

**Yuliia Uzun, PhD in political science**

*Odessa I. I. Mechnikov National University, Ukraine*

## **PROJECT “GREATER ALBANIA” AND PROCESSES OF ITS PRACTICAL REALIZATION**

The article describes the process of formation and development of the ideology of Pan-Albanism. There are presented the projects of political organizations that are directed on the practical implementation of the idea of Albanian territories unification. In the article has been analyzed the activity of the modern proponents of Pan-Albanism and has been considered their territorial claims against the neighboring countries. The project “Greater Albania” has been recognized as a part of the general process of restructuring in Balkans and Europe. The recognition of Kosovo has demonstrated the possibility of recognition other political formations in Europe that means the revision of the World War II results and postwar borders.

**Key words:** ideology, Pan-Albanism, political organization, the project “Greater Albania”, Balkans.

The geopolitical projects of spatial restructuring, expressed by the representatives of the authorities and public organizations, became urgent under the conditions of global economic crises that has influenced on the activation of the socio-political processes. Wherein an application of ideas of ethno-national consolidation, escalation of ethno-territorial conflicts, the resolution of which is presented as a way of solution to the national, political and socio-economic problems, are observed.

At the beginning of the XXI century the ideas of ethno-national “renaissance” were mass distributed and had a political platform in the Balkan countries, where the irredentism and separatism movements have politically grew strong, that blurred the images of previously formed integral national spaces. The representatives of extreme-right movements came into power, having an influence on the activity of territorial claims with an aim to implement an “idea of national state”.

The features of modern development of “ethno-national renaissance” in Europe are widely studied by such scientists and researchers as E. Gross, E. Guskova, V. Bukarskiy, P. Iskenderov, A. Miller, A. Mylnikova, C. Nasonova, O. Nemenskiy, A. Nizovski, O. Petrunina, Y. Rubinskiy, N. Smirnova, A. Yazkova, A. Zadokhin, and also by foreign scientists and researchers, among them – C. Chekrezi, R. Chosya, R. Elsie, K. Frasher, S. Hasani, L. Kristova, P. Milo, D. Mirovich, S. Pollo, A. Puto, S. Skendi, I. Tabov, etc.

The aim of the article is to analyze the history of the emergence of geopolitical project “Greater Albania” and to analyze the tendencies of its development at the present stage.

For the first time, the projects of “Greater” idea on the Balkans originated from Serbs and Greeks, when Ioannis Kolettis declared the presence of “Greater idea” among Greeks in 1844 during the speech in the parliament, and Ilija Garašanin suggested the idea of creating the Greater Serbia<sup>1</sup>. Furthermore, in both projects the main idea was to consolidate ethno-nation as a core for “gathering lands” for “Greater political institution”.

In XIX century some nations of the Peninsula, basing on the idea of right of peoples on self-determination, demanded the autonomy or statehood from Ottoman and Austrian Empires. Other states had been actively participating in all territorial changes and in the processes of recognition of their results, ultimately that had been interference in the “internal affairs”, that may be explained as a defence of their national interests, international obligations and geopolitical expediency.

In the same period, the problem of recognition of national self-determination has been expressed, when in 1878 at the Congress of Berlin was raised the question about the creation of new states – Bulgaria, Romania, Serbia<sup>2</sup>. However, the Congress agreed to grant the autonomy only for some territories of historical Bulgaria and Serbia.

Only in the 90s of the XIX century the idea of national sovereignty has been explained as a right of

1 Петрунина, О.Е. (2003). «Великая идея» и геополитическая ситуация на Балканах на рубеже XX-XXI ст. *Полития. Журнал политической философии и социологии политики*, 2, 91.

2 Задохин, А.Г., Низовский, А.Ю. (2000). *Пороховой погреб Европы*. Москва: Вече, 283.

population of the territory to independently decide under the reign of which state to live.

Then, the problem of “national self-determination of peoples” has been developed at the international legal level: the Montevideo Convention on the Rights and Duties of States (1936), the Atlantic Charter (1941), the Charter of the United Nations (1945), the UN General Assembly Resolution №1514 (XV) “Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples” (1960), the UN General Assembly Resolution №2625 (XXV) “Declaration on Principles of International Law Concerning Friendly Relations and Cooperation among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations” (1970), where as one of the main international principles has been recognized the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples<sup>1</sup>.

Nowadays, obviously, the realization of the principle of self-determination contradicts with the principle of state`s right on preservation sovereignty and the inviolability of frontiers, that causes the risk of threats to peace. The problem lies in the narrowing of understanding of Balkan peoples` national idea as an idea of geographical expansion, based on the concepts of ethnocentrism, historical revanchism, clericalism and traditionalism. In the same time, it is to be seen the loss of meaning of universal principles of humanity survival and development in all its ethno-national diversity, as a form of rejection of modern ways of globalization with its standards and global inequality.

The majority countries of the Balkan peninsula region (partially or fully there are located 12 countries: Bulgaria, Serbia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Greece, Kosovo, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Slovenia, Romania, Turkey) are with varying degrees of explicitness nostalgic for the periods of their maximum territorial expansion, referring to the maps of pre-war or wartime.

The implementation of the policy “Returning to Europe” (Greece, Slovenia, Romania, Croatia and Bulgaria are the EU members-states) or membership in NATO (Albania, Croatia, Romania, Turkey, Greece, Bulgaria, Slovenia) does not relieve from set after the World War II configuration of national borders and does not solve the problems of ethno-national nature<sup>2</sup>. That means that the relevance of these problems has not diminished. Furthermore, the War in Kosovo in 1996-2008 proved the acuteness of these issues in the region. Serbian leader, Slobodan Milosevic, claimed during his speech at the International court, that the World War III is declared on in the Balkans by the fact of the international community recognition of the possibility of revision post-war borders in the region (after recognition of Kosovo by 108 states of the world) and recognition of capability to realize the international principle of "self-determination of peoples". Thus, according to O. Nemensky, the process of establishment of “Greater Albania” has begun after declaration of Kosovo independence in 2008<sup>3</sup>.

The origin of the Albanian people has not the unique version in history. One of such versions is a Caucasian origin of Albanians, that is proved by the old maps of the III – XV centuries, which demonstrate that Albania bordered Iberia and Scythia<sup>4</sup>. Another version of origin tells, that Albanians are the descendants of the Illyrians, that emerged as a result of assimilation of Neolithic population of the peninsula (Culture Malik) into new coming Indo-Europeans. Actually, in the ancient period territory of Albania had been inhabited by Illyrian tribes – Taulantii (near city Durres) and Dardanians (on the territories of modern Kosovo and Southern Serbia). Wherein, the Southern part of modern Albania had been within Epirus, and Central Part (since the reign of Philip II) – within the state Macedonia, and after the last one joining Rome in 146 BC – within the Roman province of Macedonia. The Northern Part, with the cities Skodra (Shkoder) and Liss, became the part of the Roman province of Dalmatia since II BC. Dyrrachium (Durres) was a centre of trade route from Balkans to Italia, there was the beginning of the famous Via Egnatia road across the peninsula to Thessaloniki and then through Byzantium to Asia. In the result of division of the Roman Empire, the main part of the state became the part of Byzantium, and Dalmatia became the part of the West Roman Empire. The part of the territory of Albania for some time was within the First Bulgarian Empire that existed from the VII to XI century.

After the capture of Constantinople by the Crusaders, the parts of Albania were alternately under the

1 Декларации ООН. *Официальный сайт ООН*. <[http://www.un.org/ru/documents/decl\\_conv/declarations/intlaw\\_principles.shtml](http://www.un.org/ru/documents/decl_conv/declarations/intlaw_principles.shtml)>.

2 Неменский, О. (2000). Независимость Косово и балканизация Центральной Европы. <<http://www.apn.ru/publications/article19437.htm>>

3 Неменский, О. (2000). Независимость Косово и балканизация Центральной Европы. <<http://www.apn.ru/publications/article19437.htm>>

4 Абдурагимов, Г.А. (1995). *Кавказская Албания – Лезгистан: история и современность*. Санкт-Петербург, Макачкала: Изд-во Дагестанского Университета.

reign of Venetians, the Epirus Kingdom, the Kingdom of Naples, and the Serbian Kingdom. After the first fall of Byzantium in 1204, Crusaders created a small, but significant Albanian Kingdom with capital in Durres (1271-1333; 1355-1368). In the middle of XIV century (1336-1355) the territory of Albania was conquered by the Serbian King Stefan Dusan.

The independent statehood of Albania began in 1368, when city Durres was headed by the first ethnic Albanian prince – Karl Topia, who established there the "Principality of Albania" with the blessing of the Pope.

However, in the second half of the XIV century (in 1381), Turks had intensively interacted into the internal affairs of Albania by supporting the clan Topia against the clan Ballsha in the inter-tribal war, with an aim to strengthen geopolitical presence of Turkey in the region. Thus, Albania became the field of interests conflict of Venice, that controlled city Durres, and the Ottoman Porte. At the end of the XIV to the middle of XV centuries Albanians tried to assert their independence in the National Liberation War under the leadership of commander George Kastrioti (Albanian: Gjergj Kastrioti Skënderbeu). However, the final expulsion of the Venetians from Albania by Turks had happened only in 1571 as a result of capture Venetian cities Bar and Ulcinj by Turks.

The North Albania had a semi-independent regime, autonomy, within the Ottoman Porta. Gegs or Ghegs (sub-ethnic Albanians) did not let in their villages Turkish officials and tax collectors. In each tribe, internal relations had been regulated in the assemblies and councils of elders, led by Bayraktar (standard-bearer). Although, during wars Gegs served in the Ottoman army in irregular cavalry under the leadership of their chieftain, mainly for getting profit. Turks had a significant influence in the Central and South parts of the country, where they levied moderate taxes and permitted Christian governors to use their lands in exchange for service in the cavalry. The gradual spread of Islam there is explained as a social "lifts" and guarantees for converted to it.

Within the Ottoman Porta the Albanian land had been divided into vilayets of Janina and Rumelia (1835); later – Pashaliks of Monastir (Bitola; up to 1877) and Uskub (up to 1863). After 1865 Istanbul divided Albanian lands between the vilayets Skodra, Janina (from 1867), Bitola (Monastir) and Kosovo (from 1877).

Ideology of the "Greater Albania" became a shining example of geographical national idea, that has been formed during the period of strengthening of geopolitical contradictions of the end of XIX century, when Vienna system of status quo was finally broken. The interests of ex-allies (Russia, Great Britain, Austria, etc.) had competed with each other that influenced on their geopolitical support of "national liberation movement" on the Balkan Peninsula.

First time, the idea of uniting Albanian regions of the Ottoman Empire was presented by the League of Prizren (leader – Abdyl Halid bej Frashëri) in 1878-1881. In 1878 the League signed "the Book of Decisions" ("Karamname") that consisted of 16 articles and expressed the idea of uniting all territories, inhabited by Albanians, in one vilayet<sup>1</sup>. The League of Prizren developed a map and ideology of Greater Albania, due to which Albanians were recognized as descendants of the Illyrians, who inhabited the Balkan Peninsula long before the Slavs (Serbs) and were an autochthonous people<sup>2</sup>. As the source of Albanians statehood absence had been recognized Belgrade, that implemented a strict policy against Albanians, by contributing to their eviction from Southern Serbia and Kosovo during the Serbo-Turkish War of 1877-1878. 13 June 1878, the League submitted the memorandum to the participants of the Congress of Berlin, announcing: "Just as we are not and do not want to be Turks, so we shall oppose with all our might anyone who would like to turn us into Slavs or Austrians or Greeks. We want to be Albanians"<sup>3</sup>. In 1879 the ideas of "Karamname" have been developed in the accession program of Kosovo Chameria, Epirus<sup>4</sup>.

It should be noted that researchers sometimes doubt the Pro-Albanian nature of the League of Prizren activity, proving that the League had been the geopolitical project of Great Britain. Thus, the Albanian historian K. Frasherri, Serbian historians S. Terzic and D. Milovic and German historian H. Chandler explained the requirement of the League to establish the Albanian vilayet as a project of supporting Albania that resisted the projects of Pan-Slavism and projects of strengthening Serbia, Montenegro and Bulgaria in

1 Смирнова, Н.Д. (2003). *История Албании в XX в.* Москва: Наука, 25.

2 Искендеров, П.А. (2012). «Великая Албания»: теория и практика. *Вопросы истории*, 1, 32.

3 Skendi, S. (1968). *The Albanian National Awakening, 1878–1912*. Princeton and London: Princeton University Press, 45.

4 Pollo, S., Puto, A. (1974). *The History of Albania*. Tirana, 125; Hasani, S. (1986). *Kosovo. Istine i zablude*. Zagreb, 284.

the region<sup>1</sup>.

However, the aims of the League of Prizren had contradicted the interests of the Ottoman Empire, that is why the League had been forbidden in 1880, but the development of its ideas were continued by the members of the League of Peja (Pec), led by Haxhi Zeka.

In 1879 the “Central Committee for the Defence of Rights of the Albanian Nation” (“Istanbul committee:”) had been established in Istanbul<sup>2</sup>. After the overthrow of Sultan Abdul Hamid II in the 1908 has appeared the Albanian schools, newspapers and political clubs of supporters of Albania (in Bucharest: “Drita” (“Light” and “Dituri” (“Knowledge”); in Sofia – “Demira” (“Aspiration”); in Egypt – “Bashkim” (“Alliance”), members of which were the future classics of Albanian literature and proponents of the Albanian independence – Andon Zako Çajupi, Thimi Mitko, Zef Jubani, etc.<sup>3</sup>. In 1908 the National Congress on the issue of national autonomy and creation the unified Latin-based Albanian alphabet was held in Monastir. In response, Young Turks (Turkish: Jön Türkler) passed the law on gangs (1909), that forbid to carry weapons, promoted the ideas of Pan-Turkism and Pan-Turanism with an aim to expand control over Albanians.

In 1909, Albanian rebellion broke out. In 1911 new League draw up the “Gerçe Memorandum” (“Red Book”) in city Podgorica – as a program of struggle for broad autonomy of Albanian lands<sup>4</sup>. Albanian leaders Bajram Curri, Hasan Prishtina, Isa Boletini claimed: “*We demand special rights for four vilayets: Skodra, Janina, Bitola and Kosovo. What about vilayet of Thessaloniki, we have not come yet to certain conclusions. In this vilayet Albanians live, too*”<sup>5</sup>.

In 1912 All-Albanian National Congress, that was a held in Vlorë, proclaimed “The Albanian Declaration of Independence”. Ismail Kemal – the leader of the first Albanian government planned to establish Albania with the territories of Janina, Bitola, Skopje, Pristina and Prizren.

In 1913 (at the London Conference) Albania has been recognized, but only as an autonomy in the Ottoman Empire, that included adjacent areas of Adriatic region, while the most part of Kosovo Vilayet was given to Serbia and Montenegro<sup>6</sup>. According to R. Elzi “*the Great Powers excluded about forty percent of the Albanian population from the new state*” that “*had been an error, which haunted the Balkans right to the end of the twentieth century*”<sup>7</sup>.

The projects of redistribution of Albania also existed in 1919, when ideas of the establishment of the Protectorate over the Central part of Albania by Italy and transmission the territory of the North and South parts of Albania to Greece, Serbia and Montenegro. However, at the end of the World War I 500 000 Albanians were within the boundaries of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (later – Yugoslavia), and 70 000 people – in Greece<sup>8</sup>. The boundaries, set by the Great Powers, made Albania one of the most backward state in Europe.

In 1924 the authorities of Albania (King Ahmet Zog) did not support Pan-Albanism, considering that idea of strengthening the stability in Albania as the most important thing, expressing this idea under the statement that primarily is Albania, besides the Albanians<sup>9</sup>.

However, the collapse of the Ottoman Empire provoked the crises of the identity, the nostalgia for the “imperial grandeur” that was combined with the Romanization of Roman period of Albanian history and orientation on Italy. In 1939 Albania had been occupied by Italy. By 1941 Albania set the desired borders under the protection of Mussolini and Hitler, it was the first time, when Albania implemented the project “Greater Albania”. Thus, Italy added to Albania territories of neighbour states:

- Vilayets Prishtina, Peja and Prizren (modern Kosovo);
- Vilayets Tetovo, Debar, Kičevo and Struga (modern Macedonia);
- Ulcinj, Tuzi and Plava (modern Montenegro)

1 Frasheri, K. (1997). *Lidhja Shqiptare e Prizrenit*. Tirane, 115.

Искендеров, П.А. (2012). «Великая Албания»: теория и практика. *Вопросы истории*, 1, 38.

2 Смирнова, Н.Д. (2003). *История Албании в XX в.* Москва: Наука, 25.

3 Смирнова, Н.Д. (2003). *История Албании в XX в.* Москва: Наука, 26.

4 Искендеров, П.А. (2012). «Великая Албания»: теория и практика. *Вопросы истории*, 1, 35.

5 Искендеров, П.А. (2012). «Великая Албания»: теория и практика. *Вопросы истории*, 1, 35.

6 Искендеров, П.А. (2012). «Великая Албания»: теория и практика. *Вопросы истории*, 1, 36.

7 Гуськова, Е.Ю. (2006). Албанский фактор кризиса в бывшей Югославии. Политика двойных стандартов международных организаций. *Аналитические записки*, 18.

8 Искендеров, П.А. (2012). «Великая Албания»: теория и практика. *Вопросы истории*, 1, 39.

9 Judah, T. (2008). *Kosovo: What Everyone Needs to Know*. Oxford, 43 – 44.

The exceptions were:

- Prefectures of Kosovo – Mitrovica, Vucitrn, Gnjilane, Podujevo had been within Serbia, that was occupied by Germany;
- Chameria (Greek – Epirus), where Italians had appointed the Albanian High Commissioner and in the same time had controlled that region by Italian military command in Athens;
- Macedonian districts of Skopje, Kumanovo and Prespa, Kosovo district – Kacanik and south Serbia district – Presevo had been annexed by Bulgaria.

Nationalist and anti-Communist organizations in Albania – “Balli Kombëtar” (literally “National Front”), established in 1939 and led by Midhat Frashëri (1882 – 1949), implemented its program of creation of “Greater Albania” exactly during the World War II, with the support of fascist Germany and Italy<sup>1</sup>. One of the “Ballists” proclamations included the statement: “*We are fighting for a democratic, ethnic and free Albania with a modern society!*”<sup>2</sup>.

With the onset of the World War II “Balli Kombëtar” formally proclaimed fight against Italian and German occupants, however, they continued to cooperate with them, participating in the occupation of the states of Axis powers, Greece and Yugoslavia. Since the end of 1942 the members of “Balli Kombëtar” had carried out the ethnic cleansing, exterminating in Kosovo population that was not Albanian, thus realizing their program<sup>3</sup>. 8<sup>th</sup> of September 1943, after the announcement of the surrender of Italy, Ballists entered into an agreement with Germany and proclaimed the independence of Albania, justifying temporary German presence by necessity of fighting against anti-Hitler coalition.

In 1943 German authorities supported the establishment of the Second League of Prizren (founded by Rexhep Mitrovica) with an aim to coordinate the activity of Albanian movements of ethnic unification in the Balkans. In march 1944, their leader Bedri Pejani requested Hitler assistance in establishing the Greater Albania and appealed for permission to form Albanian army (150 000 people)<sup>4</sup>. Thus, Albanians served in the German army, forming separate divisions: 21th SS Division “Skanderbeg”, battalion “Lyubota”, regiment “Kosovo”, formation Vulnetari. Ballists together with Wehrmacht were fighting against communists, participated in punitive actions in Serbia and Macedonia<sup>5</sup>. According to E. Guskova “from 100 to 200 thousands of Serbians and Montenegrins, due to the different data, left the territory of Kosovo during the war. This territory was inhabited by many thousands of Albanians from Albania, who had remained in this region taking advantage of the favourable political situation in Yugoslavia in 1944-1948, i.e. four years of fascism occupation became the only period of existence the “Greater Albania”.

The states of the Anti-Hitler coalition made a decision to return the borders of Albania, set in 1913, during the post-war settlement. However, Albanians did not recognize such decision. Albanians expressed reluctance to be the part of Serbia by conducting demonstrations in Kosovo in 1945. That is why the post-war politic of Yugoslavia was conducted by “coaxing” Albanians: exiled Serbs were forbidden to return to Kosovo. According to J. B. Tito, it would had been advisable to join Kosovo to Albania and by this way realize the project of “Balkan federation with the core in Yugoslavia”, because the border between Albania and Yugoslavia had been open before 1949 and the formation of district “Kosovo and Metohija” in Serbia “was intended to support the unification of Albania and Yugoslavia”<sup>6</sup>. In 1947 the negotiations on such an agreement were concluded in Belgrade, however, the Soviet Union and Yugoslavian conflict of 1948 destroyed plans for a Yugoslav-Albanian Federation.

During the governing of Enver Hoxha (1948-1985) the Albanian intention to incorporate Kosovo did

1 Elsie, R. Balli Kombëtar: The Ten-Point Programme. *Texts and Documents of Albanian History*. <[http://www.albanianhistory.net/texts20\\_1/AH1915\\_2.html](http://www.albanianhistory.net/texts20_1/AH1915_2.html)>.

2 Смирнова, Н.Д. (2003). *История Албании в XX в.* Москва: Наука, 232.

3 Elsie, R. Balli Kombëtar: The Ten-Point Programme. *Texts and Documents of Albanian History*. <[http://www.albanianhistory.net/texts20\\_1/AH1915\\_2.html](http://www.albanianhistory.net/texts20_1/AH1915_2.html)>.

4 Shatri M. Përpjeklet e lidhjes së dytë të Prizrenit për jetësimin e aspiratave jetike të kombit Shqiptar. *E Djathta Shqiptare në Mbrojtje të Shqipërisë Etnike*. <[http://www.shqiperiaetnike.de/html/body\\_prof\\_dr\\_muhamet\\_shatri.html](http://www.shqiperiaetnike.de/html/body_prof_dr_muhamet_shatri.html)>

5 Shatri M. Përpjeklet e lidhjes së dytë të Prizrenit për jetësimin e aspiratave jetike të kombit Shqiptar. *E Djathta Shqiptare në Mbrojtje të Shqipërisë Etnike*. <[http://www.shqiperiaetnike.de/html/body\\_prof\\_dr\\_muhamet\\_shatri.html](http://www.shqiperiaetnike.de/html/body_prof_dr_muhamet_shatri.html)>; Elsie, R. Balli Kombëtar: The Ten-Point Programme. *Texts and Documents of Albanian History*. <[http://www.albanianhistory.net/texts20\\_1/AH1915\\_2.html](http://www.albanianhistory.net/texts20_1/AH1915_2.html)>.

6 Гуськова, Е.Ю. (2006). Албанский фактор кризиса в бывшей Югославии. Политика двойных стандартов международных организаций. *Аналитические записки*, 18, 69.

not come out into the open. E. Hoxha thought that Kosovo may be transfer to Albania, only when Albania and Yugoslavia would be socialistic states<sup>1</sup>.

The project “Greater Albania” became actual again after the breakup of Yugoslavia.

In 1992 (before the war in Kosovo) Albanians declared the creation of “Republic Iliria” in city Struga in Macedonia and demanded federalization of Macedonia<sup>2</sup>. Nowadays the idea of creation the Slavic-Albanian confederation “Republic of Macedonia – Iliria” is alive, that is evidenced by the publications of the American-Albanian digital edition «Illyria» -<http://illyriapress.com>.

In the same time, in 1992 Sali Berisha (the private doctor of E. Hoxha, the leader of the Democratic Party of Albania, first non-Communist President of Albania) claimed that idea of creation “Greater Albania” did not belong to Albanian authorities, ruling politicians<sup>3</sup>. However, that statement drew criticism from Redjep Chosya and other proponents of Pan-Albanizm (Mahmut Bakalli, Azem Vllasi, Remzi Kolgeci, Mark Krasniqi, Fehmi Agani<sup>4</sup>).

Particularly, R. Chosya blamed S. Berisha in neglecting the suffering of Albanians, who died in Serbian prisons and who would had never accepted the borders of 1912<sup>5</sup>. Then, S. Berisha advocated the creation of unified Albanian cultural space without any appeals for Balkan borders transformation<sup>6</sup>. Paskal Milo the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Albania in 1990, Arben Imami Head of the Democratic Party of Albania, Albin Kurti leader of the left-leaning political movement in Kosovo Vetëvendosje (eng. -“Self-determination”); supporters of the “People's Movement of Kosovo” openly supported movement for Kosovo and Albania unification<sup>7</sup>.

In 1998 Jakup Krasniqi, the spokesman for the Kosovo Liberation Army (UÇK) and future Chairman of the Assembly of Kosovo, claimed that the target of the UÇK was the unification of all land, inhabited by Albanians. The battles in 1999-2001 in the South-Serbian village of Donji Prekaz and Macedonia had been a stage for “Greater Albania” project. The War in Macedonia had been continuing from February to August of 2001, by the time, when the peace deal had been signed by the government of the Republic of Macedonia and Albanian separatists. The Ohrid Agreement granted autonomy to Albania (the official status of the Albanian language; amnesty to Albanian rebels; Albanian police in Albanian areas).

The Kosovo Declaration of Independence in February 2008 and its recognition by the west states gave the ideologists of “Greater Albania” new hope. In 2008 the Prime-minister of Albania Sali Berisha announced the celebration of the 134th anniversary of the Prizren League<sup>8</sup>.

Nowadays Albanians have not been the one ethnos, it is the unite of Gegs – (Arvanites population group that occupies the North-West part of Albania, Macedonia, Kosovo, Montenegro and the right coast of the river Shkumbin); Tosks (South Albanians that occupy the left coast of the river Shkumbin, the South-Central part of Albania and Greece); Arvanitia, Arbëreshë and Cham peoples.

Albanians live in the territories of Albania, Greece, Macedonia, Yugoslavia. While the population of Albanians in Albania is 3,5 million, the estimated over 2 million Albanians live in the adjacent territories. The supporters of the idea of “Greater Albania” think that 12 million internally displaced Albanians live inside Albania.

There are six stars on the state flag of Kosovo that symbolize Albanian national communities, distributed in different states. Two of them are Albania and Kosovo and four of them are Serbian Medveđa and Preševo Valleys (the South of Serbia), also the South Montenegro, the North-West part of Macedonia and Greek Chameria.

**In Macedonia** the percentage of Albanians is 25 %, who live mostly in the West of the country (in the Polog Region, that is divided into 9 municipalities, there are 50 – 90% of Albanians: in Tetovo – 54% of Albanians, in Jegunovce, Želino, Gostivar, Brvenica, Vrapčište and in the South-West region in Debarca

1 Искендеров, П.А. (2012). «Великая Албания»: теория и практика. *Вопросы истории*, 1, 39.

2 Bugajzki, J. (1995). *Ethnic Politics in Eastern Europe: a Guide to Nationality Policies, Organizations, and Parties*. – New York, 116.

3 Искендеров, П.А. (2012). «Великая Албания»: теория и практика. *Вопросы истории*, 1, 42.

4 Akademiku Rexhep Qosja kërkon që Sali Berisha të burgoset. *Illyriapress*. <<http://illyriapress.com/akademiku-rexhep-qosja-kerkon-qe-sali-berisha-te-burgoset/>>; Чугунов, К. Албанские «игры» без границ. *Бизнес-Газета*. <<http://www.rg.ru/bussines/econom/372.shtm>>

5 Смирнова, Н.Д. (2003). *История Албании в XX в.* Москва: Наука, 387.

6 Искендеров, П.А. (2012). «Великая Албания»: теория и практика. *Вопросы истории*, 1, 42.

7 Milo, P. (2001). “Greater Albania” – *Between Fiction and Reality*. Tirana, 45.

8 Мирович, Д. Великая Албания: мечты и реальность. *Фонд стратегической культуры*. <[www.fondsk.ru](http://www.fondsk.ru)>

and Debar – more than 50%). Still there is the ethnic conflict in Albania. The Albanian population does not want to estimate themselves as an “ethnic minority” or citizens of “second-class”. The evidence of that are the events of March 2012, when Albanian violence dramatically escalated against Slavs-Macedonians.

**In Greece** Albanian population is only 4%. They live in the North region “Epirus and West Macedonia” with administrative centre Ioannina, that borders Albania and is called “Chameria” by South Albanians. In 1995, as commemoration day for the massacred Albanians of Chameria has been officially proclaimed 27<sup>th</sup> June. In geography the territories, divided between two states, are called the Greek toponymy “Epirus” (respectively the South and North Epirus). The division of territories has been done on the basis of the Congress of Berlin (1878), when the part of Ottoman Empire`s territories, inhabited by Albanians, had been given to Greece. Consequently, the formal decision to establish the Principality of Albania as a sovereign state at the London Conference of the Ambassadors was reached in 1913. Nowadays, Albanian question for Greece is connected with the status of Greeks in the South Albania, and for Albania – with the status of ethnic Albanians in the Greek border areas. Both Parties differently understood the historical belonging of territories and objected to the population size of Albanians and Greeks in these regions.

**In Montenegro** Albanians occupied the South-West opština Ulcinj (72%), Podgorica (11%) and Plav (9%). On the maps of “Greater Albania” these regions of Montenegro are marked as Albanians. In 2002 Milo Đukanović, who conducted pro-independence policy, came to the power due to the support of Albanians (estimated 5% of population). In result in 2006 Montenegro has been declared independent from Serbia due to the votes of Albanians. However, it was obvious that the main aim of Albanian community was to weaken Montenegro. Although, there was no clashes with Albanians in Montenegro, in September 2006 near city Podgorica, in the settlement Tuzi, was uncovered Albanian subversive and terrorist group.

**Serbia** de-jure did not recognize Kosovo, but agreed to sign up the Brussels Agreement on normalization the relations with Kosovo on the 14<sup>th</sup> of March 2013. Albanians live on the territory of 28 municipalities and 1 city, that due to the Constitution of Serbia formed the autonomous province “Kosovo and Metohija”, that unilaterally has declared its independence in 2008. Such separation became possible after the NATO 78-days bombing of Yugoslavia (mainly in Serbia) in 1998.

The special situation is on the border of Montenegro and Serbia. In community of Montenegro – Bijelo Polje, located in the historic-geographic region – Sančak, the estimated 43% of population are Serbian Muslims (Bosniaks). In 1999 the Bosniak National Council of Sandzak drafted the “Memorandum on the Autonomy of Sandzak and Special Relations with Bosnia and Herzegovina”. Politicians noted that it is possible to create a “Muslim belt” on Balkans by unification of Muslim part of Bosnia and Herzegovina with Albanian lands, if the Christian population is expelled from Sandzak simultaneously with the realization of the project “Greater Albania”. This strategy still seems to be possible.

**In Turkey** the Albanian issue is considered as way of geostrategic presence in the Balkans in the European political space. In regard with the Turkey`s reaction on the “Albanian issue” researchers determine the next potential conflict situations: Turkey – Bulgaria – Macedonia, Turkey – Greece – Albania, Turkey – Macedonia – Serbia, Turkey – Macedonia – Greece, Turkey – Bosnia – Croatia. They may occur, if Ankara takes on a mission of protecting Muslim population of the region.

The idea of creation “Greater Albania” on the Balkans is quite popular – it is supported by more than 80% of Kosovo population, and more than 70% of population of Albania, and also more than half Macedonian Albanians<sup>1</sup>.

There are two main political parties in Albania: Socialist and Democratic. Their representatives replace each other on the President post. Now President of Albania is Bujar Nishani (from 2012), a member of the Democratic Party of Albania, a chairman of the NGO for Euro-Atlantic Army in 1997 (completed his master studies in San Antonio, Texas and California), follower of Sali Berisha.

The idea of “Greater Albania” is supported by the public authorities of the Republic of Kosovo. Thus, political wing of the Kosovo Liberation Army – Democratic Party of Kosovo has 34 from 140 seats in Parliament of Kosovo, and leaders of this Party have headed the Cabinet of Ministers from 2008 (Agim Çeku, today is Hashim Thaçi). The President Post is assumed by representatives of Democratic Party, 2010 – 2011 Jakup Krasniqi, since 2011 Atifete Jahjaga.

The Albanian National Army (ANA) and the Kosovo Liberation Army (in Yugoslavian region of

1 Искендеров, П.А. (2012). «Великая Албания»: теория и практика. *Вопросы истории*, 1, 31-46.; Ве apo Shqipëri e Madhe: Çfarë të ardhme ka Kosova? (2012). <<http://www.telegrafi.com/lajme/be-apo-shqiperi-e-madhe-cfare-te-ardhme-ka-kosova-2-24637.html>> (2014, october, 28)

Kosovo) with the branches: the Liberation Army of Preševo, Medveđa and Bujanovac and the National Liberation Army of Albanians of Macedonia (in West Macedonia, adjacent to Albania). The Albanian National Army is a military formation, the aim of which is creation the “Greater Albania” as an ethnically uniform formation (has been formed in 2001). The leaders of the Army are Gafur Adili, Xhezair Shaqiri, Betim Emmini, etc. The army consists of divisions – “Adem Jashari”, “Skanderbeg” and “Anaconda”).

In 2009, Albania became the member of NATO and applied for EU membership. However, the intention of radical forces to renew the “historical justice” and to realize the project of Albanian unification are still existed. Thus, in 2011 the representative of the ANA Sazan Toplica requested from the government to form the armed forces of Kosovo before the 30<sup>th</sup> of September, threatened with terror acts in northern Kosovo. In spring 2012 the ideologist of the ANA Adil Ghafoor threatened to mobilize ANA forces and to take under control the northern Kosovo, west Macedonia, South Serbia and part of Greece “before it becomes too late”<sup>1</sup>.

In January 2013, the Joint Staff of ANA announced the mobilization of militants in regard with the requirement of Serbian authorities to dismantle the monument dedicated to ethnic Albanians, who died in armed rebellion in Presheva valley.

According to the Crist Hedges, foreign correspondent for the “New York Times” on Balkans, and correspondent K. Chugunov – the internal structure and ideology of the Kosovo Liberation Army consists of 3 “groups”: 1) Stalinists in the units of the Maoist type (that established by Albanian special services during the life of Enver Hoxha; their activeness went down after the murder of members of the Communists Unite and supporters of Ibrahim Rugova); 2) Albanian drug cartel “Camilla” is among the world’s top five drug cartels, that uses the drug route: Afghanistan -Turkey – Kosovo – Bosnia -West Europe<sup>2</sup>; 3) neo-Nazis – the followers of the members of fascist paramilitaries “The Balli Kombëtar” and “The 1st Albanian Division of the SS Skanderbeg”, that is proved by the uniforms primary standard and greeting extending the arm.

The process of rehabilitation of Ballists and the supporters of Vulnetari started after the collapse of Cooperation of Warsaw Pact, for example, the monument, devoted to the Leader of Vulnetari in Macedonia Xhemail Hasani (Xhem Hasa) has been erected on the demand of Macedonian Albanians “New Democracy” in Gostivar in 2010<sup>3</sup>.

The Ballistët, fans of football club Shkëndija, supports the idea of Albanian nationalism and often held the extremist demonstrations (compete with FK “Vardar” and “Teteks”).

The example of Pan-Albanian extremism manifestation is desecration of the Orthodox Church in town Bar in southern Montenegro in 2012 (they wrote “ETNIK ALBANIA” and “AKSH” and draw the Coat of arms of Albania on the walls).

Thus, the project “Greater Albania” has been recognized as a part of the general process of restructuring in Balkans and Europe. The recognition of Kosovo has demonstrated the possibility of recognition other political formations in Europe, that means the revision of the World War II results and postwar borders.

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