

LEDIA DUSHKU
Institute of History
Academy of Albanological Studies, Tirana
ledia_dushku@yahoo.com

ORPHANS NO MORE!: THE YOUNG TURKS' HOMOGENIZING POLICIES, THE ALBANIAN REACTION, AND THE BALKAN COMMITTEE IN LONDON, 1910–1912

Abstract: This paper explores the reaction of Albanian nationalists towards the homogenizing and centralizing policy of the Young Turks in the Ottoman Empire. After the Young Turks came to power, the focus for the Albanian nationalists was on raising awareness of and securing international support for their national rights. In addition, their focus was on the difficult humanitarian situation in the vilayet of Shkodra. Albanian nationalists' efforts converged with the Balkan Committee, which was established in London in 1903 following the events in the Balkans after the Ilinden Uprising of 1903. This study investigates the reasons why the Balkan Committee in London became interested in the 1911 Albanian uprising in the vilayet of Shkodra. By following an analytical approach and using numerous sources, the paper concludes that the Balkan Committee succeeded in making British public opinion receptive to the Albanians' difficult humanitarian situation. However, it did not succeed in uniting the political actors in the Balkans and thus failed to organize a general Balkan uprising, which was clearly an undertaking beyond its capabilities and outside the British government's interests.

Keywords: Young Turks, Balkan Committee, Albanian Uprisings, Ottoman Empire, Vilayet of Shkodra, Ismail Qemal Vlora, humanitarian situation, Macedonian Relief Fund.

1. Introduction

In the early twentieth century, when the sovereignty of the Ottoman Empire was seriously threatened by territorial losses, military defeats, separatist revolts against the central government, and Western economic penetration, a group of reformist intellectuals emerged known as the Young Turks. The Young Turks believed they could save the state and maintain its territorial integrity through legal reforms, a constitution, and the creation of an Ottoman nation based not upon a specific ethnicity or religion but on the unity of all of them.¹

¹ Kaya 2014: 127–145; Yavuz 2013: 31–32.

In July 1908, when the Young Turks raised a flag of the revolution based French ideas of freedom, justice, and equality, the Albanians were among their greatest supporters.² Although the reasons were various and differed substantially from one to another, the Albanians welcomed the restoration of the Ottoman constitution on July 23, 1908. Some supported it based on the assumption and belief that the constitution would provide protection for Albanian traditions and culture, while others considered it a prelude political autonomy. Nonetheless, the relationship between Young Turks and Albanians eventually shifted quickly from cooperation to defiance due to the Young Turks' nationalism.

When launching their program on August 18, 1908, the Young Turks' Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) promised all Ottoman citizens equal rights and obligations without any distinction as to origin or religion. Consequently, non-Muslim citizens were also expected to perform military service, a reform that proved far more controversial than initially hoped. Turkish was also promulgated as the only official language allowed in general correspondence and official consultations. The CUP planned to centralize education: according to the thirteenth point of the program, all schools were placed under state control.³

In October 1908, the CUP declared its political platform by asking for a major change in the constitution that would require all communication at the state level be in conducted using the Turkish language; insisting on equality before the law and declaring its position in favor of mandatory conscription; and calling for the establishment of technical schools to train workers with the requisite skills for economic development.⁴ The Ottoman Union was no more than a union of all ethnic groups within the empire that would bring an end to separatist leanings among Muslim or non-Muslim subjects alike.⁵ Thus the Young Turks' aim was to move towards the centralization of power and a sort of homogenization of its society. Major Ismail Enver Bey, a member of the CUP proclaimed the well-known doctrine of Ottomanism with the statement *that* "there are no Bulgarians, Greeks, Romanians, Jews, or Muslims. We are all equals; *we glory* in being Ottomans."⁶

Initially, however, to the peoples and nations, an Ottoman Union meant cultural autonomy would be preserved and might even thrive. Accordingly, they would be considered first and foremost Albanians, Greeks, or Armenians, and only then Ottoman subjects of the empire. The elites representing different ethnic groups wanted to be rewarded for their struggle against despotism not only with official posts but also with extended autonomy. The rest of the population saw this as an appropriate opportunity to preserve and strengthen their traditions.⁷ Religious groups, including the Greek Orthodox Church, were unhappy with the CUP's move to enhance state authority and ultimately centralize and oversee the education system. Moreover, the minorities favored a policy of

² For more about the Young Turk Revolution and the influence of the Albanian factor in the promulgation of the Second Ottoman Constitution (1908) see: Hanioglu 2001: 210–279; Bozborca 2002: 244–255; Dauti 2018: 133–142; Çeku 2022: 711–725.

³ Hacısalihoglu 2013: 108.

⁴ Yavuz 2013: 48.

For a detailed treatment of the Young Turks policy see: Feroz 2003: 25–65.

⁵ Dymon 2004: 551.

⁶ Gawrych 2006: 154.

⁷ Dymon 2004: 551.

decentralization.⁸ The CUP's insistence on teaching Turkish in schools was perceived as a Turkification policy, and the Greek Orthodox acted against this education initiative. The first reaction came from the secessionist Macedonian communities along with some Albanian communities.⁹ Therefore, the reinstatement of the constitution not only left national questions unresolved but also further aggravated them.

After crushing the Counter-Revolution of April 13, 1909, in which the Albanians played an important role, the Young Turks decided to implement their centralization program and Turkification policy by force of law. On April 26, 1909, the Ottoman government passed the Law on Vagabonds and Suspicious Persons, which became a very effective instrument for controlling the action of individuals in Rumelia.¹⁰ In July 1909, the Ottoman government enacted two laws regarding the press and publishing houses. They were threatened with closure if they published articles that insulted religious or ethnic groups or the sultan, parliament, army, or any imperial institutions. Similarly, the Law on Military Service for Non-Muslims passed on August 7, 1909, which abolished the military exemption tax on all non-Muslims who avoided military service, ignited widespread opposition among Balkan Orthodox Christian groups.¹¹ Another crucial legal measure adopted by the CUP government was the prohibition of political parties organized according to nationality. According to the Law on Associations, all political parties organized on a purely ethnic basis (and characterized with an ethnic name) were forbidden and cultural clubs were closed. Article 4 of this law banned "political societies whose aim or name represented a particular race or nationality."¹² The Law on Bands passed on September 27, 1909, targeted the use of guns and was aimed at creating a state monopoly on the use of violence. Under this law, armed movements not sanctioned by the state were forbidden under penalty of death and all illegal weapons in the hands of the population had to be turned over to the state within a specific period set by the government.¹³

The Young Turks intended to follow a policy of cultural Ottomanization as well. The Law on Disputed Churches and Schools issued on July 3, 1910, upset the Christians under the authority of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople. They considered the implementation of the law to be cultural assimilation with predominantly Turkish elements prevailing over the rest.¹⁴ To that end, the Young Turks sought to centralize the Ottoman Empire's education system by introducing a law on primary school education that compelled all Ottoman children to attend the same school system.¹⁵

As a result of these policies, a non-Turkish school inspectorate was established,¹⁶ the Normal School in Elbasan and the boys' school in Korça in the vilayet of Monastir, both

⁸ Yavuz 2013: 48–49.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 49.

¹⁰ Çanlı 2017: 2825–2846.

¹¹ Hacısalihoglu 2013: 115.

¹² Dymon 2004: 116.

¹³ Hacısalihoglu 2013: 117–118.

¹⁴ Kerimoğlu 2007: 3–25; Egro 2010: 98.

¹⁵ For more on the educational system in Ottoman Empire and regulations imposed by the Young Turks, see: Ünlü 2023: 158–211; Blumi 2011: 151–174; Hacısalihoglu 2013: 121–123.

¹⁶ Dymon 2004: 552.

established in 1909, were closed, and in state schools, the Albanian language was removed from the state schools' curricula. Albanian patriotic clubs were also shut down.¹⁷ An Albanian publishing house in Monastir/Bitola, a city in what is now the southwest of North Macedonia, suffered the same fate.¹⁸ Many Albanian officials who supported the Latin alphabet were removed from their offices and sent to Anatolia or the Arab provinces. The Albanian newspapers that had recently started being published were closed down and their publishers imprisoned often without a trial. Shkodra's newspaper survived a bit longer only because its political articles did not deal with current issues. Eventually, it too died out as it was not keeping up with *the spirit of the time*. Many Albanian nationalists were arrested or forced to leave the country.¹⁹ The situation deteriorated further due to the Young Turks' attempts to disarm the Albanian population in the north and impose solutions by force to maintain order and law.

All these centralization policies provoked serious reactions. Several insurrections started in the vilayet of Kosovo in 1910 and a year later spread to the vilayet of Shkodra.²⁰ The Young Turks' policies also caused general disappointment and dissatisfaction among Greeks, Armenians, the Arabs in Syria, and others. For them, the constitution fell short of their expectations, as it did not provide the freedoms, welfare, and national progress they expected and that had been previously proclaimed. Others instead were upset for the opposite reasons since it did not guarantee the traditions and privileges they had long cherished.²¹

In response to this situation, a group of Albanian nationalists led by Ismail Qemal Vlora (Ismail Qemali) had the immediate responsibility of raising international awareness of their plight and securing support for their national rights and assistance for the difficult humanitarian situation that had resulted from the uprisings. Ismail Qemali was originally from the Adriatic port town of Vlora and a scion of one of the most influential families in the vilayet of Ioannina. He served as a deputy in the Ottoman Parliament and as head of the Ottoman Liberal Party (AHRAR), and he was the one who proclaimed Albania's independence in November 1912. Ismail Qemali considered the Law on Bands as the first attempt by the Unionist government to legitimize its "criminal attacks" against Albanians.²² He decided to put more effort into internationalizing their national question. His goal was the involvement of the Great Powers and of neighboring states that would favor an acceptable solution for the Albanians. Their efforts and aims converged on several points with the Balkan Committee's agenda.

Within this context, this article focuses on relations between the Balkan Committee and the Albanians, and will address three main aspects: first, the stance held by the Committee and its members towards the Albanians and their national issue; second, humanitarian engagement by the Balkan Committee in providing assistance to Albanian Catholic highlanders in the vilayet of Shkodra (1911); and third, the efforts of Albanian nationalists, specifically Ismail Qemali, to collaborate with the Balkan Committee and other

¹⁷ Skendi 1967: 388; Kondis 1976: 50.

¹⁸ Clayer 2009: 571.

¹⁹ Swire 1971: 98; Gurakuqi 2012: 69.

²⁰ For more on the Albanian Uprisings see: Gawrych 2006: 177–197; Clayer 2009: 620–632; Babacan 2014: 104–112; Blumi 2011: 125–150; Malcolm 1998: 239–249; Gurakuqi 2012: 125–245.

²¹ Dymon 2004: 552.

²² Hacisalihoglu 2013: 118; Blumi 2011: 118–123.

Balkan actors in organizing widespread anti-Ottoman uprisings in the Balkans that would involve not only Albanians but also other nationalities within the Ottoman Empire. These issues will be examined in connection with the awareness among and reaction of the public in Great Britain, along with the official stance of the Foreign Office.

In Albania, there are no studies related to the Balkan Committee; however, the committee's activities have been analyzed elsewhere in two doctoral theses (James Andrew Perkins at the University of Birkbeck and Daut Dauti at the University of Leeds)²³ and several articles.²⁴ With the exception of Daut Dauti's doctoral work, which focuses on the position of members of the Balkan Committee regarding the Albanian question, other works overlook this aspect. This article aims to fill this gap, especially in two areas: the humanitarian campaign organized by the Balkan Committee to garner support and provide assistance for Albanian Catholic highlanders, and the Albanian and Balkan political actors' expectations of concrete cooperation with the committee in organizing an armed Balkan reaction in support of securing national rights for nationalities within the Ottoman Empire.

This article is based on an analysis of an extensive body of literature and an examination of published and unpublished sources (Albanian, Bulgarian, and British). The latter includes documents from the Archive of the Institute of History in Tirana,²⁵ and in particular a collection of files on the Austro-Hungarian perspective, used for the first time as a source for the Balkan Committee. British primary sources have already been used in the doctoral works mentioned previously, but the novelty here is an analysis of the articles published in *Times* magazine, where the Balkan Committee's humanitarian actions in the vilayet of Shkodra in 1911 often appeared.

2. A brief overview of the Balkan Committee: Key actors and their stance

The Balkan Committee was established in the British capital in 1903 following events that transpired in the Balkans after a rebellion initiated by the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (IMRO), known as the Ilinden (St. Elijah's Day) Uprising of 1903 and which was supported by local Albanians.²⁶ James Bryce, an explorer and travel writer, was the first president of the committee, and Noel Buxton, a British liberal and later Labor politician was appointed as its chairman. Meanwhile the bulk of the committee was dominated by Liberal politicians and religious leaders who continued the Gladstonian

²³ Perkins 2014; Dauti 2018.

²⁴ Al-Jubouy 2022: 187–216. <https://doi.org/10.25130/jtuh.29.5.2022.10>, (accessed 3 August 2023); Spirkovski 2013: 53–68; Genov, R, "Bulgaria's entry and participation of in World War I as seen by the British journalist James D. Bouchier". <http://www.viaevrasia.com/documents/Roumen%20Genov.pdf>, (accessed 10 August 2023); Balatoni 2019: 49–60.

²⁵ The Archive of the Institute of History in Tirana possesses an exceedingly rich collection of documents from various European chancelleries. This collection was established and enriched as a result of numerous research trips conducted by researchers since the early 1930s.

²⁶ The goal of the rebellion was to establish an independent Macedonian state. The rebellion, however, was brutally suppressed, focusing attention yet again on the problems of Turkish misrule in Macedonia. See: Yosmaoğlu 2014: 25–39; Glenn 2000: 200–205; Hacısalihoglu 2013: 130–131.

tradition of supporting Bulgaria, Greece, or Serbia, and who were anti-Ottoman and disregarded the Muslim population. It gave priority to Christians in the Balkans and little consideration to other nationalities or ethnic groups. For this reason, the Albanian question in Ottoman Macedonia²⁷ did not receive sufficient attention from committee members.²⁸ The Balkan Committee functioned on the principles of Gladstonian Liberalism, and among the founding members were high profile scholars, politicians, clerics, and journalists.²⁹ Under the committee's auspices, the Macedonian Relief Fund, headed by the journalist Bertram Christian, was established in 1903.³⁰ One of the Balkan Committee's main goals was to promote collaboration among Balkan countries. This would lead to a common understanding to secure more national rights for the peoples of the region still under Ottoman rule. Some of its other main goals were to instrumentalize the Foreign Office's Balkan policy, mobilize the British public to turn its attention to Balkan events, start humanitarian campaigns in Macedonia, and to secure British economic interests in the Ottoman Empire.³¹ The committee's members had welcomed the Young Turks Revolution of 1908, but they too soon realized that the Young Turks' revolution did little to alter the essence of the Ottoman rule in the Balkans.³² Thereafter, the committee worked to oppose the negative effects of the Young Turks' policies.

Although the Albanian question was not within the Balkan Committee's primary objectives, Albania was mentioned in the Autonomy Proposal—a twelve-article document published by the committee in 1903, which was sent to the sultan and relevant European governments. In the document, the committee demanded autonomy for "Macedonia, Albania, Old Servia/Kosovo and Thrace/Adrianople" and outlined the details of a settlement for the region.³³ According to Dauti Dauti, the Autonomy Proposal was ambiguous and unsatisfying both for the Albanians and the other nationalist movements in the Balkans. This ambiguity stemmed from the fact that the suggested division of the autonomous provinces was not based on ethnic or religious principles. For instance, an autonomous Albania would consist of only two vilayets (Shkodra and Ioannina) out of the four existing ones under the Ottoman rule. The vilayet of Kosovo, as proposed, was to become a separate autonomous province, while the vilayet of Monastir would become part of Macedonia. Nevertheless, from the Albanian perspective, the proposal contained some positive elements, namely that this was the first proposal for Albanian autonomy to be presented to the Sublime Porte and to the European Powers by a British organization.³⁴ After issuing this document, the Balkan Committee paid no particular attention to the Albanian national question.

²⁷ Ottoman Macedonia is a geographically imprecise term. It was broadly understood to mean the three vilayets of Salonika, Monastir, and Kosovo. Ottoman Macedonia was inhabited by various ethnic and religious communities that did not share a common national identity. Albanians numerically dominated the western part of the vilayet of Monastir and most of the vilayet of Kosovo, but were not as present in the vilayet of Salonika. See: Yosmaoğlu 2014:112–168; Brown 2013: 14–21.

²⁸ Dauti 2018: 114–143.

²⁹ Robbins 1994: 216; Perkins 2014: 106; Dauti 2018: 98–99.

³⁰ Nevinson 1935: 141.

³¹ *Balkanskiat Komitet v London (1903–1946)*, 2003: 275; Balatoni 2019: 50.

³² Nevinson 1935: 274.

³³ *Balkanskiat Komitet v London (1903–1946)*, 2003: 303.

³⁴ Dauti 2018: 100–101.

Greater interest in Albania would develop among Balkan Committee associates during the Albanian uprisings against Ottoman rule in 1910–1912. This increased interest particularly resulted from the personal interest, work, and influence of individuals such as Edith Durham, a Balkan specialist and a rare expert on Albania’s national movement and political and ethnographic composition;³⁵ Aubrey Herbert, a British public figure, diplomat, and writer;³⁶ and a few other members and activists who represented the political views of the Conservatives under Disraeli. Unlike most of the committee members, they favored the Albanians regardless of their religious affiliation. The national principle of “the Balkans for the Balkan people” was their motto, which perfectly encapsulated the principle of nationality.³⁷ They worked to support the Albanian national question and to influence the British government, and they played a significant role within the Balkan Committee.

However, the main focus of the Balkan Committee remained the defense of the Christian population, which they considered to be the only group persecuted and oppressed by Ottoman policies. This focus also explains their heightened interest in the 1911 insurrection in the vilayet of Shkodra, where the population oppressed by the Young Turks was of the Catholic faith. For this reason, the insurrection of 1911 garnered considerable publicity in the British and European press. This was in contrast to the 1910 uprising in the vilayet of Kosovo, where the population was mostly Muslim, despite the violent policies pursued by the Ottoman authorities.

Some of the Albanian nationalists were in contact with the Balkan Committee. For example, according to the Albanian scholar Zef Prela, Albert Gjika, a Romanian of Albanian origin and one of the candidates for Albania’s throne in 1913, worked for the committee. However, his engagement was not appreciated in certain circles of the Albanian National Movement. Albanian nationalists such as Dervish Hima, Nikolla Naço, and their followers in Bucharest, who were supported and financed by the Austro-Hungarian joint ministry for foreign affairs,³⁸ all kept their distance from Gjika and also the committee.³⁹ Meanwhile, Ismail Qemali another prominent Albanian nationalist, who was mentioned previously, appears to have been in active contact with the committee, especially during the 1912 uprisings. Nathalie Clayer, a Senior Researcher at the Center for Turkish, Ottoman, Balkan, and Central Asian Studies at EHESS in Paris, claims that the Balkan Committee was in touch with members of the Albanian Committee in Monastir and had offered them financial support in favor of Albanian-Bulgarian close cooperation.⁴⁰

³⁵ For more on Edith Durham see: Destani (eds), 2001; Dauti 2018: 217–247; Tanner 2014; Elsie 2010: 120–121.

³⁶ About the activity of A. Herbert, especially in the vilayet of Kosovo, see: Destani and Tomes (eds.) 2011; Dauti 2018: 249–258; Elsie 2010: 189–190.

³⁷ Durham and Herbert critiqued the attitude towards Albanians and resigned from the Balkan Committee in protest at its apparent indifference to crimes committed by Bulgarian (and other Christian) bands against local the Muslim and Albanian populations. They began to enter into fierce conflict with committee members Henry Brailsford and R. W. Seton-Watson, who were known supporters of Bulgarian and Serbian causes respectively. In December 1912, they established the Albanian Committee, under the presidency of Aubrey Herbert. See: Perkins 2014: 156; Dauti 2018: 217–227; 254–258.

³⁸ Gostentschnigg 2018: 528.

³⁹ Prela 1962: 134.

⁴⁰ Clayer 2009: 514.

3. Raising public awareness, collecting contributions, and providing relief for Albanian highlanders

In the early twentieth century, the Balkans and Albania were not unknown to the public in Great Britain. A clearer picture of them had been created by nineteenth-century travel writers, and later by dedicated individuals considered experts on the history and politics of the Balkans. The expert writers played a special role in the image building process, contributed to educating the public on Balkan matters, and influenced the decision-making process in British politics. The Balkan Committee conveyed its ideas and plans through these experts, who included, among others, Edith Durham, Henry Brailsford, Aubrey Herbert, James Bouchier, and Noel and Charles Buxton.⁴¹ Raising public awareness in the United Kingdom of the Balkans, and in particular the Macedonian Question, was considered an essential goal for the Balkan Committee. In order to inform the British public and influence political opinion regarding the need for reforms in the Balkans, its members repeatedly prepared memoranda and pamphlets, published books and resolutions, and held conferences. In the first memorandum, prepared in 1903, the British authors accurately drew attention to the first signs of clear and open anti-Ottoman resentment among the Albanians who had converted to Islam⁴² and who had been so charmingly described in the poetry of Lord Byron, an early twentieth-century British travel writer.⁴³ The meager impact of the Ottoman Constitution; the inimical attitude towards schools, churches, and the Christian community; the ban on the Albanian language; and Ottoman repression, brutality, and massacres revealed the Ottoman Empire's total inefficiency⁴⁴ and were substantial reasons to provoke a reaction in the Balkans.

The British press played a major role in informing the public of the insurrection of 1911, which took place mainly among the Catholic population in the vilayet of Shkodra. The *Times* reported regularly and extensively on Balkan events, and this was no coincidence. James Bouchier, an Irish journalist and member of the Balkan Committee in London, had been the newspaper's correspondent in the Balkans since 1892.⁴⁵ Furthermore, Edith Durham, also an activist and member of the Balkan Committee and the Macedonian Relief Fund, published the majority of her writings in the same newspaper. Durham had traveled to Albanian lands in early 1904, and she had originally been drawn to the region by relics of prehistoric symbolism such as the images of suns Albanian women still drew on their foreheads or tombs ornamented with little birds carved in stone and wood.⁴⁶

⁴¹ Dauti 2018: 20–50, 91–105.

⁴² *Balkanskiat Komitet v London* (1903–1946), 2003: 303.

⁴³ Lord Byron's visit to the vilayet of Ioannina in the autumn of 1809 made a true and lasting impression on him, so much so that he recalled the experience in the second canto of his poem "Childe Harold's Pilgrimage":

*"Let me bend mine eyes
On thee, thou rugged nurse of savage men!
The cross descends, thy minarets arise,
And the pale crescent sparkles in the glen."*

He documented his trip and experiences in Albania in a series of letters to his mother, including a meeting with Ali Pasha of Tepelena, also known as the Lion of Ioannina. Marchand (eds) 1982: 29–34; 41–42.

⁴⁴ *Balkanskiat Komitet v London* (1903–1946), 2003: 350–352.

⁴⁵ Elsie (eds.) 2014: 106.

⁴⁶ Nevinson 1935: 275.

Articles published almost daily in the *Times* provided thorough and accurate information about the uprisings in the vilayet of Shkodra, the activity of Albanian nationalists and especially that of Ismail Qemali, the operations of the Ottoman army, and who was openly protesting against the Ottoman policy towards the Albanians.⁴⁷ Against this background, the main goal of the Balkan Committee's activities was to gather evidence and urge possible intervention.⁴⁸ To that end, its members made in-person visits to the region and met with Albanians and their representatives. In a letter written by Edith Durham in a neighboring village of Montenegro on June 11, 1911, and published in the *Times* by A. G. Symonds, the secretary of the Balkan Committee in London, it was noted that:

Upper Albania is now a miserable desolation. All women and children who, except a few, have had their houses burned down are too weak to go any further and have found refuge here. They fled from violence and humiliation but now risk dying of famine. In this district, there are 2,144 people, while in the whole of Montenegro around 20,000 individuals.⁴⁹

On July 31, 1911, the Balkan Committee published a call for aid in the *Times* entitled "Sorrow in Albania," appealing to the "generous support and sympathy of the British people to save them from famine and the extermination of a brave race."⁵⁰ The terribly difficult situation in the vilayet of Shkodra due to the 1911 insurrection and the severe conditions the highlanders were in certainly evoked British humanitarian feelings. The public responded to the appeal made by the Balkan Committee. The committee tried to raise enough funds to save 25,000 people. The fact that the committee sent financial aid to Albanians means they were able to raise donations for their cause. It is not clear who the main donors were, though it is more likely they were not necessarily big ones. The relief allocation was carried out through the Macedonian Relief Fund, representatives of which were already in the Malësia e Madhe, a region in the vilayet of Shkodra in the mountainous land bordering Montenegro.⁵¹ The aid amounted to several thousand pounds and would be distributed to all people in need regardless of their political or religious affiliation.⁵²

⁴⁷ For articles published in the *Times* on events in northern Albania see: "The situation in Turkey", *The Times*, London, 11th February 1911, 5; "The King of Montenegro", *The Times*, London, 28th February 1911, 5; "The condition of Albania. Concentration of Turkish troops", *The Times*, London, 18th March 1911, 5; "Montenegrin Assurances", *The Times*, London: 31st March 1911, 5; "Fighting between Albanians and Turks", *The Times*, London, 29th March 1911, 5; "Turkey and the Montenegrin frontier", *The Times*, London, 8th April 1911, 5; "Extension of the movement", *The Times*, London, 11th April 1911, 5; "Heavy Turkish Losses", *The Times*, London, 12th April 1911, 5; "Montenegro and refugees", *The Times*, London: 20th April 1911, 3; "Turkish success in Albania", *The Times*, London, 3rd June 1911, 5; "Views of Ismail Kemal Bey", *The Times*, London, 14th June 1911, 7; "Torgut Shevket's army", *The Times*, London, 16th June 1911, 5; "Insurgents and the Turkish promises", *The Times*, London, 17th June 1911, 7; "Turkish policy in the rebel districts", *The Times*, London, 29th June 1911, 5; "Destruction of catholic villages", *The Times*, London, 4th July 1911, 5.

⁴⁸ *Balkanskiyat Komitet v London* (1903–1946), 2003: 348.

⁴⁹ "Condition of refugees", *The Times*, London: 21st July 1911.

⁵⁰ The History Institute's Archive in Tirana (hereinafter: *HIA*), F. HHSt.A.PA.A, Vj. 21-20-2036, The Balkan Committee's relief appeal, London, 29 July 1911.

⁵¹ *HIA*, F. HHSt.A.PA.A in *AIH*, Vj. 21-7-752, Report of the Austro-Hungarian ambassador in London to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, London, 4 August 1911; Nevinson 1935: 275.

⁵² On the collection of funds and allocation of relief in the vilayet of Shkodra see: *HIA*, F. HHSt.A.PA.A, Vj. 21-20-2036, The Balkan Committee's relief appeal, London 29 July 1911; Vj. 21-7-752, Report of the Austro-

The success of the fundraising campaign was attributed to James Bouchier, the *Times* correspondent in the Balkans, who as a member of the committee was personally interested in raising both awareness among the British and money for the cause, while Edith Durham and Henry W. Nevinson, the chairman of the Macedonian Relief Fund and a well-known British journalist and war correspondent in the Balkans, took credit for its actual distribution.⁵³ According to the general consul of Austria–Hungary in Shkodra, the Balkan Committee’s relief operation was mediated by the British consulate, which acted in compliance with London’s instructions urging the fulfillment of the committee’s requests.⁵⁴ The British consul in Trieste, Mr. J. R. Spence, gave significant assistance for purchasing and transporting relief supplies.⁵⁵

Aid was mostly in the form of food, clothes, blankets, and timber to rebuild homes that had been burned down. Only a small amount of cash was distributed. Upon inspection by the committee’s representatives, it was decided that 250 cabins would be built in Hot, Gruda, Traboin, Kastrat, and Bajza—all villages located in the vilayet of Shkodra in the mountainous area bordering Montenegrin. To that end, all timber supplies were bought from the market, and the rest was ordered from Trieste.⁵⁶ Other forms of aid included food rations for people on the verge of starvation. Large amounts of quinine had also been ordered, although the population did not have any knowledge of medicine and still believed in pagan symbols as remedies. Similarly, it organized the distribution of grain supplies to people in poverty and on the verge of starvation. In Bregmatje alone, a village located near the town of Shkodra in what is now northern Albania, fifty boxes of medication were distributed.⁵⁷ Furthermore, a British doctor was expected to treat the sick.

4. Ismail Qemal Vlora and Other Actors in Balkan Political Life: Efforts to organize an insurrection in collaboration with the Balkan Committee

In the Balkans, the Young Turks’ centralizing policy created the preconditions for joint resistance. Balkan insurrection attempts began in 1911. According to Austro-Hungarian diplomats, there were talks between the Greeks and the Bulgarians about establishing a common front, which also involved the Albanians.⁵⁸ Ismail Qemali was

Hungarian ambassador in London to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, London, 4 August 1911; Vj. 21-6-619, Report of the Austro-Hungarian General Consul in Shkodra to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 9 September 1911; Vj. 21-6-629, Report of the Austro-Hungarian General Consulate in Shkodra to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Shkodra, 5 October 1911.

⁵³ *HIA*, F. Archivio Storico e Diplomatico del Ministero degli Affari Esteri, Seria Politica “P” (1891–1916), Albania, Pacco 673, Pos. 844, Anno 1911, Collection of Italian documents preserved in *AIH*, Report of the Italian General Consul in Shkodra to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 12 September 1911.

⁵⁴ *HIA*, F. HHSt.A.PA.A, Vj. 21-6-619, Report of the Austro-Hungarian General Consul in Shkodra to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 9 September 1911.

⁵⁵ Nevinson 1935: 275.

⁵⁶ *HIA*, F. HHSt.A.PA.A, Vj. 21-6-629, Report of the Austro-Hungarian General Consulate in Shkodra to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Shkodra, 5 October 1911.

⁵⁷ Nevinson 1935: 278.

⁵⁸ *HIA*, F. HHSt.A.PA.A, Vj. 21-59, Report of the Austro-Hungarian Consul in Monastir to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Manastir, 15 April 1911; Vj. 21-7-712, Report of the Austro-Hungarian consulate’s secretary

actively engaged in this movement, and he wanted support from Great Britain for his plan for a common insurrection in the Balkans. The plan was that “Greece, Bulgaria, Serbia, and Montenegro, in collaboration with the Turkish subjects who were their kin, along with the Albanians, should declare war against the Ottoman Empire.”⁵⁹ The Albanian insurrection of Malësia e Madhe in 1911, Montenegrin involvement, Serbian propaganda, plans for cooperation between Albanians and Bulgarians, and Greece’s political approach to Bulgaria were all considered a prelude to these designs.⁶⁰

In 1912, the Balkan Committee focused its efforts on establishing contacts with the Ottoman opposition (*Hürriyet ve Itilâf*). If the latter gained power, the committee would carry out its fundamental goal to secure more national rights (various forms of autonomy but not the right of self-determination) for the peoples of the region still within the Ottoman Empire because the second point of the Ottoman opposition’s program recognized the principle of autonomy for national provinces, stipulated respect for the rights of ethnic minorities, and the decentralization of the Ottoman state, while also preserving its political unity.⁶¹ A part of the Albanian and Balkan political elite approved of the opposition party’s program.⁶² Therefore, the Albanian insurrection of 1912 received a great deal of attention.

In a dispatch sent to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on March 25, 1912, the Austro-Hungarian governor in Zara/Zadar claimed that the anticipated Albanian insurrection would be fiercer than others organized previously.⁶³ Its strength, according to the governor, depended on the well-organized actions of the Albanians and on the engagement of the Balkan Committee. The committee became increasingly involved and began distributing money and weapons to the locals. It was estimated that around 12,000 modern rifles were provided in the northern regions of the vilayet of Shkodra. Furthermore, the Balkan Committee also attempted to achieve as quickly as possible a union of the Bulgarian, Serbian, and Greek insurgent groups with the Albanian ones.⁶⁴ However, the available information remains too scarce to make an in-depth analysis of these attempts’ progress throughout the whole Balkans.

Ismail Qemali acted as the Albanian contact person for the committee leaders. His cooperative attitude towards the committee was due to many factors. Ismail Qemali’s notion of the Ottoman state’s political future fit in well with the Balkan Committee’s mission. By the end of the nineteenth century, he was already known in Ottoman political circles. He had held several high offices in the empire and had held positions as the general secretary for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, mayor of Ioannina, and governor of the vilayet of Beirut and Tripoli, among others,⁶⁵ but he was also known in the international arena as one of the political personalities who urged self-reformation of the Ottoman Empire by decentralizing

in Ioannina to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ioannina, 20 April 1911.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, Vj, 21-13-1374, Report of the Austro-Hungarian consulate’s vice-secretary in Vlora to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Vlora, 25 May 1911.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ Gawrich 2006: 190.

⁶² *HIA*, F. *Arhiv Vneshnjoj Politiki Rossi*, Collection of Russian documents preserved in *AIH*, R. 29, Russian Embassy in Istanbul to the 1st Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 22 January 1912.

⁶³ *HIA*, F. HHSt.A.PA.A, Vj, 22-6-662. Report of the Austro-Hungarian Governor in Zadar to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Zadar, 25 March 1912.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ Egro 2012: 303–306.

the sultan's power.⁶⁶ This meant more autonomy for the empire's non-Turkish people. As one of the most distinguished representatives of the liberal Ottoman wing, and later on as one of the most prominent Young Turks,⁶⁷ he was an ardent advocate of the Ottoman Empire's transformation from an autocratic regime under total control of the sultan into a constitutional monarchy. According to him, the Ottoman Empire ought to be a union of nations under the flag of the constitution. This would guarantee each of them their national existence.⁶⁸ Ismail Qemali pointed out the need to adopt an Organic Statute for both Macedonia and Albania like the one foreseen by the 23rd article of the Treaty of Berlin, which granted protections and rights to Christians on the island of Crete.⁶⁹ In a memorandum sent to the Italian Riciotto Garibaldi in August 1903, Ismail Qemali expressed his opposition to the formation of a Macedonian province that would encompass territories inhabited by Albanians. He viewed the idea of a "Greater Macedonia" as nothing more than a "New Eastern Rumelia" that would pave the way for Bulgarians towards the two seas. Although he emphasized the role of Great Britain in implementing the reform program within the Ottoman Empire, Ismail Qemali still thought it necessary to affirm an Albanian nationality within the Ottoman Empire.⁷⁰

On the eve of the Young Turk revolution, in an open letter addressed to E. Grey, the British secretary of state for foreign affairs and Pichon, the French minister of foreign affairs, in April 1908, Ismail Qemali persisted in the necessity of implementing the principles of the Treaty of Berlin "for both Christians and Muslims, united by the need for a tolerable life within the Ottoman Empire and the desire to be part of the civilized world."⁷¹ According to him, it was necessary to resume reforms not just in Macedonia but in all the vilayets of Rumelia/European Turkey:

The inhabitants of Macedonia, who are made up of the ethnic groups that populate the three Balkan states and the Turkish provinces, have no right to any extraordinary preference. Only in this way, could a sustainable order be established throughout European Turkey, and at the same time, a solution could be found for the crisis that was tearing Macedonia apart.⁷²

Regarding Albania, Ismail Qemali emphasized that:

...without a well-organized, united, and strong Albania, the entirety of the Ottoman Empire could not be preserved. The balance between the Balkan peoples could not be established on a strong basis. It would be necessary to recognize the Albanian population, its national existence. The Albanians should be provided with the means of development and progress in full harmony with other racial populations, as the only way for them to advance.⁷³

⁶⁶ Çelik 2004: 94.

⁶⁷ Meta (eds.) 2017: 101, Ismail Qemali 2009: 304–305.

⁶⁸ Gawrich 2006: 146.

⁶⁹ Under the formulation of the 23rd Article "The Sublime Porte applies in the Island of Crete the Organic Law of 1868 with such modifications as may be considered equitable. Similar laws adapted to local requirements, excepting as regards the exemption from taxation granted to Crete, shall also be introduced into the other parts of Turkey in Europe for which no special organization has been provided by the present treaty..." https://content.ecf.org.il/files/M00935_TreatyOfBerlin1878ExcerptsEnglish.pdf (accessed 24 August 2023).

⁷⁰ Vlora 2012: 271–277.

⁷¹ *Central State Archives of the Republic of Albania* (AQSH), F. 19 (Ismail Qemali), D. 21, fl. 1-6.

⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷³ *Ibid.*

As part of his political strategy, Ismail Qemali envisioned the establishment of an anti-Slav front composed of Albanians and Greeks related by the same ancestry.⁷⁴ Furthermore, his perception of a Slav threat led him to adopt a pro-British stance. Ismail Qemali considered Great Britain to be the only power that had full control over the Mediterranean, and for geostrategic reasons it would prevent Slav expansion in the region. According to him, an “entente” with Britain would stop Russia from advancing towards Constantinople and the Balkans. On the other hand, Great Britain had no direct territorial interests in the Balkans and more specifically in Albanian lands.⁷⁵ These positions kept Ismail Qemali distant from Austria–Hungary, which consistently regarded him as unreliable when it came to implementing Habsburg policies in Albania,⁷⁶ while the Young Turks and Albanian nationalists, on the other hand considered him pro-British and pro-Greek.⁷⁷ The Balkan Committee also kept its distance from Austria–Hungary. Both Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian rule were considered by Liberals and committee members to be preventing the Balkan peoples from progressing.⁷⁸

The Balkan Committee had provided weapons and money for the 1910–1911 insurrections and urged Ismail Qemali to contact its members.⁷⁹ Meanwhile, in May 1912, he received encouraging messages from the Greek premier Eleftherios Venizelos, who desired collaboration with the Balkan Committee to secure weapons and money for the Albanian insurrection in the northern territories.⁸⁰

The Greek government’s attitude towards the Albanian insurrection and its reasons for such support might have been influenced by two possible factors. The first was the desire to control Albanian nationalism by merging the Albanian insurrection with other Balkan national movements. In this context, the Balkan Committee played a crucial role which aimed to effortlessly unite the Bulgarian, Serbian, and Greek insurgent groups with the Albanian ones.⁸¹ Second, by urging Ismail Qemali to maintain close contact with the Balkan Committee in London, the Greek government could exclude Italian influence on the Albanian national movement because the committee’s activities did not consider Italian involvement. Venizelos’ strategy proved successful. Ismail Qemali decided to meet first with the representatives of the Balkan Committee and later postponed a meeting with the Italian ambassador in Paris. As a result of this postponement, “Italy announced that it could no longer tolerate the presence of a rival power on Albanian shores.”⁸²

⁷⁴ For more details on Ismail Qemali’s viewpoints and on the Albanian and Greek cooperation see: Dushku 2019: 90–94.

⁷⁵ Ismail Qemali 2009: 246, 249, 279, 287, 398–399.

⁷⁶ Gostentschnigg 2018: 573–576; *HIA*, F. HHSt.A.PA.A, Vj, 22-11-1158. Telegram of Berchtold to Mery, the Austro-Hungarian Ambassador in Rome, Vienna, 22 November 1912.

⁷⁷ Dushku 2021: 99–105.

⁷⁸ Robbins 1994: 216; Dauti 2018: 98.

⁷⁹ Nika (eds.) 2003, 218.

⁸⁰ *HIA*, F. HHSt.A.PA.A, Vj, 22-12-1290. Letter of Fazil Toptani to the Austro-Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Paris, 24 May 1912.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, Vj. 22-6-662, Report of the Austro-Hungarian Governor in Zara to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Zara, 25 March 1912.

⁸² *Ibid.*, Vj. 22-12-1290, Letter of Fazil Toptani to the Austro-Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Paris, 24

Ismail Qemali also discussed his plan with Serbian diplomats. The British foreign secretary Edward Grey wrote that in June 1912, Ismail Qemali had met with Grujić, the Serbian chargé d'affaires, in London. Ismail Qemali told Grujić that "Albania was solid" and the Albanians were "determined this time to see the thing through."⁸³ Nevertheless, the Serbian chargé d'affaires told Lord Onslow, the undersecretary of state for foreign affairs, that the Serbian government was not inclined to share Ismail Qemali's view. Grey added that the Serbs regarded the Albanian insurrection as a primarily anti-Young Turk movement and, therefore they "were not inclined to attach a great deal of importance to it."⁸⁴

Although Dauti affirms in his doctoral thesis that there is no evidence of Ismail Qemali visiting London or Britain in 1912, Austro-Hungarian documents do confirm such a visit. Referring to the Austro-Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, at the end of June 1912 Ismail Qemali and *Ahmet Muhtar Paşa*, the leader of the Ottoman opposition, traveled to London. Among those they met, were leaders of the Balkan Committee with whom it was agreed that Ismail Qemali would be given a significant position in the government once the *itilâfists** came into power, and four representatives of the Ottoman opposition would conduct talks in London with the members of British government.⁸⁵ It can be inferred from this information that the talks guaranteed, among other things, Great Britain's privileged position in the Ottoman Empire if the opposition were to come to power.

The visit to London and the meetings held there convinced Ismail Qemali of the importance of a general insurrection. In a letter sent to his supporters in mid of July 1912, he advised:

The insurrection must be organized and progress according to a plan and the people must gather in mountains...As for the necessary means for the uprising such as: money, weapons, ammunitions, etc. and about the name of a future prince of Albania, no one should worry, as a powerful country which I do not want to name for the time being, is going to attend to it.⁸⁶

He did not specify which "powerful country," but Ismail Qemali had always favored British involvement in the Balkans. He belonged to a group of Ottoman politicians who had persistently asked and hoped for Great Britain's support and backing.⁸⁷

But how interested was Great Britain in the Balkans, and could the Balkan Committee influence British policy making? As Keith Robbins of the University of Wales mentioned, public opinion in general has traditionally played an important role in British policy making, and British leaders have openly affirmed that in Great Britain, public opinion was imperative in important matters.⁸⁸

May 1912.

⁸³ Dauti 2018: 203.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

* The Ottoman opposition

⁸⁵ *HIA*, F. HHSt.A.PA.A, Vj, 22-12-1286. Dispatch to the Austro-Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 29 July 1912.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, Vj, 22-1-122. Report of the Austro-Hungarian Consul in the region of Vlora-Berat to the Austro-Hungarian ambassador in Istanbul, Berat, 26 July 1912.

⁸⁷ Shpuza 1997: 105.

⁸⁸ Robbins 1977: 70.

After the unrest in the vilayet of Monastir in 1903, Great Britain proposed a program of thorough reforms and put pressure on the sultan to concede more rights to the Balkan peoples.⁸⁹ Although Britain's interest in Balkans affairs was concealed within the context of the Eastern Question, it gradually departed from its traditional policy of "splendid isolation," but did not change its neutral position regarding the Balkans.⁹⁰

It engaged more actively in Balkan intervention, along with other Great Powers. In August 1907, the British and the Russians signed a treaty that led to the formation of the Triple Entente. Consequently, the British ceased to be considered the "best friend" of Constantinople, and the Sublime Porte began to look for support elsewhere.⁹¹ Germany seemed a good opportunity. The Ottoman–German alliance was strengthened considerably, and by 1910, Germany had gained significant financial and military influence in the Ottoman Empire. It had already become Constantinople's favorite Great Power and played a key role in the reorganization of the Ottoman army.⁹² Meanwhile, relations between Great Britain and Germany deteriorated as they now belonged to two different blocks, and this was also reflected in a rivalry to secure a dominant position in Constantinople. The growing influence of the Germans in Constantinople and the Albanian insurrections of 1911 and 1912 only changed British policy towards the Ottoman Empire,⁹³ but not toward the Albanians. Up until the First Balkan War, the British government continued to disregard Albanian efforts to fulfill their national ambitions.

In this context, the Balkan Committee played an important, albeit limited, role. The British government and the committee had converging interests. Hence, the British used the committee essentially as a pressure group to further its foreign policy agenda, while British imperial interests were paramount to the committee. The Balkan Committee thus did not officially represent the British government, but it did see itself as representing the best traditions of British political culture and an informed public interest in foreign affairs.⁹⁴ This was also because the British foreign secretary Edward Grey had publicly backed its establishment.⁹⁵ In his speeches, he acknowledged the importance of public opinion. Although the Albanian insurrections were perceived in Great Britain as internal issues for the Ottoman state and therefore any direct British intervention was deemed undesirable, the deterioration of the situation in the Balkans was not acceptable, as it could threaten peace in Europe. The British stance and Secretary Grey's personal attitude were founded on detailed and regular accounts British diplomacy had received from indirect sources, beginning with Edith Durham and her letters addressed to Spence, the British general consul in Trieste.⁹⁶

As a result, the British government expressed concern about the Albanian insurrection of 1911. Yet, because of the broader absence of major interests in the Balkans, Britain would not take independent action or assume the role of Albania's protector. Instead,

⁸⁹ Glenny 2000: 207–208.

⁹⁰ Guy 2012: 47

⁹¹ Sezgin 2013: 435.

⁹² Shaw, J. Stanford 2006: 5–7.

⁹³ For the British policies toward Ottoman Empire see: Feroz 1966: 302–323.

⁹⁴ Perkins 2014: 150.

⁹⁵ *Balkanskiyat Komitet v London (1903–1946)*, 2003: 329.

⁹⁶ Gurakuqi 2012: 308.

Grey favored collective action so the British government would not jeopardize its relations with the Porte. The Albanian insurrections from 1910 to 1912 also revealed that the British government had left the Balkans in the hands of the three most interested Powers: Austria–Hungary, Russia, and Italy.⁹⁷ These Powers had direct interests in the Balkans, with Austria–Hungary and Italy interested more specifically in the Albanian lands.

On the other hand, in British public opinion, basic human rights and freedoms were paramount. The political elite showed sensitivity about systematic human rights violations, as was the case with the Albanian highlanders. On July 27, 1911, in a debate in the House of Commons, Noel Buxton, the head of the Balkan Committee, declared that the Albanian situation was “the most urgent matter” they were faced with. On the same day and in the same place, the British foreign secretary spoke in support of Buxton’s arguments.⁹⁸ The Albanian question “ought to be dealt with promptly and in the spirit of conciliation.” Although the Muslims, Catholics, and Orthodox had joined in resisting the Porte, the speaker of the House of Commons did not believe that the Albanians desired separation from the Ottoman government, and “under no circumstances could the [Ottoman] government submit to the dictation of others.”⁹⁹

To conclude, in Great Britain public interest in the future of the Ottoman Empire’s nationalities remained high. The Balkan Committee’s campaign to raise awareness, especially of Ottoman Macedonia, played a significant part in this aspect. Also, it managed to sensitize British political and public opinion regarding the Albanian insurrections and especially the severe humanitarian situation created in the vilayet of Shkodra. It is worth emphasizing that the British government and the press showed an interest in such events primarily because the Albanian Catholics were Christians who were seen as suffering from Ottoman persecution. The religious dimension of the situation was still considered important, which was in line the long-standing trend of interpreting Balkan affairs through the prism of religion.¹⁰⁰ Regarding the Albanian insurrection of 1912, the Balkan Committee did not succeed in uniting the political actors in the Balkans and thus failed to organize a general Balkan uprising, an undertaking that was, in fact, beyond its capacities and outside of the British government’s interests.

5. Summary

The purpose of this paper is to present Albanian nationalists’ reactions to the homogenizing and centralizing policies of the Young Turks. In this regard, the focus was on raising awareness and securing the support of the international community for their national rights and for the difficult humanitarian situation in the vilayet of Shkodra. Albanian nationalists’ efforts converged with the Balkan Committee in London. The committee was established in the British capital in 1903 as the result of events in the Balkans after the 1903 Ilinden Uprising in the vilayet of Monastir.

⁹⁷ Dauti 2018: 215.

⁹⁸ Swire 1971: 108.

⁹⁹ Dauti 2018: 188.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 192.

Although the Albanian question was not within the scope of the Balkan Committee's direct objectives, it had reason to show an active interest in the Albanian uprisings of 1911–1912, since its aims also matched the committee's goals. Raising public awareness of the Balkans and in particular of the Macedonian Question was considered an essential goal for the Balkan Committee's work. The Albanian question was considered in conjunction with the Macedonian one. The British press played a major role in informing the public of the insurrection in the vilayet of Shkodra, and the London-based *Times* reported regularly and extensively on Balkan events, which was no coincidence. The newspaper's correspondent in the Balkans since 1892 had been James Bouchier, a member of the Balkan Committee. Furthermore, Edith Durham, an activist and member of the Balkan Committee and the Macedonian Relief Fund, published the majority of her writings in the same newspaper.

The Balkan Committee succeeded in making the British public responsive to Albanian uprising of 1911 and the humanitarian situation in the vilayet of Shkodra. The success of a fundraising campaign for relief was attributed to Bouchier, the *Times* correspondent in the Balkans, while two British members of the Macedonian Relief Fund, Henry W. Nevinson, and Edith Durham took credit for its actual distribution.

The Young Turks' centralizing policies created the preconditions for a joint resistance in the Balkans. There had been talks between the Greeks and the Bulgarians, and the Albanians and the Greeks and the Serbs to establish a common front. The prominent Albanian nationalist Ismail Qemali, who proclaimed Albania's independence in November 1912, appears to have had active contact with the Balkan Committee during the uprisings of 1912. Although the Balkan Committee's awareness campaign played an important part in sensitizing British political and public opinion to the Albanian insurrection of 1911, it did not succeed in uniting the political actors in the Balkans and thus failed to organize a general Balkan uprising, an undertaking that was, in fact, beyond its capacities and outside of the British government's interests.

REFERENCES:

Unpublished primary sources:

The History Institute's Archive in Tirana

Collection of Austro-Hungarian documents (Haus und Hof Staats Archiv, Wien, Politisches Archiv, Albanien, years 1910-1912)

Collection of Russian documents (Arhiv Vneshnoy Politiki Rossi, year 1912)

Collection of Italian documents (*Archivio Storico e Diplomatico del Ministero degli Affari Esteri*, Seria Politica "P" (1891-1916), Albania, Pacco 673, Pos. 844, Anno 1911).

Central State Archives of the Republic of Albania (AQSH), F. 19 (Ismail Qemali).

Published primary sources:

Balkanskiy Komitet v London (1903-1946), Glavno Upravlenie na arhivite pri ministerskiy s'vet na Republika B'lgariya. Nacionalni daritel'ski fond "13 vjeka Bullgariya", Universitetsko izdatel'svo "Kliment Ohridski", 2003.

- Destani, B. (eds), *M. Edith Durham: Albania and the Albanians, Selected Articles and Letters, 1903-1944*, London: Centre for Albanian Studies, 2001.
- Destani, B. and Tomes, J. (eds.), *Albania's Greatest Friend. Aubrey Herbert and the Making of Modern Albania, 1904-1928*, London: Tauris, 2011.
- Marchand, L. (eds). Lord Byron, *Selected letters and journals in one volume*, from the unexpurgated twelve volume edition, London: John Murray 1982). <https://thebalkanista.com/2018/03/11/lord-byron-letters-on-albania/> (accessed 8 June 2023).
- Nika, N. (eds). *Përmbledhje dokumentesh mbi kryengritjet shqiptare (1910-1912)*, [Collection of documents on the Albanian insurrections (1910-1912)], Prishtina: Institute of History, 2003.

References:

- Abdul Halim Al-Jubouy, E. H. S, "The position of the head of the British Balkan Committee Noel Buxton on the Ottoman presence in Europe 1908-1915", *Journal of Tikrit University for Humanities*, 29 (5), 2022.
<https://doi.org/10.25130/jtuh.29.5.2022.10>, (accessed 3 August 2023).
- Babacan, H. "Malisori rebellion and the attitude of the Ottoman Empire", in Meta, B. (eds.) *100 years of Independence. Speeches of the International Scientific Conference*, Tirana, 26-27 November 2021, Volume I. Tirana: Center for Albanian Studies, Institute of History, 2014.
- Balatoni, B. "The Buxton Mission. British diplomacy in Bulgaria 1914–1915", *Mediterran Tanulmányok XXVIII*, 2019.
- Blumi, I. *Reinstating the Ottomans: Alternative Balkan Modernities, 1800-1912*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.
- Bozborra, N. *Shqipëria dhe nacionalizmi shqiptar në Perandorinë Osmane* [Albania and Albanian nationalism in Ottoman Empire], Tiranë: Dituria dhe Shtëpia e Librit & Komunikimit, 2002.
- Brown, K. *Loyal unto Death. Trust and Terror in Revolutionary Macedonia*. Indiana University Press, Bloomington – Indianapolis, 2013.
- Clayer, N. *Në fillimet e nacionalizmit shqiptar- Lindja e një kombi me shumicë myslimane në Evropë* [Aux origines du nationalisme albanais. La naissance d'une nation majoritairement musulmane en Europe], Tiranë: Përprjekja, 2009.
- Çanli, M. "Balkanlarda Komitacılık ve Çetecilik: II. Meçrutiyet Dönemi Meclis-i Mebusan Oturumlarında Yapılan Tartı Çıkmalar ve Çözüm Önerileri Üzerine Bir Değerlendirme" in *Uluslararası Türkçe Edebiyat Kültür Eğitim Dergisi*, 6(4), 2017.
- Çelik, B. *İttihatçılar ve Arnavutlar: II. Meçrutiyet Döneminde Arnavut Ulusçuluğu ve Arnavut Sorunu*, Istanbul, Buke Kitapları, 2004.
- Çeku, E. *Shqiptarët 1830-1908* [Albanians 1830-1908], Prishtinë: Botimet Artini, 2022.
- Dauti, D. *Britain, the Albanian Question and the Demise of the Ottoman Empire 1876–1914*. PhD, The University of Leeds, 2018.
https://theses.whiterose.ac.uk/20950/1/Dauti_D_History_PhD_2018.pdf, (accessed 8 August 2023).
- Dushku, L. "The Vilayet of Ioannina in front of Hellenism", *Südost-Forschungen, Band 78-2019*, Leibniz-Institut für Ost-und Südosteuropaforschung, 2020.
- Dushku, L. "Ismail Qemal Vlora, bashkëpunimi shqiptaro-grek dhe elita politike shqiptare", in: *Ismail Qemal Vlora dhe elita politike shqiptare në procesin e shtetndërtimit* [Ismail Qemal Vlora and the Albanian political elite on the state building process], (eds Ledia Dushku), Tiranë: Botimet Albanologjike, 2021.
- Egro, D. "Lamtumirë Rumeli! Dorëzimi i Janinës, Greqisë (1913), një histori e dhimbshme osmane", in: Mehmeti, A. (eds.) *Abedin Dino dhe çështja çame sot* [Abedin Dino and the Cham question today], Tiranë: Arbëria, 2010.
- Egro, D. "Biography of Ismail Qemali", *Studime Historike*, 3-4, 2012.

- Elsie, R, *A Biographical Dictionary of Albanian History*. Published by Scarecrow Press, 2010.
- Elsie, R. (eds), *Traveler, Scholar, Political Adventurer: A Transylvanian Baron at the Birth of Albanian Independence: The memoirs of Franz Nopcsa*. Budapest, CEU Press, 2014.
- Feroz, A. *Turkey. The Quest for Identity*, Oxford: One World Publications, 2003.
- Feroz, A. "Great Britain's Relations with the Young Turks. 1908–1914", *Middle Eastern Studies* Vol. 2. No. 4, 1966.
- Feroz, A. *The Young Turks: The Committee of Union and Progress in Turkish Politics, 1908-1914*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969.
- Gawrych, G. W., *The Crescent and the Eagle. Ottoman Rule, Islam and the Albanians, 1874-1913*, London-New York: I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd, 2006
- Genov, R. "Bulgaria's entry and participation of in World War I as seen by the British journalist James D. Bouchier" <http://www.viaevrasia.com/documents/Roumen%20Genov.pdf>, (accessed 10 August 2023);
- Glenny, M. *The Balkans Nationalism, War and the Great Power, 1804-1999*, London: Granta Books, 2000.
- Gostentschinigg, K. *Wissenschaft im Spannungsfeld von Politik und Militär. Die österreichisch – ungarische Albanologie 1867-1918*, Wiesbaden: Springer VS, 2018.
- Gurakuqi, R. *Shqipëria 1911-1914* [Albania 1911-1914], Tiranë: UET Press, 2012.
- Guy, N. *The Birth of Albania. Ethnic Nationalism, the Great Powers of World War I and the Emergence of Albanian Independence*. London & New York, 2012.
- Hacısalihoglu, M. "The Young Turk Policy in Macedonia Cause of the Balkan Wars?" in: Yavuz, M. Hakan and Blumi, I. (eds.), *War and Nationalism. The Balkan Wars, 1912–1913, and their Sociopolitical Implications*, Salt Lake City: The University of Utah Press, 2013,
- Hanioglu, M. Şükrü. *Preparation for a Revolution: The Young Turks, 1902-1908 (Studies in Middle Eastern History)* 1st Edition, Oxford University Press, 2001.
- Ismail, Q. *Kujtime* [Memoirs], Tiranë: Toena, 2009.
- Kaya, M. "Western Interventions and Formation of the Young Turks' Siege Mentality", *Middle East Critique* Vol.23, No.2, 2014.
- Kerimoğlu, H. T. "Kilise ve Mektepler Kanunu Örneğinde II. Meşrutiyet döneminde ittihatçı - rum ilişkileri", *Çağdaş Türkiye Tarihi Araştırmaları Dergisi (Journal of Modern Turkish History Studies)* VI/14, 2007/Bahar.
- Kondis, B. *Greece and Albania 1908-1914*, Thessaloniki: Institute for Balkan Studies, 1976.
- Korkut, H. "Critical analysis of the Ottoman Constitution (1876)", *Epiphany: Journal of Transdisciplinary Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 1, (2016), University of Sarajevo 2016.
- Malcolm, N. *Kosovo A short story*, London: Macmillan Publishers Ltd, 1998.
- Mantran, R. (eds.) *Historia e Perandorisë Osmane* [The history of the Ottoman Empire], Tiranë: Dituria, 2004.
- Nevinson, H. *The fire of life*, London: James Nisbet & Co. Ltd, 1935.
- Perkins, James Andrew, *British liberalism and the Balkans, c. 1875-1925*, Birkbeck University 2014. http://bbktheses.da.ulcc.ac.uk/82/1/cp_PhD_thesis_J.A._Perkins.pdf (accessed 4 August 2023).
- Prela, Z. "Problemi shqiptar dhe politika austro-hungareze, 1897–1912", in: *Mbi Lëvizjen Kombëtare Shqiptare* [On the Albanian National Movement], Tiranë: Mihal Duri, 1962
- Robbins, K. G. "Public opinion, the press and the pressure groups", in Hensley, F. H. (eds.) *British Foreign policy under Sir Edward Grey*, London: Cambridge University Press, 1977.
- Robbins, K. G. *Politicians, diplomacy and war in modern British history*, London: The Hambledon Press, 1994.
- Sergin, P, "Between Cross and Crescent. British Diplomacy and Press Opinion toward the Ottoman Empire in Resolving the Balkan Wars, 1912–1913", in M. Hakan Yavuz–İsa Blumi (eds.), *War*

- and Nationalism. The Balkan Wars, 1912–1913, and their Sociopolitical Implications.* The University of Utah Press, Salt Lake City 2013
- Skendi, S. *The Albanian National Awakening*, Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1967.
- Shaw, J. Stanford. *The Ottoman Empire in World War I. Volume I. Prelude to War*, Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2006.
- Shpuza, G. *Në vazhden e gjurmimeve për epokën e Rilindjes Kombëtare (Përmbledhje shënimesh historike dhe historiografike)* [Tracing the age of National Renaissance (A collection of historical and historiographical notes)], Tiranë: Toena, 1997.
- Somel, S. A. “The Religion Community Schools and Foreign Missionary Schools”, in Inalcık, H, Renda, H (eds.) *Ottoman Civilization*, vol. I, Republic of Turkey: Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Istanbul: 2004.
- Spirkovski, A. “The significance of the Balkan Committee in London for the definition of the British policy towards the Macedonian Question, 1903-1908”, *Annals of the University of Craiova. History*, 2(24), 2013.
- Swire, J. *Albania -The rise of a kingdom*, New-York: Arno Press and The New York Times, 1971.
- Tanner, M. *Albania's Mountain Queen – Edith Durham and the Balkans*, London: I. B. Tauris, 2014.
- Ünlü, M. *Vilajeti i Kosovës (1877-1912)*, Tirana: Dituria, 2023.
- Vlora, Darling, “Memorandum directed to Riciotto Garibaldi from Ismail Qemal Vlora (1903)”, *Studime Historike*, 1–2, 2012.
- Yavuz, M. Hakan, “Warfare and Nationalism. The Balkan Wars as a Catalyst for Homogenization”, in: M. Hakan Yavuz and I. Blumi (eds.), *War and Nationalism. The Balkan Wars, 1912–1913, and their Sociopolitical Implications*, Salt Lake City: The University of Utah Press, 2013.
- Yosmaoglu, I. *Blood ties. Religion, violence, and the politics of nationhood in Ottoman Macedonia, 1878–1908*, Cornell University Press: Ithaca & London, 2014.

Newspapers

- The Times*, London, February 11, 1911.
- The Times*, London, February 28, 1911.
- The Times*, London, March 18, 1911.
- The Times*, London, March 31, 1911.
- The Times*, London, March 29, 1911
- The Times*, London, April 8, 1911.
- The Times*, London, April 11, 1911.
- The Times*, London, April 12, 1911.
- The Times*, London, April 20, 1911.
- The Times*, London, June 3, 1911.
- The Times*, London: June 14, 1911.
- The Times*, London: June 16, 1911.
- The Times*, London: June 17, 1911.
- The Times*, London: 29 June 1911.
- The Times*, London: July 4, 1911.
- The Times*, London, July 21, 1911.

ЛЕДИЈА ДУШКУ
Институт за историју
Академија за албанолошке студије, Тирана

**НЕМА ВИШЕ СИРОЧАДИ!: ХОМОГЕНИЗУЈУЋА ПОЛИТИКА
МЛАДОТУРАКА, АЛБАНСКА РЕАКЦИЈА И БАЛКАНСКИ КОМИТЕТ
У ЛОНДОНУ 1910–1912**

Резиме

У раду се разматра реакција албанских националиста на хомогенизујућу и централизујућу политику Младотурака у Соманском царству. Пошто су Младотурци дошли на власт, фокус албанских националиста био је на подизању међународне свести и обезбеђивању подршке за њихова национална права. Додатно, њихова усредсређеност била је на тешкој хуманитарној ситуацији у Скадарском вилајету. Ови напори су се приближили Балканском комитету у Лондону који је основан 1903. после дешавања везаним за Илинденски устанак. У раду се истражују разлози због којих је Балкански комитет у Лондону постао заинтересован за Албански устанак у Скадарском вилајету 1911. године. Аналитичким приступом и омоћу бројних извора, у раду се закључује да је Балкански комитет успео да тешку хуманитарну ситуацију Албанаца начини пријемчивом у британском јавном мњењу. Ипак, он није успео да уједини политичке актере на Балкану и стога је био неуспешан у организацији општег балканског устанка, што је очито био подухват изван могућности Комитета, као и ван интереса британске владе.

Кључне речи: Младотурци, Балкански комитет, албански устанци, Османско царство, Скадарски вилајет, Македонски хумантарни фонд, Исмаил Кемал Влора, хуманитарна ситуација.

© Faculty of Philosophy, Novi Sad, 2023
ISTRAŽIVANJA – JOURNAL OF HISTORICAL RESEARCHES 34, 121-141