Empire of Nations: The Consolidation of Albanian and Turkish National Identities in the Late Ottoman Empire, 1878 – 1913

Emiddio Pietro Licursi
Advisor: Karen Barkey
Second Reader: Christine Philliou
Department of History
Columbia University
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For my parents, who take pride in explaining, to many interlocutors, that their son studies Ottoman History.
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Introduction

Although the Albanians have never given up their passionate desire for independence, they have been the only Balkan people really attached to the Ottoman Empire, always ready to support it, always happy to help strengthen it and to profit by its strength. But whenever the Albanians have become aware that, instead of growing stronger, Turkey had weakened herself, and hurried her ruin, they have risen in an effort of self-preservation with the unanimous cry, ‘Let her commit suicide if she wishes; we intend to survive.’

The attachment of the Albanians to the Empire must not be attributed to the influence of the Mussulman religion, which the great majority of the population accepted when Albania was incorporated with Turkey. The reason must be sought in a higher order of national interest. – Ismail Kemal 1

Ismail Kemal was a thrice-exiled Ottoman civil servant under the Sultans Abdülaziz and Abdülhamid II. As a loyal confidant of Midhat Pasha, he was a key figure in propagating liberalism and, eventually, constitutionalism in the Empire. After the Young Turk Revolution, Ismail Kemal served as a deputy in the restored Ottoman Parliament of 1908, and even served as the president of its lower house, the Ottoman Chamber of Deputies (Mejlis-i Mebusan), during the countercoup of 1909. However, in spite of his illustrious career as an Ottoman political figure, Ismail Kemal was not a Turk. He was an Albanian and, indeed, ardently championed the Albanian movement for national autonomy as its preeminent political leader. He was the chairman at the signing of the Albanian declaration of independence in 1912 and served as the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the first independent Albanian state. While Ismail Kemal’s career was remarkable, the reticulation of identities as both an Ottoman and an Albanian, apparent in his career, was common of many Albanians at the turn of the twentieth century. In this sense, Ismail Kemal was a quintessential Ottoman-Albanian figure, whose identity existed, concomitantly, in Albanian and Ottoman spheres.

His political career exemplifies the complex nature of Ottoman-Albanian identity as it was enmeshed with that Ottoman-Turkish identity, as a reflection of a long history of symbiosis and synergy between Albanians and the Ottoman Empire. Furthermore, his personal political journey reflects an important meta-historical shift in Ottoman history, the nexus of which was the 1908 Young Turk Revolution, in which the historical cooperation between Turks and Albanians for the survival of Ottoman Empire came to an end. This transition was the result of the complete requisition of power, after the revolution, at the hands of the Committee of Union and Progress, whose political agenda of social and political centralization prompted Albanians and Turks to consolidate their identities. In so doing, both groups rejected the adaptive Ottoman administrative ideology that had so long sustained the multi-ethnic, multi-confessional, multi-lingual Empire, in favor of ethno-linguistic nationalism, similar to that that had eroded Ottoman sovereignty in the Balkans. For the Albanian and Turkish political leadership in the Late Ottoman Empire, Ottomanism, which had maintained the complex socio-political system that sustained the “Empire of Difference,” \(^2\) could no longer viably protect the interests of its peoples. For these nationalists, both Turks and Albanians would have to radically reconfigure their identities in order to survive the transformations underway in the Ottoman Empire and, indeed, in the international political order at large.

This transitional process occurred, approximately, between the years of 1878 and 1913. In these 35 years, I argue, a two parallel processes occurred. Albanian and Turkish intellectuals developed ideological arguments for ethno-linguistic nationalism in the wake of external threats and domestic crises facing the Empire. While, concurrently,

Albanian and Turkish political organizations and militant groups cooperated to reinstate the 1876 Ottoman Constitution (Kanûn-ı Esasî, or “Basic Law”), in the hopes of renewing a united, just, and prosperous Ottoman Empire. I claim that the culmination of this process, whose origins can be traced throughout a multi-century history of synergistic cooperation between Albanians and Ottomans, is embodied in a single event, the massive demonstration, between July 5th and July 20th 1908, in the Albanian town of Ferizovik (in Albanian, Ferizaj) in Kosovo. This event, in which a coalition of Turkish and Albanian political groups and 20,000 Albanians gathered to demand the reinstitution of the 1876 Constitution, delivered the coup de grâce to the non-constitutional regime of Abdülhamid II, radically transforming the Empire’s power structure. The events at Ferizovik, I argue, mark both the culmination of Albanian and Turkish cooperation under the ideological banners of Ottomanism and Constitutionalism, as well as the beginning of the deterioration and eventual abandonment of this model in favor of ethno-linguistic nationalism.

I intend to utilize the intellectual output of Albanian and Turkish figures throughout this period to demonstrate the manner in which this process, and its various contingencies, affected their worldviews. Particularly, I rely on works from Pashko Vasa, Faīk Konitza, Sami Frashëri (Şemseddin Sami), Yusuf Akçura, and Ismail Kemal to elucidate this process of transformation. I argue that these intellectual works provide crucial insight as to the manner in which Albanians interpreted the events that occurred between 1878 and 1913. Additionally, I claim that these intellectual sources embody a resolution of the meta-historical transformations that occurred during this time, the
proliferation of nationalism throughout the Balkans and the Empire’s effort to
“modernize,” and the contingencies that directly effected the Albanian population.

Unlike extant histories about the development of Albanian nationalism this thesis
is composed with the understanding that any broad Albanian political movement cannot
be understood in isolation from, or in opposition to, the Ottoman Empire, Turkish
political movements and more global transformations. This thesis not only examines the
development of Albanian nationalism, but also examines a distinct meta-historical
transformation within the Ottoman Empire and on the international political scene, by
concentrating on a key turning point in the process of the transformation of Europe’s last
formal Empire into numerous nation-sates. It is in the interest of examining Albanian
nationalism in a broader structural context, that separates the approach of this thesis from
extant work on Albanian nationalism.

The common scholarly approach to the Albanian national movement can be
compartmentalized into two modes of understanding. The first, exemplified by the work
of Stavro Skendi, approaches Albanian nationalism as an “awakening” of primordial
national sentiments. In these narratives, Albanians, during centuries of Ottoman
domination and oppression, struggled to attain their independence and freedom and
finally did so in 1912. This approach, informed by modern nationalist sentiments, worked
to revise and combat the dominance of Hoxha-era historians over the historiography of
Albanian nationalism in the 1950’s and 1960’s. The second school of thought, which
developed more recently, acknowledges the place of Albanians in the multi-cultural
fabric of the Ottoman Empire, but still makes little effort to contextualize Albanian
nationalism within a broader framework specific to the Empire.
These historians, like George Gawrych, set out to revise “nationalist” histories, but seem to miss key structures that link Albanian nationalism with nascent Turkish nationalism and confluence of international and domestic forces that prompted the broader structural transformation in the Ottoman Empire. This approach tends to overcompensate in arguing that harmony existed between Albanians and the Ottoman Empire, and neglects the seemingly paradoxical sentiments of many Albanians, who for most of this period asserted their loyalty to the Empire while cultivating national sentiments.

In neglecting this paradox these scholars fail to perceive the utmost importance of Albanian multi-vocal identities, which serve to explain the seemingly contradictory views of Albanian nationalists about the Empire. Understanding the multi-vocal character of identity in the Ottoman context is not relegated to Albanians. Indeed, in analyzing Palestinian identity under the Ottoman Empire, Rashid Khalidi identifies what he calls “competing” or “overlapping loyalties,” which correspond to the “overlapping identities” of many Arabs under the Ottoman Empire. These “overlapping identities” prompted certain contradictions, but they also made the co-existence of Arabism and Ottomanism, in the worldviews of Arabs from Jerusalem, “by no means mutually exclusive.” I argue that Albanians had a similar multiplicity of religious, ethnic, linguistic, social, cultural and political identities, which I describe as multi-vocal. I intend to demonstrate the importance of the Albanian context as a reflective microcosm of meta-historical shifts occurring in the Empire at large, as well as a case that complicates extant narratives of

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nationalism in the Balkans. In so doing, I hope to present the Albanian turn to nationalism as not only different from other nationalist movements in the Balkans, but also as an ideological and political reaction to the events of this period that was, in fact, a reaction akin to that of early Turkish nationalists.

In the first section, I will explicate my theoretical approach, drawn from the works of various scholars in various disciplines, including history, sociology and anthropology. In so doing, I will demonstrate the advantage of employing these specific theories in analyzing the development of Albanian nationalism in the Ottoman context. In the following section, I will trace five centuries of interactions between Albanians and the Ottoman Empire, beginning with the earliest Ottoman conquests of Europe and tracing the lasting synergy that developed between the two groups. An understanding of this historical background is key to analyzing the deep interconnectedness of Albanians and Turks under Ottomanism, and the reluctance of Albanians to abandon the Empire even when most other Balkan communities had done so. Next, I will briefly examine the events surrounding the Treaty of San Stefano in 1878 and the psychological impact incurred by Albanian intellectuals in regards to massive military and territorial losses for the Ottoman Empire.

In the subsequent section, I will trace the early ideological development of nationalism, beginning in 1878, utilizing the available output of fundamentally important, contemporary Albanian and Turkish intellectuals. Thereby, I will examine both the structural continuity and even mutual participation of Albanian and Turkish intellectuals in formulating Albanian and Turkish nationalist ideologies. This section will focus specifically on the works of Pashko Vasa (Vasa Pasha Effendi), Faïk Konitza (Faik Bey
Konitza), Sami Frashëri (Şemseddin Sami), Yusuf Akçura, and Ismail Kemal, with particular interest in the manner in which each reconciles nationalism (Albanianism or Turkism) with Ottomanism. Finally, I will investigate the importance of the 1908 Revolution and constitutionalism as a means of galvanizing the disparate interests of Albanian nationalists and the CUP, using the detailed memoirs of Ismail Kemal. I will focus on the events of July 1908 in Ferizovik as key moment of collective effervescence and the last broad Ottomanist cooperation between Albanians and Turks. Additionally, I will consider the responsibility of the CUP in manipulating Albanian nationalists to participate in the revolution, without any intention of compromising their political agenda of political and cultural centralization.
Nationalism, In Theory

In order to examine the development of nationalism as both a political and ideological force among Albanians and Turks in the late Ottoman Empire, it is useful to establish a theoretical framework. In this section I will briefly synthesize the various theoretical works that I find elevates my particular historical analysis of nationalism. Particularly, beginning with the work of Ernest Gellner, who offered a critique of one of the founders of modern nationalist theory, Elie Kedourie. Gellner rejected Kedourie’s idea that the phenomenon of nationalism seized modern society through a long intellectual process, beginning in the enlightenment, resulting in “an ideological style of politics.” Instead, Gellner offers a materialist model, that the fusion of culture and politics in nationalism is the result of an epochal shift, between agrarian and the industrial society. For Gellner, nationalism is the ideological expression of the material necessity of an industrial society, which functionally requires a mobile, literate, culturally standardized, interchangeable, homogenous population. While theoretically intriguing, Gellner’s approach illuminates the exceptionality of the Albanian and Turkish cases.

For one, nationalism as a theory of political legitimacy may have originated as an industrial-modern phenomenon, but this epochal diagnosis does not explain the abrupt eruption of nationalist ideology among Albanians and Turks, both of which existed in a distinctly non-industrial context and had actively resisted nationalist irredentism in favor the imperil model of Ottomanism. The broad structural terms with which Gellner divides

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history into neat categories proves unsuccessful when considering the Ottoman context, which defies this categorization, as it was a non-industrial empire in the concert of Europe. While Gellner’s theories neglect contextual nuance in the development of nationalism, they are by no means irrelevant. Indeed, Albanians and Turks were desperate to find ideological and political means of bringing their nations into both political and developmental “modernity,” referring to the European model of the nation-state. As Gellner aptly describes, “…nationalism is not the awakening and assertion of these mythical, supposedly natural and given units. It is, on the contrary, the crystallization of new units, suitable for the conditions now prevailing…”

Indeed Albanians and Turks were concerned pragmatically with nationalism as a strategic political ideology. Each group understood the nation state as the most suitable means of political organization for their contemporary geopolitical situation, but this motivation does not elucidate the nature of their respective nationalist turns. Albanians and Turks were reacting to more than just a change in the international order. They were also reacting to a series of structural shifts that occurred within the Empire in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Depending on the specific context, these structural, macro-ideological changes affected different individuals and groups at different paces and to different degrees. The Albanian and Turkish national movements were set in particular contexts and were motivated by particular contingencies, the likes of which are unaccounted for by modernist scholars of nationalism. Theorists like A.D. Smith and Rogers Brubaker attempt to reconcile the modernist obsession with structure with the seemingly authentic and ubiquitous feeling of national or ethnic sentiment in modern society.

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7 Ibid., 47.
Smith argues that a historical epochal break is insufficient in explaining nationalism as an ideological phenomenon of identity. He claims that the structural changes that occur during an epoch shift do so within the pre-existing frameworks of collective identities, which distinctly determine the political, social, and cultural future of said groups. In Smith’s theory, nationalism should be conceptualized by synthesizing certain romantic and modern nationalist theories. Thus, the importance of structural, macro-historical shifts are unquestionable, but they occur contiguously with certain pre-existing kinship bonds, religious identities and belief systems. This theoretical innovation forces any scholar of nationalism to address particularity, in order to understand how the relationship between macro-structural forces and micro-contextual identities manifests in specific cases. Rogers Brubaker, who provides an innovative take on the relationship between the universality of ethnicity, national identity and contingency, elaborates upon the interplay between structure and context apropos nationalism in Smith’s work.

Brubaker offers the important critical perspective that ethnicity, race and nationhood are cognitive perspectives on the world, rather than entities in the world. The key misunderstanding in extant scholarship on nationalism, Brubaker insists, is that the discourse regarding ethnicity and nationhood has been ontological, when it should be epistemological. Ethnic identities, for Brubaker, are merely schemas of categorization; they are templates for “naturalizing social difference” by partitioning the social world into “putative deeply constituted groups...” Based on cognitive research, Brubaker concludes that the categorization projected by ethnicity is in reality a categorization of

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9 Ibid., 3-4.
“abstract entities,” that is “events, actions, emotions, spatial relationships, social relationships…” This concept is key to understanding Albanian and Turkish nationalism, which in both cases served as an ideological understanding that provides meaning to a multiplicity of contingencies with which Albanians and Turks were faced at the turn of the twentieth century.

Brubaker’s theory of nationalism draws upon fundamental theoretical innovations from a variety of social sciences. Indeed, the anthropologist Clifford Geertz’s definition of culture is analogous to Brubaker’s cognitive understanding of ethnicity,

The concept of culture I espouse…is essentially a semiotic one. Believing, with Max Weber, that man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun, I take culture to be those webs, and the analysis of it to be therefore not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretive one in search of meaning.

Conceptually, “meaning” is key to understanding nationalism, as it links the relationship between the individual and the group to that of context or contingency with structure. We must understand any historical action, particularly popular revolutionary action like that of the Turks and Albanians at the turn of the twentieth century, as social action.

According to Max Weber, sociology is “the interpretive understanding of social action,” its causes and consequences. Weber insists that study of social action is concerned with the manner in which “the acting individual attaches subjective meaning to his behavior—be it overt or covert, omission or acquiescence.” An action is social, according to Weber, “insofar as its subjective meaning takes account of the behavior of others and is thereby oriented in its course.” Thus, it becomes clear that a historian of social action, like the 1908 Young Turk Revolution or the Albanian national movement,

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11 Ibid.: 46.
must take into account the interplay between the individual and collective meaning. As Weber and Brubaker insist, an apparent ideological change, like the proliferation of nationalism in a community must be understood the relationship between individual meaning, informed by structured and material, historical contingencies.

Weber provides an analytical process he deems *verstehen*, the “rational understanding of motivation, which consists in placing the act in an intelligible and more inclusive context of meaning.” He continues, “…for a science which is concerned with the subjective meaning of action, explanation requires a grasp of the complex of meaning in which an actual course of understandable action thus interpreted belongs.”

Methodologically, the concept of *verstehen* informs my selection of intellectual historical sources as key to understanding Albanian and Turkish nationalism. As a historian, I claim, one cannot understand the meaning of the events analyzed below without also examining the meanings that individuals and groups of individuals applied to these various events and their circumstances. The meanings through which Albanians and Turks understood their identities changed based on historical contingencies: events, the public interpretations of events, and even reactions to the public interpretations of events. Thus to understand an ideological phenomenon like nationalism, one must attempt to reconstruct and interpret these “webs of significance,” and connect them to the appropriate events and structures. Furthermore, one must pursue the manner in which contingencies, events and structures provide new meanings upon which people act.

A historical analysis of Albanian nationalism, or any nationalism for that matter, requires an interdisciplinary theoretical approach. Social scientific perspectives help to buttress historical perspectives, particularly when dealing with a concept as complex as

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14 Ibid., 8-9.
nationalism, with consequences that are not relegated to political, social or intellectual history, but have significant implications for meta-historical forces and structures. Indeed, as William Sewell writes, “Given the political and intellectual challenges facing us at the beginning of the twenty-first century, I think that history can jettison the conceptual and methodological heritage of social science only at its peril.”15 Thus, methodologically I intend to construct a history that is theoretically informed by social sciences like sociology and anthropology, in order to depict a better understanding of the manner in which nationalism developed among two unique groups in a unique socio-political context.

Many theorists of nationalism have hitherto left unacknowledged the intimate interplay of contingency and structure. Only a theory that acknowledges this relationship will suffice in providing a theoretical framework for a context as complex as that of Albanian nationalism in the late Ottoman Empire. In the Albanian case, sudden crystallizations of social action occur in specific events of fundamental importance to the development of nationalism, and yet these events are perceptibly interconnected to prevailing ideological and historical structures, all of which inform the worldviews of particular individuals. This is precisely what past scholars of Albanian nationalism omit in their analysis. The rapidity of collective action, the fluctuations in the national sentiment of groups, public life, interpretive frames, and above all the “nullification of complex identities” as Brubaker describes them, are most fruitfully analyzed combining an epistemological and “eventful” approach.16

I claim that events like the 1878 Treaty of San Stefano, the 1908 Young Turk Revolution, and the Gathering at Ferizovik deeply affected Albanian and Turkish worldviews, interrupting prior meanings and forcing individuals to construct new understandings, which fell into extant ideological and historical structures like nationalism. Only this suffices to explain the, seemingly contradictory, ideological about-face at the hands of figures like Sami Frashëri and Ismail Kemal. These Ottoman statesmen and intellectuals, who long resisted nationalism typical of other Balkan-Ottoman figures, came to view the Empire with enmity and eventually promoted irredentism. These events, and the way in which Albanians understood them resulted in, what Sewell calls, the disarticulation of extant structural network, transforming culture, the management of resources, and modes of power.¹⁷ As a result of these contingencies, Albania’s structural habitat transformed, from one distinctly within the Ottoman imperial structure, which they shared with Turks, to that of the nation, akin to other groups in the Balkans following the western European model. However, to understand the weight of this transformation, it is vital to understand the long history of Ottoman-Albanian relations, which I argue were characterized by a distinct synergism.

¹⁷ Sewell, *Logics of History: Social Theory and Social Transformation*. 
Five Centuries of Ottoman-Albanian Relations

It is important to contextualize Albania in the mélange of the Ottoman Empire’s Balkan domains before 1878. In so doing, I hope to place the origin of Albanian multivocal identity in the historical context of the Ottoman conquests. I argue that the diversity of Albanian society was augmented by the Ottoman conquests and made Albania a reflective microcosm of the diversity of the Empire as a whole. I will argue that a synergy developed between Albanian and Ottoman social structures that prompted a cooperative compatibility between Albanians and the Empire. This synergy, I claim, explains the hesitation on the part of many Albanians, which envisioned an incontrovertible kinship with the Ottoman Empire, to outright reject the Ottoman imperial system. In tracing five centuries of Ottoman-Albanian interdependence, symbiosis, collaboration, and cooperation I hope to demonstrate a deeply imbedded mutual identity, particularly in terms of each societies multi-vocal social structure.

It is helpful to envision the first Ottoman military campaigns of Albanian lands as dichotomous. On the one hand, the desire of Ottomans to conquer the Balkan Peninsula was to establish gateways for further military excursions into Hungary and Italy, opening central Europe and the Mediterranean to Ottoman domination. This process, I argue, was a sort of nexus of synergy. The Ottomans integrated Albania into their empire, which contributed to its diversity and forced the Empire’s administrators to compromise in a new social context and negotiate with new actors. Simultaneously, the imposition of the Ottoman socio-political system on Albanians augmented the diversity of the Albanian social system, which adapted to a new power structure. On the other hand, despite the
alleged brutality of the conquest and the resistance on the part of a handful of Albanian feudal lords, this complex imperial system, so often deemed the “Ottoman Yoke,” actually harmonized with the existing Albanian social structure, which was already multi-linguistic, multi-ethnic and multi-religious.

Ottoman armies, under Sultan Beyazit I, first attacked Albanian-speaking lands in the 1390s. Using bands of raiders, the Ottomans subdued the population and brought Albanian lords under their economic domain but left the local feudal structure intact. By 1415, after a chaotic interregnum, Sultan Mehmet I sent the military to erect the first Ottoman garrisons throughout southern Albania, establishing direct military authority in the region. 18 This was followed, in 1423, by a full-scale invasion at the hands of Sultan Murat II, in which the Ottoman military annexed the Venetian-dominated littoral, and twenty-four years of revolt by the renowned Gjergj Kastrioti Skanderbeg (İskender Bey) ensued. By 1431, the Ottomans established formal jurisdiction over most of Albania and made it into an administrative district called the sancak-i Arnavid (Albanian sanjak). 19 This is of key importance, as it demonstrates the Ottoman center’s direct influence in defining Albania as a stable, unambiguous territorial category, for the first time. Indeed, the Ottomans united Albanians into a single administrative unit, which served as one of the earliest examples of consolidating Albanian identity by linking the Albanian language to a delineated territory. This is one of the earliest examples of synergy between Albanians and the Ottoman Empire. The Ottomans, even during their conquest of

Albanian territory, laid the groundwork for institutionalizing what would become an integral aspect of Albanian identity, their ties to territory.

Indeed, the Ottoman conquest was far from a bloodthirsty, brutal military incursion, as it is often depicted. Albanian feudal lords, even those who refused to convert to Islam, maintained their privileged positions under the Ottoman timar system, which brought local notables into the excise-network of Ottoman authority without drastically diminishing their autonomy or economic privilege.\textsuperscript{20} This system reflected the traditional Albanian feudal system and, in fact, was comparatively appealing to the severe economic domination experienced under the Venetians.\textsuperscript{21} This phenomenon was the result of the pragmatic flexibility of Ottoman administration, which, when it was possible left local institutions and power structures intact. With a conscious understanding of their bureaucratic limitations, the Ottomans vertically integrated elites into their political jurisdiction, providing a remarkable degree of autonomy and demonstrating a willingness to adapt to diverse contexts in the Balkans.\textsuperscript{22}

Beginning in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, many Greeks and Serbs had emigrated from towns and villages in northern Greece and Kosovo, where Albanians replaced them in large numbers. These Albanians established new Albanian-speaking communities that began to further blur the line between southern Albania and northern Greece and formed a significant Albanian majority Kosovo.\textsuperscript{23} Albanians seemed more willing to negotiate, if not cooperate, with Ottoman power in the Balkans than

\textsuperscript{21} Skendi, \textit{The Albanian National Awakening, 1878-1912}, 5.
\textsuperscript{22} Barkey, \textit{Empire of Difference: The Ottomans in Comparative Perspective}, 93-94.
\textsuperscript{23} Stavrianos, \textit{The Balkans since 1453}, 97-98.
many other groups in the Balkans. Even when Albanians took up arms against the
Ottoman administration, the Ottomans’ willingness to negotiate with Albanian political
leaders propagated a functional synergy between the two. In the mid-sixteenth century,
when the Ottoman encountered the resistance of northern Albanian tribes to their rule,
they negotiated the administrative autonomy and tax exemption of northern Albanian in
exchange for a certain number of men to serve in the Ottoman military.24 Beginning in
the mid-fifteenth century the Ottoman Empire incorporated large numbers of Albanians
into both the local administration of Albania, the military apparatus of the Empire, and its
highest bureaucratic posts. The devshirme, Janissary troops conscripted from Christian
families, were comprised predominantly of Albanians.25 Albanians served as ıç-oğłans
(pages of the palace), beys, and pashas in disproportionate numbers compared to the size
of their population.26 Not to mention the fact that approximately thirty-six Grand Viziers
were of Albanian origin, the first of whom, Zaganos Pasha, was appointed in 1453 and
participated in the siege of Constantinople.27

In addition to the expeditious manner in which Albanians were incorporated into
the Ottoman power structure, there was also a structural similarity between the way
religion was conceptualized among Albanians and the Ottoman administrative policy
regarding religion. About seventy percent of Albanians eventually converted to Islam,
after prolonged periods of conversion in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, making

24 Ibid., 101.
25 Bernard Lewis, Race and Slavery in the Middle East : An Historical Enquiry (New York:
Oxford University Press, 1990), 65.
27 David Nicolle and John Haldon and Stephen Turnbull, The Fall of Constantinople : The
Ottoman Conquest of Byzantium (Osprey, 2007); David Nicolle, The Fall of Constantinople : The
Ottoman Conquest of Byzantium (Osprey, 2007), 189.
Albanians the largest population of non-Turkish Muslims in the Balkans.\textsuperscript{28} The phenomenon of religious conversion had roots in pre-Ottoman Albania, which was constantly contended at the hands of the Orthodox Byzantine Empire and Catholic Western European forces, including the Vatican-backed Normans, the Kingdom of Naples, and later the Republic of Venice.\textsuperscript{29} Ubiquitously, prominent Albanian feudal lords converted from Orthodoxy to Catholicism depending on when it was politically opportune to do so, and had little hesitation converting to Islam under the Ottomans.\textsuperscript{30}

A popular saying in southern Albanian is said to have originated from Skanderbeg’s father, Gjon Kastrioti, “Ku është shpata, është feja.” (Where the sword is, there lies religion).\textsuperscript{31} In fact, southern Albania was so religiously intermixed that, it is said, members of the same immediate family belonged to different faiths and they would attend Friday Prayers together at their local Mosque and then Mass on Sunday.\textsuperscript{32} In the north, men would convert to Islam in order to reap material benefits, while their wives and children remained Roman Catholic.\textsuperscript{33} However, despite the eventual prevalence of Islam even among non-notable Albanians, many of whom converted to avoid taxation and reap the political and economic benefits of being a Muslim in the Ottoman Empire,

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{28} Robert Lee Wolff, \textit{The Balkans in Our Time} (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1956), 26-27.
\item \textsuperscript{30} Puto, \textit{The History of Albania: From Its Origins to the Present Day}, 68.
\item \textsuperscript{32} Miranda Vickers, \textit{The Albanians: A Modern History} (London: I.B. Tauris, 1999), 17.
\item \textsuperscript{33} Skendi, \textit{The Albanian National Awakening, 1878-1912}, 8.
\end{itemize}
there were other factors contributing to the unique religious diversity and tolerance typified the Albanian scene.\textsuperscript{34}

One of the factors contributing to this diversity is the influx, in the early eighteenth century, of the Bektashi Sufi order, which promulgated an exceedingly liberal, inclusive form of Islam, especially in southern Albania.\textsuperscript{35} The Bektashi order, often considered a threat to the ulema religious establishment in the Empire and the State due to their relationship to the Janissary ocaks, promoted non-traditional and mystic practices in their worship, permeated with traditions from Shia Islam and even certain Christian theological concepts.\textsuperscript{36} Aside from the appeal of Bektashi spirituality, the increasing conversions to Islam throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries can also be attributed to the ineffective, outnumbered, and often-illiterate clergy that dominated pre-Ottoman Albania.\textsuperscript{37} However, many scholars agree that the tolerant, universalist Bektashi dogma attracted many formerly Christian Albanians whose religious devotion had been based, historically, on political considerations.

In addition to religion, Albania was diverse in geographical, ethno-sociological terms as well. North of the Shkumbin river, in the rugged, isolating Dinaric Alps live an Albanian linguistic sub-group, the Ghegs. Ghegs were considered quite distinct from their southern counterparts, the Tosks, and organized their society tribally, with a complex cooperative fis (clan) system.\textsuperscript{38} The rugged terrain of the north constrained the Ghegs to a pastoral economic life, thus goat and sheep herding was the most prominent

\textsuperscript{34} Ibid., 8-11.
\textsuperscript{35} Wolff, \textit{The Balkans in Our Time}, 27.
\textsuperscript{37} Skendi, \textit{The Albanian National Awakening, 1878-1912}, 8-11.
\textsuperscript{38} Vickers, \textit{The Albanians : A Modern History}, 22.
Northern Albania was distinguished by its deeply embedded legal code, the *Kanun-i Leke Dukagjinit* or simply *Kanun*, which largely determined everyday interactions in the complex clan system, minutely regulating the social, political, economic and religious lives of northern Albanians, in spite of their religious affiliations.

Indeed, even the north’s conservative Muslims and Catholics considered the *Kanun*, a sacred, immovable system essential to their everyday life, determining everything from marriage, to hospitable etiquette, to the infamous blood feuds mythologized in literature and poetry. This complex system unified Muslims and Catholics that often belonged to the same clans and immediate families. The *Kanun* prompted Ghegs of different faiths to enter into sacred institutions like marriage and “blood-brotherhood” by establishing a secular legal code with pre-monotheistic origins.  

While culturally and geographically isolated from direct Ottoman influence, Ghegs were also officially autonomous, paying only a small, collective tribute to the Ottoman bureaucracy and electing a *Boulim-başı* who represented northern Albania at the Porte.

Inhabiting southern Albania, were Tosks, who unlike their northern counterparts, lived in a feudal agricultural system, which was easily incorporated into the Ottoman timar system during Ottoman conquests. Society in southern Ottoman-Albania was dominated by a system in which estates, owned by Muslim Albanian *sipahis* and beys, the commanders of *sipahi* regiments, were the agricultural productions centers. On the estates mostly Orthodox Albanians worked as laborers, while an exponentially growing merchant class, made up of both Christian and Muslims, developed in the cities. Southern Albania bordered Greece and Macedonia and it’s littoral was less than one hundred miles.

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from Southern Italy. Its proximity to Greek populations prompted a great deal of Hellenic cultural influence in southern Albania, particularly in education.

Albanian society, by the early eighteenth century, was distinctly diverse in terms of religion, ethnicity, culture, language, economy, and social organization. This was both reflective of and cohesive with pre-tanzimât Ottoman society, and indeed Albania served as a microcosm of the Empire at large. Albanians, who were already divided along religious lines, adapted lithely to Ottoman millet system. This adaptation was the result of both the historically ambiguous religious allegiances discussed above and the adoption, by Albanians, of distinctly tolerant attitudes and complex, flexible, pluralistic, and adaptive institutions developed by the Ottomans as they incorporated vast, diverse peoples into their realm.41 The millet was one of the cornerstone institutions that distinguished the Ottoman imperial order and was key to its institutionally adaptive flexibility, as well as the maintenance of diversity in the Empire.

The millets were social structures in the Ottoman Empire that bound Ottoman subjects to their confessional communities, particularly in terms of legal, judicial and administrative realms, but also in terms of identity. The millets did not become an institutionalized system until the tanzimât reforms, but instead functioned as, what Christine Philliou calls, a “fluid administrative apparatus.”42 The functioning of the millets is indicative of the Ottoman pre-tanzimât administrative ideology, characterized by decentralization, adaptability, and a willingness to negotiate apropos their direct power. Entrenched in the Ottoman approach to administration certainly included a multi-dimensional notion of tolerance. This governing ideology was both a pragmatic

41 Barkey, Empire of Difference: The Ottomans in Comparative Perspective, 67-68.
expression of the Ottomans’ desire for imperial power over a highly diverse domain, as well as an embedded legacy of the Islamic institution of protecting Christians and Jews under Sharia law, known as dhimmi contracts. However, this notion of tolerance took on its own meaning in the Ottoman context, not only as a means of maintaining imperial stability, but also, at its best, in the notion that the diversity of the empire contributed to its greatness. From very early on, the Ottomans laid the groundwork for the institutionalized incorporation its non-Muslim population, which would evolve, eventually, into a fluid system of millets.

Karen Barkey defines the millet system as, the “capacious administration of difference.” This categorization acknowledges the centrality of confessional identity for all Ottoman subject, its institutional and administrative pragmatism, as well as the real fluidity of the millets. Through the millet, the Ottoman Empire intended to ensure fidelity from its non-Muslim subjects, to normalize social categorization, and establish a regular, comprehensible administration of taxation. Conceived originally by Mehmet II, the Orthodox millet was established in 1454 to both unify Orthodox Christians under a singular authority as well as to actively empower a counteragent of the Vatican. The Armenian millet was established in 1461, it placed Armenians under the Patriarch of the Armenian Apostolic Church in Istanbul giving them relative political autonomy and

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43 Barkey, Empire of Difference : The Ottomans in Comparative Perspective, 110.
44 Ibid., 119-22.
45 Ibid., 130.
46 Philliou, Biography of an Empire : Governing Ottomans in an Age of Revolution, 7.
47 Barkey, Empire of Difference : The Ottomans in Comparative Perspective, 130.
acknowledging their ecclesiastical severance from the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate.\textsuperscript{49} Furthermore, at the behest of Sultan Mehmet II the Hahambaşı (Chief Rabbi) of Istanbul was created around 1453. While not officially a leader of a millet, the Hahambaşı represented the Ottoman Jewish community to the Sultan and held legal authority over the Ottoman Jewry.\textsuperscript{50}

The structure of the millet was quite pragmatic in its acknowledgment of pre-existing modes of communal organization. The adherents of a particular faith in each mahalle (neighborhood) utilized their local clergy as representatives to higher ecclesiastical authorities, who in turn communicated with the Ottoman state.\textsuperscript{51} While demonstrably “bottom-up” in its administrative organization, part of the function of the millet system was, undoubtedly, to reduce the plethora of identities in the Ottoman domain to broad universal categories. By categorizing all subjects in confessional communities, the Ottoman Empire subordinated the importance of ethnic and linguistic differences and gained effective administrative access to most communities in the Empire. Nevertheless, the decentralized locality with which the millet system functioned interacted gracefully with various pre-existing social structures, this is especially true of the highly diverse Albanian context.

Muslim Albanians belonged to the Caliphate and shared the same rights and privileges as Muslim Turks, Bosnians and Arabs. As Muslims they were officially the most privileged community and were particularly connected to the Sultan, as the Caliph.

\textsuperscript{51} Karpat, "Millets and Nationality: The Roots of the Incongruity of Nation and State in the Post-Ottoman Era," 141-42.
Orthodox Albanians belonged to the Orthodox or Rum millet (Millet-i Rûm) headed by the Patriarch of Constantinople, with Orthodox Greeks, Serbs, Bulgarians and all other Orthodox Christians. Catholic Albanians were historically a part of the Armenian millet, as a Roman Catholic millet was not formed. However, Catholics came under the informal protection of Austria-Hungary and Italy, later, they were formally protected by France. While the division of Ottoman Albanians into these broad confessional communities may have reduced their complex identities in an administrative sense, the structure of the millet was largely successful. It was decisively localized and decentralized, which served to connect the vast number of peripheral Ottoman subjects to the administrative center. The decentralized millet system allowed Albania to maintain its heterogeneous character largely unencumbered. Each distinct community, down to the local parish and congregation, communicated with the larger bureaucratic system through one of their own. These clergymen both spoke the local dialect and, more importantly, had direct access to the most local concerns of the population.

**Military Defeat, Reform and Social Disruption**

The pragmatic flexibility and institutional adaptability of the Ottoman administration had functioned capably for almost four hundred years. However, the strikingly decentralized military and administrative structures that had sustained Ottoman control over its vast territory, became gradually strained. Beginning in the eighteenth century, there was an increasingly apparent necessity for large-scale systemic reform in the Empire, particularly in the realms of the military, trade, and bureaucracy.

52 Piro Misha, "Invention of a Nationalism: Myth and Amnesia " in *Albanian Identities : Myth and History*, ed. Stephanie Schwandner-Sievers and Bernd Fischer (Bloomington Indiana University Press, 2002).
I maintain that the inauguration of reforms is further evidence of the consistent pragmatism and adaptability that had long been the root of Ottomanism as an administrative ideology.\textsuperscript{53} This is in spite of the insistence of many diagnostic historians that these reforms serve as an indication of the Empire’s overall decline. Indeed, the Ottoman State was confronted with new challenges in the eighteenth century including internal irredentism and persistent military provocations from European powers. The Ottomans, thus, launched a campaign of rapid reform and centralization that, while contiguous with the pragmatism of Ottomanism, significantly transformed the countenance of the Ottoman administrative ideology.\textsuperscript{54} Indeed, the eighteenth century marked, not the beginning of a declining empire, but the transformation of an empire into a modern state. Despite genuinely pragmatic intentions, and perhaps even the strategic necessity, these reforms considerably disrupted the synergistic cohesion that had flourished with many of its subjects, in no case is this more apparent than with the Albanians.

The eighteenth century began in the wake of a significant event in Ottoman history, marking the initiation of a slow but persistent process, in which the Empire’s European territories were annexed. In 1699, the Ottoman Empire signed the Treaty of Karlowitz, ending what Europeans had referred to as the “Great Turkish War” between the Ottomans and the Holy League, comprised of the Holy Roman Empire, Russia, the Commonwealth of Polish-Lithuania, and the Republic of Venice.\textsuperscript{55} The Treaty of Karlowitz was the first time that an Ottoman Sultan had officially acknowledged the

\textsuperscript{53} Barkey, Empire of Difference : The Ottomans in Comparative Perspective, 194.
\textsuperscript{54} Ibid., 264-65.
permanent abdication of Ottoman territory, relinquishing Hungary, Transylvania, Croatia, Slovenia, Dalmatia, Morea, Podolia, South Ukraine, and some of the Aegean Islands to the various members of the Holy League.\textsuperscript{56}

The rest of the eighteenth century was marked by a consistent struggle between the Ottoman military and various bordering powers vying for territory, the 1718 Treaty of Passarowitz, the 1774 Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca, and the 1792 Treaty of Jassy brought about massive territorial losses for the Empire.\textsuperscript{57} By 1798, Napoleon Bonaparte had invaded and occupied Egypt, marking the beginning of the end of the Ottoman Empire’s control over the crucial territory. For many historians, the crisis in Egypt marked the end of a century marred by failed Ottoman military enterprises and humiliating territorial losses, and the beginning of Ottoman decline.

However some scholars have offered alternative analyses that challenge these dominant decline-narratives. Karen Barkey characterizes the events of the eighteenth century as “a struggle over the definition of the political,” demonstrative of the Empire’s capacity for adaptation that transformed the nature of the state.\textsuperscript{58} For Barkey, the eighteenth century was marked by systemic transformations in the relationship between politics and society, enacted both “macrohistorically” and locally by specific actors. For example, the mounting importance of the kapı or household was a means of political organization apart from the palace that took the form of local patronage networks. These networks were instrumental in transformative events, such as the 1703 rebellion that removed Sultan Mustafa II. Major reconfigurations of the Ottoman social structural

\begin{footnotes}
\item[56] Donald Quataert, \textit{The Ottoman Empire, 1700-1922} (Cambridge Cambridge University Press, 2000), 38.
\item[57] Ibid., 40.
\item[58] Barkey, \textit{Empire of Difference : The Ottomans in Comparative Perspective}, 197.
\end{footnotes}
seemed to merely occur; the Empire’s periphery was increasingly horizontally integrated into the state. Notables served as the main progenitors of reorganization whether as irredentists attempting to gain autonomous power like Mehmet Ali or those notables along with the ulema and Janissaries who in 1703 “marched to Istanbul to save empire and sultan.” Reform in the eighteenth century, it seemed, was almost organic, as different actors and institutions began to rearticulate their political organization and take a more active role in the destiny of the Empire.

This political transmogrification occurred concomitantly with what Barkey deems two “metahistorical developments,” that is the commercialization of the economy and the introduction of life-term tax farming. These economic innovations, according to Barkey, marked not the beginning of decline, but the beginning of a “transitional mode” from empire to “modern” state. The expansion of long-distance trade and tax farming provided opportunities for privatization, which precipitated, according to Barkey, “enclaves of modernity.” While, as Philliou rightly claims, “in trying to capture the levels of unarticulated change in the Ottoman Empire to project the term modernization or modernity is to accept its many implications about twentieth-century paths to development,” it is nonetheless useful to understand these as fundamental political transformations.

This transformational phenomenon augmented the power of the local notables managing complex political, social and economic networks, leading to a sort of decentralized, independent process of change that resembled the “European experience of

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59 Ibid., 226.
60 Ibid.
61 Philliou, Biography of an Empire : Governing Ottomans in an Age of Revolution, xxiii.
modern[ization]…”62 I argue this is key, not only to disrupting narratives of decline that ignore this exciting period, but also to understanding the earliest historical roots of nationalism in the Ottoman Empire. The political and administrative transformation of the Empire must not be understood as relegated to state-run, programmatic, centralized efforts. Instead this complex process can be traced in peripheral localities, at the hands of local actors and institutions that transformed, both materially and conceptually, the relationship between politics and society within the Empire.

The struggles of eighteenth-century Albania should be contextualized within this important transformative process. The subtle shifts of power, that occurred both internally and externally, and the motives of numerous actors manifested to determine both the fate of Albania within the Ottoman Empire. This includes socio-historical developments that affected the countenance of Albanian nationalism. And like the Empire as a whole, the complexity of the Albanian socio-political landscape was subject to a sort of organic transmutation at the hands of various actors and forces.

One of the central conflicts in Albania, during the eighteenth century, was over the religious identity of Albanians. Throughout the eighteenth century, various actors and institutions competed for influence over segments of the Albanian populous evoking religious authority and manipulating religious difference. Military conflicts between the Ottoman Empire, Austria-Hungary and Venice in the late seventeenth century transformed into a competition over the loyalty of Albanians, a process that was complicated by the fact that religion was the primary source of identity for Ottoman subjects. For instance, Catholic clergymen, many of whom were sponsored by Austria-

62 Ibid.
Hungary or Venice, prompted their Albanian congregations to take up arms against the Ottoman military and Ottoman administrators during these military conflicts.63

This phenomenon was answered, by the Ottoman administration, in the form of forced conversions of Albanian Christians to Islam, as well as mass deportations of Albanian Catholics, from northern Albania, a number of which had taken up arms against the state.64 This initiated a fundamentally important conflict, for Albanians, over their social identity and political reality. Albanians, for the first time, were truly compelled to consolidate their identities, in order to clearly demarcate their political and socio-cultural loyalties within Albania itself, as well as in the larger constitution of the Empire, and indeed the international order. This was a decidedly modern phenomenon, in which Albanians had to consolidate their amorphous, multi-vocal identities into a concrete religious affiliation, which had implications, not only for their political loyalty, but also for their cultural and social identities. With the eighteenth century initiated a two hundred year process, in which Albanians were constantly positioned to reconcile their certain aspects of their identities, negotiate with various institutions of power and reevaluate their various loyalties.

The Orthodox Church was one of the most active institutions in the early phases of this process, initiating a campaign to Hellenize southern Albania, particularly by establishing Greek-language elementary and secondary schools, called gymnasia, throughout the eighteenth century. The central figure of this campaign was the Greek monk Kosmas Aitolos who is said to have founded two hundred Greek elementary

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64 Ibid., 9.
schools in southern and central Albania, before his death in 1779. The Hellenization campaign was not merely the result of the Patriarchate’s desire for hegemony in the Balkans, but also a strategic maneuver in a competition grounded in the Russo-Turkish wars starting in 1768.

One aspect of this competition manifested in conflicting claims to religious legitimacy in the Balkans between the Russian Empire and the Patriarchate of Constantinople. During the war, the Russian Empire sent agents, like Alexis Orlov, into the Balkans to insight rebellion among the Orthodox population, threatening the power of both the Patriarchate and the Ottoman administration. One of the results of the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca, ending these wars in 1774, was Russia’s claim to serve as protector of the Orthodox population within the Empire, as it gave all Orthodox Christians the right to sail under the Flag of the Russian Empire. This treaty was a key turning point in Ottoman diplomatic history as it established, through a diplomatic treaty, the legitimacy of potential interventions in Ottoman territory by the Russian Empire.

In Albania, the treaty encouraged Greek proponents of Orthodoxy to assert the authority of the Patriarchate more aggressively, by strictly enforcing the liturgical and educational use of the Greek language in southern Albania. For instance, in the semi-autonomous, southern Albanian city of Voskopojë, which served as an important international commercial and intellectual center, portions of the population had staged a rebellion in support of Russia in 1769. The official reactions to the treachery in

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66 Ibid.
67 Stavrianos, The Balkans since 1453, 191-92.
Voskopojë are telling as to the importance of Albania as an Ottoman domain. The Ottoman state had ordered Muslim Albanian derebeys (feudal lords that largely replaced sipahis) to attack the city and violently suppress the rebellion. On the other hand, the Patriarchate decided to allocate resources to founding a Greek secondary school called “The New Academy,” which opened in 1774 and rivaled some of the best high schools in Greece.68 While the Ottoman administration dealt severely with the rebellion in Voskopojë, the Patriarchate, which served as the political and administrative arm of the Ottoman Empire into the Orthodox communities, utilized soft power to arrogate control over the Albanian population. Indeed, by encouraging Hellenic culture and the use of the Greek language in educational and religious settings, the Patriarchate was serving to bolster, not only their own power, but also that of the Ottoman Empire.

In Albania, the eighteenth century was characterized by the contestation of various institutions for authority and legitimacy among Albanians. These power brokers abruptly entreated Albanians to consolidate their multi-vocal identities, by demanding their loyalty to one institution versus another. While some historians have argued that this went on without the participation of ethnic Albanians, and in spite of Albanian interests, there is evidence that Albanians had agency in the matter. For instance, many of the derebeys and Ottoman authority figures in Albania were Albanian Muslims, while many Orthodox Albanians actually welcomed Hellenization, particularly in their schools.69 Many southern Albanians willingly incorporated Hellenic culture in their identity, even if it was at the behest of Orthodox clergymen. One result of Hellenization in the eighteenth

century was the sudden appearance, among southern Albanians, of given names derived from the Greek language, pagan mythology, and other Hellenic traditions.\footnote{Skendi, "The Millet System and Its Contribution to the Blurring of Orthodox National Identity in Albania ".}

Throughout the eighteenth century, the undulating relational networks, negotiated within the complex socio-political framework of Albania, were reflective of those shifts occurring in the Empire at large. Even during turbulent times, the fluctuating notions of power and politics in the Empire at large were reflected and manifested in the local Albanian context. The Ottoman policy, regarding the governance of its periphery, had historically consisted of delegating responsibility to a network of timariots and sipahis. However, the sub-contracting of these duties to local notables and derebeys and the proliferation of tax farms allowed a small elite to wield a great deal of power throughout the Empire. In Albania, two particularly powerful notable families monopolized power in the eighteenth century, the Bushatis in the north and the family of Ali Pasha Tepelena in the south.\footnote{———, \textit{The Albanian National Awakening, 1878-1912}, 21.}

Beginning in 1788, Ali Pasha, who had served the Sultan in various military conflicts, was recognized, by the Porte, as the governor of \textit{Yanya (Janina) sancak}. Ali Pasha, a Greek and Albanian speaking Muslim with ties to Bektashi Sufism, had risen quickly through the Ottoman military ranks and at one time commanded one of the largest groups of Albanian janissaries. Like many powerful notables, Ali Pasha took advantage of Ottoman weakness in the eighteenth century and consolidated power in a territory expanding throughout southern Albania into parts of Macedonia and Greece. Nicknamed, by Lord Byron, the “Muslim Bonaparte,” Ali Pasha administered his territory with a particular political dexterity, manipulating the Porte and various European
powers alike. He managed many external threats including that of Napoleon’s army stationed on the Ionian Islands, with whom he negotiated an alliance and, allegedly, cultivated a friendship.\textsuperscript{72} Ali Pasha’s court proceedings were conducted in Greek, and he is known to have surrounded himself with some of the brightest Greek minds of his day.\textsuperscript{73} While Ali Pasha actively promoted and subsidized Greek education, he dealt with internal threats from dissenting Himariots and Suliots with the utmost brutality.\textsuperscript{74} Ali Pasha exercised remarkable control over the western Rumelia for decades, exploiting the weaknesses of the Ottoman Empire’s decentralized administrative system.

However, the meta-historical transformations of the eighteenth century, which gave rise to figures like Ali Pasha, forced him, and those of his like, into direct conflict, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, with the systemic, transformative centralization efforts of Sultan Mahmud II. Beginning in 1808, Mahmud II was dedicated to disintegrating the power networks of the dominant pashas and derebeys throughout the Empire, in favor of centralizing power in Istanbul. Of particular interest, to Mahmud II was the Bushati family, all of whom were exiled in 1831, not to mention Ali Pasha who was decapitated, and whose head was allegedly delivered to the Sultan in 1822.\textsuperscript{75} By this time Mahmud II had dealt severely and rather successfully with many of these powerful figures and his program of centralizing reform was well under way.

The first half of the eighteenth century was a forbiddingly threatening time for the Ottoman administration. These “fraught decades” Christine Philliou deems the historical “black hole between tolerance and violence,” as they are the, largely overlooked,

\textsuperscript{73} Ibid., 63-64.
\textsuperscript{74} Skendi, \textit{The Albanian National Awakening, 1878-1912}, 22-23.
\textsuperscript{75} Puto, \textit{The History of Albania : From Its Origins to the Present Day}, 102-06.
Beginning in 1821, uprisings in the Danubian Principalities spread throughout Greece, Macedonia and Crete. The organized rebellion in Greece was received as a devastating blow to the Ottoman center, which responded by violently dismantling Greek power networks in Istanbul and even hanged the Patriarch. The reaction of European powers to the revolution elucidated their position regarding the sovereignty of the Ottoman Empire over the Balkans. It was clear that, for the most part, the European powers were, in the best case, ambivalent to Ottoman sovereignty and, in the worst case, actively encouraging irredentism within Ottoman domains. The inability of the Janissary corps to protect the Ottoman state from Greek rebels, particularly in the earliest uprisings in Moldovia, embroiled a conflict between the Ottoman Center and the corps, which ended in its violent abolition in 1826.

Furthermore, Mehmet Ali had annexed Egypt and his army had captured the Hejaz, threatening the Sultan’s legitimacy as the keeper of the Two Holy Cities of Islam. By 1833, he was marching north into Anatolia with the express desire to remove Sultan Mahmud II. The Sultan was concurrently attempting to institute a massive series of reforms, an effort that continued in the Tanzimat. The 1839 Gülhane Hatt-i Hümayun, issued by Sultan Mahmud II’s son Abdülmecid I, signified a foundational overhaul of the Ottoman State and the countenance of Ottoman civil society. The reform initiatives included legal equality of all citizens, a standardized uniform system of conscription, a

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77 Ibid., 73.
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drastic reformation and standardization of the tax system, which began with Sultan Mahmud II. Perhaps most significantly, the inclusion of a phrase that indicated deference to European models of the modern state: the guarantee of life, honor, and property for all Ottoman subjects. Not to mention other signifiers of the modern nation-state, which were included in the edict, including the adoption of a standard flag and national anthem.81

These reforms, particularly with regard to taxation, opposed the interests of powerful derebeys, pashas and other notables who were willing to go to war with the Empire to maintain the status quo. The state, however, was anything but impotent in their insistence on reform. In 1830, Mahmud II had sent Mehmet Reshid Pasha to destroy the fortified garrisons of the powerful Albanian notables, in order to clear the way for the new centralized bureaucratic system. Infamously, in August 1830, Reshid Pasha invited the beys and ağas of southern Albania to a fraudulent reward ceremony, in Manastır, for their service in fighting Greek revolutionaries. However, rather than rewarding them, he slaughtered five hundred of the most powerful Albanian notables in a single evening.82

Militarily successful, the Ottomans commenced a drastic overhaul of the Albanian political system. They replaced the mercenary armies of these derebeys and other notables with official, compulsory ten-year-term Ottoman military units, known as nizams. Additionally, the old sub-contracted taxation system was replaced with a new system, in which official Ottoman bureaucrats acted as tax collectors.83 With the introduction of the 1839 Hatt-i Hümayun, Albanians saw a great threat to the relative

81 Barkey, Empire of Difference : The Ottomans in Comparative Perspective, 268; "The 1839 Hatti-Sherif of Gülhane ", in The Map of Europe by Treaty ; Showing the Various Political and Territorial Changes Which Have Taken Place since the General Peace of 1814, ed. Sir Edward Hertslet (London: Butterworths, 1875). "The 1839 Hatti-Sherif of Gülhane ".
autonomy that they had enjoyed during the centuries of Ottoman rule. A nearly consistent string of rebellions throughout the rest of the 19th century commenced.\textsuperscript{84}

Key to understanding the significance of the reforms is the degree to which the adaptive, decentralized governorship by the Ottomans satisfied the needs of the internally diverse Albanian society. Indeed, the malleable adaptability of Ottoman governance was key to the predominately stable 500-year bond, as it satisfied the of both the Empire’s desire for strategic territorial power in the Balkans and the multiplicity of particular Albanian interests. With the centralizing effort came significant unrest from both Albanian peasants, who, in addition to new taxes, had to satisfy a decade-long military term and the former notables whose prominence was significantly threatened by the new reforms. Despite revolts, the reforms were introduced resulting in a significant shift of power from the agricultural estates to the towns. Merchants, as a result, gained power as intermediaries between commodity farmers and the state. Additionally, Ottoman bureaucrats replaced Albanian local notables, which significantly upset embedded systems of power.\textsuperscript{85}

One of the most significant reforms resulting from the \textit{tanzimât} was the bureaucratic partition of the Albanian \textit{sancak} into multiple, isolated \textit{vilayets}. Beginning in 1836 and codified in 1865 Ottoman Albania was geographically divided into four bureaucratically isolated \textit{vilayets}: \textit{Kosova} (central north-eastern), \textit{Yanya} (southern), \textit{Manastir} (southern central) and \textit{İskodra} (northern).\textsuperscript{86} The reformation of Ottoman administrative districts had apparent origins, ideologically, in the modernization of bureaucratic institutions embedded in the \textit{tanzimât reforms}. However, many Albanians

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\textsuperscript{84} Skendi, \textit{The Albanian National Awakening, 1878-1912}, 24-25.  \\
\textsuperscript{85} Puto, \textit{The History of Albania : From Its Origins to the Present Day}, 108-10.  \\
\textsuperscript{86} Blumi, "The Role of Education in the Formation of Albanian Identity and Its Myths ", 49-50.
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felt that the Ottomans wanted to disintegrate the geographical unity of Albanian speaking lands in order to impose Ottoman hegemony.\(^{87}\) Indeed, the *tanzımat reforms* prompted important foretelling conflicts that would characterize Ottoman-Albanian relations for the next several decades. That is, the manifestation of severe discord between Albanians and the Ottoman Empire as a result of widespread reforms propagated by the Ottoman center.

Furthermore, these reforms occurred concurrently with increasingly nationalistic unrest in the Balkans, with successful revolutions in Greece and Serbia and burgeoning movements in Romania, Bulgaria, Montenegro and Macedonia. The concurrence of a newly imposed centralized state structure affecting local Albanian social structures and an increasingly threatening notion of expansionist-irredentism couched in pan-Hellenic and pan-Slavic terms represented a serious threat to Albanians. The centralizing reforms had served to alienate Albanians from the Porte, while nationalism in the Balkans had served as a menacing reminder to Albanians of their precarious position. It was clear that the pre-*tanzımat* Ottoman society, in which Albanian society had flourished, was under siege both at the hands of internal reformers and acquisitive neighbors.

The Albanian case is different from that of the rest of the Balkans, despite the religious, ethnic and linguistic diversity of the region. Albanian society, more than any other Balkan community, reflected the complex social structure of the pre-*tanzımat* Ottoman Empire. In terms of religion, the Balkans was eighty percent Christian, whereas Albania was, depending on the time between seventy and eighty percent Muslim.\(^{88}\) However, I do not agree with many historians of Albania that religion is the key to the Albanian affinity with the Ottomanism. Rather, I claim, it is the historically ingrained,


\(^{88}\) Mazower, *The Balkans : A Short History*, 47-49.
complex social patterns that dominated in both Ottoman and Albanian societies, which made them synergistic. Indeed, it is the disintegration of Ottomanism as a complex social system in both internal reforms and external attacks that laid the foundations for the development of Albanian, as well as Turkish, nationalism.

Crisis and the Provenance of New Nationalisms

With Albania’s place in Ottoman history firmly established, I will narrowly focus the temporal scope to the decade that saw the origins of Albanian nationalist sentiment. Albania in 1870’s maintained its status as a microcosm of the diversity emblematic of the Ottoman Empire. In these years, about one million Muslims (with twenty Bektashi *teqes* or lodges), three hundred thousand Orthodox Christian, and one hundred and eighty thousand Catholics lived in Albania.  

89 In cities like Manastir, where there were twenty-four mosques, five churches, and nine synagogues, Albanians lived peacefully with Turks, Greeks, Jews, Bulgarians, Armenians and Wallachians.  

90 However, in spite of this, many Albanians were indignant in regards to the Ottoman response to burgeoning conflict in the Balkans and the issuance of the 1839 and 1856 *tanzimat* reforms. Exacerbating this situation was a crop failure in 1873, the rebellion in Herzegovina in 1875 followed by the deleterious Bulgarian insurrection or “April Uprising” in 1876, which brought about Sultan Abdülaziz’s deposition the same year.  

91 In December of 1876, at the *Aynalikavak kasrı* (pavilion of the mirrored poplar, also known as the *Tersane* Palace) in Istanbul, representatives of Great Britain, the

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91 Stavrianos, *The Balkans since 1453*, 403-09.
Russian, French, German, Austro-Hungarian Empires and the Kingdom of Italy conferred to address the crises in the Balkans.\(^92\) The six powers had previously drafted a document proposing three new semi-autonomous vilayets, Bosnia, East Bulgaria, and West Bulgaria.\(^93\) On December 23, the opening day of the Constantinople Conference (or Tersane Konferansı), cannons were fired and an announcement was made that Sultan Abdülhamid II had appointed the famed liberal reformer, and delegate to the conference, Midhat Pasha to the position of Grand Vizier and publically ratified a constitution.\(^94\) The spectacle and timing of this event made it more than a mere preemptive appeasement of the European powers. Rather, it was an assertive and bold maneuver at the hands of the Ottoman center. In adopting a constitution the Ottomans were asserting a normative sovereignty compliant with the alleged political and philosophical values of Europe. As a constitutional state, they avowed legitimacy, asserted their equality with the European powers, and insisted upon their rightful jurisdiction over the Balkans. Thus, any decision regarding these areas or their associated uprisings would have to follow the legal procedure according to the constitution and go before a parliament, delegitimizing the Conference.

While this deft diplomatic scheme allowed the Ottomans to assert agency in the international political arena, the powers were insistent on the Sultan meeting their demands. When Midhat Pasha formally rejected the proposed measures, the Russian Empire declared war. The Russo-Turkish War, which lasted from April 1877 to March 1878, was fought in the Ottoman domains of the Balkans and Caucasus, in which the

\(^{92}\) Ibid.
\(^{93}\) M. Şükrü Hanıoğlu, *A Brief History of the Late Ottoman Empire* (Princeton University Press, 2008), 118.
\(^{94}\) Ibid., 272-75; Stavrianos, *The Balkans since 1453*, 403-06.
Russian military made significant territorial advances. The war ended on March 3, 1878 with the Treaty of San Stefano (now called Yeşilköy), the provisions of which proved humiliating for the Empire.\(^{95}\) Not only did the treaty grant independence to the Ottoman domains of Serbia, Montenegro and Rumania, but it also established an autonomous Bulgarian territory, similar to the one proposed at the Conference of Constantinople, but encompassing a larger territory and holding the right to establish an army (See Appendices A.1 – A.3).\(^{96}\)

Albanians may have been the only group in the Empire that reacted to the Treaty of San Stefano with more fear and urgency than the Ottomans themselves. While the treaty was a sinister humiliation for the Ottoman center, for Albanians it brought the borders of fervently nationalist, heavily armed, and acquisitive Bulgarian, Serbian, Montenegrin, and Romanian independent governments to their back door.\(^{97}\) Not to mention the fact that the Albanian-speaking areas of Prishtinë, Dibër, Korçë, Rugovë, Ipek, Antivari, Dulcigno, as well as portions of the lake of Shkodër and the river of Buenë were to be annexed and divided between Serbia, Bulgaria and Montenegro.\(^{98}\)

Furthermore, Abdülhamid II had suspended the brand-new Ottoman parliament and thus the 1876 constitution, that just one month earlier, which undoubtedly exacerbated the uneasiness of both Albanians and Turks apropos the dire situation of the Empire. Abdul Frashëri (brother of Naim and Sami Frashëri), who served as an elected representative of the Yanya vilayet in the first Ottoman parliament, founded an organization with the

\(^{95}\) Hanioğlu, *A Brief History of the Late Ottoman Empire*, 121.
interest of arming Albanians to prevent “the detachment of their lands from Ottoman rule.” The clandestine Committee for the Defense of Albanian Rights was based in Istanbul, with a membership composed of Albanians prominent in the Ottoman center like Sami Frashëri and Pashko Vasa, a Catholic Albanian and Ottoman diplomat and statesman.

The Committee was the first group of Albanians that was organized around concern regarding the San Stefano Treaty and the possible ineptitude of the Hamidian regime to ensure the territorial integrity of Albanian lands. Meanwhile, in Albania, groups of Albanians, mostly Kosovars, whose land was fatally undermined in the Treaty, had begun to organize militant bands to defend themselves from encroachment, particularly at the hands of the Serbian military. Abdul and his Committee allied themselves with these more militant factions in an official meeting at a mosque in the city of Prizren in Kosovo.

On June 10 1878, an alliance was formed between the Istanbul elites from the Committee for the Defense of Albanian Rights and the armed mountaineers, tribal chiefs and landowners that had organized in Kosovo. The delegates initiated a besa (oath) promising to raise money for arming bands to protect Albanian lands, to petition the Congress of Berlin, to create an Albanian League (or the League of Prizren) which would act as the organizational backbone of the movement, and to strive for a new Albanian

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vatan within the framework of the Empire. The Resolutions (or karaname) of the Prizren Committee for National Defense, which were approved by forty-seven Albanian beys on June 18th, was the first manifesto for the broader Albanian national movement. These resolutions illuminate the foundational framework from which the Albanian nationalist movement developed. They reflect the complex relationship between Albanians and the Ottoman state and religion, as well as embodying the earliest desires of Albanians for reform in the Empire and increased autonomy.

For instance the first article reads as follows, “Our league has come together to oppose any government other than that of the Sublime Porte and to defend our territorial integrity by all possible means.” This article establishes a key dichotomy that not only pervades the rest of the resolutions, but also was a fundamental point of contention for Albanian nationalists for decades to come. Albanians had to reconcile their loyalty to the Sultan and their desire to assert their cultural and political autonomy within the Empire. Most of the delegates at the League of Prizren were Muslim Kosovars, for whom the Sultan was a sacred imperial authority, both politically as the guardian of Muslims in the Balkans, and religiously as the Caliph of the Faithful and Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques.

This sentiment was reiterated in the second article, which stated, “It is our most earnest intention to preserve the imperial rights of our Lord, the irresponsible person of His Highness the Sultan.” The delegates at the League of Prizren were sure to profess

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103 Ibid; Malcolm, Kosovo: A Short History, 222.
105 Ibid.
incontrovertible loyalty to the Sultan, and to the Empire and religion upon which his power rested. From the first two articles alone, it was clear that from the state the Albanian national movement, in so far as it was institutionalized in the League of Prizren, envisioned itself as a sort of organ of defense of the Sultan’s rightful reign in Europe. In this sense, Albanians with desires for advancing their national interests, saw no contradiction in defending, concomitantly, the interests of the Ottoman Empire. In fact, for the delegates at the League of Prizren, the interests of the Albanian nation and the Ottoman Empire were one and the same.

Despite the fact that most delegates at the League of Prizren were Muslim nobles and tribesmen, they were sure to avoid alienating non-Muslim Albanians. In fact, the resolutions, reflect a distinctly Ottomanist religious tolerance that demonstrates a further ideological affinity between the League of Prizren and the Ottoman state. The fourth article reads, “In accordance with our noble religious law [Şeriat], we will protect the lives, property and honor of our loyal non-Muslim compatriots as our own…” Again, the language of this article reflects a precise replication of Islamic religious tolerance as it was codified by the Ottoman state, employing the same language of “life, property, and honor” as the 1839 tanzimât reform, the Hatt-i Sharif of Gülhane.107

The use of this particular language is of fundamental importance. The article appropriates the manner in which the Ottoman state reconciled the Islamic institution of protecting the Ehl-i Kitap (People of the Book, Christians and Jews) and a Western European understanding of religious tolerance, in a secular, legalistic sense. Indeed, the Ottoman state demonstrated in the Hatt-i Sharif its ability to satisfy European demands

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106 Ibid.
107 "The 1839 Hatti-Sherif of Gülhane ", 1002-05.
for reform in an extant Islamic legal framework and concepts of justice derived from “medieval Muslim political thinking.”\textsuperscript{108} In adopting similar language, the League of Prizren not only attests to its Ottoman character, but also references and, in a sense, enacts the “rights” codified in \textit{Hatt-i Sharif}. Thus, with an impressive tact, the League of Prizren asserted its loyalty to the Sultan and its interest in defending the Ottoman Empire, while simultaneously using distinctly Ottoman concepts to organize to assert and defend their “rights,” as they interpreted them. As the final article states, the Albanians at the League of Prizren were “willing to shed blood for Empire, their nation and their fatherland…”\textsuperscript{109} However, it was up to the League of Prizren to determine the interests of their nation, and in this sense there was open-endedness to the resolutions of the League of Prizren, as if the delegates had prepared for a potential contradiction in the interests of their Empire and their nation.

The League also relied on Islam, in addition to Ottomanism, as a source of conceptual legitimacy. In the same way that the Ottomans negotiated Islamic legal practice with the institution of a functioning government to which subjects must be loyal, the League of Prizren invoked Islam to legitimate their political aims. For instance, in the sixteenth article, “Whoever abandons [the league] will be treated as if he had abandoned our Islamic faith and will be the object of our curses and scorn.” Thus, in the same way that the Sultan or the Sublime Porte claimed authority from Islam, the League of Prizren both legitimized and protected itself as an institution by invoking Islam. These resolutions, which codified early Albanian national aspirations, demonstrate the self-
conscious multi-vocal character of Albanian identity. The delegates at the league of Prizren consciously employed diverse sources of legitimacy, which attested to their multi-vocal identities, as Ottomans and Muslims. However, despite the fact that most delegates at the League of Prizren were Muslim, they were conscious of their religiously diverse population and, thus, also drew upon secular aspects of their identity, sources of legitimacy that were distinctly Albanian.

This is particularly evident in the institution of besa, which is a particular type of oath based on a legal code formed the middle ages, Kanun-i Lekë Dukagjinë (The Code of Lekë Dukagjini) (See Appendix B.1). An Albanian prince called Leke Dukagjini is said to have possessed a codified version of the Kanun in the fifteenth century, but it had existed as an oral tradition for centuries, some even argue that its customs originate in the Bronze Age. Nonetheless pre-Ottoman and pre-Islamic nature of the Kanun and besa helped ground the League of Prizren in an institution that was not associated with any religion, but rather to the most secular cultural tradition. This was one of the earliest examples of Albanians “modernizing” the institution of besa, by retrospectively reconstructing this time-honored tradition as a distinctly secular oath of political and social action. The Albanian political leadership at the League of Prizren understood the galvanizing capability of the besa and reconstructed its function to serve as a distinctly Albanian political institution.

According to article 533 and 534 of the Kanun, the nature of besa, “has two forms: the oath upon a rock, according to the Kanun [or] the oath upon a cross or the Gospels…the oath upon a rock is one of the most solemn and terrible oaths known to the

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Albanian of the mountains…“\(^{111}\) Thus, even in the *Kanun* there is a difference between a religious *besa* and a secular *besa*, the latter “*besa upon a rock*” is initiated, “To exculpate oneself from an accusation, to bind oneself by oath against intriguers and traitors to the country, to stand ready to confront common threats and dangers.”\(^{112}\) The *besa* taken by the members of the League of Prizren was a *besa* upon the rock, it was an expression of unity in the face of a threat and thus one bound in ancient, secular tradition. Again, when the League of Prizren promised to fight for the Empire, their nation, and their fatherland, it was not merely rhetorical declaration. Their fatherland, the “rock” upon which they lived and swore sacred oaths meant something viscerally sentimental to them. As the first resolution claimed, the “territorial integrity” of Albanian land was the League’s foremost concern, by emphasizing territory, the potential internal disaccord in terms of religion or even class and culture were abrogated.

In fact, the issue of class and culture was certainly a potential obstacle to unity within the League of Prizren, as the leadership of the group was not only religiously diverse but came from disparate class and cultural backgrounds. For instance, the Committee for the Defense of Albanian Rights was comprised of Albanian intellectuals and government officials like the Frashëri brothers educated at the Greek Zossimea gymnasium in Janina and Pashko Vasa who was fluent several languages.\(^{113}\) On the other hand, the chieftains and beys that comprised the majority of the League, not only occupied a minor social class, but also embodied a tribal cultural milieu largely unrecognizable to their elite counter-parts.


\(^{112}\) Ibid.

\(^{113}\) Elsie, *Albanian Literature: A Short History* 68,76.
The alliance between these two social classes demonstrates the effective adaptability of the Albanian leadership and their recognition of the fluid, negotiable nature of Albania’s multi-vocal identity. The League of Prizren utilized this multi-vocality to their benefit, in a similar way to the Ottomans, selectively referencing Islam, the institution of the Empire, their sacred territory, and secular cultural traditions. While the League of Prizren reiterated its loyalty to the Sultan and Islam, it is clear that even in these early stages Albanians found a practical advantage to constituting their political identity in ethno-linguistic, territorial terms. The League lobbied Benjamin Disraeli at the Congress of Berlin in the summer of 1878 to insist that Albanian-speaking territories be returned to the Empire, but they were largely ignored.

Even after the Congress yielded most Albanian-speaking territories back to the empire, it was clear to the Albanian League that these concessions were merely maintaining the balance of power in Europe.\textsuperscript{114} The political aspirations of the League of Prizren had developed from merely keeping Albanian-speaking lands in the hands of the Empire to uniting these lands into a single Albanian vilayet.\textsuperscript{115} However, another result of the Congress of Berlin, and the fact that parts of Albanian land were still annexed to Montenegro, radicalized factions of the Albanian League. These frustrated members formed “Unionist Societies” with the primary objective of unifying all Albanian-speaking lands into one Ottoman vilayet with administrative autonomy. One such group was the Debra Unionist Society which issued a memorandum with five demands: the establishment of a unified Albanian province, the appointment of Ottoman civil servants

\textsuperscript{115} Elsie, \textit{Albanian Literature: A Short History} 82.
who spoke Albanian, the teaching of Albanian in all schools, the creation of an assembly for reforms, and money for public infrastructure.\textsuperscript{116}

The political aims of the Unionist Societies and the militant bands, especially in northern regions, remained consistently radical through the Hamidian era. These bands both defended Albanian villages from Slavic bands and attacked what they considered territorial encroachments in Albanian-speaking territories. However, beginning in 1878 there was also significant intellectual and literary output developing concomitantly, which came to define the Albanian nationalist ideology. In tracing the literary output of these intellectual figures over time, the development of the Albanian nationalist ideology becomes apparent. As various contingencies, including external forces of war, diplomacy and trade, as well as internal policies that culminated in distinct events, affected average Albanians, these intellectuals put their reactions into words. This provides us with a unique look into the development of the worldviews of Albanians that not only had their fingers on the pulse of the political and ideological developments occurring among Albanians in Albania, but also had access to those developments occurring within the Ottoman bureaucratic structure and among Ottoman intellectuals in the Empire’s major cities.

Formulating National Ideology

One of the most important bodies of sources for understanding how Albanians came to conceive of their national identity is the intellectual output of Albanian thinkers and political figures. By tracing the progression of Albanian national ideology through intellectual publications, one can understand the reactions and transformative meanings to which Albanians applied to the various contingencies that occurred in the period in question. While I acknowledge that focusing on intellectual sources is inadequate to determine the worldviews of the entire Albanian population, these sources remain fundamental. I argue that it was an intellectual transition, in interpreting the various contingencies and events that occurred from 1878 to 1913, which provided meaning to the social action of large segments of the Albanian population. While these figures were elites, they still articulated fundamental concerns of the Albanian population in the Ottoman Empire and were significantly involved in both the political organization and ideological direction of the most active Albanian political associations.

I selected the following works and authors for a number of reasons. First, it should be acknowledged that there is a general lack of published sources from this era, particularly in the Albanian language, which is due to both Ottoman censorship and an overall lack of resources in Albania. Second, the reason that these works survive is due to each author’s status as a prominent figure in the Albanian national movement and, in most cases, the Ottoman politics as well. Furthermore, each of these figures embodies a multiplicity of Albanian identities that when understood together elucidate the complex manner in which Albanian national ideology developed in this period. For instance,
Pashko Vasa and Ismail Kemal held important political and administrative positions in the Ottoman Empire. Faïk Konitza held no political position and spent much of his life, from the age of eighteen, outside of the Empire in Europe and the United States. Sami Frashëri spent his life in Istanbul and, as a devote Muslim, offers a perspective that differs from Vasa, who was a Roman Catholic. These figures, together, exemplify the multi-vocal identities of Ottoman-Albanians at the turn of the twentieth century. Their diversity in religious convictions, various cultural, social and geographical origins, differing involvement with the Ottoman government and society, and disparate politics make these figures’ works fundamental. These men, with their complex, diverse identities and their distinctive, yet intimate perspectives provide a nuanced and multifaceted source for understanding Albanian nationalism as it developed from 1878 onward.

In addition to analyzing Pashko Vasa, Faïk Konitza, and Sami Frashëri’s work, I will also conduct a comparison between two works fundamental to Albanian and Turkish nationalism respectively, Frashëri’s *Albania: What it was, What it is, and What it will Become?* and Yusuf Akçura’s *Three Kinds of Policy*. In so doing, I will indicate the principal structural commonalities and points of divergence between Albanian and Turkish nationalism, in its early ideological conception. Furthermore, I will analyze one of Frashëri’s linguistic studies that, I argue, should be included among the earliest ideological contributions to Turkish nationalism in the Ottoman Empire.

By studying all of these works together and in a chronological and thematic progression, serves to elucidate the nuanced and complicated manner in which Albanian nationalism fits into the narrative of Ottoman history. Furthermore, these works

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complicate extant narratives that neglect apparent contradictions in the intellectual output of Albanian nationalists to serve their interest in placing Albania as merely a latent case of prototypical Balkan nationalism. Some essential themes that emerge in these works include the opportunistic conjuration of Ottomanism, the diplomatic beseeching of European powers on behalf of “universal” enlightenment ideals, the rejection of religious differentiation in favor of a secular ethno-linguistic identity, and the cultivation of a distinctly Albanian identity, particularly in terms of language.

**Pashko Vasa**

Pashko Vasa, referred to in Ottoman circles as Vasa Pasha Effendi, was a poet, an Ottoman statesman, and one of the most important intellectual figures of the early Albanian national movement. Vasa was a Roman Catholic from Shkodër (İskodra), a city in northern Albania, who held various administrative positions in the Ottoman Empire. Starting as the secretary of the British consulate in Shkodër, Vasa ended his illustrious career as the Governor of Lebanon, a position that he claimed from 1882 until his death in 1892. With knowledge of Turkish, Albanian, Italian, French, Greek, English, Serbian and Arabic, Vasa was one of the most impressive Albanian intellectuals of his day. In addition to his service to the Porte, he was a founding member of the Committee for the Defense of Albanian Rights in Istanbul, and a leading delegate at the League of Prizren.

Pashko Vasa was one of the earliest proponents of a united semi-autonomous Albanian vilayet, as well as the use of Latin script for the Albanian alphabet. In fact, one of the earliest reactions to the Treaty of San Stefano came from Pashko Vasa in the form of a memorandum sent to A.H. Layard the British ambassador to the Ottoman

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Empire, only fifteen days after the treaty was signed. This erudite letter, written in French, attempts to convey to the ambassador the historical, political and cultural reasons that the treaty “shows more than a lack of respect for the most elementary principles of justice and equality.”\textsuperscript{120} Vasa insisted that the Treaty of San Stefano has “no other significance or aim than to seek the destruction of Turkish rule in Europe.”\textsuperscript{121}

Furthermore, he was convinced that Russian malevolence “has cut European Turkey into two and seized the torso – including the heart and intestines…” and that “it is obvious that under such conditions a continuation of Ottoman rule in Europe is impossible…”\textsuperscript{122}

In addition to evincing Russian machinations, Vasa claimed that the expansion of Bulgaria is demographically problematic, detrimental to a number of ethnic and religious groups, and threatening to the stability of the Balkans,

\begin{quote}
It is still not rationally possible to accept that the Muslim, Albanian, Greek or Kutzovlach populations…should be considered Bulgarians and be encompassed within the new State which Russia proposes to create…The ethnic makeup, the language, customs, in fact, everything protests against Russian claims and the new doctrines of Panslavism.\textsuperscript{123}
\end{quote}

Vasa not only appealed to the ambassador’s sense of justice, according to European standards of national self-determination, but also consistently points to the Russian Empire as manipulative, rapacious, power-hungry conspirators. Drawing upon his knowledge of the state of international affairs, Vasa appealed to the ambassador’s obvious desire maintaining the balance of power in Europe,

\begin{quote}
Russia has declared that it went to war to improve the lot of the Christians and to put a swift end to all the problems which the Eastern Question was causing to Europe. If its aim was really as noble and unbiased as it claims, it should have considered…it was doing nothing other than planting the seeds for a more disastrous and horrifying was than the one we have just experienced…All of
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{121} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{122} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{123} Ibid.
Europe will find itself in a maelstrom of terrible consequences through Russian moves if the Powers do not intervene to modify the appalling conditions imposed upon Turkey by the Government of the Czar.  

As Vasa signed the document “Wassa Effendi, an Albanian Catholic,” he augmented his legitimacy with the ambassador. In underscoring his identity as a Balkan Christian, he challenged Russia’s claim to protecting Christians in Ottoman domains as a disingenuous façade for fomenting acquisitive wars. This text is an intriguing example of the pragmatism and tact with which the leaders of the League of Prizren executed their goals. While it cannot be said whether this memorandum assisted in quashing the Treaty of San Stefano, it is incontrovertible that the British were the most strongly opposed to its passing, particularly because of their fears of Russian territorial avarice. The sophisticated way in which Pashko Vasa manipulated his multi-vocal identity as a Balkan Christian, an Ottoman politician, and European intellectual points to the strategic manner in which Albanian made use of their multi-vocal identities, particularly when playing the interests of European powers against one another.

Indeed, one of the political benefits of having multiple identities was the multiple sources of legitimacy that Albanian nationalists could draw upon when making their case for autonomy. Thus, in Pashko Vasa’s poem *Oh Albania, Poor Albania (O Moj Shqypni)*, written in Albanian and addressed to Albanians, his tone and meaning differ significantly from the above memorandum, written in the same year:

Albanians, you are killing kinfolk, you're split in a hundred factions, some believe in God or Allah, say 'I'm Turk,' or 'I am Latin,' say 'I'm Greek,' or 'I am Slavic,' but you're brothers, hapless people! You've been duped by priests and hodjas to divide you, keep you wretched, when the stranger shares your hearth side, puts to shame your wife and sister, you still serve him, gaining little, you forget your forebears' pledges you are serfs to foreign landlords, who have not your blood or language...Wake, Albanian, from your slumber, let us, brothers, swear in common and not look to church or mosque, the Albanian's faith is Albanianism!

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124 Ibid.
The ideas this poem conveys are radical, both in its calls for the secular, ethno-linguistic unification of Albanians and in its anti-foreign and anti-clerical undertones. Vasa indicted the Albanian religious establishment, both Christian and Muslim, for collaborating to keep Albanians divided using religion. While framed indirectly, there is also an anti-Ottoman implication in this sentiment. Indeed, the authority of these religious institutions was not only established and maintained by the Ottoman center, but was also an integral aspect of the governing Ottoman social system. This was true, in so far as the presence of religious institutions in Albania were, for the most part, associated with the Ottoman center, particularly the Muslim clerical establishment and the Orthodox Patriarchate. This issue later became one of the Albanian nationalist movement’s central deterrents, as Abdülhamid II used his powers over the clerical establishment to issue fatvas against Albanian nationalist causes, and had the Patriarchate ban the use of the Albanian language in liturgy.

Furthermore Vasa refers to “foreign landlords” who have different “blood” and a different “language” and derides Albanians who accept this domination as “serfs.” While Vasa was likely referring to the encroachment of Slavic powers in Albanian territory, there is no doubt that he was making a subtle reference to the Ottomans as well. This points to Vasa’s interest, even in this early stage, in fomenting a more radical political urgency, in regards to the preservation of the Albanian nation. Additionally, Vasa advocated a positive ideological transformation among Albanians, which would extract them from the tutelage of the Ottoman clerical establishment and break down the social compartmentalization of Albanians based on confessional fidelity. Thus, when Vasa writes “feja e shqyptarit asht shqyptarija (the faith of the Albanian is in Albanianism)” he
urges Albanians reject religion as their source of identity and to adopt secular, pseudo-Rousseauian, civil religion, based on ethno-linguistic, national identity.\textsuperscript{126}

This is an important innovation as none of the nuance or concern for the integrity of the Ottoman Empire, which existed in the Resolutions of the League of Prizren or Vasa’s Memorandum on the New Bulgaria, is present in this poem. Rather, the poem is a romantic appeal to the primordial ethnic ties that Vasa hopes to extract, if not construct, among Albanian-speaking peoples. Vasa was an Ottoman statesman, but he was also a combatant in the republican and nationalist Revolution in Italy from 1847 to 1849. In 1850 even published, in Italian, an account of his experiences called \textit{La mia Prigionia, Episodio Storica dell’Assedio di Venezia}.\textsuperscript{127} As an active participant in one of the nationalist revolutions that swept Europe in 1848, it is of no wonder that Vasa developed the romantic view of nationalism that he did. As an admirer of the Italian national movement, he encouraged an emotional patriotism and radical anti-clericalism to breakdown centuries-old divisions within the Albanian population. His personal desires for Albanian unity, expressed in this poem, manifested publically as he was the first and most active proponent, in the League of Prizren, for the unification of all Albanian-speaking provinces into a single \textit{vilayet}, which the League would later adopt as it’s an official objective.

The memorandum and poem, when viewed together, particularly in light of the fact that they were written by the same man in the same year, demonstrates another way in which multi-vocal identity manifested in Albanian national ideology, as a sort of pragmatic tactical diversity. It points to the pragmatism with which the intellectual

\textsuperscript{126} Ibid., 88.
\textsuperscript{127} Elsie, \textit{Albanian Literature: A Short History} 81.
figureheads of the Albanian national movement approached publicizing their political aspirations, whether to European powers or to the Albanian public. Vasa, demonstrated a remarkable tact in harnessing support from a variety of sources, and instructed other Albanian nationalists as to the importance of publicizing their cause with prudence and sensitivity as to the interests of their audience. While Vasa died before the emergence of a more active and organized Albanian national movement developed, his influence on the movement was immense, both in terms of its political strategies and in shaping its ideology.

**Faïk Konitza**

The same could be said for Faïk Konitza who, like Pashko Vasa, was an educated Albanian intellectual with ties to Europe. Konitza was educated at the Xaverian Shkodër Jesuit School, the famous *Galatasaray Lisesi* in Istanbul, the University of Dijon in France and Harvard University in the United States. His rich educational experience provided him with fluency in Turkish, Italian, French, German and English. Konitza, at the age of twenty-two, started a periodical key in propagating the Albanian national cause in Europe and the United States called *Albania*, which he published from Brussels, beginning in 1897, and subsequently in London and Boston in 1902 and 1909, respectively.

In 1899, Konitza published, from Brussels, *The Memorandum on the Albanian National Movement* in an effort to convince the Austro-Hungarian Empire to support Albania’s bid for territorial unity and autonomy. This document provided, for the authorities in Vienna, a detailed account of the condition of the Albanian national

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129 Elsie, *Albanian Literature: A Short History*
movement. It is invaluable both as an intimate look into the inner workings of the movement, as well as an opportunity to understand the events that were most meaningful, according to an insider, at a crucial time in the formation of a cohesive Albanian national movement. This document serves as an intriguing, detailed, and contemporary account of the events from 1878 to 1899, from the perspective of an individual closely involved with the leadership of Albanian national movement. Konitza offers a perspective of an Albanian embedded in European and American intellectual circles, and as such foregrounds the cultivation of an Albanian literary culture as fundamental to the political legitimacy of an Albanian national movement.

Konitza’s narrative begins with the decline of the League of Prizren and the appearance of an array of loosely connected societies that promoted the Albanian national cause politically and culturally. Konitza traced the development of the earliest of these institutions, with a particular interest in the publishing societies that produced Albanian-language books and periodicals. Two of these societies were established in 1874. The first was the Drita (light) society, founded at the hands of a small group of Albanian elites in Istanbul, including Orthodox Christian Petro Poga, Sami Frashëri, and his brother Naim Frashëri. The first project undertaken at the hand of Drita was publishing a “reading book with an [Albanian] alphabet adopted by them.”¹³⁰ In the same year, American-educated, Albanian businessman called Anastasios Koulourioti published the first Albanian-language newspaper in Athens. By 1882, the Greek government shut down

the newspaper, called *The Voice of Albania*, Koulouriōti was subsequently arrested and
died in an Athens prison the same year. In 1884 the Drita society in Istanbul received a
firman from the Sultan to begin publishing an Albanian-language magazine called *Drita*,
and after three issues renamed *Dituria* (knowledge). However, by 1885, after twelve
issues “the Turkish government, seeing that the paper was widely read, took umbrage and
began to make difficulties.” The conflict between the Drita society and the Ottoman
state, Konitza claims, prompted the society to move their operations to Bucharest where
they would continue to publish the magazine under the new leadership of Jani Vreto.
Vreto was an Orthodox Christian and co-founder, with Sami Frashëri and Pashko Vasa,
of the Central Committee for Defending Albanian Rights in Istanbul.

However, the move to Bucharest according to Konitza, created a major division in
the nascent Albanian national movement. This division he associated with conflicting
loyalties, among Albanians, to various religious institutions. In Bucharest, the nature of
the Drita society drastically changed when Nicolas Naço, an Albanian merchant from
Egypt, donated a great deal of money to the society and took interest in its operations.
The Drita society disintegrated into factions that reflected the divisions in the movement
as a whole. Some Orthodox Albanians sought sponsorship from the Russian Empire,
which had already demonstrated an interest in backing Balkan nationalists, while others
sought sponsorship from the Kingdom of Greece. Some, like Konitza, thought Austria-
Hungary would serve as an effective sponsor of the movement, while the majority, whom

\[131\] Ibid.
\[132\] Ibid.
he refers to as “Turkish Albanians” desired to sustain Albanian’s place in the Ottoman Empire and encouraged cooperation with the Ottoman state.\footnote{133}{Ibid.}

Konitza saw the crisis within the \textit{Drita} society, which he considered the heir to the League of Prizren, as one of essential mistrust among Albanians of different religions, cultivated by a social system that divided Ottoman subjects along confessional lines. Thus, he wrote of the factions, “if it were necessary to call oneself Albanian, no opportunity should be lost to work behind the scenes in favor of religion rather than the national movement.”\footnote{134}{Ibid.} The \textit{Drita} society, as such, disbanded, as result of these divisions, and a number of factions, based primarily on religious divisions, were established in Bucharest. Konitza describes this, solemnly, as the dissolution of “an overall society, which was to bring together all the efforts, which was to work uninterruptedly, publishing and publicizing books and awakening the nation. But this effort collapsed as soon as it was born!”\footnote{135}{Ibid.}

The internal crisis that dissolved \textit{Drita} is absolutely fundamental to understanding the complex origins of the Albanian national movement. The apprehension and insecurity that various groups of Albanians experienced during this time speaks directly to the manner in which Albanian multi-vocal identity manifested politically at this early stage. Konitza described the membership of \textit{Drita} as “ignorant merchants who served in shops from the age of fifteen to twenty-five or thirty before opening shops of their own and making money…” Clergymen, government officials, intellectuals, military personnel, and other community leaders bombarded these average Albanians. They claimed Albanians’ decision as to how they dedicated their loyalty could determine not only their acute
personal interests, but also those of their households, their religious communities, and their countrymen. For Konitza, and many other Albanian nationalists, the disintegration of the Drita society was a troubling instance of the contradictions in Albanian identities engendering discord in the Albanian national movement. This real potential for internal conflict made clear, to Albanian intellectuals, the necessity to construct a secular, ethnon-linguistic, national ideology that distinguished itself from the various forces competing for influence in Albania.

Indeed the factions from the Drita society began to establish their own political organizations. There was a “pro-Slav party” headed by the millionaire Hercule Duro and a “Greek party” under the leadership of Gavril Pema, both of whom agreed “that Albania must come under an Orthodox power…”136 This was not an uncommon feature of Balkan politics at the time, as various nationalist and irredentist groups sought the protection of the two foremost non-Ottoman regional powers, The Russian Empire and the Kingdom of Greece, supported and monitored by the European powers.137 However, in the Albanian case a third faction formed, more powerful than the others, a reconstituted Drita society established by Nicolas Naço. The Drita distinctly favored relations with the Ottoman state compared to the other faction. Konitza recalled Nicolas Naço’s fidelity to the Empire, “on the Sultan’s birthday he went with two hundred Albanians to give a demonstration of loyalty in front of the Turkish Legation [in Bucharest].”138

Naço devoted much of the Drita society’s efforts to establishing a propaganda network, in the hopes of garnering widespread support, among the Albanian population, for their program of autonomy and to combat the propaganda efforts of the factions

136 Ibid.
137 Philliou, Biography of an Empire : Governing Ottomans in an Age of Revolution, 109-10.
138 Ibid, 6.
partial to Russia and Greece. In 1887, Naço founded another newspaper called *Sgipetari* (The Albanian) that served to buttress *Drita*’s propaganda effort, as well as to provide updates regarding their political activities and their effort to found Albanian schools.¹³⁹ In the same year, Sami Frashëri, who was serving as an advisor in the *Divân-i Hümâyûn* (Council of State), obtained a *firman* from the Sultan to establish an Albanian-language school in the southeastern city of *Korça*. This school was funded by the *Drita* society and had over 150 students, half of whom were Christian, the other half were Muslim.¹⁴⁰ Konitza remarks, however, that the Ottoman governor of Manastur disseminated propaganda that deemed it “an infidel school” and encouraged the Greek bishop to threaten Christian parents that enrolled their children with excommunication.¹⁴¹

Meanwhile, in 1890 the “pro-Slav” faction in Bucharest began to utilize the Cyrillic alphabet for the Albanian language as well as using Russian words to fill in for words that didn’t exist in Albanian, essentially “to turn the Albanian language into a semi-Slavic dialect.”¹⁴² Konitza is highly critical of these “pro-Slav” factions, referring to them as “uncouth,” “false patriots.” His frustration demonstrates the apparent difficulty of forming an Albanian answer to “the national question.” Konitza’s resentment of “degenerate Albanian townsfolk” and “unpatriotic” Orthodox Albanians and his depiction of their stubborn refusal to form a cohesive national movement also serves to buttress his appeal to the Austro-Hungarian Empire for monetary and diplomatic support. Importantly, Konitza’s portrayal of a chaotic and impolitic movement elucidates his opinion that Albanians should seek the sponsorship and guidance of western European

¹⁴¹ Ibid.
¹⁴² Ibid.
powers. In his estimation, Austria-Hungary’s support would prove much less divisive than that of Russia or Greece, both of which had more at stake in the direction of the Albanian national movement. Konitza recalls the hindrance, at the hands of pro-Russian and pro-Greek factions, of his own efforts to establish a newspaper, called *Albania*.

Tracing its development from its inception in 1896, Konitza notes,

> Some people thought the paper had received subventions from the Sultan to attack the Greeks. Others, that it was not an Albanian but a Young Turk paper, because there were attacks on the Sultan in it. These self-same jealous partisans of the Sultan reproached me several months later for talking of the Sultan in an unfriendly way.  

Konitza demonstrates the precarious position of those advocating for a movement that was distinctly Albanian, as various forces competing for dominance in the Balkans had taken a keen interest in Albanian territories and the political allegiances of Albanians. Thus, even though *Albania* was seen as a tool of the Ottoman state, Midhat Frashëri, son of Abdul Frashëri, was arrested for distributing copies of the newspaper in 1897. He was held in prison by the Ottoman secret police until his uncle Sami Frashëri vied for his release. Konitza assessed that the situation of the Albanian national movement remained precarious in 1899, as the factions with ties to Russia and Greece dominated the Albanian political scene in Bucharest and the Istanbul faction was “in the care of several students.” However, momentum was building. A newly formed faction was active in *Manastir*. In Sofia, the *Bashkimi* (Unity) society printed an Albanian-language almanac and a Turkish-language newspaper called *Ittifak* was distributed to the Muslim population, both Albanian and Bulgarian.

Furthermore, the movement was receiving significant support from Albanian diaspora communities abroad. In particular, the *Arbëreshë* (Albano-Italians) had

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143 Ibid.
144 Ibid.
established communication networks in Italian consulates, established Albanian schools in southern Italy and Sicily, and made great strides in cultivating an Albanian literary tradition. Moreover, the Prime Minister of Italy Francesco Crispi, who was of Arbëreshë origin and participated in the Italian national unification movement, had arrogated support for the movement and made it Italian policy that no strong power would embed itself in Albania. The Arbëreshë in Italy established networks not only in Albania and Italy, but also in Egypt, Argentina, and Dalmatia. They published countless periodicals that served to rouse Italian public opinion in favor of the Albanian national movement. This included *La Nazione Albanese, Nuova Albania, Corriere dei Balcani, Gazzetta Albanese* and many others published in Calabria, Sicily, Rome, Naples and Milan.

Indeed, Konitza was apprehensive to embrace the assistance of the Arbëreshë movements in Italy, and undoubtedly included their activities in his memorandum to further encourage Austria-Hungary to take advantage of the opportunity to assist the movement, before another power had the opportunity to do so.

Konitza concluded his memorandum with a summation of the entire Albanian movement to 1899, he writes,

> There is in every Albanian head the germ of an idea, but this idea is neither old enough nor strong enough to get them into action. Why? … Collaborators, above all, are lacking. And the reason collaborators are lacking is the absence of schools. Where a school exists, there in effect is a nucleus for propaganda; and collaborators arise and take it on themselves to distribute publications…What is needed is to set up a college…with the double aim of quickly giving substantial training to future teachers of Albanian, and of attracting young people.

In this proposition Konitza has both provided Austria-Hungary with the opportunity for patronage in a new Albanian national movement, and potential state, while preserving the

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structure and character of the movement as something genuinely Albanian. Indeed, while Austria could potentially fund the schools, it would be Albanians that learned and taught in them. Perhaps most importantly, it would be Konitza and those of his like that allocated the funds for these schools and formatted their programs of study. In this sense, Konitza called for a moderate patronage that would provide the means of gradually inculcating the Albanian youth with a national sentiment that promoted ethno-linguistic unity. Furthermore, like Pashko Vasa, Konitza made a very convincing case for Austro-Hungary’s interest in Albania’s future, as he has told of the substantial influence of Russian and Greek sympathizers and the involvement of other diplomatic missions in the affairs of burgeoning Albanian political factions.

Besides demonstrating, again, the pragmatic diplomatic maneuvering of the Albanian leadership, particularly in terms of manipulating foreign diplomatic rivalries, Konitza’s memoir points to the factious nature of the Albanian national movement in 1899. In spite of its biases and potential exaggerations, this document demonstrates the manner in which Albanians continued to grapple with the political manifestations of their multi-vocal identities. The disparate character of the Albanian national movement is largely unaccounted for in historical narratives, but it attests to the unique development of Albanian nationalism, particularly when considering that the largest of these factions attested loyalty to the Ottoman Empire.

Albanians were agents in a highly complex domestic and international situation. Their multi-vocal identities prompted multitudinous loyalties, as Balkan irredentists and foreign powers vied for influence in southeast Europe and threatened their status as subjects of the Ottoman Empire. The specific issues that emerge in the Albanian crisis of
identity, particularly in terms of religious affiliation and political loyalty, are key to understanding the manner in which certain Albanian figures rapidly changed their ideas concerning the place of Albanians on the international political scene. In 1899, according to Konitza’s memorandum, the Albanian national movement was in motion but largely directionless, and it was clear that ideologically, Albanian nationalists would have to actively promote a conception of Albanian identity that traversed the divisions prompted primarily by religion. Sami Frashëri would take up this task and assemble some of the most radical ideological means of engendering unity among Albanians for the national movement. In so doing, Sami would attempt to distantly separate an Albanian national consciousness from divisive political and religious institutions, including the Ottoman Empire.

**Sami Frashëri and Yusuf Akçura**

Şemseddin Sami, as he was known in the Ottoman Empire, was an Ottoman political figure and one of the most respected intellectuals of his day. As Sami Frashëri, however, he was key political leader and intellectual figurehead of the Albanian national movement. In fact, Sami was a pioneer intellectual, not only in defining Albanian identity in ethno-linguistic terms, but also, as I will demonstrate later, in defining Turkish identity in those same terms. As an intellectual, Sami embodies the internal Albanian crisis of identity, as both an Ottoman and an Albanian. However, he came to resolve this crisis by contributing, concomitantly, foundational theoretical material for both Albanian and Turkish national ideologies. While Sami provided one of the most radical declarations of Albanian irredentism and indictments of the Ottoman state, he also contributed to foundational ethno-linguistic theories from which Turkish nationalist ideology would spawn. As one of the fathers of both Albanian and Turkish nationalism, Sami Frashëri
personifies Albanian multi-vocal identities, their contradictions and the manner in which they were resolved in nationalism.

In the earliest stages of the Albanian national movement, Sami made attempts to reconcile Ottomanism with burgeoning nationalist sentiments among Albanian, and indeed in the Empire at large. In December 1878 he published an article in the newspaper Tercüman-ı Hakikat, with this reconciliation in mind.\textsuperscript{148} Sami formulated a theory that asserted the coexistence of two vatans (motherlands) for Ottoman subjects. In his formulation the Ottoman Empire was the “general vatan” of all Ottoman subjects, who in turn also possessed a “special vatan,” which reflected an individual’s territorial, religious, and ethno-linguistic origin.\textsuperscript{149} In an attempt to revise Ottomanist ideology, Sami accommodated burgeoning nationalist sentiments in the Empire by acknowledging, under the auspices of Ottomanism, room for identities other than religion. In so doing, he both encouraged loyalty to the Sultan and advocated for leniency from the Ottoman center when it came to the aspirations of groups, like Albanians, to cultivate their own cultural traditions. Sami depicted the interplay of diverse Ottoman identities as a natural symbiosis that reflected what he considered an updated understanding of Ottomanism. However, as the Albanian national movement began to percolate in the Balkans and Istanbul, Sami began to more vigorously defend Albanian aspirations of political autonomy under the Empire.

In 1879, Sami co-founded the Istanbul-based Society for the Printing of Albanian Writings, which promoted an Albanian literary culture by formatting an

\textsuperscript{149} Ibid., 56.
Albanian alphabet and publishing Albanian literature.\textsuperscript{150} However, in 1885, Abdülhamid II, banned printing in the Albanian language. For the Hamidian regime, Albanian publications both undermined their Pan-Islamist agenda, which designated Ottoman-Turkish as the language for all Muslims, and had the potential to propagate irredentism among his Albanian subjects. In fact, Abdülhamid II received \textit{fetvas} from the \textit{şehüislam}, deeming the use of Albanian as both blasphemous and treasonous to the Caliphate. Furthermore, Abdülhamid II allied with the Patriarchate to ban the use of Albanian in Orthodox liturgy.\textsuperscript{151}

Throughout this period, 1889 to 1898, Sami composed his vast six-volume encyclopedia, the first encyclopedia written in Turkish, called \textit{Kamus ül-A’lam}. In it, he devoted entries for \textit{Arnavutluk} (Albania), \textit{Arnavutlar} (Albanians) and \textit{Besa}, finding a place in the Ottoman encyclopedia for distinctly Albanian subjects. Sami provided a detailed account of the Albanian past, focusing on ancient ethnic connections to the Pelasgians and Illyrians, as well as figures like Skanderbeg (listed as \textit{İskender Bey}), the heroic figure that fought against invading Ottomans.\textsuperscript{152} Moreover, in 1899 and 1900, Sami published a groundbreaking two-volume Ottoman dictionary called the \textit{Kâmûs-i Türkî}.\textsuperscript{153} In both of these works, and many other publications, Sami began to furtively propagate his developing nationalist ideology in an attempt to prove a primordial distinction between Turks and Albanians, linguistically, culturally, and historically. Taking advantage of his status as a prominent Ottoman intellectual, Sami surreptitiously

\begin{thebibliography}{153}
\bibitem{}\textsuperscript{150} Ibid., 53-59.
\bibitem{}\textsuperscript{151} Ibid., 90.
\end{thebibliography}
made a case for Albanian nationalism in the Ottoman public sphere, in an effort to sway his peers to embrace ethno-linguistic categories of differentiation.

One of the most intriguing examples of this is from an 1898 article that Sami wrote for the famous Istanbul journal *Servet-i Fünün* (The Wealth of Knowledge), entitled *Lisân ve Edebiyatımız* (Our Language and Literature) (See Appendix C.1). A number of elements of this article are intriguing. Particularly, the pride with which Sami advocated for cultivating Turkish literature and the manner in which his arguments reflect the cornerstones of later Turkish nationalism, propagated by figures like Ziya Gökalp. Additionally, the fact that Sami continually used the first person plural, when referring to the Turkish nation and the Turkish language, indicates the fluid multi-vocality of his identity. This is particularly striking when compared to his radical, anti-Ottoman, nationalist manifesto published only a few months later: *Albania: What it was, what it is, and what will become of it?*

The essential motivation of *Lisân ve Edebiyatımız* was to resurrect the Central Asian origins of a Turkic linguistic and literary tradition, which, according to Sami, had been largely eradicated by various influences on the Ottoman language, during conquests into Europe and the Middle East.

In this way, the Turkish language, for five or six centuries forbidden from literature and employed only in speaking and remaining, thus, in a crude linguistic state, started to shine all of a sudden from the two extremities of the wide and scattered domains of the Turks. On the one side the

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Turks of Transoxania started to write the Çağatay they spoke and on the other the Ottomans in Anatolia and Rumelia started to write the Turkish they spoke at the time.155

Sami shows his prowess as a linguist and intellectual as he introduced one of the first ethno-linguistic theories of pan-Turkic unity in the Ottoman context. Sami was clearly well informed as his understanding reflects the theories of his contemporary, Hungarian Orientalist Armin Vambrey. Vambrey conducted his own research in the 1850’s that traced the Turkic origins of various peoples in Europe and asserted a similar understanding of ethno-linguistic Turkic unity. Sami’s interest in resurrecting the relationship between Central Asian Turkic languages and Ottoman-Turkish was one that became incredibly popular among Turkish nationalist intellectuals in the twentieth century. Sami was not only interested in disinterring the Central-Asian roots of the Turkish language, but also he insisted that Ottoman-Turkish was mongrelized by Arabic and Persian influences. He advocated for a return to the Ottoman language’s fundamentally Turkic roots.

Lisân-ı Osmani üç lisândan yani Arabî ve Fârisi ve Türkçe lisânlarından mürekkebdir demek âdet olmuştur…Ne kadar yanlış, ne büyük hata! Çç lisânından mürekkip bir lisân! Dünyada görünmemiş şey! Hayır! Hiç de öyle değildir. Her lisân bir lisândır.156

It is customary to say that the Ottoman language comes from the inks of three languages Arabic, Persian and Turkish…What is so wrong, what a great mistake! From the ink of three languages, one language! Something unprecedented in the world! No! It is not at all like this. Each language is a language.

Sami refers to the interjected Arabic and Persian words as “soğuk ve külfetli” (cold and burdensome) as well as “münasebetsiz” (awkward), and thus detrimental to the Ottoman literary tradition. In rejecting the Ottoman-Turkish language’s non-Turkic sources, Sami implicitly encourages a consolidation of Turkish identity, along ethno-linguistic lines. This was in direct opposition of the Pan-Islamist ideology of Abdülhamid

155 All translations of the transliterated Ottoman text by E.P. Licursi.
156 Frashëri, "Lisân Ve Edebiyatımız (Our Language and Literature) in Servet-I Fünün (1898)," 5.
II, who asserted the linguistic dominance of Ottoman language, with its Persian and Arabic influences, as the language of the Caliphate and, thus, Ottoman Muslims. Sami’s theory that Arabic and Persian served to mongrelize the Ottoman-Turkish language had a lasting impact on Turkish nationalism. It was a key consideration in the 1928 Language Commission, which both changed the Turkish alphabet from Perso-Arabic to a modified Latin alphabet, in addition to substituting Persian and Arabic words with Turkic ones.\(^{157}\)

The implicit promotion of consolidating, cultivating, and reforming language, with the undertones of a remote glorious linguistic past is a typical nationalist reconstruction of history, in which both Turks and Albanians took part. Sami participated in this type of historical reconstruction in the Albanian national context as well. For Albanians he claimed a direct ethno-linguistic continuity with the ancient Pelasgians and Illyrians, which served to ground Albanian culture in a glorious past. In the Turkish case, Sami participated in laying the initial intellectual groundwork for a similar Turkish national ideology that would start with Yusuf Akçura and culminate in Ziya Gökalp’s pan-Turkism. Drawing on similar ethno-linguistic theories Gökalp’s *The Principles of Turkism (Türkçülüğüün Esasları)* advocated for the active inculcation of “Turkishness” into the culture of the Ottoman Empire that would establish a new national identity espoused in the Republic. Part of this identity was to reconstruct an ethno-linguistic historical connection to Central Asia, in order generate a cultural affinity between Turks and other Turkic peoples northeast of Anatolia, from a glorious nomadic past.\(^{158}\)

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\(^{157}\) Kemal H. Karpat, *Studies on Turkish Politics and Society : Selected Articles and Essays*, Social, Economic, and Political Studies of the Middle East and Asia (Boston, MA: Brill, 2004), 335-64.

Indeed, it seems that while Sami Frashëri was working on constructing a new Albanian national political and cultural tradition, both as a founder of the Committee for Defending Albanian Rights and the Society for the Printing of Albanian Writings, he was also actively promoting the cultivation of Turkish ethno-linguistic cultural identity. It is this seemingly contradictory phenomenon that attests to Sami’s multi-vocal identity, which reflects the multi-vocal character of Albanian identity, generally. Sami was a proud Ottoman and was sentimental regarding the Turkish language as such,\textsuperscript{159}

\begin{quote}
Millimiz olan Türkçe, dünyann en güzel lisânı değil ise hâla en güzel lisânlarından biri olduğunda şüphe yoktur…\textsuperscript{160}
\end{quote}

Our nation’s Turkish language, if not the world's most beautiful tongue, there is no doubt, is still one of the most beautiful of the world’s tongues…

Clearly, regardless of his Albanian identity, Sami felt a personal affinity with the Turkish language and considered it a fundamental component of his identity. However, only a few months after he wrote these sentiments, in 1899, Sami would publish a fervently anti-Ottoman nationalist manifesto with the intent of both promoting irredentism and degrading Turks as forsaken tyrants. His Albanian-language publication \textit{Albania: What it was, what it is, and what will become of it?}, makes it quite clear that Sami viewed Albanians and Turks as mutually exclusive components of a fledgling empire that had to form separate political entities to ensure their survival.

What is particularly striking about this work, is its severe indictment of the Ottoman state as incompetent and tyrannical, while speaking admiringly of other Balkan nationalist movements. This was quite unlike any of Sami’s previously published works,

\textsuperscript{159} In fact, according to Kemal Karpat, Yusuf Akçura in the newspaper \textit{Türk Yılı} described Sami as a Turkish nationalist because of his contribution to defining Turkish identity in his linguistic works, Karpat however describes him as an ardent Ottomanist, see, Kemal H. Karpat, \textit{The Politicization of Islam : Reconstructing Identity, State, Faith, and Community in the Late Ottoman State} (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 339.

\textsuperscript{160} Frashëri, "Lisân Ve Edebiyatımız (Our Language and Literature) in Servet-I Fünün (1898)," 3.
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which strove to reconcile the contradictions of Ottoman-Albanian identity through synthesis. In the first sentence of the section entitled “Can Albania Survive as it is?” Sami writes, “Albania is a part of European Turkey. Its existence today is linked to the survival of European Turkey. Will Turkey survive much longer in Europe? Either it is not possible to give an answer to this question or the answer is no.” While, Sami framed his manifesto as a pragmatic response to a distinct question about the Empire’s survival in Europe, his rhetoric regarding the Ottomans drastically changed. He abandoned any argument for cooperation between Albanians and the Ottoman Empire. In a radical call to reason he urged Albanians to abandon the Ottoman Empire’s “yoke” and to prepare for its independent national survival. The abrupt and distinct ideological change apparent in Sami’s work is striking, considering that it was published just a few months after the proto-Turkish nationalist piece discussed above. Yet, in this short span Sami came to espouse irredentism and view the Ottoman Empire with great disdain.

The other nations of European Turkey have started making preparations for its downfall so that they will be able to survive on their own and not fall prey to the collapsing remains of Turkey. These nations are like the grass which feeds and grows under the snows of winter and, when the frigid, heavy mantle melts from the face of the earth, begins immediately to thrive and take on a fresh green color. But the Albanians, who have been under Turkey's rule for so many centuries, even though they see that the huge monster is decrepit and is more and more bedridden by the day, will not give up relying upon it. The snows of so many centuries under which other nations have fed, have deadened Albania's roots. Albania has frozen over and withered during this long winter of somber tyranny, even though it has not been oppressed as much as the other countries have.

Sami encouraged Albanians to look to other Balkan irredentist movements for inspiration, and to internalize their dire situation as one of national survival. Instead of blaming Slavic territorial voracity or European interventionism for Albania’s precarious international situation, as was typical of earlier nationalist sentiments, Sami censures the

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161 Ibid., *Albania: What It Was, What It Is, and What It Will Become? (Shqipêria - Çka Qënlë, Çështë E Ç'do Të Bëhetël?)*
162 Ibid.
163 Ibid.
Ottomans for “doing nothing to prolong its survival…Like a sick man who will not listen to his physicians and is torturing his body…” Still, this great ideological transmogrification is driven by a sort of pragmatism, despite the emotional rhetoric in which it is couched. For instance Sami speaks of the other Balkan movements as “making preparations” for their survival during the collapse of the Empire, as though the impetus for nationalism is a pragmatic desire for territorial integrity in the face of the disintegrating Ottoman Empire.

In fact, despite his harsh anti-Ottoman language, Sami recognized the long standing friendship between Albanians and Turks, “…the Albanians long were comrades of the Turks and not their slaves, but now they are suffering under great oppression and are being beaten and trampled underfoot more than the rest. Do they not see that they are leaning against a wall which is collapsing and which will crush and bury them?” Once again, he framed his denunciation of the Empire as a pragmatic response to a set of broad global and domestic circumstances, and the failure of the Ottoman state to provide for the Albanians as subjects. Sami recognized the strong bond between Albanians and Turks, but, for him, the Ottoman’s failure to protect Albanian nationhood, forced them to organize for their own national interest. Sami was undoubtedly an Ottoman; he was a devout Muslim, a resident of Istanbul, an advisor to the Porte, and a fundamental scholar of the Empire and its language. It is clear that, for Sami, rejecting the Empire was a last resort, but a necessary step in preparing Albanians for what he saw as the inevitable disintegration of Ottoman Europe, particularly in light of Abdülhamid’s attacks on Albanian cultural and political movements.

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164 Ibid, 1.
165 Frashëri, Albania: What It Was, What It Is, and What It Will Become? (Shqipëria - Çka Qënë, Ç'është E Ç’dë Të Bëhetë?)
However there is a subtext in Sami’s literary output, when considered as a whole that makes this ideological shift consistent with Sami’s multi-vocal identity. Perhaps rather than trying to identify a specific contingency that prompted Sami’s ideological shift, one can consider the fact that Sami, as both an Albanian and an Ottoman, desired what was best for both Albania and the Ottoman Empire. His convictions, in regards to ethno-linguistic nationalism and the cultivation of a distinct, national literary identity, prompted him to propose a break between Albanians and Turks, for their own good. He advocated for that break subtly at first, through cultural criticism and scholarly work, but eventually came to promote this break in more radical political terms. Perhaps, Sami envisioned the inevitable disintegration of the Ottoman Empire as multi-ethnic, multi-religious, expansive, and inclusive. Thus, Sami participated in both movements, aware of the unavoidable contradictions, truly believing that the Ottoman Empire would inevitably unmix into distinct ethno-linguistic nations. His desire was to ensure, in the best way he could conceive, Albania’s territorial and cultural survival in the fallout of this process.

Historians are engaged in a debate about whether Albanians had a primordial, longstanding enmity with the Ottoman Empire, or whether Albanians could be considered a loyal, undifferentiated part of its fabric. These questions, in a sense, detach rational agency from Albanian actors, as though they are simply acting out a predetermined historical trajectory. In fact, Albanian nationalists were very actively manipulating their history for their own survival. In reality, Albanians like Sami Frashëri reacted to the multiplicity of contingencies they were faced with throughout this period and the meanings they associated with these contingencies changed over time, as did their emotions and ideas. Thus, throughout the movement, rhetoric that praised the Sultan and
 affirmed the loyalty of Albanians to the Ottoman state existed along side rhetoric like Sami’s that expressed deep hostility for Turks and the Ottoman state:

The Albanian is like a man who has fallen into the sea and knows how to swim, but who not only wants to save himself, but who also wants to save another man who has fallen into the sea and does not know how to swim. The wretched fellow, the Turk, will not let the swimmer rise to the surface and clamber out of the water, but instead grasps him by the two legs or by a leg and an arm and drags him down, not letting him swim. Thus not only does the Turk drown, but the Albanian drowns, too, and is lost at sea. Why do the Albanians, who see this peril, let themselves be clung to by this sick and demented fellow who cannot save himself and will not let the other one survive, but who rather endeavors treacherously to drown him, even though the Albanian is struggling to keep afloat? What ought a person to do in such a perilous situation? Well, he must give the traitor who is trying to drown him a good kick and expedite him to the depths of the sea, thus saving himself. This is the road to salvation. There is no other.166

Of course, Sami did not have a pathological hatred for Turks as, in a sense, he considered himself a Turk, rather he used this rhetoric to promulgate an ideology that he was convinced could politically unite Albanians to save Albanian territory from the very real threat of invasion and foreign domination. Even in this particularly severe passage, the first line indicates Sami’s self-reflexive recognition of the deep affinity between Albanians and Turks, acknowledging that most Albanians wanted to save the Ottoman Empire. However, for Sami, this ideal, which was incontrovertibly one that he had long held, was a practical impossibility. Albanians, Sami claimed, must completely abandon the Ottomanism and the Empire to ensure their national survival,

Although we must show respect for the dead, we must also bury them in the ground. If we cannot bring ourselves to say farewell to them, we have no choice but to jump into the grave with them…the revival of Turkey means death for Albania…Up to now, Albania has managed to maintain its national identity and its language, but it will not be able to do so anymore if there are no schools and learning in the country. Yet the government of Turkey will not let the Albanians open schools and promote their language, as it does for the others, its enemies and those of Albania, whom it allows to do as they wish. Thus, if Turkey should live on for another few years, Albania will not survive. It will be forever divided up between the Greeks and the Slavs.167

Again, while Sami presents a profound indictment of the Empire, it is by no means motivated by an irrational hatred for the Ottoman “yoke.” In fact, it is perceptibly

166 Ibid.
167 Ibid.
pragmatic. The Ottoman Empire was repressing the proliferation of Albanian cultural and political life and simultaneously failing to defend its European territories. This situation left Albanians socially, culturally, and politically defenseless to the expansionist ambitions of their neighbors. Adding to Sami’s adroit comprehension of the international political order, he advocated for a political rather than a violent subversive movement,

Once again, Sami’s approach to enacting his ideology is practical, as he had observed the successes and failures of other nationalist movements in the Balkans. Thus, he promoted a political movement that would appeal to European sensibilities for national rights, and encouraged Albanians, to whom this piece was addressed, to conceive of themselves as a cohesive political entity. This is especially significant when those national rights include complete political autonomy from the Ottoman Empire, the exclusive use of the Albanian language in schools, and the disintegration of the Patriarchate’s power structure in Albania. However, as from the very beginning, Sami’s essential demand is for the cultivation of Albanian “culture” and “national identity,” “…there can be no Albania without Albanians; there can be no Albanians without the Albanian language; and there can be no Albanian language without a writing system for it and schools in which to teach it.”169 However, Sami is not satisfied with reform, perhaps the most radical statement in the text is that which proposes a new government,

168 Ibid.
169 Ibid.
But in order for this to happen, the present government must be done away with and a patriotic government must be installed, a government which will act in accordance with the needs and the rights of the Albanians - a vigilant Albanian government and not a blind foreign government as we have today. What we need is proper government, whatever it may be called.  

This statement of proposed independence lays the groundwork for two key trajectories in the Albanian national movement. The first trajectory was more traditionally irredentist, seeking independence and the establishment of an Albanian national state. On the other hand, there were Albanians that viewed their national aspirations as consistent with, even symbiotic with subversive Turkish factions that desired a new constitutional Ottoman state. While Sami called for Albanian independence, his emphasis on the institution of a “proper government” was a cornerstone of Albanian national ideology, in which political action and reform had the potential to strengthen the international position of the Albanian nation.

Sami’s seemingly dramatic ideological oscillation between Ottomanism and uncompromising Albanianism, does not indicate a merely personal conversion, but rather is indicative of a broader structural shift in ideology both in irredentist nationalisms typical of the Balkans and an increasingly centralized, even myopic concept of Ottomanism, which was co-opted by Abdülhamid II and repackaged as Pan-Islamism. Sami’s work can be seen as not only a reaction to the plethora of contingencies that he and other Albanians were faced with at the turn of the twentieth century, but also a reaction to broader ideological forces and structural changes in the international political environment and within the Empire. Indeed, Abdülhamid’s suppression of Albanian political and cultural organizations was a result of his Pan-Islamist policies, which were

\[\text{Ibid.}\]
reactions to these very political and ideological forces. Sami foresaw no place for Albanian national identity in this new vision of Ottomanism and promoted a complete break with it.

Indeed, this is not far from the dissatisfaction of many Ottoman intellectuals with Abdülhamid’s new homogenizing vision of Ottomanism. Indeed, Sami’s seemingly contradictory views embodied a phenomenon found among Ottoman-Arabs as well. Khalidi writes that for Arabs “…there were several way stations between Ottomanism and Arabism…” meaning that “Arabists could also be believers in the Ottomanist ideal...” The same could be said for much of the Albanian leadership, whose multi-vocal identities contributed to complex worldviews that informed seemingly contradictory views and competing loyalties. This certainly separated Albanians and Arabs from most other ethnic groups in the Empire, particularly in the Balkans, where nationalists seemed to experience a less profound crisis of reconciling their nationalist politics with their loyalty to the Ottoman state.

Turkish figures reacted to these contingencies with a similarly deep fear as to the survival of the Empire and formed similarly nationalistic ideological responses, in terms of promoting massive political reform and galvanizing a national identity. For instance, it was not only Albanians whose publications were censored by the regime of Abdülhamid II. Turkish proponents of reform were also severely limited by Hamidian censors, and as David Kushner points out, this censorship actually provided an intellectual platform for the formation of Turkish Nationalism. Under Abdülhamid II articles discussing the regime and any internal politics were censored or banned completely, thus one of the

171 Karpat, The Politicization of Islam : Reconstructing Identity, State, Faith, and Community in the Late Ottoman State, 350.
only permitted outlets for journalists to veil their critiques or promote their ideologies was in articles about culture and history. Thus, Turkish nationalists found outlets in periodicals like *Sabah*, of which Sami was a frequent contributor, in which the groundwork for Turkish nationalism was laid in articles about everything from linguistics to ethnographic histories. In fact, Sami’s article *Lisän ve Edebiyatımız*, discussed above, was an archetypical example of this phenomenon, in which an intellectual could express his desires for drastic reforms in Ottoman society by discussing remote academic subjects like linguistics.

One of the main phenomena that both Turks and Albanians reacted to was the promulgation of irredentist Pan-Slavism, which had splintered the Empire’s European domains into aggressive independent states, backed by foreign powers. Surely the need to centralize the Empire under a more scrupulous central government was a pragmatic imitation of the European model of the nation-state. Yet one crucial aspect of that model was an ethno-linguistic national identity. Indeed there was a need in the Ottoman Empire to create a cultural and linguistic framework to breakdown the barriers of the *millet* system and to reverse the divisions prompted by the *tanzimât* reforms. Nevertheless, this type of integration came with a price. Part of the cost of national centralization was the alienation of many of the remaining non-Turkish ethnic groups in the Empire, manifesting in intensified nationalist sentiments. Just as Sami Frashëri viewed irredentist movements in the Balkans with a concomitant consternation and admiration, Turkish nationalist reacted to these movements in the same way. As the overarching ideological structures of Ottomanism were transformed and acute threats to the existence of the

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Ottoman state became more imminent, the remaining groups in the Empire reacted by prompting an ethno-linguistic consolidation of their identities.

There is no other document that encapsulates this process and the trajectory of the early Turkish nationalism more completely than Yusuf Akçura’s *Three Kinds of Policy (Üç Tarz-ı Siyaset)*, published in 1904. In this groundbreaking work, Akçura advocates for a positive program that would overhaul the prevailing Ottoman ideology, rejecting both Tanzimât Ottomanism and Hamidian Pan-Islamism in favor of a nuanced Turkism, a “Turkish political nation based on race...a Turkish nationality that constituted a scientific rather than a political entity.” In his treatise Akçura systematically critiques the three possible trajectories, which could have defined the Ottoman worldview: Ottomanism, Pan-Islam, and Turkism. For Akçura, Ottomanism has failed in its attempted amalgamation of different “societies” under a single political entity:

This means that every society finds its own interest in survival, that is in acquiring and increasing its power. Hence, as among all living species struggling for survival, we witness a ceaseless conflict among societies. We are obliged to accept this condition. The interest of each society is in its existence, consequently in being powerful...in the majority of cases the interests of one community are secured at the expense of another, for what conceivable reason can we justify the infliction of harm on another section of mankind? The question can be answered by our natural inclinations, or, to put it differently our emotions, which our minds have not managed to explain or justify. I am an Ottoman and Muslim Turk. Therefore I wish to serve the interests of the Ottoman State, of Islam, and of the Turks.

The similarities to Sami Frashëri’s 1899 manifesto are striking. The first and most important is the ideology that both Sami and Akçura share in terms of the existence of an international order of ethno-linguistic nations that are in conflict with one another and must fight for their very survival. This proto-Darwinian understanding of the global political order is key to their respective rejections of Ottomanism as an outdated, inept

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174 Akçura, *Three Kinds of Policy (Üç Tarz-ı Siyaset)*.
175 Ibid.
ideology at the turn of the twentieth century. Both thinkers define the nation as an ethno-linguistic category based on historic primordial races.

Yet there is distinct pragmatism in approaching national ideology in ethno-linguistic terms that, if not opportunistic, was at least a practical reflection of the international political and ideological scene for the Ottoman Empire at the turn of the twentieth century. In this sense, Akçura and Sami advocated for a more exclusive notion of national identity, than ever conceived in Ottomanism, because for them it was the only foreseeable option in the face of structural ideological trends and the acute threat of nationalist movements on their borders. That is, both to keep up with Europe and the ever-encroaching nationalisms on Ottoman borderlands, both Albanians and Turks needed to adopt similar nationalist strategies for their survival as nations, even if that meant abandoning Ottomanism and the Empire, as such.

Nevertheless, the intimate affinity that both Sami and Akçura had with Ottomanism emerged even when they presented rational arguments for its abandonment. Both thinkers recognized their multi-vocal identities as Ottomans. Sami, even when he scathingly indicted the Ottoman state, did not deny the inherent, long-standing, synergistic affinity that Albanians shared with the Empire. On the other hand, Akçura was forthright in acknowledging his multiple identities as “an Ottoman, Muslim and Turk.” Indeed the issue of reconciling religious identity, ethno-linguistic identity and allegiance to the Ottoman Empire are central to both the Albanian and Turkish national ideologies.

While these more structural ideological commonalities are strikingly similar, Akçura and Sami differed in two important ways. The first is Akçura’s correct
recognition of the primordial ties between Turks and the Ottoman dynasty, a connection that Sami could not have claimed for Albanians, in spite of their service to the Ottoman state. Akçura recognizes three components of his identity; he labels himself an “Ottoman and a Muslim Turk.” He indicates that each of these components of his identity are “natural inclinations.” Thus, Sami advocates for an autonomous Albanian political entity, while for Akçura, Turks can simply co-opt the Ottoman state for their new Turkist aims.

The second, and most important, is the place of Islam. Akçura notes that “because all the Turks who would be united are Muslims and essentially on important points they have things in common, it gives the impression that it is supporting the policies of Islamism and Turkism at one and the same time.”¹⁷⁶ For Akçura, there is no reason that Turkists have to reject Islam because Turks are almost entirely Muslim. In fact, according to Akçura, Islamism can functional pragmatically, as Turkism could co-opt Islam to attract constituents to the ideology. This demographic uniformity did not exist in the Albanian context, in which Orthodox Christians and Catholic made up a prominent minority. For Sami, religion only served to divide Albanians, thus he promoted a strictly secular notion of nationalism,

Albanian men! Join your two hands in a besa, a league and in unity. This is what will save you. Otherwise you will be lost. Do not turn to religions and beliefs. Muslims, Catholics and Orthodox - they are all Albanians wherever they are, and they are all brothers. They must all unite under the sacred flag of Albania. Any Albanian who abandons his brothers and leaves them to join the foes of Albania, breaking his besa, is a traitor. He is an enemy of our people and our homeland. Better that such a man not exist. He must be regarded as a foe and not as an Albanian.¹⁷⁷

Sami, while a devout Muslim, rejected religious distinction in favor of an ethno-linguistic, territorial notion of nationalism. Thus, Sami, like the League of Prizren appropriated and “modernized” the very traditional, secular institution of besa as the

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.
¹⁷⁷ Frashëri, Albania: What It Was, What It Is, and What It Will Become? (Shqipëria - Çka Qënë, Ç'është E Ç'do Të Bëhetë?)
cornerstone institution buttressing the Albanian national movement. Sami selects a particular part of Albanian culture that traversed socio-political divisions and emphasized commonality in Albanian identity, not unlike Akçura’s advocating the use of commonality in Islam to promote Turkism. In this way, while Albanian and Turkish nationalist ideologies were reactions to the same structural forces and contingencies, these differences determined their eventual mutual exclusivity.

However, one cannot substantiate the claim that these structural commonalities between Turkish and Albanian nationalism based solely on an analysis of literary sources. Indeed, these commonalities manifested materially in the social and political actions of Turkish and Albanian actors, particularly during the Young Turk Revolution of 1908. I will demonstrate how the 1908 Revolution, and particularly the events at Ferizovik, embodies a culmination of synergy between the Albanian and Turkish nationalism, in which lofty ideological aspirations manifested into material actions that disarticulated structural networks, and nullified complex identities in a euphoric moment of collective effervescence. I will also explore the forces that made this moment so short-lived, and the manner in which it devolved into political consolidations of Albanian and Turkish identities, mutually exclusive and antagonistic to one another.

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The Revolution, Ideology and Social Action

Many Albanians participated in the 1908 Young Turk Revolution, both as members of militant bands that carried out the revolution in the Balkans, as well as in the upper echelons of its political and intellectual leadership. For instance, Ibrahim Temo, known to Albanians as Ibrahim Starova, was a founder of the revolutionary political organization the Committe of Union and Progress (Osmanlı İttihad ve Terakki Cemiyeti), founded in 1899. Temo was also a member of the Society for the Printing of Albanian Writings, as well as a founder and vice-president of the Albanian nationalist Bashkimi (Union) society. Another Albanian figure key to both the Albanian national movement and the Young Turk Revolution was Ismail Kemal. Ismail Kemal Bey, as he was known in Ottoman circles, is one of the most intriguing figures in late Ottoman history, for the way in which he negotiated his active political role in both Albanian and Ottoman political movements and for the detailed memoir, written in English, that depicted this period in Ottoman history with a remarkable insight.

Ismail Kemal was born in Vlorë, on the southeast Albanian littoral. Many of the Vloras were beys and pashas connected to the Empire, while others were involved in a series of anti-Ottoman insurrections. For instance Ismail Kemal’s grandfather was beheaded for leading a revolt in 1820 and his entire family was sent into exile, to Salonika, because his father and uncles had organized a revolt against tanzimât taxation and conscription reforms. Nevertheless, Ismail Kemal was raised like many other

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Ottoman Muslim elites. He learned Turkish in primary school and attended the Greek Zossimea gymnasium in Janina, as their first Muslim pupil. Ismail Kemal moved to Istanbul after his secondary education and quickly embarked upon a career in the Ottoman civil service. At the age of twenty-two he was appointed by, then Governor of the Danube, Midhat Pasha to assist him in governing his sancaks.

Quickly becoming one of Midhat Pasha’s closest confidants Ismail Kemal assisted him in his efforts to propagate liberalism and constitutionalism in the Empire. Ismail Kemal was indispensible in gaining international support for Midhat Pasha’s reform efforts, traveling to England and France in 1865 to learn about local democracy, administration and public finance. When Midhat Pasha and the liberal faction dethroned Abülaziz in 1876, Ismail Kemal and his peers attempted to initiate a new constitutional, liberal Ottoman state. However the malleable Murad Vs alleged mental illness lead to the succession of his brother Abdülhamid II only ninety-three days later. Abdülhamid II had appointed Midhat Pasha Grand Vizier, but he was soon after exiled along with Ismail Kemal in February 1877. Ismail Kemal attributed the failure of liberalism in the Empire to the European powers’ reticence when it came to publicly and effectively supporting Midhat Pasha and his liberal faction, he wrote,

*The Liberals of Western Europe seem to me like heirs to great fortunes, who think only of enjoying the wealth acquired by the efforts and the sacrifices of their ancestors. In these countries Liberalism is only the label of a party of a means of attain power… [Midhat Pasha] possessed the supreme courage of making known his Liberalism at the moment when any others, having arrived at the height of their ambitions and power, would rather for their own preservation have shown a certain reserve.*

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182 Ibid., 37.
183 Ibid., 38.
After two decades of service interspersed with exile, Ismail Kemal finally fled the Empire in 1900 to work full-time for both the Albanian national cause and Ottoman constitutionalism. In 1901 Abdülhamid II had requested that Ismail Kemal take a new post, Kemal wrote, “I, of course declined this curious offer, replying that His Majesty knew perfectly well why I had refused further service in the Empire, and that for the same reasons I could not accept the proffered task and continue to live on Turkish money as recompense for purely imaginative services…” Abdülhamid II subsequently tried him for high treason, ordered his execution, and revoked his ranks and property.

The role of Ismail Kemal as a figure in Ottoman and Albanian history is fundamental. As an Ottoman civil servant, a European intellectual, a liberal reformist, and an Albanian nationalist, Ismail Kemal personifies the webs of overlapping political loyalties that were shared by Albanians and Ottoman Turks. His experience is key to understanding the events of the first decade of the twentieth century in the Ottoman Empire, particularly the coalescence of Albanian and Turkish political wills to bring down the regime of Abdülhamid II and institute constitutional reform. Additionally, Ismail Kemal’s final ideological break with the Ottoman state, dominated at the time by the CUP, coincides with that of the Albanian national movement’s final rejection of the Empire. Thus, Ismail Kemal’s memoir is a crucial source, the first hand account one of the most politically active Ottoman-Albanians of this period.

The Ottoman revolutionary period was set in motion with the 1902 Congress of Ottoman Opposition Parties in Paris. In preparation for the congress, one of its leaders Prince Sabaheddin and his brother Prince Lutfullah personally recruited high-ranking Ottomans with liberal sympathies, including Ismail Kemal. In a private meeting at Ismail

185 Ibid., 303.
Kemal’s residence in Brussels, Prince Lutfullah requested his presence at the conference. Ismail Kemal expressed his interest in the congress but outlined two conditions for his attendance,

Namely, that all the ethnical elements in Turkey should be represented, so that the desiderata of all the people of the Empire might be formulated. It was essential, in my opinion, to show that those who were against Abdülhamid were acting simply and solely with a view to creating a national Government that should be equally impartial and beneficent to all the peoples of the Empire. My second condition was that the Powers signatory of the Treaties of Paris and Berlin should know that in the eyes of the Ottoman people they had pledged their honor concerning the adoption of reforms for the good of the Empire. If the aid of Europe were invoked, the congress might be of some value, but if it stopped at the mere expression of opinions and nothing more was done, I could see no use in it.\(^{186}\)

Lutfullah accepted both of Ismail Kemal’s conditions, and the conference was held on February 4\(^{th}\) in Prince Sabaheddin’s personal residence in Paris. Ismail Kemal was pleased that forty delegates “representing all the races of the Turkish Empire” attended the meeting.\(^{187}\) However, his latter condition proved to engender a significant rift in the congress, creating two strongly opposed ideological factions. A major debate precipitated between the “Turkist” and “anti-interventionist” faction, later the CUP, lead by Ahmed Rıza and Ibrahim Temo and the Armenian revolutionaries, the Dashnaktsutiun.\(^{188}\) The debate centered on Ahmed Rıza’s proposed, “organization of a central and centralizing power at Constantinople in the interests of the purely Turkish element.”\(^{189}\) On the other hand, the Dashnaktsutiun proposed, “the organization of local government independent of the central administration, and based solely upon foreign protection in accordance with Article 61 of the Treaty of Berlin.”\(^{190}\)

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\(^{186}\) Ibid., 306.
\(^{187}\) Ibid., 307.
\(^{188}\) Hanioğlu, The Young Turks in Opposition, 88-90; M. Şükrü Hanioğlu, Preparation for a Revolution: The Young Turks, 1902-1908 (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2001), 84.
\(^{190}\) Ibid.
While neither a strong central government, based on Ahmet Rıza’s proposal, nor the Armenian appeal for autonomy garnered support from the “majority” of the assembly, a more serious conflict arose from this debate. This conflict centered on accepting European intervention to help remove Abdülhamid II. Prince Sabaheddin, Ismail Kemal and the “majority” of the conference advocated for “an appeal to the Powers for a regime consonant with the principles of the constitution to embrace all the ethnical elements of Turkey, guaranteeing them justice and liberty and the maintenance of their national rights.”

On the contrary, Ahmed Rıza and Ibrahım Temo strongly opposed any form of invited European involvement. Ahmed Rıza gave a speech to the assembly,

> I categorically refuse intervention by the foreigners, under any title whatever, in the domestic affairs of our fatherland. Because: Every nation is free to conduct its domestic affairs in conformance to its own will. This right is recognized all around the world and by all nations. Even the Serbians and Bulgarians are rejecting foreign intervention...Each time foreign powers have intervened in our domestic affairs they have been contemplating their own interests...to demand European intervention means to present a mandate to Europe and to confess our inability and impotence...Patriotism and national dignity charge us to act in this way.

Disagreement regarding the issue of European intervention caused a permanent rift in the Ottoman opposition movement that persisted in Ottoman politics, even after the 1908 Revolution. This split is absolutely fundamental to understanding the subsequent, irreconcilable political conflicts that would occur within the Ottoman opposition, particularly between Albanians and CUP. Ahmed Rıza and the CUP, though they represented a minority in the 1902 Congress, would eventually gain dominance not only in implementing the revolution, but also in arrogating absolute power in the post-revolutionary government. As Ismail Kemal notes,

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191 Ibid., 308.
192 Hanioğlu, The Young Turks in Opposition, 188-99.
193 Ibid., 190.
194 Ibid., 197.
The minority, consisting of those who later led the revolutionary movement in Turkey opposed this resolution and had a counter-resolution inserted in the final *procès-verbal*. This profession of faith of the Young Turks it seems to me, was the basis of the programme carried out later on by the Committee of Union and Progress…The lack of agreement among Turkish reformers which had become manifest during the Paris Congress prevented any possibility of united political action likely to give reason to hope for a change in Turkish affairs.  

Ismail Kemal identified what he considered a problematic break in the Ottoman opposition movement that was, as far as he was concerned, the result of the CUP’s aversion to the specified allocation of rights to minority groups. For Ismail Kemal, Ahmet Rıza’s antipathy for European intervention and desire for a centralized state was a projection of his interest in promoting purely “Turkish interests” in the new Empire. It is important to note, that even the CUP was not in complete agreement. For instance, Temo and Rıza had major disagreements in regards to individual national rights, the status of ethnic and religious minorities, the implementation of a Latin alphabet, and most importantly the presence of the Turkish language in schools throughout the empire. While the CUP would become the incontrovertibly dominant opposition group in the Empire, for brief period after the 1902 Congress, Prince Sabaheddin and Ismail Kemal felt had acquired some agency to implement the “majority” plan to call upon Europe for assistance. Thus, Ismail Kemal orchestrated an “action that would have the effect of giving alarm and attracting the attention of Europe, by which means the Sultan would be forced to come to terms.” Indeed, in 1902 Ismail Kemal obtained both a statement of informal support from the British Embassy and the word of the Marshal of the Ottoman

196 Ibid., 314.  
army in Tripoli, Redjeb Pasha, that he would take the city of Salonika. However, due to a series of logistical blunders the plan was never enacted.

With this failure, Ismail Kemal, Prince Sabaheddin and his faction gradually lost significance as membership in the CUP swelled. In reality, the “majority” was not at all united, many of the ethnic groups that supported Prince Sabaheddin, like the Dashnaksutiun, returned to their homelands and advocated for their independent national projects. In fact, according to historian Şükrü Hanoğlu, “the only significant support came from Albanian organizations, but their support was of slight value in attracting the Great Powers, since the endorsement was by Muslim Albanians.”

Thus, Sabaheddin continued his work eventually founding the League of Private Initiative and Decentralization that espoused liberalism, the rights of ethnic and religious minorities in the Empire, particularly the Armenians, and appealed to Europe for support. However, as Hanoğlu notes, his intellectualism and involvement in high politics paled to “his opponents’ simple patriotism and eschewal of the high politics that many members of the Ottoman intelligentsia, and more important the officer corps, typically regarded with disgust, made him the perennial loser in Ottoman politics from 1902 to 1922.”

The ascendancy of the CUP truly manifested in the, follow up, 1907 Congress of Ottoman Opposition Parties, also in Paris, in which the CUP had the congress espouse a singular objective: the removal of Abdülhamid II. In order to accomplish this, a massive tactical alliance was established between all of the opposition groups, prompting euphoric feelings of solidarity, particularly among the nationalist minority groups. Many Albanian nationalists were radicalized by the Congress’ appeal to activism and began to organize

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199 Hanoğlu, The Young Turks in Opposition, 198.
200 ———, Preparation for a Revolution : The Young Turks, 1902-1908, 129.
militant bands under the auspices of well-organized, local CUP chapters. However, this great tactical alliance was merely symbolic for the CUP, as they consolidated complete power over the direction of the revolution.\textsuperscript{201}

Some Albanian intellectuals, like Ismail Kemal, saw a crisis in a massive alliance dominated by the CUP under the pretext of unity. He writes, “By union the Albanians understood a grouping of different races under the flag of the Ottoman Constitution, which would strengthen the Empire by the union of its peoples, guaranteeing to each its national existence. The Committee [of Union and Progress], on the other hand, only thought of uniting all the different races by forcing them to deny their origin…”\textsuperscript{202}

Others, like Faïk Konitza, saw violence as premature in his periodical \textit{Albania}, expressed disdain for those Albanian bands fighting Ottoman and Greek forces in Macedonia as early as 1907. He deemed these group and their supporters as belonging to the “school of assassination and massacre.”\textsuperscript{203} Much like those more conservative Young Turks who opposed the activist wing of the CUP, Konitza saw the need for Albania to be put on “the road to civilization” before it could engage in a full on revolution for autonomy.\textsuperscript{204} Both Ismail Kemal and Faïk Konitza were hostile to the CUP, and the leadership of the CUP reciprocated this hostility, seeing both men as collaborators with outside powers, with national aims that threatened the integrity of the Ottoman Empire.\textsuperscript{205}

Nonetheless, there were many nationalist Albanian members of the CUP, as well as a great deal of collaboration between independent nationalist Albanian groups and the CUP. In 1905, the CUP had established an important base in \textit{Manastir} and quickly

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{201} Ibid., 191-209.
\item \textsuperscript{202} Vlora, \textit{The Memoirs of Ismail Kemal Bey}, 366.
\item \textsuperscript{203} Skendi, \textit{The Albanian National Awakening, 1878-1912}, 181.
\item \textsuperscript{204} Ibid., 182.
\item \textsuperscript{205} Hanioğlu, \textit{Preparation for a Revolution : The Young Turks, 1902-1908}, 256.
\end{itemize}
founded branches all over Albania. Branches were formed in Resna, Ohrid, Strugë, Shkodër, Üsküb, Ferizovic (Ferizovik), Mitrovicë, and Prizren.206 In many cases official members of the CUP were also members of local Albanian nationalist committees, and in the cities of Gjirokastër and Dibër the CUP and Albanian nationalist committees thoroughly combined into one organization.207 Additionally, many Albanian Bektashis were encouraged to join the CUP, which was partial to the sect due to its distinctly “Turkic” character and its antagonistic relationship with Abdülhamid II.208

In December 1907, continued unrest in Macedonia prompted the European powers to become more concerned about “Macedonian Question,” concerning the Ottoman administration of Macedonia, restored to the Empire at the Congress of Berlin. The so-called Salisbury-Ignatiev program, which was a joint agreement between British and Russian diplomats, laid out extensive reforms to put an end to the “Eastern Question,” for good.209 The CUP utilized this renewed foreign interest in Macedonia in a massive propaganda campaign that told of imminent European intervention in Macedonia to both destroy its Muslim population and the Ottoman Empire in Europe. The CUP encouraged imminent revolution in Macedonia and violence against any government officials “known for theft and corruption.”210

Albanian involvement in this effort was indispensible to the CUP’s efforts in Macedonia. As Hanoiğlu notes, “The CUP was well aware of the fact that without the support of certain segment of the Albanian population, which made up a considerable

207 Hanoiğlu, Preparation for a Revolution : The Young Turks, 1902-1908, 256.
209 Hanoiğlu, Preparation for a Revolution : The Young Turks, 1902-1908, 235.
210 Ibid., 239.
portion of the Muslim populace in the European provinces, success was impossible.”

The CUP undertook an extensive propaganda campaign in Albania. They sent out Albanian officers who promised that the revolution would bring Albanians freedom from heavy tax burdens and protect them from Austro-Hungarian territorial advances. They appealed to Albanian Muslims with staunch anti-interventionism and were careful not to speak ill of the Sultan, dear to Muslim Albanians, and instead referred to his advisors as the progenitors of the Empire’s problems. The CUP’s promises of freedom under the constitution convinced large numbers of Albanians to mobilize for the revolution. In Resen, the Albanian mayor and other notables joined the CUP’s Resen National Battalion an armed group whose numbers reached over 1,000. By May 1908, the entire region of Chamëria, the southern most Albanian littoral, became a stronghold at the hands of Albanian CUP officers.

The CUP co-opted almost the entire network of Albanian nationalist committees, which organized militant bands and joined the CUP en masse. They sent Adjutant-Major Ahmed Niyazi to negotiate with representatives from the Albanian nationalist bands and convince them to join the CUP, in the name of Ottomanism and the constitution. He was successful and a sizeable coalition was formed, comprised of various Albanian notables and the Albanian nationalist bands, under the leadership of the CUP forces of Ohrid, Resen and Manastr. This coalition comprised mostly of Albanians, attacked the city of Resen on July 3rd, striking the first military blow of the revolution. This encouraged widespread revolt of all the armed groups under the direction of the CUP, throughout the

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211 Ibid., 255.
212 Ibid.
213 Ibid., 256.
Balkans. Indeed, Albanian participation in the revolution was so significant in the actual execution of the revolution that Ahmed Niyazi said, “most of the leaders and partisans of [the movement for] constitutional administration were [Albanian] not Turkish.”\textsuperscript{215} In Hanioğlu’s assessment this is accurate, “When one considers the officers and privates in the CUP’s so called national battalions, the local notables who supported the movement and fed those battalions…this comment appears accurate… Thus it was understandable that the Albanian considered the revolution an Albanian enterprise, and they expected special treatment.”\textsuperscript{216}

\textbf{Ferizovik}

While the Turkish leadership of the CUP had orchestrated the revolution from above, for all intents and purposes it was Albanians that executed it on the ground. The integral role that Albanians played in the 1908 Revolution, as well as their sincere hope vested in constitutionalism, for preserving their culture and nationhood was embodied in a distinct event in the town of Ferizovik. On July 5\textsuperscript{th} 1908, 3,000 Albanians gathered at the town of Ferizovik in Kosovo. They did so in response to a rumor, spread among residents, that Austria-Hungary was planning an invasion of Kosovo from their stations in Bosnia.\textsuperscript{217} Word of the gathering spread throughout Kosovo and thousands marched on Ferizovik, burning railways on their way to halt the alleged invasion.\textsuperscript{218} The Grand Vizier, troubled by the news of further unrest in the Balkans, immediately dispatched Colonel Mirliva Galib Bey to disperse the spontaneous gathering. However, unbeknownst to the Grand Vizier, Galib Bey was a member of the executive committee of the CUP’s

\textsuperscript{215} Hanioğlu, \textit{Preparation for a Revolution : The Young Turks, 1902-1908.}
\textsuperscript{216} Ibid., 258.
\textsuperscript{217} Gawrych, \textit{The Crescent and the Eagle : Ottoman Rule, Islam and the Albanians, 1874-1913, 151.}
\textsuperscript{218} Hanioğlu, \textit{Preparation for a Revolution : The Young Turks, 1902-1908, 271.}
Skopje (Üsküb) Branch. When Galib Bey arrived he called upon members of the Bashkimi and the Drita societies in Bucharest to assist him in directing the crowd to support the revolution.

At this point numbering over 20,000, the Albanian crowd, which included hundreds of armed tchetas (guerillas) from the north, occupied the local post office and sent hundreds of telegrams to other Albanian cities inviting them to join their gathering. At the behest of Albanian nationalist leaders in alliance with Galib Bey, the thousands gathered swore a besa and an oath on the Holy Quran, pledging their commitment to restoring the constitution and reinstating the parliament. 194 Albanians, including mufti, ulema, şeyhs, local notables, leaders of both CUP and Albanian national committees and tribal chiefs, signed a codified version of the besa.

On July 20th, the besa, was copied into two telegrams sent to the Grand Vizier and the şeyhülislam, demanding the restoration of the constitution. The possibility of a massive insurrection in Kosovo sent grave fear into the Abdülhamid’s administration. The Sultan received the telegram on July 21st, the next morning he sent the following telegram to Ismail Kemal, in Paris:

If time had allowed I would have sent my confidential man, Ilias Bey, to Ismail Kemal Bey to confer with him as to what had best be done at this critical juncture. Go to him immediately and beg him to give you his written opinion, which you will forward to me by telegraph.

Ismail Kemal noted that the events at Ferizovik “had produced a greater impression on [the Sultan] than the remonstrance of all the Turks or all the diplomatic representations of Europe.” In his reply, Ismail Kemal, “advised His Majesty without a moment’s delay to promulgate the Constitution, that being the only efficacious remedy

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220 Vlora, The Memoirs of Ismail Kemal Bey, 315-16.
221 Ibid.
and the only sure way of grouping around his throne all the peoples of the Empire.”

On July 24th 1908 Abdülhamid II restored the 1876 constitution and with it initiated a new era in Ottoman history. As if regenerating the spirit of the League of Prizren, these Albanians, who had gathered in tens of thousands, traversed religious, political, and class barriers in the name of a cause that they considered an embodiment of their various political desires, the implementation of the constitution. These Albanians had invested all of their political aspirations in the constitution, because for them it represented an appeal to a universal justice. All the desires for security, for the right to preserve and advance their culture, for their right to live independently of foreign occupation were embodied in this moment. In this sense they invested their entire identity in the constitution, invoking \textit{besa}, the Islamic concept of \textit{shura} or consultation, in addition to their duty to protect the \textit{vatan} and \textit{padişah}.

This mass collectivity, which had originally come together to oppose the rumored invasion of the Austro-Hungarian army in fear for their personal safety, had transformed into constitutionalist revolutionaries. The meaning of their collective social action had changed completely, from a specific concern to a universal interest. The contingency of this massive gathering had transformed the individual demonstrators into a politicized, collective body motivated by new, greater meanings – constitutionalism, patriotism, and parliamentarianism. This was a moment of collective effervescence, a transcendent collective energy that drove individuals to behave in a remarkable fashion, augmenting their interpretations, collapsing and elevating their multifarious webs of identities, meanings and motivations into a single one, the constitution. Indeed, the transcendent

\begin{footnotesize}
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  \item[222] Ibid.
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nature of this gathering was not lost on the observing Ottoman officials. They were flabbergasted when members of the crowd, whom they had assumed were ignorant commoners, were reading copies of *Drituria*.\(^{224}\)

Thus, I claim that the events at Ferizovik embody what William Sewell calls the “historical event,” the ultimate coalescence of contingency and structure. According to Sewell a historical event, “is a ramified sequence of occurrences that is recognized as notable by contemporaries, and that results in a durable transformation of structures.”\(^{225}\)

The gathering at Ferizovik was an event originally motivated by the contingent threat of a rumored invasion. However, it had transformed into an event that was motivated to disarticulate the Empire’s existing structural networks, to completely transform the Empire. Austria-Hungary’s alleged invasion was the original source of meaning for the Albanians’ social action of gathering and demonstrating at Ferizovik. However, by July 20\(^{th}\) the motivation of the 20,000 demonstrators’ social action had transformed into reinstating the constitution and the freedoms they assumed it would espouse. According to Ismail Kemal, it was the gathering at Ferizovik, more than the coordinated military efforts of the CUP, which prompted Abdülhamid to reinstitute the constitution, which permanently transformed the social and political structures of the Empire.

The exemplary historical event, for Sewell, is the taking of the Bastille during the French Revolution on July 14\(^{th}\), 1789. Ferizovik, I argue, is the Bastille of the 1908 Revolution. The Gathering at Ferizovik, like the Storming of the Bastille, embodied a major schematic transformation, a distinct shift in the semiotic meanings, interpretations and motivations of political culture. Indeed it was the gathering itself that had


\(^{225}\) Sewell, *Logics of History: Social Theory and Social Transformation*, 228.
transformed Albanians’ political consciousness. They both empowered, through their social action, these structural schemas, like constitutionalism, patriotism, and parliamentarianism, and in turn, their social actions were further empowered by these structural schemas. This was a dialectic of contingency and structure that, like the storming of the Bastille, resulted in what can be called nothing else but a massive “dislocation of structure.”

The nature of the Ottoman society and politics was astoundingly transformed by the 1908 Revolution. Ottoman high politics were permanently replaced with the political workings of the CUP, bringing mid-level military officers into the highest positions of political power. This deep societal transformation signified the end of Ottomanism, as the CUP embraced a policy of political and social centralization, the latter of which has been called “Turkification.” However, before the CUP arrogated power, the granting of the Ottoman constitution on July 24th, was met with an incredible euphoria that swept the Empire. A fascinating first hand account, published in an alumni magazine for the University of Toronto, recounts of the euphoric reaction to the news of the reinstated constitution. Particularly, this account highlights the manner in which the constitution served to dismantle divisions embedded in Ottoman society, with a particular focus on the unity of various ethnic and religious groups.

We were approaching Ismid, Another boat, similar to ours but hailing from Ismid, came to athwart our bow. They called to us, but their hoarse cries were unintelligible. As they drew quickly near, we saw a man stand up and wave something to us. We turned and rowed to him. The calls were intelligible now: ‘Long live the Sultan!’ ‘Padishahum chok yasha!’ ‘Canoni Issassi!’ ‘Hurriet!’ ‘The Constitution! Liberty!’ The excitement grew intense. The sizzling heat was forgotten. We found ourselves shouting, yelling at the tops of our voices. The boat could hardly contain us. These two boats at last touched. The suspense was unendurable. The men in the other boat seemed to have gone wild. They could hardly tell us the news. Broken sentences we caught: ‘The Constitution is granted.’ ‘We are free-free-free!’ ‘Down with the khafies, the spies, down with Izzet and the other tyrannous pashas.’ ‘Long live the Sultan!’ Enthusiasm knew no bounds.

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226 Ibid., 250.
We cheered and yelled until we could yell no more. Perspiration streamed from us. One of our crew went into a hysterical fit, another was weeping aloud. A man handed me a paper, the Puzantion, a Constantinople Armenian daily. In enormous headlines—the first I had seen in a Turkish paper—appeared the words: ‘Liberty! Fraternity! Equality! Justice!’…All subjects of the Ottoman Empire, Mohammedan, Christian, Jew, to whatsoever religion or nationality they adhered, all were to be called Osmanlis. They were all equal before the law.

We had to rub our eyes to believe that we saw what we were reading. Loud, boisterous enthusiasm yielded every now and then to dumb, blank astonishment…from the direction of the market place, off in the distance, came a dull roar. We ran, as many of us had never run before. We found others running in the same direction, old men and young men, women, children, Jew and Gentile, Christian and Moslem, hurrying jostling each other in mad Endeavour. Yet there was a complete absence of all violence…. A Turkish soldier stopped to help along an old woman. It was plain to see that she was an Armenian, a Christian, a Giaour! Wonder of Wonders! Was the world coming to an end? Venerable Turks fell on the shoulders of Armenians, of Greeks. A Greek beside me was hugging an Armenian. A Turk saw me. He took me in his arms and pressing convulsively kissed me on my forehead…Speeches were made—by an Armenian, a Greek, a Jew, a Turkish Mollah---all repetitions of the one great truth. Cheers rent the air. Strangers clasped strangers, kissed them and wept over them. A new sentiment was born to Turkey. Hope, hope for oneself, for the future, and the enthusiasm that came with it could not be tamed.227

The euphoria that pervaded the Empire surrounding July 24th was palpable, a seemingly ubiquitous emotional eruption had occurred simultaneously with a socio-political awakening. For Ottoman subjects, regardless of their religion, ethnic identity, or class, the constitution had redeemed them, everything had changed, and they celebrated the ushering in of a totally new reality. As in Ferizovik, crowds throughout the empire experienced collective effervescence. Motivated by “a common passion,” they transcended their personal and socio-structural limitations, embracing new political, social, and cultural meanings.228 They espoused constitutionalism, liberty and equality; they sought out their neighbors of different creeds and ethnicities and enacted public displays of solidarity. Indeed, as Chambers said, there was a new pervasive “sentiment” in the Ottoman Empire.

In the Balkans, while militant bands rejoiced in the streets and publically handed their arms to the CUP, scores of political exiles returned to the Balkans, including Ismail

227 Robert Chambers, "Liberty and the Ottoman," The University Monthly 1909, 9-11.
228 Durkheim, The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life., 240; Sewell, Logics of History: Social Theory and Social Transformation, 149.
Kemal and Ibrahim Temo. For the first time, a legally operating Albanian press appeared in Albanian-speaking territories, newspapers like *Korça, Lidhja Orthodhokse* (Orthodox Union), *Tomorri, Bashkimi i Kombit* (Union of the Nation), and *Bashkimi* were published in cities across Albania. Around a dozen other Albanian language publications were published in Istanbul, Salonika and Cairo.\textsuperscript{229} By 1909, sixty-six Albanian national clubs were formed to advance the cultural and political position of Albanians in the Empire. These clubs had over 10,000 members in twenty cities, including *Manastir, Salonika, Janina, Korçë, Elbasan, Gjirokastër, Berat, Vlorë, Filat, Starovë, Üsküb* and Istanbul.\textsuperscript{230}

There was a palpable feeling among Albanians that the constitution was a crucial first step in their movement; that it guaranteed their right to progress their community under the auspices of a new Ottoman system. For instance in August 1908, just a few weeks after the reinstatement of the constitution, a group of Albanian CUP members in the city of *Vlorë*, founded The National League for the Promotion of Albanian Schools. They dedicated themselves to two programs, “…the consolidation of the Ottoman national state of the Young Turks and on the separatist and autonomous tendencies of the Albanian patriots and the League.”\textsuperscript{231} Indeed, in just ten months, fifty-nine Albanian-language schools were founded, with 3,748 pupils.\textsuperscript{232} For Albanian members of the CUP, liberty and equality meant the right to autonomous political organization and cultural independence. They shared the euphoria of their Ottoman compatriots in regards to the constitution, but for the Albanians, there was a lot of work to be done. Those that had

\textsuperscript{230} Stavrianos, *The Balkans since 1453*, 508.
\textsuperscript{232} Stavrianos, *The Balkans since 1453*, 508.
fought valiantly in the revolution had assumed that the new constitutional regime would support their political and cultural endeavors, this optimism however, was short-lived.

In Macedonia, which was described in the weeks following the revolution as “a utopia,” Enver Pasha made a speech to the gathered bands and shouted, “Henceforth, there are no Bulgarians, Greeks, Roumans, Jews or Mussulmans; under the same blue sky we are all equal, we glory in being Ottomans.”233 Those that Enver Pasha addressed, the thousands of Albanian nationalist bands, leftist Macedonian militants, Kurtzo-Vlach bands,234 and others that fought in the revolution, had missed the ominous implication of his statement. Enver Pasha and the CUP did not consider Ottoman identity an amalgamated patchwork of religious, ethnic, and cultural identities. Rather, Ottoman identity, which for the CUP meant Ottoman-Turkish identity, subsumed any of the identities of those who participated in the revolution.

Indeed, the CUP had consciously manipulated many non-Turkish groups into participating in the revolution. They pledged to uphold Ottomanism and insisted that the constitution would ensure their freedom. Thus, Albanians, who had spilt more blood for the 1908 Revolution than any other group in the Empire, had done so under the false pretense, propagated by the CUP, that the freedom guaranteed by the constitution would include the cultural and political freedom of nations. When the revolution succeeded, it is of no wonder that Albanians were anxious to commence in cultivating Albanian cultural and political life, and it is also of no wonder that they were bitterly disappointed when the CUP thwarted those efforts. The CUP felt that they earned the right to determine the direction of the new Ottoman society. Thus, it was the CUP that arrogated the power to

234 Hanioğlu, Preparation for a Revolution : The Young Turks, 1902-1908.
determine the meaning of the revolution and the meaning of a new Ottomanism. For the CUP, equality meant homogeneity, fraternity was a brotherhood of young ambitious officers, and liberty was freedom from the old regime and European encroachment, which could only be ensured by a strong, powerful CUP program. Ottomanism, for the CUP, meant a modern, rational, centralized state with one language and one nation.

**The CUP and the End of Faith in Ottomanism**

The CUP used Ottomanism as a general pretext to implement pragmatic policies of power consolidation and centralization, but the character of their brand of Ottomanism was distinct in its emphasis on Turkification and centralization. In the aftermath of the revolution, Albanian nationalists who were convinced had earned a special place in the new constitutional Empire, for all of their work in the revolution, came into direct and fierce conflict with the CUP agenda. Indeed, the CUP’s “Turkification” policies, which emphasized cultural and linguistic homogeneity clashed directly with the aspirations of Albanian political leaders to cultivate their language and culture under a new free constitutional state.

It was at this point, after the revolution, when the formerly collaborative Albanian and Turkish political leaders conflicted directly with one another in regards to the direction of the Empire. Both the CUP and Albanian nationalists wanted to cultivate strong nations, however the CUP asserted that the Ottoman Empire as a whole would have to centralize politically and culturally, in a sense transforming the Ottoman Empire into a nation-state, a Turkish nation. On the other hand Albanians wanted to cultivate their own nation under a decentralized Ottoman Empire. Thus, it was the very fact that the CUP and Albanian nationalists agreed on what made a nation, which made their parallel nationalist desires irreconcilable. From very early on, the CUP alienated the
Albanian political and military groups that they had used to win their revolution. Their policy toward the independence of Bulgaria and the annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina, the laws they enacted to brutally suppress bands, and their language policy permanently alienated Albanians from the Ottoman State. Additionally, it is essential to understand all three of these policy approaches as, not only expressions of the CUP’s insistence on their total power, but also as indicators of their nationalist ideological bent.

The first crisis that struck the CUP government occurred in October 1908. On October 5th the autonomous province of Bulgaria, declared as such by the Treaties of San Stefano and Berlin in 1878, declared its total independence from the Empire. The next day Austria-Hungary announced its annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina.235 Both of these dealings directly violated the terms of the 1878 Berlin Treaty. Oddly, the reaction of the CUP government to a foreign power violating an internationally recognized treaty and absconding with a sizeable portion of their territory was anything but severe. They half-heartedly encouraged a boycott of Austro-Hungarian goods, but there was an overall lack of palpable outrage. Albanians, on the other hand, were outraged. Bolstered by an extant anti-Austrian sentiment, Albanians understood the annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina as a potential threat to their territorial integrity.236 Ismail Kemal, who was campaigning as a candidate in the election of the new parliament at the time, wrote,

I was puzzled to know what would be the attitude of the officers of the Turkish Army representing the Committee of Union and Progress in face of these serious events. The country, greatly shaken, manifested frank indignation against Austria, which it showed by entirely boycotting that country commercially. But the representatives of the Committee did no more than announce that there was nothing extraordinary in these events…the committee was not at all disposed to offer any resistance in the matter…Their object was to ensure the triple advantage of obtaining popularity for themselves throughout the country, discrediting the former Statesmen, of whom they wanted to

get rid at all costs, and using this political liquidation as a means of ridding the country of foreign influence, so as to be able to apply their policy of racial unification with the utmost vigor.\textsuperscript{237}

For Ismail Kemal, and many other Albanians, the CUP’s reaction to this massive loss of territory was dubious. The CUP, according to Ismail Kemal, found an opportunity in the annexation crisis to truncate portions of the Empire that were historically unruly, disloyal and solidly attached to the influence of foreign powers. For Albanians and other groups in the empire this loss of territory was seen as a significant blow to the diversity of the Empire, giving the CUP\textit{ catre blanche} to homogenize and centralize their power in the remaining territories. Additionally, for Albanians, there was a symbolic importance attached to Bosnia’s annexation, in that the events at Ferizovik were motivated by a fear of a rumored Austria-Hungarian territorial advancement. This became a real threat to Albanians by October 1908. The loss of Bosnia and Bulgaria reignited Albanian fears regarding their territorial integrity, reignited memories of both Ferizovik and the Treaty of San Stefano.

Between 1908 and 1909 the CUP had solidified its power in the new Ottoman state and its relationship with Albanian political leaders worsened. This culminated in a law that the CUP passed in November 1909, which was received as a direct attack on the political and cultural rights of Albanians. This “Law on Associations” or “Law on the Bands” required a six-month prison sentence for anyone that carried or kept arms, a ten-year sentence for members of bands, death to any leaders or organizers of bands, and in the latter two cases the individual’s entire family would be subject to punishment and his

\textsuperscript{237} Vlora, \textit{The Memoirs of Ismail Kemal Bey}, 318-19.
property confiscated.\(^{238}\) Ismail Kemal, who was a member of parliament when this proposal was passed, wrote,

> It seemed to me a singularly retrograde law in a country which had joined the concert of the European Powers and was supposed to be modeling its customs upon those of liberal countries. The drastic law upon the bands was even more barbarous because it enacted that if any one member of a family joined these bands, the whole family should be exiled and their goods confiscated; so that a whole village might be penalized for the act of one member of the community. The main object of the Committee in making this law was simply to get the entire power into their hands in order to act with severity against the different nations, especially Albanians.\(^{239}\)

His insight is important, because for Albanians, this law both disempowered the very political organizations that had militarized for the revolution, and attacked certain foundational institutions of Albanian society. For instance, when Ismail Kemal wrote that entire villages could be punished, he was not exaggerating. The tribal system that existed throughout northern Albania, and had existed for centuries before Ottoman rule, resembled these so-called bands, in the sense that the almost every male tribesman carried a rifle, and often entire villages belonged to one family. Thus, since the north was a particularly politically militant area, the CUP could target huge portions of the Albanian population with lengthy prison sentences, property confiscations and even direct violence. Albanians had thus interpreted the measure as a justification for CUP brutality and a direct attack on their political agency, their cultural identity and social institutions. Indeed, for many Albanians the CUP was, by no means, simply ensuring security or even asserting its new political power, many of its measures constituted direct attacks on Albanian society.


Since the CUP dominated political life in the Empire, both in Istanbul and even, for the most part, at the local level, Albanians began to permanently reassess their relationship to the Ottoman state. As Ismail Kemal wrote,

The Young Turks [CUP] who saw in the Albanians merely a Mussulman people having no political ideal beyond a desire to avoid the payment of taxes, were convinced that by management and the exertion of pressure they would become docile and common ottomans, and would serve as an example for the other nationalities...On the contrary, the aggressive policy of the Young Turks was the leaven that caused their national sentiments to revive and flourish afresh.  

Albanians, particularly those that had joined the CUP’s ranks during the revolution, felt betrayed. The CUP was astute in manipulating Albanian nationalist bands, as discussed above. They sent Albanian-speaking representatives to talk of Ottomanism, liberty, and equality to these bands, all the while maintaining their aspirations of centralization and “Turkification.” Admittedly, it is important to approach retrospective narratives, like that of Ismail Kemal’s memoir, with critical distance, as he had a particular aversion to the CUP. However, by most accounts the CUP had indeed betrayed the type of Ottomanism that they purported to espouse during the revolution. It was not only Albanians that were let down, but also Armenians, Arabs, Greeks, conservative Muslims, Liberals and many others.

There is another important point in the passage above. That is, Albanians were considered especially vital to the CUP’s centralization and “Turkification” program, as they were predominantly Muslim. For the CUP, Albanian autonomy would be considered an unacceptable failure of centralization, as Albania was one of the last strongholds of the Ottoman Empire in Europe. However it may have been these very policies that encouraged full-fledged Albanian irredentism. The CUP leadership publicized the policies against bands as, primarily, a matter of national safety, and secondarily as a

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240 Ibid., 367.
policy of centralization required to transform the Empire into a modern state. The CUP language policies, on the other hand, could be described as nothing but an effort to culturally and politically disenfranchise Albanians in an effort to culturally homogenize the Empire.

It was the on the issue of language in particular, about which Albanians and the CUP were absolutely irreconcilable. Albanian nationalists had always made language a central issue. In every document analyzed in the last section, cultivating the Albanian language was considered the primary means for the Albanian nation to obtain political and cultural agency. The CUP in a very similar sense could only envision a political and cultural centralization of their power in the Ottoman state by adopting an inexorable policy in regards to the Ottoman language. This policy, ironically, was undoubtedly formulated in light of linguistic studies written by Sami Frashëri and his peers in the intellectual journals and newspapers circulating before the revolution.

Additionally, many of the leaders of the CUP were Muslims from the Balkans, where, as minorities, their religion had always been an indicator of their identity as “Turks” to their Christian counter-parts. The “Turkishness” (Türklük) of their identity had been imposed on them at the hands of external forces, and they and their families had always been associated intrinsically with the Ottoman state. In this sense, it is not of much wonder that the CUP had an interest in augmenting the Turkic identity of the Empire. Yusuf Akçura was a Tatar born in the Russian Empire and yet he identified himself as a Muslim, an Ottoman and a Turk. For Muslim minorities on the borders of the Empire, “Turkishness” was imposed on them, and yet many readily identified with Turks

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242 Ibid., 300.
and the Ottoman Empire. In the setting of the Balkans or Caucuses, where non-Muslims and non-Turks dominated demographically, these identities were blurred into one, that of “Turk.” Thus, the CUP had developed notions of early Pan-Turkism (tevhid-i etrâk) that manifested in a policy of cultural centralization or “Turkification” in the Empire.

Monolithic linguistic unity was an essential component of nationalism and, thus, the CUP’s post-revolutionary Turkism, in which they promoted the use of Ottoman-Turkish in every official capacity, including education. Even in its most liberal public statements the CUP was unflinching in the uncompromised centrality of the Ottoman-Turkish language:

The Ottoman nation is a body created by the incorporation of various peoples such as Turks, Arabs, Albanians, Kurds, Armenians, Greeks, Bulgarians, and Jews…who possess different religions and nationalities. Although these peoples have different languages of their own their official language is the same. It is the Ottoman language.

While this rhetoric connotes a deference to Ottomanism, if still imbued with the CUP’s centralizing ambitions. Other statements leave no doubt about the Turkism imbedded in the CUP’s language policy, which recalls Sami Frashëri’s arguments for augmenting the Turkish elements of the Ottoman language and eliminating those non-Turkish elements from it.

Our language is Turkish. Because under the banner of evolution there existed various elements, they have gradually gained the title of Ottoman. It is necessary that domination in language belong to the Turk, just as national domination belongs to the Turks, for the sake of union and advancement. Thus the Ottoman elements must unite linguistically and understand that they will render services to the fatherland only through this linguistic union.

In terms of their relationship with Albanian nationalists, who were similarly obstinate in asserting their linguistic identity, the CUP promulgated a number of severe

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244 Karpat, The Politicization of Islam : Reconstructing Identity, State, Faith, and Community in the Late Ottoman State, 356.
245 Akçura, Three Kinds of Policy (Üç Tarz-I Siyaset).
246 Kushner, The Rise of Turkish Nationalism, 1876-1908, 56-70.
247 Hanioğlu, Preparation for a Revolution : The Young Turks, 1902-1908, 301.
248 Ibid., 491.
policies to establish the cultural dominance of the Ottoman-Turkish language. In March 1910, the CUP encouraged the șehîlislam to issue a fetva banning the use of the Latin alphabet in printing the Albanian language. Furthermore, all publications using Latin script were banned and declared illegal.\textsuperscript{249}While not as severe, this action struck an eerie resemblance, for Albanians, to Abdülhamid II’s use of the șehîlislam to issue a fetva preventing printing in the Albanian language all together, and was received with similar indignation. In that same year, Albanian-language schools in central and southern Albania were closed \textit{en masse}. It is difficult to appraise these measures as merely pragmatic tools of strengthening the Empire. These policies were expressions of the CUP’s stronghold of political and military power and considered direct attacks on Albanians, their culture, and their institutions.

The CUP’s repression of the Albanian language, Albanian political and intellectual organizations, and Albanian cultural institutions was indicative of the nationalist, homogenizing nature of their centralization program. Still, the preemptory nature of this repression also pointed to the CUP’s insecurity in regards to the Albanian political situation. As Ismail Kemal observed,

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The Committee now devoted all their efforts to consolidating power, their directing policy being to set aside any opposing elements either from persons or from nations that might seek to resist or check their influence, as also to bring under their entire control the financial and economical administration of the country. The ethnical element which to them seemed the strongest and most dangerous was the Albanian People…nothing was neglected that could foment trouble, and all kinds of repressive measures were resorted to with the sole aim of crushing what was believed to be the head of the Nationalist Medusa.\textsuperscript{250}
\end{quote}

Nevertheless, in many ways the Albanian national movement and the CUP wanted the same things, which is not surprising as both movements developed out of very


\textsuperscript{250} Vlora, \textit{The Memoirs of Ismail Kemal Bey}, 350.
similar circumstantial and ideological foundations. In reality, both movements wanted the ability to have interpretive authority over the meaning of Ottomanism. The CUP had not only gained that authority politically and militarily in the revolution, but also had an established association between their identity as Turks and the Ottoman state. On the other hand, Albanians wanted a modernized version of the pre-tanzimat Ottoman governing ideology. This was, perhaps unrealistically, a decentralized Ottomanism that embraced the Empire’s status as a state that governed many distinct nations and allowed those nations political and cultural autonomy.

Still, the CUP’s repressive tactics did betray both the people that had spilt blood enacting the revolution and the ideas that the revolution had purported to espouse. However before completely indicting the CUP as destroying Ottomanism and the “pure” ideas of the revolution, it is important to recognize the precarious position of any new revolutionary government. Without exonerating the CUP, it is possible to see their insistence on cultural and political centralization as tactically necessary, in light of the instability precipitated by widespread irredentism encouraged by foreign powers. Many of these same concerns had motivated Albanian nationalists, who internalized the international political situation and acted out of concern for their territorial, socio-political, and cultural integrity. Thus, it was the very fact that Turkish and Albanian nationalists existed in the same historical context, that they developed very similar nationalist ideologies, which eventually came to exclude one another.

The key differentiation, however, lies in each respective group’s vision for the future of the Empire. Even in some of their most radical views, Albanian nationalists seemed to always allow for the possibility of a connection to the Ottoman Empire.
Indeed, after 1908, Albanians were so excited by the revolution that they wanted mere administrative autonomy within the Ottoman imperial system. It was the CUP’s conception that cultural centralization, in the form of “Turkification,” was instrumental to their political centralization of power that destroyed the Albanians’ understanding of Ottomanism. This conception, which understood the cultural, particularly the ethno-linguistic, composition of a society as integral to its political power, can be described as nothing else but nationalist.

It is important to recognize that there was by no means a consensus among Turks, or Ottomans for that matter, as to the CUP’s power or its program of centralization. The so-called Liberal Union, of which Ismail Kemal and Prince Sabaheddin were leaders, had opposed many of the CUP’s policies. When a coup d’état was staged in April 1909, briefly removing the CUP from power, it was Ismail Kemal who briefly took on a leadership role. However, these acts of opposition only encouraged the CUP’s abrogation of power. By the end of 1909 the CUP had not only reclaimed back power, but also won a substantial majority in the parliament, had 360 active branches throughout the Empire, over 800,000 members and a stronghold over the Ottoman bureaucratic structure.

What the CUP had most likely not expected, was the exponential intensity with which Albanians would oppose their rule, in spite of increasingly brutal military repressions. By the beginning of 1911, sporadic revolts had turned into widespread insurrections throughout Albania. When Italy had invaded Libya in September 1911, Albanian militant groups saw an opportunity to augment their effort. Additionally, the

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252 Ibid., 288.
Liberal Union and parties like Hürriyet ve İtilâf Fırkasi (Party of Freedom and Accord), which advocated for decentralization and concessions to Albanians, floundered in the 1912 elections. Finally, the First Balkan War broke out in October 1912, and the fact that a military conglomeration of Bulgarians, Serbs, Montenegrins, and Greeks began to attack Ottoman territory added an urgency that affirmed, for Albanians, there was no going back to the status quo.²⁵³

The direction of the new policy of the Ottoman Empire was formally sealed…these gloomy previsions, and the general discontent caused by the Tripolitan war, forced Albania to a general rising. The savage obstinacy of the Young Turks [CUP] in their attempt to absorb the nationalities had made our resistance inevitable and compelled us to fight for our national life. Challenged and attacked as we were in our existence as a people, though we felt how much thus struggle would be contrary to our unabated desire to stand by the Empire, had we not above all things a right to work out our own salvation? The general rising and the triumphal entry of the chiefs of all the tribes into Uskub put an end to the extravagant and criminal power of the Young Turks [CUP] and brought about the dissolution of the Chamber…I realized that the time had arrived for us Albanians to take vigorous measures for our own salvation.²⁵⁴

Ismail Kemal sent telegrams to leaders all over Albania, calling on them to attend an urgent conference. Eighty-three Albanians, Muslim and Christian, Gheg and Tosk, convened a conference in the town of Vlorë on November 15th. At the conference, Ismail Kemal made a basic and pragmatic argument for independence, informing the delegates that Serbian armies had already taken Albanian cities in the northeast. He told the delegates that despite their long-standing loyalty to the Ottoman Empire, only the formation of an independent Albanian state could safeguard their territorial integrity. On November 28th 1912, Ismail Kemal stood on the balcony of his family home in Vlorë and proclaimed Albania’s independence using the standard of Skanderbeg, the folkloric hero of Albania, as the new countries flag (See Appendix D.1). The text of the proclamation of independence was as follows,

In Vlora, on the 15th/28th of November 1328/1912.

Following the speech made by the President, Ismail Kemal Bey, in which he spoke of the great perils facing Albania today, the delegates have all decided unanimously that Albania, as of today, should be on her own, free and independent.\textsuperscript{255}

Furthermore, Ismail Kemal, as the elected president of the provisional government, sent telegrams to each European Power and the Sublime Porte, like this one, sent to the British consulate:

\begin{quote}
The National Assembly, consisting of delegates from all parts of Albania, without distinction of religion, who have today met in the town of Valona [Vlorë], have proclaimed the political independence of Albania and constituted a Provisional Government entrusted with the task of defending the rights of the Albanian people, menaced with extermination by the Serbian Armies, and of freeing the national soil invaded by foreign foes. In bringing these facts to the knowledge of Your Excellency, I have the honor to ask the Government of His Britannic Majesty to recognize this change in the political life of the Albanian nation.

The Albanians, who have entered into the family of the peoples of Eastern Europe, of whom they flatter themselves that they are the eldest, are pursuing one only aim, to live in peace with all the Balkan States and become an element of equilibrium. They are convinced that the Government of His Majesty, as well as the whole civilized world, will accord them a benevolent welcome by protecting them against all attacks on their national existence and against any dismemberment of their territory.\textsuperscript{256}

This telegram documents Ismail Kemal’s diplomatic dexterity, exploiting the European powers’ concerns in regards to the recent mass militarization of the Balkans. First, he was sure to demonstrate, immediately, the secular nature of the new government, precluding the possibility of European powers rejecting his appeal under the guise of concern for Albanian Christians. He subsequently refers to the European concept of national rights urging the powers to recognize “the Rights of the Albanian people.” Most importantly, he writes of the issue of the balance of power in the Balkans. By referring to Serbian military avarice, Ismail Kemal draws upon Britain’s anxiety in regards to the expansion of Russian influence in the region, which had already proved significant. Ismail Kemal offered Albania as a stabilizing force against Pan-Slavism, in which he welcomes Britain to vest political interest.


\textsuperscript{256} \textemdash, \textit{The Memoirs of Ismail Kemal Bey}, 372.
At the behest of Ismail Kemal, British foreign secretary Sir Edward Grey initiated a conference between Britain, France, Germany, Austria-Hungary, Russia, and Italy on December 17th 1912. The Conference of London met fifty-four times, debating both Albania’s potential administrative relationship with the Ottoman Empire, as well as its territorial boundaries. On July 29th 1913, a formal decision was made. Albania was to lose a substantial part of its territory, particularly Kosovo, to Serbia, Montenegro and Greece, but it would be an independent state.

However, Albania’s independence was only formal. In fact, while independent of the Ottoman Empire, Albania was politically and administratively dependent on the powers of Europe. It was decided that Albania would become a hereditary monarchy based on primogeniture and the Powers designated the king, a common pattern in the Balkans by this point. Their choice, a German royal called Prince Wilhelm of Wied, proved a disastrous one as Albanians, particularly Muslims, rebelled against his reign. Additionally, the Conference of London declared that, “The control of the civil administration and finances of Albania is to be given over to an International Commission composed of the delegates of the six Powers and one delegate from Albania.”

Thus, even in its new state of independence, Albania’s political destiny was still managed by outsiders. Ismail Kemal’s enthusiastic reliance on Europe to determine Albania’s future proved, in the end, to prolong Albania’s frustrated national aspirations. With its ties to the Ottoman Empire, its former guardian, formally severed, Albania was at the whim of the European international power contest. It was with this feeling of...

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insecurity that Ismail Kemal wrote the last words of his memoir, this foreboding passage, written shortly before the First World War, reads,

The reconstitution of the Balkanic bloc and the guarantee of its independence will be one of the most efficacious factors for the peace of the East and the world. This Balkan edifice can only be consolidated with and by the consolidation of Albania, which forms its fourth supporting column.\textsuperscript{258}

\textsuperscript{258}———, \textit{The Memoirs of Ismail Kemal Bey}, 386.
Conclusion

The process in which the political motivations of Albanians and Turks came to oppose one another illuminates the some of the most significant meta-historical transformations in the late Ottoman Empire. The fundamental contingencies, broad ideological trends, and meta-historical, socio-political forces that shaped late Ottoman history shaped these political motivations, as they manifested in the Albanian national movement and the Committee of Union and Progress. The responses of Albanian and Turkish political actors to these key contingencies, like the Treaty of San Stefano, the policies of Abdülhamid II, irredentist movements in the Balkans, and the Empire’s struggle to defend its borders, fell into existing structural ideologies like nationalism and constitutionalism. However, the contextual particularity of the Ottoman Empire and the multi-vocal identities of Albanian and Turks imbued these political actors with the agency to affect the essence of these structural ideologies, as they manifested in their respective political movements. Thus, Albanian and Turkish nationalisms were multi-faceted, unique, and even paradoxical.

The manner in which Albanian and Turkish political actors resolved the contradictions, with which they were faced, brought an end to an exceptional Ottoman-Albanian synergistic coexistence. Indeed, Albanians and Turks, for a time, triumphed over ethnic, religious, and linguistic divisions, in favor of, what had become by the revolution, the open-ended concept of Ottomanism. While Ottomanism was derived from the unique model of the adaptive administration of a multi-cultural Empire, its meaning was, during this period, somewhat ambiguous. Indeed, Albanians understood the 1908 revolution as contiguous with what they conceived of as a tradition of adaptive flexibility
embodied by Ottomanism. The constitution, they hoped, would guarantee them cultural and political rights sustained by a decentralized, yet strong Empire of nations.

However, it soon came to light that the CUP strove to make Ottomanism a dynamic form of Turkism. That is, the CUP used Ottomanism as a pretext to implement cultural centralization, to “Turkify” the Ottoman population, and they were willing to use repressive tactics to do so. For Albanians, this recalled Abdülhamid’s repressive policies, which he implemented under the guise of his Pan-Islamic reconfiguration of Ottomanism, and for which Albanians had joined the revolution to oppose. It was with the CUP and its refusal to negotiate its political program that delivered Ottomanism, as Albanians understood it, its final blow. Thus, in this process of revolutionary structural transformation, one of the key battlegrounds was a contest of resurrecting traditions and reconstructing their meanings. The CUP’s political success after the revolution gave it license to determine the meaning of Ottomanism, leaving Albanian nationalists to reconfigure their political aspirations.

Thus, in understanding the commonalities and differences between Albanian and Turkish nationalism, the fluidity of nationalism as a politically institutionalized reflection of identity becomes more apparent. Indeed, nationalism has certain consistent structures, but these manifest in exceedingly diverse ways depending on a multiplicity of contingencies and the meanings that social actors apply to them. In *Imagined Communities*, Benedict Anderson portrays nationalism as a product of modernity, as an ideology that replaced religion as “enlightened” revolutions toppled ancient institutions, replacing them with secular, rational, modern states. Yet this paradigm is complicated

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when one analyzes the Ottoman Empire. The contextual distinctiveness of the Ottoman imperial framework lends itself to the unique development of nationalisms. While the manifestation of nationalism within the Ottoman framework was a structural shift in ideology from Ottomanism to ethno-linguistic nationalism, these peculiarities fashioned each nationalism uniquely, one was secular, the other religious, one irredentist, the other advocating centralization, but both ultimately excluding the other in its vision for a national future.
Appendix

Appendix A.1

A map of territories annexed to Montenegro as proposed by the Treaty of San Stefano. (Source: Hertslet, Sir Edward. The Map of Europe by Treaty: Showing the Various Political and Territorial Changes Which Have Taken Place since the General Peace of 1814. London: Butterworths 1891, p. 2674)
A map of territories annexed to Serbia as proposed by the Treaty of San Stefano. (Source: Hertslet, Sir Edward. The Map of Europe by Treaty: Showing the Various Political and Territorial Changes Which Have Taken Place since the General Peace of 1814. London: Butterworths 1891, p. 2676.)
Appendix A.3

A map of territories annexed to the autonomous Principality of Bulgaria as proposed by the Treaty of San Stefano. (Source: Hertslet, Sir Edward. The Map of Europe by Treaty: Showing the Various Political and Territorial Changes Which Have Taken Place since the General Peace of 1814. London: Butterworths 1891, p. 2680.)
Appendix B.1

Text of the Kanun as it was originally codified in the Old Albanian language. (Source: Kanuni i Lekë Dukagjinit (the Code of Lekë Dukagjini). Translated by Leonard Fox. Edited by Shtjefën Gjeçov. New York Gjonlekaj Publishing Company 1989.)
Appendix C.1

Sami’s article as it appeared in the original Ottoman Turkish, signed by the author. (Source: Sami, Şemseddin. “Lişan Ve Edebiyatımız.” In Şemseddin Sami’nin Kaleminden Dil Ve Edebiyat Meseleleri (Issues of Language and Literature from the Pen of Şemseddin Sami) by Hüseyin Doğramacıoğlu: Uluslararası Sosyal Araştırmalar Dergisi (The Journal of International Social Research) 2010.)
Appendix D.1

This is a photograph of Ismail Kemal (in the center of the balcony with a white beard and wearing a fes), announcing the declaration of Albanian independence. Notice that Ismail Kemal and most of the men on the balcony wear the Ottoman fes, while those in the crowd wear the Albanian white plis. (Source: Elsie, Robert. "Text and Documents of Albanian History. http://www.albanianhistory.net.)
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