

## **Social conflicts, changing identities and everyday strategies of survival in Macedonia on the eve of the collapse of Ottoman central power (1903-1912) Part 2.**

The present study focuses on the period after the Ilinden uprising until the outbreak of the Balkan Wars, and aims to identify certain social dividing lines, fractures and motivations that accelerated the escalation of everyday violence.<sup>1</sup> Part 1 focused on the territorial and cultural patterns of violence, specific and general motives, the contribution of foreign penetration (including both the attempts of powers to settle the question and the competition of neighboring small states) and local traditions (customs law) to the nature and extent of violence.<sup>2</sup> Goals of Part 2. include the identification of some microsocial strategies on family and community level as responses to local coercion and government repressions. From methodological aspects a combination of Austrian and Bulgarian archival sources (a comparison of data obtained from independent observers and participants of events) can be promising in order to avoid one-sidedness and partiality, while the re-interpretation of some sources using a comparative and economic approach could also be edifying for the reader, since even the different terminology in Austrian and Bulgarian documents reflects the differences in interpreting the events.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Another goal of this study is to estimate the role of personal interests and economic reasons in choosing/changing an identity - beyond sentiments and ideals. In the second part (not published here) we also aimed to reason the changes in the support-policy of neighboring Small States, including the rentability and its local acceptance in a period, when the selection of an identity meant not only advantages any more, but imposed threats as well.

<sup>3</sup> It is important to note, that the word „Bulgarian” is not equivalent with „Exarchist” in Austrian documents (ÖHHStA PA, VII/Fasz.434, Rappaport to Pallavicini, 21.03.1907., No.330, Beilage No.26, 5. See also the map of Kral consul, from 1903, in Nachlass Szapáry, ÖHHStA. Cited also by Toleva, Teodora, *Vliyanieto na Avstro-Ungariya za sazhdavaneto na Albanska naciya 1896-1906*. Sofia, Ciela, 2012. 540-544. maps). Contrary to this, in the reports of the Bulgarian consul in Skopje the term Bulgarian equals with exarchist. The word 'Bulgarian' instead of 'exarchist' often occurs even in exarchist ecclesiastic documents. See: ЦДА, ф. 331к. оп. 1. а.е. 309. л. 31. In Bitola for example: 'Bulgarian school', 'Bulgarian church'. There were even Patriarchist Bulgarian villages according to Bulgarian sources (some of them were converted by Serbian propaganda, some were not affected).

## Strategies of the Ottoman government, the neighboring states and the local population

As the present study does not aim to analyse *all* social fault lines within the nationalities of the Sanjak of Skopje, in the following lines the behaviour of only four communities is going to be discussed. The first is the activity of the Young Turks in power, the second is strategy of Serb communities as minorities in the sanjak, the third is the support policy of Bulgaria toward Macedonia (and against Serbia) and the fourth is the response of local (mainly exarchist) communities to the socio-economic developments in Macedonia.<sup>4</sup>

*Emigration as a social strategy, a response to the deteriorating circumstances* was partly driven by the violence-wave, partly by the shortage of incomes. According to the selected sources of Austro-Hungarian archival documents the political situation in Kosovo vilayet was subordinate as a driving force, economic situation had larger effect on migration processes. The latent economic problems were also key elements in the timing of the Ilinden uprising earlier in 1903 (see below). *Economic and political problems were inseparable* as we pointed out in Part I, *but the Ottoman state tried to find solutions only for the latter, which might reason her failure.*

The USA became a target destination for inhabitants of Kosovo vilayet only after 1906, prior to this most of the early migrants moved traditionally to other regions of the Ottoman Empire as season-workers or to neighboring states (*pečalbari*), where they were often infected by or fell victim to nationalism (see later).<sup>5</sup> The emergence of the USA as a new destination in a landlocked country clearly indicates the desperate situation of inhabitants. Most of the emigrants were catholic or orthodox men, stemming from the uneducated lower classes. Qualification (tailor, stonemason) hardly had any of them. Most of them were agricultural labourers working for daily wages almost on constant motion for years. As employment possibilities shrank many decided to settle overseas to earn '2 dollars daily',<sup>6</sup> which is pretty much compared to their earnings (around 2 francs daily) in the Ottoman Empire. Another tendency is, that expatriots stemmed mainly from administrative centers, where agencies for emigration also worked (Skopje, Tetovo, Lipljan), or from settlements along railroads. The tendency, that mainly men left their place of living clearly enlightens, that their emigration should be considered temporary, and not permanent, inspired by mainly employment. From Kosovo vilayet, emigrants left Europe from Fiume (Rijeka) and

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<sup>4</sup> On the Young Turk–Macedonian relation between 1908 and 1912 see Mehmet Hacısalihoğlu, *Die Jungtürken und die Mazedonische Frage (1890-1918)*. München 2003, 184-187, 214-224, 240-245, 309-317, 366-372.

<sup>5</sup> For the former, see the articles of Stoytcheva, Stanislava for the *pečalbari* see Calic, J-M. or the complaints of the Bulgarian consul on the - often forced - Serbization of Macedo-Bulgarian employees working in Serbia. Stoytcheva St. "Season work migration as a factor in the development of the Bulgarian population in Prespa and Bitola in the early twentieth century", *Macedonian Review*, XXX, 2007/4, 47-76. (in Bulgarian); Stoytcheva, St. "The Bulgarian family in Macedonia between two centuries: aspects of the crisis (1897-1902). In: "Proceedings of the Bulgarian Historical Society. IHS-BAS, Vol. 41, in print; Calic, M-J.: *Sozialgeschichte Serbiens*. München: Oldenbourg, 1994. 180-182; ЦДА, ф. 315к. оп.2. а.е.10. л. 7.

<sup>6</sup> ÖHHStA PA, VII/Fasz.434, Lukes to Pallavicini, 20.02. 1909., No.19/pol, 8.

Hamburg (that's why Austrian sources provide information on this topic). The procedure cost around 500 francs (equal almost to the yearly wage of an untrained industrial worker or a day-labourer in agriculture).<sup>7</sup>

This social strategy – including forced and unforced migration – had long-term economic and ethnic consequences. The shortage of manpower resulted in the escalation of violence as no one was to defend the households left without adult men. The originally cheap Macedonian labour wages (in Bulgaria it was above 2 francs daily in agriculture) were also increasing, which endangered the rentability of market-oriented large chiflik-estates. These were partly based on cheap labour force, partly on high retail prices of wheat prior to 1873/78. But after Argentina, Russia and the USA had appeared in western markets as wheat exporters, prices began to fall. The landlords tried to exert pressure on the producers to earn profit, but this generated the above described mass migration. Finally, many landowners were forced to sell the land to the peasants, but these often lacked real purchase power, and needed credit to purchase land. This amount of money could be provided by private persons (this often meant usury, thus indebtedness) or could be obtained from the agents of small states using money as an instrument for nationalistic propaganda. As the case of Pusta Bresnica shows below<sup>8</sup> tenants tended to buy the landowners' land using foreign loans and **in return** they offered their loyalty to the small states allocating credit also for this purpose (beyond creating schools, building churches).

In order to halt the aforementioned unfavourable phenomena the officials and landlords of Kriva Palanka made several efforts to bring Moslem Albanian settlers from the western part of the vilayet, substituting the emigrants. The presence of Moslem Albanians in Kočani can be explained by this fact too. Unfortunately, this decision deteriorated public security further. It is important to emphasize, that in the process of discouraging peasants, who finally decided to emigrate not only economic processes played crucial role, but the frequent harassment of agitators and bands of Slavic (local, Serbian or Bulgarian) origin, who pillaged this region, and intimidated landlords as well.<sup>9</sup> Their activity was focusing on recruiting from peasants and destroying the harvest, thus weakening the economic basis of the ottoman ruling class.<sup>10</sup> But nevertheless, these raids also ruined the economic basis of peasantry as the crop was usually shared 50-50% between the tenant and landlord on chiflik-estates.

It became evident by the turn of the century that Macedonia was unable to supply more people at the given technical level without dramatic (positive) changes in internal conditions. Exports were stagnating, while crop imports grew from zero to 30 thousand tons

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> ЦДА, ф. 335к. оп. 1. а.е. 402. л. 8-10.

<sup>9</sup> KuK. Ministerium des Äussern. Diplomatische Aktenstücke über die Reformaktion in Mazedonien 1902-1906. Wien, Druck der K. K. Hof- und Staatsdruckerei. 1906. 166-174. Nr. 160. 1906. ápr. 29.

<sup>10</sup> ÖHHStA PA, VII/Fasz.434, Pára to Styreca, 31.05.1905., No.55/pol, 7. and Rappaport to Calice, 27.06.1906., No.61/pol., 12.

yearly between 1895-1905.<sup>11</sup> While in the 1850s 20-25% of the crop per household was exported, it fell back to 5% in 1900. That time Macedonia was in the phase of reindustrialisation, silk export was increasing compared to crops. The obsolete economic structure of the region is marked by the fact, that in the Kosova vilayet 50% of the central income still stemmed from the tithe, while in the more industrialized Saloniki vilayet and Monastir this fell to 25-30%.<sup>12</sup> Similar values characterised Bulgaria – but prior to 1878! Compared to the significance of land revenues, that were increasing, crop production was stagnating and price-index was decreasing. As the number of agricultural workers were also decreasing, these unfavourable conditions for the budget could only be balanced by the increase of per capita tithe-revenues (*Table 1*). This 70% increase of per capita tax-burden within 10 years was the main reason for the increase in central revenues and it also contributed to the outbreak of the Ilinden-uprising.<sup>13</sup> Per capita tithe was similar to that of in N-Bulgaria prior to the independence (including the tax-rate over 12%), but circumstances were different: the peasants of Macedonia were living mostly in chifliks and had to face with other obligations toward the landlord, while N-Bulgaria was dominated by free-estates in a period of crop-conjuncture.

*Table 1.* Central income from tithe in Macedonia between 1890-1903

Year	Tax income in million piastres	Rural population in million	Tithe per capita in piastres	Crop price index	Tax-burden index	Crop production in million tons	Crop production per rural person in tons	Index of tax-burden per capita
1888-1890	41.5	2.04	20	100	100	1.1	0.5	100
1901-1903	58.3	1.7	34	85	200	1	0.6	170

Akarli, A.: Growth and retardation in Ottoman Macedonia 1880-1910. In: Pamuk, Sevket - Williamson, J.G. (eds.): *The Mediterranean Response to Globalisation before 1950*. Routledge, 2000. p. 121. In Bulgaria (in 1866) 27 piasters, in 1867 34 piastres per person were calculated during the crop-conjuncture

To have a better understanding on the economic conditions in the region after 1908 (and thus on its consequences for the society), we have to go back in time to analyze the attempts of the reorganization of Macedonia after the Ilinden-uprising. Beyond the restoration of public order (which was quite unsuccessful as proved in Part I) other efforts of the international mission between 1903-1907 are also worth an analysis, as it was originally planned more than a simple reorganisation of the gendarmerie. The official stance of

<sup>11</sup> Akarli, A.: Growth and retardation in Ottoman Macedonia 1880-1910. In: Pamuk, Sevket - Williamson, J.G. (eds.): *The Mediterranean Response to Globalisation before 1950*. Routledge, 2000. 121.

<sup>12</sup> *Diplomatische Aktenstücke über die Reformaktion in Mazedonien 1902-1906*. Wien, Druck der K. K. Hof- und Staatsdruckerei. 1906. calculated based on 166-174. Nr. 160. 29.04.1906.

<sup>13</sup> The Ilinden-uprising was considered a 'Bulgarian' uprising by Austrian diplomats. Austrian diplomats wrote about Bulgarian agitation and provocation, blaming it for the failure of the reform plans, as these were handed in prior to the uprising, as a response to the Ottoman initiative at the end of 1902. The reform plans in 1903 (together with the unripen Ottoman initiative) encouraged the IMRO and Bulgarians to intervene prematurely, as they thought it inefficient. *Diplomatische Aktenstücke...* 14. Nr. 12. 01.09. 1903.

Austria-Hungary and Russia as supervising Powers was that their mission is to promote self-governance (this was the first case, when Powers decided to promote the realization of such goals, furthermore it was the first joint operation for peace in Europe), to establish modern administration, and to implement a new taxation system in order to restore the economic viability of the European provinces. The introduction of a modern taxation system admittedly targeted to relieve population from the heavy tax-burden (it was over 12%,<sup>14</sup> while this was around 10% in the neighboring Bulgaria, representing an other pull-factor), parallel with the increase of central revenues. So, there was a general worsening of economic conditions in Macedonia compared to Bulgaria including both economic output and per capita taxes.

According to Powers the spread of violence was partly the result of the abundance of Albanian paramilitary troops that participated in sanctioning the Ilinden uprising.<sup>15</sup> These *çetas* persisted and acted later as well as auxiliary troops of Ottoman authorities, when the latter were unable or unwilling to intervene into the course of events. Therefore Powers insisted on that the proportion of Christians in the gendarmerie should be settled according to their proportion in the population instead of the general 20% prescribed by the original Ottoman plans. The involvement of local people at *gardes champetres (militia)* was a new and welcomed element, but the Sublime Porte raised objection several times to the presence of foreign officers. Unfortunately, not only the reform of the gendarmerie, but also the introduction of a new taxation system failed due to several factors. The number of gendarmerie never exceeded 80% of the proposed, such as the amount of collected taxes never exceeded 75-80% of the original plans,<sup>16</sup> and the number of policemen was not higher than in territories with traditional gendarmerie.

Table 2. Theoretical and real number of gendarmerie in reformed and intact areas

Reformed gendarmerie	Theoretical number					Real number				
	sanjak	officer	1st class	2nd class (local)	mounted	total	officer	1st class	2nd class (local)	mounted
Saloniki	46	1121	186	195	1502	40	781	141	173	1095
Seres	14	374	34	79	487	15	292	33	70	395
Drama	10	154	65	42	261	9	123	49	45	217
Monastir-Kastoria	31	811	73	147	1031	27	612	84	138	834
Skopje	32	800	157	87	1044	24	540	153	77	770
Altogether	133	260	515	550	4235	115	2348	460	503	3311

Traditional gendarmerie	Theoretical number				Real number			
	kaza	officer	infantry	mounted	altogether	officer	infantry	mounted
Gürüd	11	242	64	306	10	230	58	288
Elbassan	8	201	32	233	10	197	32	229

<sup>14</sup> Diplomatiscche Aktenstücke ... 119-120. 27.09.1905.

<sup>15</sup> Diplomatiscche Aktenstücke ... 9. Nr. 5. 04.02.1903. Calice to Goluchowski

<sup>16</sup> Diplomatiscche Aktenstücke ... 152-154. 28.02.1906. Nr. 153.

<b>Dibra</b>	11	247	28	<b>275</b>	15	227	27	<b>251</b>
<b>Serfidzse</b>	23	475	98	<b>573</b>	23	441	93	<b>534</b>
<b>Pristina</b>	23	509	73	<b>582</b>	23	488	73	<b>561</b>
<b>Sjenica</b>	11	231	73	<b>304</b>	10	226	72	<b>298</b>
<b>Ipek</b>	14	309	44	<b>353</b>	10	284	43	<b>327</b>
<b>Prizren</b>	17	354	54	<b>408</b>	15	337	51	<b>388</b>
<b>Total</b>	118	2568	466	<b>3034</b>	116	2427	449	<b>2876</b>

Even diplomats were short-sighted or ill-informed. Contrary to the analysed statistics in Part I, published reports in 1905 wrote about successes. The then military attaché of Austria-Hungary, Giesl reported to Calice, ambassador at Constantinople, that Bulgarian bands were calmed down including the IMRO and Tsonchevists as well. Although he mentioned a clash between Serbian and Bulgarian bands (13 June, Petralica-Egripalanka and 17 June, Belan-Kumanovo), this was put down by official Ottoman forces. The Bulgarian border was silent, as he wrote (no trespassing of foreign agitators or troops was observed). He had seemingly no knowledge either on the other Austrian statistics on everyday violence or on the conscription of weapons of IMRO from 1906. The above mentioned are good examples of the limited interaction between the different organizations of Austria-Hungary. Since military attachés were subordinated to Conrad von Hötzendorf, they relied on different information sources and thus were not aware of all events.<sup>17</sup>

The new tax-system was based on fixed amounts replacing the *iltizam* system. 1 *dönüm* land in the Skopski sanjak (750-900 m<sup>2</sup>) has been charged with 1.5-8 piastres yearly for 5 years, with the exception of Keremetlik that paid 15 piastres (3 francs) yearly.<sup>18</sup> According to this newly introduced system the average tithe in the Monastir kaza fell from 3.4 million piastres between 1899-1904 to 2.4 million piastres (collected with 87% effectiveness), in the Skopje and Saloniki kaza it remained 1.3-1.3 million piastres respectively collected at 75% efficiency. Contrary to these efforts in 1905-1906 still more than 2500 men left the Monastir kaza, while in the previous year only 1000, indicating the instability of the situation.

One may come to the conclusion, that the burdens of peasantry were decreasing. Bulgarian tithe was 130-170 piastres per family in 1866-1867 compared to the 100 in 1864, while in Macedonia it was 80-120 piastres per family, decreasing from 34 per capita to 13-21 piastres. But the vilayet budgets made it clear that the situation was not ameliorating: together with the arrears collected, there was no significant difference between the situation in Bulgaria prior to 1878 and Macedonia (20-28 piastres per capita). Tithe revenues fell only with 3 million between 1903-1906 (from 58 million to 55 million). However the Powers were succesful since yearly total income of the 3 vilayets of Macedonia did not decrease between

<sup>17</sup> It is also possible that these optimistic reports were to calm down the public opinion and the diplomatic corps (the English wanted to intervene in Macedonia from 1906 claiming that the activity of powers was a complete failure). As Gustav von Kalnoky Minister of Foreign Affairs mentioned earlier: „ ... *the only problem with our diplomats on the Balkans is that they always report what I want to hear*”. (Quoted from Imre Röss).

<sup>18</sup> Diplomatistische Aktenstücke ... 119-120. 27.09. 1905.

1903-1906 and ranged up to 190 million piastres in 1905/1906, unfortunately the expenses were greater, between 253 and 267 million, creating a negative balance. *While earlier the center was able to finance its needs from the incomes of the periphery* (that was the main cause of protests in Bulgaria prior to 1878), *after the turn of the century it was the periphery sucking money from the central government*. The deficit was due to the high military expenses, that constituted 50% of the expenses, while the share of civil expenditures reached only 31%. *Per capita tax revenues were still not lower, than in Bulgaria* (increasing from 260-380 piasters altogether per family between 1864-1867) (Table 3).

Although the economic performance of the two regions were nearly the same (150 million piastres tax for Tuna vilayet with 2.2 million inhabitants and 190 million piastres for the 3 million inhabitants of the 3 Macedonian vilayets) the main difference was (beyond the passed 30 years) that Bulgaria in the 1860s enjoyed the advantages of a crop conjuncture and was characterized with more favourable estate conditions. Macedonia was overloaded. Beyond the religious and ethnic diversity of the area the economic situation was another reason why the Macedonian question could not be solved by peaceful propaganda through religion or education: the population was looking for the alternatives which would solve their everyday social and economic problems and was ready to exploit its fluid and amorphous national consciousness in order to secure its material interests.

Table 3. Tithe and total income in million piaster in Macedonia

	Income from tithe in 1903/4	Income from tithe in 1906	Income from tithe per person, per family	Income from arrears (1903)	Income from arrears (1905)
Monastir	12.3	11.1	13 and 78 piastres	7	4.3
Kosovo	23.4	22.3	21 and 120 piastres	5.3	4.3
Saloniki	21	20.3	21 and 120 piastres	3	2.9

Expenses, 1905/1906, million piaster	Civil expenses	Military expenses	Affectation	Altogether
Saloniki	33.3	50.2	26	109.5
Kosovo	27.1	55.6	1,6	84.3
Monastir	24	42	7.8	74
<b>Total</b>	<b>84.5</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>35.4</b>	<b>268</b>
<i>Total, previous year</i>	<i>74.5</i>	<i>143</i>	<i>36</i>	<i>254</i>

Income, 1905/1906 million piaster	Tax	Tax arrear collected	Altogether	Population and tax per capita and per family (6 persons)
Saloniki	70	7.8	77.9	1.1 million: 63 piastres, 350 piastres
Kosovo	49	7.9	56.9	1 million: 50 piastres, 300 piastres
Monastir	42	8.4	50.8	0.95 million: 44 piastres, 250 piastres
<b>Total</b>	<b>161.4</b>	<b>24.2</b>	<b>185.6</b>	<b>50 piastres, 300 piastres</b>

Collected and calculated from: K. u K. Ministerium des Äussern. Diplomatische Aktenstücke über die Reformaktion in Mazedonien 1902-1906. 166-174. Nr. 160. 29.04.1906.

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After the failure of Powers (1903-1908), the Young Turk (CUP, Committee of Union and Progress) revolution tried to resolve the problems. One of the remarkable changes of these times was that the already existing nationality concerns had become by far the most dominant source of conflict (beyond economic and social problems). Though the denominational identity in some cases still manifested both in the Christian and the Moslem communities (eg. after an attack on a shrine, or following the funeral of a prominent leader of the irregular troops),<sup>19</sup> it was a more common practice after 1908 that the *consular reports discussed the received information in terms of nationalities* (Bulgarian, Serbian, Albanian).

As a consequence of the revolution of the CUP, the leadership in charge of vilayets transformed. Contrary to the fact, that old and experienced bureaucrats were (re)placed to distant parts of the Empire, in the first few months following the 1908 Young Turk revolution this south-eastern part of Kosovo vilayet remained relatively calm. What made it possible was not so much the talent and aptitude of the new Young Turk officials, as the merit of Pasha Hadi, the energetic new governor.<sup>20</sup> In the Skopje sanjak he maintained peace by creating his own local intelligence network. He aimed to collect compromising information on all potential members of the opposition (clerics, clerks, teachers, journalists, četa leaders, national clubs, etc.). When minor incidents occurred, he used these information to arrest those people and thus to prevent major demonstrations (either against the state or against another community).<sup>21</sup> However, as he made no attempt to solve real problems, like reducing social tensions and neglected relevant political and economic issues, he had no chance to prevent the eventual collapse of the state power in the region.

In 1909 4 national clubs were operating in Skopje: the Serb, the Bulgarian, the Young Turk and the Albanian. The first two represented the radical nationalism of the neighboring states, the latter two were in tight relations due to personal matches and overlaps. During the autumn of 1909, the leadership of the vilayet attempted to create a civil supranational 'Ottoman Club' club, that would incorporate anybody willing to cooperate with the CUP, thus the club could serve as a means communication between CUP and radical national associations. The goal was to demonstrate and promote the possibilities of rapprochement between the nationalities and central authorities, furthermore it could serve as an instrument to hinder propaganda against the government.<sup>22</sup> Although among Macedo-Bulgarians IMRO and the vrhovists had an overwhelming majority in the countryside,<sup>23</sup> many of the urbanised Bulgarians in Skopje tended to cooperate with the central power.<sup>24</sup> The idea beyond this plan was the opinion that the key element of restoring security and tolerance in

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<sup>19</sup> ÖHHStA PA, VII/Fasz.434, Adamkiewicz to Pallavicini, 27.11.1909, No.83/pol, 6 and Heimroth to Eduard Otto, 14.10.1910, No.73/pol, 8.

<sup>20</sup> ÖHHStA PA, VII/Fasz.434, Lukes to Pallavicini, 05.10.1908, No.69/pol, 24.

<sup>21</sup> ÖHHStA PA, VII/Fasz.434, Adamkiewicz to Eduard Otto, 30.5.1909, No.44/pol, 8 and Adamkiewicz to Pallavicini, 14.01.1910, No.3/pol, 6.

<sup>22</sup> ÖHHStA PA, VII/Fasz.434, Adamkiewicz to Pallavicini, 09.07.1909., No.49/pol., 8 (Beilag, 5).

<sup>23</sup> ÖHHStA PA, VII/Fasz.434, Adamkiewicz to Pallavicini, 05.05.1909., No.40/pol., 12.

<sup>24</sup> ÖHHStA PA, VII/Fasz.434, Rappaport to Calice (from Üsküb), 04.28.1906., No.36/pol., 10. és 1906.6.27., No.61/pol., 12; Ibid. Ranzi to Calice (from Monastir), 28.06. 1906., No.28., 5.

the region was an appeasement with the most radical organisations (Serbs, Bulgarians), while the aspirations of peaceful minorities could be neglected,<sup>25</sup> since the organisations of only these two radical nationalities were able to exert pressure both on irregular troops and peaceful organisations.<sup>26</sup> The legal background of creating an Ottoman Club was the so-called 'Ottoman Law', that pointed out that the empire is constituted only by the Ottoman nation (in which every subject or citizen of the state was incorporated), therefore only Ottoman associations, clubs could be regarded as legal. Clubs, organised on national basis were soon considered illegal and prohibited.<sup>27</sup>

The efforts to organise an Ottoman club over nations remained futile. Christian national clubs did not want to appease with each other, refused to be organised in a supranational organisation and negotiations were delayed by the lack of real local respect to the CUP. The lack of trust increased further from 1909, when the central government was unable to pay its officials and the gendarmerie in the countryside in time compared to the period of supervision of Powers. This resulted not only in the loss of efficiency but of influence as well. Central power nearly drifted on the brink of collapse in local centers.<sup>28</sup> The CUP had to change its tactics to gain success in stabilizing public order.

Therefore, as a result of the above mentioned, in the late spring of 1909 the radicals of the Young Turk leadership shifted their focus of interest into Moslem policy, inasmuch as they became more open towards the religious fanatic urban groups. They initiated secret negotiations with the local denominational leaders in secluded mosques. The Young Turks' idea was to create a secret Moslem organization modelled on IMRO, with its own regulation, which could organize trustworthy and able Moslem men into combat teams after the Christian fashion. They planned to store the necessary weapons in the mosques. With this step the Young Turks wished to win the allegiance of the fanatic Moslem communities, to suppress the moderates within the party and to prepare for an open armed conflict in the vilayet, which seemed to be unavoidable for many members.<sup>29</sup>

However, the demands of the rural Moslem landowners needed to be tackled as well. Restlessness was on the increase in the Serbian and Bulgarian border kazas primarily, as these areas were virtually ruled by irregular troops or by the IMRO, where the tension between Moslems and Christians escalated the most.<sup>30</sup> The leaders of the sanjak understood that the peripheral kazas slipped out of their control, and from the spring of 1909 they started to distribute weapons to the Moslems from the army warehouses. This happened after the Ottoman beys of the countryside had threatened the military leaders, that unless they arm up the Moslems, the beys would raise the Albanians and hire them break into and

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<sup>25</sup> ÖHHStA PA, VII/Fasz.434, Lukes to Pallavicini, 26.03.1909., No.33. pol., 8.

<sup>26</sup> ÖHHStA PA, VII/Fasz.434, Adamkiewicz to Pallavicini, 05.05.1909., No.40/pol., 12.

<sup>27</sup> Albert Gottfried Krause, *Das Problem der albanischen Unabhängigkeit in den Jahren 1908–14*. Wien, 1970, 60–61.

<sup>28</sup> ÖHHStA PA, VII/Fasz.434, Lukes to Pallavicini, 20.02.1909., No.19/pol, 8.

<sup>29</sup> ÖHHStA PA, VII/Fasz.434, Adamkiewicz to Eduard Otto, 30.05.1909, No. 44/pol, 8.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.* and Adamkiewicz to Pallavicini, 07.03.1910, No.15/pol, 5.

rob the warehouses.<sup>31</sup> The distribution of weapons from military storages did not remain in secret – the Bulgarian government officially objected several times to these attempts, which the Turks refused to admit.<sup>32</sup>

The opening towards fanatic Moslems and the support of armament of Moslems along the border is interesting, since the safety of Moslems in 1908 did not seem to be challenged compared to former periods. Even the annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina did not have decisive impact on the security of Macedonian Moslems. According to the reports of Austrian consuls, the secession of the two provinces had already become an acceptable outcome of events within (Macedonian) Moslem communities by 1908. A war with Austria-Hungary over the provinces did not seem to be unrealistic, but Moslems were convinced that an Austrian annexation was still a better solution, than a Serbian one. Moslems in Skopje even hoped, that the annexation would create an emigration wave among Bosnian Moslems, and new settlers in the Sanjak of Skopje could change the religious proportion in favour of the Moslems.<sup>33</sup> Beyond the lack of training this policy and the hopes discussed above can also explain the hesitation, passivity and the failure of regular soldiers to hinder the outrages and pogroms in Štip, 1911.

The CUP did not elaborate a new policy towards the Albanians in the Sanjak of Skopje: Albanian national clubs were considered as attachments, branches of the Young Turkish clubs. The CUP continued its policy of assimilation based on the common religion by refusing Albanian cultural demands, like the latinized alphabet in 1908.<sup>34</sup> But serious conflicts between Albanians and Young Turks did not emerge compared to other parts of the vilayet.<sup>35</sup> And, contrary to Tetovo, Gostivar, Prizren and other regions, where a violent religious (Catholic/Orthodox – Moslem) conflict evolved among Albanians (beyond the conflicts between nationalities) that had to be tackled with, in this sanjak no major fault lines occurred within the Albanian society.<sup>36</sup>

The CUP-administration of the sanjak was totally powerless regarding the Bulgarian question (schooling, bands).<sup>37</sup> Leaders only tried either to avoid the escalation of conflicts and to keep them within certain frames, or to persuade local Serbs and tolerant urbanised Bulgarian associations against IMRO and vrvhovists.<sup>38</sup> Since the religious issues were interwoven with conflicts between nationalities, the Ottoman administration tried to regulate the debate over schools and churches through the law on religion, issued on 15 June, 1910. The law regulated the re-distribution of patriarchist and exarchist ecclesiastic

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<sup>31</sup> ÖHHStA PA, VII/Fasz.434, Lukes to Pallavicini, 26.03.1909, No.33. pol, 8; Heimroth to Pallavicini, 4.11.1910, No. 80/pol, 3.

<sup>32</sup> ЦДА, ф. 331к. оп. 1. а.е. 351. л. 2-3.

<sup>33</sup> ÖHHStA PA, VII/Fasz.434, Lukes to Pallavicini, 20.02.1909., No.19/pol, 8. and 26.03.1909., No.33/pol, 8.

<sup>34</sup> ÖHHStA PA, VII/Fasz.434, Adamkiewicz to Pallavicini, 05.05.1909., No.40/pol, 12.

<sup>35</sup> ÖHHStA PA, VII/Fasz.434, Adamkiewicz to Pallavicini, 07.03.1910., No.15/pol, 5. and 05.05. 1909., No.40/pol, 12.

<sup>36</sup> ÖHHStA PA, VII/Fasz.434, Adamkiewicz to Pallavicini, 09.07.1909., No.49/pol, 8.

<sup>37</sup> ÖHHStA PA, VII/Fasz.434, Lukes to Pallavicini, 20.02.1909., No.19/pol, 8.

<sup>38</sup> ÖHHStA PA, VII/Fasz.434, Adamkiewicz to Pallavicini, 05.05.1909., No.40/pol, 12. and *ibid.* Adamkiewicz to Eduard Otto, 05.30.1909., No.44/pol, 8.

property and schools based on the number of local supporters and proselytes. With this step the government hoped to increase public security and trust towards the government and to diminish rivalization and atrocities, which were caused by the fact, that since the beginning of the 20th century many villages converted to the Exarchate, but ecclesiastic property remained in the hands of patriarchist clergy.<sup>39</sup> According to the new law it was the government's right to distribute the sum of maintenance for schools between different Churches. According to the 3rd article the local church belonged to the community that built it, if its proportion did not decrease below 33%. If the proportion decreased below 33% the church and the school had to be handed over the community in majority, but the other community had the right to erect a new sanctuary. According to the 4th article, in settlements with more than one church, churches had to be divided between communities, unless the proportion of the smaller one decreased below 33%. If any community converted to new religion after the enforcement of this law, they had a right to erect a new building for religious purposes, but at their own cost.<sup>40</sup>

The content of this law draws our attention on two occasions. First of all, due to the ratios mentioned in the text, it is possible to describe ethnic/denominational proportions in the Macedonian countryside within villages and thus comparing these with the settlement-level ethnic map of the Bitola vilayet from 1901– before enforcing the law, a committee visited the settlements and conscribed the households based on religion (*Table 5*).<sup>41</sup> Secondly, owing to this conscription, investigations could be carried on regarding former (and forthcoming) abuses, which were formerly usually ignored by the central government of the sanjak. Religious communities in minority often complained about reprisals coming from the majority. In a Macedo-Bulgarian letter written to Ali Riza, President of the Parliament, it turns out, that prior to these reforms, priests assigned to other religious communities refused to baptize the children of 'infidels' or 'secessionists' or to bury the dead in the last 6-7 years. The behavior of these priests challenged *'the most sacred right of human beings – pleading for and praising God according to our own customs'*.<sup>42</sup>

Exarchist priests around Prizren mentioned, that in Kraklinno (Bitolska) on 31.10.1909. Vasilios Greek vladika closed down the Bulgarian church, although it was consecrated by the exarchist Gennadiy in 1878, and the founding ferman gave the church to the local exarchist community (in 1910 the village had 53-57 exarchist households and 7 Greek households, *Table 4*). The village seceded from the Patriarchate in 1904, but the church was used by patriarchists until the intervention of Havzi pasha. Although the church was given to exarchists in 1908, one year later villagers complained once more on patriarchists using the church expelling exarchists.

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<sup>39</sup> ЦДА, ф. 331к. оп. 1. а.е. 309. л. 22-26. л. 76.

<sup>40</sup> See the intentions of the Bulgarian population of Čair mahala in Skopje and their problem below. ЦДА, ф. 335к. оп. 1. а.е. 402. л. 16., 10.06.1911., and also а.е. 354. the establishment of the church under the patronage of tv. Constantine and St. Helen in 1907.

<sup>41</sup> Conscriptions for contested southern Macedonian areas: ЦДА, ф. 331к. оп. 1. а.е. 309. л. 23. 28-31.

<sup>42</sup> ЦДА, ф. 312к. оп. 2. ае. 10. л. 31. 07.11.1909.

In Dihovo 4 exarchists were killed by an *andartis* četa in 1909 because the 6 Greek households vindicated the right to use the local church. Contrary to the great Hellenic pressure the number of Grecophile households rose only to 15 by 1910 (when the conscription took place), while there were still over 50 exarchist households.<sup>43</sup>

Table 4. Religious (ethnic) composition in some villages where atrocities (mentioned in the text) took place

Bitola kaza	Exarchist households	Patriarchist households	Exarchis nufuz	Patriarchist nufuz
Kraklinno	53	7	354	61
Dihovo	54	15	394	111
Kopadurishta	44	20	336	235

ЦДА, ф. 331к он. 1. а.е. 309. л. 29.

But scrupulous situations also recurred after the initiation of reforms especially in territories where Exarchists remained in minority. Very often Exarchist communities were unable to get rid of Grecophil priests (in Southern Macedonia),<sup>44</sup> or the majority did not get the right to operate the school contrary to the law (Armenohori). In some cases Greeks would rather close these institutions, than to hand them over to Exarchist communities (Gorničevo) (see Table 6-7).<sup>45</sup>

Table 5. Religious (ethnic) distribution of population in the villages of Kostursko seceded from the Patriarchate after 1903, prior to the redistribution of ecclesiastic property in 1910.

Situation in 15.05.1910	Exarchist households	Patriarchist households	Moslem households	Total population	Year of secession from patriarchate	Number of churches	Number of schools
Nestine	32	18	20	420	1910	3	1 (Bulgarian)
<b>Gorjanci</b>	161	170	175	2645	1909	2	2
Gusilovo	44	8	0	295	1909	1	1
<b>Kumaničevo</b>	86	24	42	755	1908	3	1
<b>Starigiani</b>	38	20	0	455	1903	2	1
<b>Sničani</b>	58	23	0	420	1903	2	1
Mogila	15	7	0	115	1903	2	no school
<b>G. Nestram</b>	79	91	0	970	1908	3	1
<b>D. Nestram</b>	70	150		1320		2	2
Seligošte	24	14	120	831	1909	1	1
Rabigošte	12	5	0	97	1909	1	1 exarchist
Kalebušta	2	58	0	402	1910	2	1 not Bulgarian
<b>Čuka</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>166</b>	<b>1909</b>		<b>1</b>	<b>1 not Bulgarian</b>
<b>Breznica</b>	110	10	655			1	1

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> ЦДА, ф. 331к он. 1. а.е. 309. л. 30.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid. л. 31.

<b>Želevo</b>	110	110	?	1406	2 (1 exarchist)	2
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ЦДА, ф. 331к оп. 1. а.е. 309. л. 74-75 and л. 35-38. (bold letters indicate settlements with details of situation after the enforcement of new law, see below)

*Table 6.* Disputed churches in Kajlarsko

Paleor (Paleohori?)	90 Christians	50 Moslems	Exarchist majority with divided school
Embore	200 Exarchist houses, 20 Patriarchist	40 Moslem households	4 churches, 2 greater and the one outside the village is Patriarchist
Lipinci (Hassanköj)	65 Exarchist households, 6 Patriarchist, everybody visits the same church, the priest is Greek, village seceded from the Patriarchate 2 years ago, the government hinders the establishment of a school due to the fear of violence and propaganda		
Dorutovo	40-50 houses, all Exarchists except the priest, who is still in charge after the reforms		

ЦДА, ф. 331к оп. 1. а.е. 309. л. 30.

*Table 7.* Distribution of ecclesiastic and educational properties in Kostursko after the enforcement of new law in 1910

<b>Disputed settlements in Kostursko</b>	
<b>Gorjeni</b>	<b>the bigger church outside the village becomes Bulgarian<sup>46</sup> property, the Grekoman majority possesses the main church in the center of the settlement and the small one outside the village</b>
<b>Dolno Kumaničevo</b>	<b>problem remains unresolved: there is a bigger church in the village and a smaller outside the village, but there are only 3 Greek households</b>
<b>Gorno Kumaničevo</b>	<b>the church becomes exarchist property, there are no Greek households</b>
Olissa	15 Greek households, one church becomes exarchist
Konomladi	the great church of the village becomes a Bulgarian property, the 4 households with 6 Greek nufuz uses the chapel in the cemetery
Pozdiviša	the village church becomes a Bulgarian property, the 2 Grekoman households uses the chapel in the cemetery
<b>Breznica</b>	<b>the old church belongs to Bulgarians, the 11 Greek households with 74 nufuz may erect a new building</b>
<b>Želevo</b>	<b>the newer church belongs to Bulgarians and one school also</b>
<b>Staričani</b>	<b>Bulgarians constituting the majority get the greater church, while Greeks get the smaller one outside the village</b>
Ezerec	the church is given to Bulgarians, the Greeks have to build a new one
<b>Sničani</b>	<b>the great church belongs to Bulgarians, the Greeks are allowed to build a new church</b>
<b>Čuka</b>	<b>the Greek majority gets the church, the 2 exarchist household may build a new one</b>
<b>G. Nestram</b>	<b>the great church is given to Bulgarians, the Greek possess the small one outside the village</b>
<b>D. Nestram</b>	<b>the church remains Greek, Bulgarians may establish a new one</b>

ЦДА, ф. 331к оп. 1. а.е. 309. л. 28.

<sup>46</sup> Bulgarian documents use the term exarchist and Bulgarian as synonymes, while Austro-Hungarian document not always did the same.

Table 8. Religious distribution of population in Lerinsko, and the distribution of ecclesiastic property after the reforms of 1910

	Exarchist	Patriarchist households	
Lerin town	180	555	the church and the school is Greek, Bulgarians may erect a new one
Nered	248	93	
Armenohori	54	40	school and church remains Greek
Gorničevo	174	9	small church is given to Bulgarians, the greater is Greek, the school is closed down
Sorovič	57	62	school and chapel in the cemetery is Greek, Bulgarians may establish a new one
Bač	40	16	the school and the church is given to Greeks
Srebreno	45	55	the school and the church is Greek

ЦДА, ф. 331к оп. 1. а.е. 309. л. 31. Contrary to its exarchist character Bač in Albania was the homeland of the Serboman četa leader Pavle (Part I. Table 3)

In order to maintain peace, authorities had also taken steps against the broadening activity of the irregular Christian troops. At the end of 1909 the parliament in Istanbul legislated a general law to abolish all the irregular troops within the boundaries of the Empire. According to the law it was forbidden to set up irregular troops or to keep weapons at home. If caught, the četa leaders were to be executed, the četa members to be imprisoned. The law also declared the right for the authorities to arrest the wives and the children of the četa members.<sup>47</sup> These instructions were adopted by the Serbian government in 1913 after the occupation of northern Macedonia.

Furthermore, the central government decided in 1910 'to handle' the problems of the vilajets of Kosovo, Bitola and Shkodra and to collect the weapons with the help of the Imperial army. This had many reasons: contrary to the military reforms of the CUP, that encouraged Christians to serve in the military forces, the army still remained dominantly Moslem of character. Therefore it was considered loyal, while the gendarmerie - much of Christian character - was not. The army was ordered to use force if necessary, to disarm the civil population. The government also expected the imperial troops to collect the levied taxes of that year once again, to abolish all the (illegally operating) national clubs and societies in the aboved mentioned vilajets (by arresting people, destroying buildings, burning printed products) and to moderate the extremely high rate of the social violence in the countryside. The second target of the military action was to prevent a new general Albanian revolt, among other things by recruiting soldiers from the Moslem population.<sup>48</sup>

The Imperial army of Torghut Pasha, more than 50.000 men with heavy artillery, obeyed the order with the greatest possible violence.<sup>49</sup> Besides collecting the weapons, the pasha wanted to terrorise the local Christian villagers. The method of the army was simple: the military troops surrounded a village, opened fire with the cannons, brutally beat up the

<sup>47</sup> ÖHHStA PA, VII/Fasz.434, Lukes to Pallavicini, 26.03.1909, No.33.pol, 8.

<sup>48</sup> Nika, Nevila, Përmbledhje dokumentesh mbi kryengritjet shqiptare (1910–1912). Prishtinë 2003; Bartl, Peter, Albanien. München 1995, 125.

<sup>49</sup> The action was repeated in 1911. A fear of another action was one reason for the revolt of Hasan Prishtina in 1912.

terrified inhabitants and carried off the handcuffed men. After these insults, the frightened villagers handed over their weapons without resistance. Military forces intended to carry out the operation in those months, when the activity of četas was low, therefore these were unable either to encourage or to intimidate the population to resist or to flee, and Ottoman military forces did not have to confront with paramilitary troops.<sup>50</sup>

Carrying out this military action proved to be harder in the border kazas because the news of the disarming reached this region faster than the regular troops. Those living along the border managed to hide their weapons or they escaped to Bulgaria smuggling the weapons as well.<sup>51</sup> The Christian inhabitants of the central kazas, the dignitaries of the churches protested at the authorities and the foreign consulates against the disarming action. They referred to the fact that without their weapons they would be at the mercy of the Moslems and they would not be able to defend their villages against the irregular Moslem or Christian troops. Their need for weapons – as they argued, because of the incapacity of the central government to defend the countryside from intruders or from restless local elements – was after all disputable, as very often these weapons were not used to resist, but to promote the activity of rebels. Whatever the truth was about the weapons spared at home, this situation meant danger for the central government, therefore the authorities ignored the complaints. What is more, only because of their complaining, most of the complainants risked the revenge either of the authorities or of the paramilitary troops. This was the reason why the Bulgarian Pope Vane Zafirov from Orašje (kaza Kumanovo) was brutally executed by Hristo Lazarev, a četa-leader from Bulgaria on 9th July, 1910. A Bulgarian peasant from Živina (kaza Skopje), Stojce Čaparanski had more luck: though he was sentenced to death by the *müdür* of Konjari he managed to escape abroad.<sup>52</sup>

The success of the disarming action seemed doubtful however even for the contemporary witnesses. Official statistics on collected weapons were created only at vilayet levels. Approximately 150.000 pieces were collected in Kosovo vilayet till September 1910 and further 50 thousand was planned to be collected, but sabres are also included in these numbers. Half of the collected weapons stemmed from Albanians, half from Slavs. On the one hand, according to the Austro-Hungarian consul of Skopje, a remarkable part of the collected weapons was useless and old. On the other hand, the inhabitants were able to rearm themselves again any time by smuggling weapons, since the borderland has already slipped out of control of the Ottoman authorities.<sup>53</sup>

The Bulgarian state considered this disarmament of local population as the armament of Moslems. Rumours were hinted, that the collected weapons were distributed among Moslem population. Mahmud Sevket Pasha refused these statements and responded to the intervention of the Bulgarian state, that those whom the weapons were allotted, were indeed soldiers of the reserve class (*redif*), who were enrolled against the četas. But the

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<sup>50</sup> ÖHHStA PA, VII/Fasz.434, Heimroth to Eduard Otto, 30.07.1910., No.56/pol, 8.

<sup>51</sup> ÖHHStA PA, VII/Fasz.434, Heimroth to Eduard Otto, 14.10.1910, No.73/pol, 8.

<sup>52</sup> ÖHHStA PA, VII/Fasz.434, Heimroth to Eduard Otto, 30.07.1910, No.56/pol, 8.

<sup>53</sup> ÖHHStA PA, VII/Fasz.434, Heimroth to Eduard Otto, 15.08.1910, No.57/pol, 4.

Bulgarian government had news from many localities, that the distributed weapons – no matter whether they came from military storages or were collected from local people – remained in the hands of the Moslem village leaders (*mukhtar*), and weapons were not handed into the military storages after the action had been over.<sup>54</sup>

It is noteworthy that the only minority of the sanjak, that did not objected to the disarmament, was the Serb. According to the Austro-Hungarian consul in Skopje Serbs had two reasons for doing this: they wanted to enjoy advantages regarding religious and educational issues in return of their cooperation, and the government in Belgrade did not want to create unnecessary conflicts with the Ottoman Empire. Secondly, it is also noteworthy, that - through band leaders arriving from Serbia (like Skopjance, see Part I) - Belgrade pointed out, that Serbia was ready to supply new weapons, whenever the loyal population needed.<sup>55</sup>

The greatest challenge that needed to be solved by the new Young Turk leadership in the sanjak of Skopje was undoubtedly how to cope with the Bulgarian and Serbian conflict. To handle the political aspirations that the two nations held against the Empire, to moderate the hostility between them or to make compromises that could be acceptable for all parts were simply not realistic options.<sup>56</sup>

The local policy of the Serbian community in the Sanjak of Skopje was basically determined by three conditions.<sup>57</sup> 1. Within the boundaries of the sanjak the Serbians belonged to the smaller nationalities (they made up only 5.5% of the entire population, and 9.6% of the Christian inhabitants).<sup>58</sup> 2. The most significant opponents of the Serbian national propaganda was the Bulgarian national movement. 3. Considering the fact that the greatest problems that had to be dealt with were generated by the Bulgarians, the Serbian politicians and the leaders of the Young Turk party naturally became allies. This created a cooperation between Serbs and Ottoman administration at local levels too, which manifested in local level as well, as the following example confirms this.

In the neighborhood of Prilep Bulgarian monks in their letter from November, 1909 complained about the violent expropriation of two monasteries (in Slapč and Zarze) by Serbian villagers in 1906. After the coup d'état of the CUP the state gave back the two monasteries to the Exarchate. But since the Serbs expropriated the properties, lands etc. of these monasteries, and the surrounding villages (Dabnica and Nebregovo) opposed to become exarchist and to support the monasteries with food,<sup>59</sup> the clergy had to ask for help from the Bulgarian state (for 100 Turkish lira = 2000 francs). The money was used to hire

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<sup>54</sup> ЦДА, ф. 331к. оп. 1. а.е. 351. л. 2-3.

<sup>55</sup> ÖHHStA PA, VII/Fasz.434, Heimroth to Eduard Otto, 30.07.1910., No.56/pol, 8.

<sup>56</sup> ÖHHStA PA, VII/Fasz.434, Adamkiewicz to Eduard Otto, 30.05.1909, No.44/pol, 8.

<sup>57</sup> On the question of ethno- and identity policy of the Balkan states see Konrad Clewing, *Nationalstaaten im multiethnischen Raum: Ethno- und Identitätspolitik*, in: Konrad Clewing / Oliver Jens Schmitt (hrsg.), *Geschichte Südosteuropas. Vom Mittelalter bis zur Gegenwart*. Regensburg 2011, 538-542.

<sup>58</sup> ÖHHStA 19. Nachlässe, Nachlaß August Kral, Kt.2, "Statistische Tabelle der Nationalitäts- und Religions-Verhältnisse im Vilajet Kossovo (1903)".

<sup>59</sup> Perhaps under the pressure of the Serboman Grigor's band stemming from Nebregovo mentioned in Part I, *Table 3*.

Albanians to collect the harvest from lands once belonging to the monasteries, then under cultivation by Serbian peasants. As a response, the Serbs also asked for armed assistance and resisted. The authorities of the sanjak and vilayet were unwilling to interfere into the debate.<sup>60</sup>

Beyond their tacit support Turkish authorities often collaborated with Serbian četas (as they meant smaller danger for the Ottoman state), and never initiated attacks on Serbian paramilitary troops according to the account of the Bulgarian Ikonov. Major Janusewski, Austro-Hungarian officer in Skopje also admitted to the Bulgarians, that Turks rather seemed to favour Serbs, than Bulgars. It was also Ikonov, who reasoned this, when he gave a detailed account on Mahmud Shevket pasha's opinion, expressed on February, 1908. According to the pasha only the Bulgarians (here the pasha meant the official Bulgaria) are responsible for the worsening of the situation in Macedonia: Bulgarians think, that the case of Macedonia is similar to that of Eastern Rumelia, but they are wrong, as the Macedonian question is an European diplomatic question.<sup>61</sup> This enlightens the Turkish fears, that after the withdrawal of Powers from the provinces a similar and quick process will take place in Macedonia, as happened in Eastern Rumelia.

Two parties were responsible for the local representation of Serbian interests in the Sanjak of Skopje: the Serbian National Club and the Constitutional Party. The differences between the views of the two organisations were not significant (the latter was more open towards the Ottoman government), the rivalry between them was based on the competition for financial sources. The debate on the distribution of financial support arriving from Serbia resulted in the division and opposition of villages as well. The two parties in Skopje and Kumanovo established local organizations and a skupština, which was the common organ of the Serbs in this sanjak. Based on Austro-Hungarian archival sources it seems, that contrary to their internal debates, the Serbian political organizations represented the Serb interests unanimously and unambiguously.<sup>62</sup>

A cooperation between local Serbs and Young Turks has already been experienced during the elections of 1908.<sup>63</sup> The Ottoman leadership of the sanjak used a peaceful tone towards local Serbs, although this tolerance did not mean the acceptance of the Serbian demands – sometimes Serbian leaders were also arrested, as everyone else, if the situation made it necessary.<sup>64</sup> Very often the central power remained neutral in Serbo-Bulgarian conflicts, or tended to support Serb claims in religious or educational issues even contrary to laws.<sup>65</sup> In return for their ignorance or negligence, Young Turks expected Serbian solidarity regarding the anti-Bulgarian measures initiated by the state.<sup>66</sup> This was characteristic in the

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<sup>60</sup> ЦДА, ф. 313к. оп.2. а.е. 10. л. 31.

<sup>61</sup> ЦДА, ф. 335к. оп. 1. а.е. 205. л. 112-125.

<sup>62</sup> ÖHHStA PA, VII/Fasz.434, Lukes to Pallavicini, 20.02.1909., No.19/pol, 8 and 26.03.1909., No.33/pol, 8.

<sup>63</sup> ÖHHStA PA, VII/Fasz.434, Lukes to Pallavicini, 05.10.1908., No.69/pol, 24.

<sup>64</sup> ÖHHStA PA, VII/Fasz.434, Adamkiewicz to Eduard Otto, 30.05.1909. No.44/pol, 8.

<sup>65</sup> The authorities ignoring the law supported the Serbs in the case of the debate between monasteries and peasant around Prilep.

<sup>66</sup> ÖHHStA PA, VII/Fasz.434, Adamkiewicz to Pallavicini, 05.05.1909., No.40/pol, 12.

whole Kosovo vilayet not only in the Sanjak of Skopje.<sup>67</sup> A Young Turk–Serbian cooperation also existed regarding the oppression of Albanian cultural demands especially in the western and northern regions of the vilayet, where the proportion of Albanian population was greater.<sup>68</sup>

The leaders of the local Serbian communities did not increase their aspirations, their aim was to secure the results already gained through a peaceful coexistence with CUP. Young Turks did not hinder the work of the skupština in the beginning. But the recognition of the Serbian national community and cultural rights were still missing from the relationship.<sup>69</sup> Another Serbian desire was to appoint a Serbian metropolite to Debar-Veles diocese and to get official governmental support for the Serbian propaganda.<sup>70</sup> So, the local Serbian policy was able to show its peaceful side as well to the new Ottoman government, but it did not resign or refrain from the usage of 'less peaceful non-parliamentary instruments'.<sup>71</sup>

Besides the moderate and relatively consolidated political relations between the Young Turks and Serbians, the debate about churches and schools produced more conflicts between Serbians and Bulgarians. The ecclesiastical conflict reached a new level in 1902, when a Serbian episcopate was established in the city of Skopje. The debate has been going on for years between patriarchists and exarchists for positions, institutions and souls, but the arrival of the new Serbian metropolite changed the situation and exacerbated the conflict,<sup>72</sup> because a diocese had to be detached from the Bulgarian episcopate, the churches and schools had to be redistributed, as well as his sphere of action had to be clarified.<sup>73</sup> This was very important, as national propaganda only reached as far as the organisation of the national Church did. Debate was going on about the rights over the 14 churches to be detached and on the right of the Serbian metropolite to establish new churches. The solution of the problem was hindered by the leaders of the vilayet as well: although they set up a committee to handle the question, but all the members of the committee were exarchists (Bulgarians), who opposed the Serbian wills, not to mention the hesitation of the local population that refused to be attached to a Serbian diocese.

The same reasons caused conflict regarding educational questions and schools, as these determined the national identity of the local communities.<sup>74</sup> When the Serbian metropolite wanted to increase his influence over churches, he also wanted to extend it over schools. The Serbian metropolite wished to establish 28 new schools with the support of the province leadership in those kazas that witnessed the most bitter and bloodiest fights

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<sup>67</sup> „Gegenwärtig sind sie [die Jungtürken; CsDK] jedoch bestrebt, speziell die Serben im Vilajet von Kossova, ohne dem eigenen Programme in irgend welcher Weise Abbruch zu tun, nach Möglichkeit zu befriedigen.“ ÖHHStA PA, VII/Fasz.434, Adamkiewicz to Eduard Otto, 30.15.1909., No.44/pol, 8.

<sup>68</sup> ÖHHStA PA, VII/Fasz.434, Adamkiewicz to Eduard Otto, 11.11.1909., No.78/pol, 6.

<sup>69</sup> ÖHHStA PA, VII/Fasz.434, Adamkiewicz to Pallavicini, 05.05.1909., No.40/pol, 12.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid. and Adamkiewicz to Eduard Otto, 30.05.1909., No.44/pol, 8.

<sup>72</sup> Another source of conflict was the vacancy of metropolite stallum in Skopje, since the rival Church always tried to hinder the elections. ÖHHStA PA, VII/Fasz.434, Adamkiewicz to Pallavicini, 07.03.1910., No.15/pol, 5.

<sup>73</sup> ÖHHStA PA, VII/Fasz.434, Lukes to Pallavicini, 11.12.1908, No.88/pol, 24.

<sup>74</sup> ÖHHStA PA, VII/Fasz.434, Lukes to Pallavicini, 26.03.1909., No.33/pol, 8.

between the Bulgarian and Serbian national propagandists (Kriva Palanka, Kumanovo, and in other territories of the vilayet: Tetovo, Gostivar).<sup>75</sup>

Another peculiarity of the situation is, that beyond the antagonism with Bulgarians, the Serbian metropolite also had conflicts with Belgrade and with one of the Serbian parties concerning the authority over schools. This ended in a compromise, and the Serbian Minister of Education agreed to give back schools financed by the Serbian state to the Serbian Church. This meant, that teachers were also replaced, and the system of requirements became standardised once again. This enlightens two facts: 1, the Serbian consulate was unable to maintain the school system and 2, since 1909 the Ottoman government had hindered the establishment of national clubs, many public activities were able to survive only under the aegis of the Church.<sup>76</sup> The conflict with the Constitutional Party was caused by the appeasement-policy of the latter, which was refused by the Serbian metropolite who supported the national club only. Villages under the dominance of the Constitutional Party were threatened by closing down the local schools.<sup>77</sup>

Beyond political and cultural demands, politicians tried to use economic instruments as well to improve Serbian positions by increasing the number of real estates in Serb hands. They decided to buy back lands formerly sold to Moslem owners, or lands of expelled Bulgarians, who could then never return. The needed financial support was given by the Serbian bank, Zadruga, that decided to establish 10 branch offices of savings banks in the Sanjak of Skopje. But as the approval of local Turkish authorities was missing, therefore the action was delayed.<sup>78</sup>

The conciliatory and moderate Serbian policy towards the Young Turks was by no means accidental. After 1908, due to their relatively small proportion and due to the fruitful Bulgarian denominational and national propaganda, the position of the Serbian minority had significantly weakened in the sanjak. The most obvious sign of this trend was that many Pravoslav inhabitants and villages that were counted as 'Serbians' in the eye of the active members of the Serbian national movement, became 'Bulgarians'. According to the Austro-Hungarian consulary reports, from 1909 on, the Serbian Voivodes in the sanjak and their irregular troops had committed more and more retributive murders in order to put an end to this tendency. The number of Serbian attacks against the 'Bulgarisierte Serben' increased mainly in Kriva Palanka, Kumanovo and Veles kazas. These attacks naturally triggered counter-actions by the IMRO.<sup>79</sup>

Concrete cases of hindering further Bulgarization were conscribed by Austro-Hungarian and Bulgarian consuls.<sup>80</sup> Serbian *voivodes* visited those villages, where the male population was working far away from their homeland (cases observed in Kriva Palanka,

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<sup>75</sup> Documents related to the opening of the new schools: ÖHHStA PA, VII/Fasz.434, Lukes to Pallavicini, 11.12.1908, No.88/pol, 24.

<sup>76</sup> ÖHHStA PA, VII/Fasz.434, Adamkiewicz to Pallavicini, 07.03.1910., No.15/pol, 5.

<sup>77</sup> ÖHHStA PA, VII/Fasz.434, Lukes to Pallavicini, 26.03.1909., No.33/pol, 7.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid. 8.

<sup>79</sup> ÖHHStA PA, VII/Fasz.434, Adamkiewicz to Eduard Otto, 30.05.1909, No.44/pol, 8.

<sup>80</sup> Sources for the above mentioned: ÖHHStA PA, VII/Fasz.434, Adamkiewicz to Pallavicini, 05.05.1909., No.40/pol, 12.

Kumanovo and Skopje kaza) to exert pressure on the local dwellers. According to the Bulgarian ambassador in Belgrade the following settlements were the most exposed to such violent Serbian propaganda: Orlandi in Kumanovo kaza, Bigor-Dolenci, Gorno Dolenci, Dvorci from the region of Kičevo. Beyond the presence of Serbian četas another problem was caused by the harassment of those on *pečalbarstvo*, Macedonians working in Belgrade or in Pirot. These migrating Macedo-Slavs were threatened by the withdrawal of their earnings or by hindering their free return to their homeland, unless they claim themselves Serbs (not to mention the constant threat that irregular troops may invade into their homeland). These workers were often compelled to ask for a written oath from their community in which the whole family or the community declared its loyalty to Serbdom. Mihail Georgiev asked for such a paper from his brother in Dvorci.<sup>81</sup> From village Orlandi more than 100 male persons were working in Belgrade by 1909. The Serbian government offered 3000 levas for their consent to open a Serbian school in Orlandi, and thus managed to get 68 supporters out of the 100.<sup>82</sup> This clearly enlightens the ratio of success of tough Serbian propaganda (68%).

Very often family-members turned against each other when they decided to adhere to a different national identity. The influence of national ideas was so strong, that personal decisions were able to destroy traditional family structures. The father of Theodosi Mihajlov, Mihail Krlev, a tailor in Kumanovo, was imprisoned due to his revolutionary and other wrongful (not political) activity, and was freed by amnesty in 1908. In order to restart his life and to educate his son he asked for material and financial support from the Bulgarian community in Kumanovo, but he was refused. After the refusal, he turned to the Serbomans in the same town, who gave him 10-15 Turkish lira (300 francs), and tasks also to promote Serbian propaganda. He accepted the conditions and soon he became totally Serbized. He decided, that his son, who was studying in a Bulgarian school, had to continue his studies in the Teachers Training College in Belgrade. Later in a četnik meeting he was advised to send his son into military school in Belgrade to become non-commissioned officer. His son refused to do so, and he asked for help from the Bulgarian consul in Belgrade, who promised him immunity and Bulgarian higher education in the Teachers' Training College in Kjustendil, if he gave him a proper account on his father's activity. According to the account of the son, the father was agitating in Pirot and Niš against Bulgarians, and forced/convinced Macedonian peasants searching for job to claim themselves Serbs, and sent them back to Orlandi and Orahovac (Kičevo) to agitate against Bulgaria. The father also eliminated Bulgarian agents, and informed Serbian police about private persons who were in correspondence with Bulgarians. For his activity he received monthly 80-100 francs (this equals with the monthly salary of a teacher in secondary schools). In this case both the necessity to subsist and the revenge against the former community (the Bulgarians), that refused to help, was a motivating factor.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> ЦДА, ф. 315к. оп. 2. а.е. 10. л. 7.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid. л. 21.

Violence decreased neither against the thin, but influential layer of intelligence: alongside with simple labourers, priests and teachers remained primary targets after 1908. In the spring of 1909 a Bulgarian teacher, Alexander Mankov was murdered in a Serbian raid (Rahovdol village, Veles kaza), and Alexandar, the Serbian teacher of Kozle (Skopje kaza, Zeleniko nahije) was also killed by Bulgarians in Novoselo. The Bulgarian Mane Miklarov, priest of Štip, was killed because he became a propagator of Serbian national ideas, while the sin of priest Aršov from Radibuš (kaza Kriva Palanka) was that he wanted to become Bulgarian. Even leaders of monasteries were convinced or bribed by money to change side. The *igumen* of the orthodox monastery in Stalkovce, who had earlier some debates with the local Bulgarian *starešinas* was offered a huge sum to claim himself Serbian. These methods were not specific and confined to the Sanjak of Skopje, the same events and methods occurred in elsewhere.

Contrary to other sanjaks of Kosovo vilayet, in the Sanjak of Skopje Serb politicians tried to improve their positions against Bulgarians through the Albanian question.<sup>84</sup> Since the CUP hesitated to fulfill the wishes of local Serbs, they tried to sharpen the tensions between Albanians and the CUP in this sanjak. It is noteworthy, that Albanian national clubs were often the organisational and supporting basis of CUP too, and the loss of Albanian sympathy could easily mean the shrinking of social layers supporting the CUP. The worsening of Albanian-Young Turk relationship was advantageous for the Serbs, as they thought, the CUP had to rely upon them after loosing the alliance of Moslem Albanians. The Serbs counted on the improvement of their negotiating positions through the escalation of Albanian-CUP tensions. That's why the local Serb newspaper, the Vardar called the Albanians brethren in March, 1909 and supported their will to implement the Latin alphabet.<sup>85</sup>

It seems, that official Serbia also tended to accept the regional interest of Serbs in Macedonia and did not want to pursue a policy without or opposing to the will of local Serbs. The *skupština* in Belgrade decided to pay recompensation for the former Moslem landowners. This friendly act had a positive response among the Moslems in the Sanjak of Skopje, providing a sphere to manoeuvre for local Serbian politicians.<sup>86</sup> Nevertheless, these 'soft methods' were rare.

Regarding the 'less moderate' means, it was primarily the Belgrade government that played an active role.<sup>87</sup> First, the number of band leaders arriving to the Sanjak of Skopje increased (in winter, 1909 it meant 28 bands), secondly the Serbian government wanted to improve the armament of irregular troops. One of the main target locations for the rifles, revolvers, explosives and ammunition arriving from Serbia was the Preševo-Gjilan-Kumanovo triangle, where the primary objective of Nikola Pašić's government was to arm up the

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<sup>84</sup> ÖHHStA PA, VII/Fasz.434, Adamkiewicz to Eduard Otto, 30.05.1909., No.44/pol, 8 and ibid. Adamkiewicz to Pallavicini, 07.03.1910. No.15/pol, 5.

<sup>85</sup> ÖHHStA PA, VII/Fasz.434, Lukes to Pallavicini, 26.03.1909., No.33/pol, 8.

<sup>86</sup> Details in the Vardar newspaper early spring of 1919. ÖHHStA PA, VII/Fasz.434, Lukes to Pallavicini, 26.03.1909., No.33/pol, 8.

<sup>87</sup> ÖHHStA PA, VII/Fasz.434, Lukes to Pallavicini, 20.02.1909, No.19/pol, 8.

Serbian population so they could defend themselves against Moslem attacks.<sup>88</sup> According to the Austro-Hungarian consulate in Skopje it was the local Serbian consul's responsibility to organise the transportation and distribution of weapons and to align the operation of the irregular troops. In order to make illegal weapon transportations more flexible, some Moslem officers of the police were bribed too.<sup>89</sup> It is important to note, that Bulgarian villages also got weapon transportations and ammunitions from Bulgaria with the help of the Church and consulates.<sup>90</sup> In Bulgarian villages local teachers (and perhaps priests and monks)<sup>91</sup> were responsible for the storage and distribution of weapons,<sup>92</sup> which affirms their significant role in reaching national goals.

The realisation of Serb national aspirations were promoted by the fact, that beyond the religious and educational conflicts the local Bulgarian population had to face with the rivalry manifested in fights between the different wings of the IMRO (leftists and former *vrhovists*). Ottoman authorities were also burdened and engaged by the orthodox assaults on *pomak* villages along the border, and this also provided for a larger sphere of manoeuvre for Serbs.<sup>93</sup>

Beyond the policy of official Serbia and the Macedonian Serb elite it is also worth analysing the survival strategies of the population at local level. We've already seen an example on individual level, in which son turned against father (Kraleve-case). Here a Bulgarian example was chosen to analyse the behavior of local communities.

Pusta-Bresnica is a small village located SW from Skopje, 5 hours walk from the sanjak center at the right bank of Vardar River in a mountainous area.<sup>94</sup> In this ethnically heterogeneous area, this Bulgarian settlement was surrounded by the Albanian-populated Sveta Petka, the Serbophil Zdunje, and the mixed Bulgarian-Turkish Jablica. The inhabitants of Pusta Bresnica were working on the *čiflik* of Ahmad bey, who has not visited his tenants for 15-20 years, only two *kehajas* were arranging the issues concerning the land and tenants. Villagers were ordered to give them accomodation and food, but *kehajas* had no juridical power over the village.<sup>95</sup> The inhabitants of the settlement had no land property, until the

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<sup>88</sup> Documents related to the weapon-smuggling: ÖHHStA PA, VII/Fasz.434, Heimroth to Eduard Otto, 15.08.1910, No.57/pol, 4.

<sup>89</sup> I.e. a so-called Ibrahim efendi in sanjak of Skopje was named. ÖHHStA PA, VII/Fasz.434, Heimroth Eduard Otto, 14.10.1910., No.73/pol, 8.

<sup>90</sup> ÖHHStA PA, VII/Fasz.434, Lukes to Pallavicini, 20.02.1909., No.19/pol, 8 and *ibid.* Rappaport to Pallavicini, 05.02.1908., No.9/pol, 12.

<sup>91</sup> Data from the sanjak of Prizren from 1910. ÖHHStA PA, XXXVIII/Kt.405, Prochaska to Berchtold, 27.08.1912., Nr.86.

<sup>92</sup> ÖHHStA PA, VII/Fasz.434, Heimroth to Eduard Otto, 30.07.1910., No.56/pol, 8 and *ibid.* 14.10.1910., No.73/pol, 8. It was probably similar in case of Serbian villages.

<sup>93</sup> ÖHHStA PA, VII/Fasz.434, Lukes to Pallavicini, 20.02.1909., No.19/pol, 8; *ibid.* Adamkiewicz to Pallavicini, 05.05.1909., No.40/pol, 12; *ibid.* Heimroth to Pallavicini, 04.11.1910., No.80/pol, 3 and *ibid.* Heimroth to Eduard Otto, 14.10.1910., No.73/pol, 8.

<sup>94</sup> The data source is an application of Pusta-Bresnica to the Bulgarian government from 1908-1909. ЦДА, ф. 335к. он. 1. а.е. 402. л. 8-10.

<sup>95</sup> When a teacher arrived to the village sent by the Serbian metropolite, the *kehajas* let him work, after they had been bribed. But the bey came to know the situation and forbid teaching. This case testifies the drawbacks of feudal hierarchy on local community – the villagers were able to influence/bribe only the *kehajas*, but not the bey, to whom they had no contact. The *kehajas* were to obey to the bey, the peasants to the *kehajas*,

bey offered them to buy his fields for 6000 Turkish lira – partly because of the problems mentioned earlier – which was bargained by the villagers to 4200 liras in three details. Villagers sold their draft animals and cut down woods to pay the price, but they were unable to settle the last 1000 liras (20 thousand francs). Villagers thought that the yearly tax was included in the price, but the bey refused to accept this condition. Therefore peasants asked for help from the Bulgarian state through the Bulgarian metropolite in Skopje. In their petition, villagers argued that Pusta Bresnica is the only Bulgarian village in the neighborhood, surrounded by settlements inhabited by other nations. The villagers emphasized the favourable geographical location of the settlement, as it was situated halfway between Kičevo (Poreč) and Skopje cutting communication lines between these two centers of Serbian agitation. As a drawback the settlement was under constant propagandistic siege of the Serbs.<sup>96</sup> Decades earlier identity and ethnic differences had no significance here – at least not for the bey and not from agricultural aspects – but due to the growing propaganda the importance of differences increased, and **commitment (even inclination)** to a national identity imposed threats as well. But villagers thought, that time had come to profit from their national identity beyond the many inconveniences it had caused. Emphasizing its loyalty to Bulgaria the village wanted a reward for the former miseries: the population required land and school to become self-subsistent and educated, thus villagers applied for the financial support of the Bulgarian state to get the missing 1000 liras. „*There is a state, where patriotism is still alive, and it would be the sign of governmental wisdom to send the sum to the metropolite.*”<sup>97</sup> In their application they drew the attention to the activity of the Serbian metropolite in Skopje, who tried to open a Serbian school at the settlement, but local people resisted up to now:<sup>98</sup> „*...Our village is a granite cliff, on which the Serbian propaganda always broke his neck up to now ... local people always defended their Bulgarian identity, although it created only drawbacks and disadvantages for them*”.<sup>99</sup> But Sofia refused to give financial aid on 6, Feb. 1909, referring to the laws.<sup>100</sup> This created a very unfavourable situation for the community, that had already begun the transaction and paid 2/3 of the total sum for the lands.

The question is why the Bulgarian government decided not to support the village. Was it the reason, that the settlement was standing alone isolated, surrounded by villages of different ethnicity and the government found it hopeless and not cost-effective to support such a community? Was it the main problem, that Pusta-Bresnica was located in the conflict

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therefore the ambitions of peasants failed. From rhetoric aspect it is also interesting that the case of the school was later appeared again in the document, but this time to prove the determination of villagers against Serbian propaganda.

<sup>96</sup> This was also a rhetoric exaggeration, the opposite was true about the significance of the location (see *Map 1*).

<sup>97</sup> ЦДА, ф. 335к. оп. 1. а.е. 402. л. 8-10.

<sup>98</sup> It was the bey, who refused the establishment of school and not the villagers. The villagers used up this argument once against the bey, once against the Serbs in a very clever way, which confirms our suspicion, that the petition was written not by local people, but by a literate person (a cleric), who studied rhetorics as well.

<sup>99</sup> ЦДА, ф. 335к. оп. 1. а.е. 402. л. 8-9.

<sup>100</sup> ЦДА, ф. 335к. оп. 1. а.е. 402. л. 15. 06.02.1909.

zone, where the influence of Serbia and Bulgaria was nearly equal? Did the Bulgarian state refrain from supporting insignificant localities on the right bank of the Vardar? Were supporting activities focused mainly on towns? Did the Bulgarian government suspend its support after the revolution of the CUP? Or simply, was the sum too high?

Perhaps all considerations were realistic, perhaps not. In 1907, when the church of Gostivar was violently taken away from the Bulgarian community, the Bulgarian government raised an objection, which means, that it was deeply concerned by events taken place on the other side of the Vardar.<sup>101</sup> Had Pusta-Bresnica located in the safe zone of Bulgarian influence, it should have been more reasonable not to support it. Settlements located in the safe zone and situated in the 'contested zone' got support at the same probability. The school of Gradec and Gorno Vodno on the right bank of the Vardar River got 350 levas from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 9, April, 1908, while Smilovci on the left bank got 600 levas on 13, November, 1908, through the National Bank.<sup>102</sup> Of course we do not know whether these sums were spent on educational purposes or simply covered the transportation and distribution of weapons. Nevertheless, the 20 thousand levas mentioned in the case of Pusta Bresnica seemed to be too high, but just one year ago the Bulgarian metropolite in Skopje got a similarly huge amount of money (6-7 thousand levas) for educational purposes – nevertheless there had been more pupils than in Pusta Bresnica.<sup>103</sup> Was the reason of refusal, that Sofia supported mainly ideological goals (churches, schools) and buying land was not among the supported activities? Maybe. But the villagers of Pusta Bresnica asked the money for purchasing land *and* establishing a school. Or the ambivalent rhetoric exaggerations of the application (school question, insignificance of location) became too obvious for the Bulgarian officials reading the document? Pusta Bresnica was located on the top of a mountain ridge, and effectively could not disturb the connection between the Serbs of Skopje and Poreč as villagers originally claimed.

Neither urban communities were always lucky to be supported. Even in Skopje the Bulgarian metropolite had to reason thoroughly, why he asked for financial support of the Bulgarian state, when he wanted to establish a new church in Čair Mahala, a precinct of Skopje. Although the Sultan gave a ferman which allowed the Bulgarian community to build a new exarchist church, he did not allot financial support, and up to 1911 the required sum was not collected from local supporters. The first main argument of the metropolite was that the church would be located in the outskirts of the city, therefore many villagers entering the town would use it and thus would become influenced by Bulgarian ideology. He astutely mentioned that the Serbs had offered financial aid, but the community had refused (that is some kind of blackmailing of the state, while emphasizing the loyalty of the population). And the last reason: if the church in the outskirts remains unfinished, the population would visit the church in Tophane Mahala, which is exposed to Serbian propaganda - since the other

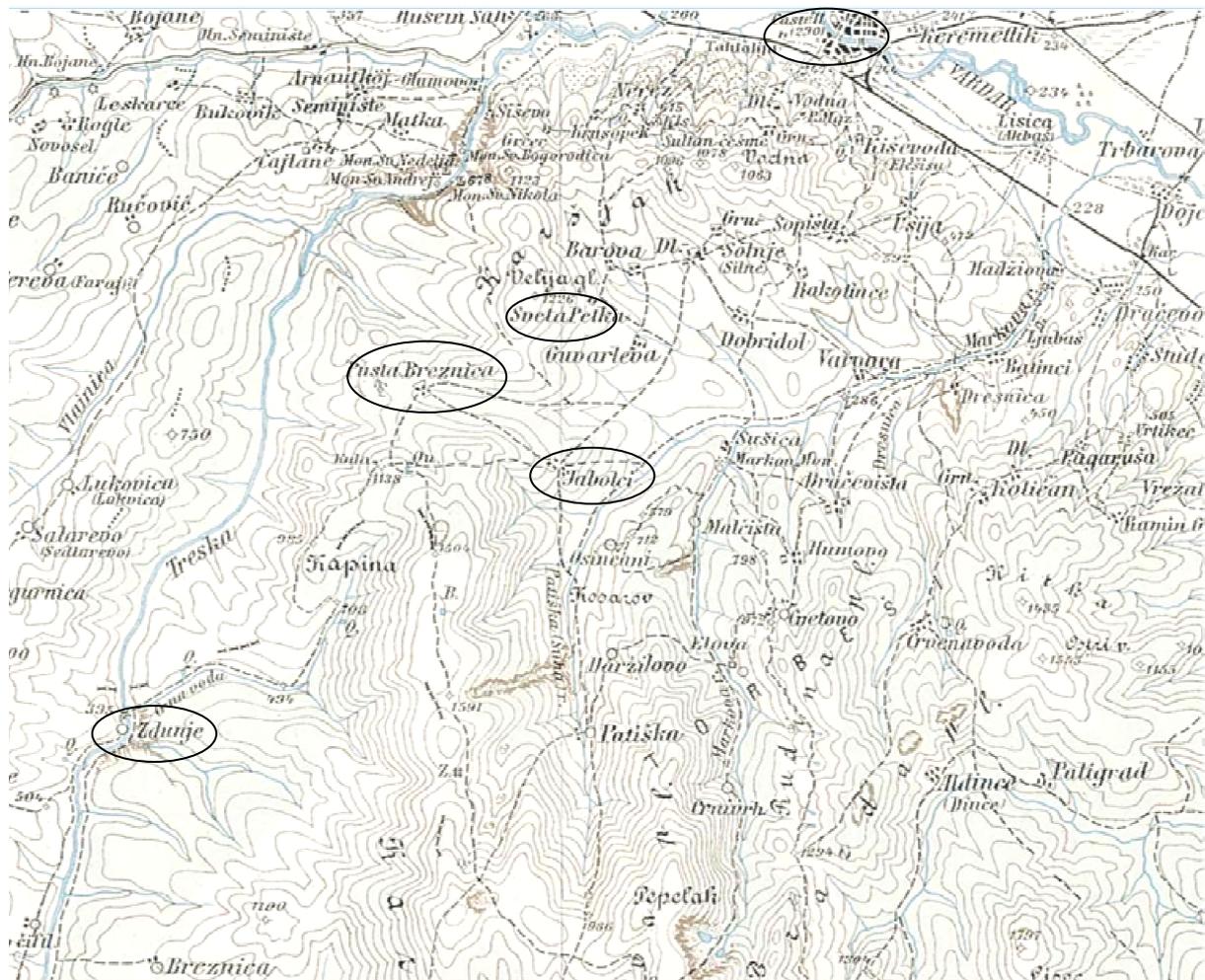
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<sup>101</sup> ЦДА, ф. 335к. оп. 1. а.е. 355. (1907)

<sup>102</sup> ЦДА, ф. 335к. оп. 1. а.е. 402. л. 5., л. 7., 04.09.1908., 13.11.1908.

<sup>103</sup> ЦДА, ф. 335к. оп. 1. а.е. 352. (1907)

exarchist church in the city centre is far away from Čair Mahala.<sup>104</sup> This case also enlightens the tactics of local communities as well.



Map. 1. The geographic location of Pusta-Breznica and its surroundings on the 3rd military mapping survey of Austria-Hungary (originally 1:200 000, cca. 1910) <http://lazarus.elte.hu/hun/digkonyv/topo/3felmeres.htm>

It is also possible that the answer had to be searched elsewhere. Similarly to Serbia, the Bulgarian government became aware of the fact, that *it was easier to destroy, than to create*. Churches, schools, lands needed large sums of investments and it was a very risky enterprise due to the spread of violence. Cultivation of land – compared to schools and churches – could not contribute to the deepening of Bulgarophil sentiments in the countryside in the long run. These cultural-infrastructure investments had small return-rate and efforts could be easily annihilated, ruined by violent acts. Therefore *construction was not considered cost-effective when financial sources are limited, contrary to destruction, which was cheaper, and fear can be as strong as national sentiments*. This recognition from 1908 on led to the escalation of violence, the unlimited intervention of paramilitary troops.

<sup>104</sup> ЦДА, ф. 335к. оп. 1. а.е. 402. л. 16., 10.06.1911.

The revolution of CUP, and soon the disappointment from the above analysed policy of Young Turks created a high-time for destruction. When in 1907 Serb bands around Štip and Kočani received 300 000 francs to promote the Serbization of villagers, this sum was not spent on purchasing land, erecting schools, as we have already mentioned, but on bribing or intimidating influential local people, and purchasing guns.<sup>105</sup> If the loyalty of a village could be bought by 20 thousand francs/leva<sup>106</sup> (it equals with the yearly grain-income of 20-30 peasants with 5 hectares of arable land, or with the salary of 20 officials, or with the yearly payment of 6 lieutenants), then the Serbs could buy 15 villages from the mentioned sum, which is not decisive regarding the power relations. Instead of doing this the Serbs decided to create self-supporting četas (buying weapons, kidnapping people, requisiting sheep, etc.) by relying on the financial aid of the Serbian state. Under these circumstances it would have been a futile effort to maintain the old-fashioned support system for the Bulgarian government.

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During 1911, the internal crisis of the Ottoman Empire deepened further. The reports of the Austro-Hungarian consuls focused almost only on violent acts. In May, 1912 at least 4 Serbian četas arrived to the territory of the Sanjak of Skopje from Vranje.<sup>107</sup> Irregular Bulgarian troops enhanced their activity against state property and officials, paralyzing communication lines and infrastructure (post offices, banks, railroad, etc.).<sup>108</sup> State officials were unable to defend themselves, military forces were also under constant harassment. The authorities were so demoralised (partly because of being unpaid for months), that bands could appear in the center of towns in groups, with weapons even by daylight. At night local inhabitants refrained from staying on the streets, only the gendarmerie and military troops were in patrol, often clashing with infiltrating paramilitary units.<sup>109</sup>

The Serb political groups - unlike četa members - tried to maintain good relations with the authorities,<sup>110</sup> while Serbian bands were engaging into ethnic cleansing along the border, targeting Bulgarian priests. Assaults became more and more brutal. A četa numbering more than a hundred members expelled Exarchist/Bulgarian monks from Karpina monastery.<sup>111</sup> Contrary to the fact, that Serbian-Bulgarian negotiations on diplomatic cooperation and military alliance (the Balkan League) were rumoured,<sup>112</sup> along the border a 'bellum omnium contra omnes' was about to evolve: Bulgarian, Serbian and Ottoman bands and military forces were fighting against each other, destroying harvest, pillaging villages

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<sup>105</sup> ЦДА, ф. 335. оп. 1. а.е. 396. л. 5-6.

<sup>106</sup> The sum that Pusta-Breznica asked for.

<sup>107</sup> Ivan Babunski and 14 men were around Veles, Stojčo vojvoda was Skopska Crna Gora, Todor Algunski - formerly teacher in Kumanovo – „visited” his hometown, while the četa of Boško vojvoda turned against Prilep. ЦДА, ф. 331к. оп. 1. а.е. 367. л. 6.

<sup>108</sup> ÖHHStA PA, VII/Fasz.434, Heimroth to Franz Kolossa, 04.06.1911., No.26/pol, 2.

<sup>109</sup> ÖHHStA PA, VII/Fasz.434, Heimroth to Pallavicini, 22.11.1911., No.58/pol, 4.

<sup>110</sup> „Die Serben aber zeigten den Türken gegenüber [...] viel Rücksicht und Zurückhaltung – ich möchte fast sagen Freundschaft.“ ÖHHStA PA, VII/Fasz.434, Heimroth to Pallavicini, 05.02.1911., No.6/pol, 12.

<sup>111</sup> ÖHHStA PA, VII/Fasz.434, Heimroth to Pallavicini, 05.02.1911., No.6/pol, 12.

<sup>112</sup> Austrian consuls also came to know this (but not the conditions of cooperation): ÖHHStA PA, VII/Fasz.434, Heimroth to Pallavicini, 05.02.1911., No.6/pol, 12.

considered as hideouts,<sup>113</sup> intimidating the local population considered as a reserve for Bulgarian troops.<sup>114</sup>

The population was deprived, demoralised – villagers quit complaining on evil-doers at the authorities, because they feared of immediate punishment, and violence that raged across the land has also paralyzed the courage of authorities.<sup>115</sup> Even the Bulgarian government had officially declared already in January, 1912 that it was unable to hinder the activity of Bulgarian bands any more.<sup>116</sup> Grown men would rather become četa members to pursuit everyday violence, than to suffer from it. This general tendency was catalysed by the disarmament action of the military forces in the previous years: if villagers wanted to defend themselves, they had to join a band, since there were no weapons at home any more. Another type of reaction was of Albanians', unleashing a revolt in each year after 1910. Their activity became more and more ethnicized and by the end of 1911 it evolved to a national movement irrespective of denominational differences among Albanians. The major cohesive force of these multi-religious groups was the cultural demand regarding educational and official emancipation of Albanian language and the demand of territorial autonomy.

The *vali*, Hadi pasha personally visited the main center of crisis leading a loyal army to punish atrocities. He did not make distinction between Christians and Moslems. But violent instruments, executions and arrestments could not bring relief any more. As a result of a conflict in January, 1911, in Štip kaza 76 Bulgarians were punished: 6 were condemned to death, many were sentenced to lifetime imprisonment.<sup>117</sup> By the end of 1911 the situation has worsened in some kazas so much, that even the vali did not dare enter. (Kratovo, Štip, Veles!).<sup>118</sup>

The units of gendarmerie and military forces were in constant motion, but were unable to engage into battle with the guerillas. Minor weapon storages were eliminated, some assaults were hindered, but troops were unable to pacify the territory.<sup>119</sup> Due to the pressure, the reliability of officers and enrolled privates was questioned. The demoralization of Ottoman forces is indicated by the fact, that between June and December 1911 Bulgaria gave shelter for more than 20 soldiers deserting the army. Not only Macedo-Bulgarians, but also Anatolian Christians (2), Rumelian (6) and even Anatolian Moslems crossed the border.<sup>120</sup> The leaders of the sanjak and vilayet gave up their last forlorn hope to settle the

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<sup>113</sup> ÖHHStA PA, VII/Fasz.434, Heimroth to Pallavicini, 28.07.1912., No.52/pol, 6.

<sup>114</sup> ÖHHStA PA, VII/Fasz.434, Heimroth to Pallavicini, 22.12.1911., No.58/pol, 4.

<sup>115</sup> ÖHHStA PA, VII/Fasz.434, Heimroth to Pallavicini, 22.12.1911., No.58/pol, 4.

<sup>116</sup> ЦДА, ф. 331k. оп. 1. 371. л. 1. Beyond being unable to make an end of this mayhem, the Bulgarian government did not want to give space for Serbian agitation among the intimidated population. Furthermore, Bulgarian četas were preparing the area for the invasion of the Bulgarian army, since the government decided to wage war against Turks when time has come.

<sup>117</sup> ÖHHStA PA, VII/Fasz.434, Heimroth to Pallavicini, 05.02.1911., No. 6/pol, 12.

<sup>118</sup> ÖHHStA PA, VII/Fasz.434, Heimroth to Pallavicini, 22.12.1911., No.58/pol, 4.

<sup>119</sup> ÖHHStA PA, VII/Fasz.434, Heimroth to Franz Kolossa, 04.06.1911., No.26/pol, 2.

<sup>120</sup> The massive character of desertation is indicated by the fact that for this purpose the Bulgarian government had to create even a new type of registration sheet to quicken the pace of administration. ЦДА, ф. 335k. оп. 1.

questions, when the most reliable *nizam* units of the province were sent to Jemen to put down the rebellion there.<sup>121</sup> The agony of central power was aborted by the outbreak of Balkan Wars.

Summarising the above mentioned events we can draw the conclusions that

- *the borders between the different types of violent actions triggered either by ecclesiastical and school conflicts or customs law gradually faded;*
- *the supporting policy of small states has irreversibly shifted from construction to destruction;*
- *the activity of the irregular troops was limited only by the change of seasons (neither Ottoman authorities, nor the withdrawal of support could stop them any more;*
- *četas became highly organised and self-subsistent groups by getting involved in agriculture (opium, tobacco, smuggling) or by expropriating state and private properties;*
- *beyond troops pursuing the national ideas, ethnically and religiously mixed mercenary bands also subsisted and were applied;*
- *the representatives of the state did not even attempt to handle the economic and political problems. Their violent and intolerant interference, contrary to the temporary successes, hastened the escalation of conflicts into anarchy;*
- *the 'usual' social conflicts (between public officers and citizens, security forces and inhabitants etc.) also got out of control,<sup>122</sup> and were overshadowed by the new types of conflicts;*
- *the nationalistic movements declared total warfare in which – compared to the years prior to 1903 – not only the Ottoman administration or military forces and the active members of the movements (ideologists, like teachers, priests) were considered as targets, but passive masses also, as they could provide shelter, information, ammunition, economic base for the rivals;*
- *the economy has collapsed by 1912 – fields remained uncultivated due to the violence wave, which triggered emigration.*

On the eve of the First Balkan War there was no functioning state administration and economy in the sanjak of Skopje.

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a.e. 435. Deserters were mainly privates of 18-26 years. In this archival unit only one Bulgarian soldier, Sakir Sabanov, a Moslem of origin from Radomir deserted to Turkey.

<sup>121</sup> ÖHHStA PA, VII/Fasz.434, Heimroth to Pallavicini, 22.12.1911., No.58/pol, 4.

<sup>122</sup> ÖHHStA PA, VII/Fasz.434, Rappaport to Pallavicini, 28.01.1908, No.5/pol, 14.