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**Report on the Debate of the Portrayal of the Ottoman  
Empire in Kosova-Kosovo History Textbooks**

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In November 2010 Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan visited Kosova, meeting his Kosovar counterpart Prime Minister Hashim Thaçi<sup>1</sup> and apparently made a request during their talks that the way in which the Ottoman Empire is portrayed in Kosovar textbooks be reviewed. This supposition is based on the fact that 5 months later, in April 2011, the Kosova Minister for Education, Science and Technology, Mr. Ramë Buja, established a “Committee to review the portrayal of Ottoman and Turkish history, geography and culture in textbooks of the Republic of Kosova”. The committee comprised of Dr Shkëlzen Raça (historian), Dr Ruzhdi Pllana (geographer), and Dr Hysen Matoshi a specialist in the language and literature of Ottoman and Turkish culture, Astrit Mustafa a specialist in the music of Ottoman and Turkish culture and Avni Rexha (historian).

In August 2011 both Turkish Minister of Education Ömer Dincer and Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu visited Kosova. Mr Davutoğlu, in a meeting with Kosova Minister of Education Ramë Buja, requested amendments to Kosovar history textbooks in all cases where offensive words were used to portray the Turkish state, its people and historical figures. Minister Buja informed his counterpart Dincer that he was to set up a special committee to examine historical facts concerning the two countries.<sup>2</sup> Turkish Foreign Minister Davutoğlu stated during the same visit that “Turkey would not like the Kosovars to learn Turkish history as interpreted by Josip Broz Tito or Enver Hoxha”.<sup>3</sup>

In December 2012 the Kosovar media publicized extracts from “The report of the committee reviewing the portrayal of Ottoman and Turkish history, geography and culture in textbooks of the Republic of Kosova”. The leader of this committee, Dr Shkëlzen Raça, made several recommendations for amendments to history textbooks in the 25 page report, a copy of which he made available to us granting permission to quote from it for this report only. The recommendations made, are as follows:

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<sup>1</sup>For more on the visit and the speech by PMs Erdoğan and Thaçi, see: <http://www.kryeministri-ks.net/?page=1,9,1713>

<sup>2</sup>For more on the visit see: <http://www.masht.gov.net/advCms/?id=82.8.2011&lng=Alb#id=20,1273,82.8.2011>

<sup>3</sup>The Statement of Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu is available at: <http://www.telegrafi.com/lajme/ndryshimi-i-historise-ne-kohen-e-perandorise-osmane-s-kishte-dhune-s-kishte-hakmarrje-s-kishte-vrasje-2-27314.html>

**History Textbook, Grade 5**

It is recommended that words *revenge* and *murder* be removed from page 45 and replaced with *take over the properties, impose taxes, and deport part of the local population*, whereas the sentence *Ottomans killed many Albanians* be removed altogether.

Remove the phrase *Ottoman attacks* from page 42 and replace it with *Ottoman military advancement*.

**History textbook, Grade 6**

On page 69 the word *crudeness* is recommended to be replaced with *from military intervention*.

On page 77 the claim stating “...*Ulqin and the threats that the league forces withdraw from this city were joined by other neighbours*” be replaced to read “...*threats to remove the Prizren League forces from Ulqin were accompanied by a fleet of the Great Powers on the city coast comprising 17 ships*”.

On the same page, the sentence reading “*inability to publish books in Albanian language under the Ottoman rule*” be extended to include that “*the publication of books in Albanian was also hindered by the Istanbul (Greek) Patriarchate*”.

On page 86, the sentence reading “*after they violently occupied the League of Peja*”, should be changed to read “*after they crushed the League of Peja*”.

**History textbook, Grade 8**

On page 68 the sentence saying “*harsh measures awaited those not belonging to the religion of Islam*”, be replaced with “*In practice all citizens residing in areas occupied by the Ottoman Empire were equal before law in their daily life. However there were occasional abuses by local Ottoman employees during the Tansimat Reform*”.

On page 103, the sentence reading “*the purpose of the Istanbul Association was to pull the Albanian people out of backwardness*” be changed to read “*The purpose of the Istanbul Association was first and foremost the fulfilment of the cultural and educational needs of the Albanian people*”.

On p. 105-6 the sentence reading “*this development was not welcomed by Ottoman government*”, and the one reading “*Albanian teachers and parents were being pursued by the Ottoman government*” be replaced by “*This development was not welcomed by the Ottoman government and there were cases when the local government of the Sublime Porte forbade*”.

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teachers from instructing students in the Albanian language, while discouraging parents from enrolling their children for education in their mother tongue". Also, the sentence reading "The Ottoman Empire was attempting to impose Turkish/Arabic culture on the Albanian people, but without any great success" be replaced with "The Ottoman Empire endeavoured to equip Albanians with knowledge of the Ottoman/Arabic culture".

On p. 113 it is suggested that the phrase *Turkish rule* be replaced by *Ottoman rule*; the word *terror* be replaced with "measures of punishment were undertaken against fighters and their families".

On p. 124 the request to remove the word *Turkish* and replace it with *Ottoman* is repeated.

On p. 141, "were spiteful against the Ottoman rule" be replaced with "requested to strengthen the combat against the regime of the Young Turks".

On p. 142 the sentence stating "The Young Turks tricked part of the Albanian people" be replaced with "the Young Turks, after assuming power, did not stick to their promises to Albanians regarding the accomplishment of their political and national rights".

On p. 156 replace the paragraph of text with the sentence: "At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century Kosova was one of the most populous and least economically advanced areas in the Balkans. This was a consequence of certain social, economic and political circumstances of the past".

**History textbook, Grade 10**

On p. 137 the period *1517-1519* be replaced with *1514-1519* and the phrase "Ottomans launched a campaign of conquest in Asia as well" be replaced with "Ottomans expanded territorially in Asia as well".

The phrase "the occupied countries were subjected to great Ottoman exploitation" be replaced with "were subjected to new economic circumstances".

On p. 138 the statement that "first signs of a weakened Ottoman Empire were the rivalries for the throne witnessed in the Sultan's court" be replaced with "the first signs of this crisis and the weakening of the Ottoman Empire were the rivalries for power, the dissatisfaction of the Yenichers with their position and the initial weakening of the Ottoman feudal military".

On p. 140 the sentence "Had great consequences" be replaced with "had deep social, political and economic impact".

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The phrase “*Ottomans pursued a discriminatory policy*” be replaced with “*Ottomans pursued a policy of subduing local populations*”.

The phrase “*Ottoman rule was unorganized and outdated*” be replaced with “*Ottoman rule started to weaken, while the Ottoman administration was lagging behind in comparison to the more developed countries of Europe*”.

**History textbook, Grade 12**

On p. 48 the phrase “*stirred hatred against the Ottoman rule*” should be replaced with “*caused dissatisfaction with the Ottoman rule*”.

On p. 49 the claim that “*the rebellious forces were fiercely extinguished*”, should be replaced by “*rebellious forces were extinguished by military intervention of Ottoman forces*”.

On p. 65 the words *exercised terror* be replaced with *undertook harsh political measures*.

On p. 66 remove the word *violent* to read only *Ottoman rule*.

On p. 69 remove the word *slavery* and replace with *Ottoman rule*.

On p. 72-73 the claim that “*endeavours of Albanian patriots to create a cultural society were hindered by the Sublime Porte*” be followed by “*and in particular the Istanbul Patriarchate*”.

On p. 75 instead of “*were not allowed*” write “*were hindered by Ottoman rule*”.

On p. 140 where it reads “*against Ottoman rulers*”, write “*against the Ottoman Empire or against the absolutism of Sultan Abdül Hamit II*”. On this page, replace the word *Turkish* with *Ottoman*.

On p. 142 the words *fierce actions* be replaced by *far-reaching actions*.

On p. 144 the word *Turkish* be replaced with *Ottoman*.

On p. 145 the word *occupiers* be replaced with *against the Sublime Porte*.

On p. 165 delete the word *ruthless* to read only *the regime*.<sup>4</sup>

The Turkish Ambassador to Kosova, Söngül Ozan, also spoke in December 2012, to the *Jeta në Kosovë* newspaper regarding the history textbooks’ review initiative examining the portrayal of the Ottoman Empire. The central themes of her message were:

- History taught to young generations should be supported by facts while offence and prejudice are to be avoided, as they stir conflicts or hatred between individuals or

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<sup>4</sup> See Report of the committee to review the portrayal of Ottoman and Turkish history, geography and culture in textbooks of the Republic of Kosova.

between different ethnic and religious communities. The fact that historians differ in their interpretations of history should be communicated. Turkey continues to work on this issue with many countries with which it shares a common past.

- Historians, politicians and public leaders should strive to illustrate the positive aspects of our mutual history and encourage young people across the multi-ethnic and multi-cultural Balkans to live together and celebrate their diversity. It would be useful to use history textbooks to teach young people about the existing interpretations of history and other diverse viewpoints, to enable them to understand the complex particularities and pluralistic viewpoints that exist in many fields and to gain an appreciation of the ethnic, cultural, religious and other sensibilities in the region.
- The historical description of a region with a structure as diverse as that of the Balkans is not an easy task and should primarily be based on historical truths, proofs and documents, which, as we are all aware, are difficult to obtain. Therefore, historians, knowing this fact, should not stand as judges, defence lawyers or witnesses.
- The issue of amendments to history textbooks is a topic being discussed with many countries that have experienced and shared a common history. The aim is to encourage young generations to look with great enthusiasm towards a shared future, while being peaceful, understanding and more tolerant. In fact this topic is one addressed by many international institutions, aiming to bring peace and stability to the world and to preserve those values.
- Initiatives and programmes aimed at removing contentious language from history textbooks exist, for example, between Germany and France but also between many other countries that share common borders, including my own. Turkey has frameworks in place to maintain contact and promote cooperation with all the countries with which it shares a common history, including Kosova. In this regard, the findings of the group of experts commissioned by the Kosova Ministry of Education will be assessed in the coming months alongside the work of Turkish experts. Together they have been working to remove any prejudice and offensive language

from communications between two friendly nations – those of Kosova and Turkey. I believe this shall reinforce existing relations between Kosova and Turkey.<sup>5</sup>

The authors of Kosovar history textbooks were unanimously opposed to the amendments in the portrayal of the Ottoman Empire, claiming their academic freedom has been violated. They did however state that if any new scientific arguments came to light they would readily embrace any proposals for amendment, while remaining reluctant to make compromises with facts and scientific arguments for the sake of political gain. One of those authors claimed that although Turkey is now a friend to Kosova, one must not forget we were once occupied by the Ottoman Empire which ruled over us for five centuries. The same author added that these amendments are simply the manifestation of a Kosovar inferiority complex and that they were an attempt to ‘soothe down’ history and placate Turkey, as it is currently assisting Kosova in many areas<sup>6</sup>.

However 127 Albanian intellectuals from all the Albanian-populated Balkan lands<sup>7</sup>, among them the renowned Albanian writer Ismail Kadare, signed a “Petition against the review of history under the supervision of Turkish state authorities” in March 2013. This petition, initiated by Ndue Ukaj, Ardian Ndreca, Matteo Mandala, Lazër Stani and Majlinda Bregasi, was sent to the Albanian President, Bujar Nishani, as well as the President of Kosova, Ms. Atifete Jahjaga. It was also sent to both parliaments, both governments and the science academies in Albania and Kosova. This petition was backed by a statement from the Kosova Minister of Education, Mr. Ramë Buja, who stated “They have my full support; as I have already made clear, history will not change, what might change and be corrected are some inappropriate expressions”.<sup>8</sup> Yet, the petition content, in summary, claims the following:

- Historical facts and scientific arguments cannot be changed by outside intervention, especially when discussing relations between an occupying empire and an occupied nation, and when the events not only concern Albanian history but European history too.

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<sup>5</sup>Full statement made by Turkish ambassador to Kosova available at <http://gazetajnk.com/?cid=1,983,4132>

<sup>6</sup>See <http://www.telegrafi.com/lajme/ndezet-debati-per-tekstet-e-historise-2-29872.html>

<sup>7</sup>The number of Albanian intellectuals from all Albanian inhabited Balkan lands to sign the petition is currently 500.

<sup>8</sup>Minister Ramë Buja’s reaction to the petition is available at <http://www.zeri.info/artikulli/2809/reagimet-rreth-rishikimit-te-teksteve-te-historise>

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- The Ottoman occupation constituted a black hole in the history of Albanian people interrupting its normal historical development process. This occupation forcefully detached the Albanians from Europe and caused inerasable tragedies and turmoil in Albanian historical memory. We will never agree to, and indeed will condemn, any attempts to portray the centuries-long Ottoman conquest as a period of peaceful and successful co-existence.
- The *Pashas*, the military, the high ranking state officials of the Ottoman Empire, even Prime Ministers who have served the High Gate, regardless of their Albanian origin, are of no value to our national history. Albanian history is not that of renegades or servants, but rather a history of resistance lead by Gjergj Kastrioti; a history of rebellions and fights for freedom and for the preservation of language, culture and identity and a history of the many sacrifices made for freedom, independence and national sovereignty.
- This arbitrary amendment of history following a request by Turkish diplomats, creates a dangerous precedent. In a few years from now Serbia might request to be recognized simply as an administrator in Kosova and to be positively viewed for protecting our freedom, independence, culture and identity.
- The five-century long Turkish conquest was violent and this long period saw continuous killings, annihilations and constant violence, with the Albanians being one of the most persecuted people of the Empire. Let us not forget the fact that of all the languages of the people occupied by the Ottomans, the Albanian language was uniquely and forcefully banned. This fact is sufficient to demonstrate the Ottoman Empire genocide against Albanians, against their culture and identity.
- The amendment of history by Turkish experts constitutes cultural aggression which strikes a nerve in the nation, and represents an unacceptable insult to Albanians with consequences for their future and identity. We are now all aware that any intervention into history as a result of predetermined political scenarios will threaten the very DNA of the Albanian nation.
- On behalf of the preservation of historical truth, we call upon the Government of Kosova, the Kosova Assembly, the responsible cultural and academic institutions as well as historians, to not betray their professional and national responsibilities, and to

review this totally arbitrary and totally anti-national decision, and to annul the works of the joint inter-state committee for the review of Albania's history and allow the historians to conduct their independent scientific work according to the principles and the methodologies employed in the discipline of history and not according to the interests, orders or political will of the Turkish Government.<sup>9</sup>

A counter-petition subsequently circulated on the internet, without having been published in any paper or officially sanctioned, entitled "A petition for an objective and scientific presentation of history", which essentially states the following:

- Kosovar history textbooks have a pro-Christian and predominantly pro-Catholic bias imposed upon them, which influences the selection of sources and the compilation of the historical narrative. This tendency has been strengthened by the fall of the communist block and the prevalence of westernizing political and cultural discourses in recent decades. This fact goes some way towards clarifying why the repeated interventions to defend the historicist dogma come from several intellectuals and aspiring intellectuals from pro-Catholic circles as well as from the remains of the Stalinist system. Individuals with professional right to address scientific problems, who confuse history with their own aesthetic and religious preferences.
- Absurd ideas have been imposed on the public recently, such as the assertion that freeing textbooks of inaccuracies and non-scientific language would somehow manage to alter the national DNA. They have been applying pressure in different ways; ranging from influencing broad public opinion to giving comprehensive support to certain persons and private companies in public tenders for the drafting of history textbooks. Thus Albanian historiography remains crippled, and school books are filled with inaccuracies, prejudice and hate speech.
- We believe that the Albanian nation, and particularly its youth, deserve a scientific presentation, namely an accurate presentation of their past, free from ideological indoctrination. In this context, we consider as legitimate any interest or offers of assistance from nations friendly to us, be those nations which once deployed occupying forces to Albanian lands such as Germany or Italy, or friendly nations

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<sup>9</sup>Full text of the "Petition against the review of history under the supervision of Turkish state authorities" available at <http://www.fjalaelire.com/tema/18167.html>

emerging from a common Empire, such as Turkey. The truth is not owned by anyone group or nation, and an isolationist and exclusive approach do not contribute to science.<sup>10</sup>

Upon the publication of the original petition signed by 127 intellectuals, the most vocal and most well-known critics of the Turkish request for textbook amendments were academic Mehmet Kraja and philosopher Arben Xhaferi.

Academic Mehmet Kraja published an article in the newspaper MAPO opposing the amendments in history textbooks entitled “The history textbook corrections”. The article makes the following claims:

- Turkey, with its new economic empowerment, aims to change the image of the one-time-occupier of the Balkans by returning the Ottoman Empire to the spotlight, but with a new look. Turkey has found suitable terrain for this in Bosnia, Kosova and Albania due to the area’s economic instability, historical heritage and the Anatolian mentality. The price which the Albanian political classes will have to pay for the political and economic support offered by Turkey will be the establishment of a non-European identity.
- Turkey turned into a strong Yugoslav ally when Albanians were being exiled from Kosova, and Kosova was deeply scarred by the secret agreements and the attempted treaties between Turkey and Yugoslavia. In order for Turkey to change its image in the eyes of the Kosovar people from Ottoman to modern Turkey, the country would need to ask forgiveness of the Kosovar people for having allied with the Serbian nationalist program in its open genocide against the people of Kosova. Equally offensive to the Albanians is the arrogance with which Turkey seeks to advance the rights of the Turkish minority in Kosova, while affording no rights to the Albanian people in Turkey.
- The amendments which Turkey is pressing seem somewhat cosmetic and do not touch on the substance of the problem, while they do touch the essence of Albanian cultural heritage as well as the concept, the meaning and the value of our history. As a consequence of the case, which went to the Council of Europe, and aimed to change

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<sup>10</sup>This counter-petition circulated only within a narrow circle of people.

“Serbian occupiers” to “Serbian rule” and so create a more favourable image in order for Kosova to be returned to under Serbia, Albanian historiography which describes the Ottoman empire as “a fierce occupier”, thus acts as an obstacle to the Turkish notion of returning to influence in the Balkan arena; if no longer through border expansion then through economic, religious and cultural impact.

- For the Albanian scholars in Kosova and Albania, what meaning would Scanderbeg have had without facing the conquering Sultans? What the country have benefitted from the literature and knowledge of the national *Rilindja* (Renaissance), if faced with an occupier radiating culture and civilization rather than one who denied Albanians their freedom? The idea that Albanians actively participated in erecting the Ottoman Empire and benefitted from the favours it did them, are purely ideas from Serbian historiography.
- Any normal state and any emancipated nation would consider such external involvement in issues as essential as the teaching of national history, a violation of their dignity, a disgrace and an insult.<sup>11</sup>

One of the well-known intellectuals, Arben Xhaferi, in an interview for daily newspaper *Express*, claimed that the request by the Turkish state for amendments to be made in Kosovar history textbooks is unacceptable, arguing that:

- The main premise behind such imperial ambitions is that the Ottoman period was a success story and not a fierce occupation. This is an attempt not only to change the historical truth, but the image of Turks as well. This thesis is based on the pretence that the Ottoman Empire was not an external conqueror, but came into an unruly geographic space, similar to the way European people established new countries in the Americas. Alongside this attempt to erase the historical memory, there exists a desire to portray Ottoman rule as co-governance; thus introducing references to the *Pashas*, the *Viziers* and other Albanian, Serbian and Bosnian officials. These claims are no doubt part of the truth. However, the other part of the truth is the Albanian rebellions, the tragic treatment of Albanian historical figures such as Pjetër Bogdani, the ban on the Albanian language, or the denial of a *milet* statute for the Albanians. Of

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<sup>11</sup>Mehmet Kraja's full article is available at <http://mapo.al/2013/05/27/korrigjimet-ne-tekstet-e-historise>.

course there are many saddening facts, which cannot be taken out of history textbooks as in doing so we would be erasing our own history.

- The acceptance of this indulgent request from the Turkish Minister for Education would immediately destabilize Albanian society as a whole. The Christian Albanians would react immediately and the crisis would inevitably result in a loss of mutual trust. Such an absurd compromise of national autonomy would diminish the loyalty of a great part of the Albanians towards the state both in Kosova and in Albania.
- There have been many endeavours – and they will continue – aimed at removing hate speech from the history textbooks of the Balkan peoples, yet they have all failed. Those attempts will continue and a suitable solution for this problem may be found within regional projects.
- The Turkish Minister Ömer Dincer uses diplomatic language in his request, avoiding any words that might upset not only his counterpart, but an entire people. He requires the erasure of paragraphs which seem to insult the dignity of the Turkish people. But he never clarifies which ones. On the other hand, the Albanian Minister Ramë Buja, also uses abstract diplomatic language claiming that the request is being considered. Yet, I believe both ministers are aware that such amendments would be devastating for Albanians and unnecessary for the Turks.
- One of the key premises in Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu's doctrine is the return of Turkey to the Balkans. In Sarajevo he claimed "We came here many centuries back, on horses. If need arises, we will come again". This harsh and undiplomatic statement was immediately denounced by the Serbian response "Neo-Ottomanisation is to the Christians what Neo-Nazism is to the Jews".<sup>12</sup>

Following the publication of the petition opposing the Turkish request for amendments, Dr Nexhmedin Spahiu and the publicist Halil Matoshi were among the most vocal personalities to defend the request.

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<sup>12</sup> Interview with Arbën Xhaferi is published in *Express* daily, available at <http://gazetaexpress.com/?cid=1.13.60875>

Nexhmedin Spahiu expressed his viewpoint in several articles, published mainly in the daily newspaper *Zëri*. In brief, his views were as follows:

- Claiming that the Ottoman Empire has opened up a black hole in the history of the Albanian people, is an outright stupidity. The expansion of the Ottoman Empire occurred in the fourteenth Century, six centuries before the Albanian nation existed. The irony is that the Albanian nation came into being right at the time when the Ottoman Empire withdrew from the Balkans. Indeed it was the Ottoman Empire that created the right environment among the Great Powers and the Balkan countries to enable the emergence of the Albanian nation and the Albanian state in the first place. Indeed, in the period between 1878 and 1912 the Turkish national idea clashed with the Albanian national idea, but at the critical moment when Albania as a geographic notion could have been abandoned, the Ottoman Empire, according to Prince Wilhelm Wied, ensured that the Albanian state was formed with the borders set by the Great Nations.
- The anti-Turk campaign started in the 1950s. The reason was simply that Turkey was a US ally and Albania was a Russian ally. Anti-Ottoman feelings rose in relation to the anti-Turkish mood. Ottomans qualified as Turks. Translations from Latin were modified, the words *Ottoman*, *infidel*, etc., were translated as *Turk*. In Kosova and Macedonia this mood was passed on from Tirana in books and by professors.
- If Roman heritage belongs to the Italians, Greeks, Germans and English, than the Ottoman heritage belongs to Turks, Arabs, Greeks, Serbs, Albanians, Bosnians and even Croats and Hungarians. The Turks have the advantage of possessing the Ottoman archives. They are fortunate that Istanbul remained in Turkey and did not become subsumed by Bulgaria, Greece or Albania, as whoever ran Istanbul would possess the archives.
- The advice from Ankara is more than friendly. Should the Turkish historians chose to dust off parts of the Ottoman archives, many Albanian myths would vanish into thin air. It would be advisable for those individuals calling themselves historians to consult those archives, and cease their lies and exaggerations, because should the Turkish historians undertake the task, it will soon emerge that the so-called Albanian

historians have written fairy tales and passed them off as history. Therefore those who request that Albanian history not be rewritten are right. There is no way it can be rewritten, as it has not been written yet. The few remaining genuine historians have either been discredited or condemned to anonymity.

- When the Ottoman Empire first reached the Balkans, there was no Turkish nor Ottoman nation nor indeed any Balkan nation. One ruler simply replaced another. Even Scanderbeg was just a ruler, and not a national leader. In the nineteenth century he was made into a national hero by the Albanian Renaissance Independents with the aim of creating a myth. The movement of Albania's conception as a nation was referred to as the National Renaissance alleging that Albanians had once been a nation in Scanderbeg's time and were now being reborn as a nation. During the Medieval period concepts such as inter-ethnic hate, national interests etc. were not issues, these were brought by modernism (the era of nations). The Albanian-Turkish problems stem from a relatively short period (1879-1912). This is the period when the Turkish national movement was challenging the Albanian one.
- The Turkish national movement in its initial stage aspired to create a single nation comprising the Muslim people of the Empire. Albanian Renaissance leaders had a notion of nation based on language and blood relations, not on the religious bonds, which clashed with the Turkish concept. This period of 33 years conflict is relatively minor given the otherwise friendly relations between the Turkish and Albanian nations. Kosova in particular owes its emergence as a state to Turkish commitment, strongly supporting the USA and Western Allies. Our history textbooks contain anti-Ottoman hatred inherited from the communist mentality of Enver Hoxha and these texts should be reviewed as a matter of urgency.<sup>13</sup>

The publicist Halil Matoshi argues for the following changes in the presentation of the Ottoman Empire:

Reports of political intervention by the Turkish state in the affairs of Albania and Kosova in the form of requests that certain content in their history textbooks be changed can simply be rejected as incorrect. Turkey did not request changes to be made to the presentation of

<sup>13</sup>Articles by Nexhmedin Spahiu available at:

<http://www.zeri.info/artikulli/3299/mos-i-detyroni-historianet-turq-te-flasin-me-dokumente>;

<http://www.zeri.info/artikulli/13642/interesat-kombetare-dhe-tekstet-e-historise>;

<http://www.gazetatema.net/web/2013/02/21/cka-duhet-ndryshuar-ne-tekstet-te-historise/>; dhe

<http://www.gazetatema.net/web/2011/08/22/ministri-turk-i-arsimit-dincer-ka-plotesisht-te-drejte>.

Albanian history, as some semi-illiterate protagonists in the field seem to suggest. Rather, it called for changes to certain content containing hate speech against them and ideological interpretations of historical facts. The petition has been initiated not by reason, but rather the unreasonable and is blatantly based on the collective paranoia and hysteria of nationalism. There was not one illuminated mind among the signatories from academia and the arts in Albania and Kosova to say stop this hysteria and return to the subject at hand: history! The intervention of the Turkish state, or any other state, in issues such as the review of Albanian, or contemporary Kosovar, history is unacceptable and scientifically doubtful. It is not the role of politicians and the state to write history; the task belongs to specialized authors and teams of authors, who can compile a rational history text from the facts at hand. The history of Kosova should be reviewed for the sake of knowledge itself, and not due to the “salaams” sent from Ankara, and not due to any remarks which might come in future from Belgrade.<sup>14</sup>

To conclude, although the petition collected the signatures of about 500 Albanian intellectuals opposed to the amendment of the Ottoman Empire’s portrayal in Kosovar history textbooks, the Minister of Education, Science and Technology in Kosova declared his formal support for such amendments. The textbook authors, however, refused to make any amendments. The report of the “Committee to review the portrayal of Ottoman and Turkish history, geography and culture in textbooks of the Republic of Kosova” was handed to the publishing house “Libri Shkollor” (*The Textbook*), the only institution in Kosova to publish history textbooks for schools. The staff of this publishing house claims that the history textbooks printed in 2013 did contain amendments, though not the ones requested by the Ministry of Education Committee. Further research is necessary to ascertain which actual amendments were made.

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<sup>14</sup>Article by Halil Matoshi entitled “Hysteria: Welcome to Biology Class!” available at: [http://www.koha.net/arkiva/?page=1,9,141323&s=&ch=0&f\\_d=04.04.2013&t\\_d=04.04.2013](http://www.koha.net/arkiva/?page=1,9,141323&s=&ch=0&f_d=04.04.2013&t_d=04.04.2013)