

Albanian-Bulgarian relations during the Balkan Wars and the Albanian-Macedonian uprising ('Third Balkan War', 1913)¹

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This contribution focuses on 2 major questions. From methodological aspect - in the first part - we aim to examine what differences or contradictions in the reconstruction of events can appear, when different source-types are used as basis of reconstruction. To trace and reveal these differences, thus the reliability of single sources, the facts and data derived from the documents of HHStA, ИЦИА and DSPKS were compared. Although our contribution is focusing mainly on Bulgarian sources and role, in the introduction we shall stress, that due to the numerous differences one source is not enough to reconstruct the events.

There was a historiographical debate going on whether Austria-Hungary was involved in the Albanian uprising or not. The Serbian newspapers and the government in his official communications to the western Powers in 1913 assumed, that the Albanian-Macedonian uprising (or third Balkan War) was strongly supported by Austria-Hungary. (However, internal diplomatic reports admitted, that Austria was not behind the events). But, surprisingly, the Austrian archives lack almost any concrete information on the well-established Macedonian-Bulgarian cooperation during the uprising, meaning that Austria-Hungary was underinformed in this question. Therefore it is not plausible, that Austria-Hungary prepared or strongly supported this movement (although anyway it supported the Albanian national movement). Austrian documents say almost nothing on the activity of cheta leaders, like Petar Chaulev, Oshavkov or Jane Sandansky; the travel of Hasan Prishtina to Sofia is reported only after the events (as harbors were closed down, telegraph centers were ruined by Esad Pasha, to control information). The dubious evidence on the activity of lieutenant Markov – a Bulgarian officer reported from Albania prior to the uprising - is based on the report of diplomatic agent in Serbia, Storck, who was deceived by a Serbian disinformation-campaign, (even secret Bulgarian sources wrote nothing on this soldier).

As a consequence, it is evident, that based on purely Austrian documents the history of the Albanian uprising cannot be reconstructed. But, on the contrary the same Austrian documents provide masses of information regarding Albanian-Serbian relations during 1913. Another difference between the 3 sources is, that published Serbian documents wrote nothing about atrocities committed, while Bulgarian sources collect the number of pillaged settlements. The third difference is, that Serbian documents state (probably as a propaganda to western Powers) that official Albania was behind the events, which is not confirmed, but denied by Bulgarian and Austrian sources. Serbian sources reveal that Serbs were aware of the preparation of an Albanian uprising, but underestimated the number of refugees (putting it only to 20 thousand), who served as a basis of revolt. And the differences can be enumerated further, the major facts and beliefs derived from the three source-types are summarised in the following table. A comparison of Albanian archival sources with the Bulgarians regarding the role of the above mentioned personalities may help in clarifying the debated questions.

Facts on Bulgarian role in the Albanian uprising based on Austrian, Serbian and Bulgarian sources

HHStA (based on the collection of Krisztián Csaplár-Degovics)	ИЦИА, Georgiev, G., Georgiev, V. Gocev, D. Arhivite govorjat, etc.	Serbian documents: Spoljnoj politici... (DSPKS)
	- In the early days of 1912	- nothing on atrocities

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Albanian collaboration with Serbia: Fehim bey Zavalani, Hamit Toptani (April, 1913) - Sandanski arrives to Albania in June - Serbia thinks, that he is sent by official Bulgaria - Serbia is not afraid of an alliance between Bulgaria and Albania <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hasan Bey Prishtina travels to Sofia with Sandansky in July, 1913 to negotiate on joint military actions - Markov Bulgarian lieutenant arrives to Albania, dispatch captured by Essad Toptani (only one telephone center), reported to the Serbs (not confirmed by Bulgarian sources) - Milan Matov, Stefan Hodo, Petâr Chaulev, Krsta Trajchev és Petâr Randlejov are in Elbasan - uprising in Krçova, Kjuštendil, Kiçevo, Radovište after the occupation of Ohrid - Ohrid was occupied by IMRO activists - contrary to the will of Kemal but in accordance with the ministers Hasan Prishtina travels to Dibra after the uprising – refugee question - separate lists on atrocities (not summarized) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hasan Bey Prishtina asked the IMRO to contribute to the Albanian revolt against the Ottoman Empire <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - in April, 1913 Chaulev and Todor Pavlov were sent to negotiate with Kemal - they were substituted by Sandanski in June - Serb counteragents arrive to bid over Bulgarian offers - official Turkey and Albania: strong protest against negotiation with Sandanski (bandit) - assembly of ministers and warlords in Valona in June - Serbs and Greeks offer: Dibra and Argirokastro to be Albanian to hinder Albanian-Bulgarian rapprochement - Essad and Kemal refused the idea of an uprising, both believe in diplomatic modification of borders - after the failure of diplomatic efforts Essad accuses Kemal of treason - another assembly of Albanian chieftains in July <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hasan Prishtina and Sandansky travels to Bulgaria in July to negotiate with Bulgaria - Oshavkov travels to Tirana to organise the uprising in Dibra - Essad wants to wait till Bajram with the uprising - Sandanski travels to Italy and Hungary - Chaulev reports to A. Protogerov, T. Alexandrov and to N. Genadiev, Foreign Minister of Bulgaria - activity of Oshavkov in Dibra described - accurate list of Pavlov and Muricchio on atrocities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - unsuccessful plan to bribe Isa Boletini (April, 1913) - Serbia tries to buy Slavs in Dibra to support Serbian rule (tax exemption, April, 1913) - Kemal talks with Jovanovic: Albanians believe, that in London Albania will get favourable borders - Albania as the member of the Balkan League (April, 1913) - Essad Toptani's strong relation with Serbia, keeping away Austria from Albania <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - in June Serbia asks Montenegro to divert the attention of N-Albanians from attacking Macedonia - early July: Balugcic in Albania: Serbian-Albanian union plan, Young Turks, Arif Hikmet - end of August, Essad Toptani's advices: confiscation + retreat behind Crni Drin - Sandansky and Hasan Prishtina in Vlora and in Sofia - number of refugees underestimated (20 thousand), Serbia is unprepared for uprising - Bulgarian agitation in Elbasan - Albania is unable to conclude an agreement with Bulgaria - Albanian government is behind the uprising - Austria is behind the uprising (newspapers) - Austria is not behind the events (internal diplomatic documents) - bands are organised by Albanians (Dervish Hima) paid by Austria - agreement between Montenegro and Boletini on neutrality in case of war - Bulgarian officer in Albania: Markov - Ohrid is occupied by Bulgarians IMRO and MOO members - military alliance against Albania is refused by Greeks (Turkey)
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The second part of the study deals with the changes in Bulgarian-Albanian relations from 1908 to the end of the „third Balkan War”, the Albanian-Macedonian uprising. In order to reconstruct the events from Bulgarian and Macedonian point of view, beyond the articles of Velichko Georgiev and Georgi Georgiev, the diary of Petar Chaulev and the reports of Todor Pavlov, participants of the events were used.

Albanian-Bulgarian relations, or better to say one-sided Bulgarian concepts on Albania came into the focus of interest after the annexation crisis, when Bulgaria was searching for allies after the declaration of its independence. Ferdinand, Tsar of Bulgaria offered his support to Austria-Hungary in creating a viable Albania in 1909 to keep Serbia off the Adriatic. Bulgaria in turn wanted to get free hand in Macedonia. But the maintenance of Turkey was such a stable point in the Austrian diplomacy

that time, that these offers were rejected several times prior to 1912,² although later this, the creation of an independent Albanian state became a necessity for the Dual State to substitute Turkey. Turkey (better to say: status quo) was so important to the dual state that time, that it did not accept the plan, however, this refusal definitely meant a Bulgarian-Serbia rapprochement – which Austria-Hungary wanted to avoid.

Prior to 1912 the activity of Albanian bands (led by i.e. Mersim Dema, Halil Kaljosh) was considered hostile towards the exarchist population based on the tone and content of many Bulgarian consular reports.³ But, in the early days of 1912 Hasan Bey Prishtina asked the IMRO and official Bulgaria to contribute to the Albanian revolt against the Ottoman Empire.⁴ According to documents, he came up with the plan of creating an autonomous province from Albanian and Macedonian sanjaks.⁵ The Albanian-Bulgarian cooperation was then failed, because the Bulgarians (especially the government) were afraid of creating an autonomous Greater Albania under the suzerainty of the Sultan, that incorporates vilayets with Macedonian population, as it could serve the interest of the Dual Monarchy, while hindering Macedonia's future incorporation into Bulgaria. This was clearly expressed in a letter written by the Central Committee of the IMRO to the Bulgarian Prime Minister. The lack of strong ties between the IMRO and the Albanian movement in 1912 is confirmed by the fact, that Albania was not mentioned in the compilation of the writings of the Central Committee up to 1, August, 1913.⁶

² Österreich-Ungarns Aussenpolitik. Eds.: Bittner, L. - Pribram, A. F. - Übersberger, H. Wien, Österreichischer Bundesverlag für Unterricht, Wissenschaft und Kunst, 1930. Bd. I. Nr. 893 and Nr. 895.

³ See: Georgiev, V. – Trifonov, Sz.: Istorija na Balgarite v dokumenti. Tom 1. 1878-1912. Chast vtora. See documents cited on p. 328. and p. 327. These Albanian leaders later were struggling together with the Bulgarians against the Serbs.

⁴ Georgiev, G.: Bezhanskijat vapros v Albanija i Balgarskata humanitarna akcija prez 1912 g. Makedonski Pregled, 35, 2012/1. p. 56.

⁵ See: http://www.albanianhistory.net/texts20_2/AH1921_3.html by Robert Elsie. Hasan Prishtina to the Bulgarian deputy in Skopje, Pavlov: *“Since the 1908 Constitution, the Turks have been and are committing massacres in Albania and Macedonia. They have never shown any respect for the rights of the Albanians and Bulgarians. The terror that they are exerting is getting worse and worse and they are pursuing exclusively pan-Turkish policies. I believe that the time has come to throw off this cruel yoke by means of a joint uprising with a view to creating an autonomous Albanian-Macedonian state.”*

⁶ Vatrashnata makedono-odrinska revolucionna organizacija. (1893-1919). Dokumenti na centralnite rakovodni organi. Tom. 2. Arhivite govorjat, 46. Nr. 366. January, 1913. *‘Albanskata dvizhenie, se javi s neimoverni pretencii odnosno etnograficheska granica na Albanija, i koeto se nasarchava ot edna velika sila i tolerizashe ot izvestni turski kragove ot druga, predizvikaha obshto opasenie v balkanskite darzhavi koeto gi obedini.’*

Another problem was the fact, that the Christian Albanians wanted autonomy guaranteed by all Great Powers.⁷ The interference of Powers in Macedonia and Albania was something, that the Balkan League also wanted to avoid, therefore an alliance with Albanians was not desired. Not to mention the fact, that in case of the involvement of Albania into the alliance - based on the principle of nationality - Kosovo would have become a disputed area, reducing Serbia's territorial aggrandisement and its will to cooperate with the League members against Turkey. Contrary to these considerations, Ferdinand, Tsar of Bulgaria repeated his offer to the Monarchy in June 1912 to create a Greater Albania.⁸ This could have meant the total denial of Serbian pretensions contrary to the principles of the Serbo-Bulgarian treaty already signed in March, 1912, therefore the Bulgarian government protested against the plans of the tsar. That time the protogerovists of the IMRO⁹ were not thinking of a cooperation



with Albanians. They were in the opinion, that the organisation should appease with the policy of official Bulgaria, as Bulgaria was fighting for Macedonia and not to dismember it.¹⁰ They tried to convince the Bulgarian elite not to resign even from the contested zone. In this respect, the disputed zone in Macedonia was more important (and more of Bulgarian character) than the area west from the Vardar river. According to their data sent to I. E. Geshov, more Bulgarians live in Skopje, than in i.e. Prilep, Veles or in Bitola, where 18 thousand inhabitants out of 38 thousand were Turks, Albanians, while in Kumanovo

(north) even according to Serbian sources 5000 Bulgarian houses could be enumerated, while only 315 are Serbomans. Contrary to this, only 32 thousand inhabitants of the 80 thousand are Bulgarians around Gostivar and Tetovo, the area where the joint Albanian-Macedonian uprising later broke out. An other account shows how instable was the national consciousness or national identity, if even the leaders of the IMRO were thinking that *'in five years the youngsters will be Serbs and Greeks'*, if the territory became dismembered.¹¹

Prior to the signature of the London Peace Treaty (30, May, 1913) neither the IMRO, nor official Bulgaria wanted tight relations with the Albanian movements: Bulgarian ambassadors even raised the idea of the partition of Albania in 1913, aspiring for Berat and Valona, if the state was not functioning as a viable entity.¹² However, as the relation between the allies was worsening, Albanian military capacity became more and more important for Bulgaria. Therefore Bulgarians believed the hoax, when Husein Hilmi Pasha on behalf of the Ottoman Turkey had promised 50 thousand

⁷ Vatrashnata makedono-odrinska revolucionna organizacija ... Nr. 261. 19, March, 1912.

⁸ Ö-U.A. IV. Nr. 3549. 1st, June, 1912. „... Ein kulturfähiges Volk von 3 Millionen.“

⁹ A wing of the IMRO led by T. Alexandrov and A. Protogerov, who relied upon Bulgarian support, and fought for the unification of Macedonia with Bulgaria (more or less opposing to Sandansky, preferring and autonomous Macedonia).

¹⁰ Vatrashnata makedono-odrinska revolucionna organizacija ... Nr. 372. pp. 1056-1057. 18, July (1 August), 1913. and Nr. 364. p. 1043. 14 (27.) January, 1913.

¹¹ Ibid. The principle of nationality was a key element in the argumentation of the Bulgarian government, which (beyond historical arguments) also referred to San Stefano, and to the Tirnovo Constitution, which was accepted by Macedonians. In case of Albanians the principle of religion (Moslem inhabitants) was added to the principle of nationality, while the Serbs could refer to economic interests and historical arguments.

¹² „The Montenegrin delegates - as they were not brave enough to complain openly on Serbs - advised to dismember Albania together, so we might get Berat and Valona“ – wrote Danev from the peace negotiations in London. ЦДА, ф 176 к. оп.2. а.е. 1369. л. 147.; and ЦДА, ф 176 к. оп.2. а.е. 1369. л. 140. 20/05 (02/06) / 1913. See also: „Za sega nas ni interesuva povedenieto na Sărbija, a v po-dalechno bădeshte, sădbata na Albanija, ako tja se откаже ne zhiznenosposobna. V părvija sluchaj, ako Sărbija potăpche dogovora i ni napadne, i v rezultat, Bălgarija poluchi po-izgodna granica sprjamo neja, kakto i v vtorija sluchaj, ako Bălgarija izleze na Adriaticeskoto more, spored moeto mnenie, mozhe da se obeshtae na Rumănija kompensacija, kato se gleda, shtoto v părvija sluchaj da obhvashta samo sărbska teritorija...“ ЦДА, ф 176 к. оп.2. а.е. 1369. л. 53.

Albanians to revolt against the Serbs, if war was provoked between the allies.¹³ The possibility of a Bulgarian-Albanian cooperation was also threatening for Greece and Serbia. Rumours spread across the League-members, that Greater Bulgaria and Greater Albania will be realised together and a map showing the result was propagated in these states to enhance enthusiasm against Bulgaria and Albania.¹⁴

Prior to the second Balkan War Serbia wanted to avoid a Bulgarian-Albanian alliance, therefore Pašić tried everything to improve Serbian-Albanian relations. Some Albanians living in the occupied territories tended to cooperate with the Serbs (Kenan bey, Izet Zavalani, Xhelal Ohrid bey). Beyond sending his appointee, Balugdzhić to Ismail Kemal, Pašić also trusted Fehim Bey Zavalani from Bitola and Hamit Toptani in April, 1913 to collect information and to promote the the position of the Serbian heir apparent, as a candidate for the Albanian throne. (This could have solved the Serbian problems regarding the outlet to the sea).¹⁵ During July, 1913, when travelling from Bitola to Tirana, Balugdzhić was used by Pašić once more, this time to promote the plan of Albanian-Serbian personal union.¹⁶ Zavalani hoped for a Serbian victory in case of an interallied war, since in that case Pašić promised him to offer the modification of the Albanian-Serbian border (the left side of Crni Drin), if Serbia acquired Macedonian territories from Bulgaria.¹⁷ Pašić was also hoping for the collapse of the 'orthodox' government and the emergence of the 'Moslem' Essad into power by using up Arif Hikmet and the Young Turks.¹⁸

From the diary of Petar Chaulev it is well-known that the Bulgarian government tried to arrange a rapprochement between Albania and Bulgaria through the mission of Jane Sandansky in 1913.¹⁹ Sandansky's activity was later written in the papers, like *Secolo*.²⁰ When the Serbs came to know his activity, immediately Serbian agents were sent to Ismail Kemal to bid over Bulgarian offers. Furthermore, the sheikülislam warned the Albanian government not to negotiate with a murderer (here he meant Sandansky). That also hindered Bulgarian-Albanian rapprochement.²¹

A Bulgarian-Albanian (and a Macedonian-Albanian) cooperation was only realised after the failure of the second Balkan War,²² after the Bucharest Peace Treaty. In his official report on Albanian events, the above mentioned Todor Pavlov, Bulgarian consul in Valona (Vlora) gave more details on Bulgarian-Macedonian participation in the Albanian uprising during the autumn of 1913, focusing on the activity of the Bulgarian cheta leader, Oshavkov. This report, dated on 19, Nov. 1913

¹³ ЦДЈА, ф 176 к. оп.2. а.е. 1369. л. 275. 27 May / 9 June / 1913.

¹⁴ Cassavetti, D. J.: *Hellas and the Balkan Wars*, 1914. pp. 314-316.

¹⁵ ÖHHStA PA XII/422/6i, Ugron an Berchtold, Belgrád, 08. 04. 1913., No. 75 B. and Ibid. Beilag: Adamkiewitz an Rappaport, 07. 04. 1913.

¹⁶ ÖHHStA PA XII/422/6i Halla an Berchtold, Monastir, 04. 07. 1913., No. 84.

¹⁷ ÖHHStA PA XII/422/6i, Kral an Berchtold, Saloniki, 01. 08. 1913., No. 141., 1-2.

¹⁸ The proposed counter-government: Essad Toptani, Dervish Bej Elbasani, Kadri Bej Pekini, Ahmed Bej Matli. See: ÖHHStA PA XII/422/6i, Kral an Berchtold, Saloniki, 01.08. 1913., No. 141., 5-6. és Ibid. Halla an Berchtold, Monastir, 07. 08. 1913., No. 97., 3-5.

¹⁹ Georgiev, V.: *Ohridskoto vastanie ot 1913 godina prez pogleda na negoviya glavnokomandvasht Petar Chaulev*. *Izvestija na Darzhavnite Arhivi*, 72. pp. 169-170. For the official report of Chaulev see: *НАБАВ* f. 175. op. 1 a.e. 51. Sandansky tended to accept the concept of Greater Bulgaria only because it was still better, than a division of Macedonia, originally he was a protagonist of the autonomy.

²⁰ Gocev, D.: *Nacionalno-osvoboditelnoto borba v Makedonija 1912-1915*. Sofija, Izd. na Balgarsaka Akademija na Naukite. 1981. p. 123.

²¹ Georgiev, V.: *Ohridskoto vastanie...* p. 169.

²² The members of the IMRO were well-informed about what was going to happen, and this explains the immediate activity of the chetas in Macedonia after the outbreak of hostilities. Todor Alexandrov in his letter to the leaders of the IMRO before the outbreak of the interallied war in 10 (23), June 1913 had informed his fellow revolutioners that the Bulgarian government was tending to accept the possibility of the war, but still hoped to achieve an international (not solely Russian) arbitration. Petar Chaulev's cheta captured few hundred Serbs in the first days of the second Balkan Wars. See: *Vatrasnata makedono-odrinska revolucionna organizacija...* Nr. 371. p. 1055.

also gave accounts on Serbian atrocities committed in the Ljuma region using the sources of Vincenzo Muricchio, who was earlier the chief-organiser of gendarmerie in Ohrida.²³

In this document Pavlov mentions, that during June, 1913, prior to the beginning of the second Balkan War the Albanians were still thinking of organising an uprising in Kosova and Dibra.²⁴ Unfortunately the realisation of idea was in delay: for a successful military cooperation between Bulgaria (here referring to the official Bulgaria) diplomatic talks had to be initiated earlier, in April, as originally were planned. But we have seen, that these negotiations failed due to the lack of appreciated personalities among the Bulgarians, and to the unwillingness of the Bulgarian government.

The organisers of the uprising, Isa Boletini from Gusinje, Bajram Curri from Djakova, Salih Hodzha from Elbasan and the Bulgarian Grigor Oshavkov from Dibra (formerly the officer of the Makedono-Odrinskoto Opalchenie) met Ismail Kemal in Valona in June. Kemal, who wanted to avoid adventures and did not want his policy be compromised in the eyes of the Powers, did not oppose the plan openly, but advised to ask other chieftains whether to wait until the end of the Balkan Wars or not. Many of the Albanian leaders responded, that the lack of weapons and ammunition did not afford to start the uprising immediately, parallel with the Bulgarian activity, others were on the opinion that the Powers would modify preliminary borders and give Dibra to Albania in London, so fighting was needless.

This hope regarding Dibra is interesting, because the Powers had already decided to give Dibra to Serbia. But another information confirmed that the hope that Dibra might be Albanian was not without any basis. Chaulev in his diary gave account on an assembly of Albanian ministers in June, where the Greek and Serbian deputation (led by Balugdzhich) was promising Korçe, Argirokastro, Djakova and Dibra to Albania, if the latter remained neutral in case of an interallied war, just to hinder the mission of Sandansky. These news calmed down Essad Pasha Toptani, who refrained from initiating the revolt. He immediately summoned his chieftains and told them to spare the weapons for other cases, as the important towns were to be secured by diplomatic efforts. The homeland of Isa Boletini would have remained Serbian territory according to this agreement, therefore he disagreed, but was not forceful enough to act without the consent of Essad Toptani. This diplomatic manoeuvre might be a good example of desinformation in diplomacy, as neither of these town were given later to Albania. When getting to know that the deal was not realised, Essad became very angry of Ismail Kemal and called him traitor according to the Bulgarian sources (*izmennik* in the Bulgarian text).²⁵ If this is true, it enlightens further roots of discontent between the two Albanian leaders. Nevertheless, as Chaulev was not invited to the assembly, it could also happen that the Serbian offer was a hoax and was made up only by Essad to avoid confrontation with the Serbs paying him subsidy or to calm down his bajraktars. But it is also possible, that it was the Serbian agent Balugdzhich, who lied, to calm down Albanians and to thwart Albanian-Bulgarian (IMRO) alliance as this was Pašić's main purpose.

But it was not only Essad, who refrained from direct support of the uprising. Regarding the hesitating behavior of Ismail Kemal one should admit, that in April, 1913 Ismail Kemal still trusted that the borders decided in London would be favourable for Albania, or can be modified later. At least he said that to Jovanovic, Serbian ambassador in Vienna, when he suggested a Serbian-Albanian cooperation within the Balkan League. Kemal was clever enough not to sign any direct agreement during the conference was working, but for him it was necessary to get the benevolence of Serbia to hinder the amelioration of the positions of Essad Toptani.²⁶ So, this hope regarding the borders originally was not based on Serbian promises, but was well exploited by the mission of Balugdzhić later. It is well-known that nor Pašić, neither Venizelos wanted to accept the decisions on borders

²³ This document was published by Georgi Georgiev in *Makedonski Pregled*. Georgiev, G.: *Novootkrit dokument za balgaro-albanskoto vastanie ot 1913 g.* *Makedonski Pregled*, 33, 2010/2.

²⁴ Georgiev, G.: *Novootkrit dokument ...* p. 138.

²⁵ Georgiev, V.: *Ohridskoto vastanie...* p. 170.

²⁶ Lukač (pripedio), *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici* 6/2, 23. Jovanović to Pašić, Vienna, 3./16. 04. 1913., br. 156., pp. 131-132. (in German see: Boghitschewitsch: *Die auswärtige Politik Serbiens* 1, Nr. 297., 324-325.); *Ibid.* 85. Pašić to Rakić, Belgrade, 16./29. 04. 1913. pov.br. 1685, p. 181. and *Ibid.* p. 130. Ristić to Pašić, Bucharest, 22.04./05.05. 1913. pov.br. 1854., p. 215.

made in London, and they believed in occupation as a forcing measure.²⁷ Therefore Kemal's hope in decisions and promises of the Serbian and Greek agents was vague.

There was a growing discontent between the Albanian elite regarding what and how to do. Pressure groups were supported by different states, therefore the Albanian political elite was divided and thinking of securing their own power. Essad claimed that the 'Balkan is for the Balkan people', therefore wanted to avoid the interference of Austria-Hungary and counted on Serbia and on the Young Turks (Arif Hikmet).²⁸ Contrary to this, Syra and Ekrem Vlora thought, that the Albanian question should be handled by Austria and Italy excluding other Powers, even through a *fait accompli*, while Kemal in Valona trusted in the concert of Powers in London and waited. Bajram Curri was counting on an Austrian military aid in case of a revolt, and he asked about it from consul Rudnay, who refrained to promise military aid in May.²⁹ Curri's plan was refused either by Essad³⁰ and by Kemal and Libohova in May and June.³¹ After having been released from prison, Hasan Bey Prishtina also wanted to get the support of the Ballhausplatz to modify the border in Kosovo, but he was also refused to organise a revolt.³² Therefore the Serbian accusation, that Austria was behind the Albanian uprising can not be verified on the basis of Austrian archival sources.

The above mentioned assembly of chieftains took place on 6, July in Valona. The leaders of the Albanian freedom fighters gathered to organise cooperative resistance, but those who were to fight against Greeks (Çerçiz Topulli, Themistokli Gërmenji, Mihail Grameno, Grigor Cilka, Hasan Xhiku) and the mirdite chieftains arriving on 10, July and warlords of Kosovo (Prek Nikol Nreci, Bajram Curri, Riza bej, Hasan Dani) were unable to settle the questions. The Bulgarians, like Oshavkov being disappointed with the results of the negotiations, left Valona on 12 July and travelled to Tirana and met there the organisers of resistance in Dibra. According to his account, it was Elez Jusufi from Dibra with 2000 warriors, Selman Ali with 500 men from the neighboring villages, Mersim Dema and Selim Dema with 500 men from the mountains surrounding Dibra (Malesia), Selim Noka with 400 men, Ali Bey Zaimi as the commander of troops, and Kazo bey, a major of the Turkish Army, as the trustee of Essad Pasha Toptani. They decided to occupy Dibra, where only a garrison of 350 Serbs was located.³³ As Essad Pasha came to know this plan, he immediately left Valona, summoned the Albanian leaders of the planned revolt without the Bulgarian Oshavkov and warned them, that an isolated and premature action may bring danger to the existence of Albania. But he also promised, that he would join the rebels with his full army, if Dibra was not given to Bulgaria till the feast of Bajram, as Ismail Kemal promised. His advise halted the preparations for the uprising.

Neither Kemal, nor Essad wanted to be involved in the preparation of an uprising, because they were sparing their military forces for a showdown between each other. Beyond the pressure of the powers, it was Essad who urged the Serbian government to retreat beyond the Crni Drin, and also to confiscate the goods of those refugees, who did not return to their homeland. In return he promised to guarantee the borders as the minister of internal affairs of Albania in July. This act strengthened his positions, as he got rid of many hungry refugees open for propaganda whom he had to feed and he got rid of Serbian soldiers as well. His promise to guarantee the borders was serious blow to the revisionist policy of Kemal, and to the preparation of the uprising as well. Serbia started to retreat from Northern-Albania only on 15, September, 1913. The abundance of Serbian forces in Albania also

²⁷ ÖHHStA PA XII/420/6f Berchtold an Lejhanec (Valona) 15.07. 1913., Prot.No. 5460-61.

²⁸ Lukač (pripedio), Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici 6/2, 135. Vukotić to the Foreign Ministry, Cetinje, 22.04./05.05. 1913. pov.br. - pp. 218-219.; KA Nachlässe, B 1450 – Nachlass Conrad von Hötzendorf, Akt. 84/177, Gellinek an Conrad, 29. 04. 1913., Geh. Nr. 153.

²⁹ ÖHHStA PA XII/421/6f, Rudnay an Berchtold, Durazzo, 16. 05. 1913., No. 157.

³⁰ ÖHHStA PA XII/421/6f, Marinensektion, Konfidentielle Nachrichten, Valona, 1913.06.18, Res. Nr. 441/K.D.

³¹ ÖHHStA PA XII/421/6f, Lejhanec an Berchtold, Valona, 27. 05. 1913., No. 48.

³² „Der mehrfach genannte Albanese [Prishtina], welcher sich nächster Tage via Roma nach Valona begibt, hat bei seinem Abschiedsbesuche im Ministerium des Aeußern ein Projekt unterbreitet, welches den Zweck verfolgen würde, dass Ö-U durch seine (Hassan Beys) Vermittlung eine Aktion einleite, um den Kossovo-Albanesen eine gewisse politische und religiöse Unabhängigkeit vom Serbtume zu bewahren und den bisherigen Einfluss der Monarchie auf dieses Volk zu erhalten.“ ÖHHStA PA XII/421/6f, secret order to 1. Heimroth in Üsküb, 2., Kral to Saloniki and 3., Mérey to Rome, Vienna, 28. 05. 1913., Nr. 2481-2483., 1-2.

³³ Georgiev, G., Novootkrit dokument... p. 139.

hindered the preparation of a successful uprising, however when the revolt broke out, the Serbian forces were pulled back by the Crni Drin river, which was favourable for the rebels.

Although Kemal promised the two Adriatic powers to refrain from any actions, Hasan Prishtina was finally sent by the Kemal government to Sofia. He left Vlora (Valona) together with Sandansky. The delegates wanted to elaborate an Albanian-Bulgarian agreement, without the consent and approval of Kemal's government. But the negotiating Bulgarians (Salabashev, Kolushev, Nachovich and Danev) asked for Albanian help only on 22 July, 1913, when the Balkan Wars has almost ended.³⁴ After the Bucharest Peace Treaty, between 12 and 17 August new negotiations started in Elbasan between the IMRO and Albanians led by Pustina, and the parties agreed to organise a joint revolt in October.³⁵

According to the account of Todor Pavlov, one day after Bajram (21 August), these chieftains decided to step forth to organise the revolt. Oshavkov also collected his troops around Dibra, and sent messages to Petar Chaulev and Milan Matov (also former members of the MOO) to prepare for fight around Ohrid and Struga, while Pavel Hristov was to organise the revolt in Monastir. Chaulev promised 1000 Mausers and on 9 September started to organise chetas.³⁶ But since in a report to Foreign Minister Genadiev he estimated his costs 5500 levas for half a year, it is unlikely that his troops got efficient financial support from official Bulgaria (symbolic support is not excluded). An executing committee was created composed of Dervish Hima, Fadil Pasha and Oshavkov to organise the revolt. Although they decided to act at their initiative, Serbs thought later that they were Austrian agents (as few of them took part in the meeting of Trieste or were paid regular subsidy from Austria). According to Pavlov's account, the military aim was to capture Dibra, then to turn towards Gostivar, and later Kichevo located in the south, then to occupy Bitola by unifying the troops with those of arriving from Ohrid via Resen to Bitola.³⁷

On 3/16, September, Selim Dema sent messages to Tirana and to the chieftains, that preparations for fight are in good condition. Soon Siljan Cvetkov and Popovski from Galichnik traveled to Bulgaria to obtain explosives. But the uprising started prematurely due to the action of the son of Selman Ali (one of the leaders). He went to Dibra on 5 (18), September and in an inn he saw the picture of King Peter of Serbia hanging on the wall. He ordered the vlah innkeeper to get rid of the picture. This was recognised by a Serbian soldier, who – not having weapons with him – managed to escape from the scene to the nearby Serbian outpost. Soon an officer with soldiers returned and shot the son of Selman Ali and the vlah innkeeper.³⁸

According to Todor Pavlov's account Selman Ali immediately collected some 300 warriors and attacked the 200 soldiers of the 19th infantry regiment of Serbia. Albanians won the fight, only 20 Serbians managed to reach Kjafa-Buli (Smokovo-defile), where another 200 Serbian soldiers were located. In the town itself 400 Serbians were garrisoned from the 19th infantry regiment. The garrison was soon attacked, the town was encircled and after some fighting 312 Serbian soldiers surrendered. The rest fled towards Gostivar. The Albanians acquired 800 Mausers.

The executive committee was surprised by the outcome of events, and decided to halt the movement, but it was too late. Oshavkov also entered to Dibra to secure the safety of the Bulgarian inhabitants from harassment. A temporary government was set up composing of Seifeddin Pustina, Riza Bey Djakova and of the former secretary of the Bulgarian metropolite, Hristo Atanasov. The town was held by the Albanians from 8 (21) to 19 September. Just before the Serbs entered into the town again, Oshavkov freed the 312 Serbs to spare the life of the Bulgarians in the town. Oshavkov then returned to Tirana with his cheta.

³⁴ Hasan Prishtina informed Austria-Hungary about this activity. ÖHHStA PA XII/420/6f, Lejhanec from Valona, 06. 07. 1913., No. 1159.; Tarnowski from Sofia, 21. 07. 1913., No. 4037.; Berchtold to Tarnowski, Vienna, 22. 07. 1913., No. 391.; Report of the Evidenzbureau, Sofia, 23. 07. 1913., Evb. No. 3460.

³⁵ Gocev, D., p. 123.

³⁶ Georgiev, V., p. 171.

³⁷ Georgiev, G., Novootkrit dokument... p. 140.

³⁸ Ibid.

The other column of rebels arrived under Ohrid after the occupation of Pogradec. The Serbian military commander in Ohrid arrested 45 Albanians on 10/23, September, when he got news about the uprising. Chaulev threatened the commander by putting him to death if oppression continues. Parallel with the attack on Dibra, Chaulev's 300 men, supported by 500 Albanians according to the Bulgarian source attacked the town of Ohrid.³⁹ The town was occupied by the rebels on 11/24, September, 1913 and reoccupied by Serbs on 17/30, September. A temporary revolutionary committee was set up containing Pavel Hristov, the Albanian Jusuf bey, the kmet Lev Ognenov, and the town nachalnik Lev Kaukov.⁴⁰

The uprising was soon overcome and retaliated by Serbian troops. According to Georgi Georgiev, the reasons of the failure of the uprising were the following: the lack of plans of joint and harmonised actions, the lack of cooperation between units, the lack of artillery, the lack of commander, the lack of promised support from Essad Pasha and the quick mobilisation of the Serbian troops. Lack of financial aid was also a problem. After the collapse of the uprising Chaulev retreated to Elbasan, then to Durazzo. Chaulev's diary gave account on Serbian atrocities at Pustočan, where 92 Albanians were killed. The document from Todor Pavlov is more detailed and gives a summary of murdered Albanians in each village. Contemporary Albanians put the number of killed to 5000 around Dibra and Ljuma. Muricchio enumerates 119 villages burnt down with 2500 victims,⁴¹ while in the area of Hasi and Krasnici tribes 2000 houses were burnt down.⁴² Macedonian historians wrote about 180 pillaged villages.⁴³

After the Serbs had crushed the uprising, they invaded Albanian territories with the hope of territorial aggrandisement. Albania was full of people fleeing from Macedonia and Kosovo. The number of refugees arriving from the Dibra region alone was put around 40 thousand.⁴⁴ In the valleys of Chermenka 30000 refugees were starving. Essad Pasha Toptani was given 30 thousand francs by

³⁹ Ibid. By lighting 200 fires in the woods Chaulev managed to trick the Serbs, who thought that cca. 10000 Albanians are around the city. The 300 Serbs left Ohrid and retreated to Resen with 4 guns from Trebenica.

⁴⁰ Chaulev did not have enough troops to march against the Serbs entrenched 25 kms west from Monastir, therefore he asked for help from Dibra. Soon 1000 well-trained and disciplined (!) Albanians arrived under the command of Riza Bey and Ajradin Aga on 15, September. (These troops were trained by Isa Boletini, who served as the guard officer of the sultan, and exercised his troops regularly in field. The next day Chaulev was appointed commander in-chief and attacked the Serbian forces, as he got information that 200 men under Matov crossed the Albanian border and reached Ohrid. They were to serve as the reserve of the army. Greece also activated his troops and on 15/28, September occupied Pogradec, but due to the Turkish threat did not intervene into the fights. The disposition of revolutionary forces were the following (according to Chaulev's diary): against Bitola Anton Sivakov and Riza bey were fighting at Istok. Dimitar Ivanov and Anradin bey were at Petrinno, while the forces of Matov and Mehmed Ali were located at Bukovo. Against Kichevo the forces of Nestor Georgiev and Raim Abdor were sent to Goljak, Osman bey was at Geleshnik, Tafo Tarsan and Suleyman Aga were posted at Jama, Ali Pustina at Brestica, Ahmed bey Zagolli (a relative of King Zogu) at K(r)usovrasti, Oshavkov and Ahmed efendi at Kusovrasti rid, Ali bey Zaimi at Radika river, Selim Dema at Drimkol as reserve. The disposition of forces was known by the Serbs through vlah shepherds.

Kichevo had strategic importance as it was located in the road between Bitola and Old Serbia. North of the town at Poreče large Serbian troops were garrisoned. Due to the pressure, by 17th (30th) September, the Serbs retreated from Kichevo to Gostivar. Chaulev entered the city. But while this was happening, Serbian troops from Resen and Bitola attacked the forces defending Ohrid. At Istok Serbian attacks were repelled 4 times and 2 mitrailleuse were captured. But at Bukovo the Serbs also used artillery fire. After the troops of Mehmed Aga had not got reinforcement from Matov, since instead of 200 men he had only some youngsters with him, who fled immediately towards Elbasan, he abandoned his position. Thus the Serbian artillery could continue its way on the road and attacked the right flank of rebel forces located at Petrinno. Commander Ivanov had died, his forces fled. Soon Struga and Ohrid were controlled by Serbian troops. Due to this Chaulev was forced to retreat from Kichevo to Dibra, which was also under heavy attacks. A strong Serbian unit with 4 guns from the surrounding of Dibra was chasing Chaulev. Chaulev went to the mountains, but in an encounter with Serb troops lost 20 men. Another Serbian unit was marching towards him from Struga. Chaulev at Kachandzik also got rumours from the Albanian defeat at Gostivar. He turned back and retreated to Albanian territory. The troops of Halil Kaljos marching towards Gostivar were beaten by Serbs after 3 days-fighting around Mavrovo. 300 Albanians were killed out of 2000. Ali bey was unable to defend the bridge of the river Radika, when beside the 2 escadron cavalry, artillery was also used by the Serbian troops. This battle resulted in the loss of Dibra. For details, see: Georgiev, V., pp. 172-175. Chaulev's forces altogether had lost 70 persons and retreated back to Elbasan (24, September/ 7, Oct.).

⁴¹ Georgiev, G., Novootkrit dokument... p. 142.

⁴² Kambana, N. 1744. 28. Nov. 1913.

⁴³ Istorija na Makedonskiyot narod IV. Skopje, 2000. pp. 70-73.

⁴⁴ Kambana, N. 1709. 23 Oct. 1913., Vetcherna Poshta, N 291. 23 Oct. / 5 Nov. 1913.

cynic the Serbs to consolidate the situation.⁴⁵ Shkodra tried to supply 10-12 thousand refugees.⁴⁶ 20 thousand refugees were in Valona according to Hrabak after the Greeks had invaded southern Epiros. In Berat 50 thousand refugees were estimated on the eve of Greek occupation. According to Chekrezi altogether 150 thousand refugees were estimated in whole Albania.

The Kemal government faced serious crisis as all the incomes hoped from the customs were suspended due to the Greekish blockade, while Essad Toptani still could count on the income of the harbor of Durazzo under his rule and on Serbian subsidy as well.⁴⁷ Chaulev also gave information on Essad's attempt to capture Valona, thus rendering Ismail Kemal's position difficult. But the Italian diplomacy had defended Ismail Kemal by hiring the catholic Prenk Bib Doda to attack Durazzo (the harbor controlled by Essad Toptani), if Essad was to attack on Valona. Thus Essad decided to refrain from attack.⁴⁸

The Bulgarian-Albanian cooperation was not over with the collapse of the uprising. In this critical situation, the Bulgarian government decided to send a humanitarian help of 500 tons of wheat and flour, with the concept of promoting Bulgarian-Albanian relations and to carry home those Bulgarians (civilians and cheta members as well), who were expelled from Macedonia to Albania.⁴⁹ The step of the Bulgarian government gave helping hand for the stabilisation of the Kemal cabinet favoured by Austria and Italy. The Bulgarian politician Dimitar Rizov, Macedonian of origin, ambassador in Italy, an artisan of the Serbo-Bulgarian treaty in 1904 and 1912 now was working on an Albanian-Bulgarian agreement parallel with the Turkish-Bulgarian negotiations on peace and alliance. Albania was full of bulgarophiles at that time. Through the representatives of IMRO, Rizov outlined a policy that propagated military assistance, the reorganisation of Albanian army with Bulgarian aid. He also advised to increase the number of Macedonian Bulgarians in Albania instead of carrying them to Bulgaria, to organise Bulgarian schools, to widen the limits of the exarchate and to create mixed territorial committees and chetas from all nations (Turks, Albanians, Greeks).⁵⁰

This concept emerged due to the changes in external conditions. As we have already seen, earlier neither the IMRO, nor Bulgaria wanted tight relations with the Albanian movements. During the interallied war, in his letter from the frontlines written to Javorov, Hristo Matov, a prominent of the IMRO admitted on 18 July (1 August), 1913, that the unification of Macedonia with Bulgaria became a dream, the present military situation could not afford this concept to be realised. An autonomy is still better, than a dismembered Macedonia. The recognition of an autonomous (and not dismembered) Macedonia is only possibly, if Austria-Hungary interferes and gives effective support. But Austria-Hungary was unable to exert diplomatic pressure in this question (also in other questions, like territorial aggrandisement of Bulgaria), therefore the Macedonians had to search for a new opportunity. In another letter Todor Alexandrov suggested the idea of an Albanian-Macedonian dualistic union, repeating the offer of Hasan Prishtina ignored one year ago.⁵¹ Unfortunately this idea became ripen only after the collapse of the Albanian uprising. Probably only these events offered enough evidence that such a cooperation can be realistic and former enemies could fight together (like Mersim Dema who was sacking exarchist villages prior to 1912). During the Bulgarian-Turkish peace negotiations a Turkish-Albanian-Macedonian cooperation was outlined on 29 Sept. 1913. On 8, October an agreement was outlined between the IMRO, Bulgaria and Turkey, in which the parties agreed to organise a new revolt in Macedonia in the future, after the stabilisation of Albania as first step (as Djemal Pasha advised). Beyond Rizov and Toshev, Protogerov was also negotiating with Djemal pasha, and Genadiev, Minister of Foreign Affairs was also notified about the events.⁵² The

⁴⁵ Georgiev, G., Humanitarna pomosht... p. 49.

⁴⁶ Georgiev, G., Humanitarna pomosht... p. 54.

⁴⁷ Georgiev, G., Humanitarna akcija... p. 45.

⁴⁸ Georgiev, V., pp. 174-175.

⁴⁹ See: Georgiev, G. Humanitarna akcija ...

⁵⁰ ЦДА, ф 3к. оп.18. 62. 49.1.

⁵¹ Vatrashnata makedono-odrinska revolucionna organizacija ... Nr. 375. pp. 1059-1060.

⁵² Vatrashnata makedono-odrinska revolucionna organizacija ... Nr. 385. p. 1072. 10, Nov. 1913.

Turks were also entering into conversation with Essad Pasha Toptani, and the organisers were planning to send Petar Chaulev and Pavel Hristov once again into Albania to promote cooperation.⁵³

The Bulgarians were planning to set up a joint Bulgarian-Macedonian-Albanian force of 5-6 thousand men, and offered the best organisers, like Darvingov, Midilev and Kirpikov. It was decided to select 1-1 delegate from each nation, in order to organise the army and prepare the population. The political organisation of districts was also planned on the same basis. The Albanian delegates asked for 20 officers from Turkey. The possibility, that the Albanian army is going to be organised without Italian or Austrian or western interference was not negligible, as the Turks wanted to avoid the rule of Wilhelm Wied. The Bulgarians urged to open schools in Albania (i.e. in Starevo near Lake Ohrid), attracting Bulgarians from Macedonia, thus increasing the abundance of the Bulgarian element in Albania.⁵⁴

But the cooperation finally failed due to the conceptual contradiction between the Bulgarian, Turkish, and Albanian parties regarding priorities. The distrust and the financial problem of organising an army instead of temporary chetas, ruined the plan.⁵⁵ Some leader Bulgarian politicians were quite pessimistic regarding the value of such an alliance. Toshev, the diplomat who signed the Peace Treaty of Constantinople, suggested that the whole idea is a Turkish trick to regain control over Saloniki. For the autonomy of Macedonia and Albania, Bulgaria had to resign from Western Thrace, which could be either the member of this alliance or a Turkish province.⁵⁶

⁵³ Vatrashnata makedono-odrinska revolucionna organizacija ... p. 1066.

⁵⁴ Vatrashnata makedono-odrinska revolucionna organizacija ... Nr. 385. p. 1072. 10, Nov. 1913.

⁵⁵ 500 private soldier needed 3 Turkish liras per month (60 leva), 54 vojvodas were counted by 10 liras monthly, and the 20 officers required a salary of 15 liras monthly, altogether 28 thousand liras monthly (more than 50 thousand leva for 500 persons), which means, that an official army like was more expansive, than the few hundred men of Chaulev, who get only an official support of 5500 levas for half a year.

⁵⁶ Vatrashnata makedono-odrinska revolucionna organizacija ... Nr. 379. pp. 1063-1064. 29, Sept. 1913.