

**Manufacturing Homogeneity
in the Modern
Albanian Nation-Building Project**

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1. Introduction and Theoretical Framework

1.1 Introduction

The Albanian state building process achieved its success in 1912 with the National Congress and declaration of independence from the Ottoman Empire. The nation-building process, however, had achieved minimal success thus far and would strengthen much later. As of 1912, Albanian national identity was fragmented, possibly non-existent in much of the new country; the state existed, the nation did not. The International Commission Correspondence, a border demarcation commission sent by the Congress of London, will provide further proof as to the political and ideological disunity within Albania during the first few years of the state's existence. This state of disunity and ideological fragmentation would remain until the nation-building project of the communist period. The communists would continue the nation-building process begun decades before with their mass education program and successful control of the media. They would achieve greater success and reach larger segments of the population than any other regime before, thus creating Albanian national communist identity.

The paper begins by exploring, and, in some cases, defining key concepts relevant to the remainder of the paper in the theoretical framework. Next, in chapter two, the internal obstacles, as of the late 19th century are outlined within the Ottoman context. Internal obstacles refer to the obstacles, within the population, preventing that same population from identifying with each other as somehow similar or the same peoples. Within the Albanian context these internal

obstacles include the presence of three religious groups within the region, two cultural groups, the existence of two dialects and many sub-dialects (based upon the cultural region) and several forms of the written language as well. These obstacles prevented Albanians from identifying and cooperating with one another during the state building process and after.

Chapter three explores how and why, regardless of the obstacles outlined previously, Albanians were motivated to recognize each other as having similar interests. These interests were due to the collapsing Ottoman Empire, the surrounding new and nationalizing nation states, and the almost-implemented Treaty of San Stefano in 1878. Thus, 1878 in particular was a turning point in the Albanian state building process because it made clear the need for a stronger autonomy movement that would eventually develop into a nation-building movement if the Ottoman Empire fully collapsed and the need for an independent state thus arose. The Treaty of San Stefano reveals how the stimulus for a nation building movement and Albanian state was based upon fear of partition, rather than national identity. Fear motivated nationalism. The Young Turk movement, also described in chapter three, also served as a later stimulus for the nation building movement as it 'backed nationalist into a corner.' With the Young Turk movement Albanians were forced to decide between becoming more integrated into the Young Turk Empire or becoming a state.

The International Commission Correspondence is examined in chapter four and is used to illustrate the political chaos and lack of national identity within Albania as of 1913-1914 (after independence). The details of the

correspondence between Commission members and The Head of the British Foreign Ministry, Sir Edward Grey, reveal that representative members found great difficulties in differentiating between Albanian and Greek citizens. Commission reports also elaborate on the political chaos within Albania and the great tension among religious and cultural groups. These Commission reports reveal the disunity of Albanians and their evident difficulty in recognizing each other as a distinct national group. These reports hint at the possibility that an Albanian national identity had not yet come into being.

Thus, when did a popular Albanian national identity emerge? The final section of the essay, chapter five, attempts to show how the communist party rose to power and then consolidated its hold on Albanians by creating a popular nationalist and communist identity. Through the communists Party's mass education program of the late 1940s and early 1950s, the anti-religious campaigns crystallizing in the banning of religion by 1967, their continual isolationist policies, and use of the media they were able to spread their vision of Albanian national communist identity. Thus, the communists continued the nation-building process begun in the late 19th century by forming and popularizing an Albanian national communist identity that reached proportions of the population never greatly influenced before.

1.2 Theoretical Framework

Defining Identity

How does one define identity, especially within the context of a new and culturally, religiously, and linguistically divided nation? When and how does identity, or in particular, national identity, develop within a group of people? Does culture, language, ethnicity, religion, etc. form and/or define national identity? One must understand definitions of identity before tackling these questions.

In an influential work entitled, “Beyond Identity,” Rogers Brubaker and Frederick Cooper explore the meaning(s) of identity and discuss problems within their definitions. They explain that the definitions of identity used in the humanities are either too ‘hard’ or ‘too ‘soft,’ or symbolize too much or simply nothing at all¹. Thus, identity, has become an unhelpful concept, a term that is ambiguous and somewhat useless to theory. However, the authors admit that despite problems with the definition of identity, the discussion and acceptance of the term is often necessary².

This discussion has important implications for this thesis as the argument for the Albanian state rested on the claim of a shared Albanian identity which was first ethnically based and then later developed into a more national identity.

¹ Rogers Brubaker and Frederick Cooper. “Beyond Identity.” *Theory and Society*. Vol. 29, No. 1. (Feb. 2000), p. 2.

² Rogers Brubaker and Frederick Cooper. “Beyond Identity.” *Theory and Society*. Vol. 29, No. 1. (Feb. 2000), p.9.

Whether or not an Albanian national identity existed in 1912, when Albania declared its nationhood, is yet another matter to explore further in the proceeding chapters.

Thus, instead of discussing further the weaknesses of the term itself, another aspect of identity which is important to explore is how collective identity is defined, shaped, shared, and constantly modified within a group of people. In a work entitled, "Identity in a Post-Communist Balkan State: An Albanian Village Study," Douglas Saltmarshe argues that identity formation is a "dynamic process" that is created through historical continuity or shared experience among a group of people and eventually expands to the national context.³ Slowly people begin to identify themselves with each other and include themselves within the larger structures of the nation that develop.

This process is particularly interesting in the late 19th century early 20th century Albanian context as the society can be defined as tribally-based and "pre-modern." In a tribally-based or collective society, concepts such as time and individual identity take-on a different form than within a modern or post-modern society. The concepts of past and present, as well as the notion of "I" do not exist.⁴ Thus, without the concept of past and present, or history, the feeling of a shared history and common future for a group of people could not exist. Anderson argues that, instead of linear time, pre-modern peoples experienced

³ Douglas Saltmarshe. "Identity in a Post-Communist Balkan State: An Albanian Village Study." Ashgate Publishing Limited. England: 2001, pp. 209-210.

⁴ Douglas Saltmarshe. "Identity in a Post-Communist Balkan State: An Albanian Village Study." Ashgate Publishing Limited. England: 2001, p.211

time as a cyclical process.⁵ And furthermore, the idea of individual identity, that is separate from the clan or *fis*, could not exist without the reorganization of time. Instead, the *fis* served as both the traditional basis of society and as a way for members to connect with the “outside” world. Thus, for the rural Albanian at the time of independence and perhaps until as late as the communist period, time was a cyclical process of traditions, supported by tribal loyalties, and relative changelessness, not of change and individuality.

Also important to the discussion of identity is its fluid nature. Identity only crystallizes at certain moments in time, especially instances of collective identity, or, more relevant to this thesis, national identity. What, then creates this instance of collective identity? Thus, when and how did those peoples of the “Albanian-inhabited” regions of the Ottoman Empire or even later, after the declaration of Albanian independence, actually conceive of themselves as a group, a nation of people with a shared national identity?

Gellner, argues that common identity, and the nation state in particular, could only develop after the formation of a shared national culture that would break the power of primordial traditions and that the nation state was created only as a consequence to increasing technology and wealth.⁶ What began as a more ethnic identity, in the Albanian context, eventually developed, due to the communist party’s strong rhetoric and wide-reaching policies of the 1940s and 1950s, into a more national communist Albanian identity. This ethnic identity

⁵ Benedict Anderson, 1991. p.36.

⁶ Gellner, 1984, p. 8.

differed from the national identity that developed as one important feature of ethnic, rather than national, identity is that it defines what it is in relation to what it is not and is defined by shared culture.⁷ This process of forming national identity and popularizing it could not occur until the many cultural barriers between Albanians were lessened and peoples were shown the similarities, whether real or imagined, between each other, rather than the differences

Thus, in this work collective identity will be defined, as "... a fundamental and consequential sameness among members of a group or category. This may be understood objectively (as a sameness "in itself") or subjectively (as an experienced, felt, or perceived sameness)."⁸

Brubaker and Cooper explore the term identity within the context of the nation as well. They show how national identity is based upon subjective, or perceived sameness and refer to the nation itself as "a powerfully imagined and strongly felt commonality."⁹ The following chapters will illustrate how this sense of collective national identity was formed later than the creation of the state itself and resulted in the nation-building process of communist-period Albania.

⁷ Douglas Saltmarsh. "Identity in a Post-Communist Balkan State: An Albanian Village Study." Ashgate Publishing Limited. England: 2001, p.29.

⁸ Rogers Brubaker and Frederick Cooper. "Beyond Identity." *Theory and Society*. Vol. 29, No. 1. (Feb. 2000), p.8.

⁹ Rogers Brubaker and Frederick Cooper. "Beyond Identity." *Theory and Society*. Vol. 29, No. 1. (Feb. 2000), p.8

Nationalism

Eli Kedourie defines nationalism as,

A doctrine invented in Europe at the beginning of the nineteenth century...to supply a criterion for the determination of the unit of a population proper to enjoy a government exclusively its own, for the legitimate exercise of power in the state, and for the right organization of a society of states.¹⁰

Nationalism, although a broad term, and a broad field, becomes an important concept for this work because of the particular development of the nation-building project within Albania. It would be impossible to do justice to the term and research regarding nationalism due to the small scope of this thesis, however, certain questions that fall within the field are important to at least mention here. One such question is; what prompts the change from autonomy movement to national movement? Or, in the Albanian nation-building context; what radicalized the autonomists? The second question asks; what role does fear play in nationalism? Or furthermore...does fear trump identity? These questions, and their possible answers, are intertwined within the Albanian nation-building process.

To address the first question; The nation-building project began in the late 19th century as a movement for more autonomy within the Ottoman Empire, not

¹⁰ James Mayall, "Nationalism and Imperialism" in: Belamy (ed.) The Cambridge History of Twentieth Century Political Thought, Cambridge: Cambridge UP, p.106.

as a movement advocating for succession. This difference between the autonomy movement and nationalist movement, as well as the autonomist and nationalist goals, is important. This path of development could possibly further explain the lack of an attempt to form an Albanian national identity. The formation of national identity is important to the nationalist, but, it is not necessarily important to the autonomist. Thus, the very character of the nation-building process within Albanian-inhabited lands of the Ottoman Empire became also an obstacle to the formation of a unified Albanian national identity.

Although this series of events, from autonomy movement to national movement, is not unique, the reasons for this shift perhaps are. This shift occurred due to the immanent collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the fear of many Albanians that their traditional inhabited lands would be partitioned among the other nationalizing states of the Balkans. Thus, to address the second question, the impetus for radicalization was not the recognition or choice to recognize a shared Albanian national identity, that would serve as the argument and basis for a state, but the result of fear; the fear of becoming minorities within nationalizing states. Thus, fear played an influential role (and perhaps the greatest role) in the shift from autonomy movement to national movement. To state it quite bluntly; as of 1912, fear was the primary impetus for Albanian statehood. This will be discussed further in chapter two, “What radicalized the Autonomists?”

However, if fear was the impetus for statehood, than one must ask what would happen after Albania was created and the reason for the fear was thus

removed? The fear of partition, became less of a concern after the state of Albania was recognized by the international community. What then, if not fear (as before) would hold the state together in the absence of national identity...in the absence of a unified nation? The assumption here is, of course, that for a modern state to survive it must have a nation.

Hoxha and his Party seemed to believe this. Immediately after achieving power the communist Party in Albania sought to form and popularize their own state sponsored Albanian national communist identity in an attempt to create, for the first time in Albania's history, a unified nation. The purpose behind doing so was not a revival of nationalism in itself but an effort to consolidate and hold onto power and government. Party leaders knew that the method to receive allegiance was through the lessening of local and tribally-based loyalties and the creation of a different and new set of loyalties. This was brought about through a mixture of creating the national myth, the appropriation of traditions, and the redrawing of history.¹¹ Thus, the communists recognized that by manipulating the individual's need for identity they could replace traditional markers of self-identification such as familial or tribal loyalties, with nationalist ones.¹² However, to form and popularize a national Albanian communist identity meant that the Party needed to both lessen cultural barriers whilst culturally appropriating aspects of different cultural groups to unify the population. This also meant that mass education and the media would be used to spread and popularize their ideas.

¹¹ Douglas Saltmarshe. "Identity in a Post-Communist Balkan State: An Albanian Village Study." Ashgate Publishing Limited. England: 2001, p.33

¹² Douglas Saltmarshe. "Identity in a Post-Communist Balkan State: An Albanian Village Study." Ashgate Publishing Limited. England: 2001, p.30

The creation and popularization of national identity was important to the communists as the state required mass-participation and this would only occur if the party was able to create a national identity and common public culture of the state which included shared beliefs, norms, values and customs.¹³ This will be elaborated upon further in the final chapter entitled, “The Communist Attempt to Lessen Differences and Create a Nationalist, as well as Communist, Identity.”

Culture and Nationalism

Also important to understanding the context of this work is a definition of culture. This is important as shared culture, is important to the definition of ethnicity, and shared ethnicity was more the basis of the claim for the State of Albania than shared nationality.

E.A Hammel, in an essay entitled, *A Theory of Culture and Demography*, defines,

Culture [as] an evaluative conversation constructed by actors out of the raw materials afforded by tradition and ongoing experience. It is continually modified by them in processes of social interaction, and their behavior is guided by anticipation of such cultural evaluation.¹⁴

¹³ Douglas Saltmarshe. “Identity in a Post-Communist Balkan State: An Albanian Village Study.” Ashgate Publishing Limited. England: 200, pp.29-30.

The definition of culture is important as in the fourth chapter of this thesis as the International Commission Reports will be examined and used as somewhat of a case study to show how Albanian national identity was difficult (or impossible) to define in the southern border regions as of 1913-1914.

The duties of the International Commission were not only to draw a border between Albania and Greece, that would satisfy the concerns of the Powers, but also an attempt to try to, "...understand people quite differently placed than [themselves], encased in different material conditions, driven by different ambitions, possessed of different notions as to what life is all about..." and attempt to place these border peoples into cultural, ethnic, or national categories; To identify and group border peoples into Albanian or Greek national identities¹⁵.

Thus, in demarcating a border the representatives had to identify Albanian national culture. To do this they relied upon locating symbols of Albanian nationality. However, the International Commission chose only to catalogue particular habits to identify nationality such as the language spoken in the home or religion instead of noticing the particulars that create national culture. If culture is defined as "...an identifier of social groups; a body of autonomous tradition; a set of coherently patterned behaviors; a determinant of human action; an artistic expression of human experience; and a set of symbols negotiated between

¹⁴ E.A Hammel. "A Theory of Culture and Demography." *Population and Development Review*, Vol. 16, No. 3. (Sept., 1990), p. 3.

¹⁵ Clifford Geertz, "History and Anthropology." *New Literary History*, Vol. 21, No. 2 (Winter 1990), p. 323.

social actors,” then why were the representatives of the Commission unable to distinguish between two cultures, Albanian and Greek?¹⁶

One must question whether people of the border regions, as of 1913-1914, (only two years after Albanian Independence was declared), identified themselves as an Albanian or Greek nationals? This question is difficult to answer and the International Commission Reports can shed light only from an ‘outside’ perspective. Thus, this is the both the benefit and the limitation of the International Commission Reports. The International Commission Reports can serve, instead, as evidence of the lack of clear group identities in the southern border region of Albania as they were unable to distinguish between the two cultural (and national) groups residing in the region.

Thus, the, “Interpretation, selection, and innovation by individual actors, as well as their representation of social groups that may be thought of as institutional actors, combine to merge these analytically separable concepts in the flux of real history”¹⁷. And so, the International Commission could not merely enforce the wishes of their perspective governments whilst demarcating the southern Albanian border. They had to also take into account the local populations, how they identified themselves, and the culture they created and lived within. Only by navigating in between these two, often conflicting, criteria

¹⁶ E. A Hammel. “A Theory of Culture and Demography.” *Population and Development Review*, Vol. 16, No. 3. (Sept., 1990), p. 4.

¹⁷ E. A Hammel. “A Theory of Culture and Demography.” *Population and Development Review*, Vol. 16, No. 3. (Sept., 1990), p.4

(the wishes of the Powers and the Local populations) could the International Commission create a border that would stand the test of time.

2. 'Internal' Obstacles With the Creation of Albanian National Identity

The Albanian nation-building process was a movement that developed out of the push for greater autonomy within the Ottoman Empire and was faced by many internal obstacles due to the cultural diversity of the peoples within the region. Internal obstacles refer to the factors that impeded the formation of a national consciousness, thus, the roles of the international community and the Ottoman Porte would be considered external factors. These internal obstacles are factors that impeded the process of recognizing or choosing to identify oneself with another. These factors are the cultural, religious, and regionally-based divisions within the population which would eventually become the basis for the claim to nationhood in 1912. However, as of 1912, a national Albanian identity, had not yet formed and spread throughout the population of the newly formed state.

To understand the difficulty with forming an Albanian national identity in the late 19th century one must first examine the diversity within the population. These cultural, linguistic, and religious differences prevented national movement leaders to unite Albanians behind a national identity.

2.1 The Cultural/Societal Divide

As of 1877-1878 Albanian-inhabited lands were divided within the Ottoman Empire into four *vilyets* or provinces, Iskodra (Skoder), Kosova (Kosovo), Manastir (Bitola) and Yanya.¹⁸ At this time the Albanians, referred to by the Ottoman Empire as *Arnavudlar*, were divided into two culturally distinct regions, Gegani (Albanian) or Gegalik (Ottoman Turkish) and Toskeri (Albanian) or Toskalik (Ottoman Turkish), and two corresponding populations the Ghegs and the Tosks.¹⁹ Ghegs lived primarily within the *vilayets* of Iskodra and Kosova, but some also lived in Monastir. Most simply, the Ghegs are from the northernmost mountainous regions of Albanian territory, north of the Shkumbi River, and the Tosks lived primarily in the central and southern regions of Albania²⁰. “The Ghegs, partly Roman Catholic, but mostly Muslim, live until after WWII in a mountain society characterized by blood feuds and fierce clan and tribal loyalties.”²¹ This isolationism and tribalism can be attributed to less contact with outside groups than the Tosk Albanians and more importance placed upon the traditional law code called the *Kanun*.²² Thus, tribal society was organized along

¹⁸ George W. Gawrych. “The Crescent and the Eagle: Ottoman Rule, Islam, and the Albanians, 1874-1913” I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd. London:2006, p. 21.

¹⁹ George W. Gawrych. “The Crescent and the Eagle: Ottoman Rule, Islam, and the Albanians, 1874-1913” I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd. London:2006, p. 22.

²⁰ Miranda Vickers. “The Albanians: A Modern History.” I.B. Tauris and Co. Ltd. London: 1995, p.5.

²¹ Library of Congress. “Albania: A Country Study.” Library of Congress Cataloguing-in-Publication Data. 1994, p.75.

lines of kinship and descent with extended family as the basic unit of society and the combination of several families forming clans; All this according to the unwritten laws of the *Kanun*.²³ The social structure was patriarchal and patrilocal, with the male head serving as clan chief with decent traced through his lineage. And so, women filled a lesser role within both public and family life.

As of the 1880s the Tosk population lived mostly in the vilayet of Yanya, but also within Monastir.²⁴ The social structure of the Tosks was less tribal than that of the Ghegs, due to the greater influence and integration into the Ottoman Empire within the region.²⁵ The geography played a major role in the differences between the Gheg and Tosk Albanians as, “southern Albania’s accessibility lead to its coming much more firmly under Ottoman control.”²⁶ Thus, due to Ottoman influence, the Tosk social system was characterized as semi-feudal with land notables deriving their wealth from farming, mining, lumbering, and minor industry.²⁷ A small number of wealthy Muslim Tosk families owned much of the countryside and lived somewhat like the traditional nobility of Europe, but on a

²² George W. Gawrych. “The Crescent and the Eagle: Ottoman Rule, Islam, and the Albanians, 1874-1913” I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd. London:2006, p. 30.

²³ “Library of Congress. “Albania: A Country Study.” Library of Congress Cataloguing-in-Publication Data. 1994, pp. 67-68.

²⁴ George W. Gawrych. “The Crescent and the Eagle: Ottoman Rule, Islam, and the Albanians, 1874-1913” I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd. London:2006, p. 22.

²⁵ Kemal H. Karpat. “The Transformation of the Ottoman State, 1789-1908.” *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 3, No.3. (July 1972), p.296.

²⁶ Library of Congress. “Albania: A Country Study.” Library of Congress Cataloguing-in-Publication Data. 1994, p,76.

²⁷ Stevan K.. Pavlowitch. “A History of the Balkans, 1804-1945” Addison Wesley Longman Limited, United Kingdom: 1999, p.10.

smaller scale. Within the Tosk social structure family, as well as civil, authority was the responsibility of the semi-feudal *bey*.

2.2 The Linguistic Divide

Albanian is defined as its own separate branch of the Indo-European language family, but the language has much Latin influence as well²⁸. Two primary dialects existed, one traditionally used by the Ghegs, the other by the Tosks, while several other local sub- dialects were present within these two larger groups.²⁹ These dialects were regionally very strong during the 19th and early 20th centuries. Many sub-dialects existed as well.³⁰ However, Gheg and Tosk Albanians could easily understand each other. Thus, both the Gheg and Tosk cultural groups were not only divided by geography, religion, and social structure, but also linguistically, by spoken dialect.

Also within the language were numerous differences in script. “By the early twentieth century, more than a dozen different alphabets were being used by Albanians.”³¹ Latin, Greek, and Turko-Arabic were all widely used by Albanians dependant upon regional and religious affiliation. Latin script was

²⁸ Robert Elsie. “History of Albanian Literature.” Columbia University Press. New York: 1995, p.9-11.

²⁹ Stevan K. Pavlowitch. “A History of the Balkans, 1804-1945.” Addison Wesley Longman Limited. London: 1999, p.103.

³⁰ “Library of Congress. “Albania: A Country Study.” Library of Congress Cataloguing-in-Publication Data. 1994, p.71.

³¹ “Library of Congress. “Albania: A Country Study.” Library of Congress Cataloguing-in-Publication Data. 1994, p. 71.

primarily used in the Catholic northern mountainous regions of Albanian-inhabited lands, the Turko-Arabic script was used in the central regions of the territory where the most Ottoman and Muslim influences spread, while the Greek alphabet was used in the more Orthodox South, due to Greek influence. Combinations of these scripts were also common. The use of different script was based on the region and religion of the writer.

The script was standardized into two alphabets at a National Congress held in Monastir (Bitolja, Macedonia) that took place from November 14-22, 1908.³² The Monastir Congress was attended by fifty-eight Albanian members representing twenty-three different cultural clubs throughout Albanian-inhabited lands.³³ These alphabets were both in the Latin script but were each based on the Tosk and Gheg dialects respectively. The initial purpose of the Congress was to pick only one alphabet so as to unify Gheg and Tosk and Christian and Muslim Albanians. However, as no consensus could be found, the representatives at the convention decided to adopt both regionally-based alphabets and hope that eventually one would become the popular alphabet. Thus, instead of a unifying congress, this convention instead further divided Albanians by polarizing them further between these two alphabets. The diverse use of script, and alphabet, is yet another example of the cultural diversity within

³² Miranda Vickers. "The Albanians: A Modern History." I.B. Tauris and Co. Ltd. London: 1995, p.55.

³³ George W. Gawrych. "The Crescent and the Eagle: Ottoman Rule, Islam and the Albanians." I.B Tauris and Co Ltd. London:2006, p.165.

Albanian-inhabited regions and a reason for the difficulty in creating a unified Albanian nation-building project in the early twentieth century.

Regardless of the adoption of two Latin alphabets in 1908 and the official adoption of a single Latin-based alphabet in 1924, the majority of the population remained illiterate until the compulsory mass education policy of the 1940s employed by the communist government. Thus, this unifying attempt, and mechanism to popularize national Albanian identity, was rather ineffective as leaders could only reach the literate members of the population. To what extent even the small literate percentage of the population viewed themselves as possessing an Albanian nationality as of 1912 is also questionable.

“...Hobsbawm at one point concedes that the production of literary text by no means guaranteed their reception by the population at large: ‘we should beware of too much reliance on the literate. In what sense, or even how far, ordinary Albanians in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth centuries saw themselves as such, or recognized an affinity with one another, is far from clear’ (Hobsbawm 1992:53).”³⁴

Another important factor to note is the fact that many Albanians also spoke more than one language including Serbian, Greek, and Turkish, dependant upon the region in which they lived.³⁵ This was both a dividing and

³⁴ Jane C. Sugarman. “Imagining the Homeland: Poetry, Songs, and the Discourses of Albanian Nationalism.” *Ethnomusicology*, Vol. 43, No. 3. (Autumn, 1999), pp. 419-420.

³⁵ George W. Gawrych. “The Crescent and the Eagle: Ottoman Rule, Islam, and the Albanians, 1874-1913” I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd. London:2006, p. 22.

unifying factor; in one respect, “The regional dimension of society in the Western Balkans was not a feature unique to the early part of the nineteenth century, but it remained a significant force for fostering an atmosphere of tolerance toward both religious and cultural diversity...”³⁶. Thus, the presence, and acceptance of the use of, different languages, fostered an environment of acceptance of religious differences, which enabled people to unify behind a more secular Albanian identity regardless of religious affiliation. However, the existence of bilingualism or tri-lingualism, especially, after 1912, in border regions, also created difficulties with the construction of a distinct Albanian national identity. This will become more clear in chapter four with the examination of the International Commission reports.

2.3 The Religious Divide

Albanians were divided into three religious groups, based upon region and the amount of influence other ‘outside’ groups acted upon the local population. These three religions were Catholic, Bektashi or Sunni Muslim, and Orthodox. As of the early 20th century, the northern, Gheg, regions of Albanian-inhabited territory was comprised mostly of Bektashi and Sunni Muslims and some

³⁶ George W. Gawrych, “Tolerant Dimensions of Cultural Pluralism in the Ottoman Empire: The Albanian Community, 1800-1912.” *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 15, No. 4. (November, 1983), p. 520.

Catholics. The central and southern regions were primarily Bektashi and Sunni Muslim, but increasingly Orthodox in the southern-most territories³⁷.

Also, due to the political infrastructure of the Ottoman Empire, subjects were defined by and separated into different groups dependent upon religion. This was the "...Ottoman practice of using religion and not ethnic consciousness as a method of determining allegiance..."³⁸

Thus, Orthodox, Muslim, and Catholic Albanians were subject to different taxation systems, law codes, and hierarchies.³⁹ Thus, Muslim Albanians were subject to the Sultan as not only political, but also a religious leader. Orthodox subjects fell under the authority of the Rum Ecumenical Patriarch, which was responsible for the Orthodox schools and churches within Albanian-inhabited lands as well.⁴⁰ The language used in these schools and churches was only Greek. And lastly, the Catholic Albanians fell under the protection of Austria-Hungary and were administered to by Italian or Austrian clergy.⁴¹ Thus, religious affiliation was not simply a personal experience, but one that greatly influenced many aspects of a Ottoman subject's life.

³⁷ "Library of Congress. "Albania: A Country Study." Library of Congress Cataloguing-in-Publication Data. 1994, p. 75.

³⁸ Kondis, Basil. "Greece and Albania, 1908-1914." Institute for Balkan Studies. Thessaloniki: 1976, p.12

³⁹ George W. Gawrych. "The Crescent and the Eagle: Ottoman Rule, Islam and the Albanians." I.B Tauris and Co Ltd. London:2006, p.21.

⁴⁰ George W. Gawrych. "The Crescent and the Eagle: Ottoman Rule, Islam and the Albanians." I.B Tauris and Co Ltd. London:2006, p.22.

⁴¹ George W. Gawrych. "The Crescent and the Eagle: Ottoman Rule, Islam and the Albanians." I.B Tauris and Co Ltd. London:2006, p.21.

The existence of three religious groups, based on region, forced the leaders of the nation-building movement in the late 19th century, to adopt a secular approach. This approach was gradually adopted as early as the creation of the Prizren League in 1878. This strategy, however, alienated religious leaders and the conservative religious elements of the population. Thus, the existence of these three religious groups created an obstacle for the unification of national identity during the early state building process.

3. The Role of the Ottoman Empire, Post 1878

As noted previously, in the theoretical framework section, the common fear of 'outsiders' taking-over Albanian-inhabited lands united Albanians and eventually resulted in the nation-building movement. This common fear was due, in great part, to the collapsing Ottoman Empire; and the quickly shrinking territory, its political instability with the rise of the Young Turk revolution, and its corresponding loss of economic and military resources.

The leading factors that fueled the Albanian nationalist movement, in particular, were the fear of outsiders taking traditionally Albanian-inhabited lands, especially after the Turko-Russo War and the Treaty of San Stefano that followed (but was not implemented) in 1878. The many other nation-building projects within and outside of the Ottoman Empire also played a factor in the emergence of a nation-building movement within Albanian-

inhabited territories as these other movements provided examples as well and created a feeling of competition and fear. This fear was created by the possibility that the Ottoman Empire would break apart and Albanians would be left as minorities within newly formed nationalizing states. The Treaty of San Stefano, however, was perhaps the most significant unifying event for Albanian autonomy or nation-seekers. The event starkly revealed to Albanians the weakness of the Ottoman Empire and fulfilled their fears of partition. Thus, with the Treaty of San Stefano, the lack of an Albanian national identity no longer mattered. Fear became a unifying agent and the common goal of remaining one entity, whether within or outside of the Ottoman Empire, created the Albanian nationalist movement.

However, it is also important to keep in mind the effect of domestic unrest within the Ottoman Empire due to other important factors. Not only fear, but frustration with the Young Turk's inability or unwillingness to negotiate with nationalist groups only increased unrest and fueled tensions. The reasons for unrest are threefold; first, the government attempted to establish tighter control of administration in the Balkans without adequate financial or military resources. Second, the Ottoman government was unable to bring about social change or unify its diverse peoples. And thirdly, peoples within this diverse empire felt increasingly disillusioned by its inefficiency and, thus, looked to newly forming nationalist movements for self-identification and community-building. Each of these factors account for the growing

dissatisfaction of Albanians with the Ottoman administration and Young Turks.

Both the fear created by the Treaty of San Stefano in 1878 and the instability of Albanian-inhabited lands that resulted from the policies of the Young Turks in the early 20th century motivated and fueled the Albanian nationalist-movement. In the proceeding two sub-chapters both the Treaty of San Stefano and the role of fear (instead of nationalism motivated by national identity) and well as the effects of the Young Turk movement will be examined.

3.1 The Treaty of San Stefano

Albanian nationalism grew within the context of fear of other nationalities attempting to acquire traditionally Albanian-inhabited territory during and after the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-1878.⁴² The fear that Albanian-inhabited lands would be partitioned between Montenegro, Serbia, Bulgaria, and Greece only further fueled the rise of Albanian early nationalism at the close of the 19th century.⁴³ This fear became a legitimate one with the signing of the Treaty of San Stefano on March 3, 1878. This treaty granted traditionally Albanian-populated lands to Serbia, Montenegro, and Bulgaria. This first draft of the Treaty of San Stefano was blocked by Austria-Hungary and Britain due to the fear that it would disrupt

⁴² Michael R. Milgrim. "An Overlooked Problem in Turkish-Russian Relations: The 1878 War Indemnity." *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 4. (Nov., 1978), p. 519.

⁴³ Barbara Jelavich. (Review of) Stavro Skendi. "The Albanian National Awakening 1878-1912" *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 40, No. 4. (Dec., 1968), p. 684

the balance of power within Europe by giving Russia too strong a position within the Balkans.⁴⁴

F.A.K Yasmee explores the role of fear and/or vulnerability in his article, "Nationality in the Balkans: The Case of the Macedonians." He explains, "The chronic sense of vulnerability, both to immediate neighbors and to extra-Balkans power, has had important repercussions on the foreign policies of Balkan states"⁴⁵. Fear, and this feeling of vulnerability after the Treaty of San Stefano, radicalized Albanian nationalists and members in the autonomy movement.

This draft of the Treaty of San Stefano was a unifying event for Albanian autonomy-seekers and nationalists. This treaty, as well as the obvious weakening of the Ottoman Empire after its defeat in the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-1878, caused much anxiety to Albanian autonomists and nationalists.⁴⁶ By early 1878 Albanian leaders began to organize defense groups within Albanian territories.⁴⁷ These groups did not initially have secessionist ambitions, but defensive goals. The early purpose of these groups was not independence from the Ottoman Empire but, more autonomy within it.

Frasherli Abdyl Bey was a founder of one of these particularly active groups and later became one the Albanian nation-building movement's leading

⁴⁴ A. F. Pollard. "The Balance of Power." *Journal of the British Institute of International Affairs*, Vol. 2, No.2. (March 1923), p. 57

⁴⁵ Yasmee, "Nationality in the Balkans: The Case of the Macedonians." p. 122.

⁴⁶ Stavro Skendi. "Beginnings of the Albanian Nationalist and Autonomist Trends: The Albanian League, 1878-1881." *American Slavic and East European Review*, Vol. 12, No. 2. (Apr., 1953), p.220

⁴⁷ Stavro Skendi. "Beginnings of the Albanian Nationalist and Autonomist Trends: The Albanian League, 1878-1881." *American Slavic and East European Review*, Vol. 12, No. 2. (Apr., 1953), p.221

figures. Frasherli, a member of parliament and brother of Semseddin Sami, was responsible for organizing the first meeting of Albanian representatives, primarily regional leaders and clan chiefs, in Prizren on June 10, 1878.⁴⁸ This group of first autonomist and later nationalist activists became known as the Prizren League and would become the primary organizing body in the autonomy, and later, the nationalist movement.

The initial goal of the Prizren League was not to achieve Albanian independence, but to gain autonomy within the Ottoman Empire, attain the right to tax the population, and form a defensive army to protect Albanian inhabited lands in case of the implementation of the Treaty of San Stefano.⁴⁹ After speaking with unnamed leaders within the Prizren League, referred to in the letter as the Albanian League, the British Consul Kirby Green wrote to Marquis of Salisbury of the non-nationalistic purposes of the organization. Whether these leaders the delegate conversed with were honest is yet another question to consider. However, these League members stated that they were not Albanian nationalists, but wished to protect the territorial integrity of both the Empire and Albanian-inhabited lands. On November 11, 1898 Consul Green wrote, "They Hate that the League merely embodies a determination, which, in the absence of

⁴⁸ George W. Gawrych. "The Crescent and the Eagle: Ottoman Rule, Islam and the Albanians." I.B Tauris and Co Ltd. London:2006, p.40.

⁴⁹ Stavro Skendi. "Beginnings of the Albanian Nationalist and Autonomist Trends: The Albanian League, 1878-1881." *American Slavic and East European Review*, Vol. 12, No. 2. (Apr., 1953), p.226

a better expression they call 'national'...The term 'national must not be taken to mean even the shadow of a desire for separation from the Sultan's rule."⁵⁰

Due to its initial goals, the Prizren League was first supported by the Ottoman government. However, Ottoman authorities insisted that delegates to the Prizren League swear their allegiance to the Ottoman Empire, and secondly to the Prizren League. The delegation split on this issue and some were radicalized somewhat by this event. Some delegates agreed, and began to advocate for the protection of Moslem-inhabited lands within the Ottoman Empire, including present-day Bosnia and Herzegovina.⁵¹ The other representatives to the delegation, however, were hesitant to make this oath and continued, under Frasheri's leadership, to advocate for Albanian autonomy. This somewhat more radical faction remained a minority at this point, however, as most of the Prizren League were conservative Muslim and thus supported the Ottoman Empire's request due to religious allegiances. This split weakened the League. In a letter sent by British Consul Kirby Green from Scutari to the Marquis of Salisbury on October 22, 1878 he noted that, "Although the League split up into Committees and Sub-Committees, some religious and others military, has lost somewhat of its importance, it has still sufficient influence to raise up resistance."⁵² Which, after the Congress of Berlin re-convened, it did.

⁵⁰ Consul Kirby Green to M. of Salisbury. About the Albanian League. Dec. 2, 1878. Found in British National Archives, Kew.

⁵¹ George W. Gawrych. "The Crescent and the Eagle: Ottoman Rule, Islam and the Albanians." I.B Tauris and Co Ltd. London:2006, p.45.

⁵² Consul Kirby Green to the M of Salisbury. The Albanian League. October 22, 1878. Found in the British National Archives, Kew.

By July 1878 the Congress of Berlin convened to re-assess the terms of the Treaty of San Stefano. The Prizren League sent the Great Powers a memorandum demanding the unification of Albanian lands into an autonomous Ottoman province with an elected assembly, chosen through universal suffrage, and a Turkish governor stationed in the town of Bitola.⁵³ This memorandum is important as it is a declaration on behalf of all Albanians to the international community. It is the declaration of a group separate from the Ottoman Empire and a radical step in the Albanian nation-building process. The Congress of Berlin ignored the League's demands, however, and decided to give the primarily Albanian-inhabited cities of Bar and Podgorica, as well as lands surrounding the villages of Gusinje and Plav, to Montenegro. Serbia was also given Albanian-inhabited territory. Despite the territorial losses, the Prizren League remained loyal to the Ottoman Empire although many Albanians began to fear the possibility of losing Albanian-inhabited lands of Epirus to Greece. In reaction to the territorial losses suffered by the newly created draft of the Treaty of San Stefano, the Prizren League formed a central committee with Seyh Mustafa, a religious official from Tepedelen, as president and formed armed resistance groups in Gusinje, Plav, Prizren, Janina, Prevesa, and Shkoder.⁵⁴

The Congress of Berlin also assigned a special commission to attempt to trace a border between the Ottoman Empire and Montenegro while

⁵³ George W. Gawrych. "The Crescent and the Eagle: Ottoman Rule, Islam and the Albanians." I.B Tauris and Co Ltd. London:2006, p.44.

⁵⁴ George W. Gawrych. "The Crescent and the Eagle: Ottoman Rule, Islam and the Albanians." I.B Tauris and Co Ltd. London:2006, p.46.

also asking the Ottoman Empire and Greece to negotiate a border separately from the Congress. The Congress assumed that the Ottoman Empire would assume the responsibility of administering these border reforms. However, because the Ottoman Empire was militarily too weak to enforce the borders the government armed the Albanians instead.⁵⁵ This move only resulted in the further armed resistance of Albanians to the new borders created by the Congress of Berlin, especially in the Northern mountainous regions of modern-day Albania where clan-based Catholic tribesmen such as the Malissori organized themselves.⁵⁶ Due to the continued resistance of Albanians to the attempted border adjustments, the Great Powers were eventually forced to alter the border again by returning the towns of Gusinje and Plav to the Ottoman Empire. The town of Ulcinj, however, remained within Montenegro. Once again, Albanians formed armed resistance groups within Ulcinj until the Great Powers blockaded the coastal town while pressuring the Ottoman Empire to assist in taking control of the population.⁵⁷

This uprising and resistance in Ulcinj further revealed the radicalization of Albanian nationalists as well as the administrative and military inability of the Ottoman Empire to control its Albanian population. Thus, due to international

⁵⁵ W. David Wrigley. "Germany and the Turco-Italian War, 1911-1912." *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 11, No. 3. (May, 1980), p.314.

⁵⁶ George W. Gawrych. "The Crescent and the Eagle: Ottoman Rule, Islam and the Albanians." I.B Tauris and Co Ltd. London:2006, p.47.

⁵⁷ George W. Gawrych. "The Crescent and the Eagle: Ottoman Rule, Islam and the Albanians." I.B Tauris and Co Ltd. London:2006, pp.66-67

pressure, the Sultan sent Dervish Turgent Pasha and a military force to forcibly suppress the Prizren League as well as other resistance groups within Ulcinj.⁵⁸

Although the Prizren League was effectively destroyed, its legacy remained. It effectively organized resistance groups that made the internationally community aware of the existence of an Albanian people with a unified interest in autonomy within the Ottoman Empire. The Ulcinj incident in particular reveals that the Ottomans were using more prohibitive policies rather than conflict resolution as a response to nationalist activity as well. These prohibitive policies, later adopted by the Young Turks, would only further radicalize the Prizren League (after its re-emergence) and other nationalist groups within Albania.

The unitary actions of the Prizren League reveal the radicalization of this group, created by the fear resulting from the Treaty of San Stefano. The Prizren League unitarily sent a memorandum to the Congress of Berlin and then later organized armed resistance in an effort to prevent border reforms from being enforced. Although the League still alleged loyalty to the Porte, it is evident that its leadership had already lost some faith in the Ottoman Empire's ability to maintain its territorial integrity.⁵⁹ The League found it necessary to even disobey the Ottoman Porte, if necessary, to protect the Albanian-inhabited lands that the Porte was unable, or perhaps unwilling, to secure. Thus, the increased radicalization of Albanian nationalists was not only due to the later reforms of the

⁵⁸ Stavro Skendi. "Beginnings of the Albanian Nationalist and Autonomist Trends: The Albanian League, 1878-1881." *American Slavic and East European Review*, Vol. 12, No. 2. (Apr., 1953), pp. 229-230.

⁵⁹ George W. Gawrych. "The Crescent and the Eagle: Ottoman Rule, Islam and the Albanians." I.B Tauris and Co Ltd. London:2006, pp.70-71.

Young Turks, but was due to the overwhelming fear of the partition of Albanian-inhabited lands into the surrounding nationalizing states. The Treaty of San Stefano crystallized this fear, and served as a turning point in the Albanian nation-building process. The early twentieth century policies and reforms of the Young Turks would later serve as more a “final push” in the radicalization of Albanian nationalists.

Thus, in the absence of a unified Albanian identity, only common fear unified and motivated Albanians to protect their traditionally inhabited lands and maintain the status quo. At the close of the 19th century the options facing Albanians were few; hope and fight so that the Ottoman Empire would not collapse, accept that Albanian-inhabited lands will be partitioned among the surrounding nationalizing states, or struggle to create an Albanian nation-building project.

3.2 The Young Turks

The Young Turk Era, spanning 1908-1918, played an important role in the Albanian nation-building process for two primary reasons.⁶⁰ Firstly, Albanians were radicalized due to the Young Turks inability to fulfill the promises made by the constitution and secondly, the Young Turks were unwilling or unable to compromise with nationalist groups. The Young Turks continually switched between policies that either granted minor concessions to ease tension or rather

⁶⁰ Kemal H. Karpat. “The Transformation of the Ottoman State, 1789-1908.” *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 3, No.3. (July 1972), p. 281.

repressive policies that closed schools, banned the Albanian language, and outlawed political groups. Both the failures of the constitution and the lack of a uniform policy towards Albanians fueled the growing discontent already existent within the region further radicalizing nationalists and convincing autonomists that negotiation was an impossibility under the new Young Turk regime.

Stevan K. Pavlowitch, in his book entitled, “A History of the Balkans, 1804-1945” explains that the primary motives of the Young Turks, or the Committee of Union and Progress was to save the Ottoman Empire and cut-off foreign influence by removing Abdulhamid from power and restore the constitution.⁶¹ They argued that the values inherent in democracy could be found within Islam and Ottoman/Islamic culture. Nader Sohrabi, in the article, “Global Waves, Local Actors: What the Young Turks Knew About Other Revolutions and Why It Mattered,” explains, “The Young Turks linked all major problems within the Empire to the constitutional solution, and justified this doctrine by drawing on the language of religion and the “invented” constitutional “tradition” of Islam”⁶².

On July 24th, 1908 the Young Turks restored the constitution of 1876: “While in the North (of Albania) there was much unrest and a lot of confusion, in the south the Albanians were favorably disposed toward the new regime.”⁶³ This was the same constitution that in Article 8 and 17 stated, “All individuals of the

⁶¹ Stevan K. Pavlowitch. “A History of the Balkans, 1804-1945” Addison Wesley Longman Limited. United States: 1999, p.167.

⁶² Nader Sohrabi. “Global Waves, Local Actors: What the Young Turks Knew About Other Revolutions and Why It Mattered” *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 44, No. 1. (Jan., 2002), p. 46.

⁶³ Kondis, Basil. “Greece and Albania, 1908-1914.” *Institute for Balkan Studies*. Thessaloniki: 1976, p.38

Empire are, without distinction, called Ottomans whatever their religion or sect” and, “All Ottomans are equal before the law and equal in rights and duties regardless of religion or sect.”⁶⁴ It is estimated that in the first ten months after the constitutional government was formed four national congresses convened within Albanian-inhabited lands, sixty-six Albanian culture clubs were formed, fifteen literary societies were created, and four printing presses, eleven newspapers, three musical societies, and twenty-four night schools began operation.⁶⁵ Many Albanian nationalists hoped that the new constitution would allow for more educational liberty. The Congress of Monostir was held in November of 1908 to pick the new Albanian script as during this period many alphabets variations existed. New schools in the Albanian language were founded in Albanian inhabited lands. Thus, enabling the unhindered use and development of the Albanian language and national identity. After the re-implementation of the constitution of 1876 Albanian clubs were created within Albanian-inhabited territory and throughout the rest of the Ottoman Empire as well. Some Christian Albanians, however, became increasingly concerned that the re-implementation of the constitution of 1876 was simply a tool to prevent international intervention as the Young Turks took control of the Empire.⁶⁶

⁶⁴ George W. Gawrych. “The Crescent and the Eagle: Ottoman Rule, Islam and the Albanians.” I.B Tauris and Co Ltd. London:2006, p.39.

⁶⁵ George W. Gawrych. “The Crescent and the Eagle: Ottoman Rule, Islam and the Albanians.” I.B Tauris and Co Ltd. London:2006, pp.163-164.

⁶⁶ Kemal H. Karpat. “The Memoirs of N. Batzaria: The Young Turks and Nationalism.” *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 3. (July 19), p. 292.

During the November and December electoral period of 1908 the Young Turks faced a series of significant crisis when Bulgaria asserted its independence on the 5th of October and the next day autonomous Crete united with Greece and Austria-Hungary annexed Bosnia and Herzegovina.⁶⁷ The Young Turks appealed to the Great Powers for assistance and enacted a rather unsuccessful boycott of Austrian goods in protest to the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Albanian club located in Constantinople was a strong supporter of the Young Turk boycott and sent telegrams to the Embassies of the Great Powers saying that, "...the Albanian people were united against the threat of foreign invasion. They could not any longer accept territorial losses in favor of Serbia, Montenegro, and Greece, and were ready to die for the territorial integrity of their country."⁶⁸ This is an understandable statement given that the Albanians were getting closer and closer to the Powers as the Ottoman Empire was quickly shrinking. They did not want Albanian-inhabited lands to become the next annexed territory and be integrated into a new and nationalizing state. Thus, initially many Albanians supported the Young Turks.⁶⁹

Regardless of the territorial losses and the unsuccessful boycott, the election was completed on December 17, 1908. Out of the 288 total deputies elected, there were 147 Turks, 60 Arabs, 27 Albanians, 26 Greeks, 14

⁶⁷ George W. Gawrych. "The Crescent and the Eagle: Ottoman Rule, Islam and the Albanians." I.B Tauris and Co Ltd. London:2006, p.155.

⁶⁸ Kondis, Basil. "Greece and Albania, 1908-1914." *Institute for Balkan Studies*. Thessaloniki: 1976, p.41

⁶⁹ Kemal H. Karpat. "The Memoirs of N. Batzaria: The Young Turks and Nationalism." *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 3. (July 19), p. 292

Armenians, 10 Slavs, and 4 Jews chosen to serve in the new parliament.⁷⁰ A small group of Albanian deputies including leaders such as Ismail Kemal, Hassan Prishtine, Shanin Kolonja, and Nexhip Druga, followed by all the Greeks representatives, formed a federalist opposition by forming the Party of the Liberal Union, or *Osmanli Ahrar Firkasi*, in opposition to the central authority of the Committee of Union and Progress or the Young Turks.⁷¹ Unlike the Committee of Union and Progress, the Ahrar party favored decentralization of the government administration and more local autonomy for national minorities within the Empire.

The April Uprising took place in Hagia Sophia Square in Constantinople on April 12, 1909 and began with the First Army Corps, a primarily Albanian corps and was quickly joined by theological studies and others.⁷² They rose in reaction to the policies of the Young Turks and called for the restoration of Sheriat or religious law. Demonstrators killed and/or burned members of the Committee of Union and Progress and military officers. Ismail Kemal and other Ahrar party members supported the move but were not directly involved.⁷³ To pacify to rebels, Huseyin Hilmi, the grand vezir, gave his resignation and the Sultan chose a successor. The Third Army Corps, lead by Mahmud Sevket Pasa, the former *Vali* of Kosova, was also summoned to forcibly put down the rebellion

⁷⁰ Kemal H. Karpat. "The Memoirs of N. Batzaria: The Young Turks and Nationalism." *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 3. (July 19), p.279

⁷¹ George W. Gawrych. "The Crescent and the Eagle: Ottoman Rule, Islam and the Albanians." I.B Tauris and Co Ltd. London:2006, p.157.

⁷² George W. Gawrych. "The Crescent and the Eagle: Ottoman Rule, Islam and the Albanians." I.B Tauris and Co Ltd. London:2006, p.167.

⁷³ Owen Pearson. "Albania and King Zog: Independence, Republic, and Monarchy, 1908-1939" The Centre for Albanian Studies in association with I.B Tauris Publishers, pp.5-6

with a force of 20,000 to 25,000 regulars and 15,000 volunteers.⁷⁴ They were able to secure the city. Soon after the uprising the members were quickly suppressed and leading deputies punished; including Ismail Kemal who fled to Athens. The news of Ismail Kemal, a popular leader in Southern Albania, prompted many of the Albanian clubs and supporters of Kemal to go underground as the Young Turks began to actively seek out and punish his supporters.⁷⁵ Thus, in Southern Tosk Albanian-inhabited lands the climate changed from excitement over the new constitution to fear of the Young Turk regime. Also, in the northern-most Albanian-inhabited regions, the Catholic Ghegs, were becoming increasingly disappointed with the constitution and its failed promises and further disillusioned by the Young Turks. Many refused to pay taxes. In May of 1909, after a law was created banning the carrying of arms the Catholic Ghegs refused. This is no surprise, however, as the carrying of arms was a valued tradition and status symbol to the northern Catholic Gheg tribesmen. The situation reached a breaking point when, on June 12, 1909 a group of Catholic Ghegs from the Kosova region organized and attacked Turkish troops stationed there.

“As pressure against Ottoman rule increased in the Balkans, the Committee of Union and Progress showed itself less flexible toward nationalist issues, and became more concerned with the Turkification of all subjects of the

⁷⁴ George W. Gawrych. “The Crescent and the Eagle: Ottoman Rule, Islam and the Albanians.” I.B Tauris and Co Ltd. London:2006, p.167.

⁷⁵ George P. Scriven. “The Awakening of Albania.” *Geographical Review*, Vol. 8, No.2. (Aug., 1919), p. 7

Empire and the formation of strong centralized government.”⁷⁶ Thus, the Young Turks were unable to negotiate with the Albanians and thus changed their tactic from one of relative patience to one of suppression and an attempt to “denationalize” rebellious populations.⁷⁷ And so, the Young Turks began an attempt to disarm and pacify Albanian-inhabited lands. Although earlier attempts failed, and resulted in violent reaction, the Young Turks continued trying to imposed compulsory military service, taxation, and the arms ban upon the northern Albanian Catholic Gheg tribes-people. On June 7, 1909 another ban was passed outlawing the carrying of arms by the Moslem population as well.⁷⁸ This was another unprecedented move as the Moslem population within the Ottoman Empire was always permitted to own weaponry. They also outlawed educational instruction in the Albanian language and allowed only Turkish language instruction.

Once again, in reaction to the suppressive measures of the Young Turks the northern Gheg Albanians militarily rose up against the regime in the spring of 1909. The Young Turks sent Javid Pasha and a Turkish force to suppress the rebellion, but they were initially unsuccessful.⁷⁹ In a non-military response the Young Turks also passed another repressive measure in November 1909 that

⁷⁶ Kondis, Basil. “Greece and Albania, 1908-1914.” Institute for Balkan Studies. Thessaloniki: 1976, p.46.

⁷⁷ Kemal H. Karpat. “The Memoirs of N. Batzaria: The Young Turks and Nationalism.” *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 3. (July 19), p. 293.

⁷⁸ Owen Pearson. “Albania and King Zog: Independence, Republic, and Monarchy, 1908-1939” The Centre for Albanian Studies in association with I.B. Tauris Publishers, p.6.

⁷⁹ Owen Pearson. “Albania and King Zog: Independence, Republic, and Monarchy, 1908-1939” The Centre for Albanian Studies in association with I.B Tauris Publishers, p. 11.

completely outlawed 'bands.'⁸⁰ This was a direct attack against the northern Albanian Catholic Gheg tribes-people, who in response swore a besa (or oath) to oppose the Young Turk regime for impeding on their traditions and way of life. The government responded to the continued dis-obedience of the northern Albanians by sending an even larger troop under general Shevket Turgent Pasha to the town of Uskub. Yet another troop under Mahmud Shevket Pasha (the Minister of War) arrived on May 2, 1910.⁸¹ The two troops totaled around 10,000 soldiers and on July 24th they had completed the defeat of the uprising and entered the town of Scutari.⁸² After their victory they begun to forcibly disarm the population and register people for taxation purposes. The trend of forcible suppression continued and during the final six months of 1910 the Young Turks began closing Albanian cultural and political clubs as well as schools throughout Albanian-inhabited regions. They also outlawed newspapers and imprisoned nationalist leaders.

In March 1911, another revolt, carried-out by the Northern Catholic Malissori tribes, began close to the Montenegrin border.⁸³ The Malissori were a Catholic Gheg tribally-based society which lived in the mountains and historically

⁸⁰Kondis, Basil. "Greece and Albania, 1908-1914." Institute for Balkan Studies. Thessaloniki: 1976, p.47.

⁸¹ Owen Pearson. "Albania and King Zog: Independence, Republic, and Monarchy, 1908-1939" The Centre for Albanian Studies in association with I.B Tauris Publishers, p.11.

⁸² Kondis, Basil. "Greece and Albania, 1908-1914." Institute for Balkan Studies. Thessaloniki: 1976, p.48.

⁸³ George W. Gawrych. "The Crescent and the Eagle: Ottoman Rule, Islam, and the Albanians, 1874-1913" I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd. London:2006, p. 30.

occupied Iskodra.⁸⁴ The Malissori tribes-people had no political program, but rose up instead as a result of their frustration with the conscription policies and taxes and disillusionment with the Young Turks. The tribes began by attacking Turkish outposts close to the town of Sctari. In response, the Vali of Scutari Bedri Pasha, "...appealed to the Moslems of Scutari to defend their town and faith against the Catholics and presented the Christian revolt..." as anti-Muslim. The Moslems of Sctari responded by burning two Catholic churches, which only further fueled anti-Turkish sentiment among the tribes. This uprising reveals not only the increasing frustration with the Young Turks but also the distrust between Moslem and Catholic Albanians and disunity among even Gheg Albanians; members of the same cultural group and region. Shevket Turgent Pasha was dispatched once again to forcibly repress the revolt and was able to chase the Malissori tribes into Montenegrin territory.

Having heard about the events, the nationalist leaders Ismail Kemal, Luigj Gurakuqi (the Catholic director of the school in Elbasan) and Tiranli Cemal Bey called a meeting with the Mallissori clan leaders in the village of Gerce in Montenegro to sign a list of demands named the Gerche memorandum, which was to be sent to the Young Turk leaders.⁸⁵ It asked for things such as, the grantee that no un-constitutional actions would be committed by the government against Albanians, that Albanians could choose their deputies, that the Albanian

⁸⁴ George W. Gawrych. "The Crescent and the Eagle: Ottoman Rule, Islam, and the Albanians, 1874-1913" I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd. London:2006, p. 31.

⁸⁵ Owen Pearson. "Albania and King Zog: Independence, Republic, and Monarchy, 1908-1939" The Centre for Albanian Studies in association with I.B Tauris Publishers, p.18. and George W. Gawrych. "The Crescent and the Eagle: Ottoman Rule, Islam and the Albanians." I.B Tauris and Co Ltd. London:2006, pp. 186-187.

language could be used freely, that Albanian schools would be re-opened, and that all taxes collected in Albania would be used in Albania, etc.⁸⁶ The twelve-point list also, and most importantly, asked for more administrative and territorial autonomy for Albanians and claimed that the European Powers must guarantee the fulfillment of all demands.⁸⁷ The memorandum was also sent to Edward Grey, who supported it, despite German protest.⁸⁸ On August 3, 1911, after the Young Turks offered to re-open Albanian schools, implement economic reforms, allow the Mallisori tribe to carry weaponry, limited military service to Albanian lands and lessened taxes, and granted amnesty to members of the uprising, the Mallisori agreed to leave Montenegro and return to Albania.⁸⁹ The revolt did not spread in the north as Moslem Albanians were distrustful of the revolution because it was begun by Catholics.

Albanians in the South, urged by the Central Revolutionary Committee, began other anti-Young Turk movements in several villages.⁹⁰ The revolutionary atmosphere was spreading. On May 5, 1911 the Central Revolutionary Committee sent out an appeal to other clubs and towns calling people to prepare

⁸⁶ Kondis, Basil. "Greece and Albania, 1908-1914." Institute for Balkan Studies. Thessaloniki: 1976, p. 54.

⁸⁷ Owen Pearson. "Albania and King Zog: Independence, Republic, and Monarchy, 1908-1939" The Centre for Albanian Studies in association with I.B Tauris Publishers, pp.18-19.

⁸⁸ G. P. Gooch. "Recent Revelations on European Diplomacy." *Journal of the British Institute of International Affairs*, Vol. 2, No.1. (Jan., 1923), p.11.

⁸⁹ Kondis, Basil. "Greece and Albania, 1908-1914." Institute for Balkan Studies. Thessaloniki: 1976, p. 56.

⁹⁰ Kondis, Basil. "Greece and Albania, 1908-1914." Institute for Balkan Studies. Thessaloniki: 1976, p.56.

for a revolution.⁹¹ Simultaneously, they sent a list of demands to the Young Turk government that almost exactly mirrored the demands of the Prizren League after the Treaty of San Stefano asking for “Administrative autonomy within the Ottoman Empire; union of the four vilayets (Scutari, Kosovo, Monastir, Janina) in a single vilayet governed by Albanians, with a separate parliament and a separate army; and that all government employees to be of the Albanian nationality.”⁹² It is important to note here that they use the term nationality. The Turks ignored the list of demands and in response the Albanians began forming guerilla bands. Armed demonstrations were held throughout the four vilayets and the Young Turks reacted by moving troops into place once again.

Soon leaders of these movements in the southern Albanian-inhabited regions became aware of the concessions made to the Malissori tribe and demanded that those same concessions be made to all four vilayets and to all Albanians. The Young Turks ignored Albanian demands, especially as the Christian population did not seem supportive.⁹³ On August 18, 1911, the Young Turks agreed to meet with the Southern revolt leaders in the town of Tepelene.⁹⁴ However, they refused to accept the Gerche memorandum used with the Malissori tribes before. Instead they offered, general amnesty to those involved in

⁹¹ Owen Pearson. “Albania and King Zog: Independence, Republic, and Monarchy, 1908-1939” The Centre for Albanian Studies in association with I.B Tauris Publishers, p. 12.

⁹² Barbara Jelavich. (Review of) Stavro Skendi. “The Albanian National Awakening 1878-1912” *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 40, No. 4. (Dec., 1968), p. 684.

⁹³ Kondis, Basil. “Greece and Albania, 1908-1914.” Institute for Balkan Studies. Thessaloniki: 1976, p.58.

⁹⁴ Owen Pearson. “Albania and King Zog: Independence, Republic, and Monarchy, 1908-1939” The Centre for Albanian Studies in association with I.B Tauris Publishers, p. 21.

the uprisings, the re-opening of Albanian schools, the teaching of the Albanian language, the appointment of civil servants who knew the Albanian language and customs, military service only within the four Albanian vilayets, reduced taxation, and the right to carry arms but only with special permission.⁹⁵ Those present accepted, however, the concessions were only marginally implemented as amnesty was never fully granted and no schools had been opened in the Albanian language either.⁹⁶ Due to the continued ineffectiveness of negotiations with the Young Turks, and the inability or unwillingness of the regime to implement all of the agreed points from the Tepelene meeting, in January of 1912, under the leadership of Ismail Kemal, Albanian leaders met in Constantinople and agreed to organize a full-scale rebellion, starting in the Kosova region and spreading south all over Albanian-inhabited territory.⁹⁷ Ismail Kemal was able to acquire weaponry from an unofficial Italian committee called "Pro-Albania."⁹⁸ Fighting ensued in the northern and southern regions of Albanian-inhabited lands.

In an effort to pause the widespread rebellion in Albanian-inhabited lands the Young Turks agreed to negotiate with movement leaders. The demands were more moderate than previously. Albanian leaders asked for many of the same

⁹⁵Kondis, Basil. "Greece and Albania, 1908-1914." Institute for Balkan Studies. Thessaloniki: 1976, pp.59-60.

⁹⁶Barbara Jelavich. (Review of) Stavro Skendi. "The Albanian National Awakening 1878-1912" *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 40, No. 4. (Dec., 1968), p. 684.

⁹⁷ George W. Gawrych. "The Crescent and the Eagle: Ottoman Rule, Islam and the Albanians." I.B Tauris and Co Ltd. London:2006, p.190.

⁹⁸ Kondis, Basil. "Greece and Albania, 1908-1914." Institute for Balkan Studies. Thessaloniki: 1976, p.66.

demands as before but excluded the more radical demand of autonomy, taxation collected from Albanians only spent in Albania, etc. After expressing their demands the Albanians gave the Young Turks forty-eight hours to respond. They did not, and in response Albanian rebels occupied the town of Uskub. Thus, on August 12, 1912 the capital of the vilayet of Kosova, Uskub, was overtaken by the 30,000 strong Albanian irregular forces and forces of powerful chieftains, Bajram Bey Curri, Riza Bey Gjakova, and Idriz Seferi, led by Isa Bey Boletani.⁹⁹ They encountered little resistance. Two days later, on August 14, 1912 the towns of Durrës, Krujë, and Peshkopi, in Shkoder, and Fier and Permet, in Janina, also fell to other Albanian rebel forces.¹⁰⁰ By September 4, 1912 the Porte officially accepted the demands of the movement leaders.¹⁰¹ This made Albanian lands, and the four vilayets a more political entity than it had been before as only Albanian leaders could govern in these four vilayets.

The outbreak of the First Balkan War created the fear that the Balkan allies intended to partition Albanian-inhabited lands following the war.¹⁰² Once again, as with the Treaty of San Stefano before, the role of fear radicalized Albanian nationalists. Albanian leaders organized a meeting on October 14, 1912 in the town of Uskub to discuss the war and its impact on Albanian-inhabited

⁹⁹ Owen Pearson. "Albania and King Zog: Independence, Republic, and Monarchy, 1908-1939" The Centre for Albanian Studies in association with I.B Tauris Publishers, p. 26.

¹⁰⁰ Owen Pearson. "Albania and King Zog: Independence, Republic, and Monarchy, 1908-1939" The Centre for Albanian Studies in association with I.B Tauris Publishers, p. 27.

¹⁰¹ Kondis, Basil. "Greece and Albania, 1908-1914." Institute for Balkan Studies. Thessaloniki: 1976, p. 76.

¹⁰² Kemal H. Karpat. "The Memoirs of N. Batzaria: The Young Turks and Nationalism." *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 3. (July 19), p. 296

lands.¹⁰³ Leaders agreed that the Ottoman Empire would probably lose the war. In response leaders sent a message to the Great Powers stating that Albanians would not fight to strengthen the Ottoman Empire, but to protect the territorial integrity of their traditionally inhabited lands.¹⁰⁴ Thus, the Albanians made clear to the international community that they were fighting on the side of Turkey only to maintain their territory.

Kemal then worked to gather support of Albanian independence from other governments. “Kemal, on November 12, called on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and told the Austrian officials about his plans to call a meeting of Albanian notables, address a memorandum to the powers containing the wishes of the Albanian people, and urge the Turkish government to order the military and civil authorities in Albania to cooperate with the leaders of the national movement.”¹⁰⁵ Austrian support was luke-warm although they were trying to begin a more assertive foreign policy within the Balkans.¹⁰⁶ A few Austrian officials gave him support, but, most importantly, he was able to receive the support of Berchtold.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰³ Barbara Jelavich. (Review of) Stavro Skendi. “The Albanian National Awakening 1878-1912” *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 40, No. 4. (Dec., 1968), p. 684.

¹⁰⁴ Kondis, Basil. “Greece and Albania, 1908-1914.” Institute for Balkan Studies. Thessaloniki: 1976, p. 84.

¹⁰⁵ Kondis, Basil. “Greece and Albania, 1908-1914.” Institute for Balkan Studies. Thessaloniki: 1976, p. 88.

¹⁰⁶ Joe D. Hagan. “Does Decision Making Matter? Systematic Assumptions vs. Historical Reality in International Relations Theory.” *International Studies Review*, Vol. 3, No. 2, Leaders, Groups, and Coalitions: Understanding the People and Processes in Foreign Policymaking. (Summer, 2001), p. 14.

¹⁰⁷ G.P. Gooch. “Recent Revelations on European Diplomacy” *Journal of the British Institute of International Affairs*, Vol. 2, No. 1. (Jan., 1923), p.17.

After receiving his support, Kemal, sent a message to the delegates in Albania to gather in Valona for the national congress.

The National convention opened on November 28, 1912. Ismail Kemal presided as speaker and opened the convention with a speech saying that, "...in view of the critical situation created by the Balkan war, the only way to salvation for Albanians was the separation from the Ottoman Empire."¹⁰⁸ In closing Kemal proposed a declaration of independence for Albania, the election of a senate to serve in the provisional government, and the formation of a special commission to send members to the capitals of the Great Powers. Kemal was elected as the president of the provisional government and a telegram was sent out to the Great Powers announcing the independence of Albania.¹⁰⁹

The Young Turks, concluded an armistice on December 3, 1912 with Serbia, Bulgaria, and Montenegro. Greece refused to sign the armistice but attended the peace conference, which began in London on December 16, 1912. The peace conference would eventually recognize Albania as an independent state and send an International Commission to delaminate a border between southern Albania and Northern Greece.

The inability and/or unwillingness of the Young Turk regime to negotiate with the Albanian nationalists only further radicalized Albanian nationalist activities. The loyalty that some Albanians and Albanian groups felt towards the

¹⁰⁸Kondis, Basil. "Greece and Albania, 1908-1914." Institute for Balkan Studies. Thessaloniki: 1976, p. 91

¹⁰⁹ George P. Scriven. "The Awakening of Albania" *Geographical Review*, Vol. 8, No.2. (Aug., 1919), p. 73.

Ottoman Porte shifted with the Young Turks. That loyalty somewhat disappeared for many. Albanians were once again, as in 1878 with the Treaty of San Stefano, in a position where only radical and opposing steps could be taken. One step, or choice, was to ‘Turkify,” and the only other option was to rebel. The state was announced in 1912, accepted in 1914, but the nation had yet to be formed.

4. Evidence of Lack of National Identity and Unity The International Commission

The International Commission and their detailed correspondence serve as an example of how ‘outsiders,’ or those outside of a particular cultural group, identified Albanian nationality in the Southern Albanian border region as of 1913-1914. As mentioned previously, in the sub-chapter entitled “Defining Identity: How Does This Work Address the Topic,” the members of the International Commission were asked by the Powers to demarcate a border based upon the majority nationality of the towns in the border regions between Albania and Greece. The “markers” of nationality, chosen for Commission members to locate within the population, will be discussed in more detail to follow.

Most importantly this chapter should illustrate that, despite months of investigation, Commission members found great difficulty in differentiating who was, and who was not, Albanian national, in this border region. This could reveal that perhaps a distinct Albanian nationality did not exist, or at least was unimportant, to populations in the border regions of Albania two years after the

state's existence. Thus, either national Albanian identity was weak in the southern regions of the country, or it did not exist yet. Further evidence as to the weakness of national identity within Albania during this period is also outlined in the second sub-chapter of this section as the various governments and political movements mentioned in the Commission correspondence are also briefly examined.

4.1 The International Commission: An Attempt to Discern Albanian National Identity in the Border Region

The Great Powers began the Conference of London on December 13th, 1912, with Edward Grey presiding, to discuss the “Albanian problem” and others that had arose during the war.¹¹⁰ There was some disagreement between the member states as to what form that the future government would take and the territory that Albania would encompass. The Austrian Ambassador, Count Mensdorff, stated that Albania should be viable and large enough to have its own separate existence. This is unsurprising as Austria-Hungary wanted to check the territorial expansion of Serbia.¹¹¹ The Russian Ambassador argued that autonomous Albania should be controlled by the six Great Powers under the sovereignty of the Sultan. By December 20, 1912 the representatives agreed

¹¹⁰ Stephan P. Duggan. “The Balkan Adjustment.” *Political Science Quarterly*. Vol. 28, No.4. (Dec., 1913), p. 629.

¹¹¹ Owen Pearson. “Albania and King Zog: Independence, Republic, and Monarchy, 1908-1939” The Centre for Albanian Studies in association with I.B Tauris Publishers, p. 35.

that an autonomous and neutral Albania would be set up only under the sovereignty of the Sultan.¹¹² This decision was made despite the fact that Albania had declared its independence from the Ottoman Empire on November 28th, 1912 already.¹¹³ The negotiations over what territory this autonomous region would control then began and many different opinions circulated.

On July 29, 1913 the Conference of Ambassadors recognized Albania as an independent state and found a consensus on how the new state would be organized.¹¹⁴ Albania was to be independent and assigned a prince by the Great Powers. Thus, Albania finally achieved recognition by the international community as an independent state and not simply as an autonomous region. On March 26 the conference also agreed upon the northern and northeastern boundary of Albania. "In order to carry her point that Scutari must be Albania, Austria-Hungary agreed that the almost exclusively Albanian towns of Ipek, Djakova, Prizrend, and Dibra should go to the Serbs."¹¹⁵ However, representatives were still unable to define the southern boundary of the new country. Austria, Italy, and Greece (with French support) could not agree on a border in the north or (especially) in the south. The border delimitation of Albania was also delayed due to disagreements regarding whether Greece or Turkey

¹¹² Basil Kondis. "Greece and Albania, 1908-1914." Institute for Balkan Studies. Thessaloniki: 1976, p. 96.

¹¹³ Owen Pearson. "Albania and King Zog: Independence, Republic, and Monarchy, 1908-1939" The Centre for Albanian Studies in association with I.B Tauris Publishers, pp. 33-34.

¹¹⁴ Basil Kondis. "Greece and Albania, 1908-1914." Institute for Balkan Studies. Thessaloniki: 1976, p.107.

¹¹⁵ Stephan P. Duggan. "The Balkan Adjustment." *Political Science Quarterly*. Vol. 28, No.4. (Dec., 1913), p. 630.

would take possession of the Aegean islands as well. The populations of these islands were primarily Greek, but Turkey claimed Imbros, Tenedos, and Lemnos to defense reasons.¹¹⁶ The issues of the Albanian border with Greece and the Aegean islands would become linked during the negotiations to follow over the preceding years. The Aegean islands would become a tool to ensure Greek support of the eventual border modifications of Albanian territory.

In an attempt to investigate the identities of border populations between Albania and Greece in the south, on August 1, 1913 Sir Edward Grey proposed that an International Commission be sent to create a south and southeastern boundary of Albania.¹¹⁷ The six delegate International Commission composed of delegates from the Powers and lasting ten years, was included in the new Constitution passed on July 29, 1913 by the Conference of Ambassadors in London and included clauses such as the sovereignty and neutrality of Albania, the form of government being henceforth a principality appointed by the Powers, and an international gendarmerie presence.¹¹⁸

The International Commission began its investigation and correspondence September 30, 1913 and was asked to base its final decision on ethnographic and geographic principles.¹¹⁹ Ethnographic criteria refers to the language spoken

¹¹⁶ Stephan P. Duggan. "The Balkan Adjustment." *Political Science Quarterly*. Vol. 28, No.4. (Dec., 1913), p. 628.

¹¹⁷ Basil Kondis. "Greece and Albania, 1908-1914." Institute for Balkan Studies. Thessaloniki: 1976, p. 109.

¹¹⁸ Owen Pearson. "Albania and King Zog: Independence, Republic, and Monarchy, 1908-1939" The Centre for Albanian Studies in association with I.B Tauris Publishers, pp. 43-44.

in the home.¹²⁰ However, the International Commission encountered several difficulties with attempting to follow solely this criterion. The Commission formulated other general rules in order to maintain fairness. In a letter sent by Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Bertie the Minister outlines some general rules that the International Commission should follow so as to maintain fairness. These rules included the exclusion of all journalists and Albanian or Greek military and civil guides, and complete secrecy regarding the deliberations.¹²¹ Thus, the International Commission would conduct secret deliberations in an attempt to ascertain the national identity of villages in the border regions by finding the language spoken in local homes.

As soon as the International Commission began its investigation, notable differences arose between the Triple Alliance and Triple Entente representatives. As was the case in the Conference of Ambassadors in London, France and Russia pressed for the Greek claims to territory, while Austria, Italy, and Germany advocated for the Albanian cause and the largest possible territory for that state.¹²² Austria and Italy argued that the boundary should be drawn at least twelve kilometers south of the town of Argyrocastro. In support of this claim they

¹¹⁹ International Commission Correspondence. "Part I: Correspondence Respecting the Affairs of Albania: October to December 1913" No.1. p. 1. Letter from Mr. Crackanthorpe to Sir Edward Grey. September 30, 1913. Accessed at the British National Archives, Kew.

¹²⁰ International Commission Correspondence. "Part I: Correspondence Respecting the Affairs of Albania: October to December 1913." No. 181. p.92. Sir Edward Grey to Mr Dering. October 29, 1913. Accessed at the British National Archives, Kew.

¹²¹ International Commission Correspondence. "Part I: Correspondence Respecting the Affairs of Albania: October to December 1913." No. 73. pp. 37-38. Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Bertie. October 14, 1913. Accessed at British National Archives, Kew.

¹²² Owen Pearson. "Albania and King Zog: Independence, Republic, and Monarchy, 1908-1939" The Centre for Albanian Studies in association with I.B Tauris Publishers, p. 45.

reasoned that, “the coastal region already granted to Albania would be too narrow if the valley of Argyrocastro were to be given to another country; secondly that the road from Argyrocastro to Delvino must remain within Albania, and thirdly that Argyrocastro was the industrial center for the territory, and Santa Quaranta the port which the entire country communicated with the outside world.”¹²³

Thus, economic reasons for the border delimitation were of primary importance, not the will of the local populations to live under one state or the other. The wishes of the international community were also placed above the national compositions of the local towns as well. Thus, not only the national identity of the majority of the population of each town was taken into account when delimiting the border but also economic concerns and the demands of the Great Powers and neighboring states.

However, the International Commission still attempted to locate whether the majority population of each town in the border region was either Albanian or Greek. As noted previously, the criterion for identifying nationality was the language spoken in the home. The International Commission encountered some difficulties with this method. For example, often the older generation of a given town spoke Albanian while the younger spoke only Greek.¹²⁴ Often inhabitants were bilingual and spoke both Albanian and Greek in the home as well. In a letter written from Lieutenant-Colonel Doughty-Wylie to Sir Edward Grey from Kolonia

¹²³Kondis, Basil. “Greece and Albania, 1908-1914.” Institute for Balkan Studies. Thessaloniki: 1976, p.117.

¹²⁴ International Commission Correspondence. “Part I: Correspondence Respecting the Affairs of Albania: October to December 1913.” No. 202. pp. 99-101. Lieutenant-Colonel Doughty-Wylie to Sir Edward Grey. October 26, 1913. Accessed at British National Archives, Kew.

on October 26, 1913 he explains that the goal of the commission; “to establish an ethnographic and geographic base for a frontier, and, for the ethnographic part of it, to take as a guide the language spoken in the families,” was an inadequate way to delaminate a border. He continues by stating, “The general result is that it is entirely impossible to establish nationality on this basis.”¹²⁵

Another problem contributing to the difficulty of using language as the determining factor of nationality was that, for a period of time, Christian households were being closed from the International Commission. In correspondence from Lieutenant-Colonel Doughty-Wylie to Sir Edward Grey from Colonia on Oct. 26, 1913 the Lieutenant explains that the Commission was at a standstill because the “Conditions laid down in London have been impossible to follow. Languages of families have been concealed from us by the closing of all Christian houses and various preparations.”¹²⁶ Thus, the International Commission could not visit homes in an attempt to investigate the language spoken by family members.

In the proceeding correspondence International Commission members, and Sir Edward Grey, attempted to understand why these many Christian households were being closed. Consul-General Lamb thought that this was due to the bullying of Albanian households by Greek members of the community for

¹²⁵ International Commission Correspondence. “Part I: Correspondence Respecting the Affairs of Albania: October to December 1913.” No. 202. pp. 99. Lieutenant-Colonel Doughty-Wylie to Sir Edward Grey. October 26, 1913. Accessed at British National Archives, Kew.

¹²⁶ International Commission Correspondence. “Part I: Correspondence Respecting the Affairs of Albania: October to December 1913.” No. 162. p.93. Lieutenant-Colonel Doughty-Wylie to Sir Edward Grey. Oct. 26, 1913. Accessed at British National Archives, Kew.

fear that they would identify themselves as Albanian.¹²⁷ Lieutenant-Colonel Doughty-Wylie mentioned the possibility is that these homes were closed in an attempt to conceal Christian households with Moslem, Albanian-speaking mothers.¹²⁸ Intermarriage between Christian men and Moslem women was common in these border regions. Thus the Greek and Albanian populations were somewhat integrated in some of these border towns making it very difficult, if not impossible, for International Commission members to distinguish which community members were Albanian and which were Greek as both languages were often spoken within families or simply because the home was closed.

Thus, the Greek government continued to complain that language was not a reliable criterion for determining the national character of a population and that, instead, national consciousness should serve for the basis of identifying the nationality of populations.¹²⁹ This is an unsurprising request as the Greeks were probably aware that national consciousness was new and fragmented, un-unified, or simply inexistent in Albania, especially in border regions. In a letter from the Acting Consul-General Morgan to Sir L. Mallet from Salonica on Oct. 29th 1913 he explains that perhaps religion could be used as the basis for nationality. "It can almost be taken as certain, however, that, even though

¹²⁷ International Commission Correspondence. "Part I: Correspondence Respecting the Affairs of Albania: October to December 1913" No. 182. p. 92. Consul-General Lamb to Sir Edward Grey. October 26, 1913. Accessed at British National Archives, Kew.

¹²⁸ International Commission Correspondence. "Part I: Correspondence Respecting the Affairs of Albania: October to December 1913" No. 193. pp. 96-97. Lieutenant-Colonel Doughty-Wylie to Sir Edward Grey. October 30, 1913. Accessed at British National Archives, Kew.

¹²⁹ Owen Pearson. "Albania and King Zog: Independence, Republic, and Monarchy, 1908-1939" The Centre for Albanian Studies in association with I.B Tauris Publishers, p. 39.

speaking Albanian in the home, none of the members of any Christian family desire to change Greek for Albanian rule. The cleavage between Christian and Moslem in this country cannot be bridged in the present case by the bonds of nationality. Christian and Moslem in Epirus may both be of Albanian origin, but no Christian will desire to pass from a Christian government under a government composed in the majority of Moslems. It would be simpler to take as an axiom that all Christian villages in the zone under examination sincerely desire union to Greece..."¹³⁰ Thus, language was an insufficient determinant, national consciousness as a criterion was perhaps one sided, and religion un-useful as the argument was invalid because there was a Christian population within northern Albania.

Due to the problems encountered with using language as the primary criterion for identifying nationality, as well as continuing pressure from the Greek government, the British delegate to the International Commission telegraphed Sir Edward Grey asking what representatives should do as the language test was ineffective. Sir Edward Grey recommended that instead of using language as a determinant of nationality, Commission members attempt to learn what they could about Albanian nationality by looking at the rest of the nation along with Albania's economic, strategic, and geographic features.¹³¹ The Commission

¹³⁰ International Commission Correspondence. "Part I: Correspondence Respecting the Affairs of Albania: October to December 1913" No. 271. pp. 139-141. Acting Consul-General Morgan to Sir L. Mallet. October 29, 1913. Accessed at British National Archives, Kew.

¹³¹ International Commission Correspondence. "Part I: Correspondence Respecting the Affairs of Albania: October to December 1913" No.247. p. 128. Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Berti. November 7, 1913. Accessed at British National Archives, Kew.

agreed.¹³² However, this task was never completed as a border proposal was sent December 12, 1913.

The International Commission, while in Leskoviki, sent a proposal to the British Foreign Ministry that would create, a somewhat arbitrary line which left almost all of the disputed territory to Albania. The proposed frontier would, "...follow a specified line from Grammos mountains westward. Greek and Moslem populations of certain districts should specifically migrate across the frontier, receiving compensation; and Vlachs should be Greek."¹³³ Thus, a border was proposed that ignored the national identities of local populations, as these identities could not be identified by the International Commission. The Italian and Austrian members agreed with the proposal. The Greek government, however, disagreed with the boundary proposed. Venizelos warned that many Greeks would be forced into Albania and would eventually rebel against the government as they would not want to live under a state governed by a majority of Moslem leaders.¹³⁴

Instead of hopelessly advocating against the proposal, he instead submitted a memorandum to the Great Powers on Dec. 12, 1913 advocating for

¹³² Kondis, Basil. "Greece and Albania, 1908-1914." Institute for Balkan Studies. Thessaloniki: 1976, p. 118.

¹³³ International Commission Correspondence. "Part I: Correspondence Respecting the Affairs of Albania: October to December 1913" No. 264. p.136. Mr. O'Beirne to Sir Edward Grey. November 9, 1913. Accessed at British National Archives, Kew.

¹³⁴ International Commission Correspondence. "Part I: Correspondence Respecting the Affairs of Albania: October to December 1913" No. 367. pp. 187-188. Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Elliot. November 25, 1913. Accessed at British National Archives, Kew.

the acquirement of Aegean islands by Greece.¹³⁵ Sir Edward Grey agreed that the Aegean islands should go to Greece, excluding the islands of Tenedos and Imbros, but only if Greece would be cooperative with the border delimitation proposed.

Having reached a decision the International Commission traveled to Florence to create maps illustrating the new border. This border was included in the Protocol of Florence on December 17, 1913.¹³⁶ According to the new border, "...Delvino, Chimara, Santi Quaranta, Tepeleni, Premeti, Cape Stylos, and both Korcha and Argyrocastro, two focal points of the disputed territory were to go to Albania."¹³⁷ On Feb. 13, 1914 the Great Powers agreed that Greece would receive the Aegean islands, excluding Tenedos, Imbros, and Casteloritzo only after it had evacuated its troops from Albanian territory.

"In the south (Northern Epirus) a compromise, better Greek interests on the one hand and Italo-Austrian, Albanian interests on the other, was reached with the Aegean islands used as compensation for the loss of much of Northern Epirus."¹³⁸ Thus the interests of the local populations were of second importance when compared to the goals and policies of the Great Powers. Further proof of this sacrifice of the wishes of local populations can be found in a speech

¹³⁵ International Commission Correspondence. "Part I: Correspondence Respecting the Affairs of Albania: October to December 1913," No.496. pp. 264-266. Sir F. Elliot to Sir Edward Grey. December 10, 1913. Accessed at British National Archives, Kew.

¹³⁶ Owen Pearson. "Albania and King Zog: Independence, Republic, and Monarchy, 1908-1939" The Centre for Albanian Studies in association with I.B Tauris Publishers, p.53.

¹³⁷ Kondis, Basil. "Greece and Albania, 1908-1914." Institute for Balkan Studies. Thessaloniki: 1976, p.120.

¹³⁸ Kondis, Basil. "Greece and Albania, 1908-1914." Institute for Balkan Studies. Thessaloniki: 1976, p.111.

delivered to the House of Commons as early as August 12, 1913 when Sir Edward Grey explained,

I am quite aware that when the whole comes to be stated it will be open on many points to a great deal of criticism from anyone with local knowledge who looks at it purely on the merits of the locality itself. It is to be borne in mind that in making the agreement the primary essential was to preserve agreement between the Great Powers themselves, and if the agreement about Albania has secured that it has done the work which is most essential in the interests of the peace of Europe.¹³⁹

Thus, in the end, because the International Commission could not identify which cities had majority Albanian or Greek populations, they more or less arbitrarily drew a border between Greece and Albania. This end result of the International Commission, as well as their evident difficulty in creating relevant criterion for identifying Albanians, reveals that perhaps a clear Albanian national identity did not exist in these border regions. Both language and religion could not be used to identify Albanian nationals. The lack of identity in the southern border regions is not the only indicator of a lack of a clear national Albanian identity at this time however. A lack of political unity, tension between religious groups, and a movement to return to the Ottoman Empire are also further evidence as to the lack of national identity and unity within the population. This will be examined in the following chapter.

¹³⁹ Owen Pearson. "Albania and King Zog: Independence, Republic, and Monarchy, 1908-1939" The Centre for Albanian Studies in association with I.B Tauris Publishers, pp.45-46.

4.2 Absence of Political Unity as Evidence of Fragmented National Identity or a Lack of National Identity

The political disunity and presence of various movements advocating for changes such as a return to the Ottoman Empire or the formation of a new Epirote State in Southern Albania reveal the fragmentation of Albanian national identity. Throughout the new country local leaders, such as Ismail Kemal and Essad Pasha Toptani, as well as their supporters, had very different views of what Albania should become politically. Thus, each of these leaders, as well as their followers, had differing views on how the country should look and who Albanians would become. The presence of great political fragmentation, with each movement's corresponding different political values, as well as the desire to create a new Epirote state is evidence of a lack of unified Albanian national identity.

With regard to the political situation in Albania, by the summer of 1913 the country was still in a state of relative anarchy. The authority of the provisional government formed by Ismail Kemal in Valona continued to extend only to the *kazas* of the *sanjack* of Berat. Thus, only a small population recognized and were

controlled by this provisional government.¹⁴⁰ The authority of the provisional government was blocked by Essad Pasha Toptani who, after the surrender of the town of Scutari, had marched to Tirana and Durazzo with a large armed force and was able to take control of most of central Albania.¹⁴¹ Thus, both Kemal and Essad, as well as their supporters, were in direct opposition for control of each others spheres of influence as each leader influenced territories outside of each others reach.

Essad was a powerful political force within Albania as he held the support of many Moslem Albanians, especially in the north. Within the International Commission reports there is mention that Essad also possibly began movements advocating for a return to Ottoman rule within Albania or the establishing of a Moslem prince under Suzerainty of the Sultan.¹⁴² The development of this movement will be discussed in more detail later and will serve as an example of religious-based political division between the Christian and Moslem populations. Regardless of the rumored involvement of Essad in the creation of this movement his eventual goal was to overthrow Kemal's provisional government established in Valona. Essad attempted to sabotage the government of Valona by accusing it of being controlled by Italy and Austria. In an attempt to pacify Essad, Ismail Kemal offered him the position of Ministry of Interior, which

¹⁴⁰ International Commission Report. "Part I: Correspondence Respecting the Affairs of Albania: October to December 1913." No. 81. p.41. Consul-General Lamb to Sir Edward Grey. Oct. 16, 1913. Accessed at British National Archives, Kew.

¹⁴¹ Owen Pearson. "Albania and King Zog: Independence, Republic, and Monarchy, 1908-1939" The Centre for Albanian Studies in association with I.B Tauris Publishers, p.44.

¹⁴² International Commission Correspondence. "Part I: Correspondence Respecting the Affairs of Albania: October to December 1913." No. 262. p. 99. Mr. Lamb to Sir Edward Grey. May 25, 1914. Accessed at British National Archives, Kew.

he accepted. This helped lessen the tension between the two leaders and their corresponding supporters, but only for a short time, as Essad remained a powerful leader within central Albania.

The political tensions between Kemal and Essad were not the only ones, however. As of August 1913, other authorities had risen to power in various regions of the country. Scutari continued to be administered by the International Commission (which had taken control in May), Catholic Malissori tribes controlled the Montenegrin border and followed their tribal chiefs or religious authorities, and Moslem tribes near Pike, Dakota and Prizren, refused to officially accept the authority of the provisional government of Ismail Kemal.¹⁴³ It is also important to note that the different tribes were separate entities and were not unified. Thus, there was still widespread political disunity within Albania as local populations identified themselves with local, tribal, or religious leaders rather than any national leader or government. Thus local allegiances, based upon the recognized local identity, replaced any national identity and allegiance to any national leader or government.

By October 12, 1913 the political situation became even further complicated as Essad Pasha Toptani established a new government at Durazzo called the Senate of Central Albania and sent a memorandum to the Great Powers pressuring them to choose the new leader of Albania.¹⁴⁴ In a letter

¹⁴³Kondis, Basil. "Greece and Albania, 1908-1914." Institute for Balkan Studies. Thessaloniki: 1976, p.113.

¹⁴⁴Owen Pearson. "Albania and King Zog: Independence, Republic, and Monarchy, 1908-1939" The Centre for Albanian Studies in association with I.B Tauris Publishers, pp.46-47.

written by Colonel Granet to Sir Edward Grey sent from Tirana on October 15, 1913 and received on October 23rd, the Colonel explained how in a visit to Durazzo four Commission members met with local notables including Fazil Pasha Topkhanie and Faik Bey Kanitza and planned to meet with Essad Pasha. On the way to meet Essad Pasha Faik Bey Kanitza explained to the Commission that Essad Pasha had “disavowed the provisional government of Ismail Kemal Bey at Vallona, and had formed a Senate, of which he had nominated himself president.”¹⁴⁵

Thus, as of October 1913, Albania had two governments claiming control over the country, one in Valona and one in Durazzo as well as many other groups refusing to owe allegiance to either government. Thus, one must stop and ask, what does the existence of two governments, both claiming to be the official representative government of Albania, reveal about the status of Albanian national identity? The followers of both of these leaders gave their allegiance because, either they identified with that leader because he was from their region and he was familiar or they identified with his political values. If supporters gave allegiance to a ‘national’ leader simply because he was from their locality, then they likely felt that their loyalty was warranted because he was ‘one of their own.’ Thus, Kemal or Essad’s supporters perhaps personally identified with their leader. Thus loyalty came from a feeling of ‘being the same;’ of sharing the same identity. The second possibility for identifying with a certain political leader was

¹⁴⁵ International Commission Correspondence. “Part I: Correspondence Respecting the Affairs of Albania: October to December 1913.” No. 141. pp. 69-71. Colonel Granet to Sir Edward Grey. October 15, 1913. Accessed at British National Archives, Kew.

perhaps agreeing with his political values; how he wanted the state to develop politically, for example. Kemal was very loyal to the advice of the International Commission. He agreed with their general plan for Albania and the idea of having a Christian prince for the state. Essad disagreed. It seems as though Essad wanted a Moslem prince to be crowned, rather than a Christian prince. And so perhaps the political fragmentation in Albania was due to different visions for the future. What is evident, thus, is that both Essad and Kemal's supporters had different and opposing ideas of what Albania should become. And if one aspect of unified national identity is envisioning a similar goal for the nation, this aspect was very lacking. The political fragmentation would continue to multiply in 1914, but this time, the political movement would assume national aspirations.

The political situation in Albania became even more fragmented in March of 1914 when a new state was created in Northern Epirus. After Greek troops had left the newly acquired Albanian territory, in accordance with the Florence agreement, a pro-Greek party in the south declared the autonomous Republic of Northern Epirus.¹⁴⁶ The flag created for the new state reveals the combination of Greek and Albanian national symbols. The Epirote flag used the colors of the Greek flag, blue and white, but was surmounted by the double-headed black eagle, a symbol of Albanian nationalism.¹⁴⁷ By May 1914, under the leadership of George Zographos, the Greek Epirotes, at a meeting held in Corcyra, succeeded

¹⁴⁶ Owen Pearson. "Albania and King Zog: Independence, Republic, and Monarchy, 1908-1939" The Centre for Albanian Studies in association with I.B Tauris Publishers, pp. 62-63.

¹⁴⁷ T.J Winniffrith. "Badlands--Borderlands: A History of Northern Epirus/Southern Albania." Gerald Duckworth and Co. Ltd. Great Britian:2002, p. 130.

in receiving the recognition of Prince William of Wied (the newly appointed, and very unpopular, prince of Albania) and the great powers. They agreed that Northern Epirus would be an autonomous region with full self-government under the suzerainty of Prince William of Wied.

However in correspondence sent by Consul-General Lamb to Sir Edward Grey from Vallona on March 29th, 1914 explained the problems related to the government created in Northern Epirus. Firstly, he argues that the future existence of Albania required the re-integration of its southern territories and secondly the movement was very fragmented and would likely not survive for very long.¹⁴⁸

By September of 1914 the Corcyra agreement was clearly worthless, as Prince William of Wied was no longer in power in Albania (as his unpopularity resulted in his abdication), and the great powers had abrogated responsibility by declaring war on each other.¹⁴⁹ Thus, the Republic of Epirus lasted a very short time as in October Greek troops moved in and annexed the territory. There was little resistance from the Epirotes. The case of Northern Epirus is further evidence as to the lack of political unity within Albania.

The Epirote movement, and state, reveals not only the political fragmentation of the Albanian population but also the brief existence of another national identity within Albanian territory. The new flag of the state blatantly demonstrates the

¹⁴⁸ International Commission Correspondence. "Part III: Correspondence Respecting the Affairs of Albania: April to June 1914." No. 6. pp.4-5. Consul-General Lamb to Sir Edward Grey. March 29, 1914. Accessed at British National Archives, Kew.

¹⁴⁹T.J Winnifrith. "Badlands--Borderlands: A History of Northern Epirus/Southern Albania." Gerald Duckworth and Co. Ltd. Great Britain:2002, p.130.

mixing of Albanian and Greek culture and national symbolism to create another national identity, another nation, within Albania's borders. If any evidence could reveal the lack of strong and unified Albanian national identity it would have to be the existence of a second, and opposing national identity within a state's borders. Although the state did not last, because it lost the support of Prince Wied and the Powers, its short existence is a clear indicator of the great disunity within Albania. Another, and final, example of political fragmentation mentioned in the Commission reports is the development of a movement advocating for re-unification with the Ottoman Empire.

Here is yet another example of the political fragmentation within Albania during 1913-1914. This movement developed in protest to all of the change occurring in Albania. This group of people either wanted a return to the time prior to Albanian independence or they desired to re-unify with the Ottoman Empire because they recognized themselves as perhaps more Ottoman, than Albanian. In correspondence by Mr. Lamb to Sir Edward Grey from Durazzo on May 25th, 1914 he begins by explaining the expulsion of Prince William of Wied and then details the demands of Albanians within this popular and spreading movement. Mr. Lamb explained in some detail the course of the movement, the demands of movement leaders, and the reactions of the International Commission. Mr. Lamb estimated that three or four thousand Albanians, principally from the *kazas* of Shiak, Cavaya, and Tirana, were arming and organizing themselves behind this movement. The movement participants demanded direct communication with the International Commission. Mr. Lamb noted in this correspondence that the

movement, "...appeared to be partly religious and partly anti-feudal."¹⁵⁰ International Commission members met with movement leaders in an attempt to discover their demands and reach some sort of understanding. The people of the movement explained that they wanted *ilm-l-din* or religious instruction, justice, and the departure of the beys. Furthermore, they complained that the government was unjust.¹⁵¹ The International Commission members encountered some difficulty in understanding their demands, as so they postponed further discussion with movement leaders.

The next day fighting broke out in the town of Shiak and proceeded to Durazzo. Prince William of Wied and his family fled Durazzo and boarded a ship, the 'Misurata' for fear that the movement fighters would take the town. The next morning movement leaders requested to meet with the International Commission again so that they could once again hear their demands. The International Commission representatives still present in Durazzo set out for Shiak, the center of the movement, where they discovered, "... assembled round government buildings, over which was hoisted a Turkish flag, some 500 men, of whom about half were armed..."¹⁵² Their demands were, "Greater extension of religious instruction, restoration of Ottoman rule, and if that were impossible, European

¹⁵⁰ International Commission Correspondence. "Part I: Correspondence Respecting the Affairs of Albania: October to December 1913." No. 202. pp. 99-101. Mr. Lamb to Sir Edward Grey. Accessed at British National Archives, Kew.

¹⁵¹ International Commission Correspondence. "Part I: Correspondence Respecting the Affairs of Albania: October to December 1913." No. 202. p. 101. Mr. Lamb to Sir Edward Grey. Accessed at British National Archives, Kew.

¹⁵² International Commission Correspondence. "Part I: Correspondence Respecting the Affairs of Albania: October to December 1913." No. 202. p. 102. Mr. Lamb to Sir Edward Grey. Accessed at British National Archives, Kew.

rule.”¹⁵³ It is important to note that “European rule” does not pertain to the rule of Albania by a European state, but, means instead somehow a “European” form of government administration. What is meant by the phrase a “European form of government” is not of primary importance here.

Now, what can we take from the movement described above, their demands, and the events described? These events reveal a lack of Albanian nationalism and national consciousness. Members of this movement, and the Epirus state as well, were less interested in an Albanian national identity, and more interested in living their lives and keeping the status quo. With regard to the religious demands; the people argue that secular teachers were paid more than teachers from the Muslim religious schools. They were particularly upset that their children were being taken out of religious schools and being placed in the newer national schools. This is another interesting point as it reveals that the people were far more connected to their religious identity than their national one. After three hours of discussion many movement participants were satisfied with the negotiations realizing that Ottoman rule was impossible and the European-style rule was being implemented by the International Commission as quickly as possible. Mr. Lamb assumes that this movement began with propaganda begun by Essad Pasha nearly a year before advocating for a Muslim prince of Albania. Although he supposedly stopped advocating for this after swearing allegiance to

¹⁵³ International Commission Correspondence. “Part I: Correspondence Respecting the Affairs of Albania: October to December 1913.” No. 202. p. 102. Mr. Lamb to Sir Edward Grey. Accessed at British National Archives, Kew.

Prince William of Wied, the damage had already been done and the movement had already begun to spread.

The most important point of the demands of those involved in this movement is that Albanians were unhappy with the current political climate, and possibly even with the Albanian state, and demanded a change. As evident from the movement's flag, this demand seemed to be a desire to somehow return to before 1912 (independence). Thus, this movement, which continued to grow in numbers, argued against having an independent Albanian state. And so, how could members of this movement have possessed a strong Albanian national identity or national consciousness if they did not want an independent state?

So, what then does a lack of political unity reveal about national identity? Perhaps widespread political fragmentation is evidence of a lack of unified national identity? To give allegiance to a political organization or government perhaps requires some sort of self-identification with that organization or government. The people supporting the government must be able to identify that government as their own and be connected to not only their local community and local leadership, or religion, but also to themselves. Thus political unity is evidence of a strong national identity. Because Albania was so very politically fragmented between 1913 and 1914, perhaps it did not yet have a state-wide strong national identity. These events illustrate how divided the Albanian people themselves were as of the country's independence in 1912 and the years following. Only a few years after independence, Albanians were breaking away in

the north and the south, clear evidence of a lack of national identity as of the early 20th century.

5. The Communist Rise to Power and Attempt to Promote a National Communist Identity

This chapter will show how and why the communists created a nation-building process in a state that had already been in existence since 1912. Looking back; in chapters two and three, key moments in the state building and, uncompleted, nation-building process were illustrated. In chapter four the International Commission gave still further evidence as to the lack of political or cultural unity within Albania shortly after the state came into existence. This chapter, broken up into two subchapters, will look at key moments and programs of the communist era. The following subchapter will illustrate the communist rise to power in Albania, to give some background into how they rose to power and why they were initially more popular than the competing nationalist political party. The second sub-chapter will then outline some of the Party's policies to show how the communists continued the nation-building process that had never been fully completed.

5.1 The Communist Assent to Power and the Nation-Building Process

Before examining how the Communist Party created and popularized an Albanian national communist identity it is first important to explore under what circumstances and using what tactics the Party was able to gain power within Albania. The rise of the Communist Party, also known as the National Liberation Front, was due to three stimuli: firstly, the repressive dictatorship of King Zog, secondly, the progressing encroachment of the Fascist Italians within Albanian administration, economy, and even military between 1926 through 1941, and thirdly, the invasion of Albania by Nazis Germany during World War Two. The communist movement arose as a reaction to these three factors. These three factors also account for the early popularity of the communist party in Albania.¹⁵⁴

After the restrictive regime of King Zog, Albanians seemed to want to pursue a more democratic or socialist government based on nationalism and not the “personality cult” associated with more totalitarian regimes. The Communist Party, especially, owes much of its early success through its ability to present itself not as a “communist revolution,” but as a national liberating movement from the oppressive three factors mentioned previously. The communists argued that the foreign occupiers, and current leadership of the time, were weighing down and holding back the Albanian people from progress as a nation. Although The National Liberation Front claimed to be a nationalist Albanian party they were,

¹⁵⁴ Miranda Vickers. “The Albanians: A Modern History.” I.B Tauris & Co. Ltd. 1995:London p.141

however, first and foremost a communist party. They blended communist and nationalist ideologies in an attempt to garner mass support.

Purely nationalist groups did exist in Albania during the early 1940s. For example, the National Front or Bali Kombetar, founded by Midhat Frasherri, organized both active and passive resistance against the Italian “occupiers” of 1939-1941.¹⁵⁵ The National Front had as its primary goal the creation of a democratic government within Albania.¹⁵⁶ This group was initially less popular than the National Liberation Front because it was seen as a not radical enough response to the many dangers, both real and imagined, that were facing the nation.

Both of these political/paramilitary organizations were somewhat hidden, however, as King Zog’s restrictive regime outlawed politically non-sanctioned parties.¹⁵⁷ And given the respective nationalist and democratic or communist platforms of these parties they were naturally un-sanctioned by Zog’s regime.

These political organizations at times attempted to work together, but faced many difficulties in this task given the mistrust between them. This mistrust was due primarily to the differing goals of the two parties; one advocating the creation of democratic government, the other attempting to create a communist revolution within Albania. Although they had similar short-term goals; to expel the Italians

¹⁵⁵“Library of Congress. “Albania: A Country Study.” Library of Congress Cataloguing-in-Publication Data, 1994, p.35.

¹⁵⁶ Miranda Vickers. “The Albanians: A Modern History.” I.B Tauris & Co. Ltd. 1995:London, p.147.

¹⁵⁷ “Library of Congress. “Albania: A Country Study.” Library of Congress Cataloguing-in-Publication Data. 1994, pp. 31-32.

and Germans from Albania and end King Zog's repressive regime, they also envisioned a very different future for the country.

Due to the existence of different long-term goals the two parties greatly mistrusted each other. The National Front feared that the Communist party, the National Liberation Front, would unite with other international communist movements and would rely on the protection of other communist countries once the eventual communist government of Albania was eventually in place. In response to these fears, The National Front argued that their movement was the only truly nationalist one. On the other hand the Communists feared that, to save the nation from invaders, the National Front would make too many concessions, especially to the Fascist Italians. This fear is possibly founded as it seems that National Front leaders might have worked alongside the Italians when they occupied Albania in the 1920s and 30s. In correspondence from the Office of the British Representative at Bari of the Resident Minister Central Mediterranean on 7, February 1945 mentioned the possibility that Bali Kombetar (National Front) leaders were "in touch" with Italian authorities, but the relationship between Bali Kombetar (National Front) and Italy was difficult to connect.¹⁵⁸ The National Liberation Front, and eventually the communist regime, within Albania would rely on the economic assistance provided by other communist nations, especially the Soviet Union and China. And so the concerns of the National Front were not at all unrealistic either.

¹⁵⁸ Letter sent from Mr. Klissura and the Resident Central Mediterranean at Bari to Mr. Broad Caserta (British Foreign Ministry), sent February 7, 1945, dated 13 February, 1945. No. 42. Regarding Bali Kombetar and other nationalist organizations during King Zog's reign. Accessed at British National Archives, Kew.

Despite the many ideological differences, eventually the two parties were able to briefly unite, at a conference held in Makaj on August 2, 1943.¹⁵⁹ The primary purpose of this conference was to discuss the future of Kosova, which in 1941 had been annexed by the Italians and reintegrated into Albania. Initially the National Front wanted to maintain its right to integrate the territory of Kosova into Albania, while the communist National Liberation Front strongly disagreed with this proposal. Eventually the decision was postponed and the delegates present from the two parties decided to unite into one political organization named the Committee of National Salvation. This alliance between the two parties, however, did not last as the leadership of the Communist party disagreed with the decision to postpone talks regarding Kosova. The National Liberation Front had loyalties to the Yugoslav communists, and thus wanted to return Kosova to Yugoslavia.

The German military occupation of Albania, in July of 1943, only further revealed the true non-existence of this alliance between the two parties and unity of action within the population. In the north, "...Albania remained but was left entirely inert or in collaboration with the Germans..."¹⁶⁰ Chaos ensued as communists fought against Germans, National Front members against communists and Germans, with different members even switching sides when identifying which enemy seemed more threatening at any given time.¹⁶¹ In this

¹⁵⁹ "Library of Congress. "Albania: A Country Study." Library of Congress Cataloguing-in-Publication Data. 1994, pp. 35-36.

¹⁶⁰ Correspondence from M. Romanos, Greek Embassy to British Foreign Ministry. Dated 14 July, 1945. No. 5018. Quotes statement said to have been made by Mr. Jacobs head of American Mission to Tirana. Regarding Albania's part in the WWII. Accessed at British National Archives, Kew.

environment of chaos the National Front was more and more unable to maintain its organization.¹⁶² On the contrary, the National Liberation Front continued its propaganda machine; even over Allied radio frequency. The propaganda shifted, and targeted the National Front as a traitor to Albanians, who joined the German occupiers. There is some truth to this claim, however, as some National Front members did fight on the side of the Germans against the communists.

The National Liberation Front was able to maintain its organization and survive German occupation despite little Allied assistance and no Allied forces within the country's borders.¹⁶³ Thus, when the German forces retreated following the war, a power vacuum remained. The National Liberation Party, and the communists, were the strongest, most united, group to fill this vacuum and create a new state within Albania. On November 29, 1944 the communist regime, headed by Prime Minister Enver Hoxha, was created in Tirana.¹⁶⁴ The new government then quickly acted to dispose of all political opposition, especially members of the National Front who had not yet fled the country. The second early goal of the regime was to create a "democratic appearance" in order to receive legitimacy domestically and internationally. Hoxha changed the title of his party, and regime, to the Democratic Front, created a People's Assembly, held

¹⁶¹ "Library of Congress. "Albania: A Country Study." Library of Congress Cataloguing-in-Publication Data. 1994, p.33.

¹⁶² Miranda Vickers. "The Albanians: A Modern History." I.B Tauris & Co. Ltd. 1995:London, p.153.

¹⁶³ "Library of Congress. "Albania: A Country Study." Library of Congress Cataloguing-in-Publication Data. 1994, p.37.

¹⁶⁴ Miranda Vickers. "The Albanians: A Modern History." I.B Tauris & Co. Ltd. 1995:London, p.163.

elections on December 2, 1945, and declared Albania a Popular Democratic Republic all in an effort to achieve this legitimacy.¹⁶⁵ The United States and Britain formally recognized Enver Hoxha's Regime in Albania in 1945 and only asked that Hoxha maintain the earlier treaties created prior to the existence of the new communist government.¹⁶⁶

By exploring the history and context of the communist revolution in Albania one can discover its distinctly nationalist style. The National Front, or communist party, within Albania recognized the lack of a national Albanian identity and capitalized on the opportunity to create one; an identity that was both communist and nationalist.¹⁶⁷ This nationalistic style accounts for the popularity of communism during the communist revolution within Albania. Nationalism was popularized due to the political climate of the period before and during World War Two due to the strong Italian, and then German, presence in the Albanian government and economy. Thus, nationalism and communism were combined, and integrated into a new Albanian communist ideology.

¹⁶⁵ "Library of Congress. "Albania: A Country Study." Library of Congress Cataloguing-in-Publication Data. 1994, p.39.

¹⁶⁶ "Library of Congress. "Albania: A Country Study." Library of Congress Cataloguing-in-Publication Data. 1994, pp.36-37.

¹⁶⁷ James S. O'Donnell. "A Coming of Age Albania Under Enver Hoxha." East European Monographs. Moulder: 1999, p. 139.

5.2 The Communist Attempt to Lessen Differences and Promote a Communist, As Well As Nationalist, Identity

This chapter will demonstrate how the communist leadership, during the period of 1944-1967, were able to continue the nation-building project by building and popularizing national identity through social policies and, in particular, the institution of obligatory mass-education. It will show how the communists revived nationalist fervor whilst eliminating previous obstacles to the formation of an imagined Albanian communist identity and was able to unite Albanians by creating common core traditions and one national culture that had not existed before. How did the communists achieve what the Prizren League, King Wied, President and then King/Dictator Zogu, and the Italian occupation government, were never able to accomplish? The answer is a complicated one. The communists both eliminated obstacles whilst creating a new Albanian identity through education and mass propaganda.

In December 1944 the communist Democratic Front (before known as the National Liberation Front), headed by Prime Minister Enver Hoxha, assumed the role of provisional government adopting laws which enabled the state to regulate foreign and domestic trade, nationalize transportation, as well as confiscate property belonging to so called 'enemies of the state' and 'war criminals.'¹⁶⁸ These enemies were primarily political opponents, however, many of whom

¹⁶⁸ "Library of Congress. "Albania: A Country Study." Library of Congress Cataloguing-in-Publication Data. 1994, p.39.

belonged to the competing political party, the National Front.¹⁶⁹ Soon after assuming power Enver Hoxha, "...had a clear grasp of the importance of ideology, of a well-defined party line, as an instrument of discipline and a weapon in power struggles"¹⁷⁰ Hoxha, and the Party, would use the mass education program, anti-religion and isolationist policy, as well as social programs, to consolidate and hold onto power by forming an Albanian national communist identity. The details of these policies will be discussed further in the proceeding sub-chapters.

In December 1945 a Peoples Assembly was elected and the Democratic Front, (the communist party), was elected. The Assembly was to meet every four years, and one assembly member was to be elected for every 8000 people. Smaller local councils were to meet every three years. The People's Assembly met for the first time in January 1946 to declare Albania a people's republic. "After months of angry debate, the assembly adopted a constitution that mirrored the Yugoslav and Soviet constitutions."¹⁷¹

By looking at some of the policies of the Democratic Front and Enver Hoxha one can see how the communists were able to create and popularize an Albanian national identity. Mass compulsory education and mass literacy (for the first time in Albania's history), enabled the communist regime to reach portions of

¹⁶⁹ Dennis P. Hupchick. "The Balkans: From Constantinople to Communism," Palgrave Macmillian. New York: 2002. pp.375-376.

¹⁷⁰ James S. O'Donnell. "A Coming of Age Albania Under Enver Hoxha." East European Monographs. Moulder: 1999, p. 17.

¹⁷¹ "Library of Congress. "Albania: A Country Study." Library of Congress Cataloguing-in-Publication Data. 1994, p.39.

the population unreachable before.¹⁷² The use of media, newspapers, radio, and film, spread ideas of a unique communist, yet still nationalist, Albanian identity. Communist leadership looked into the past to create national identity, using traditional myths and legends. Figures such as Skanderbeg were glorified and became national heroes. The first Albanian full-length color feature film was dedicated to his life.

The regime also sought to rid the country of the barriers existing between people. One such perceived obstacle was the existence of three religions within the country. Thus, the communists began an anti-religion campaign that eventually resulted in the extinction of organized religion within Albania. The communists sought to unify the population behind the concept of communism and the nation; to popularize an Albanian national communist identity. The following sections will examine how the communist leadership was able to use mass compulsory education and the media to reach the population and popularize national identity while ridding the country of the real or perceived obstacles to unified communist and national identity, such as religion and traditional society.

Anti-Religion Campaign

The results of a religious census taken in 1945 revealed that 70 percent of the population identified themselves with Islam, 20 percent with the Orthodox

¹⁷² "Library of Congress. "Albania: A Country Study." Library of Congress Cataloguing-in-Publication Data. 1994, pp. 87-88.

faith, and the remaining 10 percent with Catholicism.¹⁷³ Thus, the religious divisions discussed previously, in the second chapter, were still relatively the same. The constitution ratified in 1944 granted religious freedom. Article 18 states that “All citizens are guaranteed freedom of opinion and belief...All religious communities are free in matters concerned with their faith as well as in its practice and outward expression.”¹⁷⁴ This was the rule, but it was not the reality. As the Party slowly consolidated its power, it also slowly began attacking religious institutions. The Party gradually passed more and more restrictive policies against religious institutions until they were eventually banned outright. The long-term plan to eradicate religion was twofold; first, atheist propaganda would be taught in the new mandatory state schools, and second, children would be motivated to inform on their parents if they practiced religion.¹⁷⁵ Thus, as the next generation grew to adulthood they would never come into contact with religion. Eventually religion would disappear.

The Party justified its anti-religious campaign by claiming that religion was to blame for the “backwardness” of the country, and that religion was brought into Albania by foreign occupying states and was an “...instrument of power over the people, an agent of division among them...” and, in essence, was un-Albanian.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷³ Miranda Vickers. “The Albanians: A Modern History.” I.B and Tauris Ltd. London: 1995, p. 178.

¹⁷⁴ James S. O'Donnell. “A Coming of Age Albania Under Enver Hoxha.” East European Monographs. Moulder: 1999, p. 137.

¹⁷⁵ James S. O'Donnell. “A Coming of Age Albania Under Enver Hoxha.” East European Monographs. Moulder: 1999, p. 141.

¹⁷⁶ Miranda Vickers. “The Albanians: A Modern History.” I.B and Tauris Ltd. London: 1995, p.50. and James S. O'Donnell. “A Coming of Age Albania Under Enver Hoxha.” East European Monographs. Moulder: 1999, p. 138.

Hoxha stated on numerous occasions that, “the religion of Albanians is Albanianism.”¹⁷⁷ This is a telling statement as it reveals the goal of the Hoxha and the Party to replace religion with not only communist ideology, but Albanian nationalism. By eliminating religion, and the (perhaps perceived) divisions created by the existence of three different religions, whilst filling that void with communist and nationalist rhetoric, the Party leadership sought to create a new Albanian identity.

Laws such as the Agrarian Reform Law of 1945 were not passed solely for the purpose of nationalizing private property, but also to confiscate land previously owned by religious institutions.¹⁷⁸ As of 1945, religious institutions could no longer own property within Albania. By controlling the land where religious institutions operated, the communist government could also greater control the actions of those institutions. Religious institutions were also forbidden to continue operating educational programs for children as the communist government took full responsibility for education in 1945 as well.

Due to the fear, or justification, based on a rule of no ‘outside influence,’ those religious institutions with bases of operation outside of Albania were ordered to stop functioning within the country. Roman Catholic clergy members, who were not Albanian nationals, were forcibly expelled from the country by

¹⁷⁷ James S. O'Donnell. “A Coming of Age Albania Under Enver Hoxha.” East European Monographs. Moulder: 1999, p. 139.

¹⁷⁸ “Library of Congress. “Albania: A Country Study.” Library of Congress Cataloguing-in-Publication Data. 1994, p.85.

1946. In 1946 the Jesuit Order was banned from Albania, the Franciscans were dissolved in 1947.

In 1949 laws restricting religion became progressively more harsh. On January 26, 1949 Decree No. 743, entitled, On Religion, stated that religious practice could in no way contradict the laws of the State and asked religious institutes with foreign offices to disassociate from them. On November 26, 1949 a mandate entitled, Decree on Religious Communities required all religious institutions to contact the government for its approval. The law read:

The religious communities or their branches which have their headquarters outside the state are not allowed to open branches (orders, missions, philanthropic institutions, etc.) and those which exist will be closed within a month from the date of the entrance of power of this law.¹⁷⁹

Through these laws, and others, the government sought to greater control the actions, and even the rhetoric, of religious institutions. The attack against organized religion, as of 1949, had become more open and outright.

However, even more radical policies were to come in the 1950s and 60s'. The communist leadership, especially Enver Hoxha, became progressively more vocal and open in their anti-religion policies and propaganda. Hoxha viewed religion, and the religious divisions within the country, as a dangerous opposing force to communism and a unified Albanian people.

¹⁷⁹ Miranda Vickers. "The Albanians: A Modern History." I.B. Tauris and Co. Ltd. London: 1995, p. 178.

During the 1950s and 1960s the communist regime sought to even greater weaken the role of religious institutions within Albania. By the late 1960s, due to the Party's anti-religion policies and closer cooperation, or at least influence off, Maoist China, anti-religious feeling, had reached its height. "The religious world outlook and the Communist world outlook were said to be irreconcilable..."¹⁸⁰ In May of 1967 a newspaper, the *Nendori*, reported that "the youth had thus 'created the first atheist nation in the world.'"¹⁸¹ This was the excited headline after the students, through Party mandate, re-claimed 2,169 religious sites and converted most of them into cultural centers.¹⁸² Few religious sites remained, and only due to their cultural significance. Whether or not the headline is factual and the forced closure or destruction of these 2000 plus religious sites was the work of random and simultaneously motivated students, is highly questionable. Regardless of where the movement originated, the move resulted in the closure of hundreds of religious sites and was a very public, and well publicized, attack against religion.

On November 13, 1967, only months after the May religious site closures, Decree No. 4337, was passed. This law officially cancelled the official status of religious institutions granted by the religious freedom clause of the 1946 Constitution. Thus, religious freedom was no longer "officially guaranteed" by the

¹⁸⁰ Miranda Vickers. "The Albanians: A Modern History." I.B. Tauris and Co. Ltd. London: 1995, p. 178, p.180.

¹⁸¹ "Library of Congress. "Albania: A Country Study." Library of Congress Cataloguing-in-Publication Data. 1994, p.86.

¹⁸² Miranda Vickers. "The Albanians: A Modern History." I.B. Tauris and Co. Ltd. London: 1995, p. 195.

state. On September 23, 1975 another law, Decree No. 5339, required citizens with names that are contrary to the official state ideology or are offensive, to change them.¹⁸³ This law was an attack on religion as it outlawed religious names. Decree No. 225 forbade geographic names from having religious origins.

Article 37 of the 1976 Constitution was the most radical of all the laws passed thus far. It declared outright that, “the State recognizes no religion whatever and supports atheist propaganda for the purpose of inculcating the scientific materialist world outlook in people.”¹⁸⁴ Thus, religion was Constitutionally forbade and, at least officially, Albania became an atheist state.

In the 1970s and 80s the Party continued its anti-religion policy despite already banning religion in 1976. As of March 27, 1981 the Peoples’ Assembly passed law no. 6300, based on Article 55 of the 1976 Constitution (agitation and propaganda against the people’s power), which specified even the condemnation of those people who created or conducted religious propaganda.¹⁸⁵ The penalty for religious propaganda was harsh, up to ten years prison time, or, during a time of war, the death penalty.

How successful were the anti-religion policies of the communist Party in Albania? And, if these policies were successful, did the absence of religion actually help the population to better unify behind a national communist Albanian identity? The policies of the Party, although harsh and brutal to the religious,

¹⁸³ James S. O’Donnell. “A Coming of Age Albania Under Enver Hoxha.” East European Monographs. Moulder: 1999, p. 144.

¹⁸⁴ James S. O’Donnell. “A Coming of Age Albania Under Enver Hoxha.” East European Monographs. Moulder: 1999, p. 143.

¹⁸⁵ Sherif Delvina. “Albania: The Country of Inter-Religious Harmony.” Eurorilindja Publishing House. Tirana: 2006, p. 40.

were a partial success. The goal of the communists was to eradicate religion altogether in Albania. They were somewhat successful. As of the late 1940s, institutional religion ceased to exist. And as of May 1967, even the symbols of organized religion, the churches, mosques, etc. were closed and destroyed. Even subtle reminders of organized religion, the names of people and places related to religious tradition, was outlawed in the mid-70s. Due to the previous decades of anti-religion policy and anti-religious rhetoric, the popularity of religious practice had to have been significantly diminished. An interesting pole taken from Albania in March and April of 1994 reveals that many people were aware of their religious background, but no longer practiced any religion. Atheism had grown in popularity; of the 12 that named atheism as their religious background, 55 now say that they are now atheist. The population went from 7 percent atheist (in religious background) to 30 percent atheist (in 1994).¹⁸⁶

Thus, the anti-religion campaign of the Party was a relative success. Whether or not the 'weakening' of organized religion unified Albanians behind an atheist national identity, is difficult to say. Prior to the communist takeover in 1944, there existed very little open conflict between the three different religious communities. However, perhaps the elimination of this difference, and the supplementation of communist and nationalist, rhetoric did create a greater feeling of unification. As of the early 1990s, a person could no longer identify themselves as a Muslim Albanian, or Christian Albanian, or Orthodox Albanian, but simply as an Albanian.

¹⁸⁶ James S. O'Donnell. "A Coming of Age Albania Under Enver Hoxha." East European Monographs. Moulder: 1999, p. 139. Table 9-1: Religious Background and Present Religion.

Educational Policy and Reform

As noted before, prior to the communist takeover, two primary dialects, Gheg and Tosk, existed within Albania. Other, more local dialects existed within these two larger categories. The adoption of the Tosk (or Southern) dialect as Albania's official language was one of the earliest policies of the Party. "Tosk grammar was left almost intact, while the Gheg vocabulary...was 'Toskized.'"¹⁸⁷ The Tosk dialect was chosen due to the fact that most of the early supporters of the communist party, and the Party leadership, were Tosk. Thus, the newly adopted education system would use only the Tosk dialect and the previous linguistic division that existed within the country prior to the communist takeover, would greatly diminish. After the standardization of the language the Party then sought to create a new education program, based on the soviet model, in an attempt to increase literacy within Albania.

In 1938, approximately 85 percent of the population was illiterate and the country boasted no institutions of advanced-learning.¹⁸⁸ As of 1938 there were only 2,400 children attending kindergarten, 0 grade schools, 11 secondary schools, 0 high schools and 1,551 teachers in the entire country.¹⁸⁹ Although

¹⁸⁷ Miranda Vickers. "The Albanians: A Modern History." I.B. Tauris and Co. Ltd. London: 1995, pp. 164-165.

¹⁸⁸ "Library of Congress. "Albania: A Country Study." Library of Congress Cataloguing-in-Publication Data. 1994, p. 87, 90.

¹⁸⁹ James S. O'Donnell. "A Coming of Age Albania Under Enver Hoxha." East European Monographs. Moulder: 1999, p. 113.

King Zog created a compulsory education program, as of 1938 only 638 schools were in operation and about 25% of children attended classes.¹⁹⁰ As of 1946, just two years after the communist seizure of power in Albania, the country still had the lowest average level of education within Europe.¹⁹¹ And so, with the first constitution of 1946, the Party sought to create a uniform and partially mandatory education system that would instill communist ideological values upon the youth of Albania and rid the country of illiteracy. A law entitled the Education Reform Law, passed within the same year, required all texts to reflect Marxist-Leninist ideology and directed all citizens between the ages of 12 and 40 who could not read or write in Albanian to attend school.¹⁹² The Party invested heavily in education. For example, in 1950 10.7% of the states budget was earmarked for education.¹⁹³

The curricula and structure of education was reflective of the Soviet educational model. The education system, created on August 17, 1946, and included in Article 28 of the new Albanian constitution, guaranteed all of its citizens an opportunity to gain an education.¹⁹⁴ The system proclaimed the values of education, “in a pacifist spirit, with true patriotism, and a feeling of love

¹⁹⁰ James S. O'Donnell. “A Coming of Age Albania Under Enver Hoxha.” East European Monographs. Moulder: 1999, p. 111.

¹⁹¹ James S. O'Donnell. “A Coming of Age Albania Under Enver Hoxha.” East European Monographs. Moulder: 1999, p. 113.

¹⁹² “Library of Congress. “Albania: A Country Study.” Library of Congress Cataloguing-in-Publication Data. 1994, p. 87, 90.p.92.

¹⁹³ James S. O'Donnell. “A Coming of Age Albania Under Enver Hoxha.” East European Monographs. Moulder: 1999, p. 112.

¹⁹⁴ Joseph S. Roucek. “The Sovietization of Albanian Education.” *The Slavic and East European Journal*, Vol. 2, No. 1. (Spring, 1958), p. 51.

for the Soviet Union, Stalin, and Our Party!”¹⁹⁵ The Soviet-based structure of education, existent until October of 1960 when tensions between Albania and the Soviet Union had reached a breaking point, had consisted of eleven years of elementary and secondary education.¹⁹⁶ After the Albanian-Soviet break in relations, the educational system was slightly changed. The new law entitled, On the Reorganization of the Educational System in the PRA, passed in 1963, outlined the changes to the educational program: education would change into a twelve year program with 8 years of compulsory elementary-level education and four years of secondary instruction.¹⁹⁷

Higher education began in 1946 with the first Teacher’s Training Institution called the “Alexander Xhuvani” Teachers Training Institute, followed by the Institute of Sciences, opened in 1947, the Four-year Teachers Training Institute, Politechnical Institute, and the Agricultural Institute, opened in 1951, the Juridical Institute, and the University of Tirane, in 1957.¹⁹⁸

The educational policies were very successful, which was much to the benefit of the Party. “By 1952 more than half a million Albanians could read and

¹⁹⁵ Joseph S. Roucek. “The Sovietization of Albanian Education.” *The Slavic and East European Journal*, Vol. 2, No. 1. (Spring, 1958), p. 52.

¹⁹⁶ “Library of Congress. “Albania: A Country Study.” Library of Congress Cataloguing-in-Publication Data. 1994, p. 93.

¹⁹⁷ James S. O’Donnell. “A Coming of Age Albania Under Enver Hoxha.” *East European Monographs*. Moulder: 1999, pp. 113-114.

¹⁹⁸ James S. O’Donnell. “A Coming of Age Albania Under Enver Hoxha.” *East European Monographs*. Moulder: 1999, p. 113.

write..."¹⁹⁹ Also by 1983, 1621 grade schools, 333 secondary schools, and 8 higher schools were in operation, with 39,342 registered teachers.²⁰⁰ The number of children attending kindergarten had risen substantially from, 10,000 in 1950, 23,000 in 1960, 47,500 in 1970, and 103,000 by 1983.²⁰¹ Other statistics claim that by the 1980s illiteracy was almost completely eliminated in Albania.²⁰²

The educational programs of the Party also instituted policies including the female population. Prior to the communist takeover, tradition forbade females from education. The *Kanun*, or traditional law code, prevalent in the Gheg north, taught that it was dangerous to educate women. However, by 1978, 15.1 times more women attended eight-year schools, 175.7 times more women attended secondary schools, and 101.9 times more women attended higher schools than in 1938.²⁰³

The compulsory education policy and resulting high literacy rate of the population enabled the Party to use the media to reach and influence percentages of the population unreachable before. The integration of Marxist-Leninist and Albanian nationalist ideologies into the curricula itself was of great political benefit to the Party. Not only could the media be used to influence the

¹⁹⁹ Joseph S. Roucek. "The Sovietization of Albanian Education." *The Slavic and East European Journal*, Vol. 2, No. 1. (Spring, 1958), p.57.

²⁰⁰ James S. O'Donnell. "A Coming of Age Albania Under Enver Hoxha." East European Monographs. Moulder: 1999, p. 113.

²⁰¹ James S. O'Donnell. "A Coming of Age Albania Under Enver Hoxha." East European Monographs. Moulder: 1999, p. 112.

²⁰² "Library of Congress. "Albania: A Country Study." Library of Congress Cataloguing-in-Publication Data. 1994, pp. 93-94.

²⁰³ James S. O'Donnell. "A Coming of Age Albania Under Enver Hoxha." East European Monographs. Moulder: 1999, p. 114.

nation, but also the education system itself. Through the education system, and the resulting more effective use of different forms of the media (such as newspapers and textbooks), the Party was able to build an Albanian communist, and yet still nationalistic, identity that could reach the entire population.

The Use of The Media to Popularize Ideas of a Communist and Nationalist Albanian Identity

Soon after the communists assumed power in 1944 they worked to seize control of the media. However, the formal nationalization of media operations did not occur until two years later, in 1946. "In order to appeal to the masses, much of the media's messages had a nationalist content, evoking feelings of loyalty and pride associated with Albanian independence."²⁰⁴ Different forms of the media, including newspapers, radio, and film, were used to reach and influence portions of the population unreachable prior to the communist takeover. By controlling the media, and using to spread Party national communist ideology, the communists sought to create a new national communist identity that would eventually be accepted by the nation.

This is especially evident in the film industry. By 1946 all theaters were controlled and operated by the Party. One of the first documentaries, filmed in 1948-1949, with the help of Soviet equipment and finance, was entitled "New

²⁰⁴ "Library of Congress. "Albania: A Country Study." Library of Congress Cataloguing-in-Publication Data. 1994, p.182.

Albania.”²⁰⁵ New Albania was also the name chosen for the first film studio built in 1952 and located in the nation’s capital. Skanderbeg, a figure chosen by the Party to represent an Albanian national hero, was the title of the first film shoot on the New Albania film lot.²⁰⁶ It is important to note that instead of picking a more traditional communist “hero figure” to dedicate a film to, the Albanian communist Party chose a fifteenth century Albanian hero; a figure with absolutely no relation to communism.

The Party also took control of newspapers. Organizations such as the Union of Working Youth, created by Chapter 11, article 8 of the 1944 Constitution, operated their own newspapers.²⁰⁷ By 1947, the Union of Working Youth was responsible for six different newspapers. The Party newspaper, *Zeri I Popullit*, or Voice of the People, was published by the Party Central Committee. Due to the educational reforms more and more of the population became literate, and could read the many publications created and distributed, or in the least controlled, by the Party.

For those of the population that remained illiterate the Party could reach them via radio. Articles taken from *Zeri I Popullit* were read aloud daily along with Party news and achievements. The daily broadcasts followed a prescribed format. Thus, even portions of the population who were illiterate and did not

²⁰⁵ Joseph S. Roucek. “The Sovietization of Albanian Education.” *The Slavic and East European Journal*, Vol. 2, No. 1. (Spring, 1958), p.59.

²⁰⁶ Joseph S. Roucek. “The Sovietization of Albanian Education.” *The Slavic and East European Journal*, Vol. 2, No. 1. (Spring, 1958), p.59.

²⁰⁷ Joseph S. Roucek. “The Sovietization of Albanian Education.” *The Slavic and East European Journal*, Vol. 2, No. 1. (Spring, 1958), p.57.

attend school, were also subject to the Party rhetoric. Those people living in rural areas who did not possess a radio could also hear the daily broadcast from speakers mounted in town centers. Thus, the Party was able to reach and influence a large percentage of the population, including those who were illiterate, to transmit their ideas of Albanian identity.

Lastly, it is important to mention the use of political speeches and history to create ideology. In a speech delivered on June 10, 1978, the centennial anniversary of the founding of the Prizren League and a national holiday as well as anniversary never celebrated before, Ramiz Alia, gave a fiery address entitled, “The Albanian League of Prizren—A Brilliant Page of Our History Written in Blood.” This excerpt demonstrates how Alia praised the League as heroes while creating an enemy, religion and religious fanaticism.

The sound organization of the League itself which united in its ranks Ghegs and Tosks, Moslems and Christians, served to strengthen national unity.²⁰⁸

[By] Rising above religion, above religious fanaticism and divisions, a thing which was by no means easy in the time of which we are speaking, the ideologist of the League...launched a militant slogan that Albanian's religion is Albania.²⁰⁹

²⁰⁸ Ramiz Alia. “The Albanian League of Prizren—A Brilliant Page of Our History Written in Blood.” Speech on the Centenary of the Albanian League of Prizren (Tirana, June 10, 1978). The 8 Nentori Publishing House. Tirana: 1978, p. 27. Accessed in British National Library, London.

²⁰⁹ Ramiz Alia. “The Albanian League of Prizren—A Brilliant Page of Our History Written in Blood.” Speech on the Centenary of the Albanian League of Prizren (Tirana, June 10, 1978). The 8 Nentori Publishing House. Tirana: 1978, p. 30. Accessed in British National Library, London.

Besides granting insight into how the Party conducted its anti-religion campaign, this speech also serves as an excellent example of how the Party leaders used both the media, and history, to create identity. By reaching into the past and claiming that all Albanians, regardless of religion or cultural group, shared a common history and common struggle to create a nation and state in the late 19th century, Alia is creating identity. Those who identify with this shared history and grow to admire these same, (invented) nationalist heroes of 1878 are drawn together; the population has something more in common, another way to connect. Also, by identifying a common enemy, religion and religious fanaticism, the Party also forms identity, as people are sometimes defined by what or who they are not. Through this speech, and many others, the Party used the media to form what is Albanian national communist identity and who (according to the Party) a national communist Albanian was.

Cultural Differences Diminished

Many of the educational, anti-religious, and social policies of the communists were aimed at lessening the influence of 'traditionalism' and many of the cultural practices and societal systems of the past. These policies are important to examine as one of the real or perceived obstacles to the formation of a more unified national identity was the existence of two cultural groups and two accompanying forms of social structure; the Gheg and the Tosk. Many of the

educational, anti-religious, and social policies would weaken the roles of Gheg tradition and kinship methods, more than the Tosk, as many of the supporters and leaders of the Party were Tosk. These policies are especially evident during the Maoist-type “Cultural and Ideological Revolution” within Albania during the 1960s.²¹⁰

Due to the close political and economic ties with communist China during the 1960s, the Party sought to tailor and adopt some of the cultural reforms taking place during the Maoist cultural revolution to Albania. The Party used these reforms to weaken the roles of religion and traditional societal organization. For example, in traditional Albanian society, especially within the Gheg social and kinship system, women assumed a second-class position within the public and the home. During the Cultural and Ideological Revolution Enver Hoxha proclaimed a policy of gender equality, pushing women into education and into the labor force. Within the educational sphere, there seems to have been successes (the details of which were described in the sun-chapter entitled “Educational Policy and Reform”).

It is difficult to estimate just how successful the policy of gender equality was in weakening the roles of traditional kinship and clan loyalties. But, other factors, even prior to the Cultural and Ideological Revolution, such as the, “...postwar repression of clan leadership, collectivization of agriculture, industrialization, migration from the countryside to urban areas, and the

²¹⁰ “Library of Congress. “Albania: A Country Study.” Library of Congress Cataloguing-in-Publication Data. 1994, p. 50.

suppression of religion” also played a role in lessening the role of tradition and cultural differences based on Gheg or Tosk kinship structure or culture.²¹¹

The anti-religion policies of the Party also played a significant role in the diminishing of tradition and cultural differences and influences. The unpopularity or absence of traditional organized religion forced citizens to turn to other sources, the Party and its ideology, to fill that void. Traditional kinship systems, with women as secondary and lesser members, were also to a small extent justified by other traditional institutions including not only the *Kanun*, but also organized religion.

Thus, by pushing women into educational programs and into the workforce, as well as limiting the role of religion, and eventually eliminating religion altogether, the Party was able to greatly weaken the roles of traditional extended family and clan-based society, traditional law code (the *Kanun*), as well as the existence of two different cultural groups.

6. Conclusions

By looking the policies of the Party one can see how the communists were able to create and popularize a communist, as well as nationalist, Albanian identity. The Party used compulsory mass education to increase the literacy rate of the population, thus enabling the Party leadership to more effectively use the media to transmit communist and nationalist rhetoric.

²¹¹ “Library of Congress. “Albania: A Country Study.” Library of Congress Cataloguing-in-Publication Data. 1994, p.51.

This rhetoric sought to unite the population behind not only the Party and its communist ideology, but also the nation and its Albanian identity. The Party further strengthened its efforts by ridding the country of the barriers, (whether perceived or genuine), existing between Albanian citizens. These obstacles included the existence of three religious institutions, various dialects, and two different cultural groups with accompanying social structures and traditions. By successfully raising the overall level of education of the population and eradicating organized religion, while lessening the differences that existed between groups of people, the communists were able to reach larger percents of the population than ever before and shape and popularize identity as never done within Albania previously. In this respect, the communist Party was able to influence Albanian identity as no leadership within Albania had done before.

Thus, through the educational, anti-religious, and other social policies created and enforced by the communist Party one can observe how an Albanian national communist identity was constructed and popularized. By reviewing key periods and documents dating from times prior to the communist takeover, such as the International Commission Correspondence from 1913-1914, it becomes apparent that, a year after the state came into being, the nation had yet to exist. The communist Party continued the nation-building process begun generations before and had perhaps the greatest success in creating the nation by constructing and popularizing identity.

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