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Seeing the Albanians through Serbian Eyes: The Inventors of the Tradition of Intolerance and Their Critics, 1804–1939

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The emergence of the ideologies of 'moral murder' is one of the conditions for the escalation of ethnic conflicts into ethnic cleansing or genocide.¹ By studying Serbian political discourse and corresponding state policies, this article fills some of the gaps in existing knowledge on the treatment of Albanians by the Serbian and Yugoslav state before 1939.² The troubled incorporation of the Albanian minority into the Serbian state, when compared with similar nation-state building processes in the Balkans, enables us to extend Miroslav Hroch's theory of the rise of minority nationalisms in Eastern Europe. An élite's visions of minority populations and state policies cannot alone explain the opening or closing of the opportunities for ethnic cleansing.³ However, they do enable us to understand why and how the political élite might try to pursue such opportunities. The evolution of the Serbian vision and policies towards the Albanians was influenced by wider European nation-building models, as well as by a clientelistic relationship with some of the Great Powers. The Serbian élite faced a fundamental tension between an uncritically accepted model of the homogeneous nation-state and the complex multi-ethnic reality of the Balkans. Since the entrenched visions of the Albanian Muslims were particularly negative, the Serbian élite applied the most exclusionary policies towards the Albanians.

1804–39: The Liberation and the Cleansing of Serbia of Muslims

The Serbian Uprising (1804–13) created the first Serbian political authority that had to deal with a Muslim question on its territory.⁴ The Uprising was initially a

local rebellion that only gradually escalated into a struggle for national independence from the Ottoman Empire. The immediate goal of the rebels was to end the arbitrary and repressive regime of Dahije,⁵ but they also felt a pre-existing animosity towards Muslims. Rebel leader Matija Nenadović wrote down the last message he received from his condemned father:⁶ ‘Say to him [Matija] that neither he nor any of my people should believe the Turks ever again.’⁷ Extant class hatred of the Serbian peasants towards urban Muslim merchants and land owners was clearly a major motivator for mass violence.⁸ Nenadović describes the take-over of Valjevo by the rebels:

At that time . . . there were twenty-four mosques and it was said that there were nearly three thousand Turkish and some two hundred Christian houses. . . . Any house that had not been burnt, the Serbs tore to bits and took their windows and doors and everything else that could be removed.⁹

Nenadović indicated that the Serb rebels had a clear awareness of the Kosovo myth,¹⁰ but at this point the awareness did not seem to transfer into any clear territorial agenda per se. Although the text has occasional references to the epics of the Kosovo battle, he seems to interpret them as a symbolic and inspirational story of a ‘golden age’, its heroes, and the fall of a civilization, rather than as a call for the ‘liberation’ of Kosovo. Vuk Karadžić even wondered whether the whole of Kosovo¹¹ should be seen as a part of Serbia or Albania.¹² Independence from the Ottomans was initially not even proposed, not only because it was clearly beyond reach without major support from a Great Power, but also because a number of leaders could still remember a fairly good life under Hadži Mustafa Pasha. However, Karađorđe Petrović and other rebel leaders escalated their goals and the Serbian forces began to attack all the ‘Turkish’ settlements, not just the Dahije and their allies.¹³

Dositej Obradović, who became Serbia’s first Minister of Education in 1811, pleaded in vain to the leaders of the Uprising not to attack the ‘peaceful Turks’. In a letter written to the leaders in 1806, he also urged that:

all those Turks who support themselves and do not want to rule over the *raya* [Christians] you should allow to live peacefully in their homes, like they did before, just put them under your rule . . . and spread among them your language, knowledge, and literature.¹⁴

Despite such humanistic pleas, the First Uprising and several other failed Christian uprisings in the period of Ottoman decline seem to follow a pattern of escalating violence. Oppression and lawlessness triggered an uprising that escalated into killing, plundering, and burning of Muslim settlements. Ottoman

reinforcements soon arrived, crushed the rebels, committed various crimes, burned villages, and re-established Ottoman rule.¹⁵ It is significant that the Serb rebels were trying to permanently cleanse the Muslims, while the Ottoman forces engaged in exemplary repression, aimed at teaching the Serbs a lesson, without driving them out through permanent mass expulsion into Habsburg territory.¹⁶ Why did their actions differ?

Arguably there was class hatred,¹⁷ as the Ottomans perceived the Christian peasants as a source of tax revenue and forced labor, while the Serb peasants saw the mostly urban Muslims as a generally useless class of 'gluttons' [*izjelice*].¹⁸ Another factor leading to the Serbs 'eliminationist' attempts might be the inspiring influence of Austrian policies towards the Muslims in the newly acquired territories. As Ivo Goldstein puts it, traces of signs of Ottoman rule 'disappeared as mosques and other structures were pulled down'.¹⁹ In addition, the Muslim presence in the cities was justifiably perceived as a source of internal threat in the event of an Ottoman counter-attack.²⁰ The perception of urban Muslims as economic exploiters and as a major security threat was not auspicious for their co-religionists that would soon be included in an expanding Serbian state.

Different Visions of National Identity and State Formation

In the emerging Serbian national state there were also proponents of religious tolerance, including Ilija Garašanin, who served as Minister of Internal Affairs and then Minister of Foreign Affairs.²¹ While Garašanin's 1844 *Načertanije* explicitly defines the re-establishment of the medieval Serbian Empire as the primary national goal,²² he simultaneously advocated religious freedoms, in order to make a union with Serbia more attractive for Bosnian Catholics and Muslims:²³

Serbia has to be the natural protector of all the Turkish Slavs, and if she genuinely takes this role upon herself, the other Slavs will allow her to speak and act in their name. If Serbia showed to her neighbors that she only thinks of herself, and ignores the ill fortune and needs of others, they would not listen to her and thus instead of unity there would be mistrust, envy and misfortune.²⁴

Garašanin advocated that Serbia should gain access to (not occupy/liberate) some of the Albanian sea ports,²⁵ implying that he did not see Albania as a future part of the Serbian state. Interestingly, Garašanin does not mention Kosovo *once* in his *Načertanije*. This is particularly important in light of the more recent nationalist claims of the primeval sanctity of Kosovo as 'sacred Serbian land'.

Looking at the writings of Nenadović, Karadžić or Garašanin, it does not appear that Serbian intellectuals and politicians embraced a territorial claim to Kosovo until very late in the nineteenth century or even early in the twentieth century.

In 1847 *The Mountain Wreath* by Petar Petrović Njegoš²⁶ was published. It is a work of indisputable literary value, while still containing negative passages about 'Islamicized' Slavs, who he called 'disgusting traitors' [*pogani izrodi*] who 'denied the faith of the forefathers'.²⁷ Their existence was thus incompatible with a Christian Montenegrin state: the Muslims a 'snake within our breast', a 'devil in our Christian land'.²⁸ For their own good, they must return to their authentic, original, 'European' path.²⁹ Thus, the solution of the Muslim question was to come through coercive conversion. However, those who refused to convert wasted their chance to join the nation. For their repeated treacherous behavior they would be punished with expulsion or murder. Montenegrin land must be 'cleansed' of the non-Christians [*očišćena od nekrsti*].³⁰ He proclaimed that 'those who blasphemed the Holy Name of Christ we will baptize, with water or with blood!'³¹ Building on the tradition of intolerance, Njegoš dedicated *The Mountain Wreath* to the Serbian leader Karađorđe, who 'cleansed' Serbia of Muslims during the First Uprising. Thus, he attached his own work to the pre-existing eliminationist ideas and practices.

The inspiration for Njegoš' work was in actual historical developments. After the general decline of the Ottoman power in the second half of the eighteenth century, Montenegrin peasants began organized attacks on the local Slavonic Muslim settlers, who gradually withdrew into the lowlands and the urban areas.³² Njegoš' poem probably describes a major Montenegrin attack on the local Muslims that seems to have occurred on Christmas Eve of 1709.³³ While some Muslims managed to escape, many Muslim men were killed, and their women and children were coercively converted.³⁴

Still, it is important to avoid simplistic or singular interpretations of Njegoš' work and life. As the political and religious leader of Montenegro, Njegoš worked to reduce the tensions between the Christian Montenegrin tribes and the neighboring Muslim populations.³⁵ Moreover, in his actual diplomatic correspondence with Osman-Pasha Skopljak, one cannot fail to see Njegoš' profound personal struggle to come to some meaningful reconciliation with the Slavonic Muslims. Njegoš wrote how much he missed all the Serb nobility that converted to Islam, how hard it is for him to see his Montenegrins at constant war with their own 'islamicized brothers' [*braćom isturčenom*], that he would love 'more than anything else in the world' to see unity [*slogu*] among the brothers. He wrote to Skopljak, who was a Bosniak:

When you speak to me as my brother Bosniak, I am your brother and your friend, but when you speak as an alien, as an Asian, as an enemy of our people and our name, I cannot accept that [*meni je to protivno*] and no reasonable man could accept that.³⁶

Despite Njegoš' genuine desire to think of a way to incorporate the Slavonic Muslims into the Serbian/Montenegrin state, the central element of his thinking remains that the Muslims, seen as a residue of the Ottoman and 'Asiatic' imperial subjugation, could not be allowed to exist in liberated, European, and Christian Balkan states. Tragically, his work fuses the commitment to national liberation with extreme intolerance towards Balkan Muslims.

1878: A 'Model' Ethnic Cleansing?

In 1878, following a series of Christian uprisings against the Ottoman Empire, the Russo-Turkish War, and the Berlin Congress, Serbia gained complete independence, as well as new territories in the Toplica and Kosanica regions adjacent to Kosovo.³⁷ These two regions had a sizable Albanian population which the Serbian government decided to deport.³⁸ The Serbian Army Commander insisted that Serbia 'should not have its Caucasus' and the Prime Minister argued that the Albanian minority might represent a security concern.³⁹

In 1909, Serbian intellectual Jovan Hadži-Vasiljević explained that the major motivation for the 1878 deportation was also to 'create a pure Serbian nation state' by 'cleansing' the land of the non-Christians, as 'the great Serbian poet Njegoš argued'.⁴⁰ Hadži-Vasiljević was here interpreting Njegoš rather loosely, as Njegoš' work focused on the Slavonic Muslims and not on Albanian Muslims. The ominous implication was that Albanians, as non-Slavs, were not even capable of assimilation. While the Serbian state authorities repeatedly attempted to assimilate the Slavonic Muslims, they refrained from attempting to 'Serbianize' the Albanians.⁴¹ While both security concerns and the exclusive nationalist ideology influenced the government's policies, there was also some Serbian resistance to the 'cleansing' of the Albanians. General Jovan Belimarković opposed the deportation and offered his resignation to the government over this issue⁴² and journalist Manojlo Đorđević also condemned these policies and argued that Serbia should have pursued a policy of peaceful reconciliation towards the Albanians:

In Toplica the Albanians were encountered, and we had nothing more important to do but to expel these warlike, but hard-working people from their homes. Instead of making a peace with them as the defeated side –

they were without any good reason pushed across the border – so that they'll settle on the other side as the enemies of everything Serbian, to become the avengers towards those who pushed them from their homes.⁴³

Despite some voices of dissent, the Serbian regime 'encouraged' about 71,000 Muslims, including 49,000 Albanians, 'to leave'.⁴⁴ The regime then gradually settled Serbs and Montenegrins in these territories.⁴⁵ Prior to 1878, the Serbs comprised not more than one half of the population of Niš, the largest city in the region; by 1884 the Serbian share rose to 80 per cent.⁴⁶ According to Ottoman sources, Serbian forces also destroyed mosques in Leskovac, Prokuplje, and Vranje.⁴⁷

The 'cleansing' of Toplica and Kosanica would have long-term negative effects on Serbian-Albanian relations. The Albanians expelled from these regions moved over the new border to Kosovo, where the Ottoman authorities forced the Serb population out of the border region and settled the refugees there.⁴⁸ Janjićije Popović, a Kosovo Serb community leader in the period prior to the Balkan Wars, noted that after the 1876–8 wars, the hatred of the Turks and Albanians towards the Serbs 'tripled'.⁴⁹ A number of Albanian refugees from Toplica region, radicalized by their experience, engaged in retaliatory violence against the Serbian minority in Kosovo.⁵⁰ In 1900 Živojin Perić, a Belgrade Professor of Law, noted that in retrospect, 'this unbearable situation probably would not have occurred had the Serbian government allowed Albanians to stay in Serbia'. He also argued that conciliatory treatment towards Albanians in Serbia could have helped the Serbian government to gain the sympathies of Albanians of the Ottoman Empire.⁵¹

Thus, while both humanitarian concerns and Serbian political interests would have dictated conciliation and moderation, the Serbian government, motivated by exclusive nationalist and anti-Muslim sentiments, chose expulsion. The 1878 cleansing was a turning point because it was the first gross and large-scale injustice committed by Serbian forces against the Albanians. From that point onward, both ethnic groups had recent experiences of massive victimization that could be used to justify 'revenge' attacks. Furthermore, Muslim Albanians had every reason to resist the incorporation into the Serbian state.

Particularly ominous was that some Serbian intellectuals later concluded that the 1878 model 'worked' and that it should be reproduced elsewhere. In 1917, during the Corfu negotiations with Ante Trumbić and other Croat politicians on the future of Bosnia, Serbian politician Stojan Protić reportedly stated that the Serbs have a violent solution for Bosnia, which was conversion or extermination of Slavonic Muslims.⁵² While the actual Serbian policies after the liberation/take-

over of Bosnia in 1918 were not nearly that extreme, Protić's ideas are a sign that an important section of the Serbian elite saw the 1878 cleansing as a 'normal' way to solve the 'Muslim question' in the Balkans. By 1937 a leading Serbian intellectual, Vaso Čubrilović, argued that the 'model cleansing' of Toplica and Kosanica regions in 1878 should be reproduced against the Kosovo Albanians.

1878–1912: The Persecution of Kosovo Serbs and Hardening of Anti-Albanian Resentment in Serbia

Following the Ottoman defeat in the 1878 war, Muslim Albanians faced an increasingly dangerous political environment. Kosovo was full of thousands of Muslim refugees expelled from the territories captured by Serbia.⁵³ The Treaty of San Stefano between the Ottoman and Russian empires envisioned the creation of a Greater Bulgarian state that would encompass territories with a large Albanian presence.⁵⁴ The Albanian leadership responded to these challenges by forming the Albanian League in Prizren in June 1878, which demanded the creation of an Albanian territorial autonomous unit within the Ottoman Empire, which was to include ethnically-mixed regions, such as Kosovo and Macedonia.⁵⁵

While the League was soon suppressed by the Ottoman authorities, these demands reflected a complex position of the Muslim Albanians in the collapsing Ottoman Empire. The Muslim-dominated Ottoman Empire provided considerable opportunities for the Muslim Albanians.⁵⁶ A number of Albanian chieftains rose to high positions in the Ottoman service, such as Muhammad Ali, pasha of Egypt, or Ali Pasha of Janina.⁵⁷ In light of the religious cleansings by Orthodox nationalists in Bulgaria, Greece, Serbia, and Montenegro, the defense and preservation of the Ottoman Empire seemed the best way to protect Muslim security and privileges.⁵⁸

At the same time, the Ottoman regime was increasingly trying to implement some elements of the West European 'nation building' models. A component of the nationalization policies was the attempt to 'Turkicize' the Muslim ethnic groups within the Empire.⁵⁹ Thus, while various potentially irredentist Christian minorities were allowed to establish their own schools, the Ottoman authorities banned not only Albanian-language schools but, after 1902, even private correspondence in Albanian.⁶⁰ Not surprisingly, Kosovo Muslim Albanians strongly resisted the Tanzimat reforms and the subsequent Young Turks' push for religious equality which further eroded the remaining Muslim privileges.⁶¹ To add insult to injury, the Young Turks regime also intensified attempts to assimilate Muslim Albanians

into the 'Ottoman nation'.⁶² In 1908 and 1912, Kosovo Albanian Muslims revolted against the new constitution that guaranteed religious equality. Instead, they demanded return to Islamic Law and exemption from taxation.⁶³

The most vulnerable of all, caught in the middle of the struggle between the declining Empire and the rising nationalist states and movements, were the Kosovo Serbs and the Catholic Albanians. Their old feudal duties towards the Muslim lords⁶⁴ seemed even heavier after the peasants in neighboring Serbia were freed from these obligations.⁶⁵ The Muslim Albanian population was using its privileged position, including the right to bear arms, denied to Christians, to put pressure on the Catholic Albanians to convert.⁶⁶ Edith Durham reported that 'the Albanians are almost solely Albanophone, whereas the scattered Serbs usually speak both languages, and when addressed in Serb often replied first in Albanian'.⁶⁷ The anti-Serbian anger of the Albanian Muslims cleansed from Serbia in 1878, combined with the lack of will of the local Ottoman authority to protect the Christians from the loyal Muslims, created an increasingly hostile and insecure environment for the local Serb population. Even the clearly Albanophile Durham noted that Albanian militants were using 'medieval methods, for this is the Land of the Living Past', to push the Serbs out.⁶⁸ From 1880 to 1889, more than 60,000 Serbs moved from European Turkey to Serbia.⁶⁹ Jovan Cvijić estimated that from 1876 to 1912, 150,000 Serbs from Sandžak and Kosovo moved to Serbia.⁷⁰

Just as the 1878 cleansing fed the anti-Serbian sentiments and Albanian nationalism, the 1878–1912 discrimination, abuse, and exodus of the Serb minority fed anti-Albanian feelings and Serbian nationalism. An 1899 Memorandum of Serbian leaders from Kosovo and Macedonia claimed that 'The Serbs of the Kosovo *vilayet* live like beings without any rights, as a flock of sheep without a guardian, under the paws of wild Albanian animals'.⁷¹ Popović described the movement of Albanian settlers into previously homogeneous Serbian villages as a 'cancer'.⁷² Officials of the Serbian Ministry of Foreign affairs described Albanians as a 'wild tribe'⁷³ with 'cruel instincts'.⁷⁴ Enraged by the persecutions of the Kosovo Serbs, a number of Serbian intellectuals and journalists added to the angry hate propaganda that seemed to culminate during the preparations for the Balkan Wars. Cvijić argued that 'there is a general consensus that the Albanians are the most barbarous tribes of Europe'.⁷⁵ Another intellectual described the Albanians as 'European Indians' and 'lazy savages'.⁷⁶

Still, in the middle of rising anger towards the Albanians, some Serbian intellectuals and political activists spoke against the hegemonic discourse. Dimitrije Tucović, a leader of the Serbian Social Democrats, developed a strong critique of anti-Albanian stereotypes and Serbian territorial ambitions. Tucović found

inspiration in the writings of Montenegrin leader Marko Miljanov who had called upon Serbs and Montenegrins to realize their similarities with Albanians.⁷⁷ Tucović was also inspired by the socialist Svetozar Marković⁷⁸ and by the German Social Democrats' critique of German and Austrian imperialism. However, unlike the German SDP, Serbian Social Democrats rejected nationalism and voted against the military budget in 1914.⁷⁹ The Social Democrats were already able to see something that President Woodrow Wilson was to realize much later: in the regions with complex ethnic composition and multi-layered cultural identities there was simply no way to apply the principle of self-determination without creating new injustices. Tucović pointedly asked: 'Who will then establish the boundary line between the Serbians and Bulgarians? How could all Macedonian Slavs be brought into one state without at the same time enslaving the Greeks and the other peoples?'⁸⁰ Tucović criticized those 'who have proclaimed that the Albanians are wild and superfluous inhabitants of the Balkan peninsula and that it is the duty of the Serbian people to remove them from this world'.⁸¹

Instead of the fatal project of the quasi-independent, ethnically cleansed, and mutually hostile national states, Serbian Social Democrats advocated the establishment of a federation of Balkan peoples, which they hoped would prevent the interference of the European powers and contain interethnic conflicts.⁸² They tried to forge better cooperation among socialists in the region and organized the First Conference of Balkan Social Democratic parties, held in Belgrade, 7–9 January 1910.⁸³ Tucović rejected the dominant anti-Albanian sentiments: 'Other Balkan peoples have no interest in living in hostility with the Albanians. The union is a salvation for all of them. And in that union there is a place for Albanians, too.'⁸⁴ Abdul Frasheri, one of the leaders of the Albanian cultural and political national movement, likewise argued that the union of an Albanian state in a Balkan Confederation would serve Albanian interests.⁸⁵ Some elements of the idea of Balkan solidarity also existed in official Serbian state policy, but it was combined with nationalist ambitions and the tradition of intolerance towards the Muslims of the Balkans. During the preparation for the Balkan Wars, Serbian Prime Minister Nikola Pašić proclaimed his commitment to the anti-imperial solidarity of the Balkan national states (encapsulated in the 'Balkan for the Balkan peoples' slogan) and support for ethnographic boundaries among the Balkan states.⁸⁶ While preparing for the Balkan wars, the Montenegrin state established military cooperation with the Catholic Albanians, concentrated in northern Albania.⁸⁷ Greece pursued a fairly successful assimilationist policy towards the Orthodox Albanians in the south.⁸⁸ However, the Serbian government was remarkably unsuccessful in achieving practically any kind of cooperation with the predominantly Muslim Albanians in Kosovo.

Milan Rakić, Serbian Consul in Kosovo, offered a meaningful explanation for the failure of attempts to collaborate with Muslim Albanians. According to Rakić, Albanian Muslims were intolerant towards Serbian Christians, and, as Muslims, they were concerned about losing the religious privileges they enjoyed under the Ottomans. They also well remembered the expulsion of the Muslim Albanians from Serbia in 1878.⁸⁹ Despite Rakić's conclusion that the Serbian government did not have any chance of achieving a political agreement with the Muslim Albanians, in 1912 Prime Minister Pašić offered to the Albanian leaders guarantees of religious freedoms and respect for cultural rights in exchange for support in the coming Serbian military offensive. As Rakić correctly predicted earlier, the Albanian leaders rejected Pašić's offer.⁹⁰

Serbian pre-war propaganda represented the Albanians as 'incapable' of forming a state on their own, and thus good candidates for the 'civilizing' influence of the Serbian state.⁹¹ Conveniently, this was combined with a plan to gain access to the Albanian Adriatic ports through annexation. Thus, in a manner characteristic of European imperialism at the time, a paternalistic justification for the expansion was combined with the pursuit of economic interests. In preparation for the First Balkan War, the Serbian government concluded a secret agreement with Bulgaria on the division of the territory that promised northern Albania to Serbia.

The Liberations/Conquests of Kosovo: 1912–24

The First Balkan War brought surprisingly rapid victories for the Serbian and Montenegrin forces and their Bulgarian and Greek allies. The atrocities committed during this war by far overshadowed the 1878 cleansing. According to Durham's reports, the Montenegrin soldiers were telling her that 'when the land is once ours there will be no Mohammedan question', because the Muslims would die or go to Asia.⁹² Whereas the Montenegrin forces also engaged in forced conversions of Catholics and Muslims, the Serbian forces did not even attempt to convert the Albanian Muslim population.⁹³ A Serbian journalist later interviewed by Leon Trotsky recalled his visit to the region by train following the Serbian offensive:

By five pm. we were approaching Kumanovo. The sun had set, it was starting to get dark. But the brighter the sky became, the more brightly the fearful illumination of the fires stood against it. Burning was going on all around us. Entire Albanian villages have been turned into pillars of fire – far and near, right up to the railway line. . . . In all the fiery monotony this picture was repeated all the way to Skopje.⁹⁴

Western observers estimated that approximately 7000–10,000 Albanians were killed in the Kumanovo and Priština areas.⁹⁵ The agents of the British-Macedonian Relief Fund estimated that in the province of Monastir (occupied by the Serb and Greek forces) about 80 per cent of Muslim villages were burned.⁹⁶ Over 25,000 refugees from Kosovo fled to northern Albania.⁹⁷ According to the observers, the worst atrocities against the civilians were usually committed by the paramilitary units⁹⁸ who 'made murder, robbery, and violence a savage sport'.⁹⁹ A Serbian officer noted that while some paramilitaries were intellectuals and 'nationalist zealots', the rest 'had joined the army for the sake of loot'.¹⁰⁰ These units systematically killed and plundered Albanian and Turkish shop owners after the fall of Skopje.¹⁰¹ Moreover, regular forces also frequently engaged in the execution of the POWs, although this had been forbidden by their officers.¹⁰² Even the Serbian civilian population took part in the plunder:

From the area around Vranje the population has crossed en masse into the Albanian villages, to pick up whatever may catch their eye. Peasant women carry away on their shoulders even the doors and windows of Albanian homes.¹⁰³

There was a clear logic in this madness, as the Serbian forces engaged in permanent demographic engineering¹⁰⁴ of the population in the region. The Orthodox Slavs frequently experienced the arrival of the Serbian units as a liberation, which is understandable in light of the repression of the late Ottoman era. On the other hand, the armies of the Balkan orthodox states subjected the Muslim Slavs to coercive conversions, expulsions, or even murder. After the fall of Sandžak to the Montenegrins in 1912, about 13,000 Muslims were forced to convert to Orthodoxy, comparable numbers were forced to leave for Bosnia, and the Montenegrins took their revenge for the losses suffered during the 1876–8 uprising.¹⁰⁵

While the motives of enrichment and 'revenge' were probably omnipresent at the level of direct perpetrators, it is important to distinguish them from more ideological and long-term motivations of the military and the political élite. The paramilitaries were probably less motivated by the writings of Hegel or Fichte on the nation and history, and more by the hopes of stealing an ox or a cow. Serbian (and Bulgarian) army officers encouraged soldiers with the promises of free land in the newly liberated territories. Destruction, plundering, and mass expulsions destroyed the economy and the tax base in the newly acquired territories and thus hardly served the economic interest of the state institutions. Besides, the very existence of the paramilitaries was out of question without the consent, encouragement, supply, and toleration of the authorities. When some paramilitary units forgot who set the rules of the game and started plundering the Serbian villages as

well, they were quickly crushed by the regular forces.¹⁰⁶ Thus, Cathie Carmichael seems right to argue that the cause of ethnic cleansing, especially at the level of the political élite, was almost entirely ideological.¹⁰⁷

Tucović, who was drafted into the Serbian Army prior to the Balkan Wars, explained the crimes against Muslims as a part of an eliminationist project by the Balkan states:

These atrocities were neither initiated by individuals nor were due to personal distress, but were a constitutive part of the 'national' programs of the Balkan states. The Serbian Army was exterminating Albanians in Old Serbia (Kosovo) and Albania, the Bulgarian Army, the Turks in Thrace, and the Greek Army, the Turks and the Albanians in Devol, all in the criminal belief that they were attaining a 'national' aim – that by removing these innocent people off the face of the Earth [*sa lica zemlje*] they were removing an enemy with whom they would otherwise have to deal in the future.¹⁰⁸

In line with the long-term plan of taking Albanian ports, the Serbian and Montenegrin units occupied and, on 29 November 1912, tried to annex large parts of northern and central Albania.¹⁰⁹ They were soon forced out by Italy and the Habsburg Empire. The Serbian government, having recently committed itself to the principle of national self-determination for the Balkan peoples, was now desperately searching for an ideological rationale for the annexation of territories where ethnic Albanians were an overwhelming majority. In the negotiations with the Austrian representatives and later at the London peace conference in January 1913, Pašić argued that many Albanians were Serbs 'by blood', who had changed their religion and nationality due to the Ottoman-era persecutions.¹¹⁰ Pašić further argued that due to the concentration of Serbian religious monuments in Metohija (an overwhelmingly demographically Albanian part of Kosovo), this region had been a 'Holy Land of the Serbian People . . . since time immemorial' [*oduvek*].¹¹¹ Karadžić, Njegoš and Garašanin all failed to make a 'religious' claim on any part of the present-day Kosovo. Thus, it does appear that the 'Holy Land of the Serbian People' was a relatively recently invented tradition, probably formulated in the hope of mobilizing Christian solidarity from the Western Powers against the predominantly Muslim Albanians. The use of the 'religious' argument enables Pašić to claim for Serbia a part of present-day Kosovo that was clearly demographically Albanian. Pašić even decided to use the Serbian military to 'arrange' that the local Albanian leaders in the disputed areas with large Albanian majorities 'ask' the Great Powers to be left in the Serbian state. In December 1913, the London Conference of Ambassadors decided to recognize an independent

Albania, with borders that were yet to be determined.¹¹² In response, Pašić promptly sent a letter to the Serbian High Command with the following request:

As soon as you can, if possible tomorrow, try to arrange that the Albanian leaders from Peć, Đakovica, Prizren, and Debar send telegrammes to London and to ask, in their own name and in front of their communities, the French, the Italian, the Russian, the German, and the Italian ambassadors and Grey [the British Foreign Secretary] to leave them in the Serbian state and not to join them to coastal Albania.¹¹³

This sudden desire to manufacture the consent of the Albanians for their incorporation into the Serbian state is very interesting since at the same time the Serbian Ambassador in Berlin was trying to persuade other diplomats that the borders between Serbia and Albania could not be established by local plebiscites 'because the Albanians are not a self-sufficient people [*narod za sebe*] who could vote freely and consciously'.¹¹⁴

Finally, during the diplomatic negotiations Pašić argued that economic and military prerogatives of Serbia demanded an access to the sea, as a way to break the encirclement by the Habsburg Empire and its allies.¹¹⁵ This argument seems sincere. Since the fall of the Obrenović dynasty in 1903 and the re-orientation of the new government towards France and Russia as the new patrons, the Habsburgs and landlocked Serbia were clearly on a collision course. Pašić was desperately searching for access to seaports that would reduce Serbia's economic dependence on the increasingly hostile Habsburg monarchy and provide secure supply lines for military materials. While sincere, this argument shows how far the Serbian government had departed from its earlier commitment to the principle of national self-determination for the peoples of the Balkans. Certainly, trampling upon the basic interests of putatively inferior peoples was hardly a local speciality. According to Tucović, the true inspiration and the model for the Serbian state were the successful European imperial powers:

Serbian capitalists have opened their account of colonial murders and horrors and now they can proudly join the capitalist company with the English, the Dutch, the French, the Germans, the Italians, and the Russians.¹¹⁶

From 1914 to 1924, Serbian/Yugoslav troops repeatedly invaded parts of Albania. In the winter of 1916–17, during the Serbian withdrawal through Albania, Albanian guerrilla units did not miss an opportunity for revenge attacks against Serbian troops.¹¹⁷ In 1916 and 1917, during the Serbian uprising against the Austrian occupation in the Toplica region, the Albanian paramilitaries

attacked the Serbian rebels.¹¹⁸ When the Serbian Army returned to Kosovo in 1918, the roles of the persecutors and the victims were reversed again.

At the Paris Peace conference, the Serbian delegation refused to extend the minority rights protections for the Albanian minority in Kosovo. In line with the 'Albanian inferiority' argument, the Chief of the Serbian Military Mission at the peace conference suggested that the 'uncivilized' people of Albania were incapable of an 'independent existence'. Thus, he claimed the Yugoslav state should be given northern Albania to play a 'civilizing' role there.¹¹⁹ A 1921 report by a Serbian Radical Party member from Kosovo states that the local Serbs developed the 'crazy idea' that 'Muslims would not be allowed to live in a Serbian state. On the basis of that idea, the local Serbs are committing various crimes against the Muslims.'¹²⁰

From 1918 to 1924, the new kingdom fought against Kosovo Albanian guerrillas that were supported by the Kosovo Committee in Albania. Their goal was Albanian national unification, by military means if necessary.¹²¹ In 1921, in his speech to the League of Nations, the Prime Minister of Albania claimed that 'the Albanian nation has suffered cruelly from the dismemberment of which the country was victim in 1913'.¹²² The Yugoslav Army used artillery in the attacks on the rebel-held villages, the property of the families of the Albanian rebels was often confiscated by the state, and the Army routinely sent families of the rebels into concentration camps.¹²³ In 1924, the Yugoslav Army supported the establishment of a client regime in Tirana, which then quickly suppressed the Kosovo Committee.¹²⁴ Faced with the ruthless tactics of the Yugoslav military and without the support from the 'motherland', the Albanian guerrillas in Kosovo soon lost military significance.

Throughout this long period of almost non-stop warfare in Kosovo, Macedonia, and parts of Albania, several Serbian politicians and intellectuals continued to criticize Serbian atrocities and Serbia's colonial policy. In 1911 the Serbian Social Democrat Dragiša Lapčević argued: 'Our efforts must not be led astray by the anger of the chauvinists . . . who in a chorus numbering one hundred thousand madmen demand a "great empire" of this or that ancient ruler.'¹²⁵ Dragiša Vasić, a moderate conservative and a Yugoslav military officer on duty in Albania and later secretary of the élite Serbian Cultural Club, saw the crimes committed in 1921 and described 'poor Albania' as 'our shame' in which Serbian soldiers 'die defending plunderers and criminals'.¹²⁶ In 1921, Stojan Protić moderated his reported previous views and suggested that Kosovo and Sandžak should become one Muslim-majority province.¹²⁷ Still, as Lapčević's earlier statement aptly illustrates, it seems that the majority of the politically active Serbs were supportive of a colonial policy towards the Albanians.

The Failure of the Colonial Policy, 1924–9

With the consolidation of the new kingdom during the 1920s, there were some attempts and successes in including Albanians in the political party system. Just to be on the safe side, careful gerrymandering before the 1920 elections for the Constitutional Assembly ensured that Serbs outnumbered Albanians in all electoral units.¹²⁸ Nevertheless, by 1924 the Albanian and Turkish party *Cemiyet* was in coalition with the (Serbian) Radical Party and had 14 MPs in parliament.¹²⁹ However, once the leaders of the Radical Party concluded that *Cemiyet* was secretly pursuing a secessionist policy, they broke off the coalition and had the leader of *Cemiyet* arrested. *Cemiyet* was defeated in 1925 parliamentary elections and stopped functioning the same year.¹³⁰ A major chance to incorporate genuine Albanian representatives in the parliamentary life of the Yugoslav state was thus lost.

The long-lasting Albanian guerrilla warfare probably confirmed a belief that the Albanians were hopelessly disloyal. A 1924 police report provides a memorable description of the Albanians: 'The Arnauts [Albanians] live in many municipalities of southern Serbia; brutal, primitive, distrustful, smart, and disloyal people.'¹³¹ While it is probably true that the Albanians were not loyal to the Serb-dominated state, it is hard to imagine that it could have been otherwise, given the way that the state had treated them in 1878, in 1912 and again in the 1920s. In this case, assumptions of disloyalty had a tendency to work as a self-fulfilling prophecy. The Serbian élite seemed unable to understand that the loyalty of the Albanian minority could be unconditionally demanded, but had to be earned and maintained with negotiations and fair treatment.

In 1924, Albanian émigré organizations appealed to the League of Nations to enforce the Minority Treaties and to protect the Albanian minority in Kosovo. The official response of the Yugoslav Royal representatives deserves to be quoted at length:

If one could trust to the authors of the petition, it would seem that the Royal government threatens the survival, the material welfare, and the cultural life of the peaceful and civilized Albanian population. However, that population is neither peaceful nor civilized. It lacks national consciousness, and it is only capable and willing to work as hired murderers.¹³²

Even after such a scandalous response no sanctions were imposed on the Yugoslav Royal government, indicating a lack of commitment by the Great Powers to the enforcement of minority rights, especially in the cases where the offenders were the local client states. In 1925, the British Foreign Secretary

observed that the minority treaties serve only to 'keep alive the differences which otherwise might be healed in time'.¹³³

The government tried to 'improve' the ethnic composition of Kosovo by promoting colonization policies, such as the confiscation of Albanian land and introduction of the Serbian and Montenegrin settlers.¹³⁴ By 1921 about 40,000 Kosovo Albanians had left for Albania, and by 1930 another 45,000 had left for Turkey.¹³⁵ By the late 1930s about 60,000 colonists, mostly Serbs, were introduced into Kosovo.¹³⁶ However, according to the official Yugoslav census data, the ethnic-cultural composition of Kosovo showed only minor changes. In 1921, about 27 per cent of Kosovo inhabitants reported Serbian or Croatian mother tongue and 65 per cent reported Albanian mother tongue. By 1931, 33 per cent reported a Slavonic mother tongue and about 60 per cent reported Albanian mother tongue.¹³⁷

Why did the Serbian policy in the 1920s shift from policed deportations (as in the 1830s or in 1878) to a more gradual colonization? A possible reason might be the radically different demographic make-up of the newly acquired region. Estimates of the 'national' identity of the populations have to be taken cautiously, but it does seem that Serbia's more recent territorial acquisitions could hardly be seen as 'Serbian-majority' areas. While the Belgrade pashalik before 1804 was reported to be about 90 per cent Serbian, and the Toplica and Kosanica regions were about 80 per cent Serbian before 1878, in 1921 Serbs and Montenegrins comprised at most 40 per cent of the population of Kosovo.¹³⁸ In addition, with the establishment of a client regime in Tirana in 1924, the Belgrade authorities were probably less likely to see Kosovo Albanians as a major secessionist or security threat. However, the growing influence of fascist Italy in Albania would soon force the Belgrade élite to re-think its policy on the Kosovo Albanian question.

Planning the Cleansing of Albanians from Kosovo, 1929–40

As the transition from democracy to right-wing authoritarianism spread across Eastern Europe, leading Serbian intellectuals and politicians of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia developed increasingly exclusionary plans for the Albanian minority. In 1929, King Alexander proclaimed a royal dictatorship and implemented a set of measures aimed at a speedy creation of a unified Yugoslav nation, basically modeled after the French one. The country was divided into new administrative areas, *banovine*, which ignored almost all existing ethnic boundaries.¹³⁹ Conveniently, the boundaries of the new *banovine* ensured that none had a Slavonic

Muslim or Albanian majority.¹⁴⁰ Kosovo region was divided among three different banovine.¹⁴¹

In the 1930s Milan Stojadinović' conservative right government made major attempts at reconciliation and power sharing with several non-Serb groups. Stojadinović carefully distanced himself from the coercive 'ethnic amalgamation' ideas and policies of King Alexander,¹⁴² and brought leading Slovenian and Bosnian Muslim politicians into his government and removed a Serbian general who objected to the partnership with the Muslims.¹⁴³ However, his government also planned to develop the anti-Albanian policies to a new extreme.

Probably the most infamous articulation of the anti-Albanian sentiments of the Serbian élite in this period was the 1937 proposal from Vaso Čubrilović, the Secretary of the élite Serbian Cultural Club, regarding the cleansing of Kosovo Albanians.¹⁴⁴ Čubrilović argued that, 'in the 20th century, only a country inhabited by its own people can be confident of its security'.¹⁴⁵ Thus, the Albanian 'wedge' in Kosovo represented a major threat to the security of the Yugoslav state. Thus, 'if we do not settle the score with them at the proper time, within 20–30 years we shall have to cope with terrible irredentism'.¹⁴⁶ The 'slow and sluggish gradual colonization policy' had failed to fundamentally shift the demographic composition of the region. As Protić had reportedly argued in 1917, Čubrilović claimed that, in the Balkans, 'European' approaches to minority rights were entirely ineffectual: 'The fundamental mistake made by the [Serbian] authorities in charge at that time was that, forgetting where they were, they wanted to solve all the major ethnic problems of the troubled and bloody Balkans by Western methods'.¹⁴⁷ More radical methods were needed: 'We hold the view that the only effective method for solving this problem is mass expulsion of the Albanians'.¹⁴⁸ There were already numerous examples of the effectiveness of this method. The 1878 cleansing of Toplica and Kosanica demonstrated that the method worked. Moreover, 'all the Balkan states, since 1912, have solved or are on the point of solving their problems with national minorities through mass population transfers'.¹⁴⁹ Furthermore, 'if Germany can re-settle tens of thousands of Jews, if Russia can move millions from one end of the continent to another, there will be no world war for the sake of a few hundred thousand re-settled Arnauts'.¹⁵⁰

Čubrilović goes into detail in the elaboration of the policy, describing specific measures used against the Albanians in southern Serbia after 1878 in order to 'create a new Toplica out of Kosovo'.¹⁵¹ The best lands should be taken away from Albanian peasants, taxes should be 'ruthlessly' collected, licenses of Albanian professionals should be revoked, etc. In addition, Serbian paramilitary units should be organized and secretly assisted by the state, and local riots should be incited and then suppressed by the local Serbian militias. Finally, the Albanian

villages and city quarters should be secretly burned.¹⁵² He continued, 'nationalizing the regions around Šar Mountain [Southern Kosovo and Western Macedonia] would mean that we can stifle irredentism once and for all, and ensure our control over these territories forever'.¹⁵³

Čubrilović's basic aim was to induce the Albanians to move, preferably to Turkey, by making their lives unbearable and by selective massacres of the Albanian civilians. In 1938, the Yugoslav Military HQ joined the ultra-nationalist intellectuals by advocating the resettlement of the ethnic Albanians into Turkey, as soon as possible.¹⁵⁴ The HQ was probably concerned with the growing Italian presence and influence in Albania,¹⁵⁵ which had the potential to turn 'disloyalty' of the Yugoslav Albanian minority into a 'security concern'. Possibly inspired by Čubrilović's proposal and reflecting the spirit of the times elsewhere in Europe, Stojadinović signed an agreement with Turkey to accept 40,000 Albanian families in 1938.¹⁵⁶ The Communist Party of Yugoslavia organized a protest by Belgrade University students against this eliminationist plan.¹⁵⁷ The agreement was not implemented at that point, due to a lack of funds.¹⁵⁸

Early in 1939, following discussions with Italians, the Yugoslav Ministry of Foreign Affairs prepared an internal analysis on the possible division of Albania between Italy and Yugoslavia.¹⁵⁹ The analysis offered the following justification for the invasion and annexation of parts of Albania: 'The Albanians never showed solidarity with the other Balkan nations. As well, we never felt any sympathies for them.'¹⁶⁰ Ivo Andrić then Yugoslav diplomat advised against the annexation and also argued that it might be possible for the Yugoslav state to assimilate the Kosovo Albanian minority. In the context of the times and the intellectual climate, these were relatively enlightened ideas. However, he also does imply that if the Albanian state vanished, the out migration of the Muslim Albanians into Turkey, presumably a goal of the Stojadinović government, would be facilitated.¹⁶¹

Some of these eliminationist ideas would actually be put into practice by the multinational Yugoslav Communist regime. Vaso Čubrilović again wrote a memorandum in 1944, this time advocating massive deportations of all major non-Slavonic minorities that 'proved' their disloyalty by massive collaboration with the fascist powers – Germans, Hungarians, Italians and, of course, Albanians. Since this time he was addressing the Yugoslav Communists, Čubrilović was now using the 'model' of Soviet cleansing of ethnic Germans and the 'population exchange' between Ukraine and Poland in 1944.¹⁶² Indeed, the Yugoslav Communists did deport the German and the Italian minorities at the end of the war through violent and coercive methods.¹⁶³ In the 1950s the Yugoslav Communists also implemented an agreement with Turkey on the 'resettlement' of 'Turks'.¹⁶⁴ Vaso Čubrilović, who died in 1990, joined the Serbian Academy of Arts

and Sciences, an élite cultural institution that played a crucial role in the 1980s Serbian national mobilization.¹⁶⁵

Assimilate, Deport, or Kill: The Formation of the Cleansed National States of the Balkans

Why were the Serbian goals and means of action towards the Albanians so exclusionary and why did they gradually worsen throughout the nineteenth and the early twentieth century? A simple answer would be to argue that a large part of the Serbian political élite was simply following the trends in continental European and regional thought and the policy of the times. In his analysis of the formation of national states in Western Europe, Charles Tilly notes that almost all successful states (i.e. those that survived) adopted forms of deliberate cultural homogenization policies, such as the adoption of a state religion, expulsions of minorities, institution of a national language, and educational standardization.¹⁶⁶ The Ottoman system of non-territorial autonomies and tolerance for religious minorities effectively ensured that while Northwestern Europe was gradually culturally homogenized, Southeastern Europe remained without clear ethno-cultural boundaries.

As a number of European nationalist movements radicalized towards fascism,¹⁶⁷ the Serbian national program gradually shifted from Garašanin's paternalistic 'imperial restoration' towards Čubrilović's ethnic cleansing. As the early Balkan national states expanded into the political vacuum left by the collapsing empires, they encompassed ethnically diverse and potentially irredentist populations. The continued presence of these minorities was simply incompatible with the coercive utopia of a centralized and homogeneous nation-state. The alternative roads to modernity were beyond imagination. The minorities and ethnic pluralism had to become the victims of utopia.

It is tempting to argue that Miroslav Hroch's important account of the rise of minority nationalism in Eastern Europe fails to follow the process to its logical conclusion. Hroch distinguishes just the first three phases. Phase A is characterized by a scholarly interest and codification of history, language, and unique customs. In Phase B, 'patriotic groups' use the definition of 'the people' from Phase A to 'awaken the nation', create national identity, and gain state recognition for the 'nation'. Finally, in Phase C, a mass national movement arises, especially if the ethnic activists manage to convincingly frame an existing conflict of interests as a 'national conflict'.¹⁶⁸ While this account seems to describe the formation of the collective 'national' political identity of a number of minority nations convincingly, it does not seek to provide systematic analysis of the

development of the minority national movements after becoming majority nationalisms, that is, after they had captured state power.

The formation of national states in the Balkans appears to advance from the point where Hroch's account stops. A 'Phase D' might be the achievement of an independent state, usually at the 'core' and homogeneous ethnic territory (Serbia, Bulgaria and Montenegro before 1912, Romania before 1918). Early autonomous states were used as a stepping stone to a full independence by Romania, Serbia, Bulgaria, and Greece.¹⁶⁹ 'Phase E' would then be the acquisition of new territories with mixed populations, usually following the collapse of the empires. Here the focus was on 'national unification' by territorial expansion.¹⁷⁰ For example, pre-1918 Romania was 90 per cent ethnically homogeneous, but the territorial gains increased the percentage of the minorities to 27 per cent.¹⁷¹ Finally, 'Phase F' would be the coercive ethnic homogenization of the acquired territories, by assimilation, expulsion or mass murder. Following the collapse of empires, the new national regimes aimed to achieve unitary, ethnically cleansed polities.¹⁷² Between 1911 and the first post-First World War census, Greece, Yugoslavia and Bulgaria managed to reduce the Muslim population from the territories captured during the wars dramatically. From the Muslim population living there in 1911, by the early 1920s, 55 per cent remained in Bulgaria, 46 per cent in Yugoslavia, and only 17 per cent in Greece.¹⁷³ From 1912 to 1922, about half a million Muslims, 1.5 million Greeks, and 250,000 Bulgarians [Orthodox Slavs] were 'relocated'.¹⁷⁴ Maria Todorova observed:

... the Balkans were becoming European by shedding the last residue of an imperial legacy, widely considered an anomaly at the time, and by assuming and emulating the homogeneous European nation-state as the normative form of social organization. It may well be that what we witness today [in the 1990s], wrongly attributed to some Balkan essence, is the ultimate Europeanization of the Balkans.¹⁷⁵

While this line of reasoning does capture some of the reasons for Serbian anti-Albanian ideas and policies, it still has major flaws. It downplays the crucial importance of Great Power politics on the ability of the Balkan nationalist leaders to pursue their coercive homogenization programs. The major European Powers exercised crucial influence, initially by treating some of the atrocities against the Christians as 'humanitarian disasters' and simply ignoring the atrocities towards the Muslims, and later by frequently ignoring the violations of minority rights by the local client states, including Yugoslavia.

Furthermore, an explanation that simply centers on nationalist ideology represents the Serbian political and cultural élite as unimaginative imitators, whose

major fault was that they were not ahead of the rest of Europe. The situation was more complex. Even the most cursory look at the process of the formation of the Yugoslav state shows that the Serbian political élite was capable of designing and negotiating institutions and identities different from the standard nation-state model.

Serb leaders were somewhat constrained in their thinking by the dominant ideas of their times, but when faced with complex realities they were able, usually via the process of trial and error, to come up with better solutions. The perception of the Croats gradually evolved from assimilationist¹⁷⁶ plans to the recognition of and the ethno-territorial autonomy for the Croat people in 1939.¹⁷⁷ While the Serbian élite denied Slavonic Macedonians the right to define their own collective identity, they still focused on coercive assimilation instead of more exclusionary policies. Serbian policies were even less tolerant towards Slavonic Muslims, and in several periods this group was subjected to coercive conversions, expulsions, and massacres. Yet, the Stojadinović regime was prepared to include the leading Bosnian Muslim politician, Mehmed Spaho, in the government, even if that meant alienating Serbian hard-liners, such as General Živković. The Yugoslav Albanians, however, were generally treated worse than the Slavonic Muslims. They were neither recognized as one of the constitutive 'tribes', as the Slovenians and the Croats eventually were, nor were they seen as potentially 'assimilable' into the Serbian nation, like the Macedonians and the Slavonic Muslims.

Thus, the important limitation of the argument which centers just on the coercive utopia of the nation-state is that it fails to explain why some minorities were singled out for assimilation while others were given exclusionary treatment. Seemingly no amount of assimilation could turn Albanians into Serbs. In the Serbian case, those minorities whose 'essential' character was perceived as culturally distant (in terms of religion, race, language, and socio-economic development) and physically threatening (in terms of the previous history of conflict and the current presence of major foreign supporters) were more likely to be perceived as logical candidates for deportation or murder.¹⁷⁸ The perception of Albanians as unassimilable and barbarous was formed as a result of the persecution of the Kosovo Serbs by Albanian extremists in the 1878–1912 period. Recurring episodes of Kosovo Albanian support for the invaders of Serbia further strengthened the belief that they were a disloyal minority and a security threat.

The Serbian élite's animosity towards the Albanians was built on a tradition of intolerance towards Albanians and Muslims. The new contributors to the tradition of intolerance were clearly building on the genealogy of ideas and actions created by their predecessors. Hadži-Vasiljević justified the 1878 cleansing of Albanian Muslims with reference to Njegoš' ideas. Čubrilović used the 1878

cleansing as a blueprint for his own proposal on Kosovo. His conceptualization of the Albanians as a 'wedge' in the Yugoslav lands influenced in turn the Serbian historian Dimitrije Bogdanović, who had a decisive impact in turn on the intellectual framing of the Kosovo crisis in the 1980s.¹⁷⁹ Still, against the current, counter-hegemonic discourse and practices also exist in this history.

In the thoughts and lives of Marko Miljanov and Dimitrije Tucović, in the resistance of General Belmarković to the 1878 cleansing, in the Balkan federalist projects of Serbian social-democrats, in the demonstrations of Belgrade youth against the deportation of Albanians in 1938, the Montenegrins and the Serbs have a valuable heritage of a different vision of the Albanians: not as 'inferior' or 'savages', but as respected neighbors and fellow Balkan peoples.

Notes

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1. Michael Mann, 'Explaining the Murderous Ethnic Cleansing: The Macro Level', in Monserrat Guibernau and John Hutchinson, eds, *Understanding Nationalism* (Cambridge 2001), 237.
2. Tom Gallagher, 'A Balkan History Learning Curve', *European History Quarterly*, Vol. 31 (2001), 151.
3. Ethnic cleansing refers to the removal of members of an ethnic group from a territory against their will. For a detailed discussion of the concept, see Michael Mann, *The Dark Side of Democracy: Explaining Ethnic Cleansing* (Cambridge 2005), 10–18.
4. The initial treatment of the local Muslims during the formative phase of the Serbian state has crucial significance for the later visions and treatment of the Muslim Albanians. Since the Ottoman millet system entrenched the central importance of the religious identity for social position, the Serbian élite members of this period would frequently refer to all Balkan Muslims as the 'Turks', regardless of their actual ethnic background. Petar Petrović Njegoš, the ruler of Montenegro, writes in an 1843 letter: 'We [the Christian Orthodox Montenegrins] are now at war with all the Turks [sa svijem Turcima] around us, and that is almost always the case. They are always united against us [složni na naše zlo], both the Bosniaks and the [Muslim] Albanians.' Letter to Jeremije M. Gagić, 12 August 1843, *Izabrana Pisma: Petar Petrović Njegoš* (Belgrade 1967), 84.
5. Dahije were a group of Ottoman janissaries who managed to usurp control of the Belgrade region while ignoring the orders of the central government in Istanbul.
6. In the hope of pre-empting the likely Serbian rebellion, the Dahije ordered the execution of the Serbian notables and village chiefs in 1804.
7. Matija Nenadović, *Memoirs*, Lovett F. Edwards, ed. (Oxford 1969), 50.
8. The pre-1804 population of the Belgrade Pashalik was about 400,000. About 10 per cent were Muslims. Stevan K. Pavlowitch, *Serbia: The History Behind the Name* (London 2002), 28.
9. Nenadović, op. cit., 7.
10. In 1389, the Ottoman imperial forces defeated a Christian alliance led by the Serbian Prince

Lazar Hrebljanović on Kosovo polje, an event often seen as *the* central moment in Serbian history. An example of this genre is Aleksandar Petrov, 'Kosovo – Sveta Priča Srpskog Naroda', in Aleksa Đilas, ed., *Srpsko Pitanje* (Belgrade 1991), 43–64.

11. In this text, 'Kosovo' refers to the territory of the present-day Serbian Province of Kosovo, whose 'final' status at this time remains unresolved.
12. Specifically, Karadžić wondered whether the south-western part of Kosovo, that Serbs call Metohija, should be seen as part of Serbia. Vuk Karadžić, *Srpska Istorija Našeg Vremena* (Belgrade 1972 [1860]), 10.
13. Pavlowitch op. cit., 30, explains that the escalation happened following the Ottoman-Russian peace settlement in Bucharest and the failure of the Serbian-Ottoman negotiations. Presumably, the Serbian rebels expected an imminent Ottoman attack and wanted to consolidate their hold on the territory.
14. Nikola Radojčić, 'Dositejevo pismo o uređenju i prosvćenju Srbije', *Letopisi Matice Srpske*, Vol. 300 (Novi Sad 1921), 366. Cited in Vladimir Stojančević, *Srbija u vreme Prvog Ustanka* (Leskovac 1980), 242.
15. For example, following the failure of the 1814 rebellion, about 5000 Serb rebels believed an Ottoman promise of amnesty and surrendered. Instead, the Ottoman forces enslaved them and sent them away to Istanbul (Karadžić, op. cit., 230). They were lucky, relatively speaking, as about 40 other captured rebels were impaled (Karadžić, op. cit., 268). Karadžić did note, and further Serbian intellectuals will not forget, that the Kosovo Albanian Muslims came to help the Ottoman forces (Karadžić, op. cit., 280). On later interpretations, see M. Marković, 'Problem Kosova', in Aleksa Đilas, ed., op. cit., (Belgrade 1991), 211.
16. Following the Austrian occupation of Belgrade Pashalik (1788–91), the Ottoman authorities tried to *prevent* further Serbian mass emigration (Pavlowitch, op. cit., 28).
17. Radoš Ljušić, *Srbija 19. Veka* (Belgrade 1994), 17.
18. 'Početak bune protivu dahija', in V. Đurić, ed., *Antologija narodnih junačkih pesama*, (Belgrade 1977), 651.
19. Ivo Goldstein, *Croatia: A History* (London 1999), 46.
20. Thus, the Serbian leaders managed to negotiate the withdrawal of the Muslim urban population from Serbia in 1834. Following the 1862 clashes, all Turkish civilians were evacuated and Serbia had to pay annual compensation to the Porte for their holdings. Serbs coming from the remaining Ottoman provinces moved to Serbia to settle the lands throughout the period (Pavlowitch, op. cit., 33, 54).
21. Slobodan Jovanović, *Političke i pravne rasprave* (Belgrade 1932), 215–34.
22. Ilija Garašanin, *Načertanije* (Belgrade 1998), 75.
23. Garašanin, op. cit., 91.
24. Garašanin, op. cit., 93.
25. Garašanin, op. cit., 96.
26. Petar Petrović Njegoš (1812–51) was the Prince-Bishop of Montenegro from 1830 until 1851. During his rule Montenegro was basically a tribal alliance of Orthodox Christian groups that remained outside the Ottoman rule.
27. Petar P. Njegoš, *The Mountain Wreath [Gorski Vijenac]* (Toronto 1978), 6, 28.
28. Njegoš, op. cit., 22.
29. Njegoš, op. cit., 62.
30. Njegoš, op. cit., 6.
31. Njegoš, op. cit., 50.

32. Jovan Erdeljanović, *Stara Crna Gora* (Belgrade 1978), 63, 65, 82.
33. Erdeljanović, op. cit., 79.
34. Vuk Karadžić, *Crna Gora i Boka Kotorska* (Belgrade 1972 [1837]), 23–4.
35. See, for example, 'Letter to the Turks of Podgorica and Spuže', 27 Apr. 1832, in Njegoš, *Izabrana Pisma*, op. cit., 46.
36. 'Letter to Osman-Pasha Skopljak', 5 Oct. 1847, in Njegoš, *Izabrana Pisma*, op. cit., 153.
37. During the Great Eastern Crisis, major fighting took place in Bosnia, in which Serbian and Montenegrin regular troops and irregulars clashed with Ottoman forces. About 150,000 lives were lost in Bosnia and about 200,000 non-combatants sought refuge in the Habsburg Empire (Pavlowitch, op. cit., 63–4).
38. Branko Horvat, *Kosovsko Pitanje* (Zagreb 1988), 71.
39. Dimitrije Bogdanović, *Knjiga o Kosovu* (Belgrade 1985), 139.
40. Olivera Milosavljević, *U tradiciji nacionalizma* (Belgrade 2002), 81.
41. John R. Lampe, *Yugoslavia as History, Twice There was a Country*, 2nd edition (Cambridge 2000) 93, 97.
42. Milosavljević, op. cit., 80.
43. Manojlo Đorđević Prizrenac, *Moze li se pomoći našem narodu u Staroj Srbiji?* (Belgrade, 1891), quoted in Milosavljević, op. cit., 79.
44. Pavlowitch, op. cit., 67.
45. Vujadin B. Rudić, *Stanovništvo Toplice* (Belgrade 1978), 68.
46. Pavlowitch, op. cit., 68.
47. 'Letter of the Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs to the Serbian Minister of Foreign Affairs', 17 Oct. 1898. In *Prepiska o Arbanaskim Nasiljima u Staroj Srbiji, 1898–1899*. Belgrade [1899] 1998), 87.
48. Janjićije Popović, *Život Srba na Kosovu, 1812–1912* (Belgrade 1987), 80.
49. Popović, op. cit., 227.
50. Milosavljević, op. cit., 79.
51. Živojin Perić, quoted in Horvat, op. cit., 71.
52. Ivan Meštrović, *Uspomene na političke ljude i događaje* (Zagreb 1993), 66.
53. Bogdanović, op. cit., 143.
54. Robert C. Austin, 'Greater Albania: The Albanian State and the Question of Kosovo', in Lampe and Mazower, eds, *Ideology and National Identity in the 20th Century: Southeastern Europe* (Manuscript, 2002), 249–50.
55. Bogdanović, op. cit., 144.
56. L. S. Stavrianos, *The Balkans since 1453* (New York 2000), 501.
57. Barbara Jelavich, *History of the Balkans: Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries* (Cambridge 1983), 219.
58. Stavro Skendi, *The Albanian National Awakening, 1878–1912* (Princeton, NJ 1967), 193, 202.
59. Aviel Roshwald, *Ethnic Nationalism and the Fall of Empires: Central Europe, Russia, and the Middle East, 1914–1923* (London 2001), 57–63.
60. Skendi, op. cit., 144.
61. Durham, op. cit., 247, 274.
62. Skendi, op. cit., 391, 400.
63. Skendi, op. cit., 343, 348–9. Popović, op. cit., 381. Milan Rakić, *Konzulska Pisma, 1905–1911*, A. Mitrović, ed. (Belgrade 1985), 182.

64. Popović, op. cit., 156.
65. Edith Durham, *High Albania* (London 1985 [1909]), 263.
66. Durham, op. cit., 248.
67. Durham, op. cit., 294.
68. Durham, op. cit., 296.
69. 'Letter of the Serbian Minister of Foreign Affairs to the Serbian Ambassador in Istanbul', 25 May 1899, in *Prepiska*, op. cit., 136.
70. Bogdanović, op. cit., 150.
71. Bataković, op. cit., 104.
72. Popović, op. cit., 242.
73. 'Letter of the Serbian Minister of Foreign Affairs to the Serbian Ambassador in Istanbul', 15 Apr. 1898, in *Prepiska*, op. cit., 1.
74. 'Letter of the Serbian Ambassador in Istanbul to the Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs', May 1898, in *Prepiska*, op. cit., 16.
75. Jovan Cvijić, *Govori i članci* (Belgrade 1921), 11, quoted in Milosavljević, op. cit., 225.
76. Vladan Đorđević, *Arnauti i Velike Sile* (Belgrade 1913), quoted in Milosavljević, 226, 229.
77. Marko Miljanov 'Život i običaji Arbanasa', in *Marko Miljanov: Sjav Legende* (Titograd 1963). Dimitrije Tucović, 'Srbija i Arbanija', in *Sabrana Dela* (Belgrade 1975–81), 38. While some of the Illyrian clans of Montenegro have been Slavicized, some of the Slav tribal groups in northern Albania have been Albanianized. The Kuči clan ended up as partially Catholic Albanian and partially Orthodox Montenegrin. Vladimir Dvorniković, *Karakterologija Jugoslovena* (Belgrade 1990 [1939]), 300. Since the eighteenth century, Montenegrin Orthodox Christians have frequently cooperated with the Catholic Albanians in their common struggle against the Muslim Slavs and the Ottomans. Vuk Karadžić, *Crna Gora i Crnogorci* (Belgrade 1972 [1837]), 13. It seems that in this period and region, religious identities were more politically relevant than linguistic ones.
78. In his article 'Srbija na Istoku', in *Sabrani Spisi*, Vol. III (Belgrade 1960), 221, Svetozar Marković rejected the project of 'Greater Serbia', a state that he said would oppress other Balkan peoples, and instead advocated a Serbian-led liberation of oppressed peoples from the Ottomans.
79. Walker Connor, *The National Question in Marxist-Leninist Theory and Strategy* (Princeton, NJ 1984), 130.
80. Tucović, op. cit., 104.
81. Dimitrije Tucović, 'Režim u novim krajevima', *Borba*, 16 Nov. 1913, in op. cit., 213.
82. Dimitrije Tucović, Interview for *La Jeune Turquie*, 4 Sept. 1910, in op. cit., 257.
83. Dimitrije Tucović, 'Prva Socijaldemokratska Balkanska Konferencija', *Die Neue Zeit*, 11 Mar. 1910, in op. cit., 151, 155.
84. Dimitrije Tucović, 'Albansko Pitanje', *Borba*, 1 May 1910, in op. cit., 238–9.
85. Skendi, op. cit., 165.
86. Đorđe Stanković, 'Nikola Pašić i stvaranje albanske države', in Đ. Stanković, ed., *Iskušenja Jugoslovenske Istoriografije* (Belgrade 1988), 227.
87. Skendi, op. cit., 409, 413.
88. Skendi, op. cit., 108, 126–7, 154–6.
89. Rakić, op. cit., 95–7.
90. Dušan Bataković, *Kosovo i Metohija u srpsko-arbanaškim odnosima* (Pristina 1991), 173. John Lampe, *Yugoslavia as History: Twice There Was a Country*, 2nd edn (Cambridge 2000), 92, 97.

91. Milosavljević, op. cit., 218–19.
92. Edith Durham, 'Letter to the Editor of "The Near East"', August 1913, in *Albania and the Albanians: Selected Articles and Letters of Edith Durham*, Bejtullah Destani, ed. (London 2001), 31.
93. Lampe, op. cit., 97. Bogdanović, op. cit., 174.
94. Leon Trotsky, *The Balkan Wars, 1912–13: The War Correspondence*, edited by G. Weissman and D. Williams (New York 1993), 267.
95. Justin McCarthy, *Death and Exile: The Ethnic Cleansing of Ottoman Muslims, 1821–1922* (Princeton, NJ 1995) 141; Horvat, op. cit., 34.
96. 'Report of the International Commission of Inquiry into the Causes and Conduct of the Balkan Wars', in George F. Kennan, ed., *The Other Balkan Wars: 1913 Carnegie Report* (Washington, DC 1993), 72.
97. Durham, op. cit., 29.
98. International Commission, op. cit., 148, 169.
99. Trotsky, op. cit., 271.
100. Trotsky, op. cit., 120.
101. Trotsky, op. cit., 268.
102. Trotsky, op. cit., 119–20.
103. Trotsky, op. cit., 269.
104. Mark Mazower, *The Balkans: From the End of Byzantium to the Present Day* (London 2000), 124.
105. Lampe, op. cit., 97.
106. Trotsky, op. cit., 121.
107. Cathie Carmichael, *Ethnic Cleansing in the Balkans: Nationalism and the Destruction of Tradition* (London 2002), 1.
108. Dimitrije Tucović, 'Krvna osveta soldateske', *Radničke Novine*, 22 Oct. 1913 in op. cit., 161.
109. Bogdanović, op. cit., 169.
110. Stanković, op. cit., 231–4.
111. Bogdanović, op. cit., 172.
112. Stavrianos, op. cit., 541.
113. 'Letter of Nikola Pašić to the High Command of the Army of the Kingdom of Serbia', 16/29 Dec. 1912. In Mihailo Vojvodić, ed., *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije, 1903–1914*, Vol. 5, Book 3 (Belgrade 1986), 631.
114. 'Letter of the Serbian Ambassador in Berlin Jovan M. Jovanović to Nikola Pašić', 16/29 Dec. 1912. In Vojvodić, ed., *Dokumenti*, op. cit., 636.
115. Stanković, op. cit., 231–3, 236.
116. Dimitrije Tucović, 'Srbija i Arbanija' in op. cit., 102.
117. Pavlowitch, op. cit., 97.
118. Bogdanović, op. cit., 179.
119. Lampe, op. cit., 166, and *Zapisnici sa sednica delegacije Kraljevine SHS na Mirovnoj konferenciji u Parizu*, B. Krizman and B. Hrabak, eds (Belgrade 1960), 321.
120. Quoted in Horvat, op. cit., 38.
121. Austin, op. cit., 255.
122. Fan S. Noli, 'Speech to the League of Nations in Geneva in June 1921', quoted in Austin, op. cit., 265.
123. Bogdanović, op. cit., 190.

124. Austin, op. cit., 256.
125. Horvat, op. cit., 17.
126. Horvat, op. cit., 39.
127. Horvat, op. cit., 91.
128. Lampe, op. cit., 121, 124.
129. Horvat, op. cit., 43.
130. Ivo Banac, *The National Question in Yugoslavia* (Ithaca, NY 1984), 378.
131. Quoted in Hajredin Hodža, *Afirmacija albanske nacionalnosti u Jugoslaviji* (Priština, Yugoslavia 1984), 6.
132. Horvat, op. cit., 47.
133. Tom Gallagher, *Outcast Europe: The Balkans, 1789–1989, from the Ottomans to Milošević* (London 2001), 85.
134. Horvat, op. cit., 40.
135. Bogdanović, op. cit., 193.
136. Bogdanović, op. cit., 189.
137. Author's computations from the 1921 and 1931 Yugoslav census data. Yugoslav Federal Statistics Bureau, *Yugoslav Censuses, 1921–1991* (Belgrade 1998). The 1921 and 1931 censuses reported mother tongue and religion, not self-declared ethnic identity. The 1921 census definition did not allow for reporting of Macedonian language and most Slavonic Muslims probably reported being Serbo-Croat speakers. Thus, it is highly unlikely that all 27 per cent of the reported Serbo-Croat speakers thought of themselves as Serbs. The 1931 census lumped together various Slavonic languages, and it again makes no sense to assume that all of these people thought of themselves as Serbs.
138. John R. Lampe, 'Reconnecting the 20th Century Histories of Southeastern Europe', in *Ideology and National Identity in 20th Century Southeastern Europe*, J.R. Lampe and M. Mazower, eds, (Manuscript, 2002), op. cit., 10; Pavlowitch, op. cit., 28, 84.
139. Lampe, *Yugoslavia as History*, 167.
140. Ibid.
141. Hodža, op. cit., 28.
142. Marko Bulatović, 'Struggling with Yugoslavism: Dilemmas of Interwar Political Thought', unpublished manuscript, 2002, 293
143. Lampe, op. cit., 177–8.
144. The Club was the major Serbian élite institution, bringing together leading Serbian academics, senior bureaucrats and major industrialists. Ljubodrag Dimić, *Kulturna politika Kraljevine Jugoslavije, 1918–1941*, Vol. 1 (Belgrade 1996), 508–9, 510–1.
145. Vaso Čubrilović, 'Iseļjavanje Arnauta', in R. Elsie, ed., *Kosovo: In the Heart of the Powder Keg* (New York 1997), 405.
146. Čubrilović, op. cit., 407.
147. Čubrilović, op. cit., 401.
148. Čubrilović, op. cit., 424.
149. Čubrilović, op. cit., 402.
150. Čubrilović, op. cit., 408.
151. Čubrilović, op. cit., 415.
152. Čubrilović, op. cit., 410.
153. Čubrilović, op. cit., 405.
154. Bogdanović, op. cit., 194.

155. Stavrianos, op. cit., 725–6.
156. 'Convention Regulating the Emigration of the Turkish Population from the Region of Southern Serbia in Yugoslavia', [1938] in *Kosovo: In the Heart of the Powder Keg*, in R. Elsie, ed. (New York 1997), 427.
157. Lenard J. Cohen, *Serpent in the Bosom* (Boulder, CO 2001), 14.
158. Lampe, op. cit. 192.
159. Bogdan Krizman, 'Elaborat dra Ive Andrića o Albaniji iz 1939. godine', *Časopis za suvremenu povijest*, 2/1977, 77–90.
160. Elaborat Ivana Vukotića, 3 Feb. 1939, Arhiv Jugoslavije, Fond Milana Stojadinovića, kut. 37. Quoted in Krizman, op. cit., 80.
161. Elaborat Ive Andrića, 30 Jan. 1939, Arhiv Jugoslavije, Fond Milana Stojadinovića, kut. 37. Quoted in Krizman, op. cit., 89.
162. Vaso Čubrilović, 'The Minority Problem in the New Yugoslavia', [3 Nov. 1944] in *Kosovo: In the Heart of the Powder Keg*, R. Elsie, ed. (New York 1997).
163. Carmichael, op. cit. 54–5.
164. Hodža, op. cit., 68–70.
165. Still, Čubrilović did publicly distance himself from the controversial SANU Memorandum of 1986. Jasna Dragović-Soso, *Saviors of the Nation: Serbia's Intellectual Opposition and the Revival of Nationalism* (Montreal 2002), 186.
166. Charles Tilly, 'Reflections on the History of European State-Making', in Charles Tilly, ed., *The Formation of National States in Western Europe* (Princeton, NJ 1975), 43–4, 49, 78.
167. For an analysis of the process of radicalization of more liberal forms of nationalism into aggressive and authoritarian nationalism, and, ultimately, fascism, see Peter Alter, *Nationalism*, 2nd edn (London 1994), 16–38.
168. Miroslav Hroch, *Social Preconditions of National Revival in Europe* (Cambridge 1985).
169. Mazower, op. cit., 101.
170. Ibid.
171. Alfred J. Rieber, 'Repressive Population Transfers in Central, Eastern and South-eastern Europe: A Historical Review', in A. J. Rieber, ed., *Forced Migration in Central and Eastern Europe, 1939–1950* (London 2000), 12.
172. Irina Livezeanu, *Cultural Politics in Greater Romania, 1918–1930* (Ithaca, NY 1995), 4.
173. McCarthy, op. cit., 155.
174. Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans* (New York 1997), 175.
175. Todorova, op. cit., 13.
176. Vuk Karadžić, 'Srbi svi i svuda', in *Crna Gora i Crnogorci* (Belgrade 1972 [1837]), 114–25.
177. Dimić, op. cit., 529, 534. Also see Jovo Bakić, *Ideologije jugoslovenstva između srpskog i hrvatskog nacionalizma* (Zrenjanin 2004), 476–7.
178. While the non-territorial Orthodox Christian minorities (such as the Vlachs or the Orthodox Roma) were often easily assimilated into a rising nation, attempts at assimilation of Muslims have been more problematic. Hugh Poulton, 'The Muslim Experience in the Balkan States, 1919–1991', *Nationalities Papers*, Vol. 28, No.1 (2000), 52, 61.
179. Dragović-Soso, op. cit., 127–39.

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