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Transformation of Kosovar Albanians' Struggle from Parallelism to Armed Conflict: Why is Violence Necessary?

Bülent Sarper Ağır *

Abstract

Following the abolition of the Kosovo's autonomy in the 1989, Albanians refused to accept the legitimacy of Serbian rule over Kosovo and advocated the peaceful strategy to resolve the Albanian-Serbian conflict. In this respect, parallel state structures emerged as a hallmark of the K-Albanians peaceful resistance to Serbian rule. However, in the second half of the 1990s, K-Albanians' resistance took the form of an armed struggle with the actions of the KLA. Insufficient involvement of international community for solving of the Kosovo issue and lack of democratic cooperation mechanisms and relatedly existence of "democratic deficit" in the issue contributed to the transformation of K-Albanians' struggle into an armed conflict.

Keywords

Kosovo, Non-Violent Resistance, Parallel State Structures, Albanians, International Community

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Introduction

Kosovo has been a longstanding source of enmity between Serbs and Albanians, and the power has changed hands many times between Serbs and Albanians in Kosovo's turbulent history. Domination of one community over another emerged as a defining feature of Serbian–Albanian relations in Kosovo. The abolition of Kosovo's autonomy spearheaded by Slobodan Milosevic in the late 1980s was yet another such handover.¹ Following the abolition of the Kosovo's autonomy, parallel state structures emerged as a hallmark of the K-Albanians (hereafter K-Albanians) peaceful resistance to Serbian rule. The period since the late 1980s to the summer of 1999 could be defined by the dominance of the Serbian group, complete parallelism and discrimination against K-Albanians.

In most of the cases during the dissolution of former Yugoslavia, violence was chosen by the local actors as the mean to achieve their predefined ends. However, from this generalisation should be excluded the case of Kosovo and Macedonia.² Until the emergence of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), K-Albanians struggled against the domination of Serbia through peaceful and political means. Most important means of this struggle was the parallel state structures. Despite their relevance, the creation and maintenance of the parallel state is a little studied phenomenon. This paper mostly concentrates on the first half of the 1990s, a period when Kosovo's 'parallel structures' took shape and examine the reasons of evolution of struggle to an armed conflict.

¹ Denisa Kostovicova, *Kosovo: The Politics of Identity and Space*, Routledge, London, 2005, p. 2.

² Enika Abazi, "The Role of International Community in Conflict Situation, Which Way Forwards?: The Case of the Kosovo/a Conflict", *Balkanologie*, Vol. VIII, No. I (2004), p. 17.

The study is structured the following way: a very brief, but nevertheless necessary historical overview is followed by a more detailed examination of the Kosovo issue from the perspective of constructed parallel states structures by K-Albanians and their impact on the issue. In the next chapters, the role of international community in transforming of Kosovo issue and problem of “democratic deficit” for solving the problem in a peaceful manner, will be examined critically. Finally, reasons of transforming of K-Albanians’ peaceful resistance into a armed struggle will be held with its internal and external dimensions.

A Brief Historical Background of the Kosovo Problem

Kosovo has been a symbol of nationalist aspirations for both Albanians and Serbs. While K-Albanians insist that their rights over the territory are based on a presence in the region stretching back to the ancient Illyrians, Serbs highlight the fact that Kosovo was the heartland of their medieval empire, thus giving it immense cultural and religious significance. The decline of the Ottoman Empire in the 19th century led to the restoration of Serb independence in 1878. The date also marked the launch of Albanian nationalist movement in Kosovo. At the same year the Prizren League was established by Albanians and its major aim was to unify all the Albanians, either by forming an autonomous territory within the Ottoman Empire or by creating a separate entity. The turning-point in Albanian-Serb relations occurred in 1912, when Serbia regained control of the region. During the Serb-Croat-Slovene Kingdom that was established in 1918, Kosovo remained an administrative part of the Kingdom without any legal status. During the interwar years K-Albanians did not find

suitable or a satisfactory political room and thus remained neither integrated to nor assimilated by the Serb dominated Yugoslavia.³

The socialist Yugoslavia was established in 1945 and one year later the constitution of 1946 recognized Kosovo as an autonomous region within the Republic of Serbia. Kosovo had not been made a republic because the architects of Yugoslavia's federal system reckoned in the mid-1940s that this status should be reserved for nations (*nardodi*) as opposed to nationalities (*narodnosti*), the former having their principal homeland inside Yugoslavia, and the latter outside Yugoslavia.⁴ In spite of granting some rights for minorities by Communist regime,⁵ legal position fostered great resentment among K-Albanians for whom there were no great differences between the old and the new Yugoslavia.

The period between 1948 to the mid-1960s can be characterized as the period when the Serbian minority in Kosovo dominated the province, symbolized by Alexander Rankovic's security police's vigorous and at times brutal suppression of Albanian nationalism or ascendancy.⁶ After the downfall of Rankovic in 1966, Serbs lost their dominance in the Kosovo political and administrative apparatus and Albanian dissatisfaction was allowed to be freely aired with large-scale demonstrations in November 1968 calling for Kosovo to be granted republican status. As a result of 1968 demonstrations, a series of measures

³ Mustafa Türkeş and Said Akşit, "International Engagement, Transformation of the Kosova Question and Its Implications", *The Turkish Yearbook of International Relations*, Vol. XXXVIII (2007), p. 85.

⁴ Howard Clark, *Civil Resistance in Kosovo*, London, Pluto Press, 2000, pp. 39.40.

⁵ Paul Shoup, "Yugoslavia's National Minorities under Communism", *Slavic Review*, Vol. XXII, No.I (1963), p. 74.

⁶ Momcilo Pavlovic, "Kosovo Under Autonomy 1974-1990", <<http://www.cla.purdue.edu/si/Team1Reporte.pdf>>, p. 14., (access date: 05 July 2009).

Transformation of Kosovar Albanians' Struggle

were taken which improved the situation of K-Albanians such as the establishment of a university in Prishtina and rapid Albanization of administration and security structures.⁷ Nonetheless these 'cosmetic' developments did not satisfy the Albanians as their demand to gain the status of a republic was continuously rejected.

With adoption of 1974 Constitution, autonomous provinces were defined constituent elements of Yugoslavia and the constitution provided for a direct representation of autonomous provinces in all major federal institutions.⁸ In effect, 1974 Constitution gave Kosovo *de facto* republican status, but not *de jure* status. This *de facto* equality increased the desire of ethnic Albanians to fight for all forms of political, economic, social and culture equality in Kosovo. For Albanians, defined only as a nationality and not as a nation, the constitution was not enough to satisfy their demands.⁹ On the other side, Serbs, even though they were the minority in Kosovo, never accepted this status because, since Kosovo was legally within Serbia, where Serbs were majority, they considered that they were part of that majority within Kosovo as

⁷ *Kosovo Report: Conflict, International Response and Lessons Learned*, The Independent Commission on Kosovo, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2000, p. 35.

⁸ Mitja Zagar, "Yugoslavia What Went Wrong? Constitutional Development and Collapse of a Multiethnic State", *Reconcilable Differences, Turning Points in Ethnopolitical Conflict*, eds. Sean Byrne and Cynthia L. Irvin, Connecticut, Kumarian Press, 2000, p. 139.

⁹ The invention of term nationality was a product of the 1974 Constitution, placing this category between national minorities and nations. Anna Danielson, "Tracing the Roots of K- Informality", <<http://student.statsvet.uu.se/modules/kurser/visadokument.aspx?id=12718>>, (access date: 10 June 2011).

well.¹⁰ These two attitudes continuously clashed, particularly after 1974.

The year 1981 witnessed the largest Albanian demonstrations against the Republic of Serbia. The demonstrations stemmed from student protests in Prishtina University against the poor conditions in the university campus. The protests turned into a general riot with the participation of many Albanians in the province. In 1981, demonstrators' main demand was for Kosovo to be accorded republican status.¹¹ However, the major consequence of the 1981 events in Kosovo was the aggravation of already fragile ethnic relations.

Serbian nationalism in the years after Tito's death was an opposition movement. The Serbian reaction was mobilised around two main targets: the 'anti-Serbian' 1974 constitution and the lack of protection for Serbian minorities in areas dominated by other ethnic groups, especially Kosovo.¹² The 1986 "Memorandum" that was declared by the Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences, had a decisive role in the process. The Memorandum particularly attacked the 1974 Constitution which, it was argued, undermined the territorial integrity of Serbia.¹³ The memorandum talked about the "physical, political, legal and cultural genocide" of Serbs in Kosovo and called for reductions in Kosovo's autonomy and a total de-Albanianisation of the province. After this memorandum, nationalism in Serbia began to be expressed more openly and became a viable political tool. The politician who benefited the

¹⁰ Valon Murati, Blerim Ahmeti, Selatin Killokoqi and Glauk Konjufca, *Actors and Processes of Ethno-National Mobilization in Kosovo*, Bozan-Bolzano, European Academy Reserach, 2007, p. 32.

¹¹ Hugh Poulton, *The Balkans: Minorities and States in Conflict*, London, Minority Rights Publications, 1991, p. 61.

¹² Clark, *Civil Resistance in Kosovo*, p. 15.

¹³ Noel Malcolm, *Kosovo: A Short History*, New York, New York University Press, 1998, p. 340.

most from the conclusions reached by the Memorandum was Milosevic.¹⁴

After coming to power in 1987, Milosevic focused on strengthening Serbian position in Yugoslavia. On his way towards realizing that aim, he used Kosovo as a means to feed up the nationalistic feelings of Serbs. In so doing, Milosevic tried to use the historical importance of Kosovo for Serbs. Because, for Serbs, the myth of Kosovo is an indispensable factor that keeps the Serbian national consciousness. Therefore, So, it is claimed that it was the most useful device in legitimizing the rule of Milosevic.¹⁵ Indeed, Milosevic regime benefited from the ongoing ethnic tension in Kosovo to strengthen his own political position.

Abolition of Kosovo's Autonomy and Responses of the Kosovar Albanians

The abolition of Kosovo's autonomy began with the amendments to the Constitution of Serbia at the end of March 1989. It was a centralist settlement that undermined Kosovo's constitutional position. These amendments gave Serbia more direct control over Kosovo.¹⁶ On 23 March 1989, the Assembly of Kosovo held a special session to discuss the constitutional changes made in Serbia. In order to be in accordance with the 1974

¹⁴ Vjerran Pavlakovic and Sabrina Petra Ramet, "Albanian and Serb Rivalry in Kosovo: Realist and Universalist Perspectives on Sovereignty", *De Facto States-The Quest for Sovereignty*, eds. Tözün Bahçeli, Barry Bartmann and Henry Srebrnik, London, Routledge, 2004, pp. 84-85.

¹⁵ Lene Kühle and Carsten Bagge Lausten, "The Kosovo Myth: Nationalism and Revenge", *Kosovo Between War and Peace: Nationalism, Peacebuilding and International Trusteeship*, eds. Tonny Brems Knudsen and Carsten Bagge Lausten, London, Routledge, 2006, p. 19.

¹⁶ Miranda Vickers, *Between Serb and Albanian: A History of Kosovo*, London, Hurst and Company, 1998, pp. 234-235.

Constitution, the amendments of the Serbian constitution required the approval of the Kosovo Assembly. But, the Kosovo Assembly accepted the constitutional changes under massive pressure from Serbian police and military forces.¹⁷

The situation further deteriorated with an outbreak of poisoning on March 1990 which affected only Albanian schoolchildren.¹⁸ These unexplained poisonings radicalized the attitudes of two national communities. Albanians attacked local Serbs accusing them of mass-poisoning and, as a result, Serbia took over direct control of policing in Kosovo by resigning of first the Kosovo police chief and then the Kosovo prime minister and six other ministers. A Serb deputy prime minister was stationed in Kosovo.¹⁹ Thus, gradually, Serbia was taking direct control of the key positions of power away from the K-Albanian officials.

By abolishing the autonomy of Kosovo, Milosevic regime tried to incorporate the province into new centralized system of Serbia. The first step towards legal unification of Serbia was the adoption of the Programme for the Attainment of Peace, Freedom, Equality and Prosperity in Kosovo by the Serbian Assembly on 22 March 1990. This programme aimed to increase the control of Serbia over Kosovo. Within a year more than 20 new laws were adopted. They abolished nationality rights in Kosovo in the spheres of education, health care, self-government, information, economy, culture, sport, etc. A key step was the Law on Actions of the Republican Administration in Exceptional Circumstances, which allowed 'temporary' measures to be

¹⁷ Carsten Stahn, "Constitution Without a State? Kosovo Under the United Nations Constitutional Framework for Self-Government", *Leiden Journal of International Law*, Vol. XIV, No.3 (2001), p. 534.

¹⁸ Julie A. Mertus, *Kosovo: How Myths and Truths Started a War*, London, University of California Press, 1999, p. 297.

¹⁹ Poulton, *The Balkans: Minorities and States in Conflict*, p. 68.

Transformation of Kosovar Albanians' Struggle

introduced in the province. Using this law as a legal shield, the Serbian government replaced the entire ruling Albanian political and managerial elite with Kosovar Serbs. This law and the Law on Labour Relations in Exceptional Conditions allowed more than 100.000 Albanians to be dismissed from their jobs. Dismissal of Albanians from government administration, public services, schools, mines and industry affected 70 per cent of employed Albanians.²⁰ Dismissal of large number K-Albanians during the beginning of 1990s formed part of the explanation behind the establishment of a parallel society. The Law on the Termination of the Work of the Assembly and the Executive Council of Kosovo was adopted in July 1990. It prepared the ground for the imposition of colonial administrative rule of the province.²¹ Thus, an intensive campaign had started to Serbianize the province.

These measures mobilized K-Albanians and provoked massive protests all around the country. The first campaign included strikes, protests and demonstrations, but they were repressed with the loss of life. Therefore, Albanian political leaders decided to change their tactics.²² Hence, this full-scale social and political mobilization soon left to the erection of a large political and social movement that was later called 'parallel society'.

In June 1990, the Serbian Assembly had decided to close down temporarily the Kosovo Assembly, and to proclaim the state of emergency in Kosovo. In reply the Albanian deputies of the

²⁰ Shkelzen Maliqi, *Kosova Separate Worlds: Reflections and Analyses, 1989-1998*, Prishtina, Dukagjini PH, 1998, p. 108.

²¹ Dejan Guzina, "Kosovo or Kosova - Could It Be Both? The Case of Interlocking Serbian and Albanian Nationalisms", *Understanding the War in Kosovo*, eds. Florian Bieber and Zidas Daskalovski, London, Frank Cass Publishers, 2003, pp. 37-38; Vickers, *Between Serb and Albanian: A History of Kosovo*, p. 243.

²² Michael Salla, "Kosovo, Non-Violence and the Break-up of Yugoslavia", *Security Dialogue*, Vol. XXVI, No. 4 (1995), p. 428.

Kosovo Assembly assembled on 2 July 1990 outside the parliament building and proclaimed Kosovo as a republic within Yugoslavia. This declaration didn't at that moment call for secession from Yugoslavia, but it declared Kosovo's secession from Serbia and declared equal status for Kosovo in the Yugoslav Federation. The Serbian government suspended the Kosovo parliament after it declared independence from Serbia on 2 July 1990. On 5 July 1990, this decision was made a permanent one, and simultaneously a "special administration" for the province was set up.²³ In practice, the suspension of the Kosovo Assembly made any democratic expression of the Albanians impossible. In other words, restriction of the sphere where they could freely express their attitudes made clear to the K-Albanians that it would be impossible to achieve a liberal, democratic society by working within the current system.

1990 Serbian constitution changed the name of the autonomous province of Kosovo to Kosovo-Metohija in a symbolic reinforcement of Serbian claims on the territory. And also, Constitutional Court of Serbia was vested with the power to invalidate legal acts of the institutions of Kosovo.²⁴ Minority rights received less protection due to the reduction of the autonomy of Kosovo. With these changes, new constitutional and political system in Kosovo no longer corresponded to the social reality. The restoration of the political autonomy of Serbia over Kosovo conflicted with the decentralist and federative tendencies of K-Albanians.

This new situation in Kosovo led to human rights abuses and discriminatory policies designed to Serbianize the province.

²³ Stefan Troebst, *Conflict in Kosovo: Failure of Prevention, An Analytical Documentation, 1992-1998*, Flensburg, European Centre for Minority Issues, 1998, p. 17.

²⁴ Stahn, "Constitution without...", p. 533.

These included discriminatory language policies, the closure of Albanian language newspapers, radio, and television and the change of street names from Albanian to Serbian. While the previous leadership groups had always been ethnically mixed, new so-called “temporary measures” or “emergency measures leaderships” were appointed, composed only of Serbs.²⁵ However, “serbianisation” of the region had been achieved only in appearances, and these were limited to the bureaucracy of the state-run agencies and institutions.

Albanian members of the Kosovo Assembly, in an illegal meeting in Kaçanik on 7 September 1990, declared the Constitution of the Republic of Kosova. Although the Kaçanik constitution had sought the solution to Kosovo’s status within the framework of Yugoslavia, the secession of Slovenia and Croatia the following year had represented the collapse of Yugoslavia and radically altered the stance of the Albanian leadership. Because of the break-up of Yugoslavia, there was no possibility of a return to the *status quo ante*. The Serbian regime’s violence in Kosovo and wholesale denial of rights on an ethnic basis made it quite unacceptable to Kosovo Albanians that they should live ‘under Serbia’.

Thus, the demand of K-Albanians for a republic was changed to a demand for independence. One step in contesting the legitimacy of Serbian rule was to demonstrate democratically the aspirations of the overwhelming majority of the people of Kosovo. In this, the central idea was to prepare a referendum on the future of Kosovo. The referendum on independence of Kosovo took place between 26 and 30 September 1991 and its

²⁵ Shklzen Maliqi, “Demand for a New Status: The Albanian Movement in Kosova”, *Kosovo: Avoiding Another Balkan War*, eds. Thanos Veremis and Evangelos Kofos, Athens, Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy, 1998, p. 230.

predictable result was that, (87 per cent of the electorate), 99.87 per cent favoured independence.²⁶

In the wake of their declaration of independence the 'Coordinating Committee of Albanian Political Parties in Yugoslavia', with Ibrahim Rugova as chairman, passed a political declaration in October 1991 putting forth three options for the solution of 'the Albanian question in Yugoslavia'. First, if the external and internal borders of Yugoslavia remain unaltered, the status of a sovereign and independent state with the right of association in a new community of sovereign Yugoslav states, is demanded. Second, should only the internal borders of Yugoslavia be changed and not the external ones, the founding of an Albanian Republic is called for, incorporating, apart from Kosovo, those territories in central Serbia, Montenegro and Macedonia which are inhabited by Albanians. Third, in the event that the external borders are changed, the Albanians would by referendum and the proclamation of a general declaration, declare territorial unification with Albania and the creation of "an undivided Albania state in the Balkans within Albanian ethnic boundaries."²⁷ Connected to these three options, Ibrahim Rugova stressed that they do not intend to resort to any armed activities and they will refrain from violent actions.

After the referendum, the Kosovo parliament declared the independence of Kosovo on 19 October 1991. This referendum presented an act of democratic and political self-determination of

²⁶ Clark, *Civil Resistance in Kosovo*, p. 82; Vickers, *Between Serb and Albanian: A History of Kosovo*, p. 251.

²⁷ Predrag Simic, "The Kosovo and Metohia Problem and Regional Security in the Balkans", *Kosovo: Avoiding Another Balkan War*, eds. Thanos Veremis and Evangelos Kofos, Athens, Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy, 1998, p. 195; Vickers, *Between Serb and Albanian: A History of Kosovo*, p. 253.

the K-Albanians with the view of defining the constitutional and political status of Kosovo after the dissolution of the former Yugoslavia. However, declarations of Kosovo as a republic and later an independent state remained mostly declarations of intent rather than statements of fact under police repression.

After the independence referendum of K-Albanians, the institutional structure of the Albanian parallel state was completed by holding the multi-party and presidential elections in the proclaimed independent state of Kosovo in May 1992. Secret elections were held in which the only candidate, Ibrahim Rugova, was elected president of Kosovo. At the same time, the party of Rugova won also the parliamentary elections. However, warrants issued by Serbian police for the arrest of the creators of the self-declared Republic of Kosovo forced the government into exile.²⁸ Meanwhile, Kosovar Serbs did not participate the parliamentary elections held by K-Albanians, since they considered the voting to be an illegal political process. The Republic of Serbia continued to assume the sole responsibility for the administration and the judiciary in Kosovo, while the Rugova government remained an unofficial, parallel structure of authority in the territory.

These were strange elections because, while illegal in the eye of the Serbs and held in private houses instead of public buildings, the Serbs did little or nothing to impede them. Indeed, there was little police interference with the elections. There were good reasons for this. The first was that Rugova and the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK) had embraced a philosophy of nonviolence. The second was that, simultaneous to these events, the siege of Sarajevo was beginning. Milosevic had no reason to provoke conflict in Kosovo.²⁹

²⁸ Kostovicova, *Kosovo: The Politics of Identity and Space*, p. 183.

²⁹ Tim Judah, *Kosovo: What Everyone Needs to Know*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2008, p.70.

During this process of institution building, K-Albanians had modified their national objective. At first Albanians had fought for the preservation of the autonomy stipulated by the 1974 constitution, but Serbia's suspension of Kosovo's autonomy created a new aim - an Albanian Republic within Yugoslavia. However, the break-up of Yugoslavia caused another formulation of the national goal, which eventually emerged as a self-declared 'sovereign and independent Kosovo'.³⁰ The emergence of Albanian political structure offered the legitimacy for the parallel system. While this political structure was declared illegal by the Serb authorities, received no official international recognition (except Albania), and operated in exile for much of the period, its existence offered significant political legitimacy for the officials in the parallel system.³¹ But all this led many in Serbia to the conviction that Kosovo Albanians cannot be looked upon as citizens loyal to the republic.

Electoral Boycott of the Kosovar Albanians and “Democratic Deficit” of the Kosovo Problem

In ethnically divided societies like Kosovo, local elections are bound to confirm the ethnic distribution of the given community and to transform such patterns into legitimate structures of authority. On the other hand, local elections make it possible for minorities to have a voice in local government as well, if they can be persuaded to participate.³² K-Albanians rejected the

³⁰ Vickers, *Between Serb and Albanian: A History of Kosovo*, p. 261.

³¹ Marc Sommers and Peter Buckland, *Parallel Worlds: Rebuilding the Education System in Kosovo*, Paris, International Institute for Educational Planning: UNESCO, 2004, p. 43.

³² Arne Johan Vetlesen, "The Logic of Genocide and the Prospects of Reconciliation", *Kosovo Between War and Peace: Nationalism, Peacebuilding and*

Transformation of Kosovar Albanians' Struggle

idea of reintegration into Serbia and insisted that only an independent and sovereign Kosovo would satisfy them. Therefore, K-Albanians refused to participate in the political life of Serbia. They systematically boycotted the Serbian elections during the 1990s, considering them as events happening in a foreign country. The Albanians were invited several times to participate in multi-party elections and thus to enter the Serbian Parliament, where they could have used parliamentary means to achieve their goals. However, the Albanians did not accept this without a return to the status quo ante in Kosovo. The participation of Albanian parties in the Serbian elections would have meant the legitimisation of violence, and the recognition of a Constitution and system which had been established without their consent and completely against their will. Accepting loyalty to the state of Serbia would have meant recognising the Serbs' right to treat Kosovo as their possession.³³

Electoral boycott of K-Albanians in the 1990s meant that almost all Kosovo seats in the Serbian and Yugoslav parliaments went to Milosevic's Socialist Party or to the even more nationalist Serbian Radical Party of Vojislav Seselj, giving the more liberal opposition of Serbia no chance to get into government.³⁴ Consequently, the Serbian parliament was controlled by Milosevic's Socialist Party in alliance with Seselj's ultranationalist Radical Party. Both parties were fundamentally opposed to strengthening the position of ethnic Albanians in Kosovo.

International Trusteeship, eds. Tonny Brems Knudsen and Carsten Bagge Laustsen, London, Routledge, 2006, p. 14.

³³ Maliqi, "Demand for a...", pp. 232-233.

³⁴ Hakan Wiberg, "The Roles of Civil Society: Case of Kosovo/a", *Conference Report - International Migration, Development and Integration*, eds. Kristof Tamas and Malin Hansson, Stockholm, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1999, p. 90.

The strategy pursued by the LDK was strong defensively but relatively weak in terms of efforts to undermine Milosevic's support and power base in Serbian society. Given that the Serbian regime did not depend to any great extent on the cooperation of the Kosovo Albanians, the forging of tactical alliances with elements in the society on which it did depend ought to have been a strategic priority, despite the difficulties involved. There were opportunities to do so. Because, there were signs of dissatisfaction with Milosevic's Kosovo policy among some Serbian pro-democracy groups, but this discontent was not exploited by Kosovo Albanian leaders.³⁵ In other words, due to the refusal of Kosovo's Albanians to participate in the Serbian political process, it was eliminated the possibility of constructing a dialogue between Albanians and pro-democracy Serbs.

There was a brief window of opportunity both for more direct political action by the LDK, and for the international community actively to intervene to shape a political compromise in Kosovo, when Milan Panic became prime minister of Serbia in July 1992. Panic met Rugova in London in August and promised to restore human rights and negotiate some form of autonomy for Kosovo.³⁶ In October 1992, Panic visited Kosovo and tried to make a deal with Rugova in exchange for support in the presidential elections. But his efforts failed, and in the elections of December 1992 he was defeated by Milosevic. If they had voted in Serbian elections, Milosevic could not have remained president, because his margin of victory from 1992 onward in all Serbian elections would never have been enough.³⁷ Because, given their

³⁵ Clark, *Civil Resistance in Kosovo*, p. 94.

³⁶ Troebst, *Conflict in Kosovo: Failure of Prevention, An Analytical Documentation, 1992-1998*, p. 27; Vickers, *Between Serb and Albanian: A History of Kosovo*, p. 267.

³⁷ Judah, *Kosovo: What Everyone Needs to Know*, p. 70.

population size, the Albanians were capable of filling 10 per cent of the parliamentary seats in Serbia.³⁸

The K-Albanians boycotted the December 1992 Yugoslav elections on the pretext that the 'Republic of Kosovo' was no longer part of Yugoslavia. Many Serbian intellectuals regarded the boycott as proof of extreme Albanian nationalism.³⁹ The K-Albanians' election boycott reflected not only their desire for independence, but also a correct reading of international public opinion at the time. As Miranda Vickers explains: In reality, however, the million Albanian votes could undoubtedly have ousted Milosevic in 1992, but unless Serbia continued to be labelled as profoundly evil, they were unlikely to achieve their goals. It would have been a disaster for them if a peace-monger like Milan Panic had restored human rights, since this would have left them with nothing but a bare political agenda to change border.⁴⁰

In 1992, instead of making common cause with Serbian opposition parties against Milosevic, K-Albanians opted (indirectly) to support him. In return, despite continuing policies of harassment, Milosevic's regime seemed to have tolerated a mushrooming of K-Albanian parallel institutions⁴¹ and non-violent movement. As another explanation why K-Albanians not to take part in elections held in rump Yugoslavia, the experience of Serbian repression and the deterioration in relations between the two ethnic groups had only cemented the determination of K-Albanians not to settle for individual human rights alone, leading many to believe that the Albanian demand for territorial rights was

³⁸ Tom Gallagher, *The Balkans in the New Millennium: In the Shadow of War and Peace*, London, Routledge, 2005, p. 30.

³⁹ Guzina, "Kosovo or Kosova...", p. 42.

⁴⁰ Vickers, *Between Serb and Albanian: A History of Kosovo*, p. 268.

⁴¹ Guzina, "Kosovo or Kosova...", pp. 42-43.

irreversible. Therefore, elections that held in Serbia in the early 1990s, were not considered as an instrument of significant political change by the K-Albanians. Attitudinal surveys in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) invariably showed deep hostility towards Albanians.⁴² The LDK therefore paid less attention to making allies in the former Yugoslavia or using divisions between the population and the regime, than to appealing to the greater power of international force.

The electoral boycott of Serbian elections by the K-Albanians was greatly criticised by the democratic opposition in Serbia and by international politicians. Serb opponents argued that Albanians should demonstrate a willingness to resolve the issue through democratic processes and that only the full participation of ethnic minorities in Serbian politics could roll back the prevailing ultra-nationalism and create a democratic, multi-ethnic polity.⁴³ However, as the most ethnically homogenous population in Yugoslavia, K-Albanians rejected to be classified as a minority and claimed to be regarded as a 'nation'.

Aims and Features of Parallel Structures of the Kosovar Albanians

Ethno-mobilization is conceived as a process by which an ethnic community becomes politicized on behalf of its collective interests.⁴⁴ This process requires awareness, usually promoted by ethnic entrepreneurs, that political action is necessary to promote or defend the community's vital collective interests. This awareness results in the recruitment of individuals into the

⁴² Mertus, *Kosovo: How Myths and Truths Started a War*, pp. 319-329.

⁴³ Clark, *Civil Resistance in Kosovo*, p. 85.

⁴⁴ Murati, Ahmeti, Kllokoqi and Konjufca, *Actors and Processes of Ethno-National Mobilization in Kosovo*, p. 6.

movement or into specific organizations that purport to speak for the movement.⁴⁵ It could be considered that the process of ethno-mobilization in Kosovo has all these elements.

Repressive policy of Milosevic regime for Kosovo forced the Albanian movement to concentrate on issues of their community's survival. According to Howard Clark, movement of parallel structures had four aims: the survival of the Albanian society in Kosovo, contesting the legitimacy of Serbian state institutions and counter imposing the legitimacy of K-Albanian institutions, commitment to civil resistance by refusing to be provoked to acts of violence and, finally, mobilization of international support.⁴⁶

The core of the parallel state was its character as a non-violent resistance movement. In the beginning of 1990, a decisive shift towards non-violence occurred invoking a shift from a phase of anarchistic-like rebellions into a phase of discipline and organisation. The creation of the parallel state may in hindsight appear to have been closely planned but arguably it also had a strong sense of disconnected actions.⁴⁷ Besnik Pula supports this view by arguing that the parallel society in its earliest phase was a largely unplanned phenomenon and not a consciously created political project⁴⁸ although it rather quickly came under the leadership of the LDK and Rugova.

The decision to adopt a nonviolent resistance was taken for pragmatic reasons concerning the non-feasibility of organized violence. Kosovo no longer controlled its own police force as a

⁴⁵ *Ibid*, p. 6.

⁴⁶ Clark, *Civil Resistance in Kosovo*, pp. 70-71.

⁴⁷ Anna Danielson, "Tracing the Roots of K- Informality".

⁴⁸ Besnik Pula, "The emergence of the Kosovo 'parallel state' 1988-1992", *Nationalities Papers* Vol. XXXII, No. 4 (2004), pp. 797-826.

result of Serbian policy of disarming all Albanians. If K-Albanians had still retained control of the provincial police force, it is likely that armed force would have been used to pursue their political goods.⁴⁹ Moreover, from 1991 onwards the wars in Croatia and then Bosnia demonstrated the likely consequences of a military confrontation with Serbia.⁵⁰

The policy was based on the hard fact that war, at that stage, would simply mean that the Albanians would lose and risk being ethnically cleansed. In 1992, Rugova said, "We are not certain how strong the Serbian military presence in the province actually is, but we do know that it is overwhelming and that we have nothing to set against the tanks and other modern weaponry in Serbian hands." He then added, "We would have no chance of successfully resisting the army. In fact the Serbs only wait for a pretext to attack the Albanian population and wipe it out. We believe it is better to do nothing and stay alive than to be massacred."⁵¹ Thus, passive resistance strategy gave the Albanians the possibility to survive within rule of Serbia, limited the scope for Serbian aggression and provided a mechanism for fighting for justice without incurring all the negative costs associated with violence.

What kind of solidarity will be created, it depends largely from the context and nature of the movement. If a movement is established to fight an ethnic or national battle, most probably the solidarities they will create will be ethnic or national in character.⁵²

⁴⁹ Salla, "Kosovo, Non-Violence...", p. 432.

⁵⁰ Judah, *Kosovo: What Everyone Needs to Know*, p. 70.

⁵¹ Vickers, *Between Serb and Albanian: A History of Kosovo*, p. 264, quoting Rugova from Impact International, April 10-May 7, 1992, p. 10.

⁵² Gezim Krasniqi, "Parallel System in Kosovo: Strengthening Ethnic Identity Through Solidarity and Common Social Action", *South East European University Review*, Vol. VI, No. 1 (2010), p. 45.

In this context, Gezim Krasniqi considers that the in-group interaction that was present during the social and political mobilizations of K-Albanians in the late 1980s and early 1990s produced high level of in-group solidarity.⁵³ Thus, solidarity of K-Albanians through the parallel structures became a central element in creating the necessary homogeneity among them.

Parallelism, based on a well-organised system of self-help and solidarity finally united all the K-Albanians. The Serbian government, through oppression, only encouraged this parallelism, thus helping to widen the gap between the two ethnic groups. Because, K-Albanians continually emphasized the communal nature of rights and of individual obligations to community.⁵⁴ With the involvement of Albanians in parallel state structures, the burden of the struggle had been shifted to the Albanian population in Kosovo. Active non-cooperation of K-Albanians in political, economic, societal and cultural life of Serbia led to spread of the burden among Albanians.

The combination of resistance and institution-building led to a *de facto* freedom, because at least in practical sense, the power relationships within Kosovo had been fundamentally altered. Through the parallel state structures, K-Albanians met some basic empirical requirements of statehood in terms of experience of self-rule and structures of government. On the other hand, Serbian authorities viewed the parallel system as non-existent. While sovereignty had, for the majority of the population, been transferred to this shadow state, the Serbs' monopoly of force meant that effective sovereignty continued to reside in Belgrade. However, Serbian political domination in Kosovo in the 1990s did

⁵³ *Ibid*, p. 49.

⁵⁴ Julie Mertus, "The Impact of Intervention on Local Human Rights Culture: A Kosovo Case Study", *The Global Review of Ethnopolitics*, Vol. I, No. 2 (December 2001), p. 22.

not translate into an ability to control over K-Albanians. Because, parallel system did exist as an expression of the K-Albanians' determination not to legitimize Serbian administration.

Parallel Education and Health Care Systems

Education and health care networks were the two main pillars of the K-Albanians' 'parallel system' in the 1990s. They came to substitute autonomous education and health institutions of Kosovo that were shot down after the abolition of Kosovo's autonomy. It was the parallel education system which was the most successful of the institutions developed by the K-Albanians. As Clark noted, "the struggle for education became a central symbol for the K-Albanians and the proudest achievement of the parallel system" developed in response to repressive Serbian government measures.⁵⁵ Because of ethnic-based segregation of educational life in Kosovo, parallel educational system of K-Albanians interacted closely with socio-political and ethnic issues in Kosovo.

After the suspension of Kosovo's autonomy, the Serbian parliament decided to introduce a new school curricula for all regions of the Republic, including Kosovo, aimed at standardising the education system, irrespective of the cultural needs of the various national communities.⁵⁶ Albanian teachers and students refused to accept the new curriculum, thus setting up bases for the erection of a parallel education system operating out of homes of ordinary citizens.

⁵⁵ Clark, *Civil Resistance in Kosovo*, p. 96.

⁵⁶ Vickers, *Between Serb and Albanian: A History of Kosovo*, pp. 247-248.

The situation deteriorated further at the beginning of the 1991/92 school year, when the Serbian authorities banned Albanian teachers and students from using school buildings unless they agreed to follow the Serbian curricula. In March 1991, the Serbian Government passed a decision on cessation of financing of the teaching process in primary and secondary schools in Kosovo where the curriculum adopted by the Serbian Education Council was not implemented. The issue of financing emerged as Serbian 'stick and carrot' tactics. Nonetheless, the prospects of a higher salary failed to persuade Albanian teachers to accept the Serbian curriculum.⁵⁷

In January 1992, the first parallel school year started and for Albanian pupils it played out completely underground as the lessons took place in private houses, garages, storeroom or in the homes of the teachers. Indeed already in 1991 the secondary education had become almost entirely informal but in 1992 all Kosovar pupils were completely excluded from the schools and the university. As a result, the creation of parallel education for and by K-Albanians was a powerful demonstration of their resistance to the Serbian state and its policies.⁵⁸

In 1993, the parallel education system employed 20,000 teachers, lecturers, professors and administrative staff; it included 5291 pre-school pupils, 312,000 elementary school pupils, 65 secondary schools with 56,920 pupils, two special schools for disabled children, 20 faculties and colleges with about 12,000 students⁵⁹ Even in an atmosphere of intensified repression and conflict in Kosovo, just before the onset of North Atlantic Treaty Organization's (NATO) 1999 air war, 267.000 K-Albanians

⁵⁷ Kostovicova, *Kosovo: The Politics of Identity and Space*, p. 87.

⁵⁸ *Ibid*, pp. 97-98.

⁵⁹ *Kosovo Report: Conflict, International Response and Lessons Learned*, p. 46.

attended parallel schools.⁶⁰ The Serbian authorities systematically harassed those involved in the educational process, including members of the teachers' trade union, teachers, university lecturers, private citizens who have made their homes available for teaching and even pupils themselves. Thus, the Albanian parallel education system emerged as a target of Serbian repression, even though the Serbs had, by and large, turned a blind eye to the Albanians' education system in Kosovo.⁶¹

Continuation of the education process in the Albanian language in Kosovo had a crucial impact on slowing down, if not entirely halting, a mass departure of Albanians from Kosovo. While implementation of Serbia's education laws in Kosovo's schools was to demonstrate in practice that Kosovo was being reintegrated into Serbia, Albanian-language education system was to contribute to the institutionalization and building of the Albanian state in Kosovo.⁶²

The issue of education had always been closely tied with nationality in the Serbian-Albanian power struggles. In this sense, for Albanians, 'parallel' education system was a crucial element in the process of maintaining and strengthening of their separate national identity, whereas Serbs saw it as something "synonymous with Albanian secessionism and irredentism".⁶³ To sum up, control over Kosovo's education system was, to Serbs and Albanians alike, paramount to the protection of their own national identity.

The parallel health system began as a result of the dismissal of Albanian health workers from Kosovo's provincial hospitals. As

⁶⁰ Sommers and Buckland, *Parallel Worlds: Rebuilding the Education System in Kosovo*, p. 45.

⁶¹ Kostovicova, *Kosovo: The Politics of Identity and Space*, p. 129.

⁶² *Ibid*, p. 182.

⁶³ *Ibid*, p. 12.

a result of mass dismissals of K-Albanians, some 750.000 people were estimated to be without social insurance and thus denied free medical services in the state-run institutions. For those who could not afford medical care in state-run or private clinics, the only alternative was to attend the 'parallel' health centres.⁶⁴

The main institution within the parallel health system was the humanitarian organization Mother Theresa Association (MTA). By 1991 the MTA managed to establish a quite large network of health clinics that mostly offered free services for K-Albanians. It provided humanitarian assistance and health care for Albanians. The network expanded continuously until by the start of 1998 there were 91 clinics and some 7,000 volunteers were distributing humanitarian aid to perhaps 350,000 people.⁶⁵ But parallel health care system set up by K-Albanians was not satisfactory according to modern standards.

Responses of Milosevic Regime to Parallel State Structures of the Kosovar Albanians

The Serbian government's response to Kosovo's parallel institutions had been twofold. The first was a policy of marginalizing Albanians from the political, economic and cultural life of the province. In fact, the refusal of Albanians to cooperate with Belgrade and the development of a separate Albanian system actually assisted the government's policy of having Serbs fill all positions of responsibility in state institutions.⁶⁶ The second response by the Serbian government had been to repress the Albanian's parallel institutional system. All parallel institutions had

⁶⁴ Vickers, *Between Serb and Albanian: A History of Kosovo*, p. 262.

⁶⁵ Clark, *Civil Resistance in Kosovo*, p. 106-107.

⁶⁶ Salla, "Kosovo, Non-Violence...", p. 430.

been declared illegal and were subject to state repression. Reports of various international human rights organizations displayed the fact that the Serbian administration had become very repressive against the K-Albanians particularly after the year 1992.⁶⁷ Indeed, police violence was a very widespread phenomenon in Kosovo province. The most obvious target of police violence were ethnic Albanians who were prominent in the organisation of the “parallel” society.⁶⁸

Milosevic aimed to maintain the conflict in Kosovo at a manageable level and thus to avoid the risk of international intervention by declaring the Kosovo issue as an internal affairs. So, Serbian authorities tolerated Rugova’s non-violent resistance precisely because it has kept the Albanians quiet.⁶⁹ For instance, no tax-collection and no recruitments for the army was demanded from the K-Albanians.⁷⁰ Another reason of tolerating of nonviolent resistance of K-Albanians was to avoid another conflictual front during the Bosnian hostilities.

⁶⁷ Human Rights Abuses in Kosovo 1990-1992, <<http://www.hrw.org/legacy/reports/1992/yugoslavia>>, (access date: 9 September 2009).

⁶⁸ Yugoslavia, Police Violence against Ethnic Albanians in Kosovo Province, <<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/EUR70/006/1994/en/4ab5e4ed-ec0c-11dd-85b9-0939011eabc9/eur700061994en.html>>, (access date: 15 June 2010).

⁶⁹ Richard Caplan, “International Diplomacy and the Crisis in Kosovo”, *International Affairs*, Vol. LXXIV, No. 4 (1998), p.751.

⁷⁰ Troebst, *Conflict in Kosovo: Failure of Prevention, An Analytical Documentation, 1992-1998*, p. 8.

The Role of the LDK and Calls for Active Resistance among the Kosovar Albanians

The most influential body promoting the civil resistance campaign was the LDK founded on 23 December 1989 and led by Ibrahim Rugova. It played a crucial role in the creation and organization of the parallel institutions in Kosovo. Less of a political party in the traditional sense and more of a social movement the LDK came to unite various Kosovar organisations in a common resistance towards the Serbian rule.⁷¹

The K-Albanian sociopolitical movement made a shift from the aim of *resisting change* (attempts to resist abolishing of autonomy and other key institutions in the late 1980s) to the aim of *promoting change* (political movement for independence). As Clark puts it, “the defence of autonomy had grown into a movement for independence from Serbia”.⁷² The strategy for achieving this goal was to influence the international community and to deny the legitimacy of Belgrade institutions, both through the parallel system and through boycotting elections. Its chosen path for reaching the main goal was a resolutely political one.

Under the leadership of the LDK, the K-Albanians had followed a policy of refusing to be provoked and maintaining their own structures at home while lobbying for international support. This had succeeded in limiting Serbian aggression and averting war, in keeping the population together and its social structures functioning, and in bringing repeated international condemnation on Serbia for human rights violations. Progress towards ending the Serbian oppression was too slow, and progress in improving the

⁷¹ Vickers, *Between Serb and Albanian: A History of Kosovo*.

⁷² Clark, *Civil Resistance in Kosovo*, p. 2.

quality of life for K-Albanians too little.⁷³ Hence the call for ‘active nonviolence’ –coming from people both inside and outside the LDK– began to be stated intensively.

Until the mid-1990s, Rugova was the unchallenged leader of the ethnic Albanians’ peaceful resistance and there seemed to be a widespread determination among the existing political parties of K-Albanians to let party-political differences not come in the way of a joint political agenda. Rugova’s policies had failed to change the situation, and this led to increasing tension within both the LDK and the other smaller parties. Especially, after the Dayton conference, internal criticism of Rugova began to spread as no real improvements could be seen as stemming from the non-violent resistance and there were talks about a more active resistance. The non-violent resistance worked to uphold a status quo but not to formulate any political action.⁷⁴ General disappointment after Dayton created space for an active politics of resistance and some Albanians in Kosovo began to argue that Rugova should step up the pressure, call for demonstrations and do something to get the attention of the world.

On a visit to the United States of America (USA) on March 1994, the head of government in exile Bujar Bukoshi told reporters that the ‘Kosova government’s pacifist approach was losing credibility within the population’.⁷⁵ Bukoshi asked for more active resistance and at this point he even started to support Adem Demaçi, leading personality of the Parliamentary Party, who was at that time advocating the idea of active peaceful resistance in contrast to passive peaceful resistance led by Rugova.⁷⁶ Among the

⁷³ *Ibid*, pp. 128-129.

⁷⁴ Anna Danielson, “Tracing the Roots of K- Informality”.

⁷⁵ Clark, *Civil Resistance in Kosovo*, p. 118.

⁷⁶ Murati, Ahmeti, Kllokoqi and Konjufca, *Actors and Processes of Ethno-National Mobilization in Kosovo*, p. 75.

actions proposed as part of a shift to active nonviolence was the convening of the banned Kosovo parliament. Because, voting in parallel elections lost its meaning when there was no serious attempt to make the parliament function.

After Dayton agreement, Rugova continued with his peaceful negotiating policies. On September 1996, with the intermediation of the Rome-based Catholic religious order Sant'Egidio, an agreement on the Albanian-language educating system in Kosovo between Milosevic and Rugova was concluded.⁷⁷ With this agreement, it was foreseen the return of the Albanian students and teachers to their premises. The Serb side interpreted the agreement as meaning that Kosovo's students would be reintegrated into the Serbian education system, whereas the K-Albanians understood it as allowing Kosovo's students to come back to all premises without conditions. But the collapse of educational agreement had a profoundly negative effect on the prospects for the situation in Kosovo.

The failure to implement the Rugova-Milosevic agreement, one year after its signing, crucially changed the atmosphere in Kosovo. A sense of deep disillusionment with the political status quo precipitated the emergence of the Albanian student movement. The protests were peaceful but it embraced the concept of active non-violence rather than the passive one. Albin Kurti, one of the main leaders, declared that 'Rugova's policy blocks the energy of the people and if you block that energy, their anger is going to explode... He is just looking towards the international community. But he should do it the other way. He should organize the Albanian population here and demonstrate, and then the international community would be naturally attracted

⁷⁷ Troebst, *Conflict in Kosovo: Failure of Prevention, An Analytical Documentation, 1992-1998*, pp. 79-81.

to deal with the problem of Kosovo'.⁷⁸ As a consequence, Albanians' national struggle in Kosovo had undergone a transformation. A peaceful, static and invisible national movement turned into an active and visible, but still non-violent, protest in the streets⁷⁹ and marked the fall of the period of pacifist movement as it had operated until then in Kosovo.

Nevertheless due to political circumstances the LDK maintained to uphold its popularity until 1997, when this policy was discredited due to failures to yield concrete results in ending the Serbian rule in Kosovo. Also the continuous pressure committed by Serbian regime to Albanian population, and impossibility of this movement to protect civilians, was one of the factors that weakened the influence of the LDK. The role of international community in this field was important too. Even though publicly the non-violent policy of Rugova was supported by international community, its aim independence was rather not supported.⁸⁰ This further undermined the position of the LDK among Albanians.

The Role of International Community and the Kosovo Problem after Dayton Agreement

If non-violent action was agreed to be a desirable method for resolving conflict, mobilising international support was a major goal of the resistance movement of K-Albanians. Even though, in the eyes of the international public opinion the non-violent resistance gained sympathy and appeared a propaganda success,

⁷⁸ Gallagher, *The Balkans in the New Millennium: In the Shadow of War and Peace*, p. 35.

⁷⁹ Kostovicova, *Kosovo: The Politics of Identity and Space*, pp. 192-193.

⁸⁰ Troebst, *Conflict in Kosovo: Failure of Prevention, An Analytical Documentation, 1992-1998*, pp. 8-11.

international support meant that, unlike in 1989, Kosovo was no longer seen as an 'internal affair' of Serbia. However, Kosovo had been viewed as an issue of human rights and self-determination within the framework of Serbia. This is exemplified by the December 1994 the United Nations (UN) General Assembly resolution which expressed concern for Kosovo largely as a human rights and self-determination question, and did not challenge Serbian control and authority.⁸¹ Thus, international community gave priority to internal self-determination for the Albanians and the preservation of the territorial integrity of Serbia until early 1998.

Generally speaking, there were two main rationales for involvement for the international community. One was the appalling human rights situation in Kosovo. While human rights violations were one of the dimensions of this problem, at the heart of the conflict stood the desire of the Albanian population for the external self-determination and the constant suppression of the Serbian regime of that political will.⁸² The other reason for international community to get involved in Kosovo was the danger of the conflict triggering a wider regional crisis involving a number of Balkan countries.

Although during the first round of the disintegration of Yugoslavia the Kosovo question was a burning issue, international engagement was not extended because the international community wished to postpone the Kosovo question as the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina already occupied its agenda. While Rugova tried to internationalize the Kosovo question, the international community remained aloof to this issue until 1996.⁸³

⁸¹ Salla, "Kosovo, Non-Violence...", pp. 434-435.

⁸² Murati, Ahmeti, Kllokoqi and Konjufca, *Actors and Processes of Ethno-National Mobilization in Kosovo*, p. 96.

⁸³ Türkeş and Akşit, "International Engagement...", p. 88.

The only strong warning from the West to Milosevic about his behaviour in Kosovo came from the US. On December 1992, President George Bush stated that “In the event of conflict in Kosovo caused by Serbian actions, the US will be prepared to employ military force against Serbians in Kosovo and Serbia proper.”⁸⁴ The main reason of this threat was the fear of proliferation of the war in Bosnia to Kosovo.

Among the first international bodies to deal with the Kosovo issue was the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE). At the CSCE Meeting of Experts on National Minorities which took place in Geneva from 1 to 19 July 1991, Serbia was heavily criticised for its Kosovo policy.⁸⁵ In the summer of 1992 the British government and the UN hosted an international conference in London in an attempt to reverse the ethnic cleansing in Bosnia. Albanian representatives from Kosovo were classed as observers rather than participants. Only marginally constructive outcome of the Conference that affected the Kosovo problem was the decision to station human rights observers in Kosovo.⁸⁶

In 1992, the Badinter Committee, a body set up by the European Community (EC) to consider the legal issues arising from the dissolution of Yugoslavia, concluded that the six formal republics of Yugoslavia were states emerging from the collapse of the federation, and thus could be recognised. However, Badinter Committee ignored the self-declared independence of Kosovo and the requirements of K-Albanians leadership for a Kosovo independent and equal entity within the framework of

⁸⁴ Judah, *Kosovo: What Everyone Needs to Know*, p. 71.

⁸⁵ For the role of OSCE in Kosovo issue see Troebst, *Conflict in Kosovo: Failure of Prevention, An Analytical Documentation, 1992-1998*, pp. 36-43.

⁸⁶ Vickers, *Between Serb and Albanian: A History of Kosovo*, p. 266.

Yugoslavia.⁸⁷ Therefore, Kosovo's request for recognition by the EC was never considered on the formal grounds that the EC would recognize only republics, not autonomous provinces within republics.

In the Kosovo conflict, Serbs and Albanians had different expectations from the European Union (EU). The Serbian state was hoping that the EU would not interfere in its internal affairs. Albanians, through their policy of internationalizing the Kosovo problem, were hoping that the EU would use its influence and economic power to pressure Serbia to find a peaceful settlement for Kosovo. Albanians wanted to win EU sympathy and support for their struggle for self-determination through their peaceful movement.⁸⁸ Nevertheless, only after the conflict in Kosovo had escalated the EU prioritized the Kosovo issue in its foreign policy.

As decision of Badinter Committee displayed, the claim of the people of Kosovo to a legal status similar to that of the former Yugoslavia was not accepted by the international community. Instead, all international efforts have focused on restoring autonomy, or on creating other forms of internal self-government. This neglecting attitude of international community provoked an escalation of the demands of the Albanians that rise their demands from a peaceful solution of the situation of repression to the demand for equal entity status within the framework of Yugoslav Federation and later to independence.⁸⁹

Clark argued that the liberation of Kosovo from political domination and repression by Milosevic's Serbia could have been

⁸⁷ Bartram S. Brown, "Human Rights, Sovereignty, and the Final Status of Kosovo", *Chicago-Kent Law Review*, Vol.LXXX (2005), pp. 263-264.

⁸⁸ Murati, Ahmeti, Kllokoqi and Konjufca, *Actors and Processes of Ethno-National Mobilization in Kosovo*, p. 88.

⁸⁹ Enika Abazi, "The Role of International Community...", p. 19.

achieved without war. However, there was not any earlier and more vigorous reaction by the outside world.⁹⁰ Because, disintegration process of former Yugoslavia and the heating up the Kosovo question were accompanied by the redefinition of the roles of European security institutions such as the NATO, OSCE, Western European Union and even the UN. While Western diplomacy gave priority to calm down the violent conflicts in former Yugoslavia, civil resistance strategy of K-Albanians relaxed them. Their main aim in former Yugoslavia was to restore stability, that's why, Bosnia was the main regional concern. So, until the outbreak of armed conflicts between the KLA and Serbian security forces, on Kosovo the USA and the EU converged in prescribing their solution – 'autonomy within FRY'.

Politically and strategically, two key events were to change everything in Kosovo. The first was the November 1995 Dayton peace agreement which ended the Bosnian war. In the wake of this, most international sanctions against what was then the FRY, that is, Serbia and Montenegro, were lifted, and the EU recognized this state, which had been born in 1992, as the successor to the old Yugoslavia of six republics.⁹¹ While in April 1996 the EU decided to extend recognition to the FRY, it just asked a constructive approach by the the FRY to the granting of autonomy for Kosovo.⁹² This was an important severe blow to the Rugova's non-violent resistance strategy and of engaging the international community for the cause of an independent Kosovo. But the gravest disappointment came with the Dayton negotiations in November 1995 which formally settled the Bosnian conflict.

Rugova's point was that only peaceful methods and refraining from use of force could contribute to the achievement

⁹⁰ Clark, *Civil Resistance in Kosovo*.

⁹¹ Judah, *Kosovo: What Everyone Needs to Know*, p. 79.

⁹² Caplan, "International Diplomacy..." p. 750.

Transformation of Kosovar Albanians' Struggle

of international recognition for the K-Albanians cause. However some believed that only an actual fight against the Serbs would advance the Albanian cause. The hard-liners got the upper hand, especially after the exclusion of the Kosovo issue from the agenda of the Dayton Peace negotiations.

The expectations of the K-Albanians had not been fulfilled by Dayton Peace Accords, since the Albanians were not invited to the peace talks and the future status of Kosovo was not included in the peace accords. In the negotiations, Kosovo had only been mentioned in passing in the agreement in relation to human rights and the lifting of the 'outer wall of sanctions' imposed on Serbia and Montenegro. For two reasons Kosovo did not take place on the Dayton agenda to any significant degree. First, it was felt that there was simply too much to negotiate already; for that matter, other critical issues were hardly addressed at all. Second, no one wanted to alienate Milosevic, the 'peacemaker' who had forced the Bosnian Serbs to accept the compromises necessary for the Dayton agreement and whose continued cooperation was thought necessary to ensure successful implementation of the accord. There were perhaps a third reason why Kosovo failed to gain attention at Dayton: in the absence of war in Kosovo it was thought that there was no urgent need to deal with the question.⁹³

During the Dayton process, Milosevic was not blamed for his harsh policy with serious implications for the record of human rights in Kosovo. On the contrary, he was prised as a peacemaker and implementer of the Dayton agreement. This situation created a sense of relaxation on the side of Serbia's leadership. The political leadership of Serbia including the opposition favoured the preservation of the status quo in terms of Kosovo question. So, the West scarcely exhausted the strong bargaining position it had

⁹³ *Ibid*, pp. 750-751.

vis-à-vis Milosevic. He could have been asked to put a stop to repression and restore meaningful autonomy to Kosovo while guarantees were extended that it would remain part of a genuinely federal Yugoslavia.⁹⁴

The Dayton Agreement suggested that ethnically based territorial arrangements in the Balkans enjoyed legitimacy in Western eyes and that only the application of force to achieve self-determination could secure the attention of the West. In this context, many K-Albanians were convinced that political and diplomatic means of solving the problem were exhausted since the international community did not consider Kosovo as serious problem. They saw the international community's continuing acceptance of the borders as pushing Kosovo back to Serbia.⁹⁵ Therefore, Dayton sharply undercut Rugova's appeal at home.

In the post-Dayton climate, there was a discernible trend throughout Kosovo and the large Kosovar diaspora towards rejecting the peaceful policies advocated by Ibrahim Rugova. There had recently been trends in this direction, but they were gradually becoming stronger and more organised. For the majority of K-Albanians the *status quo* in Kosovo could no longer be preserved. As a result, the growing frustration allowed the passive policies of the Albanian resistance to be replaced by a more offensive strategy.⁹⁶

After Dayton, most K-Albanians felt, now international attention would finally turn to Kosovo. The USA announcement on January 1996 that it would open an Information Office in Kosovo confirmed the growing expectation. However, Milosevic

⁹⁴ Gallagher, *The Balkans in the New Millennium: In the Shadow of War and Peace*, p. 34.

⁹⁵ Guzina, "Kosovo or Kosova...", p. 44.

⁹⁶ Vickers, *Between Serb and Albanian: A History of Kosovo*, p. 290.

had been able to present himself as an indispensable guarantor of stability to the international community because of his influence in the region and because of undesirable possible alternatives after his departure. Once agreement was reached on Bosnia, it was thought necessary to encourage Milosevic to stay in his 'peace-making' mode so as to ensure the successful implementation of the Dayton accord.⁹⁷ But, while the LDK lost its ability to control the masses in Kosovo, marginalization of the Kosovo issue in international politics over the following years facilitated the radicalization of both Serbs and Albanians and, consequently, inter-ethnic relations deteriorated further.

From Civil Resistance to Armed Resistance: Emergence of the KLA

Rugova's line of non-violent resistance showed impressive defensive results, building up independent welfare system, schools, hospitals, etc. There were very few international results however. The interest of the West was focused where there was manifest violence.⁹⁸ In the absence of tangible progress towards the goal of independence, or even of a process which would restore substantial autonomy and end the repression, the patience of the population was bound to come under strain. Increasingly the cautious, defensive policy of Rugova and the LDK was questioned. Disputes among the K-Albanians movement grew more public as militant ethnic Albanian leaders questioned Rugova's strategy of "passive resistance".⁹⁹ As a result, peaceful movement led by the LDK postponed but could not prevent violent conflict.

⁹⁷ Caplan, "International Diplomacy...", p. 750.

⁹⁸ Wiberg, "The Roles of Civil Society...", pp. 92-93.

⁹⁹ Mertus, *Kosovo: How Myths and Truths Started a War*, p. 307.

Secession is a final resort solution, followed only when it is abundantly evident that all other peaceful and amicable options (including federalism, autonomy and minority rights) cannot remedy or prevent injustice. And also evidence of extensive, genuine support among members of the disaffected group for breaking away is required.¹⁰⁰ Given this consideration, the armed resistance and inter-ethnic conflict in Kosovo became more likely and a major shift occurred; instead of a peaceful resistance, people started to overtly support an armed insurgency for the very simple reason that life became unbearable under the Serbian regime.¹⁰¹ With the appearance of KLA and the massive support of K-Albanians for it, Albanians peaceful strategy had been replaced by a violent one.

The KLA started its operations against the Serbian police and army officers claiming the responsibility for attacks on Serbs during 1995 and 1996 in response to continuing Serbian oppression and a lack of international commitment to remedy the situation. The activity was more evident in 1997 when the public showing of the KLA on 28 November 1997 came as a warning that the time for any form of nonviolent protest was running out.¹⁰² In 1998, the conflict between Serbian security forces and the KLA escalated into a full-fledged war. Rugova's policy had failed to avoid war. International diplomacy and threats had failed to prevent Kosovo becoming another Bosnia.¹⁰³ Finally, in October 1998, the international community recognized the KLA

¹⁰⁰ Deon Geldenhuys, *Contested States in World Politics*, London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2009, pp. 41-44.

¹⁰¹ Krasniqi, "Parallel System in...", pp. 51-52.

¹⁰² Murati, Ahmeti, Kllokoqi and Konjufca, *Actors and Processes of Ethno-National Mobilization in Kosovo*, pp. 79-80.

¹⁰³ Clark, *Civil Resistance in Kosovo*, pp. 172-178.

Transformation of Kosovar Albanians' Struggle

as a political factor to be reckoned with.¹⁰⁴ The sympathies of the K-Albanians for the KLA had been growing since the fact that its actions were the first ones that the international community took seriously the Kosovo issue. While KLA became the most significant force resisting Yugoslav aggression within Kosovo and enjoyed large popular support and legitimacy among the K-Albanians,¹⁰⁵ conflictual situation further strengthened the feeling of in-group belonging and group identity.

In the process of transformation of Albanians resistance strategy to an armed one, collapse of Albanian state system and institutions played a crucial role in changing the situation dramatically. In Albania, the Berisha government had been toppled in a popular revolt after the collapse of a large pyramid savings scheme. The state temporarily disintegrated, which led to the looting of army and interior ministry arms depots. Thus the KLA gained an inexhaustible supply of weapons. As for Rugova, with the demise of Berisha, he lost an ally who had usually endorsed his non-violent strategy, since the policies of the Berisha government in Albania (1992–97) were reinforcing the Kosovo stance of nonviolence.¹⁰⁶ Because of the collapse of the security system and the ensuing lawlessness in Albania, it was possible, for the first time, to organize training facilities in northern Albania near the borders with Kosovo.¹⁰⁷ This turn of events led to essentially a civil war characterised by violation of human rights at a large scale from both sides.

The KLA rose to prominence, not only thanks to its own efforts but, perhaps even more so, thanks to the political and

¹⁰⁴ Guzina, "Kosovo or Kosova...", p. 44.

¹⁰⁵ Abazi, "The Role of International...", pp. 22-28.

¹⁰⁶ Gallagher, *The Balkans in the New Millennium: In the Shadow of War and Peace*, p. 36.

¹⁰⁷ *Kosovo Report: Conflict, International Response and Lessons Learned*, p. 52.

military errors of others. That is to say, had the Serbian leadership handled the Kosovo issue differently over the last decade of twenty century, then the KLA might never have come into existence.¹⁰⁸ Additionally, had the international community shown greater interest and commitment in these years preceding the rise of the KLA, the war in Kosovo might conceivably have been avoided.

Serb self-armament and cooperation with the security forces, on the one side, and the KLA targeting of Serbs, on the other, were two factors that act as mutually intensifying processes in the conflict and contribute to the hardening of positions on either side thus diminishing the any chance of an inter-ethnic accord. Therefore, the scope for any compromise solution had narrowed between conflicting parties considerably. Thus, violence increasingly entered the Albanian resistance movement in the second half of the 1990s.

Conclusion

The central task of a successful policy in every state should be the promotion of the interest for the common existence within the state. So, principles of tolerance, coexistence and cooperation should supplement the prevailing practice of competition and even conflict in multiethnic societies. Because, democracy is not just competition and the rule of a simple majority but also cooperation, participation and the protection of minorities. But otherwise, state security can be brought into question by a high level societal cohesion of a minority group, because of anti-democratic and exclusive practises. This refers to those instances where a state's

¹⁰⁸ Tim Judah, "The Kosovo Liberation Army", *Perceptions*, Vol. V (September-November 2000), pp. 61-62.

programme of homogenisation comes into conflict with the strong identity of one of its minority groups.¹⁰⁹ Serbia's programme of homogenisation in Kosovo came into conflict with the identity of K-Albanians and this situation led to be brought into question of Serbia's state security by aspirations of K-Albanians.

K-Albanians needed a strategy that would avoid either war or submission to the regime while progressing towards their aspiration for independence. The key to this was the parallel institutions and they functioned almost one decade and through an unprecedented expression of social and political solidarity among the K-Albanians and helped to institutionalize the identity of K-Albanians.

In extremely difficult conditions, non-violent resistance of K-Albanians in the context of parallel state structures managed to postpone war, to maintain the integrity of the Albanian community in Kosovo and its way of life, to counter Serbian pressure on Albanians to leave and to enlist international sympathy. But non-involvement of international community directly to Kosovo problem and distance itself from pressuring over Serbian government for its actions in Kosovo did not help to bring Milosevic regime to pursue a moderate conciliatory position over Kosovo. While Kosovo conflict remained unresolved, K-Albanians changed their way of resistance into an armed struggle under the continued Serb repression. As a result of losing of Rugova's authority over K-Albanians, there were callings first for active resistance and then armed one. In the process, actions of the KLA and the brutal responses of Serbian security forces led to the NATO-led operation to "liberate" K-Albanians and parallel state structures of K-Albanians lasted until 1 February 2000 when it was dissolved by Rugova and its funds transferred to the UN

¹⁰⁹ Paul Roe, *Societal Security Dilemma*, Routledge, London, 2005, p. 43.

administration.¹¹⁰ But the end of the war in Kosovo in spring 1999 and the end of the Serbian rule did not remove the notion of spatial separation between Albanians and Serbs. It continues in an equally crude form, only the two communities exchanged places.

¹¹⁰ Pavlakovic and Ramet, “Albanian and Serb...”, p. 86.