency possibly in the middle of the parties, not a “member” of one of them. Actually, Berisha after leaving the presidency continued to be and still is the leader of the Democratic Party.

²⁹⁴ On July 24, 2001, Albanians went again to the polls to vote for the parliament. The winner of the elections became the SP and Nano the Albanian premier for the next four years. For detailed information about the elections, see Komisioni Qendror i Zgjedhjeve, *Buletini I Zgjedhjeve Te Pergjithshme Per Kuvendin E Shqiperise, Buletinet E Zgjedhjeve* (Tirane: KQZ (Komisioni qendror i Zgjedhjeve), 2001).

²⁹⁵ Please note that the evaluation of “serious and professional” is not used to praise or defend this program. It is used to explain the fact that from now on in spite of all the problems in their formulation or application political, economic and social programs were formulated according to some acceptable standards. Different from the transition period when it is hard to speak of programs because everything was done according to the necessities of the very near present.

Rexhep Meidani,²⁹⁶ a prominent intellectual and a well-known physician, immediately after being elected president, resigned from his party. He brought to the presidency a new look, away from party politics and many times challenged premier Nano. His presidency started a new era for the Albanian presidency: the president was limited to his constitutional duties. The period of unlimited authority of the president was brought to an end. The period from 1990–1991 can be regarded as marking the end of communism; that of 1991–1997 as marking the transition political, economic and social from a dictatorial regime to democracy; that of 1997–1999 as the last steps of political transition; while the period from 1999 on as the consolidation of democratic society and market economy. The following sections are an attempt to show what happened to the national identity from 1990 to the present.²⁹⁷

²⁹⁶ For evaluations about Meidani and his presidency, see Vickers, *The Albanians a Modern History*, p.252.

Prof. Dr. Rexhep Mejdani born on August 17, 1944, in Elbasan, graduated from the University of Tirana (1966), Faculty of Natural Sciences, in Physics. He completed the postgraduate studies in the University of Cane (France) (1974). Meidani worked as professor, chair of the department and later as the dean of the Faculty of Natural Sciences. During 1994–1996 the chair of the Board of the Albanian Center of Human Rights. In 1996, he joined the Socialist Party and was elected its Secretary General (1996– 1997). In the anticipated parliamentary elections of June 1997, Mr. Meidani was elected deputy of the parliament. After the elections, won by the left coalition and headed by the Socialist Party, on July 24, 1997, he was elected President of the Republic.

²⁹⁷ For the 2000 local elections in Albania see *A Country by Country Update on Constitutional Politics in Eastern Europe and the Ex-Ussr* (<http://www.law.nyu.eecr/vol9num3/pdfs/updates.pdf>, 2000 [cited 1.05.2005 2005]).pp.1-4.

Public Education

Education is one of the main instruments the modern state uses to transmit ideology to its citizens. Within its different degrees and especially through elementary education, the basic elements of nation and nationalism are constituted in an individual's identity. Although the modern state makes use of various instruments to shape and formulate the individuals' national identity, education remains one of the basic mechanisms of this process. This thesis does not claim that education formulates individuals' national identity in a process that is not affected by a variety of exterior factors. On the contrary, it is conscious that the national identity formation process is a very complicated process and that a brief discussion risks an oversimplification as well as a superficial analysis of the theme.

The results in this section, based on the education system, are not extracted from the contents of books. They are founded in the general picture of the Albanian educational system during these years. The content of books is not a focus of this inquiry for two main reasons: first, because the extension of the thesis does not permit such research, and second, because whatever the contents of the books the students could hardly study them before 1998. Additionally, during this period decisions on the content of books were far from being a part of an ideology or a precise program.²⁹⁸

From 1990 to 1992, Albania was in total chaos and insecurity. Among the firsts to be affected by this atmosphere were the schools. Families, afraid for the security of their

²⁹⁸ For a historical explanation of the role of the education in the Albanian Identity, see Isa Blumi, "Role of the Education in the Formation of Albanian Identity and Myth," in *Albanian Identities Myth and History*, ed. Bernd J. Fischer Stephanie Schwandner-Sievers (London: Hurst & Company, 2002).

children, did not send them to school. The education process in the countryside especially in remote regions of Albania, was almost totally interrupted as the teachers were afraid of taking long trips or were not able to reach the schools because of the lack of transportation. The deep lack of state authority affected the teaching process, resulting in an impotence of teachers to impose the minimal required authority over the students. Especially in high schools, teachers were insulted and even assailed by students, who regarded democracy as the liberty to do “what they wanted, wherever they wanted.”²⁹⁹

There were serious problems in furnishing schools with the required materials for the education to go on normally. Furthermore, the process of cleaning the books from communist ideology had begun, yet there was not enough time to plan or apply a new education line/ideology. People and facts were put in and out of the books with individual decisions according to instant aims or emotional conditions. The content of the books was changed every year and the criteria of formulating education books lacked coherence.

Although security was restored and the state began to function in 1993, the education system experienced a deep crisis. Albanians witnessed one of the biggest scandals ever seen in education history. In order to console all those who had been unable to attend university during the communist regime because of discrimination for ideological reasons, the government opened six months courses at the end of which regular university diplomas were accorded. Hundreds of people who had been discriminated against during the dictatorial regime³⁰⁰ took university diplomas in different branches and began to work as specialists in the branches from which they had

²⁹⁹ For a general analysis of and detailed data on the Albanian education process through these years, see Ministry of Education and Science, *Annual Statistical Report of Education 2002/2003* (http://www.mash.gov.al/struktura/Raporti_vjetor.pdf, 05.2005 2003 [cited 02.02.2005, 2005]).

³⁰⁰ During this period not only those who had been discriminated against, but also many others profiting from the situation obtained university diplomas after studying sixth month courses.

graduated. As a result, lawyers, judges, notary publics, teachers and lecturers applied with all the rights of their professions after studying at “six month university.”³⁰¹ The idea of consoling the discriminated during the Communist regime by repaying them for all their sufferance is legitimate and reasonable. However, the way it was applied could be nothing but heresy and an injustice to those who had honestly studied and to all the others who were ready to attend higher education. Moreover, it was a hard blow to all the Albanian judicial and educational system. Tragicomic scenes were “played out” in Albanian law courts where “six month” educated lawyers or judges or even public prosecutors tried “apply the justice of the state of law.”

During this period, the lack of control by the state to official procedures opened the way to important irregularities. People who had never attended university acquired university diplomas. People who had never attended high school acquired high school diplomas. Many others acquired academic grades and others improved their general average notes without any exams or applications to the required commissions.³⁰² All of this resulted in a general lack of confidence to schools and to the general educational system.

³⁰¹ For an analysis of the academic situation in Albania, see Klub 2002, "Arsimi I Larte Duhet Te Ndryshoje Rrenjesisht (Higher Education Must Be Changed Deeply)," *Politika dhe Shoqeria* 6, no. 2 (12) (2003). Also Alfred Uci, "Te Demokratizohet Akademia E Shkencave (the Sciences Academy Must Be Democratised)," *Politika dhe Shoqeria* 6, no. 2 (12) (2003). Also: Ylli Popa, "Disa Te Verteta Per Akademin E Shkencave (Some Truth About the Sciences Academy)," *Politika dhe Shoqeria* 6, no. 2 (12) (2003). Also Myqerem Tafaj, "Integrimi I Arsimit Te Larte Me Kerkim Shkencor Dhe Pozita E Akademise Se Shkencave the Shqiperise (The Integration of the Research Oriented Higher Education and the Role of the Albanian Science Academy)," *Politika dhe Shoqeria* 6, no. 2 (12) (2003). Also Edmond Cata, "Mbi Reformimin Administrative Dhe Akademik Te Arsimit Te Larte Ne Shqiperi, Sipas Modelit Perendimor (the Reformation of the Albanian Higher Education According the Western Model)," *Politika dhe Shoqeria* 6, no. 2 (12) (2003).

³⁰² See Popa, "Disa Te Verteta Per Akademin E Shkencave (Some Truth About the Sciences Academy)."

1997 was the ultimate blow to the education system. For several months, students could not even attend lessons. In addition, the several years of damage made to the schools could be repaired with difficulty. After 1997, the educational system began its difficult voyage to return to normalcy. Maybe this voyage could be called what the mayor of Tirana Edi Rama describes the work he is doing in Tirana: "Return to Identity."³⁰³ Still the problems are huge, especially at the universities, where the academic world needs much more time and work to reach acceptable standards.

However, important steps have been taken since 1999, and the process is moving toward improvement. The most important steps have been taken in the elementary and middle schools. From 1998 to 2005, these began to offer a normal education without breaks or radical problems of furnishing or content in textbooks. In addition, important progress has been made in repairing damaged or old schools. In remote or rural areas much remains to be done, yet at least the process has forward toward improvement. The most serious problems remain at the universities where still nepotism, corruption and scarce academic conditions are clearly visible.

Albanian children were barely able to receive any nationalist values from their education in the period from the 1990-1998. To the history books, some facts were added, some others deleted. In the literature books some previously forbidden writers

³⁰³ Edi Rama, born in 1964, is a politician and artist. He is currently the mayor of Tirana, the capital of Albania, since October, 2000. A prominent figure of Albanian politics, in 2004 he was awarded the Mayor of the World prize for his amazing work in Tirana. He has had a busy politic carrier since the early 1990s. He was one of the fiercest of critics of Hoxha. After the 1990s, he has been one of the fiercest critics of Berisha and during the Democratic Party rule, he escaped to Paris after he was beaten nearly dead. In 1998 Nano called him to his government to be Minister of Culture, Youth and Sports.

reappeared, some poets or writers of the socialist reality disappeared.³⁰⁴ Religion was regarded as a good thing and a part of the individual identity, not as a bad phenomenon that generated ignorance and manipulation as explained by the communist textbooks. However, the emergence of all these elements could not be brought to the attention of the children through the textbooks.

In terms of nationalism and national identity, the “pupils of transition” did not learn more than suffering, anger and lack of authority from their elementary education experience. In fact, various statistics of national and international organizations³⁰⁵ deduce that the criminality rate is higher within the 15-27 year age group of Albanians. These are people who were raised and educated within the years of transition. Many of these people are full of anger and feelings of revenge. The time in which they were raised could not tell them much about their past or their future, so a crisis of identity was inevitable.³⁰⁶ Although the major part of the analysts³⁰⁷ agrees that there is crisis of identity, they differ in the results of this crisis. Would it result in ultra-nationalism or in an anti-nationalism or even in anger and vandalism?

An analysis of the Albanian reality shows that what has happened is a little of all the results mentioned, as well as none of them fully.³⁰⁸ Any ultra-nationalist tradition or movement feeds the ultra-nationalism and their education hardly offered them

³⁰⁴ Qosja, *Demokracia E Shperdorur*, pp.122-54.

³⁰⁵ See UNDP (United Nations Development Programme), *Pro-Poor and Pro-Women Policies and Development in Albania* ([cited), p.54.

³⁰⁶ For the thesis about an identity crisis of the Albanian youth, see Lubonja, "Between the Glory of a Virtual World and the Misery of a Real World."

³⁰⁷ See Mariella Pandolfi, "Myths and New Forms of Governance in Albania," in *Albanian Identities Myth and History*, ed. Bernd J. Fischer Stephanie Schwandner-Sievers (London: Hurst & Company, 2003).

³⁰⁸ See B. Budini, "Mungese Totale Identitet" (*Total Lack of Identity*) (<http://www.shqiperia.com/lajme/3gusht2004/shqiptaret.php>, 03-agu-2004 2004 [cited]).

inspirational material to nourish such nationalism. What's more, their educational experience was more disappointing than useful. It pushed them more toward anti-nationalism than to nationalism or even ultra-nationalism.

The disappointing effect the public education³⁰⁹ of the transition period had on its students has been soothed to some by the reaction of the other part of the students who have studied outside. While the first ones are angry at their country and at everything it can not offer them, the others have missed their country and have embraced their identities while abroad. It was almost the same with society, where the people in Albania upset from the harsh experiences were tired of the problems of the economic and politic pronlems of the country while those outside missed many of the things of which those inside were tired.

The educational experience the Albanian youth passed through during the transition years did not enhance or at least transmit any nationalistic feeling. On the contrary, the bitterness of such an experience provoked just the opposite feeling, as in fact many Albanian intellectuals claim.³¹⁰ The social experience was also disappointing to the major part of society. Moreover, during this period, Albanians lost even the belief they had in society and after fifty years of forced collectivization they were confronted with the reality of succeeding individually in a country that from time to time could barely offer food, security and education.

³⁰⁹The private schools in Albania began to open sometime in 1994 or 1995 and their number increased through the years. The foreign schools in Albania are a relatively difficult issue to discuss as their development and the orientation of their lessons could be the focus of a separate thesis. Yet, as far as this thesis is concerned, they can be regarded as part of the “normalized” post-1998 Albanian educational system. See Science, *Annual Statistical Report of Education 2002/2003*, p.55

³¹⁰ For such claims see Fuga, *Ikja Nga Kompleksi I Rozafes. Politika E Komunikuar Ne Shqiperine E Tranzicionit*, pp.75, 322.

Religious Identity

Religion traditionally has been the Gordian knot of Albanian nationalism. There are different religions and different sects within these religions that traditionally co-existed peacefully in Albania: Muslims as Sunni and Bektashi, and Christians as Catholic and Orthodox.³¹¹ Religious life in Albania experienced a boom in the 1990s after almost forty years of a total ban on religious activities. Charity and missionary organizations flowed to Albania as early as 1990, founding schools, religious courses, and associations, and restored, and built many mosques and churches. They distributed many religious books together with food and sometimes even clothes. They became effective especially in small towns and rural areas where living conditions were difficult. They were present in Tirana where scenes of Arabs and American missionaries going door to door were common.

Vickers writes that, by the summer of 1993, the forces which had striven in the past to divide Albanians along religious and political lines had again come to fore. Missionaries and clergy with religious and educational founding from countries all around the world (including Iran, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Greece, America and the Vatican) campaigned for the minds and souls of the Albanians.³¹² Religious missions were active especially during the 1993 -1999 period when there was a lack of state control over them. By 1999 complaints and criticism of their activities grew and the state control over them became somehow stricter. The complaints were various: American officials warned the Albanian government about the suspicious activities of different Islamic associations. As

³¹¹ Approximately, seventy percent Muslims, ten percent Catholic Christians, twenty percent Orthodox Christians

³¹² Vickers, *The Albanians a Modern History*, p.236.

a result, some of them were closed and many other put under strict control as some of the leaders of these association were taken under inquiry.³¹³ On the other hand, Albanian intellectuals³¹⁴ warned about the destructive effect and anti-Albanian propaganda of the Orthodox Church and associations related to it made in Southern Albania.

The general interest in the foreign religious missions in Albania has undergone a yearly decrease from 2000 to the present. Their favors, like sending students to foreign high schools or universities or helping poor people has been increasingly regarded as trickery to extent the effect of this or that ideology, so fewer people are cooperating with such missions. Furthermore, a relative improvement in economic and social conditions has made the presence of these missions less needed. Although the dense missionary activity in Albania affected some parts of the population, making them more bound, to religion, it has not changed the general attitude of Albanians toward religion.³¹⁵ Albanians continue to co-exist peacefully without a serious religious problem. Religion has become a more determinant factor in the formulation of national identity as different religious leaders have tried to identify religion with national identity.

There are four main official religious institutions in Albania: the Islamic community, representing the Albanian Sunni Muslims; the Autocephalous Orthodox Church of Albania; the Catholic Church of Albania; and the Central Bektashi Congregation.³¹⁶ All of them have somehow slightly different attitudes toward Albanian

³¹³ For detailed information about the inquiry over the Arabian Associations operating in Albania, see James Pettifer, *Vickers*, p.225.

³¹⁴ See Abdi Baleta, *Kundershpifografi (Jeteshkrimore Politike Historike)* (Tirane: Rimekembja, 2005), p.357.

³¹⁵ See Qosja, *Demokracia E Shperdorur*, p.47.

³¹⁶ Bashkesia Islamike- Kisha Ortodokse Autoqefale Shqiptare – Kisha Katolike – KryeGjyshata.

religious history and its relations with nationalism. As Fuga explains³¹⁷ after his examination of the religious press, the Islamic community of Albania supports the present religious configuration of Albania and stresses that this is a centuries old characteristic of Albania. It appreciates the religious tolerance and strongly criticizes the attempts of different associations to change the religion of individuals with material promises. It also claims that Islam has not been spread with force among the Albanians, but it has been their choice in order to protect their national identity against the Serbian and Greek negation of the Albanian identity. From this point of view, the national identity embraces different religions and entrenches them in one Albanian national identity.³¹⁸

The position of the Orthodox Church is more delicate as it is also identified with the Greek minority in Albania.³¹⁹ The Church is criticized as pro-Greek and anti-Albanian. Many Albanian politicians and intellectuals criticized the appointment of a Greek citizen as the head of the Albanian Orthodox church.³²⁰ In this sense, the church's position is susceptible to Greek – Albanian relations. The Greek Church claims that the real religion of Albanians is Christianity. The real core of Albanian nationalism is borne

³¹⁷ Fuga, *Ikja Nga Kompleksi I Rozafes. Politika E Komunikuar Ne Shqiperine E Tranzicionit*, p.160.

³¹⁸ For more details about this point of view, see Albert Doja, *Perdorimi Politik I Fese Ne Rindertimin E Identiteteve: Rasti Shqiptar (the Politics of Religion in the Reconstruction of Identities: The Albanian Situation)* (Tirane: ISHSN (Instituti Shqiptar per Studime Nderkombetare), 2001). Also as Albert Doja, "The Politics of Religion in the Reconstruction of Identities: The Albanian Situation," *Critique of Antropology* 20, 2000, no. 4 (2000).

³¹⁹ Fuga, *Ikja Nga Kompleksi I Rozafes. Politika E Komunikuar Ne Shqiperine E Tranzicionit*, p.163.

³²⁰ Janullatos is a Greek citizen appointed (1991) by the Istanbul Patriarchate as the head of the Albanian Orthodox Church. This provoked harsh reaction in Albanian and was regarded as a Greek trickery to take under control the Albanian Orthodox church. For general information on the Orthodox Church situation see Jim Forest, *The Resurrection of the Church in Albania Voices of Orthodox Christians* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 2002).

by those that did not surrender to Ottoman assimilation. Therefore, while the Islamic community evaluates Islam as a savior of the Albanian national identity, the Orthodox Church regards it as the surrender of the Albanian identity.³²¹

The main concern of the Albanian Catholics situated in North Albania with its center in Shkodra is communism. They claim to have been the religious community most harmed in Albania by the communist regime. Therefore, their main concern is to curse communism and sometimes even claim revenge for all that has been done to them from the children of the communists. In some ways, it can be regarded as revenge on the Muslims as the majority of the Albanian communists had been Muslims. When it comes to the national identity, the Catholic leaders sustain that the Catholic Albanians protected the real core of Albanian national identity and culture. They assert to have been among the unique elements protecting the Albanian national identity against the Ottomans as well as against the communists.³²²

The Bektashi belief³²³ represents the foundation ideology of the Albanian Nationalisms. Very tolerant a belief, the Bektashi belief³²⁴ claims to respect first of all human values and all the religions.³²⁵ The Bektashi was the religious belief that communism tried to erase from the Albanian memory. After the 1990s, it was restored relatively. The classical Albanian Nationalist rhetoric inspired by the Bektashi, but

³²¹ Fuga, *Ikja Nga Kompleksi I Rozafes. Politika E Komunikuar Ne Shqiperine E Tranzicionit*, p.164.

³²² *Ibid.*,p.164.

³²³ For a very interesting and special explanation of the Bektashi in Albania see the novel of Zeliha Midilli, The book describes the life of a Bektashi family in a beautiful city in South Albania, Saranda. See Zeliha Midilli, *Bir Balkan Sarkisi Saranda* (Istanbul: AB Kitapcilik ve Dagitimcilik LTD. STI, 2003).

³²⁴ Bektashi and Albanian Nationalism, see Duijzings, "Religion and Politics of 'Albanianism': Naim Frasheri's Bektashi Writings."

³²⁵ Bektashe in today Albania, see Aydin Babuna, "Albanian National Identity and Islam in the Post Communist Era," *Perceptions* (2003): p.49.

formulated by a Catholic is as follows; “The Albanian religion is Albanian-hood.”³²⁶ Such an expression does not generate the negation of religion, it only subordinates it to national identity, claiming that the Albanian National identity is and can be a mixture of religions. From this point of view, “Albanian-hood” means different religions composed in one national identity. The Albanian attitude toward religion and national identity enhances such a perspective (The Albanian religion is Albanian-hood). Otherwise, it would be impossible to co-exist peacefully in an environment where Orthodox Albanians regard Muslims as traitors or even Turks, where Catholic Albanians claim to be the unique element of pure Albanian national culture and identity, and where Muslims regard Christian Albanians as more a foreign than an Albania element.³²⁷

Another important issue of religious identity in Albania is the most recent conversion of Muslims Albanians to Christianity in order to integrate in foreign countries or even profit from material support in Albania or abroad.³²⁸ Many intellectuals, and among them the well-known Kadare,³²⁹ assert that Albanians would convert to Christianity - in some meaning to their real identity - in order to integrate easily into the European Union. Many others³³⁰ severely criticize and disapprove of such claims, explaining that the characteristic Albanian religious tolerance would help the integration

³²⁶ “Feja e shqiptarit asht shqiptaria” by Pashko Vasa.

³²⁷ Using phrases like Albanian Orthodox, Albanian Catholics or Albanian Muslims generalizes and oversimplifies the situation. Yet this kind of generalization are used to avoid useless details damaging the integrity of the text.

³²⁸ There are different cases of such conversions: the most popular among them are the conversion of two Albanian Muslim weight lifters in Orthodox Greeks. One of them is Pirro Dhima, who, due to his conversion in Orthodox and passage to Greek nationality also changed his name to Pirros Dhimas. In addition, the other Luan Shabani was converted to Orthodox and changed his name to Leonis Sabanis. Both of them are weight lifters with successful careers in Albania represented Greece in World and European Championships being first, second and third placers in these international competitions.

³²⁹ Kadare in James Pettifer, *Vickers*, p.104.

³³⁰ Baleta in Sulstarova, *Sustarova*, p.109.

of Albanians in the European Union. Consequently, the question stands as: is it true that Albanians are being or can be converted to Christianity in order to integrate more easily into the European Union?

This is a difficult question. Albanians have traditionally been tolerant of religion. During the Ottoman period, for some reasons,³³¹ they were converted to Islam and during the communist regime, for some other reasons,³³² they negated religion. Therefore, based on an historical perspective, such a claim is not very absurd, due also to the fact that Albanians have never been radical or fundamentalist in their beliefs. On the other hand, it can be said that, as Hobsbawm³³³ also explains, Albanians are an example of a sub-conscious ethnic identity and they react each time this identity is negated. If the change of religion would open the way to an assimilation or negation of ethnic identity, the assertion of such a conversion is not feasible. Yet economic profit would be another reason for conversion. Anyway, the discussion remains ambiguous, but still present. Giving a definite answer to the question seems analytically impossible. The tolerant attitude of Albanians toward religion makes such a discussion feasible, but their oversensitivity about their ethnic identity and their harsh reaction to its negation renders such an assertion nothing more than intellectual, political or even academic speculation.

The religious element of the Albanian national identity remains still multiple and composed of many religious beliefs. The nationalist perception of the Albania Albanians is as related to Christianity as to Islam. Religious identity generates tensions and conflicts; still they are not as serious as to shake the roots of national identity. Nevertheless, the ambiguities remain and the questions posed by Fuga are eminent: Will

³³¹ To some of these it is touched upon in the historical background.

³³² However, this was the case in almost all the communist countries.

³³³ Hobsbawm, *Milletler ve Milliyetçilik* , p.64.

Albanians manage to continue regarding religion as a subordinate to their national identity as the founders of Albanian Nationalism? How will religion affect the identity crises present in Albania, and furthermore how would it affect Albanian politics? Will it push forward democracy and liberalism or authoritarianism? What will the effect of religion be in a possible integration of the Balkans?³³⁴

Although reasonable and prominent, all these questions go beyond the limits of this thesis. What the thesis extracts from all the mixture of information and evaluations about the situation of religion identity in Albania is the fact that the Albanian national identity still enhances a multiple religious identity subordinated to national identity and that no religious belief in Albania predicates or supports ultra-nationalism or enhances any pan-religious aim. On the contrary, each of them is concerned with the status of its members and its positioning in the Albanian social and political life.

³³⁴ Fuga, *Ikja Nga Kompleksi I Rozafes. Politika E Komunikuar Ne Shqiperine E Tranzicionit*, p.159.

Intellectual Reflections

The main questions this section would ask of the Albanian intellectuals are as follows: what do you think about the Albanian national identity? Do you believe in a Greater Albania and see any meaningful effort in this way? Is it possible that Albanians would change their religion in mass in order to make integration with the EU easier? What do you think about the situation of Albanian society? How do you think the developments of after 1990s have affected Albanian national identity?

In the impossibility of asking these questions to them directly, this section tries to extract the answers from their opinions and analysis. This is not an effort to detect what a certain person thinks about these questions. It is an attempt to reflect the evaluations of an important part of Albanian society in order to complete the pieces of the mosaic of the Albanian national identity.

Rexhep Qosja claims that Albanian society is going through a process of “self – fighting.”³³⁵ He argues that the disappointment of the 1990s and the shock of as well as the anger toward their past weakened important social values resulting in a chaos of identity. Furthermore, he claims this to be a permanently repeated situation in Albanian history: Albanians tend to listen to their individual identities instead of the national identity especially in critical times for their nation. He claims this to be the primary reason of all the big problems of the Albanian society and the main reason of the division of Albanians within different neighboring states.³³⁶

³³⁵ `te luftosh vetveten`

³³⁶ Qosja, *Demokracia E Shperdorur*, pp.1-28.

Fatos Lubonja,³³⁷ another prominent member of the Albanian intellectual elite thinks that in essence Albanian society has to deal with a major problem, that of irrationality. He defines it as a black out of the mind and a triumph of a “senseless” irrationality. Although this irrationality is not a characteristic of all Albanian society, it has become dominant. He claims that the socially and politically mature³³⁸ part of society is hesitant to confront of the violent element of it. From this point of view, nationalism is not an essential concern of the Albanian society that has to deal with vital issues as the struggle with the irrational element part within itself. Would nationalism be a concern of the “irrational” element within society? Lubonja is not clear on this point, yet it seems like this part of society has different aspirations where nationalism seems a mean more than an aim.

Sulstarova, in his master thesis submitted at METU and later published in Albanian,³³⁹ claims that post-communist Albania attitudes toward nationalism³⁴⁰ can be grouped in two: the Cosmopolite rhetoric and the Nationalist rhetoric. The first one is regarded as the dominating attitude of Albanian politics and intellectualism, a kind of conscious negation of nationalism. Explained differently, it is a conscious positioning toward nationalism thought to be dangerous for the Albanian future. What this thesis would add to the survey of Sulstarova is the fact that regardless of the discussion that this positioning toward nationalism is conscious or not the fact remains: Albanian politicians

³³⁷ Lubonja in Fuga, *Ikja Nga Kompleksi I Rozafes. Politika E Komunikuar Ne Shqiperine E Tranzicionit*, p.320.

³³⁸ The author uses the word townsman to identify the “irrational” element/part of the Albanian society. The concept townsman is used in Albanian to identify the “civilized”: socially and politically mature part of the society. It is used as the opponent of “vandal-violent-irrational-uncivilized”. The concept of townsman in Albania has a specific use, which would be an interesting object for a research.

³³⁹ Sulstarova, *Ligjerimi Nacionalist ne Shqiperi*.

³⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p.13.

avoid provoking pan-nationalist feelings except in some cases when they need to use or even exploit such feeling for short-term political inferences.

The status of a conscious or instinctive conceptualization of pan-nationalism as a danger to the Albanian future does not decay this section's claim that it would be a forced /artificial effort to find important intellectual pan-nationalist dynamics in Albania. Moreover, it seems like the attitude of politicians and intellectuals, more than a conscious effort to shape citizens' nationalist lusts, is a result of the majority of Albanian intellectuals' attitude toward nationalism. This thesis regards Kadare as well as Lubonja as representatives of this majority. The connotation "majority" does not enhance a complex of similar attitudes toward nationalism. On the contrary, there exist many divergent positions within it. Yet what relates this bunch of different ideas is the distance they have or have put to nationalism.

These intellectuals are preoccupied with Albanians in Kosovo and Macedonia as far as this is related to their human, social, politic and economic rights. The Greater Albania and the means to realize it are not of their concern. Furthermore, some of them believe that such tentative or inclinations would harm Albanians in general, put in question their European future and damage their international prestige. The most important political parties in Albania, the PS and PD, also embrace this attitude.³⁴¹

The opposite intellectual thought to this majority is that of Abdi Baleta and Hysamedin Feraj, both lawyers of Great Albania.³⁴² Both of them believe that Albania cannot perform its duties in the international arena without the united Albanian communities living next to each other. Furthermore, Baleta sustains that Albania cannot

³⁴¹ The two parties that govern Albania from the 1990 on: The Socialist Party and the Democratic Party. Both of them are attentive to such assertions.

³⁴² See Sulstarova, *Ligjerimi Nacionalist ne Shqiperi*, p.107.

develop properly without unifying all the Albanians in one state. He explains that the current political trend is to bring together the ethnic nations, not to separate them. Therefore, the requests and attempts to form a Greater Albania are a natural and normal right of Albanians who for years have been divided unjustly.³⁴³ Islam is regarded as a positive factor helping Albanians preserve their national identity. The existence of Christian Albanians is not denied. The attempts of foreigners, especially the Greeks, to control the Albania church, are strongly disapproved and condemned. This ideology is represented by a political party formed in 1994 by some members of the DP that disapproved of the approach of the DP toward the Nationalist cause.³⁴⁴

According to the official statistics of the Elections Central Commission (KQZ),³⁴⁵ at least four nationalist parties were registered in this commission: the Movement for Legality (PLL),³⁴⁶ the Party of National Unity (PUK),³⁴⁷ the National League (PLKSH),³⁴⁸ and the National Front (PBK).³⁴⁹ From the parties only two of them, the PBK and the PLL, were represented in the Albanian parliament with respectively three and five deputies,³⁵⁰ all of them except one deputy of the PLL succeeded in becoming members of the parliament thanks to the proportional system, or what the KQZ calls the Complementary Mandate. The Complementary Mandate means that these deputies did not win the election race, but that their party had the right to be represented according to the general votes it received. The general vote is acquired by the Proportional System,

³⁴³ See *Ibid.*, p.106-137.

³⁴⁴ PRK (Partia per Rimekembjen Kombetare – National Revival Party) led by Baleta. See *ibid.*, p.106. This Party refuses to participate in elections accusing all the other political forces for betrayal to the national cause.

³⁴⁵ Zgjedhjeve, *Buletin*, p.9.

³⁴⁶ Levizja per Legalitetin.

³⁴⁷ Partia e Unitetit Kombetar.

³⁴⁸ Partia Lidhja Kombetare Shqiptare.

³⁴⁹ Partia Balli Kombetar.

³⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 709.

which gives to the voter the opportunity to vote separately for the candidate and the party.³⁵¹

It is important to note that these two parties managed to be represented in the parliament, thanks also to a coalition with the PD. They were voted in the Proportional System as the Coalition of Union for Victory,³⁵² not as separate political parties. Their representation in parliament was also successful due to negotiations within the coalition,³⁵³ which was determined by the DP. The PUK and the PLKSH won respectively percentage 0.189 and percentage 0.138, unable to reach the two percent of the general vote that would materialize their representation in the parliament.³⁵⁴ Evaluated in terms of voters from the 2,499,238 registered Albanian voters and 1,339,987 valid votes, the PUK received only 2,538 and the PLKSH 1,854 votes.³⁵⁵ The Party of National Restoration boycotts the election from the 1997.³⁵⁶

These parties publicize different journal and newspapers such as *Rimekembja* (The Restoration), *Atdheu* (The Fatherland), *Balli i Kombit* (National Front), *E Djathta* (The Right) and so on.³⁵⁷ In these publications, the nationalist, or it is better to say pan-nationalist,³⁵⁸ aims of the political subjects and intellectuals become visible.³⁵⁹ Although

³⁵¹ *Kodi Zgjedhor I Republikës së Shqipërisë (Albanian Republic Elections Code)*, 8689.

³⁵² Zgjedhjeve, *Buletin*, p.10.

³⁵³ Bashkimi Per Fitore. Its members were the PD, PLL, PR (Republican Party of Albania), PBK, PBL (The Party of Liberal Union)

³⁵⁴ Zgjedhjeve, *Buletin*, p.677.

³⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁵⁶ Sulstarova, *Ligjerimi Nacionalist ne Shqiperi*, p.107.

³⁵⁷ For a thorough analysis of the post – communist Albanian press, see Fuga, *Ikja Nga Kompleksi I Rozafes. Politika E Komunikuar Ne Shqiperine E Tranzicionit.*

³⁵⁸ Pan-Nationalism is used here to define Great Albania nationalism. It is important to highlight the difference between pan Albanian – nationalism and Albanian nationalism: Pan – Albanian nationalism is used here to represent Great Albania Nationalism. This kind of Nationalism can conflict with Albania Nationalism that may exclude Pan-Albanian nationalism as a danger to the peace and prosperity in Albania proper.

it is not possible to have precise data about the circulation of this kind of press in Albania, it can be sustained by the general information acquired by the sellers of newspapers and journals in Albania that the circulation is very low and concentrated in Tirana and other big cities.

The circulation of the pan-nationalist press, the representation of pan-nationalist parties in the parliament, the attitude of the major political parties as well as that of prominent Albanian intellectuals show that pan-nationalism is not an issue on the agenda or even a primary preoccupation of the Albanian intellectuals. Except for some marginal and relatively weak voices calling for pan-national unity, the Albanian intellectual majority is concerned with Great Albania as far as it affects the future of their country. Furthermore, many of them as well as the biggest political parties stay away from pan-nationalist declarations that they believe will harm the European Union future of Albania.

It is interesting to note that, in many cases, Albanian nationalism diverges with Pan-Albanian nationalism. Albanian Nationalism is concerned with prosperity in Albanian, not with Great Albania. It enhances the belief that Great Albania nationalism damages Albania. From this point of view, the Kosovo case is an international not an Albanian question and the possible independence of Kosovo does not mean the unification of Kosovo and Albania. Albanian nationalist parties are not only very weak politically, socially and economically, but they are also divided. They have many problems with each other and have never come together in a unique platform. Furthermore, the current number of nationalist parties is a multiplication of one or two parties that due to internal conflicts have divided into different factions.

³⁵⁹ During this chapters the term Albanians, defines the Albanians in Albania. The situation of the Albanians in Kosovo and Macedonia will be discussed separately in the following chapters.

Cultural Dynamics

Although the social, political and economic dynamics do not tell us much about the pan-Albanian inclination, we can detect some meaningful pan-nationalist sparks in another area. The pan-Albanian nationalism is materializing in the cultural area. The cultural collaboration of Albanians throughout the Balkans is materializing in terms of music, literature and sports. In spite of important divisions in political conceptualizations, Albanians seem to match each perfectly in cultural collaborations.

Artists and sportsmen use freely the pan-Albania area, enjoying the applause of the Albanian public in Albania as well as in Kosovo and Macedonia. Artists from Kosovo and Macedonia (Albanian Macedonians) participate and compete without any restrictions in Albanian national competitions and festivals. Collaborations and joint programs of Albanian and Kosovo television stations are now common to Albanians as well as Kosovars. Albanian radios and televisions broadcast in Kosovo. Many artistic companies operate in Kosovo as well as in Albania and there are no limits to publicizing their work in Albania or Kosovo. Albanians visit Kosovo without any problems and the number of Kosovo Albanians taking their holidays on the Albanian coast grows from year to year.

Cultural relations between Albanians in Macedonia and those in Kosovo and Albania are not much different. Joint artistic activities and the participation of Albanian Macedonians artists in Albania national festivals and competitions are now common. A permanently growing number of Albanians take holidays in Macedonia and a growing number of Albanian Macedonians prefer the coasts of Albania. Many Albanian artists frequent and work seasonally in Albanian communities in Macedonia.

No political, governmental or non-governmental organization orients, lead or inspires such cultural collaboration. It seems to be a spontaneous reaction of a de facto³⁶⁰ situation. In this case, a logical question rises: Does the Albanian government support this kind of collaboration? The answer is complex as it cannot be detected by a simple dataset. Yet it can be said that there is no proof to sustain the fact that the Albanian governments consciously, and in accordance with a precise aim, support such collaboration within Albanian societies. A more realistic evaluation is that the Albanian government has no reason to ban or obstruct these activities. The government does not put any restriction on the people's will and activities in this case. This attitude of the government does not seem related to any pan-nationalist aims. It is only a natural attitude toward something regarded as normal and natural.

Another important point beyond the cultural interrelationship of the Albanian communities is the positioning of the youth. It is interesting to see the Albanian youth's growing sensitivity to nationalism. The reaction of thousands of Albanian youth after the Albania – Greece³⁶¹ match for the elimination round of the football World Cup was more than surprising. The victory of Albania was widely celebrated throughout Albania and especially in Tirana where the celebrations lasted all night long. The Albanian flag (red and black) was everywhere. Tirana was red and black, faces were red and black, and

³⁶⁰ De facto situation: no border restrictions, non-governmental ban on joint cultural activities, common cultural heritage, common language, conscience of being of the same ethnic roots and so on.

³⁶¹ It is important to take into account that this is common to many youngs all over the world in similar situations. The day after the match, my sister e-mailed me all that happened that night. The subject of the e-mail was Fitore–Victory, and every phrase of it was full of joy and satisfaction, (Tidita Fshazi, e-mail, 05-sept-2004 2004).

clothes were red and black. The joy cannot be explained, unless witnessed. For several years, Albania had not experience such a national celebration.³⁶²

The strong reaction after the match with Greece was also due to the perception of Greece within the Albanians. Greece is regarded by a large majority as a state that has always plotted against Albanians. Furthermore, the treatment made of Albanian immigrants by Greece was another source of resentment. However, a growing trend of nationalistic feeling was witnessed, as the preparations and the flags flying in Tirana for the match with Ukraine were not less than for the match against Greece. The growing number of Albanian youth listening to Albanian music as the growing numbers of young Albanian composers of Albanian ethnic music is surprising.³⁶³

The growing sensitivity of Albania youth toward nationalism seems to be more a cultural than a political reaction. At least in this phase, it is characterized by a cultural point of view. When it comes to a political attitude, the political sensitivity of the Albanian youth has to be measured. Historical and political developments in Albania, as

³⁶² Actually, this was only a spark of what was happening to the Albanian youth. Surprisingly, the Albanian youth instead of entering a process of “anti-nationalism” was day-by-day feeling and being more related to nationalism. This process cannot be easily explained politically or sociologically. It seems like a reaction to foreign hatred of Albanian nationality. The term “hatred” may be exaggerated in terms of the real attitude the foreigners had. However, this is how Albanian studying or working outside regarded it. Their feelings of foreigners, of outsiders, of strangers, made them more related to their country. Once back, they realized that there was no choice in hiding or changing their identity. They understood that the outside, the West they had imagined and idealized for years was not different, was no better. The natural reaction was nationalism and thirst for success, for individual and national success (as Albanians). Therefore, the achievements of Albanians outside Albania were largely applauded within the country. Many Albanian youth with important achievements outside the country were regarded as heroes. One of these is Elsa Lila, an Albanian girl who achieved great success at the famous Italian annual song competition, San Remo. Some days before San Remo she came in Albanian and in a meeting with enthusiastic people seeing her as a national hero, she promised to send a message in Albanian from San Remo. It was the most watched San Remo ever in Albania and the day after everybody was discussing Elsa Lila and her message in Albanian. It is hard to explain the importance such events have for people after long years of traumatic experiences. Albanians are a typical example of this situation.

³⁶³ However, these developments must be also evaluated in the large context of global tendencies toward ethnic and nationalism

well as global tendencies permanently shape and reshape their national identity. A closer study of these dynamics is required to detect soundly the political attitude of the Albanian youth.³⁶⁴

³⁶⁴ For a general discussion and different evaluations on a “greater Albania,” see Sam Vaknin, *A Balkan Encounter: The Myth of Greater Albania (Part 1)* (Central Europe Review, Vol.1, no 17, Available [online] at <http://www.ce-review.org/99/17/vaknin17/html>, 18 October 1999 [cited 15.08.2005 2005]), Sam Vaknin, *The Myth of Greater Albania from Ilirium to Skanderbeg (Part 2)* (Central Europe Review Vol 1. No.18, Available[online] at <http://www.ce-review.org/99/18/vaknin18.html>, 25 October 1999 [cited 01.05.2005 2005]), Sam Vaknin, *The Myth of Greater Albania from Ottomans to Americans (Part 3)* (Central Europe Review vol 1. no. 19.available [online] at <http://www.ce-review.org/99/19/vaknin19.html>, 1.08.2005 1 November 1999 [cited 1.08.2005 2005]). Also Michael Radu, *Who Wants a Greater Albania?* Available [online] at (<http://www/fpri.org/enotes/balkansTurkey19980710.radu.whowantsagreateralbania.html>, 1.05.2005 10 july 1998 [cited 1.05.2005 2005]). Also Tim Judah, *Greater Albania?* (The New York Review of Books Available [online] at <http://kosovo.com/judah.html>, 2005 May 17, 2001 [cited 01.05.2005 2005]).

Albanians in Kosovo and Macedonia

Kosovo Crises and Nowadays Kosovo

The atrocities committed by Serbian police against the ethnic Albanians in the 1990s obliged the North Atlantic Alliance to intervene militarily in Kosovo in 1999.³⁶⁵ From that day on, Kosovo has been under the supervision of the UN, which deployed in Kosovo territory a Multinational Peacekeeping force (KFOR). Hitherto, Kosovo became the primary concern of most of the policy makers dealing with and within the Balkans as well as of academics working on the Balkans. Indeed, without the resolution of the Kosovo problem, there cannot be any definitive settlement in the Balkans. The integration of this region with the EU would not be possible. Furthermore, the EU would have a perilous high-tension source within its natural borders.

The present day Kosovo problem can be dated back to the 1878 Berlin Congress. The defeat of the Ottoman Empire by Russia forced the Empire to step back in the Balkans. Many territories inhabited by ethnic Albanians became part of the new Serbian state. The Albanian leaders gathered in Prizren (Kosovo)³⁶⁶ appealed to the Great Powers assembled in Berlin to recognize the Albanian (distinct) ethnicity/identity and to

³⁶⁵ Spring of 1999

³⁶⁶ The name in Albanian is “Lidhja e Shqiptareve per Mbrojtjen e te Drejtave te Shqiptareve” - “The Albanian League for the Protection of the Albanian’s Rights”. It is known as the League of Prizren (Lidhja e Prizrenit). The documents of the League are gathered by the Albanian Academy of Sciences in the: *Akademia e Shkencave e Republikes se Shqiperise Instituti i Historise, Lidhja Shqiptare E Prizrenit Ne Dokumentet Osmane 1878-1881 (Albanian Prizren League in the Ottoman Documents 1878-1881)*, ed. Kristaq Prifti (Tirane: Kombinati Poligrafik - Shtypshkronja e Re, 1978).

let the Albanians inhabit territories outside the territorial disputes between the Ottoman Empire and Russia. The call of the Albanians and the League memorandum directed to the Congress did not have any effect in the decision-making process. The efforts of the Albanians to be recognized as a distinct ethnicity failed. They were considered Muslims and subjects of the Ottoman Empire, so their fate was to be decided according the negotiations between the Empire and Russia.³⁶⁷

Although, as explained by Biberaj, “Kosovo was the cradle of Albanian nationalism, and the Kosovars had played a prominent role in the nationalist movements of the late nineteenth centuries and in the struggle that led to the proclamation of Albania’s independence in 1912,”³⁶⁸ Kosovo was left outside the Albanian borders. From this time on the Kosovo Albanians and the Albania Albanians live separated in different³⁶⁹ states.³⁷⁰ In fact, the disputes on the Albanian borders did not cease until the First World War and some problems were experienced during and in the aftermath of the Second World War.³⁷¹

Babuna writes that, “Vardar Macedonia and Kosovo became parts of the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes which was established in 1918 after the First World War. In this state, the Albanians of Kosovo and Macedonia were not recognized as

³⁶⁷ A comprehensive and detailed work is done by: Skendi, *Skendi*.

³⁶⁸ Elez Biberaj, *Albania: A Socialist Maverick* (Boulder Westview, 1990), p.113.

³⁶⁹ There is an exception of this situation in 1940 with Italian Rule uniting most of the Albanian territories for about four years. See Zavalani, *Historia E Shqipnis Mendimi Shqiptar (Albanian History the Albanian Version)*, p.303.

³⁷⁰ The Albanians in Macedonia will be the focus of the next section of this chapter. Albanians in Montenegro will be mentioned at the conclusion of the thesis. For the Albanians in Montenegro as well as the situation of Montenegro see James Pettifer, *Vickers*, p.181. Also see ICG (International Crisis Group), *After Milosevic a Practical Agenda for Lasting Balkans Peace* Available [online] at (<http://www.icg.com>, 05.2005 2001 [cited 05.2005 2005]).:p.77.

³⁷¹ The Northern Boundaries did not change since the 1913 with some little modifications after the First World War, whilst the problems between Greece and Albania concerning the Albanian southern borders continued even in the aftermath of the Second World War.

a distinct nation and were suppressed by the Serbs. Macedonia was referred to as 'South Serbia' and Kosovo as 'Old Serbia.' The use of the Albanian Language was prohibited and Albanians were forced to emigrate."³⁷² Biberaj wrote that, "Yugoslavs always considered Albanians, who had a distinct and well-developed national consciousness and never willingly participated in their annexation to Yugoslavia, to be outsiders. They made great efforts to dismantle the fabric of Albanian culture and society."³⁷³

The suppression of Albanians by the Serbs (and Montenegrins) was somehow suspended in the 1941 with the invasion of Albania by Italy. Italian rule collected under the kingdom of Albania the majority of Kosovo territories and the western Macedonia. Yet it did not last long and have any effect on the fate of the Albanians. It must be noted that although the unification by Italy of the Albanian inhabited territories did not have any concrete effect on the unification of this territories in the future, it demonstrated to Albanians that unification was possible. However, they continued to be separated after the Second World War with the incorporation of Kosovo and Macedonia into the Socialist Yugoslavia.

The close cooperation of the Albanian and Yugoslav Partisans during the Second World War seemed to be a green light for the Albanians in Yugoslavia, but it soon faded. Babuna writes that, "The Albanian-inhabited regions were divided between different administrative units. Kosovo became part of the Serbian Republic while a new Yugoslav republic was created in Macedonia. In 1945 an autonomous region of Kosmet (Kosovo-Metohija) was established. The Yugoslav Communists tried the initial post-war years to create a Balkan federation that would also include Albania and so achieve a permanent

³⁷² Babuna, "The Albanians of Kosovo and Macedonia: Ethnic Identity Superseding Religion," p.57.

³⁷³ Biberaj, "*Albania: A Socialist Maverick*", p.113.

solution to the Kosovo question confronting the two countries, but this project failed after the rift between Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union in 1948.”³⁷⁴ This process affected negatively the Albanians in Yugoslavia and especially those in Kosovo.

The period between 1948 – 1966 is one of continual reprisal against the Albanians. “The Yugoslav government discriminated against the Albanians politically, economically, and socially. Most Albanian-language schools were closed and measures were taken against the Albanian intelligentsia and teachers of history and the Albanian language. The commemoration of national holidays and the display of Albanian national symbols were banned.”³⁷⁵ The secret police and its head Rankovic took in extreme the measures against Albanians and according to Biberaj,³⁷⁶ special files were held on about 120,000 Albanians. A huge number of Albanians emigrated in these years.³⁷⁷ This number is evaluated to be as high as 230,000 Kosovo Albanians by the 1966.³⁷⁸

The continual pressure as well as the scarce economic conditions of the country³⁷⁹ led to demonstrations requesting the republic status for Kosovo. This gave way to important development in the situation of the Kosovo Albanians: Albanians were given the right to fly their flag (1968). In 1970 Prishtina University was founded and textbooks

³⁷⁴ Babuna, "The Albanians of Kosovo and Macedonia: Ethnic Identity Superseding Religion," p.58.

³⁷⁵ Ibid.: p.69.

³⁷⁶ Biberaj, "*Albania: A Socialist Maverick*", p.118.

³⁷⁷ “By 1953 many Albanians who were fearful about their position in Yugoslavia had declared themselves to be “Turks.” The Yugoslav authorities also took measures to encourage people in Kosovo and Macedonia to identify themselves as Turks.” Babuna, "The Albanians of Kosovo and Macedonia: Ethnic Identity Superseding Religion," p.69.

³⁷⁸ Biberaj, "*Albania: A Socialist Maverick*", p.119.

³⁷⁹ Kosovo was the most backward province of Yugoslavia and the major part of the Albanians were convinced that the Yugoslav government pursued discriminating economical policies against the Albanians. For a concise review of the social and economic situation of Kosovo during the communist period, see Muhamedin Kullashi, "The Kosovo Problem and the Disintegration of Yugoslavia," in *Balkans a Mirror of the New International Order*, ed. Kemali Saybasli Gunay Goksu Ozdogan (Istanbul: Eren Yayincilik ve Kitapcilik Ltd. Sti., 1995).

in Albanian were allowed to be provided from Tirana. Further positive steps were taken with the 1974 Constitution that granted a high degree of autonomy to Kosovo.³⁸⁰

All the constructive steps fulfilled by the Yugoslav government during these years seem to have been not enough or not even sincere. Malcolm explains that the reforms were not radical and that they would not have been enough to change the situation.³⁸¹ Furthermore, during this period, many Albanian leaders of different politic parties in Kosovo were shot dead under mysterious conditions. The autonomy gave the chance to Kosovo intellectuals to come in closer contact with their compatriots in Albania. The intense relations between Prishtina and Tirana University paved the way for Prishtina University to become the breeding ground of the Albanian nationalism in Kosovo.³⁸²

The relative calm of 1974-1981 did not mean that the Kosovo problem was solved. Overwhelming economic problems and the clear disparity between the economic situation of the Albanian majority and the Serb-Montenegrin minority in Kosovo provoked resentment among the Kosovo Albanians. "Malcolm writes how "at lunchtime on 11 March 1981, in the eating-hall of the University of Prishtina, a student found a cockroach in his soup. Disgusted, he hurled his tray of food on to the floor. Other students present equally fed up with their conditions of life at the University, and quickly joined in protest. Soon there were at least 500 of them demonstrating in the street outside

³⁸⁰ Babuna, "The Albanians of Kosovo and Macedonia: Ethnic Identity Superseding Religion," p.71.

³⁸¹ Biberaj, "*Albania: A Socialist Maverick*", p.107.

³⁸² To avoid misunderstanding it is important to note that Prishtina University became the cultural and the ideological alimentation center of the Albanian Nationalism in Kosovo. Yet, this does not mean that strong Nationalist feelings among the Kosovo Albanians did not exist before the foundation of Prishtina University. For interviews with various lectors of the Prishtina University, see Emerllahu, *Intellectuals*.

the main administrative building, chanting the words 'Food!' and 'Conditions!'"³⁸³ These words demonstrate better than anything else the reason of the Albanian frustration in Kosovo at the beginning of the 1980s. The harsh response of the Yugoslav authorities worsened the situation and what began as a student protest against the scarce economic conditions was transformed into a nationalist revolt.

"Two days later the University authorities tried to defuse the situation by promising new student hostels and improvements at the canteen; but the protests were already turning into something more seriously political. On the following day tanks appeared in the streets; but this did not stop several thousand construction workers from making a protest of their own, which would lead to more violent clashes with the police. Special units of security police were brought in from other parts of Yugoslavia, curfews were imposed, and a general state of emergency in Kosovo was now declared."³⁸⁴ It can be said that from these days on in spite of some relative moment of low tension the situation in Kosovo only worsened.³⁸⁵

The situation in Kosovo entered in its point of no return with the election of Slobodan Milosevic as leader of the YCP in 1987³⁸⁶ and after as the president of Yugoslavia in 1989. Conscious of the Kosovo position in the Serbian nationalism³⁸⁷ and history he exploited for individual goals the situation in Kosovo as well as the feeling of

³⁸³ Noel Malcolm, *Kosova, Balkanlari Anlamak Icin*, trans. Ozden Arkan (Istanbul: Sabah Kitaplari, 1999), p.334.

³⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p.335.

³⁸⁵ For different point of view in the Kosovo case see: Enver Hasani, "The Dissolution of Former Yugoslavia and the Case of Kosova/O: Political and Legal Aspects" (Bilkent University, 1998).

³⁸⁶ Yugoslav Communist Party

³⁸⁷ About the Kosovo position in the Serbian historiography and Nationalism, see Emerllahu, *Intellectuals*, p.15. Also Malcolm, *Malcolm*, p.60. For a thorough analysis of the Serbian Nationalism, see Ivo Banac, *The National Question in Yugoslavia: Origin, History, Politics* (Ithaca, N.Y: Cornell University Press, 1984), pp.133-52.

many Serbians. “The story of the battle of Kosovo has become a totem or talisman of Serbian Identity, so that this event has status unlike that of anything else in the History of Serbs.”³⁸⁸ Milosevic used this status to rub the Albanians of all their rights and seduce the Serbian public opinion to implement his dictatorial regime throughout Serbia as well as throughout Yugoslavia.

The abrogation of the rights accorded by the 1974 Constitution³⁸⁹ in the early nineties was the last blow to the effective existence of the Yugoslav state in Kosovo. Albanians developed their own institution and networks creating an Albanian parallel state in Kosovo. Babuna writes that “the peculiar situation produced by the dualism of an official Serbian State and a parallel Albanian state on the same territory began to erode in late 1995, but the separate states and societies continued to coexist until 1997 with relatively little political friction. Belgrade did not insist on the collection of taxes and the drafting of Albanian recruits for the Yugoslav Army from Kosovo, but the Albanian parallel state was established under the heavy presence of Serbian police and army which existed in Kosovo since 1992.”³⁹⁰

Against this “oppressor regime,” the Kosovo Albanians developed their own ways of resistance and until the 1996 their resistance was a non-violent one.³⁹¹ Rugova’s policy had three main goals: preventing the clashes in Kosovo, drawing the international

³⁸⁸ Malcolm, *Kosova, Balkanlari Anlamak Icin*, p.58.

³⁸⁹ “Constitutional amendments in 1968 granted the regions of Kosovo and Vojvodina some republican prerogatives and Kosovo was also allowed to fly the Albanian flag. This compromise was confirmed in the constitution of 1974. Kosovo was an Autonomous Province within the Serbian Republic with, de facto if not de jure, many of the powers of a republic within the Yugoslav Federation. Poulton, *Balkans Minorities and States in Conflict*, p.60.

³⁹⁰ Babuna, "The Albanians of Kosovo and Macedonia: Ethnic Identity Superseding Religion," p.75.

³⁹¹ The leader of this peaceful resistance movement was Ibrahim Rugova, leader of the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK)

community's attention toward Kosovo and acquiring the independence of Kosovo.³⁹² Although applauded by the Westerners for his "Ghandian tactics," Rugova failed to achieve his goals. As Caplan underlines, "the only real achievement would come in 1996, when Rugova would secure a pledge from Milosevic to allow the return of Albanian students to the schools and universities from which they had been ousted- a pledge which Milosevic would not begin to honor until faced with international sanctions nearly two years later."³⁹³

With the passing of years, an important goal of Rugova's policy became increasingly unreliable. It was clear that with the peaceful resistance the situation in Kosovo would not change. Dayton³⁹⁴ demonstrated that Rugova had only postponed the clashes without achieving any of his goals. The agreement made after the war in Bosnia, Dayton agreement, did not mention Kosovo or the Albanian question in Yugoslavia. Kosovo Albanians thought that the international community would touch upon the Kosovo issue in Dayton. However, the neglect of the international community made them believe that there would be no final solution without challenging the Serbian suppression with more aggressive means. Caplan writes that "the conclusion many Albanians drew from the Dayton proceedings, in the words of Veton Surroi, editor-in-chief of the Prishtina daily Koha Ditore, was that 'ethnic territories have legitimacy' and that 'international attention can only be obtained through war.'"³⁹⁵

³⁹² For a different approach on the Kosovo independence, see Kugi Hayredin, "Independence of Kosova: Stabilizing or Destabilizing Factoe in the Balkans" (Bilkent University, 1999).

³⁹³ Richard Caplan, "International Diplomacy and the Crisis in Kosovo," *International Affairs (Royal Institute of international Affairs)* 74, no. 4 (1998): p.752.

³⁹⁴ The reasons why was put a blind eye on Kosovo problem in the Dayton agreement are explained thoroughly in *ibid.*: p.750.

³⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p.752.

The most prominent result of all this was the official announcement of the existence of the KLA (Kosovo Liberation Army).³⁹⁶ From then on, the Albanian resistance would explain itself in a violent way, with the KLA increasing its control over Kosovo daily. “Serbs counterattacks – in many cases resulting in the destruction of entire villages and producing large number of civilian casualties – have only generated more support for the UCK (National Liberation Army). Adem Demaci,³⁹⁷ popularly known as Kosovo’s Nelson Mandela and head of the second largest political party in the province, spoke for many of his compatriots when in mid-March he announced, “I will not condemn the tactics of the Kosovo Liberation Army because the path of nonviolence has gotten us nowhere... The Kosovo Liberation Army is fighting for our freedom.”³⁹⁸

In 1997, there was an increase in political violence and KLA began to organize coordinated attacks against the Serbian forces in Kosovo, but although the KLA managed to put as much as thirty to forty percent of Kosovo under control it was defeated and forced to retreat by the Serbian forces in August 1998. However, it survived as an important political factor and even after this military defeat it was the KLA leader Hashim Thaci who led the Albanian delegation in the negotiations on the future of Kosovo in Rambouillet in February 1999.³⁹⁹

This was only the prelude of what was to happen in Kosovo. The intensification of the Serbian Forces operations against the Albanians in February 1998 created a status of alert in the International Community that was worried about another humanitarian crisis. “The Serb Massacre of forty alleged civilians in the Kosovo town of Racak, eighteen miles south east of Pristina, was widely perceived in Europe and Washington as

³⁹⁶ In Albanian: UCK (Ushtria Clirimtare e Kosoves).

³⁹⁷ A campaigner for Kosovo’s independence who began his third prison sentence in 1975 and was released only in 1990.

³⁹⁸ Caplan, " International Diplomacy and the Crisis in Kosovo," p.752.

³⁹⁹ Babuna, "The Albanians of Kosovo and Macedonia: Ethnic Identity Superseding Religion," p.77.

the final warning bell, and was so portrayed by the media. The dominant perception was that something had to be done, and quickly, or else the Bosnian ordeal would be catastrophically reproduced with damaging consequences for the future of Europe and the credibility of the transatlantic alliance with the United States.”⁴⁰⁰ The decision to begin air-strikes against Serbia was not taken easily, yet the mechanism ran much faster than in the Bosnia case.

In the first stages of the conflict, it was clear that the international community was reluctant about the military intervention in Kosovo. Caplan ⁴⁰¹ discusses in a detailed manner the reasons of the international community’s initial hesitancy. According to him, there were three main factors provoking hesitancy in the international community: divisions among the major powers, Serbian sovereignty claims and the unwillingness of the international community to pave way to an independent Kosovo. The situation precipitated in such a way that NATO decided to intervene with air-strikes against Serbian in order to prevent the mass expulsion and the ethnic cleansing of the Kosovo Albanians. NATO countries had to extend and prolong the strikes in order to defeat Serbian forces, which during the air strikes condensed the assaults against the Albanian civilians. The extension and prolongation of the air strikes provoked several criticism against the countries participating in the operation.⁴⁰²

Today seven years after the NATO intervention in Kosovo, although de jure⁴⁰³ a province of Serbia and Montenegro Federation, de facto Kosovo is under the supervision

⁴⁰⁰ Richard Falk, "Kosovo, World Order, and the Future of International Law," *The American Journal of International Law* 93, no. 4 (1999).

⁴⁰¹ Caplan, " International Diplomacy and the Crisis in Kosovo," pp.754-55.

⁴⁰² Louis Henkin, "Kosovo and the Law of "Humanitarian Intervention", *Journal of International Law* 93, no. 4 (1999).

⁴⁰³ This fact is also disputable

of the UN.⁴⁰⁴ An international peacekeeping force is deployed there (KFOR). The KLA is disarmed and transformed in a police body as the Kosovo Protection Force. Kosovo is developing further its institutions and the (private) economy is growing stronger day by day. Almost at ninety percent of the 1998-1999 immigrants have returned and all the system relies on independent Kosovo institutions and the assistance of the UN.

The ambiguity on the final status of Kosovo continues. The tension in the country rises from time by time due to the clashes between the ethnic Albanians and the Serbian minority in Kosovo. The symbol of the ambiguous status of Kosovo and of the relations between Albanians and Serbs is the town of Mitrovica in the north of Kosovo. The river Ibar divides Mitrovica at the North part of which is concentrated the Serbian minority and at the south part the Albania majority. KFOR controls the river in order to prevent possible clashes between the Albanians and the Serbs.

⁴⁰⁴ With UNSCR 1244 of June 10, 1999

Albanian Nationalism in Kosovo

As explained in the previous section, Kosovo is the cradle of Albanian nationalism. In spite of this, the Kosovo Albanians have lived in a country that has tried to deny their Albanian identity. Consequently, their primary fight has been the approval of their ethnical identity. Their second fight has been for equality. They pretended that Kosovo was no different from the other republics forming the Yugoslav Federation and Albanians had to be treated as an ethnic identity equal to the others forming the Yugoslav Federation. Although the first fight was won, the second one is still going on. Yet this second fight is mutilated: while before the 1999 the Kosovo Albanians sought a solution within the former Yugoslavia, since the 1999 crises such a solution has seemed unacceptable to them. They have not relied on the Serbian Authorities as much as in their promises.⁴⁰⁵ The conflict of the 1999 and its fresh memories opened an enormous gap between the two societies.⁴⁰⁶ At the same time, Serbia is not ready to accept the independence of what is regarded as a sacred territory for the Serbian nation.⁴⁰⁷

On the other hand, the international community has been hesitant in deciding the final status of Kosovo.⁴⁰⁸ It stands from making Kosovo a successful example of irredentism within the borders of a legitimate nation-state. Such an approach would be a

⁴⁰⁵ For a thorough analysis of nowadays Kosovo, see Group), *After Milosevic a Practical Agenda for Lasting Balkans Peace* ([cited), pp/pp.11-31/83-104

⁴⁰⁶ In a very interesting article and style Zizek explains that the gap opened within the societies is enormous, he underlines that the memories of terror cannot easily permit Albanians accepts Serbs. Furthermore, he claims that such a request to Albanian is illogical. Zizek, ([cited).

⁴⁰⁷ For a thorough analysis of the ethnic problems in Kosovo and the expectations of the Serbs as well as of the International Community, see ICG (International Crisis Group), "Kosovo's Ethnic Dilemma: The Need for a Civic Contract," (Pristine/Brussels: ICG, 2003).

⁴⁰⁸ For a thorough and realistic analysis about the final status and future of Kosovo, see ICG (International Crisis Group), "Kosovo: Toward Final Status" (Pristina/Belgrade/Brussels: ICG, 2005).

provocative example for many ongoing conflicts in different areas of the world. Furthermore, on the southern borders of Kosovo lies Albania, which the Kosovo Albanians regard as the “motherland.” Consequently, a possible independence would be easily regarded as materialization of pan-nationalist aims in the Balkans. The Balkans have permanently suffered from pan-nationalisms⁴⁰⁹ and the independence of Kosovo would provoke these last ones.

Although the status of Kosovo is so strictly related with “nationalism” issues, what is the real role of Albanian Nationalism in the present situation? In several revolts of the Kosovo Albanians, along with the “Kosovo Republic” slogans, a few times slogans like “Kosovo with Albania” or “Great Albania” have appeared.⁴¹⁰ “Kosovo Republic” explained an important fight and desire, but in spite of the slogans, Great Albania was not at the same degree a concern of the Kosovo Albanians. The slogan “Kosovo with Albania” or “Great Albania” remain in the status of a reaction to the extreme and meaningless suppression.⁴¹¹

In the book of Mehmet Emerllahu, *Nyja Shqiptare* (The Albanian Node), the most important Kosovo intellectuals and political leaders are asked about the situation in Kosovo and its future. None of them mentions as a priority or even as a future perspective the political integration of Kosovo and Albania. Their concern is all about the human, social and political rights in Kosovo and the status of Kosovo. It is interesting to note how all of them at the beginning of the 1990s did not even mention or plan a Kosovo Republic out of the former Yugoslavia. Fehmi Agani, when asked about the reasons of

⁴⁰⁹ Group), "Pan - Albanianism: How Big a Threat to Balkan Stability?," p.5.

⁴¹⁰ These kinds of slogans were very few in number. They represented neither an aim nor a desire of the Albanians of Kosovo. However, even though without any importance for the majority of Kosovo Albanians they were claimed to represent the real aim of the Albanians by the Serbian authorities.

⁴¹¹ Poulton, *Balkans Minorities and States in Conflict*, p.57.

the Kosovo crisis and the role of the Albanian nationalism in the crises, answers that the crises was a result of wrong politics, disinformation and manipulation of the situation by the Serbian authorities.⁴¹² Adem Demaci, one of the fiercest leaders of the independent Kosovo, does not infer or even make a point the possible amalgamation of the Albanian populated territories in the Balkans.⁴¹³

It would be a mistake to ignore the strong nationalist feelings of the Kosovo Albanians. However, the interpretation of these feelings is a critical point. The Serbs and Albanians stand in the extreme opposite poles on this point. While the Albanians evaluate these feelings as a natural reaction, the Serbs regard them as irredentism and even as “terrorism.”⁴¹⁴ The Serbs are right to the extent that Kosovo is the breeding ground of Albanian Nationalism, yet they consciously or mistakenly misinterpret the historical characteristics of Albanian nationalism as well as the current Albanian communities’ situation. Such a misinterpretation has resulted in a useless pressure over the Albanians in Kosovo, pressure that provoked strong nationalist feelings which in spite of all even nowadays does not enhance any important pan-nationalist dynamic.⁴¹⁵

The UCK (*Ushtria Clirimtare e Kosoves* – Kosovo Liberation Army) was given as an example of a terrorist-irredentist movement. A closer analysis would show that the UCK currently transformed into the police force of Kosovo was nothing more than a delayed defensive reaction of a denial of rights and identity. Although in the UCK were

⁴¹² The well-known Kosovo academician Fehmi Agani in Emerllahu, *Intellectuals*, p.39.

⁴¹³ *Ibid.*, p.203.

⁴¹⁴ For the attitudes of the Kosovo academic and intellectuals toward the former Serbian regime in Kosovo and their requests to the former Yugoslav government as well as the Serbian attitude toward their requests, see Instituti i Historise Akademia e Shkencave, Instituti i Studimit te Marredhenieve Nderkombetare, Lidhja e Shkrimtareve, *C'hone Dhe C'kerkjne Kosovaret (What Do the Kosovars Say? What Do the Kosovars Want?)* (Tirane: Kombinati Poligrafik - Shtypshkronja e Re, 1989).

⁴¹⁵ The same is explained in the : ICG, "Pan - Albanianism: How Big a Threat to Balkan Stability?."

present pan-nationalist wings it has never become a pan-nationalist and furthermore it has never been transformed never transformed into a terrorist movement.⁴¹⁶ Especially the Serbian authorities permanently continue to accuse Albania of protecting and helping UCK leaders and militants. There are important elements that show the support of Albania of the UCK and its leaders. Yet why would it be such a surprising case in a situation where people of the same ethnic and cultural roots are brutally suppressed? Although disputable in the international law, it is a natural reaction of a society and a usual attitude in similar cases. Furthermore, as clearly explained in the major part of the studies on the Kosovo case, the Albanian support to Kosovo Albanians never enhanced any irredentist aim.⁴¹⁷

Kosovo Albanians live in the breeding ground of Albanian nationalism and are the main actors of this nationalism. There were small groups in Kosovo requesting the unification of Albania and Kosovo, yet none of them ever became the real representative of the feelings of the Kosovo Albanians. This situation seems controversial, but this is the core of the Albanian dilemma. Albanians have never made a serious effort toward a Great Albania, never firmly claimed a Great Albania and even nowadays in the era of fluent borders, they do not even seem ardent advocates of a politically big Albania. The best question to such a case study would be, “why do not Albanians claim a big Albania? Why are Albanians unable to form a state including the majority of the Albanians in the Balkans?” Actually, Albanian academics have perceived the problem and they formulate what is the core of the Albanian problem in the Balkans; what is the problem with the

⁴¹⁶ Kola, *Great Albania*, p.331.

⁴¹⁷ For a thorough and realistic analysis of the Kosovo crisis and its effects in Albania and the Albanian relation with the Kosovo crisis, see ICG (International Crisis Group), "The View from Tirana the Albanian Dimension of the Kosovo Crises" (Tirana/Brussels: ICG, 1998).

state-forming capacity of the Albanians?⁴¹⁸ Consequently, this thesis claims that all questions about Pan-Albanian nationalism or Great Albania have primarily to deal with the fact that most of the claims about Albanian nationalism and its characteristics are built on myths and misperceptions. The point is that, Pan-Albanian nationalism as well as Greater Albania is more an ideological, geopolitical, diplomatic and strategic fiction than an Albanian reality.

⁴¹⁸ Lubonja in Fuga, *Ikja Nga Kompleksi I Rozafes. Politika E Komunikuar Ne Shqiperine E Tranzicionit*, p.320.

Albanians in Macedonia⁴¹⁹

The key of the Balkans stability and security is hidden in nine letters that define a small country but a major dispute: Macedonia. Macedonia is a part of what after the nineties has been defined as the Western Balkans: Albania, Bosnia – Herzegovina, Croatia, Serbia – Montenegro and Macedonia.⁴²⁰ Bulgaria claims Macedonians to be of Bulgarian origin and so has had serious problems in accepting Macedonia as a distinct nation therefore as the Macedonian Republic.⁴²¹ Greece as well does not accept the name of Macedonia as the name of a distinct nation state as it claims the ancient Macedonians were Greek. Furthermore, it has a region called Macedonia within its borders.⁴²² Consequently, the existence of Macedonia is regarded as a threat to the integrity of the Greek nation and Greece insists in not recognizing Macedonia as the Macedonian Republic.⁴²³

⁴¹⁹ The name of Macedonia is a serious problem still not completely resolved. It consists of a problem rooted in the Balkans' countries territorial claims against each other. The Macedonian name issue consists of a perilous dispute between Greece and Macedonia and Macedonia and Bulgaria. The problem between Macedonia and Bulgaria is more likely to be resolved and is not affecting seriously the relations between the two countries nowadays. However, the dispute between Greece and Macedonia does affect the relations of the two countries. This section of the thesis will mention the claims of Greece and Bulgaria on Macedonia and the name issue only briefly and in relation with its effect to Balkans security. This thesis will not deal in detail with Macedonian problems that are not directly related with the Albania question in Macedonia. As a result, this thesis calls Macedonia the Former Republic of Yugoslavia called Macedonia. In the international area, it is known as FYROM, Macedonia and even some times as Skopje.

⁴²⁰ This region is called also South Eastern Europe and all these countries are members of The Stability Pact an attempt of the international community and especially EU to develop a long term strategy in order to prevent conflict and prop development in the region. The Stability Pact will be discussed in a more detailed manner at the Conclusion section of this thesis

⁴²¹ For a detailed account of the Macedonian Bulgarian relations, see Victor Roudometof, *Collective Memory, National Identity and Ethnic Conflict Greece, Bulgaria and the Macedonian Question* (London: Praeger, 2002), p.39/65.

⁴²² For detailed research on the Macedonian – Greek dispute, see Jane K. Cowan, ed., *Macedonia the Politics of Identity* (London: Pluto Press, 2000).

⁴²³ After serious international pressure Greece accepted to recognize Macedonia as the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. For the latest developments of the Greek Macedonian dispute,

Serbia has not yet resolved the border problems with Macedonia and both of the countries have claims on each other's borders. Serbia also especially during the early nineties had serious problems in accepting de facto the Macedonian independence and made continual efforts to control Macedonian domestic affairs.⁴²⁴ Albania has no official claim on Macedonia and was among the first countries to accept the Macedonian independence and the name of Macedonia.⁴²⁵ The attitude of Albania toward Macedonia is a more complicated specific one. Albania is the "mother land" of the largest ethnic group different from Macedonians in Macedonia. Macedonians call them an ethnic minority and claim the ethnic Albanians to be the 22.9 per cent of a total population of 2,033,964.⁴²⁶ The ethnic Albanians do not agree with this percentage and claim the ethnic Albania population in Macedonia to be as high as forty per cent of the total population.⁴²⁷ However, independent sources argue that the percentage is something between the claims of both of the parts, thirty per cent of the total Macedonian population.⁴²⁸

The relations of Albania and Macedonia are affected by the situation of the ethnic Albanians in Macedonia. Furthermore, all the security of the region is strictly related to the settlements of the disputes within these two major ethnic groups in Macedonia. The tension within two groups puts in question the future of Macedonia opening way to

see International Crisis Group, "Macedonia's Name: Why the Dispute Matters and How to Resolve It," in *ICG Balkans Report* (Skopje/Brussels: ICG, 2001).

⁴²⁴ For detailed information about Serbia, see International Crisis Group, *After Milosevic a Practical Agenda for Lasting Balkans Peace* ([cited],p.33 For a good summary of the Serbian claims on Macedonia see International Crisis Group, "The Politics of Ethnicity and Conflict," (Skopje: ICG, 1997), p.4.

⁴²⁵ Group, "The Politics of Ethnicity and Conflict," p.3.

⁴²⁶ International Crisis Group, *Macedonia's Ethnic Albanians: Bridging the Gulf*, Available [online]

(http://www.crisisgroup.org/library/documents/europe/098_macedonia_s_ethnic_albanians_bridging_the_gulf.doc, 2002 [cited june 2005 2005]).p.4.

⁴²⁷ Ibid. p.5.

⁴²⁸ Ibid.

revival of former territorial claims Greece, Bulgaria and Serbia has over Macedonia. Even the scenario of the partition of Macedonia is frightful for all Europe as similar claims although not as perilously as in Macedonia are not missing throughout European geography.⁴²⁹

“The Macedonian issue has divided Balkan nation-states since the middle of the nineteenth century. In the second half of the nineteenth century, the region was fiercely claimed by all the neighboring nation states (Serbia, Greece, and Bulgaria).”⁴³⁰ “Macedonia formed an integral part of the so-called Eastern Question (the question of the partition of the Ottoman lands) which continued until the end of the First World War, but Macedonia was to continue to be one of the main sources of tension in the Balkans until the middle of the twentieth century.”⁴³¹

Macedonia was one of the republics of Yugoslavia⁴³² until 21 November 1991, when Macedonia declared its independence. The departure of Macedonia from the former Yugoslavia was materialized through a peaceful process. A referendum held on September 17, 1991 showed the large majority of Macedonians to be favorable to an independent republic of Macedonia. Consequently, on November 21, began the journey of Macedonia as an independent modern nation-state.

The independence of Macedonia was the less problematic process of the disintegration of Yugoslavia. However, its future was the most uncertain one among the other former Yugoslav republics. The key issue of its future lays in the way ethnic Albanians and Macedonians will settle the disputes and in their will identify with a nation state that does not exclude the ethnic, but also that represents properly Macedonians.

⁴²⁹ about an explanation of the boarder problems throughout Europe and their intersection with the Macedonian question see: Roudometof, *Collective Memory, National Identity and Ethnic Conflict Greece, Bulgaria and the Macedonian Question*, p.8.

⁴³⁰ Ibid., p.5.

⁴³¹ Babuna, "The Albanians of Kosovo and Macedonia: Ethnic Identity Superseding Religion," p.79.

⁴³² For a thorough study on the Yugoslavia history, see John R. Lampe, *Yugoslavia as History Twice There Was a Country* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

Albanians in Macedonia, unlike the Albanians in Kosovo, did not develop a parallel state,⁴³³ but collaborated with the Macedonian state. Different Albanian political parties were part of Macedonian political life.⁴³⁴ Furthermore, in spite of moments of serious tension and clashes between the ethnic Albanians and Macedonians the political dialog within both of the parts was never totally interrupted. Although integrated in the Macedonian system ethnic Albanians were not satisfied with the status within the Macedonia and underlying the percentage they hold in the Macedonia population they ask for a constituent nation status.⁴³⁵

A constituent nation status means the declaration the constitution of Macedonia that Macedonia is the not only the nation of Macedonians, but also of Albanians. Albanians do not agree to be a minority within Macedonia as they believe that the percentage they hold in the population does not permit this. Another important request of the Albanians in Macedonia is the Albanian language. Higher education in Albanian is not possible due to regulations in the Macedonian constitution. Albanians ask firmly the Macedonian government to permit and recognize the Albanian University of Tetovo.

The Tetovo University⁴³⁶ issue is among the fiercest disputes between Albanians and Macedonians. However, the requests of the Albanians regarding language go further:

⁴³³ For a thorough analysis of the Albanian parallel state in Kosovo see: Babuna, "The Albanians of Kosovo and Macedonia: Ethnic Identity Superseding Religion," p.74.

⁴³⁴ For detailed information about the Albanian political parties in Macedonia see: International Crisis Group, *The Albanian Question in Macedonia: Implications of Kosovo Conflict for Inter-Ethnic Relations in Macedonia*, available [online] at (http://www.crisisgroup.org/library/038_the_albanian_question_in_macedonia.doc, June 2005 1998 [cited June 2005 2005]).p.26.

⁴³⁵ For a timeline of the crisis in Macedonia see *Crisis Timeline in Macedonia*, available [online] at (<http://www.macedonia.org/crisis/timeline.html>, 1.03.2005 2005 [cited 1.05.2005 2005]).

⁴³⁶ "In late 1994 the Albanian Community formed a private university in Tetovo, a majority ethnic Albanian town in western Macedonia. The government declared the university unconstitutional and police raided the premises in December 1994. Despite government warnings, the university re-opened two months later. Two days later, the police again raided the university.

Albanians ask for further hours of Albania in the national television, use of Albania as official language in the municipalities where Albanians hold the majority and the use of Albanian as a second language in public sector and law courts. Opportunities for the Albanians to have higher rates of participation in the public sector constituted another important request.⁴³⁷

The failure of the Macedonian government to answer the Albanian request opened the way to a radicalization of the Albanian attitude in Macedonia. The continual incidents, the aggressive attitude of police and lack of will of the governments to fulfill also the basic request of the Albanians where they constituted the absolute majority provoked a further alienation of the Albanians and deepened the separation between them and the Macedonians. Furthermore, the Macedonian governments until the 1999 could not do very much to reform or even to stop the declining trend in the Macedonian economy.⁴³⁸

From time to time ethnic violence flared in the streets. International Crisis Groups writes that, "in July 1997, Macedonian special forces entered the city of Gostivar, in Western Macedonia, forcibly to remove an Albanian flag flying over the city hall. The ethnic Albanian mayor, Rupi Osmani, was defying a court ruling that stipulated that the Albanian flag could fly only on holidays alongside the Macedonian flag. Ethnic Albanian

They destroyed parts of the building, confiscated equipment, and arrested several administrators, including the president of the university, Fadil Sulejmani. One Albanian died in clashes between ethnic Albanians and Macedonian police. The university re-opened the following month and continues to have an uneasy but quiet relationship with the authorities." (Group, *The Albanian Question in Macedonia: Implications of Kosovo Conflict for Inter-Ethnic Relations in Macedonia* ([cited].p.5.)

⁴³⁷ For detailed information about the requests of the ethnic Albanians in Macedonia, see Ibid.([cited).

⁴³⁸ For detailed information about the performance of the Macedonian governments see International Crisis Group, "Macedonia Update: Challenges and Choices for the New Government," in *Balkans Report* (Skopje - Brussels: ICG, 1999).

demonstrators gathered to prevent the police from entering the town hall, and the state security officers responded with brutal force. ... Osmani was arrested and sentenced to 13 years and 8 month (later reduced to seven years) in prison.”⁴³⁹

The most dangerous incentive to the already tense ethnic Albanian Macedonian relations came from the Kosovo Crises.⁴⁴⁰

Macedonia and Kosovo were part of the same state 1991. ... Ties between the ethnic Albanians in Kosovo and Macedonia became especially strong after an Albanian-language university was established in Prishtina, to which many ethnic Albanians from Macedonia went. Due to increased mobility, family ties and close relationships developed between many ethnic Albanians from the various part of Yugoslavia. ... Macedonian's ethnic Albanians displayed a great degree of solidarity towards their brethren from Kosovo during the recent crisis. Since the Macedonian government dragged its feet before finally deciding to set up refugee camps, ethnic Albania families throughout Macedonia accommodated most of them.⁴⁴¹

The Kosovo crisis not only promoted and strengthened nationalist feeling, but it also opened way to the intrusion of important radical elements in Macedonia. While the Macedonia government with its harsh attitude prepared the breeding ground for nationalist reaction, the Kosovo crises offered the required inspiration and all the means for resistance and rebellion.⁴⁴² The deterioration of the economic situation due to

⁴³⁹ ICG, *The Albanian Question in Macedonia: Implications of Kosovo Conflict for Inter-Ethnic Relations in Macedonia*.p.8.

⁴⁴⁰ International Crisis Group, *Macedonia: Towards Destabilisation? The Kosovo Crisis Takes Its Toll on Macedonia* , available [online] at (http://www.crisisgroup.org/library/documents/europe/067_macedonia_towards_destabilisation.doc, 1999 [cited june 2005 2005]).

⁴⁴¹ Group, *Macedonia's Ethnic Albanians: Bridging the Gulf* ([cited].p.22.

⁴⁴² Large amounts of arms were transported to Macedonia territory during the 1997 Pyramids crises in Albania. These amounts were duplicated during and after the Kosovo crisis. However, the illegal transport of arms was not an issue related simply to the Albanians and the nationalist goals of the Albanians. International reports tell about complicated networks of various illegal traffics in which were implicated also the governments and important interest groups. The Macedonia government is reported to be one of the implicated parts. See International Crisis

embargos from the international community to Serbia and to Macedonia from Greece weakened the capacity of the government to control, react properly and increased discontent within the citizens consequently they became more vulnerable to provocations and propaganda.

An armed group that called themselves the National Liberation Army (NLA)⁴⁴³ seriously challenged the authority of the government and in the 2001 Macedonia came at the verge of civil war. The clashes between the ethnic Albanians and the Macedonian army took a very dangerous turn in the spring of 2001. Thousands of immigrants took the way to Albania and especially Kosovo. In spite of all the warnings of the international community neither the Macedonia army and paramilitary forces stepped back taking extreme measures toward ethnic Albanians nor the NLA retreated from its position and stopped attacking the Macedonian army and paramilitary forces.⁴⁴⁴

The critical situation focused the attention of the international community in Macedonia and many prominent leaders precipitated there to make possible a settlement between ethnic Albanians and Macedonians. Finally, under an extreme international pressure,⁴⁴⁵ the Macedonian Government and ethnic Albanians political leaders signed an agreement in Ohrid, a resort town surrounding the lake Ohrid, on August 8. The Ohrid agreements answered many of the requests of the Albanians while letting intact the most vulnerable points for the Macedonians: it opened way to a larger use of Albanian

Group, "Macedonia's Public Secret: How Corruption Drags the Country Down," in *ICG Balkans Report* (Skopje/brussels: ICG, 2002).

⁴⁴³ International Crisis Group, "Macedonia: The Last Chance for Peace," in *ICG Balkans Reports* (Skopje/Brussels: ICG, 2001), p.5.

⁴⁴⁴ About the development of the crisis its precipitation to armed clashes see: International Crisis Group, "Macedonia: Still Sliding," in *Balkans Briefing* (Skopje/Brussels: ICG, 2001).

⁴⁴⁵ The EU, NATO and State Department representatives were continually present in Skopje. The responsible for the European Common Defense Policy Javier Solana and the General Secretary lord Robertson made several visits in Skopje during that period.

especially in the municipalities where the Albanians comprised at least the twenty per cent of the population yet it did not resolve the issue of the Albanian university. It opened way to a larger representation of the Albanians in public sector yet it did not secure the ways this was to be achieved.⁴⁴⁶

Although an agreement was achieved and NATO troops were deployed in Macedonia the future and the country was still in question, as neither the ethnic Albanians nor the Macedonians trusted each other.⁴⁴⁷ Furthermore, the agreement satisfied many Albanian requests, but did not show the ways in which these requests would be fulfilled. Macedonians regard Ohrid as a posed agreement of an international community supporting ethnic Albanians and partition of Macedonia as such they are not willingly to implement it. In spite of all the declarations and support NATO and EU offers to Macedonia and its security Macedonia are still not sure if all this is to their advantage or disadvantage.⁴⁴⁸

The economic problems and the problems of the government to deal with these problems are not of much help in resolving the tense situation within the major ethnic groups in Macedonia. Corruption and implication with international organized crime deteriorate the situation provoking tension even when the problems take a positive verge. The legacy of 2001 is a very negative one as it destroyed the last pieces of trust remaining within the major ethnic groups in Macedonia. The situation seems hopeless

⁴⁴⁶ For detailed information on the Ohrid agreements, see International Crisis Group, "Macedonia: War on Hold," in *Balkans Briefing* (Skopje/Brussels: ICG, 2001).

⁴⁴⁷ For the deployment of the NATO troops in Macedonia and the immediate developments after Ohrid Agreement, see International Crisis Group, "Macedonia: Filling the Security Vacuum," in *Balkans Briefing* (Skopje/Brussels: ICG, 2001).

⁴⁴⁸ For the approach of NATO and the EU to Macedonia and Macedonians reactions to international community, see International Crisis Group, "Moving Macedonia toward Self-Sufficiency: A New Security Approach for Nato and the Eu," in *Balkan Report* (Skopje/Brussels: ICG, 2002).

taking into consideration the political divisions Albanians and Macedonians has within themselves; neither the Albanian nor Macedonian political parties come easily to common political platforms.⁴⁴⁹

Nowadays Macedonia is still dealing with the implementation of the Ohrid Agreement. There are problems in passing the required regulations from the parliament. These problems are accompanied by problems in adopting the regulations by the public sector and finally all this is reflected in the impossibility of implementing the Ohrid Agreement in everyday life. Everything is reminiscent of a zero sum game where the ethnic Albanians and Macedonians believe a gain of one part is the loss of the other.⁴⁵⁰ Nonetheless, the situation has improved since 2001 and Macedonia has at least achieved an improvement in security. Yet the situation remains a very fragile one and requires special attention from the international community as well as a serious and sincere commitment by all the political leaders.

⁴⁴⁹ For a detailed report of Macedonia after Ohrid see: International Crisis Group, "Macedonia: No Room for Complacency," in *Europe Report* (Skopje/Brussels: ICG, 2003).

⁴⁵⁰ International Crisis Group, "Macedonia: Not out of the Woods Yet," in *Europe Briefing* (Skopje/Brussels: ICG, 2005).

Albanian Nationalism in Macedonia

Albanian nationalism in Macedonia can be understood more easily in comparison with two other Albanian Nationalisms in the Balkans: Albanian nationalism in Albania and Albanian Nationalism in Kosovo. Albanians in Albania proper have lived in their nation state since 1912. Nationalism in Albania is in its major part focused on the Albanians in Albania and is concerned with the Albanians outside its borders more culturally than politically. Pan-Albanian nationalism is very weak in Albania. The differences of attitude toward nationalism between the government and the society are almost inexistent. Explained in terms of nationalist feelings, it can be said that arguably Albanians can be regarded as the least nationalist within the Albanians in Macedonia and Kosovo.⁴⁵¹

The Kosovo and Macedonia Albanians have shared the same state since the 1918. Although under different administrative units, they have been able to communicate with each other much more than with the Albanians in Albania. As a result, the Albanians in Macedonia and Kosovo are nearer culturally and socially to each other than with the Albanians in Albania. However, important differences within their situations can be detected. The Albanians in Kosovo constitute the absolute majority of the region in which they live. Aware of this fact, they have never regarded themselves as a minority within a state. They always have believed they were in a region that had all the requirements to become an independent republic, but to which this right was denied.

⁴⁵¹ For a thorough analysis of the Albanian nationalism in Kosovo and Macedonia, see Babuna, "The Albanians of Kosovo and Macedonia: Ethnic Identity Superseding Religion."

Consequently, the Albanians in Kosovo developed a parallel state system. The nationalism in Kosovo cannot easily be called minority nationalism as the Kosovo Albanians had a well developed network within their region. They did not fight for minority rights; they fought for a republic status and did not collaborate politically with the central authority at the contrary perpetually “rebelled” to it. Furthermore, although the Albanians in general had a minority status in Yugoslavia, they were not regarded as a minority in Kosovo, where the Serbians constituted the minority. The Albanian nationalism in Kosovo was stronger than in Albania as it was strengthened by the denial of rights and identity.

Albanian nationalism in Macedonia can be regarded as minority nationalism although the Albanians in Macedonia are not happy with such a connotation, de jure and de facto they are accepted as a minority. Furthermore, they have been much more integrated with the central authority than the Kosovo Albanians. Both of the communities, the Kosovo Albanians and the Albanians in Macedonia do not have their own state yet they differ in this as the Kosovo Albanians had a de facto state and have the possibility to have their own state. The Albanians in Macedonia do not have the possibility to have their own state, unless they support some irredentist goals such as unification with Albania or Kosovo.⁴⁵²

As a result, the Albanian nationalism in Macedonia can be regarded as a minority nationalism that is strengthened each time the central government pressure rises and their rights are denied. The Albanians in Macedonia seek solutions within the Macedonian political system. They have accepted their citizenship as Macedonians, but there are

⁴⁵² For a different insight on Albanian nationalism in Macedonia see Jason Miko, *Ahmeti's Hypocrisy*, available [online] at (<http://realitymacedonia.org.mk/web/news-page.asp?nid=2043>, 2005 [cited 01.06.2005 2005]). Also Tim Judah, *"Greater Albania" Gathers Support* (BCR NO.341 http://www.iwpr.net/index.pl?archive/bcr2/bcr2_2002doc_eng.txt, 7 June 2002 [cited 01.05.2005 2005]).

concerned with their political, human and cultural rights. Albanians in Kosovo are alienated to the Federation's citizenship. Especially after the late 80s, they regarded it as a mean of circulation, but never identified with it.

The Albanian nationalism in Kosovo is the strongest Albanian nationalism of the three Albanian Nationalisms in the Balkans. It is the result of the continual struggle Kosovo Albanians had to give in order to protect their identity and to gain a status they believed had been unfairly denied to them.⁴⁵³ The Albanian nationalism in Albania is another version of the Albanian nationalism in the Balkans. It can be described as a well-defined modern nation-state nationalism. The third version of Albanian nationalism in the Balkans is that of the Albanians in Macedonia. It can be defined as a minority nationalism, the actors of which identify with the nation-state to which they belong, but seek further political and cultural rights.

The common characteristics of what are called here Albanian nationalisms in the Balkans can be explained as follows: although the Albanians in Macedonia and Kosovo can be regarded as more religious than those in Albania, Albanian nationalism has never enhanced any religious inclination.⁴⁵⁴ On the contrary, it has been careful to embrace different religions and avoid religious connotations.⁴⁵⁵ Albanian nationalism has not embraced any important irredentist dynamic. Irredentist claims have been more a reaction to denial of identity, political allegations of anti-Albanian elements or manipulative

⁴⁵³ For further information, see Ger Duijzings, *Religion and the Politics of Identity in Kosovo* (London: Hurst & Company, 2000).

⁴⁵⁴ See Babuna, "The Albanians of Kosovo and Macedonia: Ethnic Identity Superseding Religion."

⁴⁵⁵ For a thorough explanation of Islam in Balkan societies, see Norris, *Islam in the Balkans Religion and Society between Europe and the Arab World*.

declarations of different interest groups, Albanian as well as foreign. Albanian nationalism throughout its history has been mainly an ethnic and cultural nationalism.⁴⁵⁶

Nevertheless, nowadays Albanian nationalism and identity is passing through a specific process. On the one hand, Albanian communities struggle for their prosperity, each in its own geography and borders and are focused on different goals,⁴⁵⁷ while on the other hand, they get closer to each other as the economic and cultural cooperation within these regions increase. This makes the differences that existed within these societies disappear. These would open the way to changes in the Albanian national identity, as Albanians in these communities would identify with a larger and more homogenous group. However, this identification would not have any political implication in the short term, as the goals of these societies as previously mentioned are different. In the long term, it can be interpreted as a “culturally larger Albania or larger Kosovo.”⁴⁵⁸ However, even if it happens, it definitely would not be something the Albanians planned, worked on or fought for. Once again, circumstances bring them to accept and adapt to a new situation. Only that, as Arben Xhaferri, a prominent Albanian politician in Macedonia explains, this time circumstances seem to be working for the Albanians, not against them.

⁴⁵⁶ Roudometof, *Collective Memory, National Identity and Ethnic Conflict Greece, Bulgaria and the Macedonian Question*, pp.172-78.

⁴⁵⁷ The major goal of Albania is to improve its democracy and market economy and realize integration with the EU. The major goal of Kosovo is to gain its final status and after to continue its road in improving the independent state. The major goal of Albanians in Macedonia is to improve their situation within the Macedonian society.

⁴⁵⁸ Roudometof, p.203.

Conclusion

If Flaubert were alive today, he would be taking a special interest in Western policy on the Balkans. He was always fascinated by a certain kind of accepted wisdom, which shades off into platitudes, clichés, and expressions of sheer stupidity -- what he lovingly described as *la betise*. An updated version of his *Dictionary of Received Ideas* would have to include several new entries derived from Western policymakers during the Bosnian war: "*Balkan people*: full of ancient ethnic hatreds. Cannot stop fighting one another." "*NATO air strikes*: completely ineffective without the deployment of hundreds of thousands of NATO ground troops." "*Arming the victims*: creates a level killing field. Only prolongs the war", and so on. More recent events would have added a couple of new entries: "*Kosova, autonomy of*: must be restored." "*Kosova, independence of*: dangerous and destabilizing; would lead to new Balkan war." These two received ideas are constantly affirmed by our politicians and diplomats; the more they are repeated, the less often anyone pauses to question their truth. How could a policy assumption be wrong, when the foreign ministry of every major power in the West is agreed about it? The Bosnian experience suggests that the answer to that question is: very easily. Some serious thinking is needed about the possibility of independence as a long-term solution for Kosovo. If, as I believe, the foreign policy establishment has got this issue completely wrong, the consequences, in terms of Balkan instability and costly Western involvement -- to say nothing of the lives of thousands of the local inhabitants -- could be severe.⁴⁵⁹

The words of Malcolm include of the some important conclusions of this thesis. The Balkans are "imagined" more than real, a production of "misperception" and "political interests." Consequently, any discussion or policy decision about the Balkans is made on some "myths" that although created have come to be identified with the reality of the Balkans, not only by those who generated them, but also by the Balkan people. This thesis has made an effort to reflect in a balanced way the inside and outside dynamics of the Balkans in order to reveal the reality of the region outside the clichés. The Albanian case is one of the most effected by the clichés. The present day Albanian question in the Balkans cannot be chosen without debunking all the myths that exist

⁴⁵⁹ Noel Malcolm, *Kosovo: Only Independence Will Work*, available [online] at (<http://www.frosina.org/articles/default.asp?id=86>, 2004 1998 [cited August 2004 2004]).

about Albanian nationalism, religion in Albania and in general Albanian society. This thesis has made an attempt to collect in a logical line the historical background, the present day's world wide effects on the Albanian question and the Albanian reality in order to materialize an analysis of the crisis outside the myths that perpetually transform reality.

Albanian nationalism, contrary to the general perception, is more a reaction than a result of dynamics inherent in Albanian society; it is basically a reaction to the suppression of rights and the negation of identity. The present day Albanian question in the Balkans is originated and deepened more by misperception and wrong politics than by the dynamics inherent in Albanian society. It is important to understand this fact in order to resolve the status of Kosovo and the tensions in Macedonia. The Kosovo Albanians would not accept autonomy but only independence because they do not believe their rights would be guaranteed in any Serbian state. This belief is not inspired by Albanian nationalism, but by their historical experiences. As such, the unification or a Greater Albania is not an important dynamic inspiring the requests for the independence of the Kosovo Albanians. Furthermore, as previously discussed, a possible integration into the EU is much more important to them than a Greater Albania. However, although integrated in the EU they would not accept to be a part of the Serbian Montenegrin Federation as the fresh memories of atrocities provoke an immediate reaction to any kind of Serbian rule.

Muslim Albanians are in the majority; however, Christian Albanians are as influential as the Muslims in Albanian society as they have been throughout history. Religious divisions have never represented a meaningful dynamic in the Albanian

communities. Religion is practiced in its most tolerant form in Albania. Religious fundamentalism would be an extraordinary exception in Albanian society. It must be noted that the Albanians in Macedonia are regarded to be more religious than the Albanians in Albania and Kosovo. This perception is not mistaken; however, it does not affect the prior deduction. The tensions between the Albanians and the Macedonians in Macedonia cannot be placed in a religious context. The real dynamic of the conflict consists in the disproportion of the rights Albanians have and their percentage in the populace. The root of the conflict is neither religious nor nationalistic. It stems from the feelings of negation, offense and injustice. These feelings provoke nationalism. Yet in this case, also integration into the EU is more important than any nationalist aspiration.

In present day Albania, the dynamics of and aspirations for a greater Albania are almost non-existent. Albanian society in Albania is experiencing a deep identity crisis. As many Albanian intellectuals stress, Albanian society is experiencing a reaction to nationalism. They rightly call this reaction anti-nationalism. The communist regime put immense pressure on the citizens. It interfered in every aspect of their lives. The pressure was made more effective with total isolation from the world outside the Albanian state boundaries. Albanians lived in a world “created” by the central authority. The central authority shaped their private, as well as their public lives. Furthermore, there was nothing private everything was collective. The dramatic pressure put on individuals’ spiritual and material integrity gave source to revolt and anger against the regime and the state. The breakdown of the communist regime was another trauma. The end of isolation and the confrontation with the outside world was a mixture of sadness and joy for the Albanian citizens; sadness for all the years regarded as lost and joy for the future. The joy

for the future soon faded as the transition to a new system/ regime was far more difficult than they ever could have imagined.⁴⁶⁰

Economic, social, political and security problems were rampant. Economic and politic crises seemed endless. Security in the country was extremely fragile. The transition years, as the 1990-2000 period is known, was an additional trauma for Albanian society. This “ultimate” trauma increased the anger Albanians had toward the central authority and to any kind of government. This resulted in hatred toward any kind of central authority and to the Albanian state. This was accompanied by a general demoralization and diffidence toward the ability of society to form a solid stable democratic state. The past was effected by this general state of demoralization and the old national heroes became the objects of everyday jokes or comedies. This was a reflection of the general demoralization. Nothing was taken seriously, the state, the government, the Albanian future, and the history. Albanians could not detect any source of national pride in the clumsy feelings by which they were invaded.

In this context, it would not be correct to claim that Albanians want a Great Albania, while in reality Albanians mistrust any kind of Albania. Albanians, after long years of suffering, want and need economic prosperity, political stability and security. The perspective of a Greater Albania does not enhance any of these. Albanians believe such a future could be possible with Euro-Atlantic integration. As such, their priority is Euro-Atlantic integration. The first priority of the programs of the greater part of the

⁴⁶⁰ For concise analysis on the Albanian question in the Balkans see also Fridrich Ebert Stiftung Foundation, "Ceshtja Kombetare Shqiptare (the National Albanian Question)," *Ballkani+ Ngjarje dhe Tendenca (Events and Inclinations)*, No.23, December 2002.

Albanian political parties in Albania is integration with the EU.⁴⁶¹ Albanians are aware of the fact that the Balkans are zone of serious security concerns for the International Community. A “Greater Albania” would incite the sensitivity the international community has in security cases. Furthermore, it also would be perilous for the future of the Albanian societies to endorse “greater” claims, seriously condemned by the international community. Consequently, the majority of Albanian intellectuals and politicians insist that the future of all the Albanians is in the European Union. Albanian political leaders in Macedonia continually underline the importance an EU membership would have for Macedonia. At the same time, Kosovo leadership permanently explains its will to collaborate with the EU and the international community to reach the democratic and economic standards they ask from Kosovo. They stress that although the status of Kosovo is not final and that independence would be the best solution, the priority of Kosovo is EU integration.

Furthermore, Albanians believe that: first, the European Union as well as the International Community is sensitive toward nationalist claims, especially if they originate from the Balkans. Consequently, they would not like to provoke any unpleasant reaction from the EU. Second, a possible integration with the EU is the materialization of a culturally Great Albania in its most adequate way; as a result there is no need to “fight”

⁴⁶¹ The Institute for International Studies in Albania made a questionnaire about the perception of the European Union in Albania. The results demonstrate once again the desire Albanians have to enter the EU. At the same time they point out to a general pessimism toward a final membership in spite of the desire for this membership to be a reality. See Instituti i Studimeve Nderkombetare (The Institute of International Studies), *Integrimi European Perfytyrime & Realitete (the European Integration Myths and Realities)* (Tirana: Instituti i Studimeve Nderkombetare, 2004).

for a bigger Albania while it is the logical consequence of the European integration of the Balkans.⁴⁶²

Therefore, to accuse Albanians of efforts and aspirations for a greater Albania is nothing more than applying once again the “Balkans myths” to another case study on the Balkans.⁴⁶³ “Balkan myths” require Albanians to be intriguing to change borders and form some “great nations.” “Balkan misperceptions” require them to be fighting for some mythical heroes. “Balkan imaginary” require them to attack their neighboring states. “Nation-state logic” requires the efforts and aspirations for a “Greater Albania” while three neighboring communities, extremely conscious of their ethnic identity, common past and common language and culture, live beside each other. “Various political interests” require tension or backwardness in the Balkans and so Albanians are required to play a role in this scenario. Yet the reality of the Albanian communities is different. They are fed up with tensions, do not see any special benefit in the endeavor for a “greater,” do not have any need to attack neighbor communities without being attacked

⁴⁶² Arben Xhaferri, Ismail Kadare as well as many other political leaders and Albanian intellectuals insist that integration in the EU is the cultural and economic unification of the Albanian inhabited territories. As a result, the priority of each of the Albanian communities must be Euro–Atlantic integration. This thesis in this context did not discuss the rightness or wrongness of this situation and feelings. It was limited to reflecting what it deduced from the research and analysis of present day Albanian society.

⁴⁶³ The counter claim of this thesis would insist that in many cases, such traumas did not provoke “anti-nationalism,” but ultra-nationalism, or some kind of religious fundamentalism. This would be true in the cases when an outsider/foreign authority, community, state or so on is blamed for all the troubles experienced. This is not the Albanian case. Albanians do not and cannot blame a “foreign authority” for the harshness and isolation of the communist regime in Albania. They do and cannot blame any “foreign authority” for the shocks experienced after the 1990s. Consequently, they have been invaded by feelings of mistrust, hatred toward their own society and state and demoralization for the future.

or being obligated to defend themselves; furthermore, they make fun of their national heroes more than any of their “adversaries” would have made of them.

All this may sound strange, mistaken, and even subjectively positive. However, it is natural to sound like this, as it does not fit the picture of the Balkans all of us are used to seeing. The reaction to social traumas of societies “decided” to be “the other” of the West “has to be” fundamentalist or ultra-nationalist, and the Balkans are one of them. Furthermore, it is true that there are such reactions especially in the cases when the “foreign authority” is regarded as “guilty,” for the social and economical problems, yet Albanians have no “foreign” to blame. The communist regime blamed the Ottoman Empire for all the “backwardness” the regime had to deal with, the Great Powers for the dividing Albanians in different states, and the prior regimes for destroying the country and the individual. Albanians do not want to believe any of this anymore, fifty years would have been enough to remediate all the faults. In this case though it would be easier to blame someone, but there is no one to blame. The experience of suffering has been so immense that the anger has been directed at the nearest perpetrators, not at some distant imaginary culprit.⁴⁶⁴

⁴⁶⁴ It is true that there exist ultra-nationalist declarations of political leaders or some movements that could be regarded as ultra-nationalist. Yet the context of these claims must be analyzed before claiming that these episodes represent the Albanian reality. Nonetheless, it can be asserted that these episodes represent an exception of the everyday reality, not its general state. Concomitantly, it is true that in Kosovo and Macedonia can be detected more easily some nationalist wings. Although they would be a consequence of some Albanian ultra-nationalist aspirations, they represent the minority feeling, not those of the Albanian majority. The characteristics of Albanian nationalism in Macedonia, the reactions of Albanians in Kosovo and the nowadays situation in Albania support this conclusion. It must be stressed again that the ultra-nationalist party in Albania is a marginal party retreated from any political activity, the ultra-nationalist wings in the Kosovo are also marginal and the most important part of Kosovo

The solution of the Albanian question/dilemma in the Balkans is possible only by understanding within its real dynamics the Albanian communities as well as all the other Balkan societies. The Balkans must be taken out from the net of imaginations and put under inquiry with its reality. In this case, globalization offers some solutions to the “nationalism era.” The Balkan people are not as different from each other as they have come to believe. The territorial divisions in the Balkans have always provoked tensions as it is almost impossible to make clear definitions of borders, and it is almost impossible to make clear divisions between different Balkans states’ heroes, popular culture and mythologies. In this context, the idea of an area where the political boundaries are more symbolic than divisive would function in the Balkans more than anywhere else. A united Balkans that would enhance the economic, social and cultural collaboration of the Balkan people can be a permanent solution to the tensions the “nationalism era” provokes. This does not enhance the destruction of the national identity of the Balkan societies. On the contrary, further damage to this identity would deepen the trauma many Balkan societies have experienced. However, it requires the “cleansing of this identity” from “the other.” The national identity has to be saved from the myth of the “enemy/backward/uncivilized other.” In the globalization era, this is possible, as it does not necessarily require “social” engineering, but collaboration.

The European Union would be a good model for some kind of “Balkan Union.” However, the Balkan people and governments must be conscious that integration into the EU would not represent any solution if they are not committed to materializing a “Balkan

leadership is committed to collaborate with the international community and the main Albanian political parties in Macedonia are in continual collaboration with the Macedonian government.

Union.” The logic of European integration must be understood as first and necessarily collaboration between the Balkan states. Although the perspective of the EU is regarded as the solution to many Balkan problems, the EU cannot and will not be a solution as long as the Balkan people and governments do not put aside the “myths” and focus on collaboration. Yet the process of the “debunking of myths” has to be initiated by Western authorities, as it was in the West that these myths originated. Furthermore, the Western politics toward the Balkans must be “cleansed” of the “myths.” The Balkan people cannot overcome the “the Balkan troubles” as long the EU and Western policies operate in the “imaginary Balkans.” In this context, this thesis made an attempt to come out of the “imaginary Balkans,” relating the dynamics of the past with the present day conditions in the Balkans and in a case that represents properly the present problems and future dilemmas of the Balkans, in the Albanian case.

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