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Balkan Wars and the Albanian issue

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ABSTRACT

This paper will elaborate the collapse of the Turkish rule in the Balkans and the future fate of Albania, embarking on the new plans of the invasive politics of the Balkan Alliance, especially of Serbia, Montenegro and Greece. Then the dramatic events during the Balkan Wars 1912-1913, the occupation of Kosovo and other Albanian lands by Serbia, the Albanian resistance with special focus on Luma, Opoja and Gora. It will also discuss the rapid developments of the Balkan Wars, which accelerated the Declaration of the Independence of Albania on 28 November, 1912, and organization of the Ambassadors Conference in London, which decided to recognize the Autonomy of Albania with today's borders. Then, information about the inhumane crimes of the Serbian Army against the Albanian freedom-loving people, committing unprecedented crimes against the civilian population, is given.

Keywords: Serbia, Montenegro, Ottoman Empire, Gora, Opoja, Luma.

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Collapse of the Ottoman Empire and creation of the Balkan Alliance

The actions to implement the decisions of the Albanian League of Prizren had kept the feeling of Albanians for national independence and unification. This ideal, among other things, was expressed in the continuation of movements in broad and active participation in the uprising of 1909-1911, particularly in the general uprising of 1912, involving all the provinces of Albania. Then, Turkish military forces were in Albania, while Serbs were militarily attacking Albania. This situation has led Albanians to have only one solution, to seize their weapons for the Albanian territorial integrity (Defence, 1997, 56). Between two evils, one in agony and another at its height, the Albanian nation shook its ranks, and after paralyzing Turkish military forces, it directed its forces against the Balkan aggressive states, in the face of which they must fight for life or death (Braha, 2000, 2). While the Albanian Uprisings were reaching its peak, in Russia it was openly spoken and written for the Balkan states agreement (Shala, 1990, 16). The Russian diplomacy actively supported formation of the Balkan alliance, considering it as its ally against the Austro-Hungarian and German politics. Similarly, Russia hoped that with a Balkan Alliance it would instil its influence on the Balkan Peninsula and thus, set a good dam on the eastward German penetration (Rrahimi, 1978, 199). On 13 March, 1912, the Bulgarian-Serbian agreement was reached, on the basis of which the Balkan Alliance (Buda and Frasheri, 1979, 846) was formed, to which Montenegro and Greece joined, as well. Although this alliance proclaimed that the Balkan War would be directed against Turkey, aiming at the national unification of the Balkan people, and which allegedly was something progressive. However, this alliance led by the military circles of the Balkan countries, primarily Serbia, Montenegro and Greece, would turn to war of invasion, especially against Albania and Macedonia. The Albanians were as much

interested as other Balkan oppressed people to become liberated from the Ottoman yoke. Their representatives made efforts to join their neighbours in the common fight against the Ottoman invaders, but these efforts failed, for the sake of the Balkan Alliance leaders, who did not want to have Albanians as partners with equal rights in this alliance, for so they agreed between them, to split Albania. Therefore, participation of Albanians in this alliance, before having their rights officially recognized, would be a suicide. This is proved by a document of Diplomatic Archive of the Federal Secretariat of Foreign Affairs - Political Department affairs, titled: "The Directive for Working with Albanians, which clearly shows that the Serbian government had already made a plan for occupation of the Albanian lands, where among other things this directive stated: "We should with all means help division between Turks and Albanians. Like this, we would achieve to weaken both, the Turks and the Albanians, and then we will overwhelm the Turks and Albanians. (Diplomatski Arhiv Saveznog Sekretarijata Inostranih Poslova – Politčko Odelenje (DASSIP-PO), Beograd, 1912, 1913, 1914. F.V, d. 8 – Direktiva za rad sa arnautima). When he announced the war against the Ottoman Empire, King Nicholla of Montenegro, invited the Montenegrins to fight: (Cana, 1996.:89) "Montenegrins! There is righteousness beside us, but the dice is thrown, and with the Lord's will the fate of the warriors, too!" (Objava Kralja Nikole, 26 rujan (9 listopad) Cetinja). To cast out the Turks from the Balkans and to extend the borders to the Albanian lands. Before and on the eve of the First Balkan War, some foreigners noticed a perfidious Serbian propaganda aimed at smearing and discrediting Albanians in front of the foreign public (Shala, 2015, 79), which was also pointed out by the US Ambassador to Albania, Charles Erikson, who wrote: "The injustices that the Albanian people had suffered under the Ottoman rule, had the Albanians impeached bad names by their enemies, such as murderers, killers, captains, barbarians, given

after the blood feud, and that not a single foreigner had a safe life amongst them. This was an organized, severe and false propaganda, developed purposefully to discredit the Albanian nation in the eyes of the western world." (Ericson, 2003.:26). This finding is also confirmed by the official stand of the Serbia and Montenegro politics, which tried their utmost to present the Albanians in the light of the most negative to the Great Powers (Russia, Austria-Hungary, England, France, Italy and Germany) (Gruda, 2013, 89). One of them was Vladan Đorđević, president of the Serbian government, who was committed to launch a distorted picture of the Albanians and to present them to the public insults and slanders on the account of the Albanians as people and as a nation. He made these declarations, as they can easily be understood, to justify the invasive intentions of Serbia and Montenegro over the Albanian lands, in front of the whole world. While in his book, "Albanians and the Great Powers" he wrote: "that Albanians are not a nation but some related clans among themselves, living separated from each other, without any nation attributes, without common language, and they do not have their culture and history" (Djordjevič, 1913, 28-29). Even Stojan Protić, who also exercised the function of the head of the Serbian government, in his book, "The Albanian Issue, Serbia and Austro-Hungary," justified the aspirations of Serbia and Montenegro to re-establish the Great and Old Serbia with the help of Russia, on account of the Albanian lands (Protić, 1913, 13-18). Thus, Serbia using its propaganda, in front of the foreign public and diplomatic world, was militarily prepared to conquer the Albanian territories.

The course of the Serbian-Montenegrin war operations in the territory of Kosovo

The weakening of the Ottoman Empire, the consecutive loss of battles, both military and diplomatic ones, resulted with creation of some Balkan states in 1878, like Romania, Bulgaria, Serbia, Montenegro and Greece, at the

expense of the Albanian people, which also had consequences in both, loss of territories and human lives. The Balkan countries, to further achieve their territorial ambitions in the Albanian lands, realized that they had to face the Ottoman Empire (Ahmeti, 2010, 101-2). Meanwhile, for the Albanians of the four vilayets (provinces), the year 1912 would unfold the great historical responsibility to protect the fate of their country, Albania. This responsibility was reflected in both sides, to the national movement as well as taking the guns to face with the dangers that, according to the English scholar Edith Durham, "The First Balkan War was a plot prepared against the Albanian nation. The natural Albania, which was just being established, was the main cause of the outbreak of that war" (E. Durham, 1990, 386). So, the truth is that these dangers were coming to the Albanians from their Balkan neighbours, who had drafted a series of hidden plans for sharing among themselves of the Albanian land historically settled by Albanians. The created circumstances were unfavourable for Albanians, especially the patriots, who were part of the progressive clubs and societies, were disturbed. They declared it publicly: "The neighbours we have around are armed and they are getting armed more and more every day. They seek their expansion and our shrinkage. We are not like them, with weapons and organized armies, but we are stronger in the inalienable right to the homeland that we have inherited from our grandparents ("The Freedom of Albania" – "Liria e Shqipërisë", 26.08.1912). For this, Oliver Schmitt wrote: "The Albanian Muslims were unorganized and poorly armed; therefore they were not able, after the rapid withdrawal of the Ottoman army, which had been weakened by the Muslims (Albanians) uprising of 1909-1912, to resist the regular Serbian and Montenegrin armies, despite the local uprising efforts (Schmitt, 2012, 137). "But in spite of this, time could not wait. It dictated the necessity of a popular people's resistance (Manaj, 2002, 47). And the basis for organization of a resistance was the

assessment and the call of the extraordinary meeting of the "Salvation Committee" in Skopje on 14 October, 1912. It was anticipated that some 15,000 people would rise in the Prizren region. Opoja and Gora had gathered about 3,000 volunteers. Luma, as the largest and the most popular province carried the mobilization, totalling about 8,000 fighters. Half of them would fight in peripheral areas; the others would defend the province in the regions of 'bayrak' (Ottoman territorial units consisting of several villages in mountainous areas) and villages. There were two main lines for resistance: the one of Carralevë-Qafë e Duhles-Lipushës and the one of Qafa e Prushit, Zhur-Guri i Zi in Sharr (Braha, 1978, 238). Despite the tremendous resistance and courage of the Albanian forces at the Neck of Duhle (Qafë e Duhles), they were defeated, while the Serbian army had also entered in Prizren. After the withdrawal from Carraleva, Qafë-Duhla and Prizren, many forces had arrived in the Opoja and Luma regions. The forces of the resistance and Isa Boletini reunited at the Tower of Luma. About 25,000 fighters were concentrated on the slopes of Mount Koretnik, on the side of Sharri and on the slopes of Pashtriku and Gjallica, ready for a resistance (Braha, 1978, 56). On the eve of the Declaration of the Independence of Albania, which was expected to be proclaimed by Ismail Qemali in Vlora, the Balkan Alliance's army entered into Albanian lands from all sides. In October 1912, the Serbian and Montenegrin military broke through the territory of Kosovo by bringing to an end the Turkey's five-century rule. The Montenegrin army invades Peja, Gjakova and the north-western parts of Dukagjini and joins them to the Montenegrin kingdom. During the invasion of Peja by the Montenegrin army, the commander of the Montenegrin army's Eastern Division Gen.-Adjutant of His Majesty King Nicholla, the First Brigadier, Janko Vukotic, issued this Proclamation to Peja's people: "People of Peja, from today on you fell under the power of the GOSPODAR (KING) of Montenegro, His

Majesty, King Nicholas the First and his progressive laws. I invite you that from this moment to be calm, obedient, loyal and orderly citizens" (Cana, 1996, 101-102). The Brigadier Commander Vukotić, on 20.10 (2.11) 1912, informed His Majesty, that according to the report of the Commander Vesovic, they had concurred Deçan, and that all the villages had been surrendered up to Gjakova (Cana, 1996, 105). While also in October 1912, on the eve of the Serbian aggression against the Albanian territories, the Serbian army numbered 356,000 men (Braha, 1991.:129): the chief of the General Staff was appointed General Radomir Putnik, who would lead three armies: The First Legion counting an effective of 128 thousand people, which would be under the command of the succeeding Prince Alexander Karadjordjevic, while Chief of Staff Petar Bajović. The Second Legion numbered 75,000 men, under the command of General Stefanovic, and the Third Legion with an effective of 63,000 men, which would be commanded by General Bozidar Jankovic (Jankovic had led a Serbian terrorist organization "People's Defence"), whilst the Chief of Staff Dušan Pešić ("Military Encyclopaedia" - Vojna Enciklopedija I, 1970, 449). The third Legion of the Serbian Army had fought hard in the areas at the Kosovo border, especially in Merdare of Podujevë; according to the Serbian historian Aleksandar Stojčević, the Serbian army was caught in an uncomfortable position, so that the Third Army Command would be alerted: "The Operational Plan for invasion of Kosovo is put to a halt before a failure (Stojčević, 1932, 122). Although the Podujevo soldiers came to the aid of the Albanian soldiers from the territory of Vushtrri, Prishtina, Drenica and Sandzak of Jeni Pazari, they did not have any supplies in weapons, food and clothing, and the fresh reserve staff (Stojčević, 1932, 90- 91). Therefore, after they committed crimes, by killing elderly people, women and children, the Serbian army headed south of Kosovo. On 9 and 10 November 1912, two lines with soldiers set off on the invasion

road to come to the Adriatic (Ratkivić et al., 1972, 134). But the first major obstacle to prevent the Serb forces to enter into the Adriatic was Luma, for which the Serbian intelligence services possessed secure information on the organization of a strong defence. The people of this province and the surrounding villages, Opoja, Hasi, Dardha e Dibrës, Gora, and Reçica had long before seen the danger of the Serbian occupation and prepared for an armed resistance (Braha, 1981,196). The attack from the Serbian army will take place in two directions, one from Gjakova, Qafa e Prushit, Qafa e Malit, Puka, Lezha, and the other from Prizren, Kukës, through Mirdita in Lezha to arrive to Durrës, the old Serbian dream. The target was Lezha and Durrës, but first they must conquest and disarm Luma. On November 15 Luma was under the flames of the war. For three days, the Luma people conducted fierce fighting against a reinforced Serbian attack. For the heroic war of the Luma people, including the Opojans and the Gorani, the famous patriot, Aqif Pasha Elbasani, would forward to the Albania government this report: "The Luma people and a part of Malsia e Dibres (Dibra Highlands) attached to it, sparked by the Serbs who entered into Luma while murdering and burning the houses, opposed them and killed nearly 6 battalions of soldiers. The other remaining forces forced them out of Luma (Dossier, 1924, 329). While, about the Serbian crimes against Kosovo Albanians, Leon Trotsky, as an opponent of Stalin as he was, he was also against the Serbian atrocities against Albanians during the Balkan wars, so in his book, *The Balkan Wars 1912-1913*, he tells to a Serbian officer about the Serbian misery within the Albanian territories: "The terrors actually began as soon as we entered Kosovo. Entire Albanian villages had been turned into flame clouds; the fortunes collected and earned by forefathers and grandfathers were burning in flames, and such images repeated all the way to Skopje. Among the masses of soldiers, one could see Serb villagers who came from every corner of

Serbia allegedly seeking for their sons and brothers. They walked through the Kosovo fields and begun plundering; people came in mass from the area around Vranje to the Albanian villages to snatch whatever the eye caught." (Trotsky, 1980, 267). While, Swiss historian Oliver Jens Schmitt describes and compares the invasion of Kosovo by Serbo-Montenegrins in this way: "The occupation of Kosovo by Serbia and Montenegro in October / November 1912 has many parallels with the end of the Serbian administration in 1999 (Schmitt, 2012.:137). Hence, these circumstances urged the Albanian patriots to proclaim the independence throughout the cities as soon as possible in order for the military authorities to be in front of the act (Pushkolli, 1991, 66). Under these conditions and before the representatives of some provinces would come, the National Assembly of Vlora opened on 28 November, 1912. Ismail Qemali was elected as its chairman and Luigj Gurakuqi the secretary. The Assembly decided about the Declaration of the Independence of Albania and all the delegates signed this national event (Myzyri, 2001, 161). So, 28 November, 1912 opened a new era in Albania's history. The era of the independent national state and the struggle of the Albanian people for protection of their freedom and independence and for the establishment of a democratic order (Pushkolli, 1991, 66). Despite the Vlora's government demand, neither the Great Powers nor the neighbouring Balkan states initially recognized the Albania's independence (Myzyri, 2001, 166). But for the Albanian people, proclamation of the independence was a big victory in the five centuries-long war against the Ottoman rule and against the aspirations of the Balkan neighbours for the complete split of Albania.

Ambassadors Conference in London and its Decisions

Although a joint statement by Austro-Hungary and Russia was issued in early October, to maintain the "status quo" in the Balkans, the

Balkan wars for ten days changed the situation. Soon after was noted that the rule of the Ottoman Empire in Europe had come to an end (Shala, 1990, 117). For this, the French Prime Minister, Poincaré proposed to call the Sixth Conference of the Great Powers, to gather after the end of the war and to bring a final decision (Puto, 1978, 144). London was chosen as the most neutral city to host the conference. The Ambassadors Conference hastily gathered in London on 17 December, 1912, headed by the British Foreign Secretary Sir Edward Gray. From the first day, it dealt with the Albanian issue. Three major issues were discussed: The Albania's international status, the organization of the new state and the definition of publicly recognized borders. The Balkan Allies, presented to the Ambassadorial Conference large territorial claims affecting the Albanian lands. The Serbian government sought the entire territory of Kosovo, the eastern Albanian lands which today fall under Macedonia and other parts of the northern Albania. Montenegro wanted the annexation of Shkodra with its surrounding districts and demanded that its border with Albania be the river of Mat or Drini up to its inflow in the Adriatic (Myzyri, 2001, 167). The Vlora's government also sent a delegation to London whose members were: Rasim Dino, Mehmet Konica and Filip Noga.

The fourth member Sotir Kolea did not go, mainly because of his distrust about any "benefit from this cause" with such a composition of the delegation (Dragnich and Todorović, 1984,314-342). The Albanian delegation documented the creation of a compact ethnic Albania, where the towns of Peja, Gjakova, Prizren, Mitrovica, Prishtina, Skopje and Manastir were included (Dragnich and Todorović,1984,103-4). As it concerns the borders, the declaration of the representatives of the Government of Vlora was for not changing the borders of the Albanian nation: "*The borders that we seek, are those that need to be marked following the dividing line, starting from today's borders of the*

Montenegrin Kingdom and including, in particular, all the surrounding suburbs, the towns of Peja, Mitrovica, Prishtina, Skopje and Manastir (Bitola) to Meçova, preserving the today's borders to Preveza. By seeking these borders, the Albanian people aimed only at maintaining as heartfelt and stable relations as possible with their neighbours. Regardless of the ethnic geographic and historical issues in favour of this reasonable demarcation, it is necessary that by reducing it and shrinking it beyond its natural boundaries, Europe would jeopardize the imposition of the Albanian state on a material impossibility for the whole its life, without having so, in economic terms, the necessary resources for its normal development (AQSH, Tiranë-fondi 245, viti 1913, dosja 11-19, fleta 34). At the end of this Memorandum was stated: "*The Albanian people are born who, in regulating today's conflict, the Great Powers will not neglect to consider the points raised in this Memorandum and will not be oblivious to the fair demands of a worthy nation for a better fate.*"(AQSH, Tiranë-fondi 245, viti 1913, dosja 11-19, fleta 34). Austro-Hungary and Italy were interested in an autonomous or independent Albania, with broader borders, to prevent a further expansion of the Slavic states towards the Western Balkans. But Russia was for a new fragmentation of the Albanian lands, and to share them amongst the neighbouring states. Through expansion of the Slavic states, Russia tried to extend its influence to the Balkans. The Balkan Allies (Serbia, Greece and Montenegro), for their part, were determined to conquer all the Albanian lands. This clearly showed that they were against the creation of an Albanian state (Myzyri, 2001, 167). This is also indicated by a persistent stand of Nikola Pasić, who stated that Serbia would never abandon the area between the cities of Dibra and Gjakova (Vickers, 2004, 110), however the Serbian troops had to retreat from the Adriatic coast, according to the Russian Foreign Minister Saznov's advice, who warned Serbs: "Be careful! Do not insist on Durrës because

you can lose Belgrade. Vienna has lost its mind." Neither Russia nor its allied powers could allow the issue of a European war to be decided by Serbia (Dragnich i Todorović, 1984, 103-4). A day later, the Ambassadorial Conference had stated that it would recognize the Albania's independence, but Serbia openly had expressed its territorial aspirations. Thus, the Belgrade newspaper "Politika" of that time wrote: Luckily, the Albanian issue has not yet been resolved. It is far from it, the main problem has not been recognition of the autonomy, but the establishment of the Albania's borders (Politika, 10. I.1913). In a very concise manner, in his book the "Albanians", regarding the precedent for splitting Albania in London, the American diplomat who had served in Montenegro and Greece, George Williams would say in his book: "*The featherbrained European diplomacy, by taking the Albanian lands in the North, East and South, and giving them to their neighbours, will in fact cause daily wars to those states*" (Williams, 1934, 37). The First Balkan War would end on 30 May, 1913, with signing of the First Protocol of London, between Greece, Serbia, Bulgaria, and Montenegro. With this protocol, the allies were obliged to recognize the new state of Albania, with today's borders, meaning that, they should withdraw their armies from Albania and determine their borders with the Ottoman Empire. This agreement would not clearly determine the borders of these states in the Macedonian area, which they had to negotiate with each other, like this leaving gaps, which would lead to new conflicts. In principle, the London Conference, had decided that Albania to the north be bordered with Montenegro, and in the south with Greece. This had hampered the Serbia's exit to the Adriatic, which was very important for both Albania and Italy and Austro-Hungary.

The armed resistance in Luma, Opoja and Gora

As discussions about the borders were going on in London, the Serbian atrocities in Kosovo

and Albania were continuing on incalculable dimensions. Meanwhile, the European public was convinced that the Belgrade criminals, with their cruelty, continued the atrocities against the Albanian nation in Kosovo and other Albanian lands of Macedonia (Braha, 1991, 192). This situation forced the Kosovo leaders, Bajram Curri and Isa Boltini, to travel to Vlora at the end of August in 1913 (AVII. Kutija 1. Fascikal 1, br. 3/21) to talk about the necessary protective measures that need to be taken. In September, Hasan Prishtina, was appointed minister in the government of Vlora, while Bajram Curri, Isa Boletini and Sali Hoxha, took over organization of the revolt ("The birth of Albania"- Përlindja e Shqipërisë, 27. XI. 1913). The insurgents headed toward Dibra, Struga, Tetovo, Gostivar, Kërçova and north of Gjakova and Prizren (Puto, 1978, 415). Also in the Drini's Valley, the Serbian army suffered a defeat, but the Serbian government did not think of giving up the province of Luma, Hasi, Opoja, Dibra, and Gora, considering that these all were of a strategic importance to conquer the rebel regions (Hoxha, 2002, 1). Therefore, many military forces were also sent against Opoja, to punish those villages. Against these forces, at the front line of Pllava – Mount of Broja (Kodra e Borjes) - Gilloboçicë mountain, the highlanders of Opoja, Topojani and Gora, with their popular leaders Qazim Lika, Kaplan Opoja, Ahmet Qehaja, Nail Hyseni and others (Manaj, 2002, 71), drove the Serbian army back, which retreated through Opoja's territory, the patriotic warriors of Opoja again attacked Serb soldiers. The Serbian army got new reinforcements, which then, although badly broken, returned back, retaliated against the villagers who had attacked their soldiers. The Serb officers, according to foreign sources and not just Serbs, were ordered to "burn all the localities in Luma, Gora and Opoja and to exterminate the population of these regions (Braha, 1991, 200)." Thus, the Serbian army, by this pretext, in some villages of Opoja burned and killed many men, women and children. According to the foreign documents, which give

a partial insight, clearly show the Serbian atrocities; we present (Braha, 1991, 201): In the village of Bellobrad, 45 to 70 houses were burned to the ground and 80-87 were killed. In the village of Brrut, 80-90 houses were burned to the ground and 20-60 people were killed. In the village of Rrenc, 30-40 houses were burned to the ground and 40-45 were wounded, with no casualties. The village of Bresanë, was attacked twice. The first time, there were 30 houses burned to the ground and 40 people were killed. The second time, 25 houses were burned and 25 were killed. In the village of Zym, 20-23 houses were burned to the ground and 27 were wounded (HHStA-PA, Vienna, 23-34-3480). The unarmed population of Opoja, upon hearing about the return of the Serbforces, hid themselves in the nearby mountains. The village of Bellobrad was mostly damaged both, in people and in burned houses (Qafleshi, 2010, 234). In the neighbourhood of "Baxhakët" of Bellobrad village were killed: Jaha Zeqiri, Memish Baxhaku with his wife Zylfiana and the son Sallah, while another son Kamber was seriously wounded. In the "Qafleshi" neighbourhood, the afraid residents had hidden in the Gani Qafleshi's water well, where 13 people had died because of the lack of oxygen, and as it was transmitted that only Rasim Qafleshi survived, because his mother and another woman named Fetije, who later got married in Krusha e Madhe, had kept him as a child above the water, (Qafleshi, 2011, 184). Sinan Myftari, was killed and massacred at a place called the Village Bridge, where hungry dogs ripped his body, and later the villagers gathered his bones and buried him. As soon as the Serbian forces returned from the pursuit in the mountains and other places, near the village mosque, five or six gipsies who lived in this village had gone out with drums to welcome them as saviours, but they killed and insulted them as bad 'weeds', and afterwards they buried them in the yard of the village mosque (Qafleshi, 2011, 184). The Serbian crimes on the Albanian people are well known amongst other villages in Opoja as well.

According to the Gorani scholar Sadik Idriz, for this bloody war he writes: "In September of the 1913, the Albanian uprising broke out, which did not even spare Gora, too. Some historians, the uprising named as the Third Balkan War, paraphrasing the Serbian Social Democrat Dimitrije Tucovic, who for this uprising wrote: The biggest massacre occurred in the village of Restelica, there were 13 residents of this village that were killed. In the village of Krushevo, 9 members of the Gazi family (Mullah Arif Krusha) were killed, including children of minor age. In Brod, near a place called Zdrashejec a massacre was committed, where dozens of local inhabitants were liquidated. In Vranishte, Haxhi Ridvani and his son Haxhi Arifi, Mullah Sezairi and the so-called Hasani from Dikanca were killed. All of them were buried in two pits at the place called Kika. The imam of the village Mullah Karimani was killed in Globocica. These crimes were best described in an article of the Belgrade paper "Radničke novine" (The workers paper), which speaks about the crimes and massacres committed by Serbs against the insurgents in Opoja, Gora and Has, where among others it says: "Slaughtering ceased after a vigorous protest of a group of officers, acknowledging that these "savage Albanians", once they disarm our captured soldiers they let them free, while our "cultured" army of the 20th century is killing their children! It was late. What could have been done was done, the corpses were brought inside the houses and the houses were set on fire - to hide the traces of the crime (Radničke novine, 22. X. 1913)." All of these crimes were committed solely to scare the wide population, so when the International Commission for demarcation of the new borders asks them, they would say they wanted to live in Serbia (Idrizi, 2012, 62- 63). Despite all of these Serbia, Greece and Montenegro, with their invading politics, did not succeed to tear Albania apart, but they managed to shrink and pluck it (Tucović, 2017, 49). But the severe fragmentation of the Albanian lands had great and very negative consequences, not only in the occupied territories, but also to the

independent Albanian state itself, already recognized by the Great Powers.

Conclusions

In no time of its national existence, Albania has given up on its sovereignty. So, at the time of the Balkan borders discussions, the Albanians had the right to raise their voice to ask from the European Powers for the independence of the Albanian state with its natural borders, along with the right to live the opportunity to develop in peace like all other nations. Based on the statements of our neighbours, in London, the Albanians stated that if the final solution to the problem of the Balkan people was forcefully imposed, the Albanian people could not endure their rights to be partially sacrificed, and further, the full peace cannot be reached on the peninsula, if the frontiers known to every political entity, would not be inspired by the geographical and ethnographical borderline of every state. Only giving a homogeneous configuration to Albania can bring peace and tranquillity to the Balkans. After the bloody Balkan wars, Albania gained the formal autonomy, which was crippled. The London Conference, according to Tucevic, behaved more cruelly against Albania than the Berlin Congress against Serbia. But this is not all, because it has created the greatest ideological and political uncertainty even within the Serbian people themselves. It means that Serbia has created to itself the risk of its European and the worldwide political and diplomatic future. The serious war crimes of the Serb units in 1912-1913, mostly against Albanians, created an enmity, but this continued during 1st Yugoslav state and – in different shape during 2nd Yugoslav state, which led to the war situation in the late 1990s, and which was stopped only by the NATO bombs on Serbia.

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