

Albania's Golgotha

Indictments

of the Exterminators of the Albanian People

Collected and Edited

by

Leo Freundlich

Translated from German by S. Sophie Juka



Extent of the Albanian-inhabited Provinces (Vilayets) shortly before the Treaty of Berlin



S. S. Juka in company of Leo Freundlich and his wife.
(photograph taken in 1937)

Leo Freundlich, a native of Austria of Jewish descent, was a journalist and a politician. He lived in Vienna.

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The atrocities committed by the Serbs against the Albanians at the present time are not different from those perpetrated in 1912-1913, as described in *Albania's Golgotha*.

I dedicate the translation of this book, published in Vienna, Austria, in 1913 by L. Freundlich (who in the 1930 became a close friend of my father*) to the Kosovar martyrs, past and present: not only to the men who defended bravely the land of their ancestors, and their own dignity as human beings, but also to all other Albanians: the defenseless children, women and the elderly who lost their lives, innocent victims of Serbian aggression.

S.S. Juka

New York, July , 1998

* The translator's father, M. Juka, a well known and respected Albanian personality, served for many years as a statesman in the prewar government of Albania.

The proceeds from the sale of this book will be used to help Kosovar refugees.

S.S. Juka

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INTRODUCTION

In March, 1878, the Russians imposed the Treaty of San Stefano on vanquished Turkey. The Treaty of Berlin, which was signed in July of that same year, modified some of the decisions dictated in San Stefano, but remained favorable to the Slavic populations in the Balkans while ignoring the rights of the non-Slavs, i.e., of the Albanians.

Montenegro, Russia's protégé, was granted state autonomy¹ and allotted territories which were nominally under Turkish rule but whose population was Albanian: the rich valleys of Plava and Gusigne, the Albanian strongholds of Hoti and Gruda, and also the seaport of Ulcin.²

The see of a Catholic bishopric from 877 to 1560, Ulcin had practically never been under Slavic rule. Its population was 95% Albanian.³ The Albanians defended it heroically, just as they had defended all the other regions allotted to Montenegro by the Great Powers. However, the Great Powers eventually intervened using naval and military forces and they handed over Ulcin to Montenegro.

As a result of the Treaty of Berlin, Serbia, which already had state autonomy, was enlarged. The aggrandizement of her territory was also made possible at the expense of the Albanians, who inhabited the towns granted to her, namely Kurshumlija, Leskovac, Vranja, Toplica and Nish.

Bismarck applied to Albania the exact words once used by Metternich in regard to Italy at a time when Austria was opposed to the creation of the Italian state: "Albania," so the Prussian statesman declared, "is merely a geographic expression; there is no Albanian nation."

The Treaty of Berlin became synonymous with injustice for the Albanians who were deeply saddened not only because they were not granted state autonomy like the other Balkan nations under Turkish rule, but also because territories inhabited by their co-national were allotted to neighboring states. The decisions reached in Berlin in 1878 marked the beginning of a long Albanian tragedy, a tragedy to which there seems to be no end.

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As soon as the ceded territories were occupied by the Serbs, the Albanians were submitted to a treatment described as "cruel" by foreign diplomats.⁴ Tens of thousands of them were eventually forced to evacuate places, where their ancestors had lived for generations, in a very brutal way and without receiving the slightest compensation for their losses. The evacuated regions were subsequently colonized by the Serbs within a short period of time.

The Serbs, however, were not satisfied with the annexation of these territories to their state. They were bent on enlarging their domain even further. They were

watching for an opportunity to get hold of other portions of land inhabited by Albanians. The Greeks and the Montenegrins were also on the watch; they too intended to enlarge further their states at Albania's expense.

It must be pointed out that when the Balkans were under Turkish rule, the so-called "Albanian territories" were vast. They comprised (see map) the *vilayets* (provinces) of **Janinë**, **Manastir**, **Shkodër** (Scutari) and **Shkup**.

The Albanians, fearful that the superpowers might decide to cede to neighboring states other sections of their land, rebelled uninterruptedly against the Turks in the hope of winning state autonomy. Their frequent insurrections weakened considerably the position of the Turks in Europe.

In 1912, the Turks were so enfeebled that when the Albanians captured Shkup (Uskub, Skopje) and Manastir (Monastir, Bitolje), they granted them state autonomy within the *vilayets* of **Shkodër**, **Janinë**, **Kosovë** and **parts of Manastir**. The extreme weakness of the Turks became thus evident. It was at that time that Serbia decided to declare war on Turkey. The declaration was made two days after King Peter of Serbia had issued the manifesto, "To the Serbian People," in which he asserted that he was going to wage a 'holy war' in order to bring to the Balkan nations *freedom, brotherhood and equality*.

As it turned out, the Turks were even more exhausted than they appeared to be; in fact, instead of opposing a strong resistance to the Serbian army, they decided to retreat. Those who resisted the Serbs were practically only the Albanians, for it did not take them a long time to understand what the so-called 'holy war' was all about: the Serbs were merely intent on conquering Albanian territories.

The Albanians, having no state of their own, had no regular army; a few weapons here and there, that was all they possessed. As a result, it was relatively easy for the well-equipped Serbian troops to advance despite the opposition encountered. Thus the Albanian cities fell one after the other; Prishtina on October 22, 1912; then Ferizaj and Shkup. Prizren was taken on November 3; Gjakova (Djakovica) on November 4 and Manastir (Bitolje) on November 20.

However, the capture of these cities did not appease Serbia's hunger for conquest, for the age-old dream of the Serbs has been to have access to the sea; they coveted the seashores of Albania. The project to create a state extending to the Adriatic which would comprise all of the southern Slavs but where the Serbs intended to be the sole rulers, may be traced as far back as the eighteenth century. This project was very much alive among the Serbs at the beginning of the twentieth century. However, the Adriatic seashores inhabited by the southern Slavs could be included in the future state only after the destruction of the Austro-Hungarian Empire to which these territories belonged. The destruction of this empire was thus urgent. The presence of the Albanians on the Adriatic was also undesirable

and had to be eliminated. Was not Montenegro given Albanian seaports? Why not Serbia?

Consequently, Serbia made preparations for the expedition of her troops to the Adriatic. The Serbs decided to proceed through Luma (Ljuma). In this region, the Albanians opposed a heroic resistance to the Serbian troops, but lacking arms, they were eventually overpowered by them. The capture of Luma greatly facilitated the advance of the Serbian army toward the Adriatic.

On November 28, 1912, the Albanians, alarmed by these events, proclaimed their independence in the southern seaport of Vlora (Valona). Playing no heed to this proclamation, the Serbo-Montenegrins continued their aggression. Durrës was captured on November 29, and shortly after, Elbasan was taken. The Serbs committed unspeakable murders and also burned and destroyed everything wherever they went. The ceasefire, eventually enforced by the Great Powers and accepted by the Serbs, was expected to last from December 3, 1912 until February 13, 1913, but was broken several times by the Serbian army.

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Although the Albanians had no allies to plead for them, the Great Powers decided that the Albanian problem should nonetheless be discussed. To this effect a meeting, known as the *Ambassadors' Conference*, was held in London on December 17, 1912. Here, it was

agreed that Albania should be recognized as an autonomous state. Serbia accepted the decision reached at the Conference, but she did everything in her power to prevent it from becoming a reality.

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Albania's borders had yet to be demarcated. Theoretically, the borders of the Balkan states that had been under Turkish rule were to be delimited primarily on the principle of ethnicity. There is no doubt that, based on this principle, the territory to be assigned to the state of Albania would not have been small. Though many Albanians had been massacred by the Serbo-Montenegrins, those that were left still constituted an overwhelming majority as compared to the Serbian population. The Serbs were aware of this fact more than anybody else. Since Albania had been occupied by their army, they succeeded, by means of threats and by modifying statistics, in presenting the small Serbian minority in the Albanian regions as being much larger than it actually was. Moreover, the Serbs contended and endeavored to convince the members of the Conference in London that the Albanians inhabiting Kosova and Macedonia were originally Serbs who had been forcibly Albanized and that they would soon turn Serb again. According to still another Serbian theory, the Albanians in the aforementioned regions were late comers; it went without saying that they had to be driven out.

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By asserting that the Albanians were late comers in Macedonia and Kosova, the Serbs intended to stress the importance of history in decision making with regard to the delimitation of the borders. They contended that not only Kosova and Macedonia, but also the city of Shkodër and the seaport of Durrës (Durazzo), as well as all of the region that at the present time constitutes North Albania, had been under Serbian rule prior to the Turkish conquest.

However, should history and not ethnicity be considered as a basis for the demarcation of the borders, various historical data should be taken into account. With respect to the Albanian-inhabited regions, it is important to point out the following facts:

1. It is undeniable that the Albanians are, together with the Greeks, the oldest people in the Balkans.
2. It also is an admitted fact that the Slavs are actually late comers in the Balkans. They did not even come as conquerors; they migrated in small groups.
3. True, the Albanian-inhabited regions were ruled by the Serbs for a brief period of time. But so were parts of Greece. The population remained Albanian as it was prior to the Serbian conquest.
4. The regions in question were not lost to the Turks in 1389. At the time of the Kosova battle, Serbia was small.
5. Prior to the Serbian occupation, the regions in question were for a period of time under Bulgarian rule. Scholars assert that the Slavic names of villages and other places both in Greece and in Albania date from the Bulgarian rather than from the Serbian occupation.

6. The Battle of Kosova was not fought by the Serbs alone, but by a coalition of Balkan nations. The number of the Albanians who took part in it was not negligible. Moreover, the hero of the battle, Milosh Kopili (who became known under his Slavised name as Milosh Obilich) was an Albanian.

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The fact remains, however, that in the interpretation of history, the imagination plays an important role, be it unwittingly, for history is, like everything else, subjected to trends and fashions of a particular period of time. There is no doubt that in 1913, Western imagination was marked by Russia and by the Slavs in general. The Serbs, who had been for centuries under Turkish rule, and about whom the world knew very little, managed to impose their own interpretation of history to the members of the Conference in London. Serbia was supported not only by Russia, but also by France.

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The Serbs insisted, in a particular way, that with regard to the delimitation of the borders, priority should be given to territorial compensation resulting from the Balkan War. Therefore, after having broken the cease-fire several times, they resumed their mass

massacres on February 3, 1913, i.e., as soon as the delay fixed for the cease-fire was over. The Serbs seemed convinced that decisions would actually be made on the battlefield and not at the bargaining table.

When the demarcation of the borders was announced on March 22, 1913, the Albanians were deeply saddened because more than half of their territories were left outside the borders assigned to their state. Albania's neighbors, however, were still not satisfied. Serbia was hopeful that the Great Powers would eventually modify their decisions and grant her Durrës and Shkodër. In March, she sent new troops to Albania. Although she had agreed to remove them as soon as the borders were delimited, she continued to keep her troops within the Albanian state. The Greeks, who as members of *The Balkan Alliance*, had allied themselves with the Serbs in the hope of preventing the creation of the Albanian state, were also plaguing the Albanians with blockades and blood baths.

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Albaniens Golgatha was published in 1913, shortly after the delimitation of the Albanian borders, i.e., at the time when the Serbo-Montenegrins, and also the Greeks, were still within the state of Albania. This booklet contains reports and articles from the world press, published between October 1912 and March 1913. These tell about atrocities committed by the Serbo-Montenegrins for the purpose of exterminating the Albanians: their lootings, tortures, bloodbaths, etc.

The editor of the booklet, Leo Freundlich, contends that some 25,000 Albanians lost their lives as a result of the massacres committed by the Serbs. This figure is considerable for that particular time. Experts, however, assert that it was much higher.

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As stated by Leo Freundlich in the preface, the accounts contained in *Albania's Golgotha* are not complete; they constitute merely a small fraction of the material that is available.⁵ Among the reports that are not included, one should mention especially those written by Mary Edith Durham.⁶ An anthropologist, a painter, historian and journalist, Mary Edith Durham also worked for the 'Macedonia Relief Organization.' She spent many years in the Balkans and lived among Albanians as well as among Serbo-Montenegrins. When she first arrived in the Balkans in 1900, she was well disposed toward the Serbs, as were many other people in the west, but she eventually denounced Serbia in all of her writings. As Aubrey Herbert, M.P., remarked, "It was only the cruelty of the Serbs that turned her affection into dislike." A passage contained in her *Twenty Years of Balkan Tangle* (London, 1920) indicates to what extent she was repulsed by the atrocities committed by the Serbo-Montenegrins: "On arriving in London," she wrote, "I packed up the Golden Medal given me by King Nikola and returned it to him stating that I had often expressed surprise as persons who accepted decorations from Abdul Hamid, and that now I knew that he and his subjects were even more

cruel than the Turk, I would not keep his blood-stained medal any longer. I communicated this to the English and Austrian press. The Order of Saint Sava given to me by King Petar of Serbia I decided to keep a little longer 'till some peculiar flagrant case'." (p. 25)

In fact, the Serbo-Montenegrins, once freed from the Turkish yoke, tried to impose upon other nations, be they Catholics or Moslems, a yoke which was much heavier than that of the Turks. "No Turk," wrote Miss Durham in that same book, "ever treated the Armenians worse than did the two Serb peoples treat the Albanians in the name of the Orthodox Church" (p. 235).

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Albania's Golgotha has a particularly disturbing effect on those readers who are familiar with the history of the Albanian people and who know about the reputation of their soldiers. In fact, Albanian mercenaries were in great demand, just as the Swiss, on account of their bravery. But in the fights against the Serbs in 1912-1913, the Albanians were unable to display their real valor and dignity because these were not battles between two armies, where the soldiers of both camps make use of equal means; they were combats between the army of a state and an unarmed, defenseless population that could easily be defeated and humiliated. Needless to say that procedures of a similar nature are devoid of greatness and distinction.

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It is interesting to note that the Albanians did not blame the Serbian people for the atrocities committed against them; they merely condemned the Serbian government. Justin Godard, of the Carnegie Commission, who pointed out this fact, added that all nations ought to be able to make the distinction between government and people, as the Albanians did.⁷ However, governments followed governments in Yugoslavia without ever bringing about a change in the treatment of the Albanians who continued to be harassed, imprisoned, tortured, killed and discriminated against.⁸

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Various means may be used to commit genocide: mass killings (as was the case during the Balkan Wars), deportations, imprisonments, et al. The worst kind of genocide is when the human rights of a people are completely ignored, for this brings about a spiritual death. This was the case when Kosova and Macedonia became part of Yugoslavia. At that time, the Albanians in Yugoslavia had neither schools for their children nor hospitals for their sick people. The Albanian population was decimated by all kinds of illnesses and whereas the Albanian children were not allowed to go to school, the Serbs, whose illiteracy during World War I was shockingly high,⁹ could provide their children with elementary, secondary and higher education.

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Immediately after World War II, Tito decided that each of the nationalities in Yugoslavia should have its own republic — even Montenegro, still tiny although its territory had more than doubled following the Treaty of Berlin. The Albanians, however, were not allowed to have their own republic despite the fact that they were more numerous than the Montenegrins and the Macedonians. Some 40 000 of them died in the first years following World War II; others were ruthlessly beaten and tortured. When Rankovic was in power, a treaty was signed with Turkey, on the basis of which 300 000 Albanians were driven out of Kosova and forcefully sent to Turkey.

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After World War II, except for a brief period of time when Tito, having dismissed Rankovic, granted the Albanians a certain freedom and even allowed them to found their own university, the atrocities committed against them have continued unabated: beatings, incarcerations, killings, etc. In 1989, no matter how unbelievable it might seem, the Serbs even managed to poison over 6 000 school children.

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Since the fall of Rankovic, in 1966, the Serbs have started to accuse the Albanians of persecuting the Serbian minority in Kosova. There is no doubt that the

purpose of this contention is to turn world attention away from the true genocide: that of the Serbs on the Albanians.

The Serbs have also pointed out, especially during these past ten years, the high birth rate of the Albanians, which allegedly is a threat to the Serbian minority. Much has been written by foreign journalists on that high birth rate. By contrast, the fact that the mortality of the Albanian infants and children is the highest in Europe is known to very few.

It is interesting to note that according to the French scholar, Ami Boué,¹⁰ in 1838, Serbia's population was less than 900 000, whereas the Albanians numbered over 1 600 000. At that time the Albanians were also more numerous than the Greeks. These figures give an idea as to the extent of the Albanian genocide which was achieved with various means inconceivable in twentieth century Europe.

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The so-called *Autonomous Province of Kosova* is, ever since it was annexed to the Republic of Serbia in March of 1989, a frightful concentration camp, where people are constantly tortured, both physically and mentally. The Albanians, dismissed from their jobs, are dying of hunger. No humanitarian society is allowed by the Yugoslav government to send them medical supplies, food and clothing. Strangely enough, the

Serbs, despite irrefutable evidence, continue to deny their wrongdoings, as they have always done in the past, a fact that Leo Freundlich has not failed to point out in *Albania's Golgotha*.

It is surprising that even now that the atrocities have reached extreme proportions both in scope and in intensity; even now when it has become obvious that not solely the Serbian government, but all of the Serbian people are responsible for the crimes committed against the Albanians, the 'civilized world' is still maintaining a shocking and disturbing silence.

In an article published in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine* on July 9, 1991, Johann Georg Stadtmüller remarked that the unbelievable ill-treatment of the Albanians, which has been going on for so long, is something of which Europe should be ashamed. He added that the Serbs are not merely subjecting the nationalities that make up Yugoslavia to ill-treatment; they are also threatening peace. Mr. Stadtmüller noted, furthermore, that the Serbs, because of their behavior, somehow convey the impression that there is something demoniacal about them. He added that this can, of course, not be possible for an entire people; all that is needed to improve the image of the Serbs, is to make them understand once and for all that they have no right to subjugate others in an arrogant way, but must learn to live side by side with them as equals.

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An American pastor of Swiss origin, Frank Buchman, founder of the *Moral Rearmament* movement, once said that "there is enough in this world for everybody's need, but not enough for everybody's greed." When thinking of this declaration, one must admit that the Serbs have somehow managed to satisfy their greed, whereas nothing has ever been provided for the most elementary, the most vital needs of the Albanians.

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The Albanians have often been betrayed by the Great Powers. But although frustrated and bitter, they have never given up the hope that their rights will ultimately be recognized.

Now that Yugoslavia seems to be disintegrating, one wonders, of course, what the fate of the Albanians in Yugoslavia will be. In the territories inhabited by them, they constitute an overwhelming majority and are almost equal in number to the Albanian population in the state of Albania. Consequently, it would be unfair to regard them merely as a minority group; they are a nationality.

Will the Albanian problem be solved in an equitable way or will it continue to be ignored? Will the Albanians still be treated as slaves by the Slavic populations? Will they continue to be victims of

aggression and selfishness as has hitherto been the case? Or will the rights of the Albanians finally be recognized now that human rights seem to constitute the basis for resolving European problems?

Will the Albanians be finally allowed to work with dignity, to develop their varied talents, and to channel their admirable vitality toward careers with future prospects and toward goals that will not remain vain?

S.S. Juka

New York, July 1991

Footnotes

¹Montenegro is a geographical name used for the first time in the fifteenth century, after the Turkish conquest; it is not included in maps prior to the seventeenth century (see F. Miklosic, *Die Serbischen Dynasten Crnojevic. Ein Betrag zur Geschichte von Montenegro*, Vienna, 1882).

²Ulcin: from Alb. Ulk = wolf.

³In one of the articles on Ulcin published in *The New York Times* back in 1880, it is clearly stated that the population of Ulcin and its district "is Albanian" with just a "sprinkling of Slavs and Gypsies" (NYT, Sept. 13, 1880, 4:3).

⁴"The Servian Government has behaved with great and unnecessary harshness, not to say cruelty, toward the Albanians in the recently ceded districts...the inhabitants of over 100 Albanian villages in Toplitza and Vranja Valley were ruthlessly driven forth from their homesteads by the Servians..." (letter sent to the Secretary of the Foreign Office of G.B. by the British consul in Belgrade, Nov. 26, 1878; see: British Museum, "Accounts and Papers" -38- 1878-9 LXXX 79, 574-575. This letter is reproduced in: S. Rizaj, *The Albanian League of Prizren, English Documents*, Prishtinë, 1978, pp. 241-242).

⁵The *Report of the International Commission to inquire into the Causes and Conduct of the Balkan Wars*, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, recounts

the atrocities committed by the Serbo-Montenegrins against the Albanians, thus corroborating the statements contained in *Albaniens Golgatha*. But the report was published at a later date, i.e., in 1914.

⁶ME Durham (1863-1944) published several books dealing with the Balkans: *Through the Land of the Serb* (1904), *The Burden of the Balkans* (1905), *High Albania* (1980), *Struggle for Scutari* (1914), *Twenty Years of Balkan Tangle* (1920), *The Serajevo Crime* (1925), *Some Tribal Origins, Laws and Customs in the Balkans* (1928). Miss Durham was elected a fellow of the Royal Anthropological Institute of England.

Miss Durham recounts the atrocities perpetrated by the Serbo-Montenegrins against the Albanians especially in her *Struggle for Scutari* which appeared in print in 1914, i.e., after *Albaniens Golgatha*. However, prior to this book, articles on those atrocities written by her had been published in various newspapers.

⁷See *L'Albanie en 1921*, Paris, 1922, p. 234.

⁸According to the *Treaty of Saint-Germain-en Laye*, the Yugoslav Government had to protect the rights of all the citizens. But the persecutions against the Albanians did not stop. Nicholas Bojaxhiu, Mother Teresa's father, a native of Shkup, was poisoned by the Serbs, as reported by his son Lazër Bojaxhiu in an interview published in the Italian magazine *Gente* (Dec. 1979 and Jan. 1980). Mother Teresa's family eventually moved to Tirana, Albania.

⁹During World War I, "...illiteracy of the whole Serbian nation was 83%..." (E.H. Huskell, "The Truth about

Bulgaria,” reprint from the *Oberlin Alumni Magazine*, 1918).

¹⁰Born in 1794, the son of a wealthy shipbuilder, Ami Boué spent his childhood in Hamburg, Geneva and Paris. Orphaned at the age of 11, he was brought up by his uncle Antoine Odier, a banker. But he showed no interest in shipbuilding or bookkeeping. Instead, he went to Edinburgh, Scotland, to study medicine. He was an excellent student. Thanks to one of his teachers, he became, at the same time, deeply interested in botany and geology. His numerous publications in this latter field are greatly valued by specialists. Boué was co-founder of the French Geological Society.

From 1836 to 1837, Boué, who by that time was an established scholar, journeyed, accompanied by a team of experts, through European Turkey for the purpose of studying the resources and the nationalities of that territory. In 1840, he published *La Turquie d'Europe*, a work which was admired for its unbiased scholarship, its clarity and precision. The Serbian scholar and patriot Alexandar Belic wrote that “it is superfluous to underscore the importance of the works by the distinguished French scholar Ami Boué. His *La Turquie d'Europe* in four volumes, each one comprising 400 pages, is a real encyclopedia with which no other publication of this kind could possibly compare as of this date.”

N.B. The reader may find the usage of quotation marks at times faulty. I did not think it appropriate to make any changes. Also, I considered it unfit to correct inconsistencies with respect to city names (thus: Scopio, Üsküb; Tirano, Tirana; Prizrend, Prizren, etc.).

S. S. Juka

Albania's Golgotha

On the east bank of the Adriatic, hardly a three-day journey from Vienna, live the Albanians, an autochthonal people who for centuries have been fighting for freedom and independence against enemies and oppressors of all kinds. They have preserved their originality despite numerous wars and historical upheavals. Neither the great migrations, nor the battles against Serbs, Turks and other invaders and oppressors have succeeded in preventing the Albanians from maintaining pure and unadulterated their distinctive traits with respect to race, language, ways and customs.

The history of this nation is an uninterrupted succession of the most murderous battles against cruel oppressors. But not even the bloodiest horrors have managed to exterminate this strong race. Also, the intellectual life of the Albanians has been remarkable despite the fact that the oppressors have nipped in the bud every possibility of cultural progress. This nation has given to the Turkish Empire its most outstanding generals and statesmen. The best judges in the Ottoman Empire are of Albanian origin. The most remarkable works in Turkish literature are written by Albanians. Nearly all merchants in Montenegro were originally from this nation. The same may be said regarding merchants in many Romanian cities. In Italy, too, the Albanians have played an important role in various domains (Crispi,¹ for one, is of Albanian origin) and in Greece, the most courageous soldiers were of Albanian descent.

Following the massive upheavals produced by the Balkan War, this nation's age-old dream of freedom and independence was at last going to become a reality. The European Superpowers decided to grant state autonomy to Albania.

However, the Serbs, prompted by their greed for conquest, devised a means of destroying the beautiful dream of a brave and freedom-loving nation shortly before it came true. Serbian troops invaded Albania with murderous assaults and arson. "Since we are not allowed to have Albania itself," so the Serbs thought, "there is only one solution left: the extermination of the Albanians."

October 18, 1912, King Peter of Serbia issued his manifesto, "To the Serbian People," in which he stated, among others, the following:

The Turkish governments have shown a lack of understanding as regards responsibilities towards their citizens, and they have turned a deaf ear to all grievances and protests. The situation has eventually become such that in European Turkey nobody is satisfied any more. The Serbs, the Greeks and also the Albanians consider it intolerable.

As a result, I have ordered my brave army, in God's name, to wage a holy war, in order to free

our brethren and to secure for them a better life.

My army will meet in Old Serbia with both Christian and Moslem Serbs, who are just as dear to us, but also with Christian and Moslem Albanians with whom our nation has shared for thirteen centuries, uninterruptedly, both joys and sorrows. We shall bring freedom, brotherhood and equality to all of them.

A half year has hardly gone by since the proclamation of this solemn manifesto. How did the Serbs fulfill the promise of their king?

The answer is: people were murdered in thousands; men, women, children; the elderly tortured to death; villages burned down or looted; women and young girls raped and a whole land, devastated and ransacked, has been immersed in blood.

The Serbs did not come to Albania as liberators of the Albanian people, but as their murderers. At the *Ambassadors' Conference* in London, it was proposed that Albania's borders should be defined on the basis of statistics pertaining to nationality and creed which were to be validated on the spot by a commission. The Serbs hastened to prepare these statistics with machine-guns, firearms and bayonets. They perpetrated atrocities impossible to describe. The feeling of indignation and horror aroused by these crimes is surpassed only by the dreadful uneasiness that one is

bound to experience when considering that such frightful horrors may be committed in the twentieth century in the very heart of Europe not far away from important cultural centers. This feeling becomes the more disturbing because nothing has been done to put an end to the unspeakable massacres despite the fact that for months now reporters of all nationalities have been writing about these horrid deeds and notwithstanding the furious accusations that Pierre Loti² hurled so vehemently at the world. A brave and remarkable people is being tortured on the cross before the eyes of the entire world, and Europe, Christian Europe, civilized Europe, is not uttering a word about it.

Tens of thousands of defenseless people have been butchered, women have been raped, elderly people and children strangled; hundreds of villages burned down, priests slaughtered.

Yet Europe is remaining silent!

Serbia and Montenegro have set out to conquer a foreign land. But that land is inhabited by a freedom-loving and brave people who, despite centuries of bondage has never gotten used to tolerating a foreign yoke. On account of this fact, the solution was: the Albanians must be exterminated.

A brutal, dehumanized army showed by means of dreadful procedures how this decision could be put into practice.

Innumerable villages were razed to the ground and countless people slaughtered in bestially cruel ways.

Where once stood modest homes that generations of poor Albanians had built diligently, there now lie heaps of smoking ruins. A whole nation is bleeding on the cross — and Europe does not say a word!

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The purpose of this publication is to arouse the awareness of the European public. The collected reports included in it constitute merely a fraction of the material that is available. Besides, their content is well known to the European governments through official consular accounts and abundant reports that have appeared in the press.

So far, these governments have remained silent.

But now any prolonged silence will imply complicity. The Great Powers must turn to the raging barbarians with an unconditional "Hands Off!" In Albania, the cruel expedition of genocide must be halted and an international investigation commission set up to inquire about the dreadful changes brought against the Serbian government.

Above all, the Serbo-Montenegrin troops must leave without delay the Albanian territory they have invaded and the Greek blockade which is cutting off Albania from every food supply, must also be lifted.

I appeal to the governments of the Great Powers; I appeal to the European public in the name of humanity, in the name of civilization, in the name of

the distressed Albanian people.

I turn to the public of England, to the nation who at the time of the Armenian massacres raised so courageously her voice in defense of the oppressed.

I address my appeal to the French, to the nation that has so often proved that she stands for humanity and human rights.

A wretched nation enduring a dreadful fate is calling for help from her Golgotha.

Will Europe hear her call?

Vienna, Easter Sunday, 1913

Leo Freundlich

The Albanians Must Be Exterminated

In regard to the news report that 300 Albanians from Ljuma, who carried no arms, were shot in Prizrend without legal proceedings, the *Frankfurter Zeitung* wrote this: "It seems that in this particular case, the Serbian troops are to be blamed for the carnage. However, there is not the slightest doubt that on other occasions, when very bloody massacres were committed by irregular, auxiliary troops, these acted under the orders of Serbian authorities who fully approved them. At the beginning of the war, we ourselves were often openly told by Serbian officials: "We shall exterminate the Albanians." Since this policy of genocide has been continuing unabated despite European protests, we consider it as our duty to expose bluntly the intentions of the authorities in Belgrade. These will angrily deny their declarations, aware as they are that journalistic ethics, do not allow us to mention names. However, it is not difficult to understand that we would not release such information if we were not absolutely sure about it. After all, the facts exposed here are much more eloquent than the most sincere confessions. Since last fall when Serbian troops crossed the border and

occupied land inhabited by Albanians, one bloodbath after another has been committed.

A Genocide War

In an article published in the *Kreuzzeitung*, Professor Schiemann wrote this: Personal letters have been coming here from war headquarters, despite the tough censorship in the allied Balkan states as well as the pressure put on war correspondents. They describe the deportment of the Serbs and Greeks in the war. The picture that gradually emerges from these letters is unusually afflicting. The Serbs, Professor Schiemann declares in his article, are waging a war of genocide against the Albanians. They would like to exterminate this nation root and branch.

The *Daily Chronicle* reported on November 12, 1912, that the slaughter by the Serbs of thousands of Albanians was an undeniable fact. Near Üsküb, 2 000 Moslem Albanians and, not far from Prizren, 5 000 of them were butchered. Many villages have been set on fire and their inhabitants massacred. When homes were searched for weapons, the Albanians were simply killed even when no weapons were found. The Serbs made it clear that Moslem Albanians had to be eradicated. They contended that this would be the most effective way of appeasing the country.

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The war correspondent of Rome's *Messaggero* gives an account of the frightful massacres perpetrated by the Serbs against the Albanians in the *vilayet* of Kosovo. As a result of the resistance opposed by the Albanians, such towns as Ferisovic, Lipian, Babus and others were completely destroyed and most of their inhabitants killed. A high ranking Catholic priest made it known that fighting in the surroundings of Ferizovic raged for three days. After the conquest of the town, the Serbian commander is said to have summoned the fugitives to return quietly and to hand in the weapons. When this was done, three or four hundred people were slain. In all of Ferizovic, only half a dozen Moslem families remained alive. Poor Serbian families quickly settled in the homes of the well-to-do fugitives.

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The Paris newspaper *Humanité* published an official account which had been communicated to a consulate in Salonica. This communication tells about the way the Serbs acted in Albania; about their lootings, destructions and massacres. The number of Albanian villages completely or partially destroyed by the Serbs in a systematic way, amounts to thirty-one. The gangs, led by Kristo from Kumanovo, Ssiro Dilow from Üsküb, Alexandrowos from Ishtip and others, plundered all of the villages in the districts of Kratovo and Kotchana, set them on fire and slaughtered the entire Moslem population. In Shuyovo and Mesheli, all of the Moslems were slain; two hundred others were killed in Vetreni.

In Bogdanitza, sixty Turks were locked up in a mosque. They were let out later on and thereupon killed one after the other. In the district of Kawadar, thirty-four villages out of ninety-eight were destroyed. The Turks, some of whom believed to have been saved thanks to a ransom paid to a gang, were butchered by another gang. In Drenovo, all of the inhabitants were killed. Between this place and Palikura a whole row of graves were discovered, including a few with heads sticking out of them. These were graves of martyrs who had been buried alive.

Manhunts

The war correspondent of the Danish newspaper *Riget*, Fritz Magnussen, is a man who was formerly well disposed toward the Serbs. In a telegram he sent from Üsküb to Semlin by a special messenger, in order to avoid the rigorous censorship, Magnussen describes as follows the comportment of the Serbs in regard to the Albanian population:

The war-making of the Serbs in Macedonia is characterized by a frightful slaughter of the Albanian population. The army is waging a horrible war of genocide. According to declarations made by officers and soldiers, 3 000 Albanians were killed between Kumanovo and Üsküb, and 5 000 around Prishtina. The

Albanian villages were encircled and set on fire. Thereupon, the inhabitants were chased out of their homes and killed like mice. The Serbian soldiers boast about this manhunt.

Üsküb is in an absolutely horrifying state. Albanian homes have to be thoroughly searched. Should some object be found that looks like a weapon, the members of the household are killed on the spot. Streets are very unsafe because of the constant shooting from and at the houses.

Yesterday, thirty-six Albanians were sentenced to death by the war tribunal and shot down immediately. Not a single day goes by without savage murders being committed against the Albanians. The river, further up, is filled with corpses. In the villages all around, hunting expeditions are organized every day. Yesterday, I was invited to participate in such a hunt by a Serbian officer who boasted, at the same time, of having killed with his own hand nine Albanians the previous day.

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The *Reichspost* received a file from a personality whose name and outstanding position must be considered by every respectable newspaper as a guarantee regarding the authenticity of the information included in it. This information concerns the dreadful

crimes perpetrated in Albania by Serbian gangs and by regular Serbian troops.

The file contains the following reports:

The city of Üsküb and its surroundings bear evidence of the atrocities committed against the Albanians. For days together, I saw the *battues* organized against the Albanians by Serbian armed gangs and by regular troops. For three consecutive nights, I could see the sky red with the flames of burning villages. As a result of these horrendous acts, five villages in the immediate vicinity of Üsküb were devastated. Almost all of their inhabitants were killed, despite the fact that in the surroundings of Üsküb the Albanians did not oppose any armed resistance to the invading Serbian troops. Behind the fortress of Üsküb, there is a precipice which, to this very day is filled with corpses of over one hundred victims of this hunt. Likewise, in the ravine of Vistala Voda, in the vicinity of Üsküb, lie eighty Albanians. A trustworthy informant with whom I spoke myself, visited the hospital of Üsküb shortly after the Serbs entered this town and found there, during his first visit, 132 wounded Albanians. The following day, only eighty of them were left and a few days later only thirty. The treatment to which the wounded Albanians were subjected was absolutely cruel. They were refused food and drink. As a result, some of the wounded, as reported by eye witnesses, died of hunger at the hospital. The inhabitants of the region claim that many of the corpses and even bodies of wounded people still alive, were thrown into the Vardar. This river washes down, at a distance below the city, twenty to thirty corpses every day. In my hotel in Üsküb, several Serbian Komitatchis

were stationed. They spoke very freely and boastfully, especially when the wine loosened their tongues, about robberies and human *battues*. One evening, in the middle of the street, two unarmed Albanians were killed. They were going home quietly. The two killers, who shortly after their misdeed made their appearance in the hotel where they got drunk, remained unharmed by military authorities despite the fact that everybody in town knew that the crime was committed by them. Another bloody incident took place in the city on the Vardar bridge. There, three Albanians, who were going downtown on errands, were attacked by Serbian soldiers and killed immediately without a trial, without a hearing. Since the soldiers seemed to find the digging of the graves strenuous because the soil is frozen, many bodies of those who had been killed were simply thrown into wells. The informant counted in the region of Üsküb thirty-eight wells filled with corpses of Albanians. The authorities in charge of the persecution are connected with bandits. I myself was present when a Serbian soldier in Üsküb produced two watches and 150 Turkish pounds which he had already gotten hold of. Thereupon, the soldier noticed a well-dressed Albanian who was passing by and, sincerely doleful, declared: "Too bad there are so many people present; otherwise I would have spent a bullet on him." The Albanian is regarded as an unprotected outlaw, a being not safeguarded by any government principle or legal power. However, quite a few excesses are also committed under the influence of drink. The inebriated military bands who roamed about and broke into homes were the most dreadful ones.

Given the fact that I am very fluent in Serbian,

Serbian officers and soldiers have often considered me as one of their co-nationals. I was thus told in a boastful manner by a Serbian soldier how he and his comrades had attacked an Albanian village near Kumanovo: "Many of the inhabitants who were no longer able to escape had concealed themselves in the attics of their homes. We forced them to come out by means of smoke, when their cottages were on fire they came out of them like moles out of their galleries, screaming, cursing and whiningly begging for mercy. We shot them down at the doors. For children, we used our bayonets, thus saving our bullets. We destroyed the village completely, because shots had come from a house which displayed the white flag." Bloodbaths were not stopped by military authorities anywhere. Many of the officers took part in the atrocities, and there was not a single Serb who did not act from conviction that by committing these horrors he had accomplished a rewarding act in accordance with the will of his superiors.

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In Kalkandele, eighty-five Albanians were killed in their homes, where they were found by the Serbs, and the town was looted despite the fact that no armed opposition had previously taken place there. The shameful acts committed against women and girls, even against twelve-year-old children, are beyond

description. The horrors reached perhaps their peak when the soldiers forced the fathers and husbands at gun point to be present and to light up the scene when outrages were committed by military gangs at home against their daughters and wives. The town of Gostivar was saved because 200 Turkish pounds were paid to the Serbian commander. Here, only six Albanians were shot.

In contrast with the places previously mentioned, Ferizovic opposed an organized armed resistance. During the fight which lasted twenty-four hours, an Albanian woman, seized the gun of her husband who had just been killed and shot down five Serbs before she was killed herself. To the carnage of Ferizovic over 1 200 Albanians fell victim. As of this day, the town has almost no inhabitants: remaining are only three Moslem Albanians over fifteen years of age. Also, in Gillane, where the Albanians did not defend themselves, the entire population perished by fire and sword; the only survivors were a few fugitives. At present, merely ruins are left to attest to the massacres and the fall of Gillane.

In Prishtina, the Serbian occupation was even bloodier. The Albanians estimated the number of the dead here at 5 000. One must admit, in all justice, that here the white flag was very improperly used for after the flag was hoisted, Turkish officers suddenly opened fire on Serbian troops. Their intention was obviously to obstruct the armistice negotiations with the Albanians. The consequence of this deed was the annihilation of hundreds of Albanian families; even infants in their cradles had to pay with their lives.

In the village of Lescovac, near Ferizovic, eight unarmed Albanians were attacked by Serbian soldiers and immediately shot.

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The city of Prizrend opposed no resistance to the entry of the Serbian army. Yet, here too, as elsewhere, blood flowed in streams. Prizren is now, after Prishtina, Albania's most desolate town. The native people sadly call it "the kingdom of death." It is here that Serbian gangs wrecked the greatest havoc. They broke into houses and massacred those who stood in their way, regardless of age or sex. For days, the corpses of the killed lay on the streets unburied because the Serbian conquerors were busy elsewhere, and the surviving Albanians did not dare to get out of their homes. The attacks were repeated every night in the city and its surroundings. Some 400 Albanians lost their lives during the first days following the invasion by the Serbs. Despite this fact, the commander-in-chief, Jankovic, forced, at gun point, both the notables of Prizren and the tribe leaders to sign a declaration of gratitude to King Peter for "the liberation that came about thanks to the Serbian army." Then, as the Serbian troops, ready to proceed westward, were unable to obtain horses to transport their equipment, 200 Albanians were requisitioned. Each of them was to carry loads weighing fifty to sixty kilograms. These men were then obliged to walk for seven hours during the night

over rough roads in the direction of the district of Ljuma. These unfortunate people reached their destination completely tired out and in a frightful state as a result of the extreme exhaustion and the ill treatment inflicted upon them. Even the Serbian commander expressed disapproval concerning this kind of proceeding.

A woman from Fandi, named Dila, came to Prizren with her son, another relative and two men from the village of Gjugja. She wanted to shop for her daughter's dowry. Before leaving Prizren she applied, at the headquarters of General Jankovic, for a pass for herself and those accompanying her; they wanted to cross the Serbian military posts unharmed. She obtained the pass. When the five people arrived in Suni, which is at a distance of four hours from Prizren, they were robbed of their possessions. The four men were then tied up and thrown into a pit. Thereupon, these unfortunate people were shot dead by soldiers from the edge of the pit. The desperate mother, who witnessed the scene, called out to her son, but when she became aware that he no longer moved, that he was killed, she fell on her knees before the soldiers imploring them to kill her too. She was tied up to a tree. When officers came along having heard the shots, the soldiers exhibited a loaf of bread, all broken up, which they had taken away from the woman and in which they had inserted two Mauser cartridges. They showed this as alleged proof that the men were trying to smuggle ammunition. Thereupon, the officers left them alone. The wretched woman remained from Monday afternoon until Wednesday tied up to a tree facing the pit where her dead son was laying. On Wednesday, completely exhausted as she was from lack of food and the cold of

the late autumn nights, she was dragged back to Prizren. She got there Wednesday night. She was locked up again and the following day was taken to the military headquarters. Although General Jankovic was obliged to admit that the sorrowful woman in front of him was innocent, she was not set free but remained in custody at the house of the Serbian bishop until the following day. Only then was she handed over to the Catholics and taken to the Church; there, the poor creature was able to freshen up.

In Prizrend there lived a baker, Gjoni i Prek Palit, who had to furnish bread to the Serbian troops. One day, the sergeant in charge of provisions came to the bakery. Since he was planning to come back, he left his gun hanging there. A few soldiers who haphazardly entered the bakery a little later noticed the gun and arrested the baker, claiming he had violated the law that prohibited arms. He was immediately taken to the military tribunal and shot dead. When Gini, the baker's brother, heard about the arrest, he ran instantly to the sergeant and took him to the military headquarters. The aforementioned sergeant testified that the Mauser gun was his own, and that he had left it momentarily in the bakery. He also gave the correct number marked on the gun and recognized that it was his own gun. Gini and the Serbian witness were beaten up and chased away. Gini was unable to learn anything regarding his detained brother. Ten days later, the corpse of the shot man was found some fifteen minutes away from the city by the unfortunate mother. She had been looking for her son day and night, and believed him to be still alive. She requested that the dead body be left with her so that she could provide a Christian burial for him. Her request was denied. Thereupon, the

Catholic priest appeared before the commander and asked, in the name of religious freedom, for permission to bury the body in the Catholic graveyard. This request was also rejected. The only authorization granted was to bury the dead body on the very spot where it was found.

Even officers took part in the massacres. In Prizren a soldier had asked in vain his regiment's officer for shoes, or *opankas*. He was then advised by another officer that in case he would see an Albanian wearing good-looking *opankas*, he should take them away from him, for after all, did he not have a gun! The officer showed him his own *opankas* clearly indicating how he had appropriated them.

In the surroundings of Prizren three Albanian villages were completely destroyed and thirty municipality representatives from the vicinity killed. The latter were accused of "being pro-Austrian." In one of these municipalities, the soldiers forced the women out of their homes, bound them together and obliged them to dance, lined up in rows. Thereupon, the soldiers opened gunfire on these captives and had fun watching the defenseless victims as they collapsed, bleeding, one after another.

When General Jankovic was informed that the Ljuma people were setting about to impede the march of the Serbian troops toward the Adriatic, he gave orders to proceed with excessive harshness. In the district of Ljuma, twenty-seven villages were completely destroyed, and the inhabitants, including children, killed. This region was the scene of the most frightening acts of cruelty perpetrated by the Serbs against the Albanians during the genocide war: women and children were literally wrapped in straw and burned alive before the eyes of their captive husbands and fathers. Pregnant women were torn to pieces in a horrible way and the unborn child was set on the bayonet. My informant, a highly responsible and absolutely trustworthy gentleman, added this to his report: "All this seems unbelievable, but is nonetheless true." 400 men from Ljuma who surrendered voluntarily were taken to Prizren, where they were killed daily in groups of forty to sixty people. Similar executions continue to be carried out every day. In the surroundings of Prizren lie unburied to this day, hundreds of corpses. Djakova, too, is almost completely destroyed and its inhabitants are decimated.

Sixty Albanians were killed in Tertenik, thirty-two in Smira, twenty in Ferban, nineteen in Ljubista. In Kameno Glava, which numbered fifty households, all of the men - without exception - were killed. In this latter village, the men were forced to place themselves in a rank, and then to salute. Thereupon, they were tied up and shot dead, without being tried by any military tribunal. In Presevo, too, there were few survivors. The number of the Albanians killed in the *vilayet of Kossovo* is estimated at 25 000, and this figure does not constitute

an overstatement.

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On March 20, 1913, the *Albanische Correspondenz* released this information: We have received the following report from a reliable Albanian source in Üsküb: Unbelievable crimes are being perpetrated both by Serbian troops and by Serbian *komitatchis* against the population in the surroundings of Üsküb, in the territories occupied by them. European circles here were particularly horrified by the following incidents which were ascertained in the most reliable way. At the end of February, Serbian armed forces entered the village of Shashare. After they got all the men and the boys out of the way, the soldiers raped the women and the girls. Serbian soldiers committed the same shameful acts in the village of Letnica. It must be pointed out that the population of both Shashare and Letnica is entirely Slavic and Catholic. Serbian troops do not stop from committing unspeakable brutal acts even against Christian people of their own race.

In other districts, the wild troops have perpetrated even worse atrocities. In twenty-nine villages situated in Kara Dag, 280 farmhouses owned by Moslem Albanians were burned down, and all of the male inhabitants, unable to escape, were killed by the soldiers with bullets or bayonets. The Serbs go raging from village to village similar to the Huns. The

villages of Trstenik, Senica, Vrbani, Ljubista and Giulekar were the scene of a horrible bloodbath. Here, 238 men were pitilessly slaughtered. In Sefer, an old woman, together with her Catholic servant, were burned alive. The wretchedness of the population is immense. In the village of Ljubista, the misery is such that Moslem Albanian women sell themselves for 400 piasters as property, or, so to speak, as slaves to surviving Moslems. In this latter village a man, an old woman and two children were burned alive by the Serbs. In Giulekar, the belly of a pregnant woman was slit open with a bayonet and her offspring forced out of her body. In Presta, a Moslem woman whose husband was taken away from her, shot five Serbian soldiers. Thereupon, the Serbs set on fire the whole village, consisting of 90 farms, and let it burn down to the ground.

Entire regions are being devastated by the Serbs, and the inhabitants slaughtered. The Serbian rage is aimed against Catholics just as violently as against Moslems. The surviving population is in a state of indescribable misery and despair.

A report published in *Deutsches Volksblatt*, dated February 19, 1912, contains the following: "In the region occupied by the Serbs, there are only few villages and communities which may be considered as completely spared by the Serbs and too many Albanians who want to avenge themselves for the deaths of their wives and children. A very small number of individuals obeyed the orders issued in town to surrender weapons without delay. Most people concealed the weapons at home or escaped with them, for it is easier for an Albanian to give up his property than to surrender his

gun. In order to enforce the law, patrols were sent to homes. They would search the house thoroughly, and woe betide those in whose homes weapons were found. The military tribunal pronounces the verdict within a matter of hours. A striking case took place in Tirano. There, Serbian soldiers went to a merchant and bought all kinds of goods. When it was time to pay, it turned out that they had no money. Therefore, one of the soldiers gave the merchant his gun as a pledge of good faith. Later on, the soldier concerned about his deed, went to the commander in charge claiming that the merchant had taken the gun away from him. Shortly afterward, a patrol went to the merchant, found the gun, and took the Albanian before the military tribunal. Although he insisted he had accepted the gun as security, he was, nonetheless, shot dead.

An Albanian man, from the village of Zala, north of Kruja, escaped after shooting dead a Serb who had entered his hut and was about to attack his wife. Later, when the Serbs arrived at the place where the shooting had occurred and did not find the killer, they massacred all the inhabitants of that village, numbering over one hundred, including women and children, and set the village on fire. This is, unfortunately, the sad truth.

The Blood Lust of the Serbs

The following has been reported by the special correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph*:

"The frightful persecutions in world history have all been surpassed by the horrible dealings of the troops led by General Jankovic. During their march through Albania, the Serbs have not only treacherously executed armed Albanians but, in their awful savagery, they have also murdered defenseless people: women, children, the elderly, and even infants on their mother's bosom.

Serbian officers, carried away by their conquests, have proclaimed that the most effective way to bring peace to Albania is to exterminate all of the Albanians. Between Kumanovo and Üsküb, 3 000 people were massacred by the Serbs. In the surroundings of Prishtina alone, 5 000 Albanians fell under their blows. These people were not killed in an honorable battle; they were victims of a series of horrible slaughters. Also, Serbian soldiers have devised new methods of perpetrating atrocities to satisfy their blood thirst. In several villages, the houses were set on fire and the poor inhabitants ruthlessly killed like rats as they tried to rescue themselves from the flames. The men were slaughtered before the eyes of their wives and children, and the grieving mothers were forced to witness the massacres of their children, who were literally chopped in pieces.

For Serbian soldiers, executions constituted a daily entertainment. All of the inhabitants in whose houses weapons were found were executed.* They were either shot down or hanged. In one day, up to thirty-six executions took place. Worth mentioning is the fact that Serbian nationalists living in Hungary have shown indignation with regard to the massacres in Albania. Mr. Tomic, a former secretary of the Serbian prime minister Pasic, said that during his trip from Prizren to Ipek, he did not see anything else on both sides of the road but villages that were burned out and razed to the ground.

The roads were studded with gallows on which bodies of Albanians hung. The street of Diakovitza looked like an "avenue of gallows."

Even newspapers published in Belgrade shamelessly recount the dreadful atrocities of the Serbs. When the soldiers of his regiment marched into Prizren, Colonel Osbic told them: "KILL!" The newspapers in Belgrade made it known that when this order was pronounced, "the Serbian soldiers stormed into the houses and killed every being they could find."

Later on, the *Daily Telegraph* published this report, based on the account of an Albanian notable who guarantees its authenticity: Whoever denounces an Albanian to the Serbs, can be sure that that particular Albanian will be executed. There have been people who owed money to Moslem Albanians. They went to the Serbs and denounced those Albanians as traitors. Those unfortunate Albanians were immediately hanged. As for the denouncer, he managed to acquire, at a ridiculous

* It is well known that every Albanian carries arms.

price, the house and the field of his victim.

In Üsküb, unarmed Albanians have simply been killed by Serbian officers. If even a hunting knife is found in a home, the owner of the house is killed.

In Ferisovitch, the Serbian commander had summoned the fugitives to return and to surrender the arms. But when over 400 people came back, they were murdered. In the whole town of Ferisovitch, there are hardly a dozen Moslem families left alive. This account was confirmed by the war correspondent of the *Messaggero*.

In Pana, the prisoners were killed by the Serbs. In Varos and Prishtina, the population is literally decimated. The Serbian officers themselves admitted that 'they are in chase' of Albanians and one of them boasted to have killed with his own hand nine Albanians in one day.

According to the same source of information, a physician of the *Red Cross* reported this: The Serbs have killed mercilessly everywhere in Albania. Neither women nor children nor the elderly have been spared. In Old Serbia, I have seen villages burning every day. In the vicinity of Kratons, hundreds of prisoners were lined up in two rows, as ordered by General Stefanovic, and then shot dead with machine guns. Near Sienitza, 850 Albanian notables were murdered by order of General Zivkovic on account of the opposition they had shown.

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The *Albanische Correspondenz* reported from Trieste on March 12 that "At the Albanian Congress was read aloud a letter from Kroja, near Durazzo, dated February 27. Therein, it was stated, among others, that all of the buildings and also the villas of Mashar bey and Fuad bey (both of whom were participating in the Congress) were burned down. In Vignola, near Kruja, the brother of Ali Lam Osmani was buried alive up to the hip by the Serbs who later on shot him dead. The letter ended with these words: 'We shall no longer see one another. May we meet again in the other world!'"

The Serbs Plunder!

Ahmet Djevat, secretary of the *Comité de Publication D.A.C.B.*, issued the following information which is based on accounts of various witnesses:

"In Strumitza, the Serbs committed unbelievable thefts and robberies. Alone Major Ivan Gribic, who is commander of the fourth battalion in the Serbian fourteenth line regiment, sent off to Serbia eighty cart-loads of furniture and rugs. All of the women and girls in Strumitza were raped and forcibly baptized. The remainder of the unfortunate Moslem population is dying of hunger, wretchedness and malady..."

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On March 21, 1913, the *Albanische Correspondenz* received from Trieste the following report: The misery in Albania has become most frightening. The Serbian troops, having first taken Durazzo, were then thrown into the land without being provided by the Commissariat with supplies of food and fodder. They were thus advised to resort to requisitions. This was done with extraordinary cruelty. Of all the supplies that were available, they took nine out of ten for themselves. They also refused to deliver certificates for the supplies requisitioned by them.

Moreover, the Serbian troops did not make requisitions solely for their own needs. Whatever provisions they could lay their hands on were taken away and destroyed. Old olive trees, which had been planted way back during the Venetian rule and which constituted their owner's livelihood, were felled by the Serbs, as were also slaughtered by them cattle big with young. No sheep, no hens, not an oka³ of corn which could be taken remained untouched by the Serbs. They also robbed and plundered extensively. The Serbs shipped large amounts of rugs and other looted goods from Durazzo to Salonica, whence they were then sent to Belgrade. The Serbs even took away antique benches from the government building in Durazzo and sent them off by boat, together with other spoils.

Fazil Toptani Pasha, to whom we presented this report for examination, explained: "Whatever is contained in this report is true. But these facts constitute merely a small fraction of all the hideous acts committed in our fatherland by the barbarians. The Serbs broke into Albania murdering, robbing, burning. They brought

about devastations so abominable as to defy anyone's imagination.

We were told this by Dervish Hima: Let it be publicly known that a large number of the Albanian people may die of starvation. We are in the spring season. It is the time when the land is cultivated. But the seed has been taken away by the Serbs. Yet even if the Albanians had the seed, they would still not be able to cultivate the land. For, as people say, 'should something grow, the Serb would destroy it.' This indicates to what extent the Albanians are horrified by the Serbs.

Mass Killings

A Romanian physician, Dr. Leonte, reported on January 6, 1913 in Bucarest's *Adeverul* that the atrocities he had seen perpetrated by the Serbian army were much more frightening than one can imagine. The fact that hundreds of captured Moslems had been ordered to march for as long a distance as one hundred kilometers would have been for those unfortunate people the least of evils. However, when one of these wretched people collapsed of hunger and exhaustion, he was finished off with a bayonet by the next soldier and his corpse left right there. The fields are said to be strewn with corpses of murdered people, including young men, women and also children. When the Serbian troops entered Monastir, all of the wounded Turks lying

in hospitals were killed in order to make room for wounded Serbs. The soldiers stole whatever they could lay their hands on. Even foreign banks were robbed. A Bulgarian professor, who became unpopular with Serbian officials because he proposed a toast to King Ferdinand, has disappeared without leaving a trace after that evening party when he proposed the toast. Also, Dr. Leonte furnishes descriptions of massacres similar to those perpetrated by the Serbs in Kumanovo, Prizren and elsewhere.

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On November 20, 1912, the well-known war reporter Hermengild Wagner reported from Semlin: During my three-day stay in Nish, I was able to ascertain shocking details relating to atrocities committed by Serbian troops. I should like to remark that I have highly respectable witnesses for all these details.

A fifteen-year-old Albanian girl was taken to the fortress of Nish. She was suspected of having thrown bombs in Ferizovic at the Serbs who were entering that town. The poor girl who had been charged with the crime was handed over to the Serbian soldiers instead of being taken before a military tribunal. The soldiers hit her skull with clubs until it broke into pieces.

A Turkish *Mulassim*, named Abdul Kadri bey, who was taken captive, was beaten to death in the fortress of Nish. His corpse indicated that his nose

bridge had been fractured and his liver ruptured. The victim, in fact, was trodden under foot until he died.

An Albanian, who made an attempt to escape, was pierced with bayonets and died. Even his dead body was treated in a horrible way while it was being taken to the morgue.

In the hospital of Nish, a number of Serbs entered a room where wounded Turks were lying. A Serb shouted jokingly while pointing at a seriously wounded Turk: "He is the one who wounded me." Thereupon, the whole band of Serbs rushed headlong in the direction of the wounded and defenseless man and kicked him so harshly that he eventually expired under their feet.

I was told by a horrified *Red Cross* physician that the captives and the wounded, who may be seen in Nish and Belgrade, are merely for the show. "The Serbs," he declared, "do not grant mercy. All of the Albanians, wherever they might have been caught, and whether they carried weapons or not, were murdered pitilessly. Women, children, the elderly ... frightful things happened over there (in Old Serbia). I do not know how many villages have been burned down by Serbian troops. I saw them burning every day in the distance. Near Kratovo, General Stefanovic, having ordered hundreds of Albanians to form two rows, shot them down with machine guns. Thereupon, the general explained: "These scoundrels must be exterminated so that Austria may no longer be able to find her beloved Albanians."

Ten thousand Albanians resisted the advance

of Serbian troops. As a result, 950 notables of Albanian and Turkish nationality were slaughtered by order of General Zivkovic.

Only few of those who were wounded in the battle of Kumanovo were picked by the Serbs from the battlefield. The explanation was given by King Peter himself when he visited the military hospital in Nish: A wounded Serb complained to the king that the Albanians had fired at the Serbs with guns that they had captured from the Serbs and that this was how he had been wounded. Thereupon, King Peter replied:

“The pigs will have to pay a high price for that!”

Serbian eye witnesses who took part in the battle, told me with laughter how after the combat, the dead and the wounded — Turks and Albanians alike — were thrown into large graves. But after the heavy rainfall, the aspect of the battlefield wasn't pleasant, indeed. The shallow mass graves of the Turks broke down. As a result, hands, feet and heads of horribly distorted corpses emerged from the soil.

Devastated Villages

In Üsküb, a Serbian officer, on his return to town, was absolutely convinced that the burning down of eighty villages in the region of Ljuma was justified.

The *Deutsches Volksblatt* published on February 14, a report from southern Hungary containing the following statement:

The Serbian government should finally realize that the result of such denials is to make Serbia's concern for truthfulness less and less credible. We already had the opportunity to test the truthfulness of such reports when the King was murdered. In fact, the government had at that time categorically and in highly official form denied the news that King Alexander and Queen Draga had been murdered by perjured officers. The government claimed, instead, that the king and the queen had killed each other as a result of an argument they had...

As far as Albanian massacres are concerned, the sad truth is that all of the descriptions that have reached the public so far, fully correspond to the facts. They have only one defect, that they are not complete.

This has been confirmed by numerous Serbs themselves often with great pride. In this connection I should merely like to repeat the declarations of someone who participated in the first part of the war and who, at the present time, is professionally active in southern Hungary. Although a native of the kingdom of Serbia, this man prefers to live under Austria's 'oppression', as far away as possible from his fatherland in order not to disturb the 'cultural and religious toleration' reigning there. This witness, typical of all the others, told with obvious pleasure how Serbian soldiers had mercilessly slaughtered a whole crowd of Albanian peasants whose only 'crime' was that weapons had been found in their homes. My informant noticing my surprise, declared calmly: "We were not going to waste our time escorting these people to some far-away garrison center. What we did was much simpler; thus, we were free again and could quietly go to have drinks." This practical point of view seems to be characteristic of the Serbian military in general, for a wounded man told a visitor in a Belgrade hospital, among others, the following: "We left the Turks alone, but we slaughtered the Albanian dogs(!) whenever it was possible." Another example of this kind is the letter of a Serbian officer which was also published in the *Magyoroszag*, whose Balkan correspondent is the Austrian deserter, Ivan Ivanovic, formerly head of the royal Serbian press. In this letter, one can read, among others, that the officer had seen with his own eyes how the soldiers, after the capture of Monastir, had bound together Turkish men, women and children, in groups of ten each and had burned them alive. Here, every Serb who has returned from the war scene tells about such feats or similar ones. Obviously, these people have not read, in the foreign press, the

official Serbian denials of the accusations.

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An Albanian from the vicinity of Scopio reported the following: "We saw Serbian soldiers coming toward our village. Everybody hurried back home. I was not afraid. Wanting to see strangers, I stood in front of the house. They came fast. I gave a coin to one of the soldiers. Thereupon, I was hit on the head and fell to the ground. The soldiers left me lying there, and stormed into the house where they killed my mother and father. Then they set the houses on fire and massacred everybody. When I was able to get up, everything was in flames."

In Sefer, in the district of Gilan, the Serbs set on fire a hut, and they threw alive into the flames its two elderly inhabitants who were unable to escape. Another man had his hands tied together. He was told to leave, but was shot.

This month, the following places were burned down for reasons which, as communicated, were inconsistent with one another: Limbishte, Kolish, Terpeza and Gilektar. In the latter three villages everything was annihilated, including women and children.

In the district of Djakova, in the village of Boba,

Christians, too, are killed by the Serbs

On March 20, the *Reichspost* published a letter from Albania containing the following information:

Serbian soldiers have robbed Don Tommaso, the parish priest in charge of the sanctuary of Cernagora (or Setnica), of all the money that belonged to the church. Holding bayonets in their hands, they forced Father Tommaso to open the cash box. They took from it the money which represented all the savings of this place of pilgrimage.

The priest of Djakova, while threatened to be killed, was told: "Either you renounce the Austrian protectorate or else we blow your brains out." But the priest was not intimidated. His courageous attitude defied the Serbs who gave up their threats.

In the past three months, the Serbs have denied the priest of Ferizovic the freedom to attend to his ministry. Whoever speaks with the priest or goes to mass or confession is imprisoned. The Serbs tried to do the same thing to two priests in Prizren.

All kinds of pressures are brought on the Catholics of Janjevo (400 families, almost all of Slavic origin) for the purpose of forcing them to give up their religion and accept the conversion to the schismatic church.

In this archdiocese have been living for several centuries 8 000 Catholics, so-called Laramans (secret

ones) who, on account of Turkish persecutions, could not profess their faith openly. When the Serbs arrived, several hundreds of these Laramans wanted to be recognized openly as Catholics. But when representatives of the new government found out about it, the decision was proclaimed: "Either Moslem or Orthodox, but not Catholic."

Near the sanctuary of Letnica is located the village of Shashara (ninety families, all of them Catholics). Serbian soldiers marched in, assembled all of the men on the fields and bound them with ropes. Thereupon, they started to plunder the houses and to rape the women and the girls in abominable ways.

The murders perpetrated against Catholic Albanians are numerous. In Noshez, for example, thirty men, who were spending their time peacefully in the village, were killed in a single day. They called themselves Catholic Albanians; this was their only crime. Near Zhuri, whole families of Malissors, who had come to Prizren to buy salt, oil, sugar, etc., were for no reason at all treacherously murdered on their way. This was also the fate of seventy other Catholics from the parish of Nikai who were slain not far from Djakova. The Catholics are persecuted, whereas no harm is done to the native Orthodox population.

In the surroundings of Dibra and Monastir, as also in Kossovo, numerous villages have lately been completely destroyed. The robberies are indescribable. Suffice it to mention the fact that sheep now are sold at two francs apiece because the sheep that the Serbs and the Montenegrins have taken away from the Albanians

four Serbian soldiers who tried to rape the women were severely beaten. This called for a punitive expedition, which was dispatched and Boba went up in flames. Everything was devastated. When this was done, the soldiers came across seventy Albanian Catholics from Nikoi who were coming to the village to do their shopping. Among these people, too, there were atrocities committed by the soldiers.

In Ipek, three women were kidnapped by the Serbs. In their turn, the Montenegrins kidnapped three girls.

In the district of Ljuma, thirty-two settlements were burned down. Whoever was caught there, was slaughtered.

In Dibra, too, Serbian soldiers perpetrated the meanest excesses. They took away whatever they could carry with them. Then came other troops who set fire to twenty-four villages and massacred all of the inhabitants.

In Prizren, the Catholic priest was not allowed to administer the last communion to the dying. Whoever contacts the priest has to appear before the military tribunal.

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It was reported from Durazzo on March 8 that

the Serbian troops had burned down the following villages: Ses, Larusk, Minikle, Scej and Gromni.

In Ses, women, girls and several children, numbering twenty, were locked up in houses which were then burned down.

The inhabitants of the villages around Kroja-Kurbinao took refuge in the mountains in order to save their lives, leaving behind all their possessions.

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On March 12, the *Albanische Correspondenz* reported from Trieste, the following:

Letters from Tirana, inform us that Serbian troops have once again committed atrocities in the surroundings of Tirana. The inhabitants of the kaza Tirana sheltered a division of Albanian volunteers and provided them with food. When the Serbian military commander found out about this, he ordered that the place be encircled by troop divisions. Thereupon, all the houses of this place, as well as those located on the property of Fuat Toptani bey, were reduced to ashes. Seventeen men perished in the flames. Ten men and two women were executed.

are so numerous that one does not know what to do with them.

They also want to prevent us from speaking Albanian. Some schools where Albanian was taught have already been closed down. The letter ends with the words: "May God have mercy on us and may Europe come to our aid. Otherwise we shall perish!"

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The *Neue Freie Presse* reported the following in its issue of March 21:

Well-informed circles have reported to us, that recently both Catholics and Moslems, are being persecuted in the district of Dibra, as in the district of Djakova. Numerous murders are being committed every day. The inhabitants are fleeing in great numbers, leaving behind their possessions. The persecutions are not directed solely against the Albanians, but also against Catholic and Moslem Slavs.

A Slain Priest

The *Neue Freie Presse* reported on March 20: On March 7, in and around Djakova, the soldiers joined forces with fanatic Orthodox clergymen to convert the inhabitants, forcibly from the Catholic to the Orthodox faith.

Some 300 people including men, women and children, were tied with ropes and summoned, under death threats, to convert. Among them was Father Angelus Palic.

An Orthodox priest, pointing to the soldiers who were holding their guns ready, said: "Either you sign here that you have converted to our unique true faith, or else these military defenders of God will dispatch your souls to hell."

Thereupon, the captives signed the sheet on which had been written beforehand the declaration of their conversion to the Orthodox faith.

Father Angelus' turn came last. He was the only one who had the courage to refuse, in a calm and dignified way, to abandon his faith.

Father Angelus persisted in his refusal even after he was summoned three times, and despite the supplications of the Catholics who were forcefully converted. Then a scene so horrible took place that one couldn't ever believe it possible in twentieth century Europe.

At a signal from the Orthodox priest, the soldiers fell upon the Franciscan, ripped off his clerical vestments, and started to hit him with the butts of their guns.

Father Angelus fell to the ground with several broken bones and ribs. The Orthodox clergymen ordered the soldiers to stop the beating and asked the seriously

wounded priest whether he would now decide to become a convert.

The priest shook his head again and said calmly: "No, I will not give up my faith and I will not break my vows."

Father Angelus was hit again with the gun butts numerous times. A soldier eventually pierced his lung with a bayonet, thus putting an end to the life of this ill-fated man.

Massacres Ordered by Serbia

A mandate was issued to the local leaders in the district of Kruja, in western Albania. It contained, among others, the following: "Should, at the arrival of the army, any attack or just the killing of a single Serbian soldier occur in the town, in a village, or anywhere else in the vicinity, the town shall be burned down and destroyed and all the men over fifteen years of age shall be bayoneted."

The decree is dated January 5, 1913, and is signed in Kroja by Commander A. Petrovic, first class captain.

Kruja is the birthplace of the Albanian national hero, Skanderbeg. His castle can still be seen in that town. For the Albanians, it is a hallowed place.

Serbian Declarations

The following appeared on February 8 in *Deutsches Volksblatt*: "The Serbian under-secretary of state for Religion and Education, Ljuba Jovanovic, published in a Slav newspaper a declaration, in which he stated among others that with respect to citizens' rights, the Moslems will, of course, be treated the same way as everybody else. As for the Church-related properties, the assets of the *Vakuv* [church] will be administered by the Moslems and their convents will receive the same attention as Christian convents. The Moslems, with the exception of the regular troops, have not rebelled against the Serbian occupation. As a result, they have not been harmed by the Serbian army. As for the Albanians, they resisted the Serbian occupation; they have even shot at soldiers right after they had surrendered, and they have done so not only outdoors, but also from within houses in occupied territories. What happened as a consequence, is actually something that occurs all the time and everywhere else when non-combatants come into conflict with a victorious army (i.e., the massacres of the Albanians).

The Belgrade newspaper, *Piemont*, which is considered as the mouthpiece of radical, military circles, dealt in its issue of March 20 with the Scutari question and declared that Scutari must fall to Montenegro. "But should this not be possible," the newspaper continued,

“Scutari must be razed to the ground.”

Serbian Officers Boast About Their Heinous Deeds

The *Albanische Correspondenz*, received from Durazzo the following report:

The atrocities perpetrated by the Serbs against the Albanians are monstrous. Serbian officers boast about them quite freely. Serbian troops have committed dreadful acts, especially in Kossovo. Here, a Serbian officer reported this: The women hid their jewelry most of the time; they did not want to turn it over. In such cases, we would shoot a member of the household and the whole jewelry was produced at once. The Serbs proceeded in a particularly frightful way in the district of Ljuma. Men were burned alive; old people, women and children were murdered. In Kruja, Skanderbeg's birthplace, a number of men and women were simply shot dead and a great number of houses burned down. The Serbian commander, Captain Petrovic, published an *ukas* by which he made these shameful crimes officially known. In Tirana, many Albanians were sentenced to be thrashed. These unfortunate people were beaten so hard by the Serbian soldiers that they eventually died.

In Kavaja and Elbasan, people were, likewise, officially beaten to death. A well-known, decent and wealthy gentleman, son of a Turkish Colonel, was shot dead in Durazzo. The Serbian commander proclaimed later, by means of an announcement posted on the wall,

that the man killed was accused of larceny and sentenced to death. The Serbs destroy Catholic churches; they claim that they are Austrian buildings and must be done away with. The population is harassed by Serbian soldiers and officers day and night.

Not too long ago, a Serbian soldier was found murdered. At once, five Albanians who were not guilty of the murder, were caught by the Serbian command and shot dead.

Carnage in Scutari

This was reported to the *Albanische Correspondenz* from Podgoriza:

After the battle of Brdica, which for the Serbs ended in a defeat involving great losses, the Serbian troops stormed, on their retreat, into the village of Barbalushi. Scared, the inhabitants, holding crucifixes in their hands, went to meet the Serbs and asked for mercy, but to no avail. The blood-thirsty troops attacked the defenseless inhabitants of the village, stabbing several men, women, old folks and children. The body of an eight-year-old child, lacerated by these ferocious people, had no less than six bayonet perforations.

The Serbian Denials

Most of the reports regarding Serbian atrocities were denied of late by the Serbian government. These

official denials were made promptly in all of the cases, but characteristic of all of them was that they were not credible. For it is not possible to do away with incriminations of such gravity by simply claiming that the accusations brought forward are not true.

When judged by the court of world justice, the present selection of reports from various sources — not only Austrian, but also Italian, German, Danish, French and Russian — reports which are in no way exhaustive, will certainly outweigh all the disavowals of the Royal Serbian press bureau.

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In a denial, dated February 8, the Serbian press bureau declared that, "Such atrocities allegedly committed by the Serbian army are simply impossible nowadays, especially among a people who are downright religious and tolerant." To this, one can reply: "Such atrocities may indeed be expected from an army whose officers attacked their own king and queen during the night,* threw their bodies out of the window after slashing them with fifty-eight sword cuts. The Albanian massacres recounted in the foregoing reports become more plausible when one realizes that those who engineered the carnage in the Konak at Belgrade acted under the command of Captain Popovich, who was one of the leaders of the Serbian attack in Albania, and who at the present time is commander of the Serbian garrison in Durazzo."

* Vladan Georgevitch, (*Der letzte Obranovitsch* (The Last Obranovich), Vienna, 1903.)

FOOTNOTES

¹Francesco Crispi (1818-1901) was born in Sicily where many Albanian families found refuge in the 15th century after the death of their leader George Castrioti-Skanderbeg, which was followed by the invasion of Albania by the Turks. Crispi worked for the unification of Italy collaborating with Garibaldi who named him Minister of the Interior in 1860. Subsequently, Crispi served twice as Prime Minister of Italy. Crispi, who spoke Albanian very well, remained deeply attached to the country of his ancestors throughout his life.

Many Albanian descendants from families that found refuge in Italy in the 15th century became prominent figures. One of them is Alexander Albani whose name remains attached to the Villa Chigi-Albani (presently Villa Torlonia), where he assembled, assisted by Winkelmann, rare works of art. Several members of the Albani family, whose name was originally Lezhe, distinguished themselves for their fine taste, their talents and their scholarship. This family also gave to the Church important cardinals and nuncios, including, among others, Giovanni Girolamo (b. Bergamo, 1504 - d. Rome, 1591) and Annibale (b. Urbino, 1682 - d. Rome, 1751). To the Albani family also belonged Gian Francesco, who became pope under the name of Clement XI (pope from 1700 to 1721) and was noted for his piety. Of Albanian origin was also the Venetian painter Marco Basaiti, whose talent, according to art historians, equals that of Bellini and Carpaccio.

²Pierre Loti (pen name for Julien Viaud): French

novelist (1850-1923), member of the *Académie Française*.

³Oka = about three pounds

⁴Alexander Obranovic and his wife, Draga, were assassinated in 1903. Milan IV Obranovich became prince in 1868. He served as King of Serbia from 1882 until his abdication in 1889. His son Alexander followed him to the throne. After the assassination of Alexander Obranovich, in 1903, Peter Karageorgevich became king.



Extent of the Albanian-inhabited Provinces (Vilayets) shortly before the Treaty of Berlin



S. S. Juka in company of Leo Freundlich and his wife.
(photograph taken in 1937)

Leo Freundlich, a native of Austria of Jewish descent, was a journalist and a politician. He lived in Vienna.

S. Sophie Juka, who was born in Albania, has been living in the U.S.A. since 1957. She graduated from an Austrian secondary school and holds a *Licence ès lettres* and a *Doctorate* from the University of Paris, France.