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## THE CASE OF KOSOVO: SEPARATION VS. INTEGRATION LEGACY, IDENTITY, NATIONALISM

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### The Difficult Legacy

Kosovo (Kosovo and Metohija) consists of two distinct areas: Kosovo proper and Metohija, with portions of territories which were not considered to belong to these two areas. A valley between the cities of Kosovska Mitrovica and Uroševac, Kosovo proper is eighty-four kilometres long and roughly fourteen kilometres wide. Since medieval times the Kosovo valley has been a densely populated area, an important crossroad of vital transport routes in the Western Balkans, linking the Adriatic Sea with the lower Danube basin. Kosovo and Metohija are rich with both agricultural and mineral resources<sup>1</sup>.

The other area geographically separated from Kosovo by the hills of Drenica has been, for centuries, known as *Metohija*. Marked since the medieval period by hundreds of Serb Christian Orthodox churches, monasteries and their dependencies (*metochion*—signifying in Greek language the church property) Metohija is renowned by splendid endowments of Serbian rulers and landlords<sup>2</sup>. Bordering northern Albania in the west, Metohija is a highly fertile agrarian flatland that stretches roughly from the towns of Istok and Peć in the north to the Djakovica and Prizren area (*Prizrenski Podgor*) further south.

<sup>1</sup> Atanasije Urošević, *Kosovo*, Belgrade 1965; *Zadužbine Kosova. Spomenici i znamenja srpskog naroda*, A. Jevtić & Ž. Stojković (eds.), Belgrade–Prizren 1987.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. more in: Mihailo J. Dinić, “The Balkans 1018–1499”, *Cambridge Medieval History*, vol. IV, Cambridge, 1966, pp. 520–522; Sima M. Ćirković, *La Serbie au Moyen Age*, [Saint-Léger-Vauban], 1992.



Within the larger area that encompasses parts of neighbouring northern Albania, Metohija is known to the Albanians as Dukagjin. Metohija is about eighty kilometres long and over forty kilometres wide<sup>3</sup>.

The very word *Kosovo* (*kos* in the Serbian language means “blackbird”) has opposite meanings in two rival ethnic communities, the Serbs and Albanians. To the Serbs, Kosovo with Metohija represents an area considered to be the ‘Serb Jerusalem’, with impressive cultural achievements and economic growth in medieval times, brought to a halt by the Ottoman conquerors. For the Serbs, the epic 1389 Battle of Kosovo fought between Serb and Ottoman armies came to symbolize their struggle for liberty against oppression and their plight under the yoke of a foreign conqueror. After centuries of Ottoman rule, the suffering of Kosovo had grown to legendary proportions owing to Serb epic ballads. Kosovo grew into a central pillar of Serbian modern identity, being a sacred land, the heartland of Serbian culture, art, and both spiritual and political traditions<sup>4</sup>. Kosovo is perceived by the Serbs as a holy land from which they have been driven out of for centuries and continue to be expelled by ethnic Albanians even today. This was, as witnessed by Serbian and other reliable historical sources, the result of an orchestrated and systematic effort since the late seventeenth century perpetrated primarily by the Muslim Albanians, legal and illegal immigrants settled into Kosovo for social, religious and political reasons in several migratory waves during the rule of the Ottomans, the Italian fascists, and Tito’s communists<sup>5</sup>.

In contrast, ethnic Albanians consider Kosovo to be a symbol of an “ancient Albanian land”, the province of “Dardania” that directly links the ancient Illyrians with the present Albanian community in the province. This romantic historical notion, created for practical political purposes, originally in Austria-Hungary, only to be embraced by Albanian historians during the rule of communist dictator Enver Hoxha, views Albanians as direct descendants of the ancient, pre-Roman, Illyrians and brands Serbs as “Slavic occupiers” who settled in an ancient Albanian land in the seventh century AD. Serbian monasteries, built in Kosovo in unusually large numbers from the early thirteenth to the late fifteenth century, as well as others built during the Ottoman rule by the restored Serbian Orthodox Church (Patriarchate of Peć, 1557–1766) were, according to contemporary Albanian propagandists, constructed on the foundations of earlier “Illyrian churches”<sup>6</sup>.

The Serbian view is, however, mostly supported by tangible evidence. Many written historical sources, foreign and domestic, confirm the predominant Serbian presence in the area since the seventh century AD. Kosovo is presently covered by roughly 1300 Serb Christian Orthodox churches, monasteries, hermitages, fortresses and other monuments as well as various archaeological sites<sup>7</sup>. The demographic shift, by which Kosovo’s Serb

<sup>3</sup> Milisav Lutovac, *La Metohija : étude de géographie humaine*, Institut d’études Slaves, Paris 1935.

<sup>4</sup> On Kosovo tradition and Kosovo covenant as a pillar of Serbian modern identity see: C. Stewart, *Serbian Legacy*, London 1959; T. A. Emmert, *A Serbian Golgotha. Kosovo 1389*, Boulder 1990; R. Mihaljević, *The Battle of Kosovo in History and Popular Tradition*, Belgrade 1989.

<sup>5</sup> In detail: *Kosovo-Metodija dans l’histoire serbe*, R. Samardžić (ed.), Lausanne 1990.

<sup>6</sup> *The Albanians and their territories*, A. Buda (ed.), The Academy of Sciences of the PSR of Albania, Tirana, 1985. Prifti Kristaq (ed.) *The Truth on Kosova*, The Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Albania, Tirana 1993.

<sup>7</sup> On Serbian medieval and post-medieval heritage more in: *The Christian Heritage of Kosovo and Metohija. Historical and Spiritual Heartland of Serbian People*, chief contributing editor, D. T. Bataković, Los Angeles 2015, 1007 p.

majority population was gradually replaced by an Albanian one from the late seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries, is also well documented, as well as the reasons for it, the primary one being the oppression of foreign domination, with the Muslim Albanians (ninety-five percent of Albanian Kosovo population) siding with Ottomans, Austro-Hungarians, Mussolini's Italy or Nazi Germany.

In contrast, there is no tangible scholarly evidence of the continuity between the ancient Illyrians and modern Albanians, with relevant sources from the sixth to the eleventh century A.D. completely silent on this matter. Even many of Kosovo's place-names (including the name of the province itself) used by Albanians themselves are of Slavic, that is, of Serbian origin. Nevertheless, all this did not prevent the formation of a modern Albanian national mythology based on the alleged continuity with the ancient Illyrians, a theory skilfully promoted by post-1945 communist historiography of Enver Hoxha and strongly advocated by a group of certain foreign scholars often biased and bizarrely passionate on this subject<sup>8</sup>.

Historical accuracy, in the case of Kosovo, is, almost entirely, on the side of the Serbian perspective, while contemporary demographics are heavily on the side of the ethnic Albanians. Furthermore, historical and political claims of both Serbs and Albanians are often constructed in victimage discourse in order to legitimize both romantic and pragmatic needs of one's identity, while combining symbolic memories, emotional outbursts and immediate political demands on a personal, collective and national level subsequently<sup>9</sup>. Nevertheless, the usual approach, often lacking a reliable scholarly background, is to compare the Serbian historical account, overwhelmingly based on verifiable data, with Albanian romantic-historical theses and attractive scholarly-inspired theories that have significantly less backing in sources, in order to offer a kind of "balanced" version of history. However, such attempts to find a middle ground usually produce a distorted and misguided view of the region's past<sup>10</sup>.

<sup>8</sup> Noel Malcolm, *Kosovo. A Short History*, New York, New York University Press, 1998. See a review by A. Djilas in: *Foreign Affairs*, September 1998, ("Imagining Kosovo; A Biased New Account Fans Western Confusion"). Also biased are: R. Elsie (ed.), *Kosovo in the Heart of the Powder Keg*, Boulder 1997. Useful information and less biased interpretation, but still incomplete history of Kosovo is to be found in: M. Vickers, *Between Serb and Albanian. A History of Kosovo*, London 1988. Very accurate and balanced is: I. King and W. Mason, *Peace at Any Price. How the World Failed Kosovo*, Ithaca & New York, 2006. In French speaking countries, M. Roux, *Les Albanais en Yougoslavie. Minorité nationale, territoire et développement*, Paris 1992. S. Methias, *Histoire des Albanais. Des Illyriens à l'indépendance du Kosovo*, Paris 2006 is totally inaccurate as far as Kosovo is concerned.

<sup>9</sup> H. Zdravković, *The Vernacular Discourses of Historical Victimage of Kosovo Serbs and Albanians* Balcanica, vol. XXVI (2005), pp. 83–112.

<sup>10</sup> Two solid insights in different and essentially irreconcilable Serbian and Albanian historical and political perspectives on Kosovo are available in two proceedings of international conferences with both Serbian and Albanian participants: G. Duijzings, D. Janjić, S. Maliqi (eds.), *Kosovo-Kosova. Confrontation or Coexistence*, Nijmegen 1996; T. Veremis & E. Kofos, (eds.), *Kosovo. Avoiding Another Balkan War*, Athens: Eliamep & University of Athens, 1998. Cf. also: W. J. Buckley, (ed.), *Kosovo. Contending Voices on Balkan Interventions*, Michigan & Cambridge U. K 2000). The standard pro-Albanian German view is available in: W. Petritch, K. Kaser & R.t Pichler, (eds.), *Kosovo/Kosova. Mythen, Daten, Fakten*, Klagenfurt & Wien, 1999. More balanced is the standard Italian survey, covering interwar and contemporary period: M. Dogo, *Kosovo: Albanesi e Serbi: le radici del conflitto*, Lungro di Cosenza 1992. Among the latest works, J.-A. Dérens, *Kosovo. Année zéro*; préface de M. A. Nowicki Paris, Paris 2004 is balanced and accurate.

Therefore, the present-day Albanian perception of Kosovo history was not motivated by verifiable scholarly results but was rather an endeavour to legitimize the current Albanian demographic predominance and project it, through historical revisionism, deep in ancient and medieval history in order to discredit any claim Serbia has on Kosovo. Furthermore, the political focus of the Albanian historiography is on the policy of “recolonizing” Kosovo: after certain areas were cleansed from Christian Orthodox Serbs by the Muslim Albanians (roughly 60,000), in the late Ottoman period (1875–1899)<sup>11</sup>, a similar number of Serbs were settled in Kosovo, during the interwar period within a large scale agrarian reform in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia<sup>12</sup>. The main goal was to present a historically verified version of Kosovo’s past the space as a formally new state of “Kosovars” – allegedly a new European nation<sup>13</sup>. Nevertheless, the province of Kosovo covering 10,887 square km of this Serbia’s troublesome province became, after a self-proclaimed independence in February 2008, a second Albanian state ethnically cleansed of most of the Serbs and other major non-Albanian communities (Roma, Gorani) – second Albanian state in Europe extended into the heartland of Serbia.

### **Kosovo under Communist Rule: Manipulation with National Question**

The ideological manipulation with the national question within communist Yugoslavia (1945–1991), along with the constantly growing social differences, came as the final coup to every attempt at establishing inter-ethnic relations that would be based on individual, rather than on collective rights. Within this context, Kosovo and Metohija as a newly created autonomous entity within Serbia with a mixed Albanian and Serb population played an important role in maintaining balance of force within the communist federation<sup>14</sup>.

After the communist takeover in 1944 with the crucial support of the Red Army was completed, Yugoslavia was re-established in 1945, as a Stalin-inspired communist federation with Serbia as one of its six federal units, with two inner autonomies: one of Vojvodina – as a concession to Hungarian communists, and another with Kosovo and Metohija – as a concession to the “brotherly” Albanian communist comrades. Tito had built communist Yugoslavia on the principles completely contrasting those of the interwar period. While the Kingdom of Yugoslavia was built on the French-inspired centralized

<sup>11</sup> There is official diplomatic correspondence between Belgrade and Constantinople, regarding persecution and expulsion of Kosovo Serbs: *Documents diplomatiques. correspondance concernant les actes de violence et de brigandage des Albanais dans la Vieille Serbie (Vilayet de Kosovo) 1989–1889*, Belgrade 1899 (bilingual, French and Serbian edition).

<sup>12</sup> The Albanian approach in: R. Q o s j a, *La Question albanaise*, Paris 1995; H. B a j r a m i, *Politika serbe për rikolonizimin e Kosovës*, Prishtinë, 2002. See, in contrast, Serbian explanation: B. K r s t i ć, *Kosovo. Facing the Court of History*, New York 2004, pp. 80–95.

<sup>13</sup> That “Kosovar” is a synonym for ethnic Albanian see: *What the Kosovars say and demand: (collection of studies, articles, interviews, and commentaries)*, H. Kekezi, R. Hida (eds.), Tirana 1990

<sup>14</sup> D. T. B a t a k o v i ć, *Twentieth-Century Kosovo–Metohija: Migrations, Nationalism and Communism*, Serbian Studies. Journal of the North American Society for Serbian Studies, vol. 13 (2), Washington D.C. 1999, pp. 1–23; idem, *Kosovo a l’epoque titiste: entre nationalisme et communisme*, Les Annales de l’Autre Islam, No 7, Inalco-Erism, Paris 2000, pp. 205–224; Cf. also : *Kosovo–Metohija dans l’histoire serbe*, Lausanne 1990, pp. 291–309.

model with a strong Serbia as a pillar of common state, Tito's communist federation was founded on making Serbia weak in order to maintain the communist domination that promoted interests of all other national and ethnic groups. Being considered as a pillar of anti-communism, royalist Serbia, predominantly loyal to the Yugoslav Home Army of General Draža Mihailović, was penalized by being the only republic with autonomous provinces, as a guarantee for long-term suppression of the so-called "Greater Serbian hegemony". Within this policy, a special decree issued by Yugoslav communist authorities on March 6, 1945 banned the return of Serbian interwar colonists to Kosovo and Metohija, a decision that made at least 60,000 Kosovo Serb civilians, waiting to be resettled elsewhere in Yugoslavia, temporarily homeless or internally displaced persons<sup>15</sup>. In contrast, most of the roughly 75,000 ethnic Albanians from Albania, colonized during the war years in the fertile plains of both Metohija and Kosovo, remained to live within Serbia after 1945. The old and new settlers from Albania (during the Italian occupation 1941–1943, and after 1948) whose number was never accurately established were, in most cases, granted citizenship of Serbia within the Yugoslav federation<sup>16</sup>.

After banning the return of Serbian interwar settlers in Kosovo in 1945, J. B. Tito in parallel envisaged the unification of Kosovo with Albania, hoping to attract Tirana's communists into federal Yugoslavia as its seventh republic. The whole process of giving away Kosovo to Albania was halted by the fear that the Serbs, non-communist and communists as well would not approve this project. J. B. Tito, the dictator of second, communist Yugoslavia was brought up in the Habsburg *milieu* of constant fear from the alleged "Greater Serbian danger". Furthermore, Tito was a fervent adept of Lenin's doctrine that the nationalism of bigger nations is more dangerous than the nationalism of the smaller ones. Thus, until the end of his lifetime of dictatorship in 1980, Tito remained rather consistent in the persecution of any alleged, symbolic or real manifestation of "Serbian hegemony", incarnated by the political legacy of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia – the political tradition perceived as a permanent ideological threat to communism since the takeover in 1945<sup>17</sup>.

Even though Tito described inter-republican boundaries established in 1945 purely as lines on a 'granite column' that are additionally bonding nations and minorities into communist "brotherhood and unity", it was obviously ideological *langue de bois*. Nevertheless, the famous Yugoslav dissident Milovan Djilas eventually confessed to the Paris daily "Le Monde" in 1971 that the post-Second World War partition of Serbs into five out

<sup>15</sup> *Privremena zabrana vraćanja kolonista u njihova ranija mesta življenja*, in: Službeni list DFJ, N° 13, 16. mart 1945, No 153; *Zakon o reviziji dodijeljivanja zemlje kolonistima i agrarnim interesima u Makedoniji i Kosovsko-metohijskoj oblasti*, in: Službeni list DFJ, 5. avgust 1945.

<sup>16</sup> The overall number of Albanians according to the census of 1948, despite heavy war losses as stated by Albanians themselves, augmented 75,417 for the period of nine years. (P. Živančević, *Emigranti. Naseljavanje Kosova i Metohije iz Albanije*, Belgrade 1989, pp. 78–81). The latest research based on official, although incomplete documentation, scales-down the number of political immigrants from Albania in the 1950's, using Yugoslavia mostly as a transit towards Western countries (B. Hrabak, *Albanski emigranti u Jugoslaviji*, [in:] *Tokovi istorije*, vol. 1–2, Belgrade 1994, pp. 77–104). However, the peasants from Albanian crossing the border and settling in the nearest villages in Metohija or Kosovo, was not, as it seems, accurately tracked, at least after 1968.

<sup>17</sup> D. T. Bataković, *Twentieth-Century Kosovo-Metohija: Migrations, Nationalism and Communism*, Serbian Studies, vol. 13 (2), Washington D.C. 1999, pp. 1–23; idem, *Kosovo a l'epoque titiste: entre nationalisme et communisme*, Les Annales de l'Autre Islam, No 7, Inalco-Erism, Paris 2000, pp. 205–224.

of the six republics aimed at diminishing the “centralism and hegemonism of the Serbs”, as the main “obstacle” to the establishment of communism<sup>18</sup>.

Royal Yugoslavia, in general, and in particular after 1929 was the French-inspired nation-state marked by the Serbian, rather Jacobin and centralist vision of Yugoslavism, whilst communist Yugoslavia was based on an opposite model: Austro-Marxist, Comintern-inspired federalism, the Croatian vision of Yugoslav unity. The Albanian minority of Kosovo and Metohija was to play an important political role within such a project. The national integration of Albanians lagged a whole century behind those of the other Balkan nations. The Kosovo Albanians remained in communist Yugoslavia against their will, but shared some strong anti-Serb interests, often compatible with the main ideological goals of the ruling Communist Party headed by J. B. Tito<sup>19</sup>.

Within this Comintern-inspired Titoist strategy on solving the national question, Kosovo first became an autonomous region (1946), only to be further elevated into an autonomous province of Serbia (1963). During the period of centralism in Yugoslavia (1945–1966) – when Albania, in response to Tito’s split with Stalin in 1948, was, until 1961, part of the Soviet bloc hostile towards Yugoslavia – Tito entrusted the control over Kosovo mostly to the Serbs in his party ranks who, defiant and self-confident, represented the ironclad guarantee of Yugoslavia’s integrity. The ruthless persecution of the Albanian separatists and their supporters within Metohija and Kosovo during two decades after 1945 was considered by Albanians as ethnically based violence, although the Serbian communist police was equally brutal with the monks, priests and dignitaries of the Serbian Orthodox Church in the southern Serbian province. Nevertheless, after the reconciliation with Moscow (1955), the removal of centralist champion Aleksandar Ranković (1966) and within the efforts for gradual reconciliation with Albania (1968–1971), Tito halted to support the Kosovo Serbs and favoured the Kosovo Albanians, in spite of the occasional outburst of their nationalism framed by claims for unification with Albania<sup>20</sup>. The pro-Enver Hohxa Albanian riots on the National Day of Albania in late November 1968, in Priština and several other cities were suppressed by the Yugoslav army. The slogans calling for immediate unification of Kosovo with Albania had clearly showed that the role-model for Kosovo Albanians was not Tito’s Yugoslavia, but Enver Hohxa’s Albania. Nevertheless, even after the 1968 riots, the political responsibility over Kosovo was entrusted to the Albanian communist leadership<sup>21</sup>.

Kosovo’s status was upgraded by the constitutional amendments in 1968 and 1972 and finally by the 1974 Constitution which gave Kosovo Albanians the main say in the political life, a decision fully approved by the aging communist dictator Tito in order to pacify the growing Albanian nationalism, strongly supported by neighbouring Stalinist

<sup>18</sup> “Le Monde”, Paris, le 30 décembre 1971.

<sup>19</sup> D. T. Bataković, *Frustrated Nationalism in Yugoslavia: from Liberal to Communist Solution*, Serbian Studies, vol. 11 (2), Washington 1997. pp. 67–85. More on Tito: S. K. Pavlowitch, *Tito. Yugoslavia’s Great Dictator. A Reassessment*, London 1992.

<sup>20</sup> More details in: S. L. Burg, *Conflict and Cohesion in Socialist Yugoslavia: Political Decision-Making since 1966*, Princeton New Jersey, 1983; see also: P. Ramet, *Nationalism and Federalism in Yugoslavia 1963–1983*, Bloomington 1984.

<sup>21</sup> P. Shoup, *Communism and the Yugoslav National Question*, New York & London 1968, pp. 216–218; more in: G. Troude, *Conflits identitaires dans la Yougoslavie de Tito 1960–1980*, Paris 2007.

Albania of Enver Hoxha<sup>22</sup>. The Stalinist-type ethno-communism of E. Hoxha targeted the Serbs of Yugoslavia as the main ideological opponents and fierce national enemies of unified, ethnic Albania, i.e. “Greater Albania”<sup>23</sup>. The ethnically-based discrimination was followed by a series of successive administrative and physical pressures which resulted in the quiet, but forced emigration of tens of thousands of Serbs from Kosovo and Metohija<sup>24</sup>. After this process of tacit ethnic cleansing –not only tolerated but even encouraged by the federal communist leadership– the Serb population in Kosovo and Metohija was dramatically reduced by almost half: from 23.6 percent in 1948 census to 13.2 percent in the 1981 census, the relatively high birth rate notwithstanding. The Montenegrin population was facing a similar path as well: they fell from 3.9 percent of the Kosovo province population in 1948 to only 1.7 percent in 1981<sup>25</sup>.

Already in 1968 the Albanian-dominated provincial assembly of Kosovo removed the term “Metohija” from the province’s name; for it sounded too Serbian and too Christian: *metochi* is a term of Greek origin, used for the church-owned property. This decision paved the way to the historical revisionism by Kosovo Albanians, framed to foster a current political agenda, a process of anti-Serb policy that was orchestrated by the Albanian-dominated administration in the autonomous province. The enhanced status of Kosovo within Serbia – the status change that resulted in the discrimination of the non-Albanian population in everyday life and their silent exodus of Kosovo and Metohija – was the last although fatal legacy of the declining Titoist order<sup>26</sup>.

In spite of open protests of a number of Serb cadres and credible caution by certain intellectuals who warned that the new constitutional arrangements offered since 1968 will inevitably lead to the disintegration of Yugoslavia (Prof. Mihailo Djurić and a group of Law Professors and researchers from the Law School of Belgrade University), its final result – the Constitution of 1974 – remained a legal framework after the death of Tito in 1980. The Constitution of 1974 soon after the death of Tito produced a serious political stalemate, thus leaving no room for non-violent dissolution of post-Titoist Yugoslavia.<sup>27</sup>

After repeated discrimination of the Kosovo Serbs throughout the 1970s and early 1980s, this escalated into large-scale Albanian demonstrations, after March 1981 onwards, demanding Kosovo be given the right to the status of the seventh republic within Yugoslavia. The ethnically motivated discrimination against the Serbs targeted the Serbian Orthodox Church as well, perceived as the pillar of Serbian identity in the Province:

<sup>22</sup> A. Pipa & S. Repishti (eds.), *Studies on Kosova*, Boulder 1984.

<sup>23</sup> M. Komatina, *Enver Hodža i jugoslovensko-albanski odnosi*, Belgrade 1995, pp. 135–145. Cf. also, B. Komatina, *Jugoslovensko-albanski odnosi 1979–1983. Beleške i sećanja ambasadora*, Belgrade 1995. Useful overviews are available in: N. J. Costa, *Albania: A European Enigma*, Boulder & New York 1995, and M. Vickers, *The Albanians. A Modern History*, London 1995.

<sup>24</sup> Detailed analysis is provided in: R. Petrović & M. Blagojević, *The Migrations of Serbs and Montenegrins from Kosovo and Metohija. Results of the Survey conducted in 1985–1986*, Belgrade, pp. 100–140.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>26</sup> S. K. Pavlowitch, & E. Biberaj, *The Albanian Problem in Yugoslavia: Two Views*, introduction by Hugh Seton-Watson, London 1982, pp. 7–43.

<sup>27</sup> For Yugoslavia, more in: S. K. Pavlowitch, *The Improbable Survivor. Yugoslavia and its Problems 1918–1988*, London 1988, pp. 78–93; D. T. Bataković, *Yugoslavie. Nations, religions, idéologies*, Lausanne 1994, pp. 264–267. More in: R. M. Hayden, *Blueprints for a House Divided. The Constitutional Logic of the Yugoslav Conflicts*, Ann Arbor 1999.

Serbian bishops, priests, monks and nuns were attacked; Serbian graveyards desecrated and landed property usurped. Numerous instances of continuous persecution both by Albanian nationalists and by Albanian provincial bureaucrats were reported to the Serbian Orthodox Church by the Raška-Prizren Bishopric (covering the whole of Kosovo and Metohija) in May 1969. The Serbian Patriarch German was compelled to officially demand protection from Tito, but there were no tangible results for his complaints<sup>28</sup>. After fourteen years of undisputed Albanian rule in Kosovo and Metohija, marked by the continuous discrimination of Serbs, the new phase of Albanian revolt was announced by setting fire to the Patriarchate of Peć, a historic seat of the Serbian Orthodox Church in March 1981<sup>29</sup>.

### Mounting Nationalism, Limited Autonomy, Escalating Conflicts

The cautiously prepared and utterly orchestrated Albanian rebellion in March and April 1981, initially described as a genuine student revolt, evolved within weeks into a large-scale nationalistic movement demanding the status of a seventh federal republic for Kosovo within Yugoslavia. The status of the republic supposed the right to self-determination (i.e. secession), a Leninist constitutional provision reserved for other republics only. The Albanian demand took place only a year after Tito's death, thus disrupting the sensitive balance of power in the federal leadership and challenging the sustainability of the whole system established in 1974<sup>30</sup>.

Despite frequent threats and repeated intimidation on subsequently a federal, republican and provincial level, the communist ruling oligarchies were unable to hide that Serbs, not only in Kosovo, were exposed to visible bias on a national basis. The growing national frustration of Serbs, after a party coup in 1987, was skilfully manipulated by Slobodan Milošević, the new leader of the Serbian communists: instead of party forums he used populist methods, taking over the role of the main defender of national interests from the Serbian Orthodox Church and the liberal intelligentsia. Thus, the sensitive question of protection of the persecuted Serbs in Kosovo and Metohija in the 1980s became a resource of populist manipulation by the alleged protector of the entire nation<sup>31</sup>. Nevertheless, Milošević was neither a nationalist nor a protector: the misfortune of the Kosovo Serbs as well as the vacuum in the federal leadership he saw as a chance to impose himself to whole of Yugoslavia as a new Tito after Tito.

Milosević's objective to revamp the exhausted communist party on the basis of new national ideals (as did the national-communist in other republics more than a decade

<sup>28</sup> The patriarch's German letter to J. B. Tito is reproduced in: *Zaduzbine Kosova. Spomenici i znamenja srpskog naroda*, p. 833.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. credible reports by the American journalist on Albanian demands and the difficult position of Kosovo Serbs since 1981: *Exodus of Serbians Stirrs Province in Yugoslavia*, The New York Times, July 12, 1982, by M. Howe; *Ethnic Rivalries cause unrest in Yugoslav Region*, Washington Post, November 29, 1986, by J. Diehl; *In Yugoslavia. Rising Ethnic Strife Brings Fears of Worse Civil Conflict* The New York Times, November 1, 1987, by D. Binder.

<sup>30</sup> N. Beloff, *Tito's Flawed Legacy. Yugoslavia and the West since 1999*, Boulder 1985, pp. 209–214.

<sup>31</sup> K. Magnusson, *The Serbian Reaction Kosovo and Ethnic Mobilization Among the Serbs*, Nordic Journal of Soviet & East European Studies, vol. 43 (1987) pp. 3–30; More in: S. Djukić, *Kako se dogodio vodja*, Belgrade 1991.



earlier), as a starting point for obtaining the supreme power in Yugoslavia was in sharp opposition to the rapid demise of communism throughout Soviet-dominated Eastern Europe. At that point, for most of the Serbs, preoccupied by the Kosovo question as a metaphor for inequality of Serbs in Yugoslavia, the interests of the nation were more important than the democratic changes in Eastern Europe, in particular after the semblance of the freedom of speech and media restrictions were removed and the former historical and ideological taboos from the Second World War and the Titoist period were freely discussed for the first time since 1945. Democracy in Serbia was, thus, delayed by the unresolved national question. Furthermore, Milošević, by using communist bureaucracy, police measures and populist methods to reunite Serbia, started to discredit the overall Serb interest throughout Yugoslavia.

On March 26, 1989, the semi-republican status of the two Serbian provinces, Kosovo and Vojvodina was not abolished, but rather reduced to usual competencies of autonomous regions: the 1989 amendments to the Constitution of 1974 annulled the right of two separate legislature for these provinces, abolished the veto power held by the provincial legislature over the legislature of Serbia, placed the power over international relations into the hands of the republic, and limited the right to debate a measure to a period of six months, after which the matter was to be settled by a referendum.

The referendum in the whole of Serbia, boycotted by the ethnic Albanians was held on July 1, 1990. Kosovo remained an autonomous province, but with territorial autonomy and a *Statute* which would be enacted with the Serbian parliament. The legislative authority was transferred to the parliament of Serbia and the executive authority to the Government of Serbia. The highest judicial authority resided in the Supreme Court of Serbia. The name Metohija eventually reappeared for the first time after 1968 in the official name of the autonomous province<sup>32</sup>.

The majority of ethnic Albanians (through the members of the dismissed provincial communist Assembly), claiming illegal abolishment of autonomy, responded on July 2, 1990 by proclaiming Kosovo as a seventh republic within Yugoslavia and adopted their own “Constitution” on September 7, 1990 at an Albanian assembly held secretly in Kačanik. These acts followed by the widespread Albanian boycott of all official institutions were regarded by Serbian authorities as a serious attempt at secession. The result was the firing of all the Albanians who voluntarily left their jobs for an indefinite period, contesting thus the state unity of Serbia. The second measure was often brutal police retaliation against often violent both armed and unarmed street protesters, mostly the younger Albanian population.

### **From Boycott to Conflict (1991–1999)**

Denouncing what they described as the Serbian-sponsored “apartheid”, the majority of the Kosovo Albanians boycotted all Serbian-controlled institutions and the Belgrade-appointed administration since 1991. Kosovo Albanians left their state-paid jobs indefinitely, only to be eventually officially fired. In parallel, they organized their own school and

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<sup>32</sup> *Ustav Republike Srbije*, Službeni glasnik Republike Srbije, No 1, Belgrade 1990.

health system, tacitly tolerated by Belgrade<sup>33</sup>. After the Dayton Accord in 1995, Milošević, as the main guarantor of the hard-won peace in Bosnia-Herzegovina, with unconditional Western support, became the chief negotiator for the Kosovo crisis. However, the growing efforts of different international mediators demanding a peaceful solution to the Albanian issue in Kosovo failed<sup>34</sup>.

While Milošević, treating the Albanian issue as humanitarian (allowing school facilities to be used) was reluctant to discuss constitutional changes, the Albanians in Priština demanded, as a first concession, the restoration of the 1974 autonomy status<sup>35</sup>. Different semi-official Serbian proposals called for partition of Kosovo on an ethnic criteria, as a means to a permanent solution to the problem, while, in parallel, the Serbian democratic opposition proposed various transitional solutions ranging from regionalization to the cantonization of Kosovo<sup>36</sup>.

Albanians were for several years organized into a non-violent, passive resistance, symbolized by its political leader Ibrahim Rugova. The tacit coexistence of two parallel systems, Serbian and Albanian, spared the province from large-scale interethnic conflicts, such as those raging in other parts of the former Yugoslav federation between 1991 and 1995. Nevertheless, the same period witnessed a yearly rhythm of six to twelve terrorist attacks on the Serbian police by smaller armed groups of Kosovo Albanians. This low-intensity conflict, more like testing the police force in preparation for large-scale actions, went on until the middle of 1996, when the number of attacks tripled. The reported score of 31 ambush attacks in 1996 rose to fifty-four in 1997<sup>37</sup>. The KLA (so-called Kosovo Liberation Army, UÇK or KLA) emerged as an organized paramilitary force in 1998. It was a liberation military group to the ethnic Albanians, and an oppressor in the eyes of other ethnic groups in Kosovo. Purely Albanian, the KLA was the military wing of one of many pro-Communist guerrillas often of a Stalinist and Enver Hoxha inspired, relied

<sup>33</sup> Albanian viewpoint in: I. Rugova, *Independence and Democracy* Prishtina, 1991; A. Gashi, (ed.), *The Denial of Human and National Rights of Albanians in Yugoslavia*, New York 1992; *Open Wounds: Human Rights Abuses in Kosovo*. New York: Human Rights Watch, 1993. However, roughly ten to fifteen percent of Kosovo Albanians, however, remained loyal to the Serbia and the Yugoslav state, which afterwards, made them privileged targets of Albanian terrorist groups.

<sup>34</sup> D. T. Bataković, *Kosovo-Metohija Question: Origins of a Conflict and Possible Solutions*, Dialogue, vol. 7, No 25, Paris 1998, pp. 41–56. See also: *International Community and Kosovo. Collection of Relevant Documents* Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia, Belgrade 1998.

<sup>35</sup> The Milošević–Rugova agreement on education in Kosovo, signed under the auspices of Sant' Egidio, never came into effect due to different interpretations: *Naša Borba*, Belgrade, 3rd and 4th September 1996. The review of different initiatives with corresponding documentation in: *Conflict in Kosovo: An Analytical Documentation, 1992–1998*, S. Troebst (ed.), Flensburg 1998.

<sup>36</sup> D. T. Bataković, *Progetti serbi di spartazione*, [In:] *Kosovo: Il triangolo dei Balcani*, Limes, No 3, Roma 1998, pp. 153–169.

<sup>37</sup> According to Belgrade's data, there were 13 officers, nine Albanian terrorists and 25, mostly Serb, civilians killed, and 67 persons wounded. Moreover, in 1997 there were 27 registered attacks on the Yugoslav army, hitherto uninvolved in operations against rebel groups. The intensive smuggling of both drugs, which as well as of ever-larger quantities of weapons from Albania, where the looted army barracks (700,000 pieces of small arms were stolen) became a source for the illegal export of tens of thousands of Kalashnikovs, shoulder and other weapons, usually of Chinese, Soviet and Albanian provenance, into Serbia, mostly Kosovo and Metohija and adjacent regions was also observed during 1997. (*Kosovo i Metohija u velikoalbanskim planovima 1878–2000*, N. B. Popović (ed.), Belgrade 2001, pp. 229–253).

on the Albanian drug-smuggling mafia and radicals in the Diaspora. Trained and armed in neighbouring Albania, and sponsored from abroad, the KLA started attacks against Serb policemen, civilians and Albanians loyal to Serbia<sup>38</sup>.

The full-scale civil war instigated by the KLA and their sponsors in 1998 led, after the failed negotiations held at Rambouillet in France, to the unilateral NATO intervention in March 1999: seventy-eight-days of NATO bombing of Serbia and partially of Montenegro, the second member-state of the former Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The NATO bombing consisted of massive air-strikes operation in order to halt the “humanitarian catastrophe” of the Kosovo Albanians and their fighting units (KLA) confronted by the Yugoslav armed and police forces.

However, the bombing campaign (38,000 combat sorties from March 24 to June 10 1999) lacked the legal endorsement of the United Nations and was strongly opposed by many international players, including two permanent members of UN Security Council, the Russian Federation and China<sup>39</sup>. During the bombing, that triggered a large-scale civil war, many horrible war crimes were committed on both sides, hundreds of thousands of the local population were displaced, notably Albanians who found refuge in Macedonia and Albania, while the KLA excelled in organ-trafficking in the midst of a full-scale civil war and a NATO intervention, launched in order to restore democracy and multi-ethnic society in the province<sup>40</sup>. Nevertheless, ethnically motivated violence remained to be the prevailing practice in Kosovo, even after the establishment of the UN administration and NATO-led KFOR military control since June 1999<sup>41</sup>.

### Under UN administration (1999–2008)

The war on Kosovo which, as was confirmed later, was not a “genocide” as claimed during the bombing, took the lives of roughly 10,000 Albanians and 2,000 Serbs in the province of Kosovo only, plus a few thousand Serb victims in other regions of both Serbia and Montenegro, was eventually terminated in early June 1999 only after Western and Russian mediators previously promised to Belgrade that Kosovo, after being entrusted to the UN, will remain under Serbia’s sovereignty. UN Security Council Resolution 1244/99, under which Kosovo was entrusted to the UN, calls for establishing a democracy, a multicultural society and a “substantial self-government” for this southern province of Serbia torn by spiralling cycles of inter-ethnic violence.

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<sup>38</sup> *Kosovo Serbs Live in Fear of Future*, Chicago Tribune, February 22, 1999 by T. Hundley.

<sup>39</sup> M. Mandelbaum, *A Perfect Failure. NATO’s War against Yugoslavia*, Foreign Affairs, September/October 1999, pp. 2–8.

<sup>40</sup> On organ trafficking of abducted Serbs see more details in: C. del Ponte, & C. Sudetic, *Madame Prosecutor. Confrontations with humanity’s worst criminals and the culture of impunity: a Memoir*, New York 2009. On war: T. Judah, *Kosovo. War and Revenge*, New Haven & London 2000.

<sup>41</sup> M. McGwire, *Why did we bomb Belgrade?*, International Affairs, vol. 76 (2000), pp. 1–23. C. Lane, *Blunder in the Balkans. The Clinton Administration’s Bungled War against Serbia*, Cato Institute Policy Analysis, Washington D.C, 7 March 1999. See also a rather critical analyses of the Kosovo crisis development and NATO operations in: I. Ramonet & A. Gresh, *La nouvelle guerre des Balkans* Le monde diplomatique, Manière de voir No 45, mai-juin 1999.

Since then, despite certain, though insufficient, efforts of the UN Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) and an unprecedented international military presence (a 45,000 strong “Kosovo Force” or KFOR for a province of only 10,887 square km and less than two million inhabitants, gradually scaled down in 2008 to a still high contingent of 16,000 NATO-led troops), the Albanian-dominated provisional institutions of Kosovo (president, government and parliament) not only failed to prevent large-scale persecution of the Serbs and other non-Albanians, but gave tacit approval to all kinds of ethnically motivated crimes<sup>42</sup>.

The return of hundreds of thousands of displaced Albanians to Kosovo in the summer of 1999 from Macedonia and Albania was followed by the mass expulsion, according to the UNHCR in 1999, of 246,000 Serbs, Roma, Goranies (Muslim Slavs), and other non-Albanians by Albanian extremists in the following months. Furthermore, more than 40,000 houses and flats were burned to the ground or usurped by Albanians, including many illegal immigrants from Albania who plundered the property of exiled Serbs or Roma. Furthermore, an additional 1,300 Serbs are considered as missing and another 1,300 were killed after June 10, 1999. The provincial capital of Priština lost a quarter of its 250,000 pre-war population – 40,000 Serbs prior to the war has been reduced to less than a hundred inhabitants (presently eighty-six persons) heavily guarded by KFOR soldiers<sup>43</sup>.

The same horrendous fate met the large, at least 10,000 strong Roma population of urban and suburban Priština, which is today the only ethnically cleansed provincial capital in the whole of Europe. As of the year 2000, more than sixty percent of Kosovo Serbs are internally displaced persons (a euphemism for expelled civilians living in both Serbia and Montenegro since 1999), as well as seventy percent of Roma and seventy percent of Goranies<sup>44</sup>. In contrast, the Albanians in Kosovo claimed that they eventually became a ninety percent majority of the population after ethnic cleansing perpetrated in the years following June 1999. Most of the Kosovo Serbs who stayed were, apart from several enclaves in central and southern Kosovo (Gračanica, Novo Brdo, Velika Hoča, Štrpce) were located in the northern Serb-inhabited areas, north of the Ibar river that divided the city of Mitrovica into two distinct areas. The French KFOR troops responsible for security blocked the efforts of Albanian extremists to cleanse this largest Serbian enclave on the boundary with central Serbia<sup>45</sup>.

In addition to this appalling human rights record, 156 Serbian Orthodox churches, of which one third were important monuments dating from medieval times, were levelled to the ground or burned by local Albanians – it was a post-war destruction aimed to erase the visible proof of the Serbian historic, thirteen-century long presence in Kosovo and Metohija. It was, as described by the Western eye-witness, “A Vandalism with

<sup>42</sup> F. Didier, *La KFOR confrontée à la violence albanaise. Les représailles se multiplient contre les minorités serbe et rom*, Libération, Paris, 29 June 1999; H. Morris, *Church warns over attacks on Serbs*, Financial Times, 29 June 1999; R. Jeffrey Smith, *Kosovo Rebels Make Own Law*, Washington Post, Washington, 24 November 1999.

<sup>43</sup> More data and analysis: D. T. Bataković, *Surviving in Ghetto-like Enclaves. The Serbs of Kosovo and Metohija 1999–2007*, [in:] *Kosovo and Metohija. Living in the Enclave*, D. T. Bataković (ed.), Institute for Balkan Studies, Belgrade 2007, pp. 239–363.

<sup>44</sup> UNHCR/OESCE, *Overview of the Situation of Ethnic Minorities in Kosovo*, 3 November 1999; on Goranies: H. Hasani, *Migrations of the Goranies*, [in:] *Kosovo and Metohija. Living in the Enclave*, pp. 143–153.

<sup>45</sup> Important testimonies by one of the French military commanders: J. Hoggard, *L'Europe est morte à Pristina. Guerre au Kosovo (printemps – été 1999)*, Paris 2014, pp. 74–104.

## Internally Displaced Persons from Kosovo and Metohija (UNHCR data, June 1999–2000)

Ethnic communities	Serbia	Montenegro	Total
Serbs	207,500	18,500	226,000
Roma	30,000	7,000	37,000
Muslim Slavs	13,500	1,500	15,000
Others	6,500	2,500	9,000
Total	257,500	29,500	287,000

a Mission”<sup>46</sup>. Furthermore, Veton Surroi, editor of the main Kosovo daily, *Koha Ditore* in Albanian, has rightfully labelled the orchestrated wave of violence in the post-June 1999 period by the Albanian extremists as “Kosovo Fascism, Albanian’s Shame”<sup>47</sup>.

The largest wave of ethnic cleansing after June–December 1999 took place in March 2004, when thirty five churches and monasteries were destroyed or damaged, while 4,000 Serbs were displaced by Albanian mobs from strategically important areas of Kosovo<sup>48</sup>. Two years later, in spite of frequent Western reports that Kosovo remains a major centre of drug-smuggling and sex-trafficking in Europe, and that it had made no progress in fulfilling the standards regarding democracy, tolerance, minority protection and the rule of law that were set as the obligatory pre-condition for talks on the final status of the province, negotiations on a final settlement for Kosovo commenced in early 2006, under UN auspices<sup>49</sup>. All previous Serbian and Yugoslav Constitutions up to the UN Charter, Final Helsinki Act of 1975 and UNSC Resolution 1244 of 1999 have defined Kosovo, in every substantial way, as a part of Serbia, without any right to secession. Furthermore, Kosovo Albanians, who controlled the self-governing institutions in June 1999 also failed to comply with minimal requirements for democracy and inter-ethnic tolerance, defined in 2003 by the UNMIK administration as “standards before status”<sup>50</sup>.

<sup>46</sup> D. T. Bataković, *A Turbulent Decade. The Serbs in Post-1999 Kosovo. Destruction of Cultural Heritage, Ethnic Cleansing, and Marginalization (1999–2009)*, Paris 2014, pp. 87–95. See the list of destroyed and damaged Serbian churches and monasteries, prepared by Mirjana Menković: *ibidem*, pp. 149–179. More data in: *The Christian Heritage of Kosovo and Metohija. Historical and Spiritual Heartland of Serbian People*, pp. 737–845.

<sup>47</sup> V. Surroi, *Fashismi ne Kosove, turpi i Shqiptareve*, *Koha ditore*, 25 August 1999; *The Guardian*, 20 August 1999; *Kosovo Albanians urged to reject ‘fascism’*, *BBC News*, 23 August 1999. R. Fisk, *NATO turns a blind eye as scores of ancient Christian churches are reduced to rubble*, *The Independent*, London, November 20, 1999; M. Buckley and S. Cummings (eds.), *Kosovo. Perception of War and its Aftermath*, London & New York 2001.

<sup>48</sup> J.-L. Tremblais, *Kosovo: La terrible agonie des Serbes*, *Le Figaro Magazine*, Paris, 27 septembre 2003; J.-L. Tremblais, *Les Serbes du Kosovo. La valise ou le cerceuil*, *Le Figaro Magazine*, Paris, 9 avril 2004.

<sup>49</sup> On Albanian mafia that controls Kosovo politics and economy: P. Péan, *Kosovo, une guerre “juste” pour un Etat mafieux*, Paris 2013.

<sup>50</sup> M.-J. Calic, *Standards and Status. Violence against minorities a year ago scared everyone*, *Internationale Politik*, München, Spring 2005, pp. 80–83.

### From Failed Negotiations to a Failed State (2006–2008)

During the 13 month-long UN-sponsored talks between Belgrade and Priština on the future status of Kosovo in Vienna (2006–2007), were presided by the former Finnish President Martti Ahtisaari. The Kosovo Albanians who were obviously promised independence prior to the beginning of the process, did not seriously engage in these status talks. Although Serbia, in contrast, offered the EU model of autonomy – “more than autonomy but less than independence” – Albanians, confident of the support they enjoyed in certain capitals, practically refused to negotiate the status and were willing to discuss only “minority rights” for the Kosovo Serbs.

At the end of status talks in March 2007 there was no mutual agreement on any of the discussed issues. Furthermore, sixty per cent of the topics proposed by Belgrade had not even been discussed by the involved parties. The crucial provisions regarding security and military protection for the Serb enclaves and the Serbian mediaeval legacy (four medieval monasteries from the list of UNESCO heritage sites – Visoki Dečani monastery and Patriarchate of Peć in Metohija, Gračanica monastery near Priština, Mother of God of Ljeviška in Prizren) – as well as a dozen other medieval sites), were rejected by the Kosovo Albanians. Furthermore, ambiguous proposals by Ahtisaari were rejected by the Belgrade delegation (that included the Kosovo Serb and Gorani representatives as well) as being both biased and unsustainable. During the Vienna status talks it became quite obvious that the Kosovo Albanians, strongly backed by several great powers, will accept nothing short of independence<sup>51</sup>.

The Ahtisaari plan of the “supervised independence” for Kosovo, proposed at the end of the failed status talks, was considered by Serbs as one sided, paving the way to Kosovo’s final separation from Serbia. After failing to be approved by the UN Security Council, the Ahtisaari plan could not be legally implemented, as envisioned by Kosovo Albanians<sup>52</sup>. The Troika-format (USA, EU and Russia) as a time-limited extension for the status talks after Vienna did not provide any results. The next step was to proceed to self-proclaimed independence orchestrated solely by Kosovo Albanians.

Kosovo’s non-Albanian MPs, including even self-appointed Serbs, plus Goranians and legitimate representatives of the Roma community, boycotted the Albanian-dominated provisional parliament session of February 17, 2008, underlining that the declaration of independence approved by *de facto* mono-ethnic Kosovo parliament has no legitimacy among Serbs and Kosovo’s non-Albanian communities. Such a declaration of self-proclaimed independence, as confirmed by representatives of the Serbs and the non-Albanian minorities cannot in any way be a foundation for the establishment of a tolerant, multi-ethnic, and democratic society, and it was against all the valid Serbian laws and UNSC resolutions<sup>53</sup>.

<sup>51</sup> D. T. Bataković, *Kosovo. Un conflit sans fin?*, Lausanne 2008, pp. 273–282.

<sup>52</sup> J. Ker-Lindsay, *Kosovo: The Path to Contested Statehood in the Balkans*, London and New York 2009, pp. 33–56.

<sup>53</sup> Ch. J. Borgen, *Kosovo's Declaration of Independence: Self-Determination, Secession and Recognition*, Insights, February 29, 2008, Volume 12, Issue 2. American Society of International Law (ASIL), published on: <https://www.asil.org>.

Lacking legitimacy and parliamentary approval from any of Kosovo's significant non-Albanian communities (including 140,000 remaining Serbs and roughly 200,000 displaced Serbs who are a constitutive nation, in Kosovo as elsewhere in Serbia, not a minority like others), the decision of the Kosovo provisional assembly has not represented the will of a multi-ethnic society. It was rather an entirely Albanian project founded on brutal and irrevocable ethnic discrimination and continuous orchestrated reprisals against other national communities and ethnic groups, as confirmed many times by the international Kosovo Ombudsman Marek Antoni Nowicki, various reports to the UN and relevant international human rights groups<sup>54</sup>.

Thus, the declaration of independence of Kosovo, proclaimed solely by the Kosovo Albanians, was not a success of restoration of human rights and democracy, as proclaimed as a goal by NATO before the bombing of FR Yugoslavia, but rather a triumph of post-war ethically-based persecution, ethnic cleansing and consistent discrimination of all the non-Albanian population considered as hostile to the Albanian-dominated independent Kosovo. Moreover, this process, favouring separation instead of integration, exclusion instead of inclusion, intolerance instead of tolerance, continued throughout Kosovo after February 2008<sup>55</sup>.

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<sup>54</sup> “Defending Human Rights in Kosovo: Interview with Marek Antoni Nowicki”, *Balkananalysis.com*, 2005, Issue 3, pp. 1–7; *Ombudsperson Institution in Kosovo*, Fourth Annual Report 2003–2004, Pristina 2004; *Ombudsperson Institution in Kosovo*, Fifth Annual Report 2004–2005, Pristina 2005; J. Ch ad b o u r n e, *Not On the Agenda: The Continuing Failure To Address Accountability In Kosovo Post-March 2004*, Human Rights Watch, New York 2006; *Rapport 2008 sur le Kosovo-Métochie* du Collectif Citoyen pour la Paix au Kosovo-Métochie au Parlement Européen, avec le Groupe Indépendance et Démocrates, Bruxelles 2008.

<sup>55</sup> The percentage of Serbian returnees to Kosovo is rather symbolic, less than two percent, due to the continuous harassment and usurpation of Serbian landed properties. The similar percentage of minimal number of returnees stands for Roma and Goranians. I. B a n c r o f t, *The flight of Kosovo's minorities: the EU insists that Kosovo is a tolerant and multi-ethnic society. So why are its minorities leaving?*, *The Guardian*, 5 June 2009; D. B a n d o w, *Kosovo a Year Later*, *The American Spectator*, 23 February 2009. See more in: D. T. B a t a k o v i ć, *A Turbulent Decade. The Serbs in Post-1999 Kosovo*, pp. 115–139.

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## **The Case of Kosovo: Separation vs. Integration Legacy, Identity, Nationalism**

### Summary

The history of the Serbian province of Kosovo and Metohija in the 20<sup>th</sup> century was rather marked by the secessionist movement of Kosovo Albanians from Serbia and Yugoslavia than with integration as a way of solving old inter-ethnic conflicts between Serbs and Albanians. After the Second World War and the subsequent communist takeover, Yugoslavia was restored as a communist federation, and Serbia became one of its six federal units, with Kosovo and Metohija, a region with a mixed Serb and Albanian population, within its borders. Kosovo in the present boundaries first became a region (1946) and then an autonomous province (1963) within the Socialist Republic of Serbia one of the six constituent republics of federal Yugoslavia. The Kosovo status was upgraded by constitutional amendments (1968–1972) and finally by the 1974 Constitution which gave Kosovo Albanians the main say in the province's political life, a decision approved by communist dictator Tito in order to pacify the growing Albanian nationalism, strongly supported by neighbouring Stalinist Albania of Enver Hoxha. This policy triggered a process of repeated discrimination of the Kosovo Serbs throughout the 1970s that in the early 1980s, escalated into large-scale Albanian nationalist demonstrations, after March 1981 onwards, demanding that Kosovo be given the right to secede, thus announcing the rapid disintegration of the Yugoslav communist federation. Separation instead of integration became an official policy of Kosovo Albanians.

**Keywords:** Serbia, Kosovo, ethnic-strife, Albanians, Serbs, 1999 NATO intervention, international policy, ethnic discrimination, self-proclaimed independence