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Negotiating Globalization: The Challenges of International Intervention Through the Eyes of Albanian Muslims, 1850-2003.

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Introduction

“Albanians have been Muslims for more than 500 years and they do not need outsiders [Arabs] to tell them what is the proper way to practice Islam.”

Rexhep Boja, Mufti of Kosova ¹

The quote above demonstrates how Kosova's most senior Sunni Muslim cleric, Rexhep Boja, sees the presence of Arab “non-governmental organizations” (NGOs) in Kosova today. Despite being the beneficiary of tens of thousands of aid dollars, much of which went to rebuild buildings of the Islamic Community of Kosova or *bashkesia islamee Kosovës* [henceforth BIK] that Boja runs, Kosova's Mufti wants “the Arabs” out. ² And it is not only the Mufti who has expressed concern. In perhaps the most clear cut example of how many Albanians feel about the growing influence of Saudi-funded organizations, the news agency Kosova press, considered to be the media arm of first the wartime Kosovar Government and now of the second largest political party of Kosova, issued in late October 2001 the following commentary:

“For more than a century civilized countries have separated religion from the state. [However], we now see attempts not only in Kosova but everywhere Albanians live to introduce religion into public schools... Supplemental courses for children have been set up by foreign Islamic organizations who hide behind assistance programs. Some radio stations now offer nightly broadcasts in Arabic, which nobody understands and which lead many to ask, are we in an Arab

country? It is time for Albanian mosques to be separated from Arab connections and for Islam to be developed on the basis of Albanian culture and customs.”³

These statements most succinctly highlight the fears many urban Kosovar Albanians have about their Islamic legacy being “hijacked” by outside forces. It is not the first time that the local population has confronted a state or state-like bodies that sought to dictate the content and method of practice within Kosova’s Islamic community. In terms of institutional ambitions and even operational methods, there is not that much which differs with what the Saudi Joint Committee for the Relief of Kosova and Chechnya (SJCRKC) wished to accomplish today from how Belgrade in the post World War II period and the Great Powers in the period of 1878 -1912 sought to politically subjugate Kosova using Islam. Tellingly, however, the socio-cultural conditions under which Saudi funded organizations operate today are potentially far different than those with which either the Ottoman Empire or the Yugoslav state had to deal. This difference is best understood in terms of the extent to which Kosovar Albanians have alternative sources of spiritual sustenance, something which the Saudi aid agencies under scrutiny today are far more successful in limiting than their totalitarian counterparts in the past.

Cultural and political variety and the right to freely adopt social practices other than the one dictated by the state has historically been essential to any free society. Much of the armed conflict taking place in Kosova since the nineteenth century has been to assure outsiders could not eradicate the spiritual diversity found in the region. It is all the more tragic that today in Kosova, after a bloody war that most Albanians thought ended Yugoslav tyranny and cultural chauvinism, much of the same ambitions of the previous

regime has been resurrected by an international community keen on diverting Kosovar Albanian energies away from formulating certain political demands. ⁴ Similarly, and perhaps more dangerous for the long-term, the distribution of humanitarian aid has been tied to an narrow set of social standards which the international community clearly wishes to impose on Kosova's population. This is most clear in the case of rural Kosovar society and how it has become dependent on Saudi "charities" for its basic needs.

As Saudi-funded "NGOs" operating within the SJCRC run orphanages and primary schools that claim to address the serious shortage of education and basic social services in rural Kosova, a sort of closed community is being created in these villages. Since most of the adult males of these regions have been murdered during the 1998-1999 war, the children and their female benefactors are left with little options in the countryside. Impoverished, much of their homes destroyed, and the utter lack of a state presence has made these communities the most vulnerable to the SJCRC and its long-term strategy. This paper presents this relationship the SJCRC has developed in rural Kosova as one of the fundamental building blocks for an institutional, material and existential hegemony that had been elusive to earlier regimes. It is suggested that because of a number of misrepresentations Western powers have of Kosova's Islamic heritage and institutional chauvinism on the part of the international community, Kosova's rural population may in the near future become the exclusive domain of Islamic Fundamentalist groups that have emerged in similarly devastated and culturally isolated regions in the Former Soviet Union and the Afghan refugee camps located in Pakistan.

The threat begins with the kind of exclusive power NGO organizations have been able to develop for themselves since the emergence of organized "humanitarianism"

developed in the post World War II period. The kind of exclusivity that “charitable” institutions can develop inside certain social settings is a phenomenon that operates in much the same assertive way that marketing agencies seek to locate and secure customers for their products and services. The kind of hegemony discussed here, however, is something far more complex than the commercial “globalization” that results in children wearing Nike shoes, smoking like the Marlboro Cowboys or adopting mannerisms depicted in Hollywood movies. What is important about the case in Kosovo (and the slums of the Middle East, Central Asia and even inside Europe) is that the perpetrators of cultural hegemony do not necessarily come from “the West,” nor are the results so clearly identifiable in terms sociologists have normally used when studying the issue.

John Esposito almost twenty years ago urged his reader to not dissociate the ability of “traditional” societies such as that found in Saudi Arabia to proselytize using the very tools of modernity assumed to be the exclusive tool of Western capitalist societies.⁵ Perhaps reflecting this assumption, the international community, dominated by Europe and the United States, has deferred the care of communities like those found in rural Kosovo, Afghanistan and Iraq to Saudi-based charitable organizations. What is behind this gesture is an assumption that Muslims are uniformly linked through the Saudi state and would prefer to be dependent on “fellow Muslim” charity or that the Saudis know what is best. For some reason, Western policymakers and bureaucrats in the international aid agencies do not see any harm in the underlying desire by these charitable groups to solidify “Islamic” traditions in these communities while they distribute food, medicine and basic education. At least this is what one hears when questioning those

responsible for overseeing the distribution of assistance in Kosovo. I suspect a more fundamental rationale may be behind this as well: Western aid agencies and those who operate them simply do not want to live and work in rural Kosovo. That the SJCRC is not only willing to send out volunteers to work among the region's most poorest people in some of the most difficult conditions AND are willing to pay for these operations without any contribution from Western agencies explains a great deal about how it is that many parts of Kosovo are today under threat. In other words, oil-rich Saudi Arabia has been given the green light to actively engage in its form of cultural monopolization that, despite prevailing assumptions about Muslim primitiveness, is reminiscent of corporate behemoths that have traditionally been associated with the phenomenon of globalization or Christian evangelical missionaries actively seeking to convert the infidels. ⁶

Where I would differ somewhat from John Esposito and others who have studied the impact of technology and the monopoly of some components of these hegemonic forces in the oil-rich Gulf States, is the importance of the recipient. For Coca-Cola, Bill Gates or the Saudi state, there is still the difficult question of actually reaching a target population and assuring the message, product or way of life is uniformly adopted without challenges from other sources. Here lies the causal mechanics of globalization that assure the process is contingent and therefore enabling for local actors to ultimately help shape the success or failure of such programs. Throughout Kosovo's history, as I will demonstrate below, there have been a variety of options available for the population to actively balance state or extra-state institutions that sought to monopolize the cultural or political life in Kosovo. It is for this reason that the Saudi strategy in Kosovo is so revealing. Instead of operating in urban areas where there still remains a great deal of

alternatives to Saudi assistance, they have sought ways to eliminate this contingent dynamic by seeking out segments of the population that are relatively isolated from the world. Like any business seeking to maximize their profits by eliminating the competition, the cultural hegemony sought by faith-based organizations like the SJCRKC is best effected in rural Kosovo where the international community has demonstrated little or no desire to go. While institutional neglect on the part of the European-dominated institutions whose staff preferred to work in Kosovo's capital city is a significant reason for rural Kosovo's isolation today, the level of poverty that plagues the region stems from the consequences of Yugoslav administration and two years of war.

Recognizing this, according to the SJCRKC's own website, the organizations spent four million Saudi Riyals to sponsor 388 religious "propagators" (i.e., missionaries) to travel throughout Kosovo in the immediate postwar period.⁷ Their task was to find communities "most affected by the war and in need of SJCRKC's assistance." In reality, the work of these scouts was to identify the most vulnerable communities and stake an exclusive claim to them. This needed to be done quickly as international NGOs were flooding the region immediately after the end of the war, many of them faith-based who were equally eager to proselytize in rural Kosovo. In view of the fact that Kosovo became by mandate of the United Nations Security Council a protectorate of that body, it is all the more remarkable that the SJCRKC was able to secure more than 200 villages and towns as "its exclusive" zone of operation. In other words, the villages now being "cared for" by the SJCRKC have rarely been visited by other international NGOs.

Ostensibly, the Saudis have been able to create a web of "captured" and dependent recipients who in return for the food, shelter and money given to them, are to

undergo long-term programs of indoctrination. Today, the SJKCRK educates, feeds, houses and in many ways, represents the only link these communities devastated by war have with the outside world. While the food and clothing, the built homes and the new water wells are appreciated, it is clear the rhetoric being used to educate local children is of concern to many of the adults. Residents interviewed complain that the classes their children attend are segregated by sex and that the girls are learning “nothing more than sewing and how to take care of babies,” while the boys are being taught to memorize the Koran and speak Arabic. Worse still for many of the widows who have little means to control the fate of their children is the sense that their children are slowly being “taken away” from them. Clearly, the SJKCRK has identified the youth of these communities as their target audience and are effectively isolating them not only from “mainstream” culture but their mothers as well.

One of the more glaring consequences of this distancing of the children from their community is the visible intolerance the older ones are beginning to display toward the traditions of Kosovar Islam. A recent letter written by a student of the Institute for Islamic Education in Prishtina reveals a rhetorical order that indicates the universalist claims of Wahhabism, the official doctrine of the Saudi state and its aid agencies. Armend Podvorica, in an open letter to *Koha Ditore*, Kosova’s main daily newspaper, condemned the position taken by Rexhep Boja as it concerns his objection to the activities of Wahhabi groups in Kosova. Podvorica’s reactions speak of a particular sensitivity towards opposition to the growing influence of Saudi-based organizations. In responding to criticism, Podvorica also revealed the underlying Wahhabi intolerance towards, in particular, Kosova’s Islamic heritage. In the process of defending Wahhabi

doctrine as “a pure form” of faith, Podvoric goes on to explain how Kosovar Albanians, despite 500 years of an Islamic tradition, went wrong.

Revealingly, in Podvoric’s words Kosovars never learned the “true” Islam. Instead, it inherited the “bastardized” form from Turkey [sic] which “has nothing to do with religion.” Podvoric goes on to challenge Rexhep Boja’s stated concerns with extremism by qualifying the act of “these Muslims” (implying Boja is not one) who are running schools and “are well respected in Arabia.” That “they follow the authentic path” is supposed to assuage any concerns readers of *Koha Ditore* may have about the legitimacy of Wahhabi doctrine and immediately dilute Boja’s. As Podvoric’s spurious Arab Muslims are distinguished from what he is clearly identifying as Boja’s “bastardized” Islamic tradition, Podvoric exhibits a tell-tale sign of doctrinal rigidity that fails to accommodate the interpretations of other Muslims, a central point in Saudi educational strategies in their rural schools throughout the world. ⁸

Understanding the Wahhabi Doctrine

Podvoric’s rhetorical confrontation with other Albanians perfectly demonstrates the tenants of Wahhabi practice that is being exported by Saudi aid agencies and reflects a pattern of interaction we can locate throughout the Islamic world. Through Podvoric’s letter, we can see how these Saudi organizations, based on the teachings of a doctrine originating in Arabia in the eighteenth century have actively sought to disseminate what most people of the Islamic world deem hostile and rigid “fundamentalism.”

In order to better appreciate what local Wahhabi loyalists like Podvoric actually hope to accomplish in Kosova, it is necessary to look critically at the Wahhabi movement itself in the

Middle Eastern context from which it came. The Wahhab movement emerged out of the southern Arabian region of Najd in the late eighteenth century led by Muhammad b. ‘Abd al Wahhab who wished to challenge the power circles based in Istanbul and Damascus. The movement was immediately condemned by the Damascus religious and political elite who saw ‘Abd al Wahhab as but another debutant seeking to threaten the established order in the Ottoman Middle East. In particular, it was ‘Abd al -Wahhab’s radical doctrine which ascribed *takfir* (unbelief) to all who did not follow his teachings, that most antagonized the Middle East’s religious elite.⁹ As the movement grew, its intolerant stance towards others became of greater concern to religious leaders in multi-sectarian cities like Aleppo, Damascus, Baghdad, Basra and Jerusalem. In this regard, Wahhabism has been and should be considered an intolerant doctrine that seeks to eliminate rather than co-exist with contradictory practices and beliefs, an important factor when considering the complex and diverse cultural heritage of Kosovo.

‘Abd al -Wahhab himself devoted much of his energy to refuting the charges levied against him, in particular claims that he was seeking to transcend the four schools of Sunni law which were firmly in place in the Ottoman Middle East.¹⁰ Part of his defense was the claim that few understood Wahhabism and its central claims, a position adopted by adherents today when confronted with accusations of terrorism. There was indeed, much confusion pertaining to the articles of Wahhabi belief.¹¹ This mystery was largely due to the fact that ‘Abd al -Wahhab’s works were little known outside Arabia until recently.¹² On the basis of this ignorance, Islamic scholars and non-Muslims alike have perpetuated the anti -Wahhabi polemic, denouncing the Wahhab movement’s concomitant ideology of making an absolute demarcation between its expanding polity and all its surroundings.¹³

Importantly, the fact that Wahhabi polemic is so often “misquoted by outsiders” is used by followers to great effect. As has already been seen with Podvorica’s letter in the Kosovo context, the adopted “offensive defense” strategy taken by members of the Wahhabi movement mobilizes a “siege -mentality” among loyalists that results in an intensified distrust and subsequent violent antagonism towards outsiders. Such antagonism is twisted in the teachings of the movement in places like Kosovo and a heightened sense of loyalty to the movement becomes manifest in everything a member does. This rigid and stubborn defensiveness is key to appreciating the impact of Wahhabism in Kosovo today as the possibility for dialogue is being all but shut down by the self -imposed sense of persecution that is only being reinforced by the growing “fear” of Islamic extremism expressed by the entrenched European community based in Prishtina.

The social and political dimension of Wahhabi ideology that is key to appreciating its goals in Kosovo today is the setting of strict limits of exclusivity to a particular ‘*asabiyya* (group) identity. The central role of the practitioner of ‘Abd al -Wahhab’s doctrine is that anything that is external to the expanding social, political and geographical territory of the ‘*asabiyya* (the Wahhabi group) is a legitimate target for subjugation. *Kufr* [unbelief] is an attribute of others and, in the accentuated Wahhabi form, of otherness pure and simple. Such a doctrine, according to the writings of prominent Wahhabis since the nineteenth century, makes conquest and subjugation under the banner of the misunderstood term *jihad* incumbent upon the member.¹⁴ This interactive position with the outside world is both seen as the political act of an expanding polity and as a legal -religious obligation.

Key to ‘Abd al -Wahhab’s doctrine in this relational context is that the exterior of *kufr* comprises not only idolatrous faiths or non -Islamic monotheism, but describes non -Wahhabi

fellow Muslims as well. ‘Abdal Wahhab himself emphasized this, justifying the distinction on the analogy of Muhammad the prophet having fought “the believers of the one God” during the early years of Islam. ¹⁵The hallowed principle of Sunni Islam, according to which all those who profess the *shahada* [ritual act of belief] are Muslims, is therefore rejected by Wahhabism in favor of the necessity of struggling against all other Muslims who fail to accept Wahhabi teachings. ¹⁶

In the writings of Sulayman b. Abdallah b. Muhammad b. ‘Abdal Wahhab, a prominent and influential descendant of the movement’s founder, Wahhabism not only bans any alliance with the *kuffar* [unbelievers], but also their employment, consultation, trust, visiting, advice, friendship, emulation, cordiality and affability toward them. ¹⁷This means in today’s context, that Saudi -based “humanitarian” agencies are actually projecting a doctrine of complete communal isolation that not only sees Christians and Pagans as the undesirable other, but also other Muslims who do not subscribe to their interpretive principles. Worse still, the underlying assumption of their superior values means they are compelled to actively destroy all other forms of spiritual expression, again, not only Christian, but “local” Muslim ones as well. Tragically giving free reign to these organizations, the international community has invited disaster for Kosovo’s traditionally tolerant and idiosyncratic local traditions.

What this means in the present world is that Saudi Arabia is using this rigid and confrontational doctrine to legitimize its aggressive expansionist campaign of indoctrination in the former Soviet Union (Central Asia and Caucuses), Southeast Asia, Afghanistan and Europe. Armed with billions of petrodollars, the assault on traditional Balkan Islam, which, as outlined below, has been based on tolerance and syncretism, is beginning to cause significant, if yet unseen, splits in Kosovo. That a state so closely tied to the United States is actively promoting this confrontational doctrine’s expansion in

rural areas is an indication of just how uninformed and narrow-mindededly planners were in regard to postwar preparations. That UNMIK and the various European and US government agencies, even after September 11, continue to allow these determined organizations to monopolize the “assistance” to rural communities that have little capacity to resist reflects the pervasive ignorance Western policymakers have of the region and about Islam as well as a demonstrated disinterest in the fate of hundreds of thousands of people that in the past has resulted in deadly consequences.

Thereasons why Wahhabis are so eager to destroy what they deem to be outside the realm of acceptable practice is linked to the political assumptions of their place in the larger scheme of the world. To Wahhabis of the present age, the rhetorical and practical scope of their doctrine is clearly exportable. The issue many of those who oppose Saudi policies within the Islamic world (including Kosovo) is the question of what do these “impure” practices and traditions upon which they base their own spirituality do to the health of a modern Islam. Most would argue they are good for Islam as they reflect the global diversity of the faith’s reach. To the early Wahhabis, on the other hand, local traditions (like those found in Kosovo) acted to fragment religious authority in the world, militating against the emergence of a unique political authority which is assumed to be sustained in the modern world by the Saudi-Wahhabi alliance.¹⁸ Clearly what we have in the beginning of the twenty-first century is a modern state that assumes its divined duty is the spreading of Wahhabi Islam to the rest of the world, a process which requires the elimination of all other “impure” manifestations of that faith, much as the Soviet Union and Maoist China sought to codify and standardize their particular readings of Marxist-Leninist doctrine.

Indeed, monitoring Saudi activities in Central Asia, Africa, the Balkans and in neighboring Arab states, it is clear that it is actively seeking to use the powers of modern technology and its vast economic wealth to project an expansionist and intolerant doctrine into the world's impoverished regions much as the United States purports to export "democratic values" to those same regions. Al-Qa'idais but a militant manifestation of these underlying currents in the world that is often crudely understood along a "civilizational" axis. In practice, we can observe the underlying method of this dynamic at play in Kosovo.

In the very heart of Prishtina at the headquarters of the SJKRKC in the Dardanija neighborhood, "training" sessions for women include lectures on the superiority of Arab culture and the need to return to the exemplary behavior of the first Muslims. According to an informant who occasionally attends these gatherings, a young woman from Drenica (assumed by the dialect she uses), now a student in the School of Theology in Sarajevo, lectures once a week to her fellow Albanian women, trying to convince them that among other things, Skanderbeg (the Albanian national hero who fought off Ottoman troops for forty years in the fifteenth century) was a traitor to Islam; that the fundamentals of Albanian legal history, the Kanun of Lek Dukagjin, are not indigenous but were handed down by Arabs who infiltrated the Balkans hundreds of years ago; and that in order to be true Muslims, they must adopt the lifestyle of those Muslims living in the seventh century Arabia. This curious mode of engaging people who for all intents and purposes disagree with what they are hearing, fits perfectly the methodological precepts drawn in the fundamental doctrinal texts of the Wahhabimovement. ¹⁹

The issue for the local instructor is not historical "facts" but an underlying theme of overwhelming submission to what is basically a form of ethno-centric chauvinism disguised in a universalistic religious veneer. Just like American evangelical groups operating around the

world, Wahhabi organization demands subjection in principal to its authority, which is unambiguously centered in the Royal House of Sa'ud, out of which all culture worthy of preservation emanates. This doctrine puts forward a model whose task is to subject local societies like Kosova's with Arab customs. ²⁰ Any hope of membership to this exclusive commonwealth must begin with buying into the notion that Albanian culture and history is either defunct or its best aspects are to be subsumed into a history that is exclusively linked to Arabia. According to the logic of the SJCRKC, Albanians are basically living in darkness whose only salvation is to adopt the illuminating doctrine of Salafi (puritanical) groups linked to Saudi Arabia.

Such is the import of the abstraction from contemporary reality which marks all fundamentalism: an absence is constructed, which is then filled by interpretations provided by those with the means of enforcing an interpretation. In Prishtina, the freedom to walk out and find a sewing course elsewhere is still present so there are few women who are persuaded by the above-mentioned methodology of indoctrination. In other words there is not that critical mass of ABSENCE required. In Kosova's villages, on the other hand, it is the SJCRKC that has the exclusive means to distribute the food, jobs and hope for a better material life everyone has. This is the fundamental difference between the world in which most members of the International Community experience Kosova and the realities of the vast majority of the region's population living in villages that have been devastated by war and decades of neglect. Wahhabi tactics today are programmed to assure there is a rhetorical door left open for the social and political contexts of fundamentalist doctrine to weave themselves into the contemporary realities of Kosova's desperately poor rural population. Again, the sociological factors are important to understand here, as in them we can best understand how to resist SJCRK hegemony as much as simply

study it. Basically, Saudi tactics work well in situations like refugee camps and war-torn rural areas, not in places where people have a wide variety of cultural institutions from which to choose. Again, this is why the SJCRKC has targeted the rural regions of Kosovo, regions the international NGOs and UNMIK have demonstrated little interest in visiting.

Historicizing Albanian's Confrontation with Global Islam

I suspect Saudi strategies are fully cognizant of the limitations of their message in face of alternative sources of spiritual comfort and indeed, tradition. That this diversity is historically prevalent in the region clearly reflected the SJCRKC's initial interest in locating and colonizing the most inaccessible, economically and physically devastated communities. The Saudis were aware of the need to restrict the interaction of their subjects with the outside world and even the physical presence of a past that could remind people that there was indeed, other ways of experiencing the world through Islam. The eradication of alternative channels to people's spirituality, cultural development or consumption are the requirements of the uniform Wahhabi doctrine Saudi Arabia is exporting today. It is telling, therefore, that so much effort has been made to silence the past, either by destroying the remaining artifacts of the Ottoman Empire, or rhetorically denigrating Albanian heroes. Material poverty in itself is not the reason for concern in regard to the possibility of an intolerant and violent brand of Islam ultimately infiltrating into rural Kosovo, what is of concern is that rural Kosovo's cultural heritage has been all but eliminated. To better understand what that cultural heritage means to the ability of Albanians to resist the SJCRKC, it may be helpful to explore how earlier regimes that sought to impose cultural hegemony on these same communities failed.

The modernizing state of Sultan Abdülhamid II (1876-1909) and later the Tito-era communist state of Yugoslavia also tried to establish this kind of spiritual hegemony over the region. Key for me here is to spell out why they failed and why the SJCRC may succeed in the long run. While I believe there is much to say about the post-cold war world and the phenomenon of the international NGO in particular, there is value in historicizing past attempts to impose cultural uniformity in places like Kosovo as it helps pinpoint the uniqueness of our current situation, one which may finally see the elimination of the “local community” in wartorn areas like rural Kosovo and in post-Saddam Iraq.

Again, it is not the first time in Kosovo's history that the tools of the state or state-like institutions sought to dominate the local population through faith. Under the regime of Sultan Abdülhamid II, sectarian politics took on a central role in projected state power over the empire's disparate territories and considerable amounts of state resources were spent on doctrinally sanitizing diverse areas of the Empire.²¹ Often, the issue had been constructed rhetorically in terms of loyalty to the Sultan, Empire and ultimately to the Hanafi doctrine of *ijtihad* that functioned as the state ideological/theological foundation in this period. The issue of loyalty to both faith and Sultan/State is clearly rhetorical as well as a practical aspect of Hamidian politics.²²

Others have explored this refocusing of state energies to assert a uniformity in Ottoman Islam through, for instance, Hamidian attempts to subjugate sectarian “anomalies” in Northern Iraq and the battles in the Arabian Peninsula over the doctrinal challenges presented by the Zaydis and Wahhabis to the very claim to the Caliphate.²³ While these examples provide us a good sense of the challenges to the Hamidian state, a

neglected but clear example of what were the impediments of this distinctive drive to establish uniformity in the empire is Northern Albania.

For this part of the Balkans, the Hamidian reforms were animated by the rivalry for ascendancy after the disastrous war of 1877 that ultimately resulted in the San Stefano and then Berlin Treaties of 1878. The principal factors animating the Balkans then were the increasingly intrusive actions of European states and their use of longstanding diplomatic concessions granted by the Sublime Porte to assert their respective influence on the region's Christian populations. One of the more widely studied of these diplomatic mechanisms is the infamous capitulation (*ahidname*) awarded to states with which the Sublime Porte signed a peace treaty.²⁴ By 1878, these capitulations played a conspicuous role as the Ottoman Empire implemented reforms in Albanian territories. In the context of these reforms, European powers made increasingly loud calls for expanding their intrusive privileges as a way to maximize access to the Empire's wealth. This largely competitive imperial dynamic resulted in the consolidation of claims on various "nations" (*millets*) within the Empire as a means of assuring European influence over the Ottoman Empire's numerous Christian populations.²⁵ The concessions granted by the Sublime Porte in this context took the form of extensive European activities in the development of "Christian" education and trade among exclusively designated imperial/communal groups, a fundamental factor to Hamidian policy towards Northern Albania.²⁶

Parallel to the growing influence Russia and Austria enjoyed within the Ottoman Balkans after the Berlin Congress of 1878, diplomatic tensions between the powers grew with the region being the central ground of contention. Initially, attempts were made to formalize spheres of interest in the region in order to avoid unnecessary confrontation.

The Reichstadt Agreement of 1876, for example, was supposed to signal a delicate balance of power between Vienna and St. Petersburg.²⁷ Widely forgotten in this diplomatic history are the roles played by so-called lesser states like Italy, who often threatened Austrian and Russian interests in the Balkans. Amid this, Istanbul expressed increasing concern that such influence not only threatened the state's economic and military control of the region, but the very spiritual loyalty of the majority Muslim population there.²⁸ Attempts to assert Russian or Austrian influence funded schools in the region since the 1880s or the later attempt to "reform" Macedonia in 1903-1905, for instance, signaled to many within the Ottoman state's elite that not only were these powers interested in protecting their respective co-religionists, but "convert" the local Muslim population as well.²⁹

For the Hamidian regime in Istanbul, it became clear that it had to cultivate an ideological mechanism that could at once challenge these outside influences and mobilize resistance to a number of diplomatic setbacks that occurred as a result of its military defeat in 1877. The first explicit example of this took on a sectarian coloration, reflecting as much the semantics of the era as much as realities on the ground. The League of Prizren, for instance, organized by local Albanians to lobby European powers meeting to decide the fate of Albanian populated territories was often seen by foreign councils as being a creation of the Sultan. How Italian and British councils interpreted this as emblematic of the Sultan's "fanatical Islam" is interesting in as much as these movements were largely multi-faith in nature. These factors were ignored however, as the tone of the moment during the Berlin meetings was almost exclusively set along these sectarian lines.³⁰

Throughout the Hamid period tensions between regional power took on this sectarian shape. That said, there is no way of differentiating from the “fanaticism” often claimed by European consuls and more local reactions to what were ostensibly local concerns of foreign influence (this includes the Ottoman State). The murder of a French engineer by an Albanian Muslim around Manastir in 1897, for instance, does speak of a general tone of “Muslim” resistance to foreign ascendancy in the region over the years. The assailant himself confessed that it was his “Muslim duty” to murder the infidels present on Muslim land.³¹ As was expected, the European consuls complained to their foreign ministries that this reflected a policy from Istanbul to consolidate its control over its Muslim population by promoting fanaticism in its schools and media. This too may have some merit, if we were to take the Ottoman State for its words. It is clear that a general tenor was circulating in the region through official publications, translating into what appeared to be inter-sectarian fighting between Catholic Albanians in villages around Shkoder and Muslim inhabitants who on more than one occasion, volunteered to hunt down the “Christian troublemakers” in neighboring districts. There is no doubt that Istanbul sought to cultivate these anti-European (and by default, anti-Catholic) sentiments and direct much of that ire through Islamic channels to subjugate rebellious populations.³²

But much of this can also be seen as generated from local initiatives – the League of Prizren for instance – with Istanbul capitalizing on the obvious anti-European sentiments circulating around them. Indeed, with Austrian occupation of Bosnia in 1878, a regional call for a boycott of Austrian products was later cultivated by Istanbul through the state media to spread throughout the empire. Similarly, heightened sectarian

sensibilities during the Greco-Ottoman war of 1897 first translated into local hostility towards “Greek” neighbors living in the Balkans and only later fully cultivated by Istanbul to a more general “Islamic” reaction to the war.³³ This may suggest that in many ways, the Empire was stumbling towards its much talked about “Islamic policy” in the early stages. The key therefore, is to try to capture the mechanics of this reactive policy that was clearly attempting to effect cultural uniformity that would be mobilized by the state vis-à-vis its struggles with rival powers and rebellious subjects.

I believe looking at the Hamidian attempt to institutionalize this policy through schools is almost the helpful way in making my ultimate claim that the project could not hope to succeed, despite its clear ambition. Benjamin Fortna has convincingly suggested in his work on Hamidian educational reform that there was a pervasive Islamic message projected by the Hamidian state through its rapid and extensive investment in schools.³⁴ How much this ideological current permeated local Albanian society is something I wish to suggest was more complicated than the simple construction of schools in the region, however. A better understanding of the complex factors engaging local Albanians, including the previously mentioned competitive dynamic with regional powers will demonstrate the attempt to homogenize the *umma* in Albania around the Sultan and his claim to the Caliphate is mediated by these same locals’ ability to maintain their distinct regional identities.³⁵

As a number of scholars have written, it is in the Hamidian period that the school becomes the central ideological battleground for imperial/colonial states.³⁶ Much like their imperial counterparts elsewhere, Russian, Austrian and Ottoman state-funded schools in the Balkans were from the very start meant to monitor, supervise and

manipulate local population to best suit long-term imperial ambitions. Lost, however, in the statistics about the construction of schools is that the various states involved in the expansion of education in the region reacted to events on the ground instigated by locals in equal measure to its attempts to dictate policy.

While on the surface the issue of educational “reform” may be read in a clear-cut instrumentalist manner, local conditions forced the hand of these imperial ambitions. Austrian state activities among the region’s Albanian-speaking populations and especially their Catholic leaders over the thirty years after Berlin best demonstrate the clash between assumed imperial interests (and their incumbent capitulatory privileges) and the practical realities on the ground. What that often meant for Austrian officials operating in the area was that their state’s interests were defined more as a reflection of how local populations mobilized (or articulated) their communities through a liberal flow of tertiary regional powers’ money, than dictates from Vienna or Istanbul, their assumed confessional guardians.³⁷ The problem posed for both Austria and the Sublime Porte in this period, therefore, lays in the fact that these populations were not acting along the lines assumed to characterize them.

It is often forgotten that Albanian-speaking communities in Northern Albania were often made up of mixed Orthodox, Catholic and Muslim families.³⁸ Rather than acting within the firm boundaries of a Catholic or Muslim community, locals manipulated the rhetoric of sectarian patronage to best attract much desired money and weapons from various parties.³⁹ As Austrian and British Consuls in Scutari (Shkodra) often noted in their reports to unconvincing superiors in Vienna and London respectively, loyalties based on faith could not be assumed in Ottoman Albania.⁴⁰

Despite these local nuances, due to the efforts of rival powers to influence local political and economic events, there was a dramatic increase in state investments in the construction of faith-based schools, armories, hospitals and other government structures after 1878. This again suggests that schools were seen to be very much a part of the process of installing greater state influence in the region by all regional parities.⁴¹ Due to financial restraints and the need to establish a bureaucracy, Abdülhamid schools were being built only in the 1880s. But it is clear they were being built in great numbers in response to the numerous schools already in place or being developed and financed by other European states. In the case of Northern Albania, at least in the period immediately prior to and after the Berlin Congress of 1878, Austrian and Italian funded schools were of particular concern to the Ottoman state.⁴² In correspondence between the Archbishop of Scutari and the Ottoman state, for instance, one notes that since 1875 a marked rise in Ottoman resistance to efforts to expand Catholic education by the Catholic Church, largely based on Istanbul's concern that growing numbers of locals are attending these Catholic institutions, including the children of prominent Muslims. Among the tactics used to halt the rapid expansion of Catholic influence was bureaucratic obstructionism. Another was pitting the interests of Italian and factions inside the Vatican against those of the Austrians.⁴³

Seeing large numbers of Albanian Catholics and importantly for us, Muslims flock to the well-funded "Italian" schools that were beginning to make inroads into the region, Austria and its policy-minded consular staff based in the region had to devise new methods of attracting and sustaining their influence over the local Catholic population. The same held true for Ottomans.⁴⁴ The different tactics taken by the three powers in

search of regional hegemony are revealing. The interest in propagating pro-Austrian sentiments through schools in response to the rise in Italian-funded schools, ultimately led to the active promotion of the use of the Albanian language as a medium of instruction in Austrian-funded schools, a program that would receive the largest resistance from the Hamidian regime. That the Ottoman state would in the end be the primary factor, along with the Orthodox Church based in Istanbul, in repressing local demands to be educated in their own language proved the largest impediment to Ottoman efforts to control the doctrinal message being promoted by the state. Indeed, due to its resistance to the use of the Albanian language, many former “allies” took up arms at various times of the Hamidian state, issuing demands that specifically asserted the Albanian demand for the use of their language.⁴⁵

Closer research into the question of schools in the area, therefore, suggests we are neither dealing with a passive population vulnerable to indoctrination and thus globalizing forces, nor a Church or state capable of dictating events on their own terms. The competitive dynamic between regional states proved, first and foremost, to be a veritable windfall for locals. While the material benefits of such attention are important, it is the nature of the response locals made that seems crucial to understanding the period as a whole and the barriers to the globalization of faith, market or ideology. While the state agencies involved in implementing these projects operated within a sectarian logic, locals did not respect the intended purpose of these sectarian-based initiatives, instead, they utilized the *possibilities of identity* available to them to maximize their local interests.⁴⁶

Here then, the local perspectives shed new light into the dynamic of Great Power rivalries at play in the Balkans and just where ethno-national and sectarian identities stand in the day-to-day lives of locals. These actions also had a dramatic impact on how outside powers could operate in the region. Austria's privileged role in protecting Ottoman Catholics was immediately questioned with the growing activities of Albanians based in Ishkora and elsewhere, many of whom would align with Muslim family members to assure local communities would receive the state investment most needed for local economies.⁴⁷

While historians of the late Ottoman state focus on Istanbul's imperial pretensions, as much as Austrians discovered as far as its relations with "Catholics," the Sublime Porte had to frequently modify these ambitions. One of the interesting consequences of these sectarian "abnormalities" presented by how local communities lived, was the dynamic of local power that gave small communities the capacity to balance the Austrians, Russians and Ottomans off one another by both using the formal diplomatic structures as well as forcing their modification.

Defining Albanian Islam through Resistance

What, in the end, defines Hamidian failures, was its institutional weakness. The state hoped to inculcate in Albanians an Islamic ethic through the school and a new body of ulema who were assumed to be dealing with a single, coherent audience. The distinct and multi-level realities of Islam in much of the empire, and in particular in Albania, made such an imperial instrumentalization of the faith unfeasible.⁴⁸ That one's religion was imagined to be a possible tool of modern state control should not be new to the reader, as "national churches" have been

the tools of states in the molding of social policies in the Balkans for decades. What is not widely known, however, is that the Communist state, which inherited the rich cultural mosaic of the postwar Balkans, used these homogenizing forces to try to subjugate its “dangerous” Muslim populations as well. This was particularly true in Yugoslavia when it concerned Albanians. The central issue for this section is to highlight the recent history of Kosovo’s Islamic communities (in the plural) in order to emphasize a more recent past in which there was great diversity in how an individual’s faith was practiced and that this diversity was deemed a threat to Belgrade. By appreciating the diversity of how Islam was practiced in Kosovo and the efforts by Belgrade to impose a rigid and centralized “universal doctrine” through state-appointed religious officials, we can then proceed to better understand what Saudi NGOs are doing in Kosovo today.

Yugoslav Islamic Politics

During the height of Communist Yugoslavia, this same attitude towards Muslims led to efforts to confine legitimate power within “the Islamic community” to a specific group of Muslim leaders (*ulema*) who were redesignated by Belgrade to represent all of Yugoslavia’s Muslims. The problem with such a measure was that it cynically empowered Bosnian Slav Muslims in order to disseminate a centralized (read Slav-centric) and homogenous Islam throughout the regions where Yugoslavia’s non-Slav populations (Albanians, Turks and Roma) lived. Centralizing Islam to fit a number of state goals – the homogenization of Yugoslav linguistic and cultural identity and the weakening of “minority” communities – often manifested itself in long-term tensions at the institutional and the ethno-national level between Bosnian Slav Muslims and their Albanian, Roma and Turkish counterparts. Indeed, the antagonism that is initiated by the

attempt to create a single “Islamic Community” (*Islamska Zajednica*) run by a government-appointed *ulema* manifested itself in the creation of a number of local institutions inside Kosovo that have left a legacy in Kosovo little appreciated today.

The central tension lies in the ambition to control Kosovo’s (and Macedonia’s) complicated and diverse religious life under the auspices of a single Islamic mechanism that would report directly to Belgrade. In line with these efforts of “streamlining” the religious life of the population was a coordinated effort to dilute the non-Slav character of Yugoslavia.⁴⁹ Through the forced migration of non-Slav Muslims to Turkey (upward to 300,000 Albanians left during the 1948–1962) and the often violent closure of “unlicensed” mosques and schools (*medrese*) Turkish, Albanian and Roma Muslims faced significant pressure to abandon their centuries-old practices and adopt ones dictated by Slavs based in Sarajevo.⁵⁰

From an institutional standpoint, the problem for Belgrade and their Bosnian allies based in Sarajevo was that the “Islamic Community” was not at all coherent. This lack of homogenization should not come as a surprise. Islam had reached the Balkans by way of roaming spiritual leaders (*shaykhs*) who proselytized in rural areas among the Christian Albanian and Slav populations of the late Medieval period. These *shaykhs* were invariably attached to Sufi orders whose “unorthodox” practices often bridged doctrinal gaps between Christianity and Islam by adapting local beliefs into reformulated theology. For this reason, Kosovo was until the 1998–1999 war a unique place to study the diversity of human spirituality that existed in the early modern world, since most of these Sufi orders still practiced in the original village mosques from where they were established in the fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.⁵¹ The practices of these Sufi orders

were uniquely local and reflected a spiritual tolerance that acknowledged and often engaged local Christian customs in a complicated fusion of cultural practices that was largely condemned by the Serb, Greek and Sunni Islamic institutions of the late nineteenth century. By the end of World War II, thanks to the often brutal homogenization of the national territories of Balkan states, it was only in Macedonia and Kosovo that these “unorthodox” practices remained, confounding Yugoslavia’s effort to better control doctrinal content and the day-to-day experiences of peasant communities.

The central goal of the modern nation-state in the Balkans has been to eliminate certain “contradictions” to the nation, often understood as meaning ethnic minorities and unconventional religious practices such as those in Kosovo. In Tito’s Yugoslavia, that entailed the creation of the *Islamska Zajednica* which would maintain the responsibility of training Yugoslavia’s religious leaders who would then control the religious, doctrinal and cultural content of all Muslim institutions in the country. The creation of this organization was specifically meant to erase the diversity present inside the country as such diversity diluted the ability to control those who worshipped outside state-sanctioned institutions. The first act of the Islamic Community of Yugoslavia, in fact, was to assert complete and unchallenged control over religious practice by banning all unsanctioned Muslim institutions.⁵²

In 1952, it prohibited the work of Sufi orders in the country, which included the aggressive policy of closing down “unregistered” mosques. It is instructive that it was the non-Slav and non-Sunni (orthodox) communities that were targeted for this persecution.⁵³ In large part because this period is better known for the political persecution taking place under the lead of the notorious Serb nationalist Minister of Interior, Aleksander

Rankovic, the extent of the persecution of this policy of sanitizing Islam in Yugoslavia has gone unnoticed. As Cornelia Sorabji noted in her dissertation recently, however, the *Islamska Zajednica* actively sought to tighten its hegemony over Islamic life by monopolizing its claim to religious authority and its scholarly and spiritual superiority over “reactionary” forces found in Kosovo and Macedonia.⁵⁴ Interestingly, as Sarajevo increased its oppression of, in particular, Albanian Sufi traditions, the notion of what was “a proper religious life” dovetailed to that of what was a proper gauge of one’s political loyalty to the Yugoslav state.⁵⁵

What that means in respect to Kosovo is a concerted effort to indoctrinate Albanian Muslims by *Islamska Zajednica*. The first goal of this campaign was to draw Albanian Muslims away from independent and highly localized Sufi tekkes, either by closing them down or by convincing Albanians of their moral bankruptcy. In addition to the physical removal of these sites, *Islamska Zajednica* trained Imams (spiritual leaders) for urban Albanians as a daily appetite of a “religious doctrine” that stressed “unity” among Muslims and a dissolution of “ethnic” loyalties that would translate into “a spirit of brotherhood.” While the anthropologist Ger Duijzings does a nice job in highlighting the general problem between Sufi unorthodox practices and Sunni centralizing efforts in a recent study, he fails to appreciate the content of the doctrines themselves that were clearly at the center of the 1952–1962 program.⁵⁶ Among those who grew up attending the mosques of the Rankovic period, at least those operating under the guidance of a *Islamska Zajednica* approved (read Belgrade approved) Imam, the underlying message was clear. Without exception, the Bosnian Imams who were sent to Kosovo and Macedonia in the 1950s (later, Albanian trained in Sarajevo would take their place with

the creation of the Islamic Community of Kosovo (based in Prishtina) all preached a doctrine of “unity” behind Islam that specifically targeted Catholic (but not Orthodox) Christians as the primary enemies of not only Muslims, but the Yugoslav nation. ⁵⁷

This is important, as the central policy of Serbian historians and the Serb-dominated regimes over the last eighty years has actively sought to erase any evidence of a Catholic past in Southern Yugoslav territories. The underlying reason for this is that by eliminating a Catholic past, ethno-national claims to the medieval past would be possible. ⁵⁸ It must be remembered that the thesis of Kosovo being Serbia’s heartland is its historical claim that the medieval state was purely Serbian. The problem is that there is evidence of a large Catholic community living prior and during the glory years of the Dushan Kingdom, somewhat contradicting nationalist claims made today that Albanians came to Kosovo with the Ottoman invasion. ⁵⁹ In order to address this contradiction between policy and reality, many efforts were made to eradicate the Catholic community that still lived in the region. One tactic was encouraging animosity between the majority Albanian Muslim population and the Catholic Albanian community.

Informant’s telling of sermon taking place on a daily basis in Kosovo’s urban mosques that “obsessively” emphasized the Catholic “threat” to Muslims. Importantly, it was the youth who were particularly targeted during this period as older Kosovars reportedly complained about the language being used by the Bosnian Imam to vilify Catholic relatives and neighbors. ⁶⁰ It was the children educated in state-sanctioned medreses, therefore, who were told elaborate stories of Catholic “demonic” practices, the cannibalistic tendencies of priests and the historical treachery of the Church in regard to Muslims AND Albanians. Such an education ultimately left a large impression on many

of Kosova's young Muslims who, according to many sources interviewed for this project, have been publicly ostracizing Albanian Catholics from their daily lives. The result of this animosity is the large-scale migration of Albanian Catholics from Kosova and the more-or-less complete segregation of the two "communities" in urban Kosova. ⁶¹

It is clear from my conversations with those educated during this period that one particular line of argument from the Imam was the same throughout Kosova. It is said that Bosnian and later, Sarajevo-trained Albanian Imam taught that the Serbian Orthodox faith was actually "close" to Islam and that Serbs are much more likely to convert to Islam than Albanian Catholics. ⁶² The point being that Muslim Albanians should trust their Serb neighbors more than Catholic Albanians, who were so "different" that the likelihood of their ever adopting "the right religion" was nil. That this method of indoctrination was the same in Prizren, Gjakova and Peja throughout the 1950s and early 1960s suggests Sarajevo was formulating and enacting a strategy to change the loyalties of Albanian Muslims en masse. ⁶³ It is interesting to note that this strategy was largely successful in communities where the Sarajevo Islamic Community had institutional control, namely in the urban areas of Peja, Gjakova, Mitrovica and Prishtina, cities that saw the complete elimination of any alternative site for the practice of the Islamic faith.

It must be stressed, this animosity between Albanian Catholics and Muslims has no historical foundation as research in the Ottoman period shows Kosovar families often had both Catholic and Muslim members in them. ⁶⁴ That such tensions did not exist in the pre-Yugoslav era is all the more highlighted when one observes how successful this policy of eliminating the Catholic heritage from Kosova was in a demographic sense. The 1921 census conducted by Serbia suggested that 27.8 percent of the Albanian population

(which made up 64.1 percent of the entire population) were still identified as Catholic. 65

That Catholics make up only 5 percent of the Albanian population in Kosovo today demonstrates perfectly the extent to which Belgrade targeted Catholics over the century. 66

What is also striking is that while the once large Catholic communities in Peja, Gjakova and Prizren are all but gone, it is the rural Catholic communities living alongside Muslim neighbors that still thrived. It suggests much of this cohabitation reflected the minimal influence Sarajevo's Imamshadin rural Kosovo and the preponderance of tolerant Sufi orders.

Throughout the Tito era, rural Kosovar Albanian Muslims resisted the centralizing efforts of Sarajevo and Sufi orders subsequently thrived. In the urban areas, on the other hand, police control and strict enforcement of "licenses" helped shut down unsanctioned mosques and medreses. In response to this persecution from Sarajevo, the orders that survived in rural Kosovo became increasingly active in addressing the centralizing efforts of Sarajevo, eventually attracting many adherents from the urban areas as well. ⁶⁷ Informants suggest there were secret organizations that mobilized communities to help finance and protect many of these lodges over the decades. The very fact that these communities were able to survive through the Rankovic period is a suggestion of a great deal of collaboration between the institutions and their constituents. This level of rural community activism also reflects the central role these Sufi orders played in the daily lives of most of Kosovo's Albanians, a role Belgrade was desperate to eliminate. ⁶⁸

With the shift of political power in Yugoslavia during the last constitutional phase in 1974, these underground networks surfaced as the association of Sufi (Dervish)

orders (*Bashkësia e Rradhëve Dervishë Islame Alijje*, henceforth BRDIA) which was headed by Shaykh Xhemali Shehu of the Rufaite tekke based in Prizren. The BRDIA, vilified by the Islamic leaders based in Sarajevo, quickly became a cultural force in Kosovo's public life as locals flocked to these Albanian institutions. BRDIA's publication, *Buletin HU*, an invaluable source for the organization's many efforts to untangle the disastrous and largely divisive practices of the previous twenty-five years, also helped spread the message to tens of thousands of readers in urban Kosovo. By 1984, 126 Sufi lodges throughout Kosovo joined BRDIA, representing 50,000 dervishes, which in 1998, according to a Serbian sociologist based in Prishtina until 1999, reached a membership of 100,000.⁶⁹ These numbers give us a sense of the vastness of this phenomenon and the richness of pre-1998-1999 Kosovar Islamic life. Indicative, among the orders that operated in Kosovo until the mid-1990s -- the Rufai, Kaderi, Halveti, Sadi, Bektashi, Nakshibendi, Sinani, Mevlevi and Shazili -- all were deemed "unIslamic" by Sarajevo.⁷⁰

Again, the influence of these orders on local communities was large and thus feared by Belgrade and Sarajevo. Importantly, this influence was also seen as a threat by the now Kosovo-based BIK that was created in the 1960s to serve as an extension of Sarajevo. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, members of the BIK openly accused local Sufi *shaykhs* of "stealing" the faithful away from Sunni orthodox mosques and aggressively stigmatized the tekkes in the mainstream press as venues of mysticism and primitivism.⁷¹ Importantly, the efforts to dilute the influence of the Sufi orders had political consequences both inside and outside of Kosovo. It was clear throughout the post-World War II period that Sarajevo's central function was to sanitize the Kosovar

Albanian population, which as a whole was seen as a threat by Belgrade.⁷² Sarajevo thus openly condemned Kosova's Sufi *shaykhs* as a threat to "harmony" as well as to Islamic good practices.⁷³ By March 1979, when the Islamic Community organized a meeting to deal with the "problem," even openly nationalist Serb journalists got into the act of attacking Albanian Sufi orders by making accusations of drunkenness, thievery, "unpatriotic behavior," primitiveness and other slurs.⁷⁴ The subsequent campaign in Serbia's media to stigmatize Albanian Sufi's as the primary problem to the region, clearly linked the long history of Sarajevo's attempt to eliminate Kosova's religious diversity to the lingering nationalist concerns of many in Belgrade.⁷⁵

Again, the source of the fear was the Sufi orders' organizing role in rural Kosovar society. Sufi *shaykhs* traditionally played the roles of intermediaries in rural communities whenever a dispute arose. Their central spiritual role extended, in other words, to a socio-political one that was deemed essential for the functioning of rural Kosovar society, largely isolated from the rest of Yugoslavia. This role posed a long-term threat to Belgrade's attempt to assert more control over rural Kosova. Here lies the crux of Kosova's long history of local governance and self-reliance. It did not only reside in the structures claimed by the LDK, but in the spiritual networks maintained by the Sufi orders.⁷⁶

It was for the noted influence of Sufi *shaykhs* and their tekkes on rural society that the war of 1998-1999 took on the "anti-Islamic" undertone that it did. Sufi orders that had for centuries constituted the foundation for Kosovar Albanian society that was specifically targeted. At the height of the 1998-1999 Serb sweep of Kosova, it was the Sufi orders, their hundreds of years' old mosques, medreses and even the *shaykhs*

themselves who were eliminated. It was clear that Milosevic, Seselj and the Serbian nationalist elite were keen on forever eliminating the Sufi communities in Kosovo as it was they who helped maintain rural Kosovo society. At the very beginning of the offensive in July 1998, for example, Belgrade's primary targets were the leaders of the Sufi orders. Shaykh Mujedin, an important leader of the Dervish community and *shaykh* of the Halveti tekke in Rahovac was murdered by Serb police while praying. Mujedin's death marked the beginning of the end of the Sufi's six hundred year history in Kosovo, and like so much else of the Albanian heritage, the postwar realities has all but assured that they will never come back. ⁷⁷

This eradication of such a fundamental element of rural Kosovo is causing serious disorder in Kosovo's rural communities today and unless addressed, long-term instability will be likely. Put differently, this history with Sufism is key to appreciating the current dynamics at play in Kosovo. The "religious establishment" of Kosovo since the war is largely distorted by the physical elimination of much of rural Kosovo's historical spiritual base. That this spiritual tradition was far more tolerant of cultural diversity and shared many notions of inter-sectarian cohabitation than the Islam propagated by the Saudi-based humanitarian agencies dominating Kosovo's spiritual life today gives Western policy-makers all the more reason to be concerned. In the devastation brought on rural Kosovo, little has been done by the International Community to address these spiritual voids resulting in long-term problems for the region. The result is very little capacity of local communities to put up much of a doctrinal fight to the forces of the SJC/RKC. For one, the Sufi orders have more or less disappeared with the tekkes burnt down, the men who once ran them murdered and those who prayed, for the most part also either dead or

living in Prishtina. Who has remained in rural Kosovo are the orphans and widows whose male members of the family were specifically targeted by Serb forces.

The impact of SJCRC's monopolistic access to up to sixty percent of Kosovo's population has already produced dividends on the national level. Local students at their seminaries are actively demanding through the BIK journal *Takvim* for the creation of an Islamic political party in order that the "real" needs of Kosovars can be addressed. The debates in *Takvim* are revealing in that the bellicose language is proving to be increasingly intolerant of debate and far more assertive. This is beginning to spill over into national debates as well as demonstrated in Armend Podvorica's letter to the main national newspaper. The difference with past efforts to homogenize the region is that these Saudi agencies will shift the center of power away from the region. In other words, a future Kosovo identity will not be one easily controlled by political forces based in Prishtina or even in the region. The central theme of Wahhabi doctrine is the universalistic claim of faith, one that does not recognize the local and emphasizes only the global reach of its doctrine. That the center of this doctrine of "universal" Islam is Riyadh, I am afraid that in ten years time, when war breaks out somewhere in the "Islamic world," local Albanian loyalties will be challenged. Militancy may become manifest in Kosovo in much the same way that the "Taliban's" world vision was created out of the ashes of Afghan society that was resurrected by Saudi money in the refugee camps of Pakistan. As much as the devastating wars in post-Soviet Afghanistan was fought between those who practiced an "impure" Islam (the Northern Alliance) and those who practiced the Wahhabi doctrine (Taliban) the same is likely to happen in the Balkans.

As noted earlier, there have been attempts by local Albanian Muslims to challenge the doctrines of exclusion promoted in Saudi-funded institutions. There is

concern, however, that Boja's or other Albanians' challenge to Wahhabid doctrine are being interpreted as a gesture of hostility that needs to be aggressively confronted by Wahhabi loyalists. A perception of hostility towards Wahhabi adherents, clearly causing Podvorica to react with accusations of Boja's (and Kosova's) "bastardized Islamic traditions," is being linked to other forms of hostility towards Wahhabism that are transmitted on the international news program every night. This has been manifested in a form of institutional competition between the "established" local religious community, the BIK, and the "Arabs." As late as 27 April 2003, officials from the BIK have outwardly challenged Wahhabi teachings in Kosova only reinforcing perceptions by some Albanians that non-Wahhabi Muslims in Kosova are "puppets" of the West. ⁷⁸

While statements from head Imam Sabri Bajgora, an ally of Rexhep Boja, may attempt to assert order in an Islamic community ill-defined by decades of institutional oppression and the 1998-1999 war, they lay some important tensions that cannot be addressed without UNMIK and EU intervention. The sense of being unwelcome by Europe, the sense of being persecuted for being "at risk Muslim" and indeed, blamed for events taking place in other parts of the globe is a common theme among self-identified Albanian Muslims today. Simply, as rural communities in Kosova have become more or less dependent on the SJKRKC for their basic needs and are sensing little or no sympathy from the international community, they are increasingly vulnerable to specific world views that are inherently hostile to Europe and the West as a whole.

Clearly with Podvorica's recent letter, such attitudes are not only directed at the outside world. While touring these regions over the last year, it is evident that as a result of nearly three years of being under Saudi care, the young men of these communities

have begun to manifest a greater intolerance towards the inherent cultural and sectarian diversity of their country. This reflects Wahhabi's rigid notion of what constitutes an Islamic community and an interpretation of Kosova's Islamic past as being somehow "illegitimate" is spreading among the vulnerable youth of rural communities.

Again, much of these sentiments are reinforced by the perception of being neglected by the Western -dominated international community that administers Kosova. Tellingly, the forced segregation of the sexes and a focus on young male education based on little more than the memorization of the Koran has attracted little or no attention from the international community. When the improvement of Kosova's educational standards and the promotion of the education of girls are under the umbrella of UNMIK "competencies," it is indeed tragic that rural Kosova is in such a state with widows left on their own to deal with Saudi educational hegemony. Perhaps even more damning and incomprehensible in face of the events of September 11 is that international indifference has allowed for this monopolization of Kosova's spiritual life by Saudi agencies to take one even deeper roots within the very governing institutions of the region.

Rural Kosova's dependency on religious funding has been assured through the formal alliance with some elements of the Kosova provisional government, most conspicuously the Ministry of Health and Saudi organizations which in the past, provided essential drugs and medical equipment to these same rural communities. The ethnic Bosnian and the currently suspended Minister of Health, Numan Balic, a native of neighboring Novi Pazar (Sandjak), has been known for years to have "fundamentalist" leanings for which he was actually exiled from Sandjak in the early 1990s. Settling in Albania, Balic made his links with among others, an Albanian from Skopje, Macedonia who has since changed his name to Muhammad Jusufi. Jusufi,

Numan's "political advisor" while heading the Ministry of Health, has long ties with Saudi Arabia. During the 1998 - 1999 wars, Jusufi was the coordinator for Saudi aid agencies in Albania and no doubt through the influence of these agencies, took up his new role in Kosovo alongside Numan. Numan's colorful history as a political leader in his adopted home is key to understanding the complicated links between Saudi Wahhabism and the undercurrent of religious sectarianism beginning to surface in Kosovo. Balic and Jusufi, two non-Albanian Kosovars, can be seen as central figures in the effort to integrate Wahhabi proselytizing institutions into Kosovo's political and cultural mainstream. ⁷⁹

One of the impediments to dealing with such issues is an internationally imposed policy that has sought to implement certain ideals in local societies with little or no flexibility to adjust them when it becomes clear they are counterproductive to the overall mission. Despite evidence of Balic's underlying hostility to "Western" forces in the Balkans, as noted in conversations with a broad range of staff in the Ministry of Health (MoH) and the international staffs supervising the MoH's daily activities, UNMIK is seemingly trapped in its policy of "multiculturalism," ultimately hampering local governing bodies', including the provisional government of Kosovo's efforts to discipline Balic for failures as Health Minister that go well beyond his associations with Saudi Arabia. In the end, the largely ignored inter-linking of Saudi religious organizations, the Bosnian government and Numan Balic's Ministry has been broken after a long and ugly political fight between the provisional government of Kosovo, Balic and UNMIK which all too often intervened to protect Balic from being disciplined for his questionable policies. While Balic was formally suspended from his position on 4 March 2003 (Steiner's office is delaying his formal removal out of fear of the political consequences), the complicated web of interests that were allowed to shape the health system in Kosovo may still provide the wedge needed for Saudi

influence to remain paramount in many parts of rural Kosova, let alone keep Balic in the position of Kosova's Minister of Health, despite a long record of incompetence and mismanagement.

Local Efforts to Address the Growing Power of the SJCRKC

In an attempt to thwart what many on the ground see as an effort by the SJCRKC to indoctrinate Kosova's rural population and take over some of Kosova's key institutions, new political lines are being drawn in Kosovar society. Unfortunately for the long-term stability of the region, these political divisions reflect more than ever, the rural/urban divide that has historically divided the Kosovar population. As a result, there appears to be a heightened sense of persecution among those who have become reliant on SJCRKC assistance and indeed, a small segment of the population who have adopted Salafidoctrines. "Political Islam" as it has emerged in other parts of the world, therefore, while still at its infancy in Kosova, is transforming to fit local concerns. One can follow in the BIK's journal *Takvimi*, for example, the occasional debate over the merits of establishing an Islamic party in order to address these problems of rural poverty and administrative neglect. Indeed, advocates for the creation of an Islamic Party reveal a growing sense of political power in Kosovar society, one that is becoming more interventionist when it comes to influencing cultural mores and the education of society as well as a more aggressive political stance vis-à-vis the outside world.

The powerful impact Saudi-funded schools have on the perceptions of rural communities vis-à-vis the outside world has not only created tensions within the Muslim community over doctrine, but it has also challenged the traditional harmony between Christian and Muslim Albanians. A visible division has emerged in which radical elements of the Albanian Muslim community, taking their cue from their Arab benefactors, are going so far as to challenge Albanian nationalist sentiments seen as too closely linked to a "Christian heritage." In addition to

declaring the Albanian national hero Skanderbeg a “non-believer” (he resisted Ottoman forces in the fifteenth century), Saudi Salafi groups have also expressed open hostility to the presence of Americans and other Western “corrupting” Christian influences in Kosovo. Linking Catholic Albanians to Western interests and rural Kosovo’s continued impoverishment has shown increasing success in some regions and is a continuation of a strategy adapted by Sarajevo during the Tito era.⁸⁰

Conclusion

The single most important factor in globalization is the scale of the project. I have no doubt that the very message compels those participating in the Saudi project to strive for the kind of global domination that is more associated with US pop culture these days; but it is important that the strategies of these Wahhabis are restrained, patient and ultimately, self-aware of its central problems. The SJCRKC avoids the confrontations with Christian evangelicals, rather preferring to cultivate in environments that are exclusive, closed and highly dependent on their “charity.” What the SJCRKC is attempting to accomplish is not the domination of an entire cultural geography, but manipulates smaller socio-economic units that are utterly incapable of caring for themselves, such as the Afghan refugee camps in Pakistan during the 1980s and Kosovo today. It is a long term process, one which builds a strong foundation of support among the most vulnerable, and in the case of Kosovo, the key human resource to all the revolts in the region for the last three hundred years. Much like with the Taliban in Pakistan, Kosovo’s rural youth are being cultivated in ways the Abdülhamid and Tito state’s could never accomplish. In the end, as has been the case in many other regions of the world, it has been the neglect of wealth

“democratic” societies to adequately meet the most basic needs of fellow human beings who happen to be Muslim, that has resulted in social and cultural conditions we may be witnessing in rural Kosovo today. Unless immediate attention is paid to provide an alternative for rural communities in Kosovo, the spectacle of outside powers manipulating internal sectarian differences, as in Lebanon in the 1970s and Afghanistan in the 1980s is a distinct possibility. It would be yet another tragic demonstration of western shortsightedness that its failure to provide a few million dollars to rebuild the lives of hundreds of thousands of human beings would result in decades of conflict and instability. The economic stinginess and the cultural chauvinism that produce this neglect may come back to haunt Europe and the Bush administration that has since the beginning of 2003, quietly evacuated Kosovo, ending any illusion that things have been made right in the Balkans over the last three years.

Notes

¹Quoted in Andras Riedlmayer, “Kosovo: The Destruction of Cultural Heritage,” in www.justiceforall.org, 1999.

²The latest manifestation came in reaction to a lecture of mine which was misquoted in an UPInewsservice report. See “Edhen jërrezik për Kosovën: Wahabitë,” *Koha Ditore* 4 January 2003.

³Consult www.kosovapress.com archives, 29 December 1999.

⁴I observed this already in 1999 and have outlined the fundamental structural dynamics of the United Nations’ systemic attempt to dilute Kosovo Albanian political development which would undoubtedly raise the issue of the region’s status as an independent state. See Isa Blumi, “One Year of Failure in Kosovo: Chances Missed and the Unknown Future,” *South Eastern European Politics* [Summer, 2000]: 15-24.

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- ⁵John L. Esposito, *Islam and Politics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984), 212.
- ⁶Gregory Stauth and Sami Zubaida, eds., *Mass Culture, Popular Culture and Social Life in the Middle East*, (Frankfurt: Campus Verlag, 1987).
- ⁷Consult the Official Saudi information website for news on activities of various Saudi “charities” in Kosovo: www.saudinf.com.
- ⁸Armend Podvorica, “Besimii denjënukështëekstremizëm,” *Koha Ditore* 7 January 2003, page 11.
- ⁹See M. Sh. Alusi, *Tarikh Najd*, ed. M. B. Athari, (Cairo AH1343/AD1924), 50ff and Al Jabarti, *Min Akhbar al-Hijaz wa Najd fi Tarikh al-Jabarti*, ed. M. A. Ghalib, (n.p. 1975), 97.
- ¹⁰H. Khala fal -Shaykh Khaz‘al, *Hayatal -Shaykh Muhammad b. ‘Abdal -Wahhab* (Beirut, 1968), 119ff.
- ¹¹Ibn Bishr, *‘Unwan al-Majd fi Tarikh Najd*, 2 vols, (Riyadh: AH1385, 1388/AD1965, 1968) vol. 1, 18 and M. A. Khan, “A Diplomat’s Report on Wahhabism in Arabia,” *Islamic Studies*, 1 (1968): 32 -48.
- ¹²M. Kurd‘Ali, *Al-Qadim wa‘l Hadith*. (Cairo, 1925), 157.
- ¹³M. R. Rida, *Al-Wahhabiyya wa‘l -Hijaz*. (Cairo: AH1344/AD1925), 34.
- ¹⁴W. Sharara, *Al-Ahl wa‘l -Ghanima: Muqawwimatal -Siyasafi‘l -Mamlakaal -‘Arabiyya al-Su‘udiyya*. (Beirut, 1981), 124.
- ¹⁵*Majmu‘atal -Tawhid*, (Saudi Arabia, n.d.), 52 and passim.
- ¹⁶*Majmu‘atal -Tawhid*, 284.
- ¹⁷*Majmu‘atal -Tawhid*, 121- 122 and cf. 251ff.
- ¹⁸Sharara, *Al-Ahl wa‘l -Ghanima*, 91.
- ¹⁹Sulayman b. ‘Abdillab. Muhammad b. ‘Abdal -Wahhab, *Taysiral -‘Azizal -Hamidfil Sharh Kitabal Tawhid* (Damascus, n.d.) is a detailed commentary of these doctrines.
- ²⁰Sharara, *Al-Ahl wa‘l -Ghanima*, 101.
- ²¹A number of scholars take this too much for granted when citing documents generated from Istanbul at the time, assuming as a result, that pan-Islamism resonated unambiguously in places such as Albania. See for instance, Cezmi Eraslan, *II. Abdülhamid ve Islam Birliği* (Istanbul: Ötüken, 1992)

²²In a revealing file at the archives of the Italian Foreign Ministry (ASMAE), Enrico Comashi, an Albanian Catholic by birth, is being hunted down by the Ottoman authorities for “treason” for taking Italian citizenship at the turn of-the-century. The issue is that Enrico had converted to Islam in the 1880s, becoming Ahmed Shevfik Efendi, thereby giving up his “Latin” identity to join the *umma* as asserted by Abdülhamid. His persecution became a concern to the Italians as it reflected a larger Ottoman state aggressiveness towards its assumed Muslim constituency. See ASMAE Ambasciata d’Italia in Turchia B.54F.1, Scutari 31 Luglio 1906 no.437/24 Consular report to Italian Embassy in Istanbul.

²³Selim Deringil, “Legitimacy Structures in the Ottoman State: the Reign of Abdülhamid II (1876 -1909),” *IJMES*, 23 (1991): 345 -359.

²⁴For details on these concessions which granted subjects of states at peace with the Ottoman Empire the right to certain judiciary exemptions within the Ottoman judicial system, see Halil İnalcık and Donald Quataert eds., *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire, 1600 -1914*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 50 -52, 188-191. *Ahdnâmes* were granted to Austria in 1699, 1718, and 1739 while Russia received them in 1701, 1721, 1739 and 1774 and Italy 1890.

²⁵See Starvo Skendi, “The *Millet* System and its Contribution to the Blurring of Orthodox National Identity in Albania,” in Benjamin Braude and Bernard Lewis eds., *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire* vol.1, (New York: Holmes & Meier Publishers, Inc., 1982), 247.

²⁶For details of Austria’s program in the region see Engelbert Deusch, “Das Österreichische Kultusprotektorat in der Türkei,” in *Österreich in Geschichte und Literatur mit Geographie*, 45, (2001): 3 -23. Austria’s recognized claim to the Albanian Catholics helped exclude other European Catholic powers from establishing a foothold in the region. The French, for instance, despite their active policy of supporting Catholic communities in the Levant, had not a single school in Northern Albania. Archives of the French Foreign Ministry, Nantes (henceforth AMAENANTE S): Constantinople Correspondences avec les Echelles Scutari d’Albanie (1885 -1890) French Consulat Scutari to French Embassy in Constantinople, dated Scutari, le 25 Oct 1886 “Etablissement Scholaire.”

²⁷As far as Austria was concerned, the Reichstadt Agreement of 1876 with Russia clearly articulated Vienna's opposition to the formation of a great Slavic state in the Balkans.

See B. H. Sumner, *Russia and the Balkans, 1870 - 1880*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1937), 586, 588.

²⁸See Abdal -Ra'uf Sinnu's, *al-Naz'aatal -Kiyaaniyyahal -Islaamiyyahfial -Dawlahal -Uthmaaniyyah, 1877 -1881: Bilaadal -Shaam, al- Hijaaz, Kurdistaan, Albaaniyaa* . (Beirut, 1994), 143 -155.

²⁹For a comprehensive explanation of this in the case of Macedonia, see Fikret Adanir, *Die Makedonisch eFrage* , (Wien: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1979), 154 -162.

³⁰For an example of this European interpretation of the League of Prizren, see I Documenti Diplomatici Italiani (DDI) Seconda Serie 1870 -1896 Volume X, Document 202, Scutari 23 giugno 1878 R. 353 il consolo Scutari, Berio, al Presidente del consiglio, Cairoli.

³¹ASMAE Ambasciata d'Italia in Turchia, B. 107 F. 2, Monastir, 14 novembre 1897 no. 349/23 consulto MAE.

³²Ambasciata d'Italia in Turchia, B. 222 F. 3 Telegramano. 407, Scutari, 4 febbraio 1904, reporting that 7000 Muslim Albanians from the city headed out to the mountains to help capture rebellious Catholic Albanian groups.

³³ASMAE Ambasciata d'Italia in Turchia, B. 204 F. 1 Hodeidah 22 aprile 1897 no. 23/3 encloses a report from the Italian consul in Yemen that highlights the sudden outburst of violence toward the local Greek merchants in this, the opposite end of the empire. It was reported that local mosques and the government newspaper evoked the hostile language needed to stir up locals.

³⁴Benjamin C. Fortna, "Islamic Morality in Late Ottoman 'Secular' Schools," *IJMES*, 32:3 (2000): 369 -393.

³⁵For how Istanbul tried to disseminate this to the Arab part of the world see Engin Akarli, "Abdulhamid II's Attempt to Integrate Arabs into the Ottoman System," in *Palestine in the Late Ottoman Period* , edited by David Kushner, (Leiden: Brill, 1986), 74-89.

³⁶See for instance, Bayram Kodaman, *Abdülhamid Devri Egitim Sistemi* .(Istanbul, 1991), 91-96, Hysni Myzyri, *Shkollatë para Kombëtare Shqipe* .(Tirana, 1978) and Mustafa Ergün, *II. Mesrutiyet Devrinde Egitim Hareketleri, 1908 -1914*, (Ankara, 1996).

³⁷See the extensive reports presented to the Porte by Yusuf Ziya Pasha and others during the period in BBAYEE, 7/23. Compiled by Istanbul on 24 Ramazan 1303. [June 26, 1886], documents 3, 5, and 6.

³⁸See Isa Blumi, "The Dynamics of Identity: The Albanian in the Ottoman Empire." in *ACTA Viennensia Ottomanica Aktender 13 CIEPO -Symposiums*, (ed.) Gisela Prochazka - Eisl (Vienna, 1999): 21 -34.

³⁹See Prime Minister's Archives, Istanbul, (hereafter BBA), Meclis Vukela 56/54, 4 Muharrem 1308 [August 21, 1890] in which Istanbul's concern over Montenegro's Prince Nicholas' payoff to local Albanian leaders in Grudais clearly based on the "surprising" willingness of local Muslims to take weapons from the Orthodox state.

⁴⁰See Theodore Ippen, "Das religiöse Protectorat Österreich -Ungarns in der Türkei," in: *Die Kultur* , III (1902), pg. 298 -310. The British Consulat Scutari, Green, was also quite aware of the fluid value sectarian identities had in the region see Public Records Office in Kew Gardens, (PRO) Foreign Office (FO) 78/2628 N. 15, Consul Green to Foreign Office, Scutari, 3 March 1877.

⁴¹For the Ottoman state, full -scale implementation of an educational infrastructure began in 1881-1882. See for instance the declaration by the Education Ministry for the creation of vilayet -based education councils. BBA Ayniyat Defterleri, 1420, 1 Safer 1299 [23 December 1881]. By 1910, this policy is streamlined by the Young Turk regime. See BBA DH.MUI 80 -3/181328. Ca. 29 [8 June 1910] for a report on expenditures (*masraflar*) on schools.

⁴²For over fifty years Austria and the Vatican was busy constructing schools in the region. For instance, documents dating as far back as 1849 demonstrate how the Propaganda Fida and the Scutari based Archbishops sought to introduce teachers in various village church complexes. See Albanian State Archives (henceforth AQSH), F. 132. D. 1. f. 8 dated 28 June 1849, Bishop of Lezhato Church officials in Scutari and Rome. Later, the archbishop of Durrazo (Durres/Draç) was also busy organizing a school with Austrian money. AQSH, F. 131. D. 2. f. 1 -13, dated 16 July, 1856. A year later,

bishops in Scutari and Durrazo were discussing ways to finance private schools and the salaries of their teachers. AQSHF.132.D.29.f.1 -2; D.31.f.1 -3 dated Scutari and Durrazo throughout the spring of 1857.

⁴³To appreciate Ottoman concerns about Austrian monetary and military support to Malësore "Catholics," and their understanding of what the Italians hoped to do about Austrian ascendancy, see BBAYEE42/139, no date.

⁴⁴BBAYA.HUS166/23(29.1.1298), In Kosova, 20 Kanunëve, 1296, telegram 553 states that "Muslims are going to Christians schools in Ipek and Kalkadelen, Yakova, Prizren. In protest, local Muslim leaders march to Uskub and Prishtina to protest." These demonstrations represent a struggle of influence, pitting established local imams who were aligning themselves with the Sultan, and others who saw benefits in sending their children to Catholic schools being funded by Austria and Italy.

⁴⁵HHStA No.2A -B, Beilage, PAXIV/7, Albanien V/1, Ippento Goluchowski, Scutari, 31 January 1901. The language problem would be the single issue that divided Albanian Muslims for decades, until finally, with the fall of the Hamidian regime, even loyalists to the promotion of the study of Ottoman and Arabic, demanded the use of Albanian in state-funded schools. Demands outlined by Albanian ulema in an article in Tanin dated 11 February 1911.

⁴⁶Ispe ll this out in Isa Blumi, "Contesting the Edges of the Ottoman Empire: Rethinking Ethnic and Sectarian Boundaries in the Malësore, 1878 -1912." in *IJMES*, 35/2, [2003]: 237-256.

⁴⁷For an example of how a "mixed" village in the mountains above Prizren organized a petition to both Istanbul and Vienna for the construction of a school, see BBA TFR.1.KV28/2774, various dates throughout 1907.

⁴⁸For one of the better representations of this unique Albanian Islamic heritage, see Robert Elsie, *History of Albanian Literature*, (Boulder: Social Science Monographs, 1995) vol.1, 85 -118, 195-208.

⁴⁹Although Albanians made up more than half the Muslim population of Yugoslavia, Belgrade never permitted an Albanian to head either the highest state sanctioned institution and its training infrastructure.

⁵⁰On Yugoslavia's forced migration policy see Isa Blumi, "Whatever Happened to the Albanians? Some Clues to a Twentieth-Century European Mystery" in *European Encounters, 1945-2000: Migrants, Migration and European Societies since 1945*. Eds. Ohliger, Schonwalder, Triadafilopoulos [London: Ashcroft, 2003], 231-268 and on closure of mosques in the 1950s see Isa Blumi, "Albanians in Macedonia: Has the Rain Come?" *International Journal of Albanian Studies* [Fall, 1997]: 32-56.

⁵¹On how these Sufi orders have persisted until 1998 in Kosovo to play a leading spiritual role in the daily lives of Kosovars see Haki Kasumi, *Bashkësitë fetare në Kosovë 1945-1980* (Pristinë: Instituti Historisë së Kosovës, 1988), 65 and for a more general history of their settlement into the Balkans, see Alexandre Popovic, *Les derviches balkaniques hier et aujourd'hui*. (Istanbul: ISIS, 1994). Nathalie Clayer has provided the most thorough study of Sufism in Albania and is helpful for a better understanding of how they practiced over the centuries: *Mystiques, État et société: Les Halvetis dans l'aire balkanique de la fin du XVe siècle à nos jours* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1994). See also H.T. Norris, *Islam in the Balkans: Religion and Society between Europe and the Arab World* (New York: University of South Carolina Press, 1993).

⁵²Alexandre Popovic, *L'Islam balkanique: les musulmans du sud-est européen dans la période post-ottomane* (Berlin, 1986), 347-357.

⁵³Fejzulah Hadzibajric, "Tesavuf, tarikateki jenapodrucju Starjesinstva IZ BiH dana s," *Glasnik vrhovnog islamskog starjesinstva u SFRJ*, XLII/3 (1979): 271-277, see in particular 273 and *Glasnik Vrhovnog Islamskog Starjesinstva* (1952), 199.

⁵⁴Cornelia Sorabji, "Muslim Identity and Islamic Faith in Socialist Sarajevo," PhD dissertation (Cambridge University, 1989), 163.

⁵⁵*Glasnik Vrhovnog Islamskog Starjesinstva*, (1962), 186.

⁵⁶Ger Duijzings, *Religion and the Politics of Identity in Kosovo*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000).

⁵⁷Stephen Schwartz, *Kosovo: Background to a War* (London: Anthem Press, 2000), 87-101.

⁵⁸Numerous residents of Peja, Gjakova and Prizren told of building projects in the 1940s and 1950s that leveled Medieval Catholic monuments, including graveyards and a late

as 1982 in Peja, archeological sites that produced artifacts which dated before the rise of the Nemanjic dynasties.

⁵⁹This is made clear in Noel Malcolm, *Kosovo: A Short History* (New York: New York University Press, 1998), 41-57.

⁶⁰Personal Correspondence, Peja, January 2003. Interestingly, as a result perhaps, a popular saying among older Kosovo Muslims today reflects a general animosity towards Bosnian/Slav Muslims. "Squeeze a Bosniak and you get Seven Shki (Serbs)."

⁶¹Peja's nominally Muslim majority is notorious about keeping Catholics out of their lives. The biggest sin a child can commit among Peja's Muslim community, for instance, is to marry a Catholic, an act that taints the blood of the family forever. Personal correspondence, Peja, January 2003.

⁶²Personal Correspondence, Peja, January 2003.

⁶³As confirmed by conversations with elder members of the Catholic community of Gjakova and Prizren now living in New York, September 1997 and Muslims living in Klina and Prizren August 1999.

⁶⁴See Isa Blumi, *Rethinking the Late Ottoman Empire: A Comparative Social and Political History of Albania and Yemen, 1878-1918* (Istanbul: ISIS, 2003), chapter 6, 8.

⁶⁵For census data see "Jugoslavija 1918-1988, statisticki godisnjak" (1989).

⁶⁶The largest flows of Catholics out of Kosovo took place immediately after World War I, World War II and during this Rankovic period. That said, well into the 1980s, a disproportionate number of Kosovo migrantsto Western Europe and North America were Catholics. For a history of the Catholic Church in Albanian-populated Macedonia and Kosovo, see Gjini Gasper, *The Shkup-Prizren Diocese through the Centuries* (Prizren: Drita, 2000).

⁶⁷This process has been observed by Alexandre Popovic, "The contemporary situation of the Muslim mystic orders in Yugoslavia," in Ernest Gellner (ed.), *Islamic Dilemmas: Reformers, Nationalists and Industrialization: The Southern Shore of the Mediterranean* (Berlin: Mouton, 1985), 247.

⁶⁸This was revealed in a report provided by a Serbian journalist who explored a particularly bloody episode of repression by Belgrade. L. Bulatovic, *Prizrenski proces* (Novi Sad, 1988), 91-93.

⁶⁹*BuletinHU* 1984,12andSladjanaDjuric, *OsvetaIKazna. Socioloskoistrazivanje krvneosvetenaKosovuIMetohiji* (Nish:Prosveta,1998),107.

⁷⁰*BuletinHU* (1978)vol.2,6.

⁷¹SeeSharifiAhmeti'sarticlein *GlasnikVrhovnogIslamskogStarjesinstva* ,1979,283-287.

⁷²Amongothers,seeDusanBatakovic, *TheKosovoChronicles* (Belgrade:Plato,1992).

⁷³*GlasnikVrhovnogIslamskogStarjesinstva* ,(1975),296.

⁷⁴Theentiremeetinganditscontentsarecoveredin thespecialissueof *GlasnikVrhovnog IslamskogStarjesinstva* ,no.3(1979).

⁷⁵SomeauthorsstandoutintheirvirulentandsensationalistdepictionsofAlbanian "savagery"and"primitiveness."DejanLucic'sremarkablyopenracismhadawide readershipinSerbiaandhisbookentitled *Tajnealbanskemafije* (SecretsoftheAlbanian Mafia)publishedin1988complimentedtheequallyderogatoryworkofBulatovicand othersintheMilosevicera.

⁷⁶Djurichasnotedthis1998, *OsvetaIKazna*, 109.Seealso *BuletinHU* 1978(4),12.

⁷⁷SeeAmnestyInternational, *AHumanRightsCrisisinKosovoProvince.Document SeriesB:Tragiceventscontinue,No.3Orahovac,July -August1998.EUR70/58/98* , pages4 -6.

⁷⁸ArbanaXharra,"NismaeBashkësisëIslamenxitreagimetëfuqishmen ëshkolla," *KohaDitore* ,27April2003,1and4.

⁷⁹Formoredetails,consultIsaBlumi,"TheIslamistChallengeinKosova." *Current Histor*[March2003]:124 -128.

⁸⁰ThiscanbenotedintheeffortbyBIKtoassert"religious"trainingintoschools,a counteroffensivedirectedatWahhabipenetrationbutperhapsexpectingsomehopeof maintainingasecular,multi -faithcommunitytogether.SeeArbanaXharra,"Nismae BashkësisëIslamenxitreagimetëfuqishmenëshkolla," *KohaDitore* ,27April2003,1 and4.