

Of Women, Faith, and Nation:  
American Protestantism and the Kyrias School For Girls, Albania

by

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For my family

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## List of Abbreviations

### *Archives and Libraries*

AQSH	Arkivi Qëndror Shtetëror
HGL	Hatcher Graduate Library, University of Michigan
IGH	Instituti i Gjuhësisë dhe Historisë
MHCASC	Mt. Holyoke College Archives and Special Collections
OCA	Oberlin College Archives
RBML	Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University
SCRC	Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago

**Note on place names:** For place names that are well known in English, like Istanbul, I have used these. At all other times, I have used the names current in the period of study, respecting the political establishment then in power. For present-day Albanian cities during the Ottoman era, I have used their Ottoman name, providing the present-day name at first mention. After World War I, I have used their Albanian version. Most commonly this has been, Görice (present-day Korça in Albania).

**Note on style:** Where relevant, I have used non-English terms, placing them in italics. At first mention, I have always placed their English translation in parenthesis.

## Cast of Characters

ABCFM	American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions
American College for Girls	Women's high school and later college for women in Istanbul Kyrias sisters' Alma matter (1871-1924)
James L. Barton	ABCFM missionary and activist, advocate of Protestant Albania and female education
Marie Çoba	Editor of women's magazine <i>Mbleta</i> (1920-21)
Charles Richard Crane	American philanthropist and supporter of female education and Albanian statehood
Christo Anastas Dako	Christian worker, Albanian Protestant educator and activist
Charles Telford Erickson	ABCFM missionary turned activist, advocate of Protestant Albania
Pandeli Evangjeli	Albanian politician
Mehmet Frashëri	Albanian politician
Mid'hat Bey Frashëri	Albanian politician
Semseddin Sami Frashëri	Late Ottoman intellectual
Evdhoksi Gërmenji	Editor of women's magazine <i>Përlindja</i> (1921-22)
Hester Donaldson Jenkins	ABCFM missionary and educator in Istanbul
Ismail Kemal	Ottoman bureaucrat, Albanian politician
Phineas Kennedy	ABCFM missionary in European Turkey and interwar Albania
Violet Kennedy	ABCFM missionary in European Turkey and women's activist in Ottoman and interwar Albania
Gerasim Kyrias	Christian worker, Albanian Protestant activist and educator
Instituti Kyrias	Private school for girls in Tirana, Albania (1922-1931)
Kyrias School for Girls	Protestant-funded School for girls in Ottoman Görice (1891-1913)
Paraskevi Kyrias	Christian worker, Albanian Protestant activist and educator
Sevastia Kyrias	Christian worker, Albanian Protestant activist and educator
Mary Louisa Mathews	ABCFM missionary and educator in Ottoman Monastir
<i>Mbleta</i>	Women's magazine, Shkodër, Albania (1920-21)
Fan Noli	Albanian politician
Oberlin College	Alma matter of Kyrias educators, supporting institution of Albanian female education and Protestant Albania
Mary Mills Patrick	ABCFM missionary and educator in Istanbul, supporter of American mandate over Turkey and mentor to Kyrias sisters
<i>Përlindja</i>	Women's magazine, Korça, Albania (1921-1922)
Marigo Posio	Editor of <i>Shpresa Kombëtare</i> (1921)
<i>Shqiptarja</i>	Women's magazine, Tirana, Albania (1929-1933)
<i>Shpresa Kombëtare</i>	Women's magazine, Vlorë, Albania (1921)
Ellen Stone	ABCFM missionary in Ottoman Macedonia, captured by brigands In 1901 by Macedonian brigands, advocates local autonomy in the

Grigor Tsilka  
Katarina Tsilka

United States.

Christian worker, Albanian Protestant activist and educator  
Christian worker, Bulgarian nurse in Görice and Tirana, captured  
by Macedonian brigands in 1901, advocate of female education  
and political movements in the Balkans

Ahmet Zog

Albanian politician

## Timeline

- 1810 The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions is formed in Boston
- 1820 ABCFM missionaries first visit the Ottoman world
- 1845 Ottoman government recognizes the Protestant community as a distinct *millet* (religious community) with the right to appoint its leaders and govern its own affairs.
- 1875 Missionaries John and Ellen Baird set up a station in Monastir, befriending next-door neighbors, the Albanian-speaking Kyriases.
- 1877 Christian uprisings in Bosnia and Bulgaria usher in armed conflict between the Russian and Ottoman Empires, leading to Ottoman defeat.
- 1878 European negotiators set peace terms at the Congress of Berlin. New Balkan states emerge: Bulgaria (with two autonomous principalities), Montenegro, Serbia, Romania. Ottoman retrenchment in Europe deepens. Question of the East defines the next decades of politics.
- 1870s-1880s Gerasim and Sevastia Kyrias become Protestant. They attend Protestant schools.
- 1891 Sevastia Kyrias graduates from the American College for Girls in Istanbul.
- 1891 Gerasim and Sevastia Kyrias open the School for Girls in Görice
- 1895 Gerasim Kyrias dies, leaving the school to his sister, Sevastia.
- 1901 Katerina Tsilka and Ellen Stone are captured by Macedonian brigands.
- 1902-3 “The Miss Stone Affair” concludes with their release. Stone and Tsilka tour the United States, supporting Macedonian autonomy and raising money for women’s education in the Balkans.
- 1904 Sevasti Kyrias makes key connections in the U.S. with American missionaries and Albanian intellectual circles in the diaspora. These connections will be crucial to expand the mission field in Albania, and the Kyriases’ careers in activism and politics.
- 1907 Two donors gift the ABCFM with \$25,000 to expand the mission field in “Kortcha, Albania”. It appoints two families: Rev. Phineas Kennedy, and wife

- Violet Kennedy (nee Bond), and Rev. Charles Telford Erickson, and wife Carrie Erickson. They arrive in Ottoman Görice (Kortcha) in 1908.
- 1908 The Young Turk Revolution of July 1908 restores the Ottoman constitution of 1876 and opens the way for political decentralization. Cultural activists in European Turkey and American missionaries, civil society watchdogs, celebrate it a moment of democratization.
- 1909 The Committee for Union and Progress forges efforts to support pan Ottomanism, retracting its earlier promises to decentralize rule. Frictions impact minority relations to the government throughout the Empire, from calls for pluralism to armed rebellions.
- 1910-11 Albanian mountaineers mount rebellions opposing increased taxes and infringements on vernacular education. They successfully drive Ottoman armies far enough southward to provoke the reaction of neighboring Balkan countries who declare war on the Ottoman empire in September 1912.
- 1910 Sevastia Kyrias marries Christo Dako.
- 1910-12 Dako and sister-in-law, Paraskevi, strengthen their educational credentials at Oberlin College, Ohio. He receives an A.D, and she an M.A. in education.
- 1912 Albanian leaders declare independence in November. European diplomats recognize it in May 1913, and appoint a Protestant Bavarian prince, Wilhelm von Wied to rule the independent and neutral principality.
- 1913 Dako and Paraskevi devise a plan to expand the Protestant mission and its facilities in independent Albania, and invite the ABCFM to sponsor it. “Protestant Albania” has the potential to extend conversion throughout the Ottoman Muslim world. Kyrias family is forced out of Görice/Korça by invading Greek armies. It settles in Massachusetts.
- 1913-18 Albanian statehood is contested on several fronts: Greece and Serbia invade the south and north, respectively, and the European warring factions occupy it in the course of World War I. Italian occupation is the most serious long-term threat to independent Albania.
- 1921 The Kyrias family returns to Albania.
- 1922 In conjunction with the Ministry of Education, they set up Instituti Kyrias in Tirana.
- 1924 Albanian democracy collapses and civil society is disbanded.
- 1925 Albania concludes a series of secret agreements with Italy, paving the way for

expansion. In time, Italian presence is deeply felt in the spheres of education, economics and finance, and the military.

- 1926 Albania becomes a monarchy. Ahmet Zog ascends the throne.
- 1928 Albania enacts its Civil Code and enlists the help of Paraskevi Kyrias' organization, the Albanian Woman, to organize women's benevolent associations around the country to carry out new state policies.
- 1931 Instituti Kyrias celebrates forty years of activity.
- 1933 Albania nationalizes education, hoping to curb Italian influence in the country. Private education is abolished, closing down institutions like Instituti Kyrias.



## Chapter 1

### Introduction

The threat posed by the soldier, the diplomat, the merchant, all had to do with the here and now; the missionaries, through their schools, constituted a danger for the future...<sup>1</sup>

America's first modern hostage crisis<sup>2</sup>, involved two women: the American Congregationalist missionary Ellen Stone, and the Bulgarian-born Katerina Stephanova Tsilka. The first was an aging teacher; the second her much younger acolyte. At the moment of captivity, September 3, 1901 Katerina was also unknowingly and rather dramatically, a mother-to-be. Their captors, Yane Sandansky and his men, were Macedonian irredentists.

Stone came to the Balkans as part of a growing network of American missionaries in 1878. Tsilka, on the other hand, was a Balkan daughter. Born in Bansko, a Bulgarian village near present-day Macedonia, she entered the village's Protestant school, despite her father's opposition. But sure of herself, she continued on and joined the local Congregational church.

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<sup>1</sup> Deringil, Selim. "They Confuse and Excite the Mind: the Missionary Problem" in *The Well-Protected Domains: Ideology and the Legitimation of Power in the Ottoman Empire 1876-1909*, (London: I.B. Tauris, 2011), 114.

<sup>2</sup> This quality has been assigned to the incident because it was the first time in which an American, Miss Stone in this case, was taken hostage in a foreign country since the Barbary Pirates took hostage the three hundred sailors of the *Philadelphia* accidentally stranded on the shores of Tripoli (modern Libya) in 1812. When the Stone crisis hit the State Department, assistant secretary Alvah Augustus Adey, had no defined policy for dealing with matters of ransom. See in,

Theresa Carpenter, *The Miss Stone Affair: America's First Modern Hostage Crisis*, New York: Simon & Schuster, 2002), 28.

For a discussion of the Barbary wars see, Frank Lambert, *The Barbary Wars: American Independence in the Atlantic World*, (New York, 2005).

Eventually, she went on to study nursing<sup>3</sup> in the United States, and there she again met an Albanian Protestant pastor, Grigor Tsilka, then studying at the Union Theological Seminary in New York City.<sup>4</sup> After their studies, the newlyweds returned to work in the newly opened missionary substation in Ottoman Albania (where Grigor was also born at), the town of Görice, near the present-day Albanian-Greek-Macedonian borders.

Their captors' intentions were political. By holding hostages whom they considered influential, Sandansky and his men aimed to raise funds to bring international attention to their cause: Macedonian autonomy. The plan worked. Not only did they pocket a handsome sum, but the captives, who sympathized and bonded with them, also advocated their cause to American crowds! In all, ordinary Americans collected sixty-six thousand dollars to secure the release of Ellen Stone, Katarina Tsilka, and her newborn daughter, Elena "Ellenchie" Tsilka. And then, to top it off, American lecture agencies paid the two women generous sums to tell their stories, which they happily did before many evangelical congregations across New England and Middle America.<sup>5</sup>

"The Miss Stone Affair" garnered international attention from the start. Perceptions about feminine captivity, conveyed in the press and diplomacy, were powerful in that sense. Two

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<sup>3</sup> Tsilka studied nursing and obstetrics at the onetime Presbyterian Training School for Nurses in New York City, The School of Obstetrics at Cornell, and acquired clinical practice at the Sloane Maternity Hospital, also in New York City.

<sup>4</sup> The two had first met at the Samokov Theological Seminary in the same city in Bulgaria the 1880s.

<sup>5</sup> Miss Stone's tour was organized by the up-and-coming McClure Magazine, which paid her \$30,000 in total. Tsilka's tour with her husband and daughter, was organized by the Slayton Lyceum Bureau. It seems that her lectures depended on donations as opposed to a fixed upfront fee like Stone. Carpenter, "Persona Non Grata", 187-208.

women— one a very active and stout American missionary, the other, a “beautiful” young wife and mother-to-be— both moved about unwillingly from mountain to mountain in far-off Bulgaria among a group of “rough men” animated great debate in the U.S, Europe, Russia, and the Ottoman Empire.<sup>6</sup>

While the incident has generated a variety of assessments for decades, spanning numerous genres of entertainment and literary forms<sup>7</sup>, in this dissertation, I use it as an opening into a larger narrative that centers women as agents of historical change in the late and post Ottoman Balkans. My goal in this introduction is to portray the “affair” as a highly charged moment in which Balkan women emerged in the public sphere. Situated as it was at the convergence of growing American Protestant influence and local nationalism, it presents a new

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<sup>6</sup>The affair took some time to become front-page news, because it happened so close to the McKinley assassination. But once there, journalists of the New York Journal cooked up fantasy tales of their suspected ongoing rape and torture. The French *Figaro*, according to Carpenter, was especially interested in the outcome since a few years earlier, a French heiress, Mlle Gerard de Trincville, was similarly kidnapped, though she had been forced to marry her captor. Stone’s family started an independent fundraiser through *The Christian Herald* in New York City. The American government was firm in telling them that it could not pay a ransom, without an act of Congress, although it acted independently to negotiate their release by sending Charles Dickinson, an independent consul to Sofia. The negotiations were difficult in that Bulgaria was remote, and that any action against the revolutionaries would have to involve the Bulgarian military, and by proxy, the Ottoman counterpart, given the possibility that this could insinuate an armed insurrection in Macedonia, contested but technically an Ottoman province. The American government hesitated because it feared that the tension could draw in other European patrons of the Ottoman Empire and Bulgaria, and reasoned that the better route was to find a back-door negotiator. Stone had a powerful connection in Madame Kasurova, a former student and influential businesswoman who had connections to the royal family and the American wife of the Russian envoy to Bulgaria. Stone related this to her brother, Charles, who was then able to forward instructions to undersecretary Alvah Adee, fortuitously a personal contact of Mary Bakhmetieva (nee Beale) to initiate negotiations. Count Bakhmetiev used his personal connections to trace the revolutionaries and resume negotiations for Stone and Tsilka mother and baby’s eventual release. See, Carpenter, “Diplomacy”, 43-64.

<sup>7</sup> The most recent account of the Stone-Tsilka kidnapping featured in Theresa Carpenter’s Pulitzer prize- winning *The Miss Stone Affair: America’s First Modern Hostage* published in 2004. Earlier views into the affair include: a dissertation (1983); a biography of Yane Sandansky; a Yugoslav film in 1954, and a flopped Broadway play. See “The Abduction of Ellen Stone and Katerina Tsilka.” [www.cochranfamily.net/popstefanov/popstep5h.htm](http://www.cochranfamily.net/popstefanov/popstep5h.htm)

set of questions, centering women in these sometimes overlapping phenomena, which played significant roles in transforming the region culturally and politically.

These questions concern the position that American Protestant institutions took in regard to facilitating the rise of a new kind of womanhood in the region. During the early nineteenth century, female seminaries in the U.S. often trained women to be wives and mothers. But when they and their alumnae transferred to the “Near East” and “European Turkey”, they imbued students with a desire for broad social activism. In view of this process, this dissertation asks: 1) how the alumnae of American Protestant schools translated the ethos of women’s service to home, family, and nation to a “daughter school” in what became Albania; 2) and how that ethos reverberated in the context of competing imperialisms and state-sponsored nationalism.

The “affair” offers a dramatic entry point into a Balkan entanglement, which demonstrates the intricate connectivity between a number of themes: activism, empire, education, gender, nationalism, and religion. As much as (American) Protestantism presented a new opportunity for bringing late Ottoman peoples together in the sense of a new faith, or in some cases a “reformed” one<sup>8</sup>, as an institutional element it became a vehicle for disrupting and altering the late Ottoman social fabric.

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<sup>8</sup> This was the case in Bulgaria, where missionaries early on thought their approach to attracting locals would be that they would inspire a Bulgarian-style reformation of the already existing but in their view, corrupt Orthodox Church. See Barbara Reeves-Ellington, “A Vision of Mount Holyoke in the Ottoman Balkans: American Cultural Transfer, Bulgarian Nation-Building, and Women’s Educational Reform, 1858-1870,” *Gender and History* 16, no.1 (2004), 148.

Ellen Stone and Katerina Tsilka are two among the women protagonists of this dissertation, but here I use them as instigators. By bridging the worlds of missionary service and political activism, their case sheds light into the ways in which Protestant methods enabled women's entry into the public sphere. Just before their captivity, they came together for an annual event: an intimate women's Bible retreat for younger Christian workers, led in tour of surrounding villages near Tsilka's native Bansko by Ellen Stone to "inspire the hearts of Christian friends".<sup>9</sup> The women read from Scripture and held classes on nursing and hygiene.<sup>10</sup> Such congregations, whether contained like this one, or larger, more general ones like the annual "general meetings" held in the cities of Samokov (Bulgaria), Monastir (Macedonia), or Thessaloniki (Greece), brought together American missionaries and local Christian workers.<sup>11</sup>

In those particular moments, their concerns were communal: to grow and improve their evangelical communities. Depending on size, a typical mission station—designating the Protestant mission headquarters in a given area—facilitated a number of spiritual and social institutions: an evangelical church, a medical facility<sup>12</sup>, and more frequently gender-specific schools, especially for girls. In each of these, the staff included: missionaries, typically two

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<sup>9</sup> Carpenter, 15.

<sup>10</sup> Stone regularly managed these meetings, and also regularly updated the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions on their progress. See reel 574.

<sup>11</sup> As an example see, Reverend Edward T. Haskell, "A Christian Workers' Convention in European Turkey", *Missionary Review of the World* 96, no. 4 (1900): 141-144.

<sup>12</sup> Some sources describe "sick-rooms", whereas many expanding stations envisioned whole scale hospitals and medical operations attached to them.

American married couples, a licensed preacher/pastor who was increasingly a native, one or more colporteurs (Bible salesman), and/or a varying number of so-called “Bible women”<sup>13</sup>.

But while during such meetings they were Christian workers concerned with spiritual and administrative welfare, in their daily routines their identities presented ethnic complexity. The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missionaries, the main American Protestant mission organization active in the area described as “European-Turkey”, recruited and employed locals identified as Albanians, Bulgarians, and Greeks, often for the explicit (and to them enthusiastic) purpose of facilitating Protestant expansion among these particular peoples.

During the Convention for Christian Workers of the European Turkey Mission in 1900, for example, gathered to address the growth of native, self-supported churches<sup>14</sup>, missionary education, and ways of inspiring spirituality, Miss Sevastia Kyrias, then Principal of the Albanian School for Girls, spoke of work among Albanian women in “Kortcha” (Ottoman Görice). But her Bulgarian colleague, Rada Pavleva, working at the Monastir School for Girls, where both pedagogy and the community around were ethnically far more mixed, by necessity

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<sup>13</sup> I have not been able to encounter a standard definition of what a Bible woman was. However, a variety of descriptions of Bible women that come across in sources imply them to be itinerant “Christian instructresses” who passed out Christian pamphlets, went into homes to speak to women, and set up Bible reading classes in local communities to read and interpret the Bible to other women. See, Barbara Reeves-Ellington, *Domestic Frontiers: Gender, Reform, and American Interventions in the Ottoman Balkans and the Near East*, (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2013), 43.

<sup>14</sup> It had been mission policy since the 1840s to encourage the development of native self-supporting, self-governing, and self-propagating indigenous evangelical units. Deemed to be a good strategy in order to reduce the financial and logistical burden of the ABCFM missionaries, as well as missionary suspicions that poor natives saw the mission as a source of financial resources, by shifting the responsibility to locals Rufus Anderson’s “three self theory” produced controversy but also moved local churches forward. For background see, Paul William Harris, *Nothing but Christ: Rufus Anderson and the Ideology of Protestant Foreign Missions* (New York, 1999).

addressed the attendees with “the place of the Christian school in the preparation of workers for souls.”<sup>15</sup>

Mission policy discouraged its representatives from political entanglements.<sup>16</sup> But the transformations of the late nineteenth century in Ottoman Europe, made it clear just how easily this could happen. When Ellen Stone arrived at her new post as assistant missionary, the Ottoman and Russian empires had just concluded their latest armed conflict. The Russo-Turkish War of 1877-78 was a coalition of Russian and Balkan armies that declared war on the Ottoman Empire when its poor handling of two separate but linked uprisings of Bosnian Christians and Bulgarian revolutionaries in 1875 and 1876 escalated into atrocities widely reported throughout Europe. Working with reports of Istanbul-based American missionaries, the former British Prime Minister William Gladstone, magnified the issue into the “Eastern Question”.<sup>17</sup>

When all was said and done at the Congress of Berlin (1878), the region became significantly reconfigured. Montenegro and Serbia became independent kingdoms. Romania became an independent principality. Bulgaria became an autonomous entity split into two separate units: Ottoman Eastern Rumelia, and a Russian-administered principality. Greece was promised territories in the regions of Thessaly and Epirus. Because these last two remained

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<sup>15</sup> Haskell, 144.

<sup>16</sup> The missionaries Albert Long, Cyrus Hamlin, and George Washburn fed the reports they received by their Bulgarian students at the recently established and influential Robert College in Istanbul to British journalists. See, Seton-Watson, R.W., “The Bulgarian Atrocities”, in *Disraeli, Gladstone, and the Eastern Question: A Study in Diplomacy and Party Politics*, (London: Routledge, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition 2004), 51-102.

<sup>17</sup> The missionaries were affiliated with Robert College, the recently established and influential American Protestant school then educating many young Bulgarian elites. See Chapter 2.

unfulfilled promises, they fuelled the irredentism associated with the region in the lead to World War I.

As Ipek Yosmaoglu recently pointed out, “the political map of southeastern Europe that emerged as a result of the Congress of Berlin would precipitate decades of violent struggle for territory and set in motion events that ultimately resulted in the deaths, deportations, and ethnic cleaning of thousands of people. The epicenter of the first round of the struggle was Macedonia, a region that did not easily lend itself to partition along ethnic lines”.<sup>18</sup> Though the Balkans were only one theater of Ottoman retrenchment, they were a critical and highly visible one.<sup>19</sup>

European intervention and local nationalism played a combined and significant role in curbing Ottoman rule in the Balkans. But whereas the former had a long history in the region, beyond the scope of this study, American Protestantism was entirely new. And it was by virtue of its ties to and (sometimes tentative) promotion of local nationalism that it became a source of political competition and centrifuge. At one of the many backgrounds of the Stone affair, stood the Kyriases, an Albanian family of cultural mediators, who were colleagues of Katarina and Grigor Tsilka. I turn to them throughout the dissertation as guides in the transformation of these parts of Ottoman Europe into a nation state.

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<sup>18</sup> Ipek Yosmaoglu, “The Ottoman Empire, the Balkans, and the Great Powers on the Road to Müzzsteg” in *Blood Ties: Religion, Violence, and the Politics of Nationhood in Ottoman Macedonia, 1878-1908*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013), 25.

<sup>19</sup> In all, the Ottoman Empire lost more than a third of its territories and most of its non-Muslim population. Bosnia was ceded to Austria-Hungary, and all the territories to the east conquered by Russia (Bessarabia, Batum, Kars, and Ardahan.) Britain also gained control of Cyprus under a separate agreement. See, Caroline Finkel, *Osman’s Dream: The Story of the Ottoman Empire, 1300-1923*, (New York, 2006), 486 in *ibid*.



Uniting evangelism and education, the Kyriases managed to transform a peripheral mission school for girls into an institution closely identified with Albanian nationalism. At once recognized as evangelical or Christian workers for the European Turkey branch of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, they also contributed to constructions of ethnic difference in the linguistic margins of present-day Albania and northern Greece, and more broadly to constructions of womanhood and its participation in nation building during the interwar period.

#### *A New Source of Western Influence*

Before I continue with the mechanisms that the Kyriases deployed to those ends, it is necessary to establish a broad overview of American Protestantism as a placeholder in the region. What brought it to the Ottoman world, to begin with? As the Middle East scholar Hans-Lukas Kieser has argued, its arrival there was connected to centuries-old European and then American Protestant preoccupation with “restoring the Jews to Jesus and to Palestine”<sup>20</sup>.

At the turn of the nineteenth century, European and American Protestant revivalists argued that the modern era beckoned them to action. Anxious to hasten Jesus’ Second Coming, they wanted to see the Bible lands restored to Christianity. In addition, Protestant expansion coincided with a simultaneous extension of American ideas about politics and science. With such

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<sup>20</sup> Hans-Lukas Kieser, *Nearest East: American Millennialism and Mission to the Middle East*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2010), 34.

global dimensions, nineteenth century American millennialism sharply contrasted with the diplomatic isolationism of America's foreign policy toward Europe between the two world wars a century later.<sup>21</sup>

This American missionary movement began in 1810 when a group of theology students at Williams College created the interdenominational American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions on Beacon Street in Boston. Their first missions went out to India and Ceylon, but ten years in, they shifted focus to the Bible lands. Believing that such a restoration would begin with the Jews and the fall of Islam, their first target was Palestine. But on meeting with strategic difficulties there such as indifference as well as communal and legal resistance<sup>22</sup>, American millennialism redirected its approach to a more receptive Christian group, the Armenians.<sup>23</sup>

As this dissertation will demonstrate, and as mission scholars have already established, mission policy shifted repeatedly and had many unintended consequences that were hard to foresee.<sup>24</sup> Generally speaking, American missionaries were as enthusiastic about identifying a next target group/area, as representatives of such groups/areas sometimes were to induct American methods and sometimes funding to their own people. While Muslims remained legally

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<sup>21</sup> *ibid*, 9.

<sup>22</sup> It remains an apostasy for Muslims to convert to Christianity, but doing so was also punishable by death at least until the mid nineteenth century in the Ottoman Empire. Reeves-Ellington, *Domestic Frontiers*, 57.

<sup>23</sup> Kieser, "Mission as Factor of Change in Turkey", *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 13, no. 4 (2002): 393.

<sup>24</sup> See Heather Sharkey, *Cultural Conversions Unexpected Consequences of Christian Missionary Encounters in the Middle East, Africa, and South Asia* (Syracuse, 2013).

out of reach to missionaries, and Jewish leaders in Palestine showed indifference<sup>25</sup>, ABCFM leaders hoped to inspire internal reformations of existing native Christian churches, like that of the Armenians or the Bulgarians.

And while such shifts produced mixed results of their own, the overall conversion of the area to Christianity remained a long-term goal. Thus when predominately Muslim Albania became its own nation-state in 1913, the ABCFM enthusiastically endorsed the tentative reports of one of its upstart missionaries in Albania that Muslims there were ready and willing to embrace Protestantism.<sup>26</sup> Conjecturing that Albania's nominal but well-regarded Muslims could become better Protestant ambassadors to Ottoman coreligionists than the already tried Armenians, the Board momentarily thought that it had solved a century-old dilemma.<sup>27</sup>

If religious restoration brought American evangelicals to the Near East, politics followed close behind. To quote Hans-Lukas Kieser, to evangelicals “there was no fundamental gap between the Gospel, scientific progress, democracy, social change, and enlightened belief in universal human commonality in contrast to innate difference.”<sup>28</sup> Two of the defining moments of Protestant activity in Ottoman domains were: 1) recognition in 1847 as a *millet*— an

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<sup>25</sup> For background on the failure to convert the Middle East, see Ussama Makdisi, *Artillery of Heaven: American Missionaries and the Failed Conversion of the Middle East*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008.

<sup>26</sup> This kind of group focus to conversion by the ABCFM has been noted before. First, the ABCFM targeted the Jews, then the Armenians and the Greeks, and the Bulgarians in succession.

<sup>27</sup> See Chapter Three.

<sup>28</sup> Kieser, 17.

autonomous and self-regulating religious community under Ottoman protection and 2) the constitution or *Nizamname* drawn up in 1854.

The essence of being *Prote* (Protestant) was that unlike members of other *millets*, one could be a community member without formally belonging to a church organization. The *millet* itself and its constitution prescribed democratic election of a civil person as opposed to the appointment of a clergyman. In a political sense, this was innovative. It evidently set the tone for the empire's modernization in the sense of democratic governance. Only two years later, the Ottoman government formalized the centuries-old unofficial *millet* (religious community) system on that basis, by placing the selection of its respective leaders before assemblies of both religious and civil parties through the Reform Edict or *Hatt-i- Hümayun*.<sup>29</sup>

This redefinition, even if subtle, prompted some Ottoman minorities, notably the Armenians to rethink their civil rights. For them, the Protestant constitution became common reading. It and other extensions of American Protestantism, already mentioned above, became synonymous with modernity and progress, and more generally, a positive image outside of their (reviled)<sup>30</sup> religious context. Kieser also points out its positive impact on women, the model “Bible women” in particular, who as teachers and nurses— the primary professions opened to

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<sup>29</sup> *ibid*, 48.

<sup>30</sup> The Eastern Orthodox hierarchy, in particular, saw Protestants as apostates. Nationalists and cultural activists, on the other hand, like Ottoman bureaucrats worried that Protestant missionaries would threaten the following they cultivated locally. Orthodox and Bektashi Albanian activists expressed apprehension when the Protestant *Kyriases* pressed to come up with a common alphabet and found evangelical institutions in Görice, out of a general feeling of competition of the groundwork that they had already laid in the cultural discussions emanating from the Congress of Berlin before training and connecting the first Protestant pastor, Gerasim Kyrias, to the Albanian language and its defenders in Istanbul and other Albanian settlements. See Skënder Luarasi, *Gjerasim Qiriazi*, (Tirana, 1965), 45.

them by the missionary schools, acquired “much more independence and public roles” outside their families<sup>31</sup>.

To Ottoman state policy, however, Protestant expansion came to signify a leading political threat. Ottoman statecraft began to emulate European form more or less since its military defeats in the late eighteenth century forced it to reevaluate its position vis-à-vis the West. But its modern achievements and the following they inspired among its subjects, led the state to suspect and eventually to obstruct Protestant networks and institutions.<sup>32</sup>

The ethnic fragmentation of the Ottoman Empire during the nineteenth century was a drawn out process that should be read as more complex than a simple local response to modernization. Fatma Müge Göçek, for example, has argued that Western schooling and its *cultural translation* in Ottoman spheres led to political differentiation within the Empire, having a different impact on Turkish elites and ethnic groups.<sup>33</sup>

However, it also followed already existing ethnic segmentation, defined along the lines of minority communities, some of which were religious.<sup>34</sup> Even as the imperial edicts of 1839 and 1856, the *Gülhane Hatt-ı Serif* and the *Hatt-ı Hümayûn*<sup>35</sup>, tried to equalize all subjects in legal

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<sup>31</sup> Kieser, 49.

<sup>32</sup> See Chapter 2.

<sup>33</sup> Göçek explains this differentiation as the use of Western education to construct different political goals. Thus, while Turkish elites envisioned a new national identity superceding all other cultural and religious identifications, their resistance of the cultural movements of Ottoman minorities, ultimately led the latter to desire a split from the Ottoman fold.

<sup>34</sup> Fatma Müge Göçek, “Ethnic Segmentation, Western Education, and Political Outcomes: Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Society”, *Poetics Today*, 14:3, 508.

<sup>35</sup> I refer to these two indirectly several times in the dissertation as the onset of modernizing reforms in the Ottoman Empire. They concerned reforms in education, liberal government, and social organization, resulting in a significant

terms, they could not stem the tide of widening divisions between the Sunni Muslim ruling classes and the ethnic religious minorities.

The redefinition of ethnic groups in Ottoman society in the nineteenth century followed their earlier acknowledgment as distinct religious units in Koranic precepts. Culture, language, and historical context also factored into these constructions. And it was in the reproduction of these communities, as Göçek maintains, that, “the members of each community acquired a cognitive sense of their difference in relation to other religious communities and to the Muslims.”<sup>36</sup> Some of these religious communities, like the Armenians, had long been allowed to regulate their own affairs, and were economically well entrenched in the Ottoman system.

However, the overall social exclusions of Ottoman minorities from the Sunni Muslim ruling class tore Ottoman society apart. What did such fissures mean? And where did American Protestant networks fit within them? Göçek has analyzed the social chasm and its results at two levels: structural and cultural.<sup>37</sup> While Ottoman Muslims and minority groups both took to western models in education, their training happened separately and their integration was insufficient.

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and unprecedented distribution of civil rights and attempted inclusion of and to the empire’s non-Muslim population. For an extended overview of the introduction of human rights to the Ottoman Empire in the nineteenth century see, Berdal Aral, “The Idea of Human Rights as Perceived in the Ottoman Empire,” *Human Rights Quarterly* 26, no. 2 (2004), 454-482. In general, American missionaries were very enthusiastic about the reforms that the empire undertook during the Tanzimat, and again during the Young Turk Revolution, and they commented severely during the Armenian reprisals of the 1890s and the genocide of 1915.

<sup>36</sup> Göçek, 514.

<sup>37</sup> Göçek, 518.

While Muslims went to state schools, non-Muslims attended private institutions set up by their communities as well by western powers. In addition to this differentiation, the two groups mobilized their education for different ends. While Muslim elites applied Enlightenment ideals to reform the Ottoman state and to centralize its rule, Ottoman minorities used them for their own political ends, especially as they articulated their communities as “distinct nations”.

Western schools recruited Ottoman minorities at far greater rates than the Ottoman state could keep up with.<sup>38</sup> Between the 1830s and 1890s, as western intervention increased, so did the number of schools that western powers sponsored and the regions they covered. For example, the Arab provinces had American, British, German, French, and Italian schools. The European provinces and Asia Minor had a range of Greek, Romanian, Russian as well a mix of the above.<sup>39</sup>

The spread of such schools followed the economic and political interests of these countries in Ottoman lands, but it was also a consequence of religious ones. Because of the broad indifference they encountered, as well as the lack of access to women, American mission theorists argued that schools providing a modern education would solve the Board’s problem.<sup>40</sup> And as figures showed, their rationale proved partly right. By the end of the nineteenth century, American schools were the second largest network of private schools in the Ottoman Empire, prompting competition between Ottoman state schools as well as other foreign schools.

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<sup>38</sup> See Chapter 2.

<sup>39</sup> Göçek, 524.

<sup>40</sup> See Chapter 2.

However, that which attracted locals to foreign schools did not necessarily correlate with the aims of their founding missions. Rather, locals frequently turned to such institutions as opportunities for professional advancement, especially as they provided a training base in one of the western languages, and opened doors for advancement that they may otherwise not have gotten at Ottoman state schools. Protestant missionaries in Bulgaria, for example, were discouraged by these tendencies.<sup>41</sup>

On rare occasions, however, such schools also inspired local students to extend their pedagogies to their native environments. This partly explains the focus of this dissertation on late Ottoman and post Ottoman Albania. Where the Ottoman state saw a threat, and where things turned political with such institutions, is that they helped to intensify the process of ethnic redefinition, as Göçek calls it, through the acquisition of western ideas of government and community. If members of such units already entered such premises with the sense of a distinct historical past, they then developed ideas of a different political destiny for their communities.<sup>42</sup>

Although varying, the curricula of these schools related students (Muslim and non-) to western ideas that forced them to think about their social positions within the Ottoman structure. The political revolutions in France and the United States inspired a set of by now familiar vocabulary such as “liberty”, “fraternity”, and “equality”, which they used to develop concepts

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<sup>41</sup> Protestant pastors, like George D. Marsh in Bulgaria worried that missionary reputation and influence in the Balkans favored their educational output as opposed to the “strongly evangelical.” Tatyana Nestorova, *American Missionaries among the Bulgarians, 1858-1912*, (Cleveland: Ohio University Press, 1987), 72.

<sup>42</sup> Göçek, 529.



of communal autonomy. But whereas these were, merely cultural expressions, the Ottoman state interpreted them in a political sense. In its view, they had centuries old rights to self-regulate their communities. What would such communities do with this autonomy now?

Such a conflation in meanings caused tensions between the state and its minority subjects. The Ottoman state implemented such a strategy for faraway provinces in North Africa and the Arabian Peninsula, as well as the Christian vassal principalities in lower Eastern Europe and the Caucasus. In the nineteenth century, Greece was the only major exception to this rule concerned with geography. There, original demands for communal autonomy morphed into territorial ones. Because of this precedent, Göçek further argues, the Ottoman state developed a stance that precluded the integration of its minorities, even as it attempted it.<sup>43</sup>

This dissertation connects to these points on a few crucial counts. Western education, American Protestant, to be precise as examined here, contributed significantly to the development of ethnic segmentation and political nationalism, ultimately, in the European part of the Ottoman Empire. With its particular focus on developing vernacular literature and raising literacy, American Protestantism galvanized new forms of cultural expression, where none such were previously organized or politically systematized. This was particularly true for the

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<sup>43</sup> Göçek, 532.

Albanian-speaking lands, where Ottoman subjects of five different religious communities eventually constituted an imagined national whole bound by language.<sup>44</sup>

Though outnumbered by the vast range of foreign schools operating in the region, American Protestant mission (or mission-funded) schools were considered competitive in the eyes of the local administration, be that the Orthodox Church hierarchy or the Ottoman bureaucracy. Their administrators, American missionaries, and increasingly American-educated locals became complicit in the processes of cultural transfer and cultural translation or mediation, as I sometimes refer to it for my purposes here, and made significant strides to insert women in the public sphere.

The field of studies on American Protestant missiology in the modern Balkans is small but growing. The historical comparative scholarship of Barbara Reeves-Ellington, Ömer Turan, and Tatyana Nestorova have laid the groundwork that this project builds on, especially as Protestant missiology impacted Bulgarian education, nationalism, and women's reforms. In a nutshell, they highlight the themes that are central to "Of Women, Faith and Nation."

Tatyana Nestorova observed that while American missionaries failed to accomplish much in religious terms in Bulgaria, they succeeded in founding schools. Ömer Turan and Barbara Reeves-Ellington have taken this further to illuminate the processes of cultural transfer, with

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<sup>44</sup> Enis Sulstarova, *Arratisje nga Lindja: Orientalizmi Shqiptar nga Naimi te Kadareja*, (Tirana: Globic Press, 2006), 3. At the declaration of sovereignty from the Ottoman empire, the Albanian-speaking provinces constituted five religious communities: Sunni Muslims, the heterodox Bektashis, Roman Catholics, Eastern Orthodox, and Protestants. The latter have only recently been recognized officially, although it was common knowledge that the Kyriases and their associates in Görice were Protestant.

respect to women and domestic reform, and help point to American missionaries as secondary (but still crucial) actors in Balkan nationalisms.

Here, I attempt to widen ongoing discussion about the transformation of the late Ottoman Balkans by focusing specifically on a new analytical category in the region. Where Fatma Müge Göçek has pointed to cultural translation from Western thought and tradition as a pivot in the (re)definition of nineteenth century ethnicity, I aim to showcase how local students of American Protestantism carried and applied this to a region of ‘European Turkey’ and one of its post World War I political descendants (Albania).

The self-identified Albanian Kyriases, though Orthodox in family origin, converted to Protestantism and devoted their entire lives to promoting American-style education for women and ideas of service to national community in what became Albania after 1913. A history of cultural transmission on the one hand, and an institutional history, on the other, this project operates on both levels of macro and micro historical analysis. By mapping Albania onto Protestant networks in Ottoman Europe, and indeed late Ottoman cultural and global networks in general, it contributes to the growth of transnational scholarship on the Balkans.

Local scholars in Albania, Macedonia, and Bulgaria have noted the contact and work of American missionaries in their regions, but they have yet to overcome the ideological restrictions imposed on their scholarship by nationalist and communist regimes. And especially where they have dismissed American input as foreign propaganda or philanthropy after 1990, they have

ignored American contributions to the imagining and creation of post-Ottoman spaces and maligned Ottoman legacies in the area. These gaps, and the manner in which the study fills them, are addressed in turn, in each of the succeeding chapters.

Cultural intermediaries like the Kyriases are interesting for analytical purposes in that they readily connect American religion and pedagogy locally, while showcasing the methods for such cultural transmission. While previous studies have laid a framework for studying American Protestant impact, especially in terms of transference to new grounds, they say little about the actual mechanisms of its transmission there. By connecting the Kyriases to American institutions and people, as well as to Albanian networks, I aim to show how well connected Protestant networks were in the modern Balkans, a point which has rarely extended beyond the country-grounded case studies discussed above, as well as how they shaped the transition from empire to nation state.

Balkan nationalisms borrowed significantly from the European Enlightenment and also fueled each other.<sup>45</sup> The movements for autonomy in Greece and Serbia gave rise to pan Slavism and pan Hellenism, both of which competed vigorously with each other, and both of which facilitated the rise of Albanian nationalism in turn. But however much the distinct works of Paschalis Kitromilides or Nathalie Clayer<sup>46</sup> provide context for the broad cultural and political

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<sup>45</sup> Paschalis Kitromilides, *Enlightenment, Nationalism, Orthodoxy: Studies in the Culture and Political Thought of Southeastern Europe* (London, 1994).

<sup>46</sup> Kitromilides' scholarship looks to the European Enlightenment as inspiration for nationalist expression in Greece. Clayer's work argues that Albanian nationalism developed as a form of anti-Hellenism.

developments in Ottoman Europe during the nineteenth century, they do not make room for American Protestantism as yet another significant source of Western influence.

American Protestantism made no headway in Greece, because the Greek Orthodox Christian establishment staunchly resisted it. However, a Eurocentric focus on southeastern Europe, or Greece as a particular prototype, does fall off the mark, when looking at the region as a whole. This is particularly all the more compelling since the cultural transmission studied here focused broadly but also specifically on women. And in spite of my narrative's focus on Albania, American intervention had repercussions for the region as a whole.

The Stone kidnapping was meant to finance the terror campaigns of IMRO, a Macedonian revolutionary organization, to raise awareness for local independence. Kidnappings of locals and foreigners suspected of ties to influence or money were not uncommon at this time. Gerasim Kyrias, brother to the Kyriases, and founder of the Protestant movement in Albania was kidnapped and held for ransom for six months in 1894 by Macedonian brigands who rightly conjectured that he had British connections<sup>47</sup>, although it was his family in the city of Monastir who eventually paid his ransom. But whereas sources later confirmed that the kidnapping was a

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<sup>47</sup> Kyrias was an agent of the British and Foreign Bible Society. Because of changes to Ottoman laws, and the frequent interruption of Protestant work, missionary societies and their agents often sought the consular protection of their respective nations. Gerasim Kyrias, *Captured by Brigands*, (London, 1902), 5.

means to a financial end,<sup>48</sup> the Stone affair was expected to have political repercussion from the start.

Missionary correspondence indicates that it was done to show that “Turkey was not safe.”<sup>49</sup> And they were correct. The tactic was a trademark of the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization, which carried out violence in the region and established a secondary shadow government to frighten and force the local population to comply, with the overall goal of organizing a general rebellion.<sup>50</sup> IMRO was founded in Thessalonikki in 1893 by five young college graduates educated in Serbia and Bulgaria, and was by the early 1900s in competition with a second revolutionary organization devoted to Macedonian independence, the (External) Supreme Committee.<sup>51</sup>

The political organization of these guerilla societies grew out of the unfulfilled promises of the Treaty of San Stefano (preceding Berlin) which envisioned a Great Bulgaria extending as far west as the province of Monastir, bordering Görice.<sup>52</sup> Between the early 1870s and the 1890s, the union of the two Bulgarian provinces, Eastern Rumelia and its Russian-controlled counterpart, and the expansion of the Bulgarian Exarchate Church were steps in “correcting”

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<sup>48</sup> Decades after the kidnapping, his sister Sevastia Kyrias happened to lodge at the hotel built by one of the brigands who held her brother. His wife innocently told her the story, not aware of her identity.

Sevastia Kyrias, *A Struggle to Emancipate the Daughters of the Eagle*, 10, AQSH.

<sup>49</sup> Dr. John House to James L. Barton in Boston, as quoted in Carpenter, 24.

<sup>50</sup> Yosmaoglu, 30.

<sup>51</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>52</sup> Duncan Perry, *The Politics of Terror: The Macedonian Liberation Movements, 1893-1903*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 1988), 5.

that, however, young irredentists, considerable numbers of which were teachers, thought that armed struggle was their best bet.<sup>53</sup>

Several reasons led them to pursue this course. First, the Ottoman state was slow to implement the reforms that international policy makers recommended. While the Great Powers imposed a number of such changes in Macedonia, Ottoman bureaucracy responded by leaving things on paper. Second, the Great Powers were also content to preserve the status quo, even as they constantly interfered in Ottoman affairs. Finally, the successful example of the 1897 Cretan uprising resulting in autonomy, gave the Macedonian revolutionaries a template that they wanted to emulate.

Armed violence, on the other hand, seemed to provoke attention. When guerillas attacked, the Ottoman government responded brutally.<sup>54</sup> This, the Great Powers noticed. And because of the leverage they had acquired in Ottoman affairs through the Public Debt Administration as early as 1875<sup>55</sup>, and the political retrenchment resulting from the Congress of Berlin, the Great Powers could not only propose reforms, but they could also propel the Ottomans to act. But to get to that point, guerillas needed money, which they could not easily

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<sup>53</sup> Yosmaoglu, 27.

<sup>54</sup> One such revolt, the Gorna Dzhumaia revolt of September 1902, resulted in quick suppression by the Ottoman army. Villages in the district were burnt, prompting pillage, rape, and also the flight of local inhabitants.

<sup>55</sup> See Donald C Blaisdell, *European Financial Control in the Ottoman Empire: A Study of the Establishment, Activities and Significance of the Administration of the Public Debt* (New York, 1929).

obtain from the poor peasants they preyed upon. And so they resorted to other means like kidnapping.<sup>56</sup>

Records are unclear as to what the band of Yane Sandansky did with the money it collected through the Stone Affair. However, some of those sums financed the rebellion that IMRO and the Supremists had been planning for years. Throughout 1903, the organizations carried out various attacks on Ottoman and foreign targets, and temporarily established an autonomous republic in Kruševo in August. These moments were spectacular but short lived.<sup>57</sup>

The Illinden Rebellion ousted Ottoman officials, and it meant to “invite the entire population, without respect to language or religion, to rise up against tyranny, but in practice this proved to be an improbable ideal.”<sup>58</sup> Not only did insurgents exceed their original orders not to harm the local population but also the Ottoman reprisals that followed were swift and more brutal than ever before.

They did however succeed in attracting international attention, which was their underlying goal. While the European powers were hesitant to intervene directly, they did agree to a more hands-on reform program than the ones previously proposed. The Mürzsteg program

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<sup>56</sup> Laura Beth Sherman, *Fires on the Mountain: the Macedonian Revolutionary Movement and the Kidnapping of Ellen Stone*, (Boulder: University of Colorado Press, 1980), 8.

<sup>57</sup> An anarchist branch of IMRO carried out attacks in Thessaloniki in the spring, bombing a French steamer, the state railroad carrying a train from Istanbul, the Ottoman Bank, a post office, and the Russian consulate.

<sup>58</sup> Yosmaoglu, 35.



placed Ottoman Europe under European military and financial oversight, and provisioned that the provincial administrations be redrawn to reflect national principles.<sup>59</sup>

Constant disagreement among the European administrators prevented the reforms from going forward, but its attention to “national principles” fuelled the kind of violence that IMRO and the Supremists had begun, spurring Albanian, Greek, Serb and even Muslim bands to join the fray for control in Macedonia. What the program had intended to be an equalizer, they in turn interpreted as a sign that the reforms supported autonomous partition along ethnic/national lines.

The bulk of Stone and Tsilka’s advocacy for Macedonia (and some on Albania) was done in the United State. Because of geographical constraints, as well as the general desire to resolve this through third parties, the U.S. government chose negotiation as the best way to deal with the revolutionaries. And it could do little, or indeed cared to do very little, about Macedonia. The incident came at a time when the Balkans were at best an unknown part of the world to American diplomacy, to say little of its actual readiness to engage about it in the world stage.<sup>60</sup>

However, what is relevant here is that the two Protestant women sided with their captors and that they publicized their story. Their public speaking campaign was expected to be a hit.

Within days of their release, Stone made it to Vienna, to speak with *McClure*’s editor Ray

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<sup>59</sup> Yosmaoglu, “Counting Bodies, Shaping Souls: the 1903 Census and National Identity in Ottoman Macedonia,” *International Journal of the Middle East Studies* 38, no. 1 (2006): 61.

<sup>60</sup> This cut both ways. The Ottoman state knew relatively little about the United States early on, and only established diplomatic relations with it in 1830. Kieser, 35.

Stannard Baker, and began to prepare her first series of articles for the magazine. The young Tsilkas, in the meantime, were held back in Thessalonikki while Ottoman policemen repeatedly questioned them, and briefly arrested Grigor Tsilka on charges that he had collaborated with the kidnapers.<sup>61</sup>

Stone and the Tsilkas, wife, husband, and baby, began their separate American tours in 1902 and kept appearing before audiences until fall 1905.<sup>62</sup> They lectured broadly, thanking many Protestant congregations for their ransom, and showed off baby Elenchie, born in captivity, to crowds of local churchgoers and Balkan immigrants in Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Missouri, Rhode Island, Virginia, and Wisconsin beginning with the then famous Chautauqua circle in Jersey City.<sup>63</sup>

American reporters frequently confused the Tsilkas' ethnicity<sup>64</sup>, but appeared excited to put their readers in touch with their exciting stories. While Stone and the Tsilkas occasionally wove their captivities into their lectures, they spent a lot of time speaking about life and

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<sup>61</sup> Carpenter, 187-9.

<sup>62</sup> Stone's round was over by the spring of 1903, when the Kyriases finally made it to New Jersey.

<sup>63</sup> At the beginning of the twentieth century, the Chautauqua Circle was a popular educational and entertainment venue for the farming communities of the Northeast. See, Charlotte Canning, *The Most American Thing in America: Circuit Chautauqua as Performance* (Des Moines, 2007). Their journey made headlines through newspapers that had previously reported her capture: the Trenton Times, The Syracuse Evening Herald, The New York Tribune, The (Jersey City) Evening Journal, The New York Times, The Chicago Record-Herald and the Chicago Daily Tribune, the Marshfield Times, the Lima Times Democrat, The Chautauquan, the Kansas City Star, the Richmond Broadside, etc. See the family's American itinerary for 1903, 1904, and 1905:

[http://cochranfamily.net/popstefanov/The%20Tsilka%20Itinerary\\_1903.htm](http://cochranfamily.net/popstefanov/The%20Tsilka%20Itinerary_1903.htm)

[http://cochranfamily.net/popstefanov/The%20Tsilka%20Itinerary\\_1904.htm](http://cochranfamily.net/popstefanov/The%20Tsilka%20Itinerary_1904.htm)

[http://cochranfamily.net/popstefanov/The%20Tsilka%20Itinerary\\_1905.htm](http://cochranfamily.net/popstefanov/The%20Tsilka%20Itinerary_1905.htm)

<sup>64</sup> The Tsilkas were invariably described as Albanian, Armenian, Bulgarian, and Macedonians escaping Turkish rule.

conditions under Ottoman rule, casting their captors as otherwise kind “Christian” victims of Ottoman oppression and persecution, who needed money.

Stone, in particular, drew some criticism about her handling of the lectures, and the fact that she was using the lectern “to promote the Macedonian cause.”<sup>65</sup> Some of her readers accused her of “merchandising” her suffering, while missionary colleagues worried about how much emphasis she put on the captors. Nevertheless, she raised the fact that even twenty some years after the Congress of Berlin, the world was not doing much to ensure that the “Sultan” kept the promises he made for the “protection and development of the little Christian nations which are under his rules.” The revolutionary committees had taken it upon themselves to address the indifference.<sup>66</sup>

In one occasion, Tsilka’s speech to members of the Illinois militia in Chicago’s Second Baptist Church, many of whom were Macedonian, erupted into patriotic enthusiasm, ending with the unfurling of a “Macedonian flag” and calls to support the Macedonian cause in person or through money.<sup>67</sup> Many times she and her husband expressed gratitude to be in a place of “good government”, and cited his persecution as their reason for being in the U.S.<sup>68</sup>

However, reports of their itinerary, collected and curated online by Katerina’s descendant, Dr. Richard Cochrane, makes it clear that they wanted to publicize her story and that

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<sup>65</sup> Carpenter, 192.

<sup>66</sup> *ibid*, 193.

<sup>67</sup> “Members of Local Militia Offered to Aid Macedonia. Local Committee Revolutionary Reports that Some Illinois Soldiers Have Volunteered Services.” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 18 September 1903, 2.

<sup>68</sup> “Ellen Stone’s Companion Visiting New Jersey,” *Trenton Times*, 20 April 1903, 7.

(some) money was collected in the process. On a few occasions she declared that she and her husband would return to missionary work, and that the money she hoped to raise on her tour would be used for a “missionary school” for girls in the Balkans and in Macedonia.<sup>69</sup> That institution, as this dissertation will reveal, was the Kyrias School for Girls, in Görice.

Stone received polite invitations to return to the mission field, but never did in actuality. Many of her previous colleagues on the ground felt that she had acted imprudently and they questioned her judgment in supporting the revolutionaries so openly during her McClure-sponsored tour. The Tsilkas, on the other hand, returned to Görice in the fall of 1905, after a more successful and better-received American excursion. They remained there until the outbreak of World War I, immersed in the teaching of the Kyrias School for Girls, and in service of the modest community surrounding it, and Albanian cultural and nationalist activism more broadly.

### **Cultural Mediation and the Public Sphere**

How should we account for the visible support that Stone and Tsilka gave to the Macedonian cause? Particularly since as missionaries they approached a very political subject, even as they had been personally distressed in the process? Given the geographical breadth of Christian missions in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, it should come as no surprise that they at times became the subjects of public controversy.

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<sup>69</sup> “Was Held for \$50,000 Ransom, Mme. Tsilka Tells of Experiences among Balkan Brigands,” *Wisconsin State Journal*, 9 September 1904, 4.

Beth Baron's recent monograph *The Orphan Scandal: Christian Missionaries and the Rise of the Muslim Brotherhood* illustrates how violence inflicted on a Muslim orphan girl by evangelical schoolmistresses for refusing to convert, evolved into a scandal that drew the ire of Muslim Egyptians and Islamist groups, by developing very similar social welfare networks.<sup>70</sup> But while these two kinds of public exposure that missionaries facilitated were radically different in intention, they help point to the unintended consequences of missionary activism, in general, by the simple fact of operating in foreign lands and societies.

Activism is a central feature of the "public sphere", and mission scholars often consider the links between mission work and its results in the public realm.<sup>71</sup> A basic working definition to work with here, is that of an arena standing apart from state institutions and the private ones of the family where individuals and parties come together and identify social problems with the intent of politically modifying them.

Scholarly debate has greatly expanded and built upon the definitional foundation given to the public sphere by Jürgen Habermas in the late 1980s.<sup>72</sup> But where the term is applied in

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<sup>70</sup> Beth Baron, *The Orphan Scandal: Christian Missionaries and the Rise of the Muslim Brotherhood* (Stanford, 2014).

<sup>71</sup> Hans Lukas Kieser, for example, has considered the links between the missionaries and many of the political changes that took place in the late Ottoman era vis-à-vis minority populations who became attracted to the Protestant mission and its methods. He notes that, "The Protestant missions were not only a modernizing factor outside the big centers through their schools and hospitals, but also clear promoters of federalist solutions regarding the future of the crisis-ridden Kurdo-Armenian eastern provinces of the empire." See Kieser, "Mission as Factor of Change in Turkey," *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 13, no. 4 (2002), 396. Indeed, the missionary teachers of the Kyrias School for Girls as well as the lead of the ABCFM, all of whom had worked among Armenian communities in eastern Anatolia and formed opinions of Ottoman misrule in the Balkans through their students, wrote very enthusiastically in defense of the Young Turk revolution which restored constitutionalism in 1908.

<sup>72</sup> Discussions on the public sphere have greatly evolved from Habermas' basic definition of an eighteenth century Westphalian bourgeois citizen and male-dominated phenomenon facilitated by the rise of new public discursive

mission studies in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, with respect to women, is that it links women's emergence from the "home sphere" with their contributions to nation building. And education is described as their key to the outside world.<sup>73</sup>

Where schools are described as spaces of socialization in difference (religious, ethnic, etc), physical training and ideas,<sup>74</sup> scholars also contend with what women did with their education, as in the professions they chose and the ideas they expressed.<sup>75</sup> As national societies arose to challenge European colonial regimes and the empires that had ruled over them for

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spaces like the coffeehouse and the salon where middle class elites usually came together to discuss new ideas and social matters publically. At their core, these scholarly undertakings have a concern to map out communication flows, and "to contribute to a critical theory of democracy." With the last in mind, scholarly discussion has expanded to consider who/what entities have constituted the public sphere, and the various arenas in which public opinion was framed. Since such opinion reflected developments within certain official boundaries, another underlying assumption of the workings of the public sphere is that it must coexist alongside a sovereign power, which it is supposed to keep in line through constant critique. Today, discussions have expanded to consider new dimensions and like women, diaspora, religious groups, and an increasingly a global audience. See, Nancy Fraser, "Transnationalizing the Public Sphere: On the Legitimacy and Efficacy of a Public Opinion in a Post-Westphalian World," in Nancy Fraser, Kate Nash, eds., *Transnationalizing the Public Sphere*, (Polity Press, 2014), 8-43. Women's emergence in the public sphere has also been discussed in other contexts beyond the Protestant missionary dimension. One such classic, also influenced by the Habermasian concept of the public sphere and an extension of it, is Joan Landes' *Women and the Public Sphere in the Age of the French Revolution*. Landes's theoretically informed study argues that women's cultural representation during the French Old Regime and the post Revolutionary republican order played a large role in shaping perceptions of "public" and "private" and where women fell within these binaries.

<sup>73</sup> Marilyn Booth, "She Herself was the Ultimate Rule: Arabic Biographies of Missionary Teachers and Their Pupils," *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 13, no. 4 (2004), 428.

<sup>74</sup> Inger Marie Okkenhaug, "She Loves Books & Ideas, & Strides along in Low Shoes like an Englishwoman: British models and graduates from Anglican Girls' Secondary Schools in Palestine," *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 13, no. 4 (2002), 462. N.B. Protestant missionary schools need not always be American.

<sup>75</sup> Scholars have particularly noted the proliferation of voluntary organizations and the rise of women's publications in turn of twentieth century societies, for example, as byproducts of the missionary venture. Not only did these activities build on earlier socially sanctioned activities "appropriate" for women, but they slowly gave way to debates about expanding such opportunities. In the late Ottoman Balkans, the only comprehensive study of mission-influenced women activists in the public sphere is Barbara Reeves Ellington's chapter "the Mission Press and Bulgarian Domestic Reform" in *Domestic Frontiers: Gender, Reform, and American Interventions in the Ottoman Balkans and the Near East*, (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2013), 78-107.

centuries, women's participation in nation building was predicated upon their becoming mothers and teachers, and on their educated families becoming the founding blocks of society.<sup>76</sup>

Missionaries in the Balkans liked to comment that the public appearance of women in conventions was a cause for wonder among locals and Muslim officials. During the same Christian workers' convention in Thessaloniki mentioned above, Reverend Edward Haskell of Thessaloniki remarked that Miss Stone's speech on "the importance of elevating and Christianizing the women" impressed the local Turkish censor. Haskell had invited him purposely to listen to her, and the speech allegedly left with a "curious, doubtful expression as he listened for the first time to a woman speaking in public."<sup>77</sup>

Another meaningful context in which I use sources regarding women's public emergence, is the practice of seclusion. Appearing under various cultural expressions, such as *pardah* or *mbyllje* in Albanian, seclusion as practiced locally across faiths, meant that once a girl hit the age of puberty, she would be hidden from public view and literally trained to become a domestic.

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<sup>76</sup> Nationalist reformers looked to the missionary schools for building up a basis of local elites to teach their children. However, they also looked to their own elites to ultimately supplant the missionary institutions, seeing them suspiciously as sources of foreign influence and in certain cases, like Egypt, Lebanon, or Syria, extensions of colonial rule. See, Booth, 428. There was, at times, an explicit acknowledgement that the key to undoing Western influence in the region was to imitate its methods. As Halide Edib, one of the most celebrated students of the American College for Women proclaimed in the British *The Nation* on the role that Turkish women played in the 1908 Young Turk Revolution, "they [Turkish women] understood that the reason why Anglo Saxons occupy so lofty a moral position in the world's civilization is due to their sacred ideas of womanhood and home." Edib generally considered education as a "healthy" form of Anglo-Saxon influence. In Jenkins, *Behind Turkish Lattices*, 53.

<sup>77</sup> Reverend Edward T. Haskell, "A Christian Workers' Convention in European Turkey," *Missionary Herald* 96, no.4 (1900): 142-3.

The undoing of this through education became tantamount to “liberating” a woman, as well as a mark of national progress.<sup>78</sup>

Ottoman and Balkan reformers borrowed and adapted these ideas locally from a western context, and formulated modernizing reforms with regard to women’s dress and their position in the family during the interwar period. This is where missionaries became key: they brought a new faith, and they transferred a set of values. Women’s education and its importance to their personal and social development were selling points for missionaries<sup>79</sup>, and ones that were, generally, well received locally.

In the nineteenth century United States, Mary Kelley has investigated the outcomes of women’s education through the concept of civil society. One of the female characters she most closely links to the term was Sara Josepha Hale, the publisher of the famous *Godey’s Lady’s Book*.<sup>80</sup> As a term already used in the eighteenth century, Hale deployed it to highlight spaces— institutional and discursive— in which women otherwise excluded from direct political influence exercised it.

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<sup>78</sup> Chapters 4 and 5.

<sup>79</sup> Missionary educators sometimes like to preempt fears that their work was undermining tradition, by propagandizing that men preferred to marry educated women, because they were better fit for household economics and also made better intellectual partners. See Hester Donaldson Jenkins, *Behind Turkish Lattices: The Life of a Turkish Woman*, (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott & Co., 1911), 46. The Kyrias educators who liked to say that their alumnae stood apart for their home-making skills also used this as a marketing strategy in Albania. See Jenkins, *An Educational Ambassador to the Near East: The Story of Mary Mills Patrick and an American College in the Near East*, (Fleming H. Revell, 1925), 98.

<sup>80</sup> *The Godey’s Lady’s Book* (1830-1878) was the most widely circulated magazine in antebellum America.



Civil society was a term that was closely tied to the birth of the American Republic. Per Kelley, “in its most inclusive form, antebellum Americans defined civil society as a national public in which citizens were secured in basic freedoms before the law.”<sup>81</sup> But if post Revolutionary America denied women the opportunity to participate directly in organized politics, civil society opened such doors to white and black women to extend their voices beyond their homes. And the female seminary and the academy became primary sites where young American women prepared to contribute to civil society.

Rooted in the bourgeois practices of sociability in the previous century, by the 1800s civil society became synonymous with social units that made public opinion, like the voluntary associations that made American democracy famous through the pen of Tocqueville<sup>82</sup>. The salon and coffeehouse conversations of European American elites gave way to a range of institutions preoccupied with charity, women’s rights and African American emancipation, literature, and mutual improvement. In addition,

Like their eighteenth century predecessors, antebellum European Americans who engaged in organized benevolence demarcated the elite and the emerging ‘middle classes’ from the multiple others whom they defined as ‘uncivilized’ objects of reform.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Mary Kelley, *Learning to Stand and Speak: Women, Education, and Public Life in America’s Republic*, Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 7.

<sup>82</sup> Alexis de Tocqueville travelled to America in the 1830s to study and produce a report to the French government on the penitentiary system of the United States. In addition to that, he produced a two-volume set of his observations of the rise of social equality.

<sup>83</sup> Kelley, 8.

In their own way, missions became one such extension of American values abroad. Missionary initiatives, and indeed those of their local contacts, were concomitantly framed as civilizing projects.

Their expressions ranged from the Bible reading circles, and the nursing classes of maternal associations like those of New York and New England in the 1810s and 20s, to the more rare, but full-blown political projects based on education.<sup>84</sup> Newly arrived missionaries in Ottoman lands, like Martha Jane Riggs in Izmir, found it useful to imitate the format of antebellum American advice manuals and magazines to write her very own *Letters to Mothers, or a Mother's Manual on the Good Nurturing of their Children*. Translated into Armenian, Bulgarian, and Ottoman Turkish, the magazine was widely disseminated through mission networks, and presumably consumed for its advice on the religious, moral, and intellectual training of children. She additionally advised women to educate themselves for those ends, and alerted them to the ways in which they could influence society through them.<sup>85</sup>

When mixed up in the political struggles of Ottoman peoples, missionaries and their affiliates became local components of civil society, giving a willing hand to cultural and political nationalism, because the very venture they were operating came under fire. Threatened with closure and persistent police crackdown, at a time of continued rebellions by tax-weary mountaineers opposing Ottoman centralization between 1909-1911, the entire staff of the

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<sup>84</sup> See Chapter Three.

<sup>85</sup> Reeves-Ellington, *Domestic Frontiers*, 31.

Albanian mission station, including Tsilka's husband, crafted three essays for the *Missionary Review of the World*.

In them, they combined descriptions of the terrain and the evangelical dimensions of their work, as an appeal to investors and donors to keep their work going in what they described as an important center for Albanian politics and the Christian education of Albanian women and girls. Ending their series with the deteriorating state of local politics, which from moment to moment was expected to assume "an international character", these subjected American Board missionaries, joined their cause with those of the people they were educating and rather boldly asked: "What is the message of Christian America to this simple people struggling for a modest share of liberty and education?"<sup>86</sup>

Once again, after the transition to nation state occurred, these onetime missionary workers took the helm to organize the societies for women that guided their integration into nation building.<sup>87</sup> Remarkable as these phenomena were, what they reveal on close analysis, and that which matters here, is the success of Christian workers to translate and mediate American methods locally. This tendency persistently marked their activism, and is already evident in the appeals that they directed to their perceived American and Christian audiences. This singular

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<sup>86</sup> Conveniently enough, they also mentioned that Albanians considered their wives to be equals and that they considered them to be equals. The essays appeared under the umbrella title: "The Albanians" by Kristo A. Dako, followed by more specific headings on "Political Conditions" by Grigor M. Tsilka, "Religions" by Rev. Phineas B. Kennedy, and "Evangelistic Work" by Sevastia M. Kyrias.

Kristo A. Dako, "The Albanians," *The Missionary Review of the World* 34, no. 11 (1911), 849-853.

<sup>87</sup> See chapter 5.

source reveals that while they positioned themselves as proponents of Albanian nationalism, they also sought to implement missionary goals there.

In their appeal to the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, Albania is presented as a distinct and ancient European nation, integrated into the Christian fold since the days of St. Paul in Greece, and a society that treated its women equally. However, as this dissertation shows, the idea of nationhood was novel and remained a contested project, leaving interwar leadership to deal with the difficult process of state building. Likewise, the low status of women demanded significant attention by bureaucrats and reformers alike. However, in drafting the appeal, they used a language that prioritized the mission's endeavors, listing both the work done, as well as that which they still aspired to.

This ability to mediate culture was the result of cultural transfer<sup>88</sup> and cultural translation. While women's schools were responsible for the former, their students, the local Christian workers, became responsible for the latter. In the Ottoman context, it was the American College for Girls in Istanbul that facilitated the passage of American ideas on gender from the North American point of origin (Mt. Holyoke) to the Balkan and Anatolian peripheries subsequently.

The processes of cultural transfer and translation are related, and also subjects of scholarly debate across disciplines.<sup>89</sup> At their core, they imply the unilateral movement of ideas,

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<sup>88</sup>Chapter Two.

<sup>89</sup> In the context of Protestant cultural transfer to the Balkans, I am indebted to Barbara Reeves-Ellington, who first noted the transfer of the Mt. Holyoke educational model from the North American context to Ottoman Bulgaria. See, Reeves-Ellington, "A Vision of Mt. Holyoke in the Ottoman Balkans: American Cultural Transfer, Bulgarian

broadly defined, and their negotiation from one cultural context to another. Where missionaries and their institutions become the agents of cultural movement, their students often claimed the process of cultural translation, acquiring a distinct sense of agency and empowerment of their own in dealing with hierarchies of power on either end of their social networks<sup>90</sup>. Here, I convey the linkage of the two processes, through the intellectual and spiritual kinship forged between “mother” and “daughter” schools from the United States to the Balkans.<sup>91</sup> From Mt. Holyoke to Istanbul, and from there to the provinces, women were imbued with a sense of purpose extending beyond the household, and enabled to explore professional opportunities like never before.

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Nation-Building, and Women’s Educational Reform, 1858-1870,” *Gender and History* 16, no.1 (2004), 146-171. Many studies tracing cultural transfer or translation from one context to another attribute the origins of such general debate to the French scholars Michel Espagne and Michael Werner in the 1980s who observed the movement of nineteenth century music and philosophy from Germany to France. See, Michel Espagne, “La Notion de Transfert Culturel,” *Revue Sciences/Lettres* [En ligne],1(2013), 2-9. Some scholars have looked at this from a literary perspective, such as examining the translation of Enlightenment ideas across Europe (Ex: Stephanie Stockhorst ed., *Cultural Transfer through Translation: The Circulation of Enlightened Thought in Europe by Means of Translation* (New York, 2010). Earlier studies broach it in the sense of population movements and adaptation from the Atlantic Ocean to North America (ex: John J. Mannion, *Irish Settlements in Eastern Canada: A Study of Cultural Transfer and Adaptation* (Toronto, 1974)). Cultural translation, in the way that Göçek used it in her study of ethnic segmentation and western education relates similarly to cultural transfer through Itamar Even Zohar’s notion of interference. In his schema, “interference” is a more direct (and complex) way of accounting for cultural borrowing from one culture to another, either unilaterally or bilaterally as opposed to the more vague of notion of mere “influence”. Even-Zohar’s relative definition of interference is “a relation(ship) between literatures, whereby a certain literature A (a source literature) may become a source of direct or indirect loans for another literature B (a target literature)” (Even-Zohar, “Polysystems,” *Poetics Today* 11, no. 1 (1990), 54.) Literature, as Göçek clarifies, is a broad definition encompassing “all sources of social knowledge, such as the contexts of history culture, language, and society” (Göçek, 526). That which is at stake for cultural transfer, as Reeves-Ellington notes, is local reception. American missions faced all kinds of responses in their varying global contexts, however, when dealing with cultural intermediaries not only did the sense of involvement, or interference to the extent that the term can be applied here, became diluted. For example, even though the Kyrias’ nondenominational school in the interwar period was built by American money and the curriculum built off the relevant American literature, its designation as a “Lycée Internat” may have purposely introduced competition to the other French-language high school for men in Korça (the former Ottoman Görice). It is entirely plausible that students may have known of their affiliation to the Protestant mission, but from an official point of view, those connections were entirely blurred. One effect of this has been that local sources alone fail to capture the strong correlation between religion and their political activism.

<sup>90</sup> See chapter two and four.

<sup>91</sup> Chapter 2.

What is emblematic about Stone and Tsilka, then to return to our original question, is that while their kidnapping may have been happenstance, their choice to advocate for Macedonian autonomy was not. Their release was conditional upon securing ransom, however, accounts of their captivity convey empathy on both sides. Katerina's condition, as pregnant woman and young mother, and her abilities as a trained nurse certainly helped to secure some sympathy from their captors.<sup>92</sup> But in the end, their advocacy for their captors reflected both choice and conviction.

As products of American education, and ambassadors of Protestant mission methods, they mingled with the local population, and influenced its women through educational interactions in the vernacular. Given the intimate nature of such exchange, which manifested itself in the fact that Stone had learned excellent Bulgarian and that Katerina became conversant in three languages and three cultures through her choice to convert and marry, it becomes easy to understand, if not also to explain, their political advocacy.

If mission methods thus served as their entry point into the public sphere, the desire to secure and continue their professions during the great political transformations of the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth served to proliferate their options and expand the discussions that their work inspired. If mission-supported schools aimed to attract local students to Protestantism, they ended up converting Ottoman citizens into ethnic partisans. Just as

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<sup>92</sup> Carpenter, 128-140.

American women and mission theorists carved spaces to integrate women into the American republic, their Christian counterparts halfway across the Atlantic did this through participation in politics, writing, and feminist organization.

### *Dissertation Outline*

This dissertation is organized thematically and chronologically. It moves between the Ottoman Empire, the United States, and Albania registering the Kyrias Christian workers' activity empirically in the following fields: education, politics, and women's organization. It begins with a broad overview of American Protestantism and its position in the changing Ottoman world in the nineteenth century, to focus more closely on the ways in which Albanian Christian workers adapted Protestant methods locally.

Chapter Two examines Protestant-sponsored education as a way to encourage cultural activism at the dawn of Ottoman liberalism. It consults early and mid nineteenth century American mission theories and women's pedagogical history as methods of conversion, connecting them to the Ottoman world and locally to the Greek-Albanian linguistic margins.

The analysis charts the extension of American Protestant networks throughout the Balkans, stopping in Görice, to question how the Protestant-sponsored Kyrias School for Girls became a vehicle for shifting institutional power locally by promoting vernacular education and cultural activism. Finally, it addresses the leverage and visibility that the Christian workers

acquired at a time of increased European scrutiny, American competition, and subsequent Ottoman retrenchment.

My research in this chapter draws on both Albanian and American archives. These sources allow me to unpack the narrative built around the school by the Kyrias family, as well as to connect it intellectually in a new manner to American institutions of women's education, beginning with Mt. Holyoke Female Seminary, Constantinople College for Girls, and the Monastir School for Girls in Macedonia. Additionally, they allow me to position the Kyrias educators as local power players, especially in their institutional rivalry with the Orthodox establishment and the Ottoman bureaucracy in Görice.

Chapter Three moves into the transition out of empire and cultural activism into nationalist politics. It foregrounds the failures of the Young Turk government to fulfill its promises of decentralization, and uses them to portray the contestation of Ottomanism in the Balkans between 1910-1912. Then, it threads the Kyriases' networking strategies around the conflict by strengthening their credentials as educators and as nationalist activists, focusing closely on their correspondence with American institution and people, and organizing New England Albanians to support Albanian independence.

The crux of their previously unanalyzed correspondence with American Protestant institutions (and their gateway to political work with New England Albanians) belied a plan to extend their school for girls to train Protestant missionaries and independent Albania's future



elites. Invigorated by the prospect for a Protestant nation ruled by a Protestant Bavarian, and the possibility of having Albania become a gateway to convert the Muslims of the Near East, the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions endorsed the idea.

When the Greek invasion of southern Albania put an end to that, the Kyriases channeled much of that groundwork to conceptualize a civilizing mission for postwar Albania and to mobilize support for an American mandate. Anticipating the good likelihood that Italy would acquire Albania as a protectorate, as per the provisions of the Secret Treaty of London, in their view, this was the only other safe bet. I conclude the chapter with a synthesis of Paraskevi Kyrias' diary during the proceedings of the Peace Conference in 1919, where she served as a representative of *Partia Kombëtare*, a New England political unit headed by her sister, which pushed for the Albania sanctioned at the Conference of Ambassadors in 1913.

Chapter Four centers on the era of state building, and the resumption of the debates on education between the Kyriases and their American mentors, at the invitation of the Albanian government by charting the life of Instituti Kyrias, the leading institution for women's education in Albania between 1922-1933. Drawing heavily on a commemorative brochure published to celebrate forty years of Kyrias activity, surviving student records, as well as comparative scholarship on Protestant schools in the former Ottoman world and beyond, it looks at how the Kyriases redefined an essentially American Protestant educational ethos to serve their nation, by training a new generation of Albanian women to function as "soldiers of the state". Finally, it

harnesses the debates around the school and the support that the government and American sympathizers extended to Instituti Kyrias as a way to mask Albania's struggles to consolidate and to ward off Italian expansion.

Chapter Five is a complement to the previous discussions about women's place in nation-building. Using four Albanian women's magazines from the interwar period, that have not been analyzed along each other, it juxtaposes the Kyriases' experience with women's organization and their Protestant platform as a more successful and pragmatic approach to women's organization. A number of amateur feminist magazines attempted to raise debates about the place of women in Albanian society, and to address issues of their emancipation, finding practically no support. This was especially the case after Albania's first democratic revolution was crushed in 1924, which women's groups supported, giving way to authoritarian government and the end of republican rule.

The royalist government imposed a temporary ban on all voluntary organizations and the liberal voices that had opposed it. However, recognizing that such a ban would ultimately harm it, it agreed to allow cultural organizations, among which women's clubs, to resume their activities, provided they adhered to certain guidelines.

One of the most serious commitments that the government made to modernization was to commission a Civil Code that replaced Ottoman laws with secular jurisdiction in the areas of family law. Noting the troubling low levels of development of women, and the country's overall

unpreparedness to embrace western mores, the state mandated an intensive literacy campaign in the late 1920s and early '30s, tasking Paraskevi Kyrias with nationalizing her former club for women in the new capital city.

Unlike the earlier magazines for women, which had employed an explicitly feminist language, Kyrias' "Albanian Woman" tried to approach the question from a pragmatic point of view. Focusing its campaign on raising literacy, improving hygiene, and organizing women through charity work, the magazine also featured articles that constantly tested official diction. At once drawing from international women's developments, and asserting that feminism needed to be a homegrown phenomenon, the magazine managed to sustain momentum while respecting official policy.

These advances in women's education, social position, and their organization served as some of the central threads to the processes of state and nation building. Like elsewhere in interwar Eastern Europe, ideologues and bureaucrats struggled with the question of how to integrate the postwar population within a nationalist framework. As far as they were concerned, Albania had to overcome its internal divisions caused by tribalism and religion, and protect its sovereignty from Italy.

This balancing act came at a high cost. With no economic or government infrastructure in place, Albanian politics for much of the interwar period were highly unstable. The League of Nations provided some recommendations for state building, and a two party-system built a

democratic republican government for some time. However, political ambition and an overall greater ability to deal with the country's internal and external challenges placed chieftain Ahmed Zog at the center. But while he managed to steal political power, he was only able to do so with Italian support.

Italian interest in Albania was tied to its overall policy of expansion in the Adriatic region. Economic and educational ties between the two countries dated to the late Ottoman period. And during World War I, Italy secured the promises of the Triple Entente to acquire a number of territories across the Adriatic, Aegean, and Eastern Mediterranean regions if it changed sides. The Secret Treaty of London promised Italy the port of Valona, even though Wilsonian policy became an obstacle. However, when the League of Nations approved Albania's independence, it also stipulated that balance of power in the region necessitated Italian protection of Albanian borders.

With this caveat on paper, Italy played its cards as well as its Albanian counterpart allowed it to. With back-and -forth negotiations about business concessions and political bailout, by 1925 the two countries entered into a series of secret military and trade agreements that paved the way for gradual expansion into much of the countries public sector like education, finance, and the administration.

Italian money financed Albanian monarchism with little payback between 1925-1931. But the intentions of the *Societa per lo Sviluppo dell Albania* (Society for the Development of

Albania), the agency that administered the secret bilateral agreements, were transparent enough to inspire public irritation as well as bureaucratic swindling. The Albanian side wanted to renegotiate their loan agreement. When this failed, it tried the only real trump card it could use: nationalizing education. Within a few days in mid spring 1933, all Italian instructors were sent off, and all private schools in the country closed down as a result.

The onetime Kyrias School for Girls transformed from a mission school to a secular private institution in the interwar years. The orders to close down were abrupt and unexpected. What took its administrators by surprise was that its contributions to nation building did not spare it. However, their American mentors remained loyal to the mission of women's education and their contribution to Albanian state building to the very end.

## Chapter 2

### For Christ or Country? Teaching ‘Masonkas’ in ‘Turkey-in-Europe’

It is not too much to say that the only infusion of civilization in the eastern races has come not from Great Britain or Germany, but from America...the American government... spends nothing and has accomplished nothing. But private American citizens subscribing out of their pockets sums that in 50 years might have equaled the amount spent on building a modern ironclad have left in every province of the Ottoman Empire the imprint of their intelligence and their character.<sup>93</sup>

This is how a British journalist travelling through “Turkey-in-Europe” approached a class of graduates at Thessaloniki’s American Farm School at commencement in 1910. In part, his bold praise of American “intelligence and character” can be read as the tactic of a savvy professional speaking to his audience. What better occasion to hyperbolize the influence of American endeavors in this part of the world, than when the soon-to-be alumni of an American institution were about to leave its doors? But in spite of the indulgent propaganda, William T. Stead made a valid point. American institutions— Protestant schools paid for by Christian enthusiasts to be exact—were making an impact on Ottoman societies.

In this part of what missionaries regarded “Turkey-in-Europe”, or territories they perceived as European spaces administered by the Ottoman Empire, male and female students from Greece and the Balkans were learning an unassuming but useful craft: agriculture.<sup>94</sup> But at another American-funded school, a day journey north of Thessaloniki, women students seemed to be causing trouble. In Görice, a mixed town of Albanian, Greek, and Vlach speakers,

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<sup>93</sup> William T. Stead, “The Americanizing of Turkey”, in *A Sacred Task: The Life of Gjerasim Qiriazi*, John Quanrud (Reading, Great Britain: Ichthus Christian Fellowship and Authentic Lifestyle, 2002), 21.

<sup>94</sup> See Brenda Marder, *Stewards of the Land The American Farm School and Greece in the Twentieth Century* (Macon, 2004).

Orthodox clergymen and Ottoman administrators worried that what these young “masonkas” (masons) were learning would split their city apart. Specifically, they worried that vernacular instruction at the Kyrias School for Girls would undermine their institutional influences. But how compelling were their fears? And if significant, what did they imply?

As this chapter will clarify, much of the noise about the school and its students actually came from the staff, Albanian Protestants, who persistently utilized their position as religious and vernacular educators to transform this Ottoman town into a contested linguistic periphery.

To illustrate this process, in this chapter I turn to Protestant-sponsored women’s education by local Christian workers as an analytical lens through which we can shed light onto the shifting dynamics of institutional power that accompanied the rise of cultural activism encouraged by Ottoman liberalism in this contested part of Europe. The Kyrias School for Girls in “Kortcha, Albania”— the address where the Kyrias Christian workers received their mail in “Turkey-in-Europe”— was one in an international network of so-called daughter schools inspired by the famed American Mt. Holyoke Female Seminary.

To demonstrate this key link, and its pedagogical relevance for this region at the turn of the twentieth century, I foreground women’s education as a method of religious conversion by examining American mission theories and nineteenth century women’s pedagogical history. I then clarify how missionaries made contact with locals and how they laid out a network in Ottoman Europe. Finally, I then center the Kyrias School as a case study, and unpack the narrative built around it by the family, nationalist historiography, and religious publicity, while linking it to Mt. Holyoke. I conclude with an assessment of how this encouraged local power players to exercise agency at a time of increased of European scrutiny, American competition, and subsequent Ottoman reform and retrenchment in this area.

### *Education as a Method of Conversion*

As different as the pedagogical mission of the two schools in Thessaloniki and Görice was, their common denominator was the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. This New England missionary society, founded in 1810 by graduates of Williams College, conceptualized and funded the schools. It also worked to foster Christian conversion in places that its overseas missionaries identified as ready to receive the “word of God”. To achieve this, it set up private schools that marketed American learning as an emblem of modernity and progress.

Numerically speaking, this tactic seemed to be working. With 892 units teaching locals in the private sector throughout Ottoman Europe, north Africa, and the Middle East<sup>95</sup>, American missionary schools constituted the fastest growing educational network in the Ottoman Empire by the 1890s. They rivaled European networks, and prompted the Ottoman government to increase the number of state schools as a response.<sup>96</sup>

While ultimately becoming a tool for cultural activism, education was originally theorized to be the cure-all for the failure of early missionaries to inspire and effect sizeable conversions. The early breadth of overseas missions: from the Hawaiian Islands in the Pacific to Cyprus in the Eastern Mediterranean, was impressive indeed. However, missionaries found that the typical way of public proselytization to men through street preaching, or in coffee houses, as they did in the Ottoman world, was insufficient for their goals. As mission historian Dana Robert

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<sup>95</sup> “Protestant Strength in Turkey”, *The Star in the East*, 45 (1894), 13.

<sup>96</sup> Selim Deringil. “Education: The Problem to All Evil?” in *The Well-Protected Domains: Ideology and the Legitimation of Power in the Ottoman Empire 1876-1909*, (New York and London: I.B.Tauris, 2011), 93-112.



points out, these strategies were met with indifference, and they left out half of society—women.<sup>97</sup>

This gendered observation struck mission theorists with particular force in contexts where secluding women was social practice. To exclude womankind from evangelization as a whole, they theorized, would undermine the very work they were doing with men. Repeatedly, missionary reports, which referred to gender-based seclusion as a source of female degradation, argued that wholesale social reform would prevail only *with* the “enlightenment” and “elevation” of women. The first to offer recommendations in that direction, the 1826 Annual Report of the Prudential Committee of the ABCFM on Ceylon, made women’s education a cornerstone of missionary practice.<sup>98</sup>

Educating women had multiple goals. First, women missionary teachers could enter the secluded quarters of local women, and bridge that crucial gap between public and private. Second, educated female spouses could offer significant moral and logistical support to their missionary husbands, be they American or local Christian workers. Women’s literacy would allow men to see their partners’ abilities in a new light, and (hopefully) eradicate their seclusion. Third, women’s schools would give missionaries access to the other “hidden half” of the population, ultimately paving the way for the deep kind of social transformation that would lead to the broad conversions that the American Board wanted. And from this very premise, theorists postulated that local resistance to Christianity would ultimately fade.

### *Making Local Contact: Expanding Networks and Cultural Activists*

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<sup>97</sup> Dana Robert. “The Missionary Teacher” in *American Women in Mission: A Social History of their Thought and Practice* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1996), 81.

<sup>98</sup> Robert, 82.

In spite of the ways in which the early experiences of foreign missions shaped such theories, in practice results varied according to time and place. At times, however, mission experience and strategy were also shaped by more specific factors like legal limitations. In the Ottoman world, for example, missionaries focused exclusively on reforming native Christians because Ottoman law forbade them from preaching to Muslims. Elsewhere, this was not the case.

But mindful of such structural challenges, local Christians, of which the Armenians were the first, responded positively to American strategies, like schools for women, because it gave them cultural leverage over other Ottoman communities. It marked them as a “modernized” group.<sup>99</sup> And as European intervention gained ground in Ottoman affairs, such reactions intensified locally. Specifically, the growth of cultural nationalist movements in this time period, often typified as an ethnic “renaissance” of some kind, often invited American Protestant initiatives because they had a common interest in developing vernacular literatures.

When one looks at the complex web of actors and circumstances bearing down on “Turkey-in-Europe” such as “national” renaissances, growing European oversight, and Ottoman reform and retrenchment— it is difficult to speak of causality. The Bulgarian uprising of 1876 is one case in point. When American Protestant faculty at the newly opened Robert College in Istanbul learned of the brutal reprisals by Ottoman *başıbozüks* (irregulars) through letters of Bulgarian friends channeled to them by an Austrian consul, its president, George Washburn, attempted to persuade the British ambassador to the Ottoman Empire to investigate the matter further. This failed, but Washburn then pressed his many prominent British diplomatic contacts to push the British government to investigate.

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<sup>99</sup> Robert, “The Missionary Teacher,” 86.

In addition, he also supplied the college's Bulgarian professor, Stephan Panaretoff, with letters of introduction to them.<sup>100</sup> Panaretoff's reports were so influential in the British press, that the liberal M.P. William Gladstone published his famed pamphlet *The Bulgarian Horrors and the Question of the East* to persuade the British government to take an interest in the deepening crisis.<sup>101</sup> Although that direct action came from the Russian Empire, in the form of a Balkan military coalition, which declared war on the Ottoman Empire, it suffices to say that the combined efforts of these actors redrew the map of the Balkans, further reducing Ottoman Europe.

Cultural activists, schooled in European thought and inspired by European trends, saw multiple advantages in the widening American enterprise. American missionaries responded in kind by enthusiastically offering their services, hoping that such local actors would propagate Protestant wisdom and spirituality to their people. Nationalist historiography, where applicable, has treated such individuals like the Albanian Kyriases as 'patriots', blurring their connections to the missionary enterprise. But when looking closely at their career trajectories interspersed with connections to missionaries, European diplomats, as well as local ideologues, the term cultural activist is more appropriate, as it widens the analytical framework in which they were operating.

Revisionist historiography of the late Ottoman Balkans also urges closer scrutiny of how these intricate connections often served the narrower, individual interests of such activists who, on occasion, became dynamic local power brokers. Thus, for example, an Albanian translator Kostandin Kristoforidhi, effectively baited British and American missionary agents for

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<sup>100</sup> George Washburn, *Fifty Years in Constantinople and Recollections of Robert College*, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1909), 107.

<sup>101</sup> Washburn was a good friend of Stratford Canning, a longtime British Ambassador to Istanbul, to whom Gladstone dedicated his pamphlet. William Gladstone, "The Discover of the Bulgarian Horrors", in *The Bulgarian Horrors and the Eastern Crisis* (New York: Lovell, Adam, Wesson & Co., 1876), 21-24, 31.

employment, after his education at the Protestant College in Malta, on the recommendation of an Austrian vice-consul to Greece, Georg von Hahn. Kristoforidhi taught Hahn Albanian, and never quite became a local power player, but he did lay the groundwork for others to follow.<sup>102</sup>

Between the 1850s-1910s, the ABCFM laid out a well-connected network of mission stations throughout the shifting landscape of Ottoman Europe. Protestant institutions linked such cities and towns in today's Albania (Görice, Elbasan, Tirana); Bulgaria (Bansko, Eski Zagra, Plovdiv, Resen, and Samokov); Greece (Thessalonikki); Kosovo (Pristina); and Macedonia (Kafadartsi, Monastir, Monospitovo, Murtino, Prilep, Skopie, Strumitsa, Radovic, Raklic, Vodena, and Yenidje).<sup>103</sup> A typical mission station (when well-funded) included an evangelical church, gender-specific schools, and a medical facility. This network all came to be overseen by the European-Turkey branch of the ABCFM, headquartered in Istanbul. But the single-most dynamic point of contact between locals and missionaries were the schools. Emerging scholarship on Balkan missions makes this clear: the current analysis focuses primarily on schools as sites of cultural transfer.<sup>104</sup>

### *The Kyrias School for Girls*

In one sense, missionary schools gained notoriety because they provided models, which local cultural reformers drew upon as they formulated their own views about women's roles in nation building. The "Mt. Holyoke" founded in 1863 in Bulgarian-speaking Eski Zagra is a case in point. The town's Christian Orthodox elders worried about this "foreign" school disrupting

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<sup>102</sup> Kristoforidhi is treated as a founding figure of Albanian nationalism.

<sup>103</sup> Ömer Turan, "American Protestant Missionaries and Monastir, 1912-1917: Secondary Actors in the Construction of Balkan Nationalisms," *Middle Eastern Studies* 36, no. 4 (2000), 119-136.

<sup>104</sup> In her study of American missionaries in Bulgaria, Tatyana Nestorova concluded that education was the most enduring legacy of the American mission endeavor there. See, Tatyana Nestorova, *American Missionaries Among the Bulgarians, 1858-1912*, (Cleveland, Ohio: Ohio State University Press, 1985), 2.

their community life. But others looked at it as a model for Bulgarian women's education, and argued for schools of their own.<sup>105</sup> More generally, however, as the network of American schools in the region grew, the dynamics of their impact broadened. From education and spirituality, they also became vehicles of cultural activism and political voice.

Moving westward from Bulgaria, the Monastir School for Girls, established in 1875, had a more ethnically diverse student body. Because of this, it contributed more broadly to cultural nationalism in Ottoman Macedonia. Ellen Baird, a missionary teacher writing to the Boston Women's Board of the Interior in 1899 pointed out that,

This school is in a position to be a center of influence not only for Bulgarian girls, but Albanian as well. Those Albanians who have finished the course in Miss Kyrias' school in Kortcha could receive an additional year or so of instruction in our school if the language of the school was English, as Miss Kyrias teaches English in her school.<sup>106</sup>

The Albanian-speaking Kyriases, neighbors of Ellen and her husband, the Rev. John Baird, in Monastir, began to associate with the American Protestant mission once John Baird administered medicine to their four-year-old daughter, Sevastia Kyrias, then stricken with malaria. Over the next several decades, five of the ten Kyrias children (three boys Gerasim, George, Kristo; and two girls Sevastia and Paraskevi<sup>107</sup>) converted to Protestantism. They contributed to the mission as Christian workers, and became cultural intermediaries in the process. As they positioned their school for girls to propagate Albanianism, to American Protestant mentors and to Albanian colleagues, they intertwined the fate of the Protestant mission with that of an Albanian nation.

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<sup>105</sup> Barbara Reeves Ellington, "A Vision of Mt. Holyoke in the Ottoman Balkans: American Cultural Transfer, Bulgarian Nation Building and Women's Educational Reform," *Gender and History* 16, no. 1 (2004), 146-171.

<sup>106</sup> Ellen Richardson Baird, "A Sketch of the Monastir Girls Boarding School," in *Woman's Board of the Interior, Life and Light for Woman* (Boston: Frank Woods Printers, 1897), 46.

<sup>107</sup> This spelling is how they Anglicized their names in mission reports. They are slightly different in Albanian. In this dissertation, I will use their Anglicized spelling.

### *Christian Workers as a New Category of Local Actors*

The role of native Christian workers in Ottoman Europe remains largely unexplored. Scholars of Balkan missions suggest that agents of American Protestantism played a *secondary* role in the construction of Balkan nationalisms. But this argument is limited, because it builds on one published case study on the Monastir mission station by the sociologist Omer Turan.<sup>108</sup>

Given the expanse of mission stations at the time in the region, many questions remain unanswered. One of these concerns the web of actors involved in the missions' operation. While we know some things about American missionary educators, we do not yet know much about their students- turned- associates, the "Christian workers". This is compelling in that we know that, many times after graduation, they founded schools<sup>109</sup>. That said, it becomes imperative to ask how Christian workers, as a new kind of analytical category in this terrain, fared in the complex web of social interaction and cultural competition in the early 1900s? The scholarly record is presently silent on this note, and it is a question that I aim to explore here.

As the expansion of American Protestantism among Albanian-speakers coincided with a broader movement for cultural expression, driven primarily by activists removed from their immediate setting, the Kyriases offer a unique vantage point. Owing to their American connections, communist era historiography repeatedly obscured their links to the missionary enterprise, depicting them merely as women's educators. But since the fall of communism, Albania has opened itself to a variety of new movements, ideological and otherwise. Recently, evangelical biographers, who have revived the long silent Protestant community, have recognized the role played by the Kyrias activists in *Rilindja*, a cultural moment connected to

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<sup>108</sup> Ömer Turan, "American Protestant Missionaries and Monastir, 1912-1917: Secondary Actors in the Construction of Balkan Nationalisms", *Middle Eastern Studies* 36, no. 4 (200), 119-136.

<sup>109</sup> Mary Louisa Mathews, an ABCFM missionary to Monastir who worked in the area between 1886-1920, reported visiting Bulgarian students along with her assistant Rava Pavleva in the early 1900s. I refer to her correspondence many times in the course of this chapter.

nineteenth century national renaissances.<sup>110</sup> However, this chapter demonstrates that both of these depictions are ideologically driven, and that they downplay the complexity of American Protestant expansion in Ottoman Europe.

### *Women's Schools: the American-Protestant Connection*

Protestant women's schools in Ottoman Europe were part of an international network of "daughter" units, modeled after Mt. Holyoke Female Seminary, operating in China, India, Iran, the United States, and Turkey. Before analyzing how its pedagogy transformed late Ottoman Europe, it is important to examine why Mount Holyoke mattered. Founded in 1837 in South Hadley, Massachusetts, by Mary Lyon, an equally influential missionary educator, it took the lead in training American women as missionary wives and teachers. After graduation, Holyoke alumnae exported and transmitted its teaching in the U.S. and abroad through their affiliations with the ABCFM.

Lyon's approach, combining spirituality and practicality, enabled that pedagogical mobility. Her academic background had combined New England theology and prescriptions of "usefulness" to women.<sup>111</sup> When she created Mt. Holyoke, Lyon developed a curriculum appropriate for enterprising middle-class, church-going girls "who would then gain practical and intellectual training to become teachers and homemakers in foreign, often hostile cultures."<sup>112</sup>

To understand Mt. Holyoke and its impact abroad, one must also look at the underlying debates about women's place in the early American Republic, generally, and Puritan New

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<sup>110</sup> John Quanrud, *A Sacred Task: The Life of Gjerasim Qiriazi- A True Story from Albania's National Awakening*. Reading, Great Britain: Ichthus Authentic Christian Lifestyle, 2002.

<sup>111</sup> Lyon attended Reverend Joseph Emerson's Ladies Seminary at Byfield. Emerson was influenced by the Swiss Johan Friedrich Pestalozzi and the English Hannah More, both of whom wrote about methods of instruction on making women useful.

<sup>112</sup> Robert, op. cit., 97.

England religious culture, specifically. As historians of antebellum America note, the American Revolution gave women some opportunities to organize. For example, they rallied efforts to gather supplies and support the war front. Once it was over, however, they could no longer participate directly in American political life. Education, however, allowed them to forge other links to the political sphere.

Advocates of women's education argued that American women could become politically socialized through their role as mothers. "Republican Motherhood", a new model of the early Republican period, maintained that women could rear their children to become good citizens. As Linda Kerber shows, it allowed women to bridge domesticity and politics:

Western political theory, even during the Enlightenment, had only occasionally contemplated the role of women in the civic culture. It had habitually considered women only in domestic relationships, as wives and mothers. It had not devised any mode by which women might have a political impact on government or fulfill their obligations to it. The Republican mother was a device, which attempted to integrate domesticity and politics.<sup>113</sup>

Kerber has further argued that Republican Motherhood was a pathway into public life: by becoming *deferential citizens*, or exerting partial influence upon the political system. Even though this ideological model limited women's claims of political equality, it enabled them to enter public life by acquiring an education.<sup>114</sup> In this regard, Mt. Holyoke women combined motherhood and teaching, and the overwhelming majority of them became professional teachers.

Another component of female visibility came through New England religious culture. *Disinterested benevolence*, or continuous self-sacrifice, an outgrowth of New England theology termed New Divinity, was deemed to be the very essence of Christian life. Specifically, these two were set to function as countercurrents to the prevailing "belle ideal" model of womanhood, which cast women as "flirtatious, charming, dependent, and incapable of learning". Emerging

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<sup>113</sup> Linda Kerber, "The Republican Mother: Women and the Enlightenment- an American Perspective," *American Quarterly* 28, no. 2 (1976), 203.

<sup>114</sup> Mary Kelley, *Learning to Stand and Speak: Women, Education, and Public Life in America's Republic*, (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 25.



educators like Lyon took the concept of disinterested benevolence and transformed it into a pedagogy about lifelong devotion to the cause of Christian conversion throughout the world. To train her students in that endeavor, she taught them the essentials of self-sacrifice: effective management of time and money. She directed a significant portion of her own (meager) income for foreign missions, and systematically encouraged her students to do the same.

Reflecting these trends in her own pedagogical methods, and indeed *using* them to justify her own work, Lyon developed a platform of schooling that expanded opportunities for women.<sup>115</sup> Her methods focused on their cultivation of religious learning, physical wellbeing, self-reliance, and the most up-to-date grounding in natural and social sciences. Curriculum offerings expanded as she consulted with fellow and senior scholars at nearby schools and male colleges. From basic reading and arithmetic, her students went on to study physiology, algebra, chemistry, botany, astronomy, geology, logical, geography, history, English grammar and literature, as well as Latin and theology.<sup>116</sup>

To enhance self-reliance and sacrifice in students, Mt. Holyoke instituted a domestic studies program. This also kept tuition low, as it eliminated the need for servants and attracted poorer students to the school. Simultaneously, it also became the best way to teach students to look after themselves by directly engaging with housework. The daughter schools founded by alumnae in the United States and abroad, closely followed the methods thus far outlined.

Mt. Holyoke's methods are important to scrutinize because they connected it to the ACBFM, which ultimately became the means of their export and replication abroad. In particular, the seminary's educational platform coincided with the Board's growing interest in

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<sup>115</sup> This in particular is the opinion that Amanda Porterfield holds. For more see her chapter "The Place of Antebellum Missionary Women in American Religious History" where she discusses Lyon's take on post Revolutionary New England culture.

<sup>116</sup> Porterfield, 42.

women's education. Noting that education was becoming steadily professionalized in nineteenth century America, Rufus Anderson, the man who formulated much of the ABCFM's early policies, and himself an advocate of female education, pushed to give missionary wives and teachers a thorough and up-to-date training before they took up their positions outside of the country.

Mary Kelley's work on the growth of women's education is particularly helpful in elucidating Anderson's observations<sup>117</sup>. Kelley argues that the new and rapidly expanding<sup>118</sup> institutions, the academy and seminary, offered women a curriculum of a "more elevated and elevating nature"<sup>119</sup>, equal in depth to men's colleges, whereas before the Revolution an education in needlework had been deemed sufficient. Such growth reflected similar development in men's education, particularly as Americans moved westward. More academies and seminaries appeared in the Mid- and Southwest.

Institutional variety meant varied options. Female academies focused primarily on developing women's "social graces" through music, dancing, penmanship, drawing and needlework, and as such were important in enhancing women's social standing. Seminaries, on the other hand, offered a more explicitly academic curriculum. Some like Mt. Holyoke went so far as to professionalize teaching. But regardless of their offerings, these institutions increased opportunities for women, in that they offered the same academic preparation that men received in colleges.

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<sup>117</sup> See Kelley, "Female Academies are Everywhere Establishing: Curriculum and Pedagogy", in *Learning to Stand and Speak* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 66-112.

<sup>118</sup> According to the data that she provides, in the first phase of women's educational expansion (1790-1830) 182 academies were established and at least 14 seminaries in the North and South. During the second phase (1830-1860), in which seminaries grew further, 158 more schools were opened.<sup>118</sup>

<sup>119</sup> Judith Sargent Murray [pseud. Constantia], *The Gleaner: A Miscellaneous Production*, 3 vols. (Boston, 1798), III, 188-189, in Kelley, 66.

If early advocates had used motherhood as justification for expanding women's education, its beneficiaries noted their ability to make opinions and exercise influence, or as Kelley calls it, to participate in "civil society". In short, the rise in women's education molded women who were eager to act upon their newly acquired foundations.

Believing that world evangelization would happen by establishing self-propagating and self-administering churches, Rufus Anderson justified the female seminary to train wives for native evangelists and "other teachers in the revival of pure religion". Anderson based his theories on his extensive experience among Armenian communities. The seminary, he argued, would also incentivize the Armenian community to set up other female schools, and train teachers.<sup>120</sup>

The result was what Dana Robert has called the Lyon-Anderson Partnership. To the ABCFM, Mt. Holyoke was the model setting to train missionary wives. As a case in point, outgoing male ABCFM missionaries frequently partnered with a Mt. Holyoke graduate in marriage. By the 1890s, an estimated twenty percent of American women missionaries abroad were affiliated with this school, and a large percentage of students became teachers. It was in this context that Mt. Holyoke graduates exported their school model in the 1840s-50s to Nestorian Urmiyah in Iran, the Indian Maharashtra, the Zulus and Natalis of South Africa in the, and to China and the Ottoman lands in the 1860s and after.

Holyoke alumnae became influential in a number of ways. They introduced female education and they raised native elites. However, these transformations were confined to certain places, and they had unintended consequences on local customs and gender relations. Among Nestorians, for example, schooling shortened marriage rituals among the reformed Christians,

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<sup>120</sup> Rufus Anderson, *Report to the Prudential Committee of a Visit to the Mission in the Levant* (Boston: T.R. Marvin, 1844), 21, in Roberts 89.

but it also sparked conflict between them and their Muslim neighbors. In the African Natal and the Indian Maharashtra, too to a lesser degree, local Christian elites grappled with the racism of their educators and eventually exerted their own control.<sup>121</sup> In Ottoman Europe, friction also emerged, but more often than not, missionaries here threw in their lot with the local people.

Here too American teachers introduced the Mt. Holyoke model of education. For example, the Byington missionary couple, specifically demanded Mount Holyoke trainees for their school for girls in Eski Zagra (Bulgaria) in the 1860s. Many of the American teachers at the Monastir School for Girls, among whom Mary L. Mathews<sup>122</sup> has left a concrete trail in the archival record, also attended Mt. Holyoke.<sup>123</sup>

The Monastir School for Girls gave the Kyrias sisters, Sevastia and Paraskevi, their grounding in Protestant education. They further consolidated it at the recently incorporated Constantinople College for Women<sup>124</sup>, originally a missionary outreach for Armenian women, and later the designated spot for women's higher learning among Protestant network institutions of the European Turkey Mission Branch of the ABCFM.

### *Cultural Activism, Ottoman Reforms, Christian Workers, and Imagining "European Turkey"*

The leading challenge in weighing the position that the Kyrias School for Girls took in Albanian-speaking society, at the turn of the twentieth century, is self-promotion. Much of the

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<sup>121</sup> Porterfield, 140.

<sup>122</sup> Mathews was an American from Ohio who attended the seminary for two years, before tying her lot with the ABCFM to serve as a teacher in Monastir, Macedonia between the mid 1880s-1919, when she was expelled by Serbian troops invading the city.

<sup>123</sup> When on sabbatical, Mathews herself requested a replacement affiliated with either Mt. Holyoke or Oberlin College.

<sup>124</sup> This was the name of the eventual American College for Women. It began as a high school named "Constantinople Home" in 1870, was subsequently chartered as a college with the state of Massachusetts in 1891, and changed its name from Constantinople College for Girls to the American College for Women in 1908 when the Board of Directors voted to cut off ties to the mission boards. Finally, the Turkish republican government made it change its name again in 1923 to Amerikan Kız Koleji, although in English language materials its American appellation stuck.

available autobiographical documentation appears to be self-serving propaganda. Among the most powerful of these elements, is that they described their school as a “national” center of learning. While it became that in time, their first students were local girls. Instead, another way to look at the propaganda is to think of it as aspirational.

Their American and Protestant mentors supported them on a project that would help the development of a people they imagined to be a “nation,” however much that notion was contested locally. For its part, Albanian historiography has readily adopted the Kyrias claim. However, Western scholarship of the late Ottoman period has urged a reconsideration of what local scholarship has labeled “national” in this period, especially schools, which more often than not were extensions of Ottoman reforms rather than nationalist implementation.

Such a depiction of schools emerged from their interpretation as tools of nationalist proselytism because of the rise of nationalism in the region in the late nineteenth century. When the Russo-Turkish War concluded, interest groups in Albanian-speaking regions bordering the new Balkan states (clergy, bureaucrats, and landowners) mobilized to debate its local repercussions. Among other things, they forwarded some demands to the Ottoman state for vernacular education.<sup>125</sup> This coupled with the movement’s geographical setting, have allowed scholars to interpret the League of Prizren, the name of the short-lived organization, as a founding block of Albanian nationalism. When the Kyriases based their school for girls in Görice, a decade later, they advertised it on the premise that it would train girls to be good wives and mothers in their own language. And in that vein, local scholarship regards it a “cradle” of nationalist education.<sup>126</sup>

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<sup>125</sup> Kristo Frashëri, *Lidhja Shqiptare e Prizrenit*, (Tirana: Akademia e Shkencave e Shqipërisë, 1997), 104.

<sup>126</sup> Hysni Myzyri, *Arsimi Kombëtar Shqiptar*, (Tirana: Akademia e Shkencave e Shqipërisë, 1996), 201.

Reconsidering this period and its sources is insightful because it draws closer attention to the diversity of opinion, reactions, and more importantly, the parochial manner in which delegates to the League handled various pressures unleashed by the political crisis. According to Ottomanist historian Isa Blumi, such concerns were motivated by political pragmatism rather than sheer nationalist idealism. Leaders of Albanian-speaking origin petitioned the Ottoman government to resolve immigrant crowding in the Kosovo and Iskodra vilayets (provinces), and also to protect the newly transformed border towns with Montenegro and Serbia. When the government failed to protect these border communities (esp. in the Iskodra highlands) or to send its representatives there to appease the Great Powers, community leaders responded with violence.

And this, according to Blumi, they did not in the name of an Albanian political project, but in order to retain the privileges and protections that the multi-ethnic empire afforded them. Thus, while it would be unreasonable to flatly dispel notions of “Albania” and “Albanians” as regional and cultural ascriptions in use at the time, it would be excessive to interpret such actions as politically nationalist. Instead, such pressure toward the Ottoman bureaucracy meant to improve and prolong Ottoman administration, not weaken it.

The same can be said for the kind of cultural activism generally ascribed to the supposed nationalism stemming from the League. The most outstanding examples, perhaps, are the works of the Frashëri brothers. Although some of their ideas, expressed at the League and beyond, such as Latinizing orthography, building schools, and promoting Bektashim, their faith, as a “civilized” alternative to the state religion, Sunni Islam, have been narrowly interpreted to apply to Albania, when viewed from the angle of contemporary Ottoman reforms, they were motivated by similar trends pervasive among liberal Ottoman elites bent on modernizing their Empire. It is

telling perhaps, that the most famous of the trio, Şemseddin Sami, enjoys a greater reputation as a Young Ottoman reformer, internationally today, than as a nationalist thinker, locally. Thinking of them as Ottoman bureaucrats, paid by Ottoman taxpayers, also helps to shift that narrow perspective.

Aspiring to put Tanzimat era<sup>127</sup> reforms into practice, Young Ottoman reformers saw schools as institutions that would play a key role in shoring up loyalty to the state. As a consequence, educational networks expanded greatly during the Hamidian regime, despite the perception of Ottoman decline in this period. In fact, the Ottoman state decided to triple funding for state schools to counter the rising numbers of irredentist and foreign-funded education emerging in the private sector. Selim Deringil has asserted that the Ottoman state took this position in view of the growing network of American Protestant schools, which it regarded as a dangerous fifth column.<sup>128</sup>

Where Christian workers are concerned, their added role as cultural activists is interesting to analyze in light of the intensified competition to shape and streamline social allegiances to power players at the local level. As much as external (i.e. Greek or Slavic) irredentist propagandas have previously been addressed as divisive forces, aiming to weaken Ottoman rule in the region, the addition of individuals seeking to increase their own stake in local politics seems to have been mutually reinforcing (in a way), perhaps insofar as stirring competition on multiple fronts.

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<sup>127</sup> The Tanzimat reform era (1839-1875) was a period of Ottoman legislative attempts to modernize the empire at a time of growing nationalism within and increasing European scrutiny. The literature on the subject is vast. For a general overview see “The Tanzimat Era” in Sukru Hanioglu, *A Brief History of the Late Ottoman Empire* (Princeton, 2008), 72-109. For reading on their impact on education see Emine Evered’s recent monograph. Emine Evered, *Empire and Education Under the Ottomans: Politics, Reform, and Resistance from the Tanzimat to the Young Turks*, (London, 2012).

<sup>128</sup> See especially Selim Deringil, “‘They Confuse and Excite Minds’: the Missionary Problem” in *The Well Protected Domains: Ideology and the Legitimation of Power in the Ottoman Empire 1876-1909*, (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2011), 112-135.

For the purpose of my own analysis, I will here adopt a phrase used by Blumi to characterize this era in which parties who came to see themselves as power players in this region, were confronted with the dilemma of how to “make themselves relevant”. His analysis of late Ottoman era “patriots” is helpful in taking stock of the role of individuals and their agendas to wield power locally.<sup>129</sup> Although Blumi uses the phrase to make sense of the ways in which warlords and even Ottoman bureaucrats (commonly known as the “burra”/founding fathers of Albanian nationalism) deployed this style of rhetoric, I aim to do so in order to demonstrate that the Kyriases, who mastered the art of communicating with missionaries, nationalists, and irredentists, differed little in this regard.

Kyrias recollections of their early years of activism in Görice were noted down in hindsight, at moments in which their very connection with the area, and their professional careers were most at danger. Of these, key ones are George Kyrias’ report to the British and Foreign Bible Society (BFBS) on the Congress of Monastir (1908), Christo Dako’s *Albania: Master Key to the Near East* (1919) and his biography of the only postwar Albanian regent *King Zog* (1937), their postwar school’s *Foleja Kombëtare* (The National Hearth, 1931), and Sevastia Kyrias’ unpublished memoir in English *A Struggle to Emancipate the Daughters of the Eagle* in 1936. Each of these moments had particular relevance for the family, and they have often been used to enhance the dimensions of their work, specifically to center it within nation building.

While this is not to diminish their enthusiasm for Protestant work, it is a strong indication that they saw professional possibilities beyond the spiritual dimension of such work. Their decision to open the school seems to have been as much a result of missionary practice and mimicry, as much as it was rooted in a sense of self-interpreted urgency. The most encompassing

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<sup>129</sup> See in particular, Isa Blumi, “Learning the Wrong Lesson: Local Challenges to Educational Reform” in *Reinstating the Ottomans: Alternative Balkan Modernities 1800-1912*, New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2010), 151-174.



biographical narrative on the Kyriases, by the British evangelist John Quanrud, makes it clear that American missionaries groomed the first two Kyrias converts to become missionaries to the “Albanian people”. In this sense, it is possible to see American Protestantism as a catalyst for cultural nationalism.

In *The Construction of Nationhood: Ethnicity, Religion, and Nationalism*, essentially a critique on the theoretical scholarship of Benedict Anderson, Eric Hobsbawm, and Ernest Gellner that regards nationalism as a modern phenomenon tied to political and industrial revolution in the century, theologian Adrian Hastings (at times) persuasively makes compelling connections between missiology and linguistic nationalism. His argument that Biblical literature can, and has in some cases, succeeded in deploying an enduring sense of community bounded in the form of a nation is applicable to the kind of religiously rooted nationalism that the Kyriases deployed in the making of Albania, precisely as a function of publishing in the Albanian language.

What began as a push to vernacularize the Bible into Albanian, quickly led to the realization that the Albanian language needed its own orthography. Whereas Albanian texts had usually been written in Greek, Latin, and Arabic scripts until then, the Kyriases, recognized through their expertise as Albanian educators, at the ostensible dawn of Ottoman liberalism, joined in with other Albanian activists to agree on a common writing system (discussed below) in 1908.

Missionary societies first noted “Albania” and other Balkan regions, Greece and Bulgaria, in particular, in their “exploratory” expeditions in the late 1820s-30s. The American Board sent two of its men, H. G.O. Dwight and W.G. Schauffler to scout out mission terrain in

the Balkans, with the conclusion that it was “sorely needed” in these areas.<sup>130</sup> Their initial point of contact with these people was to be the Bible. The British and Foreign Bible Society contracted a Corfiote medical doctor to begin its translation, but the lack of funding and properly trained professionals impeded progress.<sup>131</sup> In similar vein, one of its agents had noted the need for “Sacred Scriptures in the Bulgarian language” in 1826. In the Albanian case, the invitation of a trained professional translator, Kostandin Kristoforidhi, a graduate of the Malta Protestant College, to get the two prominent Anglophone missionary societies, the BFBS and the ABCFM, to think further about “Albania”.<sup>132</sup>

In 1860 Kristoforidhi was looking for employment, and he was bold in doing so. Kristoforidhi proclaimed “his” peoples’ willingness to “accept divine wisdom”. He further differentiated “Albanians” from their neighbors: the Greeks “admirers of the imaginary idol of Hellenism” and the Slavs who “dreamt of Pan Slavism in the middle of the day”. Quite the keen student, he knew how to sell himself, and what the missionary societies were interested in. Albanians, he proclaimed, were “innocent” and had no partisans of their own.

Dr. Alexander Thompson (BFBS) and Cyrus Hamlin (ABCFM) were impressed with his qualifications and they both competed to engage him in work for their respective agencies.<sup>133</sup> Kristoforidhi had taught Albanian to an Austro-Hungarian consul in Yanya (Greek Ioannina),

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<sup>130</sup> Tatyana Nestorova, *American Missionaries Among the Bulgarians* (Cleveland: Ohio University Press, 1985), 4.

<sup>131</sup> Dr. Evangelos Mexis’ Albanian version of the New Testament, per Kristoforidhi who argued that he could improve upon it, was that it used a dialect of Albanian intelligible to Albanian speakers in the Greek island Hydra, a far off place to Albanians in the mainland.

<sup>132</sup> Kostandin Kristoforidhi, “Dok. 2. Kostandin Kristoforidhi: Shënime mbi Shqipërinë, Gjuha dhe Përkthimi i Shkrimeve të Shenjta” in *Rreth Alfabetit të Shqipërisë*, ed. Xhevat Lloshi, of British and Foreign Bible Society. Editorial Department. Extracts from Letters, vol. 1, p. 126-130, (Tirana: Logos, 2008), 222.

<sup>133</sup> Kristoforidhi met Hamlin in Istanbul in 1857 and made a favorable impression upon him. Hamlin conferred with other American pastors, and they seemed to agree that K. was a fitting candidate for mission work among Albanians. While Thompson was waiting for approval from the BFBS executive committee, Hamlin paid him a small sum to start translating. When the British got wind of this, Thompson accused Hamlin of trying to outcompete the BFBS in its Albanian field, and quickly impressed upon the BFBS the urgency to take on Kristoforidhi. It is plausible from Kristoforidhi’s contacting both in 1860 that he took notice of such competition, and tried to improve his odds at employment.

Johann Georg von Hahn, the man who founded the field of Albanian studies. Yet in spite of his demonstrable “scholarly skill”, Kristoforidhi fell short of projecting the image of a devout believer: he did not attend services while working for the BFBS in Istanbul, and worse yet, he became the proprietor of a liquor store in Tirana. His employers eagerly looked for someone whom they could mold.

In the 1860s-70s, the BFBS employed a number of colporteurs (travelling Bible salesmen) throughout Ottoman Europe. At roughly the same time, the ABCFM consolidated plans to further extend its mission into the Balkans. After opening the third station in Bulgarian Eski Zagra in 1857 (after Edirne and Filibe), Cyrus Hamlin communicated to Thompson the ABCFM’s plan to set up a mission in Monastir from where Albanians among others there (Slavs, Jews, Greeks) could also receive the Word.

The starting point had been Istanbul. But it would be another decade (1873) before the first two missionary families, the Bairds and the Jenneys, arrived there. It was only in the remaining two decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, that the ABCFM was truly able to spread throughout the Ottoman Balkans, in cities like: Kafadartsi, Monospitovo, Murtino, Prilep, Pristina, Raklic, Radovich, Resen, Salonica, Skopie, Radovich, Raklic, Strumitsa, Velusa, Vodena, and Yenidje.<sup>134</sup> As the BFBS salesmen discovered among Albanian-speakers, they rarely sold a Bible without also selling alphabet books.<sup>135</sup> Determining a suitable orthography thus became a driving force for further missionary activity. Alongside it, schooling, and raising basic literacy also became leading concerns. Before Albanians could receive the Word of God, they should first be

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<sup>134</sup> Ömer Turan, “American Protestant Missionaries and Monastir, 1912-1917: Secondary Actors in the Construction of Balkan Nationalisms,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 36, no. 4 (2000), 119-136.

<sup>135</sup> Kristoforidhi created his own alphabet system, heavily relying on the Greek letters, with a Latin-Greek combination to yield [Albanian-language] sounds which neither could accommodate by themselves. *ibid*, Lloshi, Dok. 15-17.

able to read and write in their own language, using an alphabet that they could all understand—reasoned foreign Protestants.

The BFBS colporteurs travelling throughout the territories that Kristoforidhi had described to be Albanian, also became complicit in delineating imaginary geographical boundaries later asserted to be Albanian, on the basis of K's assertions as well as their contact with Albanian-speakers. To that end, the BFBS established contact with Albanian activists in Italy, Greece and Egypt. Thompson wrote to the Italo-Albanian Arbereschi, Girolamo de Rada, and Demetrio Camarda on the subject of suitable scripts, the state of Albanian literature, and politics both before and after the League of Prizren. At the same time, the BFBS employed men like Anastasios Kuluriotis, an Athenian-based Bible salesman and self-described Albanian who founded the newspaper *Η Φωνή της Αλβανίας* (The Voice of Albania) in 1878, and was arrested multiple times for inciting pro-Albanian sentiment in Greece. Finally, Thompson and Hamlin arrived at the necessity of opening language schools in the 1860s, and '70s— especially for women.

Even if Kristoforidhi's lack of piety and temperance made him an unsuitable candidate, the resourceful Kyriases forever changed their minds about working in Albania. Thanks to the reports of colporteurs, missionaries entertained hopes of easily winning over Albanians to Protestantism. Colporteurs wrote of their congenial reception by wealthy Muslims, who professed respect for all the Holy Books. On visiting Kruja, a mountainous area inhabited by Bektashi Muslims, a heterodox Muslim sect that combines Christian and Muslim symbolism with scriptural elements, BFBS Bible salesmen declared them to be something akin to Muslim Protestants.<sup>136</sup> As for the vast majority of Sunni Muslims, their points of view varied, but they

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<sup>136</sup> This view of the Bektashis, as reformed Muslims persisted well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. See,

noted that were it not for fear of Ottoman authorities, these too could be won over on account of their disinterested and disingenuous attachment to Islam, having been “forced” into it.

Catholic ground, they found harder to enter into. Albanian Catholics who wanted an education attended either Austro-Hungarian or Italian state subsidized schools, both of which had strong connections to the Catholic Church, and both of which permitted the usage of Albanian beginning in the mid 1890s, first as an elective subject, and later as a language of instruction.<sup>137</sup>

But where the Christian Orthodox were concerned, colporteurs quickly provided the “observation” that Orthodox believers deeply resented their (culturally and politically-oriented) *Greek* clergymen.<sup>138</sup> The recognition of the Bulgarian Exarchate in 1870 may have encouraged

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Mary Hasluck, “The Nonconformist Moslems of Albania,” in *The Contemporary Review of London* 713, (1925), 599-606.

Bektashis themselves perpetuated the idea. Naim Frasheri, a poet of Bektashi origins, suggested that if Albanians adopted its tenets, Albanians of different faiths may have an easier time rallying around the idea of “national unity.”

<sup>137</sup> In 1912, the Austro-Hungarian Ministry of Cults and Education requested two officials, Barons di Pauli and Musulin, to compile a comparative report on state-subsidized A/H schools in Albanian-speaking territories. They found, that of all such schools, the vast majority of which provided no more than four years of education only one, the “Railway School” in Skopje was secular. All others had a religious orientation; school officials maintained open lines of communication with consulate officers. The officials maintained that, Italian was the primary language of instruction until 1890, since it had long been the official business language that the Dual Monarchy used in dealings with areas south of its borders. Among the more important of these institutions, were two high schools run by the Jesuit and Franciscan orders, founded in the 1840s and 50s. A school for girls was opened in the 1870s and run by the Stigmatine Order. These institutions were all located in the city of Shkodra (Scutari), an important hub of economic, religious, and intellectual activity on the border with present-day Montenegro. Catholic leaders there became equally invested in the alphabet question, and the Austrian consul Ippen mentions the existence of a “Society for the Unification of the [Albanian] Language,” and the drive to publish Albanian-language textbooks. Many of the individuals and clergy who taught in Austrian schools were behind this initiative after 1900. Consular records mention several cases of power struggles between Catholic Bishop Primo Doçi, desiring more autonomy in handling school affairs, and their office.

With regards to Italian schools, I have not been allowed to access archival records at the Institute of History archive. See 1. “Krijimi i Libravet te mesimit ne giuhen shqipe 1899-1900” (Creation of the books to learn the Albanian language) in,

Haus Hof und Staats Archiv, Wien, Politisches Archiv, Inventory no. 1543, Folders 4-10, 1898-1900, IGH.

2. “Akcioni Shkollor ne Shqiperi Secret” (School Activity in Albania Secret Report) in, HHuSA, Wien, Politisches Archiv, Albanien, Inventory no. 1551, Folder 64/1, 1913, IGH.

<sup>138</sup> Colporteurs note instances of meeting with Orthodox believers who were curious to buy their Gospels, and alphabet books, but refrained on grounds of being found out and reprimanded by their parish priests. At times, in fact, they made more sales among Muslims than Christian Orthodox speakers of Albanian.

colporteurs in these parts of the Balkans and the missionary societies, at least as far as breaking down the impasses that the Orthodox establishment typically created for Protestant missiology.<sup>139</sup> This was one of the reasons why the ABCFM did not establish a strong foothold in Greece, and hesitated to enter into the Balkans even after a commercial agent reported quick sales of the Bulgarian New Testament in the 1840s.<sup>140</sup>

Colporteurs reported that it would not be a challenge to steer these Orthodox, who were denied the chance to hear God's message in their own language, away from the "Greek Church" and into the folds of Protestantism. But as premature (or self-serving) as such reports were, given the colporteurs' frequent harassment and infrequent conversions, they worked in terms of attracting the necessary funding to get any aspect of the missionary enterprise off the ground. Men like Kristoforidhi, who had large families, and frequently turned to the missionary societies with requests for funding in times of financial hardship, may have been far less zealous nationalists than they were intelligent pragmatists.

### *Training the Christian Workers: Mt. Holyoke in Istanbul*

Early on, ABCFM missionaries had come up with similar theories that highlighted the easy convertability of Bulgarian Christians. However, as time passed, missionaries in Bulgarian towns, American missionaries expressed frustration that schools, not churches, remained the major appeal to locals.<sup>141</sup> In Macedonian Monastir, for example, the School for Girls that opened in 1875 was the other major Protestant institution in the city after the Protestant church.<sup>142</sup>

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<sup>139</sup> This was actually a strong point in Bulgaria. When missionaries set up shop there, the coincidence of a national Bulgarian church, encouraged them to think that they could work toward Protestant style reform.

<sup>140</sup> Barbara-Reeves Ellington, *Domestic Frontiers: Gender, Reform, and American Interventions in the Ottoman Balkans and the Near East*, (Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2013), 42.

<sup>141</sup> Nestorova, 12.

<sup>142</sup> Turan, 122.

When the time came to open a similar school in Görice, Sevastia Kyrias recounted her own struggle against her parents to break the custom of adolescent seclusion. Before she was to attend Constantinople Home in the fall, the mission's highest institution of learning for women in the Empire, Kyrias had to explain to her bewildered parents what she was going to do with her education. She already had more than most of her peers. But for Kyrias, who until then had studied with her brother Gerasim and the School for Girls in Monastir, her life's purpose became clear. Thus far, the parallels of missionary teaching are easy to read.

While at Constantinople, Kyrias reportedly undertook a faster course of study, at three years instead of four, so as to speed up the time in which she and her brother could open their school. In this time, Constantinople Home itself was expanding, diversifying its curriculum to become a college. When Kyrias graduated in 1891, along with four other girls, Constantinople Home had become Constantinople College for Women, also the first college for women outside of the United States.

The Home marked a turning page for missionary practice. In 1867, the same year that Vassar College graduated its first class of women students, three New England Protestant reformers, Mt. Holyoke alumnae, conferred with an Istanbul-based missionary educator, Dr. George Wood, about opening a school for women in the Ottoman capital. For four years, Mrs. Albert Bowker, Cora Welch, and Caroline Borden, fundraised for four years before they opened the "Home" in the Istanbul neighborhood of Usküdar.

The group envisioned many goals. Noting the Ottoman prohibition of proselytizing to Muslims and the general failure of such attempts by American missionaries earlier in the century, the Women's Board believed that it could improve the home and community life of Christian women by teaching them literacy, domestic skills, and medical instruction. As

Constantinople Home's first few students were Armenian, the school recruited American female missionaries with field experience in Armenian communities. Longtime president, Mary Mills Patrick, for example, had begun her career as a missionary in Marsovan. At the start, it was hoped that some of the students would become missionary teachers and "helpers". Given that all three founders were Mt. Holyoke alumnae, it comes as no surprise that the initial design mirrored Mt. Holyoke's to a tee:

The design of the High School shall be to provide for the thorough education and Christian culture of girls from the surrounding various native communities, and for a special training of such as may desire to become teachers and helpers in the missionary work. Pupils will receive a thorough drill each in her own vernacular by competent native teachers, instruction in the Bible, in Arithmetic, Geography, Algebra, Geometry, Botany, Physiology, Hygiene, Natural, Mental and Moral Philosophy, Vocal Music, Needlework and Weaving. The English language will be so thoroughly taught that it may be made the medium of instruction in advance studies.<sup>143</sup>

But as the Home began to absorb a growing variety of Christian students, among them Balkan Slavs, Greeks, and Arabs, in addition to a small number of Turkish Muslim students, missionary teachers strived to reorient its educational scope. Whereas earlier, missionaries prioritized religious learning, the diverse body of students that their school attracted (in terms of ethnic and religious background) forced them to reconsider this, steadily secularizing the curriculum. In the process, they acquired newly found meaning in a pedagogical mission as emissaries of Protestant culture and American ideals. Although it was once a fledgling missionary school, by the outbreak of World War I, the former Constantinople Home touted itself as an international center of learning and influence. President Mary Mills Patrick clearly outlined her institution's point of view in the Annual Report for 1911-1912:

Conditions are steadily improving in the Near East, with the result of constantly brining the subject of higher education for women into greater prominence. In this respect, Constantinople College occupies a unique place in scope, organization, and aspirations. It seeks to share in the development of the nations of Eastern Europe

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<sup>143</sup> Caroline Borden, "Constantinople Home" undated handwritten report, Box 8, Folder 68, Papers of the American College for Girls, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, RBML, Columbia University.



and Western Asia, and desires to furnish each one with the intellectual, moral, and religious help that is most needed.<sup>144</sup>

Recording her memories of the College decades later in retirement in the 1930s, when her school had closed down, Sevastia Kyrias noted that she “still love[d] it dearly”. Her impressions of college life are that it provided a very structured and rigorous academic environment, but also one in which she acquired a lot of inspiration for the “wider prospect of life.”

One of the few early depictions of Sevastia, is her senior year photograph, in the company of four other girls in Victorian dress at a studio of “Abdullah Frères” in 1891 Istanbul. In it, she sits centered in front of the camera, looking young and healthy, if somewhat shy, but quite eager. A similar penetrating gaze comes through in later pictures of her, yielding a curious and driven personality. It is difficult to ascertain how the college impacted her fellow classmates, eight in all, but her memoirs make it evident that she took advantage of every opportunity given to her.

She was adamant to the admissions committee that she wanted to enter at the sophomore level, because she wanted to “help [her] brother open a girls’ school in Albania”<sup>145</sup>, and managed to finish the year with honors although she had a weak foundation in mathematics. During the holidays, she stayed on in Istanbul to study, because Monastir was far away and travel was expensive, saying nothing of her fees in the city. But she became close to faculty, four in particular who were instrumental to her subsequent career, and on one occasion she even snuck out of school dressed as a boy to meet Koto Hoxhi, then a political prisoner at Yedi Kule.

These influences each grounded her in ways that shaped fundamental aspects of her teaching program in Görice and subsequently Tirana. Her good fortune seems almost stunning

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<sup>144</sup> The American College for Girls at Constantinople, *Reports for the Year 1911-12*, (Constantinople: H. Mattesoian, 1912), 20.

<sup>145</sup> Sevasti Qiriazhi, “A Struggle to Emancipate the Daughters of the Eagle”, *Fondi 47, Dosja 4*, 1936, Fl.18, AQSH.

when one thinks of Görice as a peripheral town in the Empire's western edge. While not detailed, her mention of these key mentors, Clara Hamlin, Florence Fensham, Mary Mills Patrick, and Caroline Borden tie her so intimately to the very core of the missionary enterprise and its goals for women's education.

Hamlin, then the school principal, was the daughter of Cyrus Hamlin, lead ABCFM representative in Istanbul, and founder of the very influential Robert College for men. Fensham, a pious Christian and devoted teacher, a model of academic self-sacrifice, was one of her favorite professors, and helped her refine her own curriculum when Sevastia attended summer lectures at the University of Chicago in the summer of 1904. Caroline Borden, an art enthusiast and founder of the college, came to influence her during the many excursions through Istanbul's museums, churches, and ancient sites. Ever the Mt. Holyoke alum, she later became the driving force for strengthening the Kyrias School, as the College's "daughter" school in the Balkans. Those examples were few, and in that, the Kyrias School was a unique (and privileged) example. Mills Patrick, her psychology teacher and Borden's own spiritual student in many ways, later became the College President and pushed hard to redefine the Kyrias School in 1913.

She remembered these women for exhibiting traits like calmness, culture, grace, refined character, stateliness, inspiration, persuasiveness, and finally sweetness. Patrick, whom she befriended in her senior year, left the most prominent mark. Most impressive to Kyrias was Dr. Patrick's encouragement to their intellectual freedom. Patrick later fought important battles alongside Caroline Borden to secularize the curriculum.<sup>146</sup> These specifics do not surface in her memoirs. However, a reference to Patrick's defining mark, "to tell us that she respected us to be rather than to do" as the "loftiest ideal", is indicative of the pedagogical changes taking place, as well as the lasting influence Patrick had on her student.

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<sup>146</sup>Reeves-Ellington, 151.

Koto Hoxhi, peculiar in this mix as a male Albanian educator, influenced Sevastia's cultural perceptions about the local dynamics that she would encounter in Görice. A one-time priest and teacher at the Greek state-funded teacher's college in the village of Qestorat, Hoxhi was excommunicated by the bishop of Ergiri (today Gjiroakstër) for teaching the local Albanian dialect and history to his students in secret.<sup>147</sup> How he came to be transferred at the prison in Istanbul's Yedi Kule is not known, but apparently his pedagogical "offense" was sufficient to have had him arrested in Ergiri first.<sup>148</sup>

It was also enough to pique her interest and persuade an Albanian warden whose family she befriended during her college years to visit him. Reduced to rags, the old man's appearance made her grieve and wonder why "the [Albanian] League" was disbanded. It is there that she probably first learned the names of his students, Pandeli Sotiri and Petro Nini Luarasi, who emulated his tactics, only to face similar reprimands. Oddly enough, both of them became her collaborators during her early years in Görice.

Kyrias does not link either Constantinople College or her own to the model laid out by Mt. Holyoke, but the intellectual imprint and faculty connections were there. On leaving Monastir, she travelled to Istanbul in the company of Violet Bond and her father, Rev. Louis Bond, who had spent many years among Bulgarian missions. For some reason, Violet interrupted her studies at the College and left to attend Mt. Holyoke, which she graduated in 1893. Years later, when local persecution had taken a toll on the mission, Sevastia met with Violet and her husband, and invited them to return to Görice, which they did once the ABCFM obtained the proper funding to establish them on a more permanent basis.

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<sup>147</sup> Blumi, 166.

<sup>148</sup> Elizabeth Özdalga, *Late Ottoman Society: the Intellectual Legacy*, (New York: Routledge, 2005), 254.

Beyond such association, it was the college program and overall design that Kyrias transferred to her-own institution. In ways echoing Mt. Holyoke's curricular approach, Kyrias reports emphasis on the College's spiritual, physical, as well as broad academic, and domestic cultures. For her, the college was a "garden of many virtues" and specifically a place for character-foundation. She credits it with learning how to live for others, to cultivate high aspiration, and to love "labor for its own sake".

While her academic strengths tended toward the humanities, history and literature in particular, the curriculum was broad, and likewise aimed to give students as broad as one was possible. And in Istanbul, of all places, this was attainable. Countless were the art and architecture tours and excursions to the old city's multiple cultural sites, leaving "no place unturned". Prioritizing academic skill, her classmates appointed a class mathematician, a historian, a philosopher, and a pianist, of which she became the "historian". Beyond high standards of academic work, students learned the "benefits of outdoor play" so crucial to their pleasure and health: a daily one-mile walk, and frequent tennis and croquet matches. In addition to these, there were garden parties in the spring and summer during which students planted flowers and picnicked at the hill of Camlica.

She recalled writing competitions, which drove her to sharpen her analytical faculties, and holiday lectures that stressed practical pursuits. During Christmas and Easter, the college treasurer, Ida Prime, talked to them about "the ideals of the home, the dignity of labor, and joy of service." Less noted, but informative in its own way, is her mention of boarding with the Bulgarian Grodinaroff family, whose patriarch was an agent for the college and a writer for the Bulgarian newspaper *Zornitsa* (The Morning Star). Years later, her own family cultivated the cultural loyalties of New England Albanian immigrants through their English-Albanian *Yll I*

*Mengjezit* also known as the Morning Star. All of these influential elements impacted her teaching.

### *Local Resonances*

In Görice, the Kyriases established a school for girls that (initially) placed a strong emphasis on spirituality and learning the vernacular, an aspect that was later staunchly propagandized as fostering their “love for their nation”<sup>149</sup>. Most of the information regarding the school’s pedagogical bent during the late Ottoman era is found in Gerasim K’s *Hristomathi a Udhëheqës për Ç’do Shtëpi Shqiptari*, literally a guide book for the “home of each Albanian”, compiled and published in Monastir early in 1902 through the printing press *Bashkimi i Kombit* (National Union) that brother George (Gjergj) ran in collaboration with other cultural activists.

This collection of poems and hymns applied scriptural reference to daily life, mainly to inculcate in students virtues like “honesty, integrity, generosity, diligence, patience, and kindness.”<sup>150</sup> In a similar vein, the school’s overall program aimed to build character through three principles— physical wellbeing, intellectual training, and spirituality:

The first is physical exercise to promote one’s health, for without it knowledge can neither be acquired nor used much. The second is the strengthening of the mind, so that they [students] possess clear and true judgment, and win those skills that one needs in daily life. The third and most valuable for girls is the training of the soul. A good and enlightened spirit is an estimable thing for those who understand. If we teach them to work righteously and befriend God’s word, always will they be honored and never shamed through their deeds... Let them be trained to do well unto the poor and the needy to deepen in their hearts desires for the good of the nation. Rejoice they shall when the nation thrives.<sup>151</sup>

The curriculum, which kept growing with outside funding, emphasized rudimentary academic and domestic skills. Despite the professed large crowds, which reportedly attended

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<sup>149</sup> This is apparent in their recreation of the school’s history, published to celebrate forty years of Kyrias work in interwar Albania. See

Instituti Kyrias, *Foleja Kombëtare* (Tirana, 1931).

<sup>150</sup> Quanrud, 162.

<sup>151</sup> Gjergj Qiriaz, *Hristomathi* (Sofia, 1902), 308, in Shefik Osmani, *Trashëgimi Social-Pedagogjike: Motrat Qiriaz* (Prishtina: Enti i Teksteve dhe i Mjeteve Mësimore i Kosovës, 1997), 73.

school-related events (running in the hundreds), the number of attendants was small and irregular. Though oddly, for a school in a provincial town with a population smaller than Monastir and smaller still by far than Istanbul, its attendance records and graduation class sizes were similar and sometimes even exceeded theirs comparatively.

Practical pitch may well have played a part in this. While much of the foundational rhetoric mirrored the ethos of American women's institutions, it probably also resonated in ways that local parents found persuasive. If an idealized recreation of Gerasim's speech on the school's opening day is to be believed, the school delineated from the outset the essential purpose of a woman's education: to create an "ideal home". Much as in the American scholarly setting, a woman's influence was postulated to grow from the domestic sphere and extend outwardly.

However, there was not yet talk about how this would impact the Albanian *nation*. Those dimensions were articulated among Korçar (Albanian name for Görice women) women very strongly after the First World War in a women's journal run by the local benevolent society, *Mbleta* (The Bee). Sevastia Kyrias would evoke the "ideal home" once again in the 1930s, when women's organizations came to be reorganized (and restricted politically) by the Albanian government.

To construct the "ideal home", students would learn proper comportment to be able to delegate to those in their care, and to give due deference to seniors, specifically their mothers-in-law. Next, they would learn domestic science and economy, to maximize and live within their means. Most importantly, they would learn and execute those "laws" which were essential to their prospective families' physical and spiritual development, "because this is the only way in which she will be able to give them a good upbringing and lighten their path to a pleasant

future.” To have the “ideal home”, Kortchar parents would have to send their girls to school, Gerasim Kyrias concluded on that day of October 3, 1891 when the school first opened its doors.<sup>152</sup>

However, as time went on and the staff had time to work on instructional material, the curriculum expanded to include subjects that seemingly far exceeded the needs of an ordinary local housewife. By the 1890s, students were studying from Gjergj’s *Fizika*, Sevastia’s elementary grammar and arithmetic<sup>153</sup>, her texts on ancient, medieval, and modern history. Work on the hectograph was reportedly very time consuming, but such publication earned the family respect among activist circles, for theirs were among the very first such allowed to circulate among Albanian-speakers (this was more the case in Tosk-speaking regions). Nevertheless, as the need to expand the curriculum grew, so did the propensity to enter into dialogue with fellow educators across the region. The marriage of Sevastia Kyrias to Christo Dako, a mathematician based in Bucharest, Romania, began over correspondence about texts on arithmetic and algebra in 1904.

When they had arrived in Görice, Sevastia Kyrias noted that the city was an Ottoman kaza (Ottoman juridical district with a sitting Muslim *kadi*, or judge) in the vilayet of Monastir. It was a town of 23, 243 inhabitants, of whom 17,779 were Christians belonging to the Eastern Orthodox Church and 5, 464 were Muslims.<sup>154</sup> Among the things she noted, beyond the city’s general cleanliness, was the state of education. At this point, the city had Ottoman public

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<sup>152</sup> Sevasti Qiriazhi, “Kemi Nevojë për Skoli të Mira Që të Nxjerrmë Mëma të Ditura” (We Need Good Schools to Deliver Enlightened Mothers), in *Hristomathi a Udhëheqës për C’do Shtëpi Shqiptari*, Gjergj Qiriazhi (Sofia, 1902), 291-95.

<sup>153</sup> Copies of these texts are difficult to come by, however, I recently was able to find an original print of her elementary grammar published in Monastir curated by the Institute for Albanian and Protestant Studies online. For the original see Sevasti Qirias Dako, *Gramatikë Elementare për Shkollat Filllore* (Monastir, 1912).

<sup>154</sup> Kyrias, “A Struggle to Emancipate the Daughters of the Eagle”, 65.

schools, taught in Turkish and Arabic, and those run by the Μητροπολια of Κορυτσα (Orthodox Metropolitan Church of Korytsa)<sup>155</sup> where Greek was the language of instruction.

The first three students who came to the Kyrias School, reportedly were a Muslim and two Orthodox girls. The instruction that they received at the *mitropolia* (Metropolitan Church) and the *mejtep* (Ottoman elementary school) was difficult to follow, Sevastia claimed many years later in her memoirs, was on account of the foreign languages that they studied: Greek and Arabic, respectively. Difficulty in comprehension led to poorly understood lessons, resulting in physical punishment by their teachers. In their first year students learned fluent reading, writing, counting, general history, embroidery, and sewing. As Sevastia had taken them under her wing, she explained that “tomorrow” they would learn “our language” being both “easier and more useful.”<sup>156</sup> She conveyed the same hope to the ABCFM.<sup>157</sup>

Whether or not this was indeed the case, it was how the Kyriases tried to legitimize their educational establishment locally. Others in the staff, at least insofar as Katarina Tsilka’s letter to her American friend Anna Maxwell indicates when she felt great homesickness for life in the States, further justified their work because of women’s low level of cultural development:

women are ignorant as goats, for they are not allowed to go out of their houses. They think it terrible for women to be in the presence of men. They must use neither eyes nor mouth. Obedience, and only obedience, is their only virtue. Woman is not respected because she is ignorant, and does not know how to respect herself.... Our line of work is of every kind... we began in the school with three pupils and have increased the number as money would allow. We feel that little can be done unless the girls are taken from the bad influences of their homes and put under Christian influences and everyday example. This school was daily and this year we decided to make it boarding, and then only we can have the girls at our command, and mold their character in the right direction.<sup>158</sup>

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<sup>155</sup> I give the katharevousa Greek rendition of the local Orthodox Church, since it was the highest ecclesiastic and official body in Görice.

<sup>156</sup> “A Struggle to Emancipate the Daughters of the Eagle”, 15.

<sup>157</sup> Sevasti Kyrias, “Kemi Nevojë për Skoli të Mira Që të Nxjërënë Mëma të Ditura”, in Gjergj Qiriaz, *Hristomathi a Udhëheqës për Ç’do Shtëpi Shqiptari* (Sofia, 1902), 295.

<sup>158</sup> Katerina Tsilka to Miss Anna Maxwell, 12 Aug 1900, extracted in “Foreign Department” column, *American Journal of Nursing* 2, no. 6 (March 1902), p. 473 in Richard Cochrane’s website <http://cochranfamily.net/popstefanov/popstep5g.htm>.



Tuition in 1901, as Tsilka put it, was \$40 a year, and the students were “nearly naked”. (One of the few existing photographs visually contradicts this statement). She wrote to her friend asking for help.

Archival sources make it clear that students came through a connection of some kind. Some were the daughters of their colleagues. Oddly, two family members, youngest sister Paraskevi and niece Victoria (daughter to Gjergj/George) graduated from the school in Monastir, not Görice. In another case, the aunt of a girl whose parents had recently returned to town from Odessa (today in Ukraine) persuaded them to send her to the school where she could learn “to read and write Albanian” and proper home care.<sup>159</sup> There is also the claim that students came to them from farther regions of “Albania”, and in one case, a widowed Muslim immigrant to the U.S. entrusted his daughter, Thamire, to Paraskevi Kyrias when she was studying at Oberlin College in Ohio.

The ties to their “mother” schools in Monastir and Istanbul varied from time to time, but were maintained by feeding them students. Before 1913, the numbers were quite small. The two students who attended, Paraskevi and Victoria Kyrias, eventually became teaching assistants. Paraskevi spent her first year as a teaching assistant in Monastir, and then became a deputy director at the School for Girls in Thessaloniki when its regularly appointed director went to the U.S. on furlough. Victoria’s path is less well known, but she graduated from Constantinople in 1908, and eventually became an assistant sometime between her graduation and 1912, when she emigrated to Canada with her mother.<sup>160</sup> The ties with Monastir continued to be quite strong well until the Balkan Wars, as Görice was until 1908, an outlying station. With Istanbul they intensified at the outbreak of the war.

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<sup>159</sup> Sevasti Kyrias, Fondi 42. Dosja 5. Fl. 1. AQSH.

<sup>160</sup> Quanrud, 174.

According to a promotional pamphlet that Paraskevi Kyrias authored in 1913, none of the students who attended had become Protestant. This was a common experience in mission stations, especially newer ones. In Monastir, the class of 1908 with forty-three students had ten who were members of the church. In addition, the school had set up a Christian Education Society and a Temperance Society, which the church members attended. The graduating class of 1910 had three teachers who became missionary teachers in outlying stations. But the main difference between Monastir in the 1900s and Görice was that “persecutions” were not reported at this time in the former as they were in the latter.

### *Challenging Local Institutions*

In Görice, the Kyriases persistently claimed that their school and students faced harassment by the Ottoman administration and persecution by the Orthodox Church. In fact, such hindrance opened up a new career to them. Before starting the school, Gerasim Kyrias had gone to extensive trouble to secure an *irade* (license). When Sevastia got her diploma, all three Frashëri brothers were reportedly in attendance. Whether this was a later invention or a fact is hard to tell. But Naim Frashëri reportedly handed Sevastia her diploma as a representative of the Ministry of Education giving her his blessing to “emancipate the women of our poor little country” giving her plenty of warning of how hard the task would be.<sup>161</sup>

The reported harassment seems to have been frequent. On the one hand, Ottoman authorities dropped in frequently to inspect the school premises. On the other, Orthodox Church authorities threatened to excommunicate those Orthodox girls who attended. Kyrias sources do not mention harassment from regular people; however, fellow missionary Katarina Tsilka reported that the early years had been tough. Before her captivity in 1901 (see introduction), no

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<sup>161</sup> Kyrias, “A Struggle to Emancipate the Daughters of the Eagle”, 20.

one in Görice would sell them property, and that boys and parents “jeered at us and often disturbed our services”.<sup>162</sup>

Fluctuations in enrollment may be an indication of this, even though between 1891-1899 they averaged about forty students a year. As the Kyriases began to associate more openly with Albanian activism, one aspect of which was sheltering *kaçaks* (brigands), however, attendance dwindled, falling to its lowest in 1902 (19) and 1904 (12). The first such recorded instances of recording fugitives were in 1906 and 1908, with the *cheta* (band) of Mihal Grameno and Bajo Topulli, but this does not mean it was the first time it had happened. The brigands had previously murdered the Metropolitan Bishop Photios Kalpidis (Φώτιος Καλπίδης), and took shelter at the Kyrias School, using it as a depot to smuggle weapons as well as Albanian literature.

Such associations did not bode well for the Kyriases, who had previously complained that their girls were stoned walking to school by hooligans calling them *masonka* (literally freemasons but more loosely a metaphor for perceived apostates like Protestants), or whose families were threatened by excommunication and denied burial rites by the *mitropolia* (Orthodox Metropolitan Church). Still, they kept at it, only strengthening their ties to Albanian activism.

The greatest demonstration of such commitment was their organization of *Kongresi Manastirit* (Congress of Monastir), which decided to test two orthographic systems, Latin-Greek, and simple Latin to write Albanian. The convention was held in Monastir, the Kyrias homestead, in November 1908, only a few months after the Young Turk Revolution. The Albanian cultural club *Bashkimi* (Union), headed among others by George Kyrias, initiated the convention. It was the first time that the Kyriases extended their activism beyond Görice and its environs.

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<sup>162</sup> Katarina Tsilka, “Christian Work in Albania,” *Congregationalist and Christian World* 91, no. 9 (1906), 298.

Speakers at *Kongresi* were many of the Albanians who became politically and culturally prominent in the post-Ottoman context. However, other attendants like Bulgarians, Greeks, and Wallachians were reportedly in attendance as well. Thus to call it an all-Albanian convention, may perhaps be exaggerated, however, it was one that primarily seems to have concerned the cultural position of Albanians in the Empire. The goal of the convention was to decide which of the existing six-seven alphabets would be best to use as the number of Albanian-language publications increased.

Among the writing systems in use, speakers mentioned those used in a north-south line,<sup>163</sup> namely *Gegëni* and *Toskëri*, as the respective dialects of Albanian were called. Those speaking from *Toskëri* advocated the Constantinople alphabet, designed in 1875 by Albanian Ottoman activist, Semseddin Sami Frashëri, and in use at the Kyrias School. Grigor Tsilka, pastor in Görice and teacher at the Girls' School, defended its use because of its breadth and its ease. The alphabet used a base of Latin and Greek letters to yield Albanian sounds. Those speaking from *Gegëni*, mentioned three systems used by the Jesuits, the club *Bashkimi*, and the club *Agimi* (Dawn), all used primarily in Iskodra and its vicinity, and with reportedly very limited circulation (although the Jesuit alphabet had been in use for 300 years). A number of government officials from the vilayets of Monastir and Kosovo were also present, The committee also received telegrams from Albanians in Italy, and regional leaders, like the hereditary prince of Mirdita, Prenk Bib Doda, Primo Doki, the Abbot of Mirdita, the Jesuits of Iskodra, etc. The committee also heard from gymnasium students in Monastir.

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<sup>163</sup> The Shkumbini River, which flows out of today's central Albania and pours into the Adriatic, is the north-south marker generally considered to divide *Gegëni* from *Toskëri*.

There is one source for this cultural convention: the report of George Kyrias to the BFBS.<sup>164</sup> Delegates debated the benefits *Kongresi* would bring to “national unity” and flowering in “education and literature”. While historiography has claimed it as a nationalist moment, the careful reading of Kyrias’ report to the BFBS shows that even as it concerned Albanian cultural development it was simultaneously rooted in the reformative spirit of the Young Turk Revolution, expressed in the desire to “keep” and “defend” the Ottoman Constitution. The Catholic prelate from Iskodra, Patër Fishta, mentioned the benefit the Government (Hükümet) would have if it “helped toward the civilization” of the Albanian people, highlighting the protection the service that Albanian soldiers had provided the empire, further adding how much more Albanians could contribute if they became better educated in all branches of knowledge.

Committee members, which included two Kyrias-school teachers<sup>165</sup>, opted to adopt the Latin alphabet as a foundation, with twenty-five base letters, assigning a sound to letters marked with “signs”: the umlaut-bearing *ë* and the diacritic-bearing *ç*, the combination of *h* to five base consonants (dh, sh, th, xh, zh), *r* onto itself (rr), *j* onto *n* (nj). Ultimately, this became the script that Albanian uses today. On noting why two different alphabets were chosen, Kyrias informed the BFBS that “all the different delegates sent from different places tried to stand for the alphabet they were told to support, but in spite of it, most strived to choose that which was going to bind Ghegs and Tosks”.

That he may have thus tried to smooth over the likelihood of dissension is possible. Albanian activists had varying visions of future development, although the idea of an “Albanian people” and “nation” obviously existed. Kyrias concluded his report with the alleged gratitude that “nearly” all the delegates present extended to the BFBS through him for the “nation’s”

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<sup>164</sup> Myzyri, 125.

<sup>165</sup> Pastor Tsilka and George Kyrias officially represented the Kyrias School. Paraskevi was also present, but she was reportedly told to minimize her appearance in public as there were Muslim men and clerics in their midst.

indebtedness to its sacrifice for enlightenment. “Because during the times when every other Albanian book was prohibited only the Bible Society could circulate the Bible in our mother tongue.” During the closing activities, “many” also reportedly acknowledged the assistance that “foreigners”, Miss Stone (Ellen Stone) and Miss Durham (Mary Edith Durham), had given to publicize Albanian in its various *isms* (language, nationhood, etcetera).

A document of this type was geared toward highlighting how the mentoring and funding that missionary societies poured into the making of a new people was acknowledged. And in so doing, it had a diplomatic motivation. Although the mention of the BFBS has been written out of Albanian historiography, George’s report helped to catapult the school’s image among Albanian-speakers, and thereby Görice/Korça as a center of Albanianism. The Kyriases and their affiliates single-handedly instrumentalized this. Here they were, intellectual and religious middle-persons of Anglophone Protestant missiology, all of a sudden emboldened by the prospect of Ottoman liberalism. The possibilities to extend themselves were greater than ever. As the next chapter will show, Kyriases’ ambitions tended ever more towards the political.

In January 1909, the Kyriases sisters achieved further notoriety in Görice. Sevasti Kyriases established the first society for Albanian women, named *Ylli i Mëngjazit* (Morning Star). It is a reasonable speculation on my part, that in so doing, she was perhaps influenced by the Bulgarian Protestant mission paper *Zornitsa* (Day Star), since she had boarded with one of its contributors, Mr. Grodinaroff, during her study at Constantinople College.<sup>166</sup> All that survives of *Ylli*

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<sup>166</sup> *The Zornitsa* was a mission journal published in Istanbul between 1864-1871 by American missionary Elias Riggs, addressed to families. It included practical advice to women and mothers on home and child-care, among other things. Its approach to women was very similar to that which the popular *Godey’s Lady Book*, published by Sara Josepha Hale between 1830-1878, took with regard to American women’s issues especially with regard to education and mothering. Barbara Reeves-Ellington argues that in press too, Bulgarian reformers took much from *Zornitsa* when they articulated the roles that Bulgarian mothers would play in the home. For more see, “The Mission Press and Bulgarian Domestic Reform” in *Domestic Frontiers: Gender, Reform, and American Intervention in the Ottoman Balkans and the Near East* (Amherst, 2013), 78-108.

*Mëngjezit* is a statute specifying to Korçar women to believe in themselves since the “hand that rocks the cradle, rocks the world”.

However, sources I have not seen further designate that the committee was selected annually by secret voting. Historian Fatmira Musaj posits that this was one of the first signs of “democratic” methodology employed by Albanian women’s organizations before the so-called *Revolucioni Qershorit* in 1924 (Albania’s own French-like Revolution). For the purpose of this chapter, such an interpretation would perhaps indicate Kyrias’ use of an American norm that she may have learned about through affiliation with the various missionary institutions.

What limited information about the society there is, shows that all of the school and the mission’s female staff became its members. Like its earlier Bulgarian counterpart, the society had multiple functions. It would teach women how to read and write, refine their domestic and mothering skills, improve their understanding of good health and hygiene, and further encourage their emergence in public. Fatmira Musaj has written that the society emulated “the European model of the women’s movement”<sup>167</sup> for Albanian needs, but this particular platform shows much closer relation to an American-Protestant one. The reported membership has been cited as “100”, but that remains difficult to substantiate. However, it must have been sufficient enough to encourage a sizeable number of them to perform the play *Wilhelm Tell* in Albanian for the Korçar<sup>168</sup> public. Their director was Paraskevi Kyrias, the youngest sister of Sevastia, then just returned from her position as a deputy director of the Girls School in Thessaloniki.

Details of where and how are missing, but the reaction that the performance must have provoked was such that it led to Kyrias’ arrest for inciting “public disorder”. Although she was

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<sup>167</sup> Fatmira Musaj, “Women Activists in Albania following independence and World War I” in Ingrid Sharp, Mathew Stibbe, eds., *Aftermaths of War: Women’s Movements and Female Activists, 1918-1923* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 186.

<sup>168</sup> Here Korçar refers to the townsmen in the same manner that Paraskevi Kyrias would have referred to them.

subsequently released, Kyrias was told to appear before the local *kadı* (Ottoman judge). As missionary sources allege, it was hoped that such a measure would shame a woman, and by extension all the women she was affiliated with, to act out in such a manner. Kyrias stood trial and refused to admit guilt, and had the testimonies of fellow missionaries, Grigor Tsilka and newly arrived Phineas Kennedy to back her up.

While such sources have been used to portray Kyrias' courage, perhaps justifiably remarkable for a woman of her time, it is further important to consider what such an act may have symbolized to the local Ottoman administration. Within a year after the Young Turk Revolution gave the green light to the cultural activism, which ultimately enabled Kyrias' bold public performance, Austria Hungary occupied Bosnia, and Bulgaria formally declared independence from the Empire. American diplomats were trained in the thought that the Revolution was a stopgap to further such dismemberment in the Balkans.<sup>169</sup> In light of such larger external developments, her trial is also a way to read the local impact of the recalcitrant policies of the Young Turks after the counter coup in 1909, which were aimed at recentralizing Ottoman governance and encouraging *Osmanlılık* (pan-Ottomanism).

To the Ottoman bureaucracy the sum total of performing "Wilhelm Tell" in Albanian may really have been much more about the fact that it was a way of disturbing the status quo, especially since the deed was a mission-affiliated initiative. The Ottoman government recognized the Protestant *millet* (community) in 1842. It well knew that it could not legally prohibit

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<sup>169</sup> Anderson, Frank Maloy and Amos Shartle Hershey, *Handbook for the Diplomatic History of Europe, Asia, and Africa 1870-1914*. Prepared for the National Board for Diplomatic Service. Government Printing Office, Washington, 1918.



missionary activity. But finding ways to disrupt and discourage the competition that missionary activity ultimately promoted was a consistent strategy.<sup>170</sup>

### *Conclusion*

What did the act of teaching “masonkas” signify in this peripheral town of European Turkey? Here I aimed to demonstrate how local activists, the Protestant Albanian Kyriases, utilized their American training to establish a girls’ school and how this singular act catalyzed broader cultural activism, upsetting the multi-religious town’s Eastern Orthodox and bureaucratic establishments. The ideas they brought to Görice were rooted in an American Protestant institutional culture that defined women’s roles in society and the home. But the act of teaching in Albanian, coupled with the fact that the school was essentially a Protestant institution, sparked fears among the establishment that members of their community were deviating from their faith and increased its suspicions that their teachers would challenge Ottoman authority. Such hostility gave the Albanian Christian workers a kind of capital that they deftly used to promote their school and the principles they stood for.

The Kyrias School is not unusual as far as Ottoman disruption of Anglophone Protestant-driven missions went. But this particular case is especially instructive insofar as it substantiates the stress that recent historiography places on how local power brokers of the late Ottoman Balkans strategized self-importance. In *Reinstating the Ottomans* Isa Blumi argues how individuals with seemingly uncontested credentials of patriotism rather successfully manipulated Great Power and Ottoman resources to bolster their stature locally.

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<sup>170</sup> Pandeli Kissimov, *Istoricheski Raboti: Moite Spomeni*, vol. 1, (Plovdiv, Edinstvo, 1897), 65 in Reeves-Ellington, 84.

Seen in this light of local power brokers, the Kyriases instrumentalized the opposition they felt from the Orthodox establishment and the Ottoman bureaucracy, crafting, what Blumi has called, an art of “making themselves relevant”.<sup>171</sup> Much like their predecessor, Konstandin Kristoforidhi, who seemed to bait the British and American missionary societies with his concept of an “innocent” and Godless “Albanian-nation” to secure employment, the Kyriases capitalized on their resources as Christian workers and their credentials as Albanian educators to portray themselves as cultural activists.

To illustrate how their form of self-promotion evolved, it is helpful to think of a chain of causality. When they first came to Görice, Sevastia and Gerasim Kyrias, were local agents of missionary societies onto Albanian-speaking Ottoman subjects. Their school for women was an instrument of Albanian learning. But as much as they, their enterprise, and their “masonkas” may have come under pressure by the local establishment—the “Greek” Μητροπολια and the Hükümet (the Ottoman government)—resisting, and where possible, subverting such tactics became simultaneously a self-defensive and self-serving act.

In Sevastia Kyrias’ own words, the transformation from missionary teacher to a firebrand nationalist was a gradual one. When writing her memoirs in 1933, she cast herself as a teacher of Christian principles who had “responded sensibly” to the influences of American culture and civilization, she wrote that her work was to

Prepare the Albanian people for national self-assertion, to promote the feeling of brotherhood between Christians and Moslems, to encourage them by word and deed, to work unitedly for freedom and independence and not dividends for local privileges, to teach the broadest principles on which true liberty grows and develops. These ideas came to me *gradually* [my italics] while I was plodding and teaching to do my bit among my people to enlighten, uplift, and free them from the heavy yoke of ignorance and superstition.<sup>172</sup>

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<sup>171</sup> Blumi, 105.

<sup>172</sup> Kyrias, “A Struggle to Emancipate the Daughters of the Eagle,” 63.

These lines convey the carry over of a distinct American Protestant ethos, as they also make transparent the way in which she rationalized her early identity as a missionary teacher as the start of her immersion in the process of nation-building. Conflating Orthodoxy with “Greekness” and vesting Orthodox clergy with it in Görice with it became a part of that process.

In 1904, an Albanian newspaper in Romania, *Drita*, published a letter that Metropolitan Photios and the dimogerontia (church council of elders) had sent to a Görice businessman living in Bucharest, warning him to withdraw his two nieces from the Protestant school,

Since our community as well as the Holy Metropoly (Μητροπολια) desires to take out the small number of girls who attend the Protestant school here, which as everyone knows intends to pull the young and innocent away undertake to excommunicate every family sending its children to the Protestant school. Since your brother in law Mihal Melo did not take his oldest daughter nor your niece Aleksandra out of it, we find it wise to write and plead you to write your brother in law to heed our word. Otherwise the Holy Metropoly will be obligated to excommunicate his [Melo’s] family.<sup>173</sup>

In addition, excommunication carried with it other more unpleasant complications. An assistant teacher, and former student, Helidhona Titu was denied burial rites for her sister by the Μητροπολια because she also refused their “bribes” and because she wrote to Bishop Photios that she would not stop teaching in “her language”. But as much as these accusations may have been rooted in deeds, they represent an institutional position, and one that the Kyrias School staff retroactively portrayed as an *Albanian* one. Both the letter and Titu’s allegations were published in a commemorative brochure in 1931, when the school was celebrating its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary.<sup>174</sup>

However, careful reading through a tome of meeting minutes of the council of elders between 1870s-1908, a period of time sufficient to note the entry of Protestantism in the town, has not yielded evidence that the Orthodox hierarchy initiated such specific action.<sup>175</sup> The

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<sup>173</sup> Instituti Kyrias. *Foleja Kombëtare*, (Tirana: Gutenberg, 1931), 52-53.

<sup>174</sup> See above.

<sup>175</sup> At the University of Michigan, I worked intensively with the lecturer of Modern Greek, Despina Margomenou, through the records to identify such potential documentation. At the Albanian State Archive, paleographer Sokol Çunga, who was also kind enough to read through the record on dates indicated by Kyrias materials as ones of “persecution” also resulted in a lack of mention of the Protestant school or the community.

collection in question covered a variety of individual and communal affairs such as property and inheritance disputes that needed church adjudication. But the lack of documentation from this quarter does not necessarily negate the statements of Kyrias-related parties.

As other sources point out, the early 1900s demonstrated the first signs of intra-communal friction between Albanian activists and establishment figures, and the Kyriases became intimately involved. The murder of Görice's Orthodox Metropolitan, Photios Kalpidis, in 1906, is one such example. The Metropolitan, a Pontic Greek by origin educated in Istanbul, and Church functionary in several posts and places before coming to Görice in 1902, became the president of Görice's city schools' committee, giving direction to the Greek education within it. His assassins, Albanian-speaking *kaçaks* (guerillas) killed him because, in their eyes, he was impeding Albanian cultural works.<sup>176</sup> Albanian historiography and communist era filmography have since popularized such moments for their own ends, typecasting the guerillas as Albanian patriots.<sup>177</sup> However, conflating guerillas with outright nationalism is limiting in that such violence can be seen in a number of ways.

The same church records that failed to yield evidence of threats to excommunicate, instead demonstrate such friction between Albanian activists and the Orthodox Church as a process of negotiation. Two of the guerillas implicated in the murder, Mihal Grameno and Themistokli Gërmenji petitioned the Church to integrate Albanian into church services like marriage and schools. Even after Photios was murdered, the Patriarchate of Istanbul recommended to his successor, Gervasios Serasitis, to make Albanian an elective course in the city's schools. In the heyday of the Young Turk Revolution, Gërmenji founded *Liga Ortodokse*

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<sup>176</sup>George Gawrych, *The Crescent and the Eagle: Ottoman Rule, Islam, and the Albanians, 1874-1913*, (London: I.B. Tauris, 2008), 91.

<sup>177</sup>Kalpidis' assassination is captured in the 1979 Kinsotudio film *Liri a Vdekje* (Freedom or Death). Jane Sugarman, *Engendering Song: Singing and Subjectivity at Prespa Albanian Weddings*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 358.

(Orthodox League), organizing Orthodox Albanians, and giving the community a voice in print. From this perspective, these two guerillas who remained members of the Church even though they wanted to Albanianize services, can be seen as cultural reformers.

At the same time, such guerilla tactics, even though they are interpreted to be in defense of Albanian “cultural works”, are hard to measure in concrete terms. They involved an ambiguous cluster of individuals prosecuted and quickly released, and then prosecuted again during the Balkan Wars when (actual) Greek forces occupied this part of Ottoman Albania. Moreover, such murders coincided with widespread insurgency in Ottoman Macedonia. In her recent study, Ipek Yosmaoglu argues that such violence should not be conflated with ethnicity.<sup>178</sup> In her view, it precipitated the erection of community lines, but did not stem from them. In light of the interpretation such events have been given in both historiography and the media, Yosmaoglu’s intervention is a particularly helpful tool here.

Kostas Giakoumis, another historian of late Ottoman society on the modern day border of Albania and Greece, argues that the Orthodox Church did indeed stiffen its position toward the Albanian language after 1878.<sup>179</sup> He has carefully documented numerous cases through the centuries, from the early modern era to 1878, of instances when Albanian was used in Church services, and when parishioners successfully petitioned Patriarchate officials in Istanbul to appoint an Albanian-speaking priest when their needs so dictated. However, this form of privilege, and wider trend perhaps, was reversed in light of language-based reform movements among Bulgarians and Romanians.

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<sup>178</sup>Ipek K. Yosmaoglu, *Blood Ties: Religion, Violence, and the Politics of Nationhood in Ottoman Macedonia*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013), 4.

<sup>179</sup>Kostantinos Giakoumis, “The Policy of the Orthodox Patriarchate Toward the Use of Albanian in Church Services,” *Albanohellenica*, no. 4 (2011), 137.

What Giakoumis has read into such a reversal of the Church's attitude is that Church authorities were opposed to the instrumentalization of language for causing rifts in the Church body. And such rifts did indeed occur, exemplified by the establishment of the Bulgarian Exarchate Church in 1870. In accusing a teacher of Albanian like the Kyrias' friend, Petro Nini Luarasi, of "masonry" and the receipt of funds from Protestant sources, the Metropolitans of Kesrye (Alb. Kostur/Gr. Καστροπία) were worried about rifts within the Orthodox community. Luarasi's children went to Protestant schools. His daughter attended the Kyrias School, while his son attended the American Agricultural School in Thessaloniki. As Giakoumis tactfully reminds scholars of this period, Greek was the *traditional* language of the Orthodox Church, but local activists with their own cultural agendas helped to paint it as a political medium, not a religious or a cultural one.

And even though the Kyriases successfully courted mentorship on many fronts, their shift from Christian workers and educators to cultural activists did not go unnoticed. The closest observation and, indeed, concern for their "attitude toward religion" came from the American missionary and Paraskevi's own teacher, Mary Louisa Mathews. In her October 1908 letter to the ABCFM Secretary, James L. Barton, she drew a clear distinction between workers and missionaries, splitting with him her (very reasonable) concern for what their activism might mean for the relationship of *missionaries* to the Ottoman government.

It has appeared, in the past, that *workers* desired to secure all the money they could from the Board, but wished to carry out their plans, without *missionary* [italics are mine] interference. To me the most discouraging aspect, at present, is their haste to open institutions with American money, when they have not the workers to man them, who are even church members, to say nothing of their being consecrated persons whose lives will be a power for Christ. **I fear the attitude toward religion is something like that at the American College, at Scutari, but I do not want to misjudge the workers [bolding effect is mine].**<sup>180</sup>

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<sup>180</sup> MLM to James L. Barton, October 13, 1908, Mary Louisa Mathews Collection, MS 874, MCASC.

To be fair to the “workers”, Sevasti Kyrias did express concern for the mission itself. Although there is little way to substantiate this at the moment, it is a reasonable speculation that with her brother Gerasim’s early death, perhaps the most “earnest” Protestant in the family, evangelism itself faltered in Görice.

At the height of the school’s reported persecution by Orthodox clergy, however, she visited the United States to reinvigorate her own learning and her contacts there. Among the old acquaintances she communicated with (and very likely met in person) was her old companion, Violet Bond, who had long since married Congregational missionary Phinneas Kennedy. Their deliberations are similarly not available, but one subject of debate, must have been funding. Evidence suggests that there must have been some fundraising attempts, for some time later in 1907, two anonymous women donors made a generous contribution to “establish permanent work in Albania”.<sup>181</sup>

It was this funding that eventually brought the Kennedys and the Charles Erickson Telfords, also Congregationalist, to Görice in 1908. Ottoman authorities delayed Kennedy at Thessalonikki, for many months, frequently questioning his motivations for proceeding at Görice. A mere few months later, Mathews reported to the Board in the same letter mentioned above, that Mr. Kennedy and Grigor Tsilka (Alb. Cilka) were a “part of the national movement.” The relentless suspicion and interrogation must have alienated Kennedy and further allied him to the Kyrias’ cause, because his letters to the Board in those months signal his outrage at his “colleague’s” arrest and sympathy for swift release from the Monastir provincial prison.

Tsilka, perhaps knowing that the mission would once again come to his rescue as it had done with other workers in previous occasions, resumed his “political speeches” the minute he

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<sup>181</sup> James L. Barton, *Free Albania: A Momentous Occasion Confronting the American Board*, (Boston: American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, 1913), 12.

was released from prison. Mathews, who had known the Kyriases and the Tsilka for far longer than either Kennedy or Erickson— both of whom saw different possibilities for the mission field— feared for their prudence. But as she communicated to Barton, the repercussions for the mission itself were at stake: “It will not help us in our relations with the government, if this continues”, she concluded. “We have the same *Vali* [governor] as before the Constitution.”

But as worried as Mathews was about the position of her mission in Ottoman Macedonia, she also believed very strongly in her mission as a teacher. Indeed her expression to that extent, recorded among notes on the Young Turk Revolution for Rev. William P. Clarke, inspiring to her as it was to the Kyriases, is just as passionate and strikingly similar to the one Kyrias made in 1936:

It is no ordinary responsibility which rests upon those who are called to lay the foundations of character and to direct the development of *future leaders* [italics mine] of society. There is also an intensity of interest in watching the growth of young minds toward a true conception of the meaning and worth of life consecrated to God and to his work for a needy world. I count myself happy that I have some part of each year in the world of the master architect sic of character.<sup>182</sup>

If these were the genuine beliefs of a Mt. Holyoke trained-missionary, then the Kyriases were nothing less than good students. Whether Mathews realized it or not, what they were doing in Görice, neatly fit her worldview.

By 1910, relations between their school and the Ottoman administration sank to their lowest levels still. In the fall of that year, Violet Kennedy wrote to Mathews that they were threatening to seize the school, calling it an *Osmanli* (Ottoman) school. The Kyriases and Mr. Kennedy, for their part, insisted that it was American property, since their funding was American-based. The Ottoman *mutasarrif* (highest local Ottoman official) insisted back that there could only be two types of schools: state schools and private ones for *foreigners*. They

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<sup>182</sup> Mary Louisa Mathews Collection, MS 874, MSACS.



would have an easier time, he told them, if more Americans lived in town. And there was no point in contacting the American consul (Henry Morgenthau) in Istanbul. He could not “protect” parties living more than nine hours away.

In Monastir, authorities arrested Erickson and assaulted his wife. While it stands clear that these were intimidation tactics, it seems that, in part, missionaries had little faith in their own diplomatic representation. The Kennedys had contacted the American Embassy, Mr. William Peet, and also the Austrian Consul at Monastir, whom the American diplomacy had traditionally charged with protecting its own citizens in the Vilayet of Monastir. But, as Violet’s letter to Mathews shows, locals did not think American diplomacy to be effective.

People in Görice have doubts as to the power of the American Ambassador. They say he is nearly always a Jew and a Turkofil- is that the way to spell it?

Whatever implied “negative” effect Morgenthau’s alleged “Jewishness” had on them, it also appears that such bureaucratic troubles were also being used as fodder for trouble with Greek irredentism. Perhaps mutually so...

For some time Grecomans have been rejoicing this, saying this school is closed. A recent article in a Greek paper states that the Protestants in Kortcha are proselytizing as earnestly as they can and are doing much harm, etc. Mrs. Tsilka [Katarina] was told about the article. We [Kennedys and Kyriases] haven’t seen it.<sup>183</sup>

The widening conflict, as Mathews understood it, boiled down to enhancing local privileges:

The Albanian troubles are serious, but we do not know much about them. It is hard to find out the truth about such disturbances. Part of the cause is that Albanians want their own language, and the government wishes to have the Arabic alphabet used by them, instead of the Latin alphabet which the Albanians insist upon. Of course this point seems reasonable, and the desire of the Albanians that taxes paid by them should be spent on improvements in their part of the Empire...<sup>184</sup>

It is clear from these tidbits of reflection upon what information missionaries had access to, that Christian workers had the upper hand in local affairs. It is also clear that their overlapping

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<sup>183</sup> Violet Kennedy letter to Mathews. Oct. 19, 1910, Mary L. Mathews Collection. Ms874, MCASC.

<sup>184</sup> Letter to brother John. March 21, 1910, *ibid*.

microcosms were beginning to close in on them, in large part through their own instigation, regardless of their initial motivations. Small wonder then that the Christian workers and the missionaries who expanded the mission in Albania found it hard to stay away from politics.

## Chapter 3

### From Education to Politics: Framing Albanian Independence

Unprecedented opportunities will be before us for the extension of the Kingdom of God. The only question is will we be able to meet these opportunities?<sup>185</sup>

Paraskevi Kyrias invited the ABCFM to expand its Protestant mission in Albania at a crucial moment. Following the end of the First Balkan War in December 1912, ambassadors of the Great Powers convened in London in May 1913 to settle peace terms between the warring parties: the defeated Ottoman Empire and the Balkan League<sup>186</sup>. Since much of the fighting involved Albanian-speaking territories, spanning four Ottoman *vilayets* (provinces), the ambassadors discussed Albanian independence. Fearing Ottoman defeat, until then their only perceived protection from Hellenic and Slavic expansion, Albanian leaders turned down an Ottoman offer for autonomy. Instead, they declared independence on November 28, 1912 at the port city of Vlorë, and urged European powers to accept the decision.

With these developments underway, the Christian workers of Görice got busy pitching their own ideas for the postwar context: an independent and Protestant Albania. Around the time of the conference, Paraskevi Kyrias and James Levi Barton, secretary of the Prudential Board of the ABCFM, addressed the Board with two publications. In *Free Albania: A Momentous Occasion Confronting the American Board and the School for Girls, Kortcha, Albania*, Barton

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<sup>185</sup> Paraskevi Kyrias, *The School for Girls, Kortcha Albania* (Chicago: Women's Board of Missions of the Interior, 1913), 14.

<sup>186</sup> The Balkan League included the kingdoms of Bulgaria, Greece, Montenegro, and Serbia. Both Balkan wars have seen extensive coverage in academic literature and otherwise. For a concise and recent coverage see "A Maze of Conspiracy" and "The Empire of Illusions" in Misha Glenny, *The Balkans: Nationalism, War, and the Great Powers*, London: Penguin Groups, 2012), 135-307.

and Kyrias argued that Albanian independence was the best time to expand the Protestant mission there.

As a missionary on the ground, Erickson further assured the Board that Albanians were not only “friendly”, but also ready to take up Protestantism “at once”. Propitiously, it also seemed, the European powers postulated that a Protestant European prince was the perfect solution to govern the multi-confessional Albanians. If these conjectures succeeded, an independent and Protestant Albania could solve the Board’s century old dilemma: how to win over the Muslims of the Middle East. The stakes were high and interesting. But to achieve this, the Board needed to support the Christian workers already on the ground.

Eventually, this intriguing proposition materialized differently than originally intended. The consecutive wars in the 1910s, the Balkan Wars and World War One, each played an important part in that. Nevertheless, the Christian workers marshaled the support that the Board and other sympathizers extended them throughout, to lobby for Albanian statehood. Forced to leave the Albanian-speaking borderlands, they relocated to the United States, where they organized New England Albanians politically. Acting in the name of this influential diaspora unit, they then deliberately dispatched Paraskevi Kyrias to the Peace Conference at Versailles to represent their interests for Albania and to impress upon foreigners just how ill conceived their notions of it as “backward” and “savage” were. Salvation from postwar Italian expansion, they hoped, would come as much from above, as it would from an American mandate.

By continuing the narrative thread laid out in the previous chapter, here I aim to show how worsening tensions with the Young Turk government channeled the Kyriases’ cultural activism towards nationalist politics. As such, many of the details surrounding the Kyrias-American vision for a Protestant Albania will be laid out here for the first time. While local

historians have interpreted American support for Albanian statehood as simple philanthropy, the extent of American missionary ambitions in southeastern European affairs during this period remains largely unknown.<sup>187</sup>

Elsewhere in the Balkans, American missionaries were drawn to independence movements, by virtue of humanitarian work.<sup>188</sup> But as a unit on the verge of independence, Albania seems to have represented a different story. In spite of the doubts that an overseer like Mary Mathews had about the intentions of Görice's Christian workers, the Board lent them unconditional support. Rooted in Eastern Europe, its officers reasoned, this new nation and its nominally Muslim people ruled by a Protestant European prince could become Christianized, educated, and "civilized" through American means. Ultimately, they could become effective missionaries onto the bigger world of Ottoman Muslims.

Though unsuccessful, the plan is compelling to analyze in that it captures the depth of American missionary ambition and influence on Eastern European affairs, at a time when American diplomacy there was all but absent. Second, it demonstrates how deftly the intermediaries connected to them, maneuvered their networks with missionaries and the diaspora, charting new professional careers: as Christian workers and nationalist educators, and as diplomats with a stake in statecraft and nation building. The latter was especially important for launching women's careers onto the national and international arenas.

I open this chapter by analyzing the failure of the Young Turk government to fulfill its promises of decentralization and the subsequent contestation of Ottomanism in the Balkans. I then nuance the Kyriases' maneuvers to looming conflict in the peninsula through a narration of

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<sup>187</sup> Dhimitër Dishnica, *Përballë të Vërtetës: Kristo Dako Jeta dhe Vepra*, (Tirana: Shtëpia e Librit "Erik", 2004), 62-73.

<sup>188</sup> For an example of how American missionaries became involved in independence struggles see, Ömer Turan, "American Protestant Missionaries and Monastir, 1912-1917: Secondary Actors in the Construction of Balkan Nationalisms," *Middle Eastern Studies* 36, no. 4 (2000), 119-136.

networking between Protestant institutions and Albanian diaspora circles. I show how out of concern for the Protestant mission, the Kyriases strengthened their credentials as religious educators and as nationalist activists, conceiving a plan to enlist the financial and logistical support of the ABCFM, Constantinople College for Girls, as well as Oberlin College to train independent Albania's future elites. I carry this analysis further to explore the implications for a Protestant Albania, and the plan's altered course during the Balkan Wars and World War I.

With the Kyriases forced out of contested Korça/Korh̄ts̄a to the United States, I then deepen the chapter by situating their political stint in the United States within a framework of Erez Manela's interpretation of the Wilsonian Moment. As Albania's onetime neutrality was violated during World War I, foreign armies overran it, and regional chieftains fought over how to divide it. One in an array of visions for postwar Albania, the Kyriases' was a civilizing mission built on education and constitutional government.

Fearful of Italian intentions behind the idea for an Albanian protectorate, the Kyriases campaigned for an American mandate instead. I highlight their political advocacy by analyzing their Christian review, *The Morning Star* and Paraskevi Kyrias' diary of her time as delegate of their National Party at the Peace Conference in Paris. Ultimately, the Kyriases represented but one of many visions for postwar Albania. However, their contribution was ultimately important because Paraskevi's tireless advocacy with Albanians and foreigners alike generated the publicity that Albania needed to become independent.

### *Contesting Ottomanism in European Turkey*

As the previous chapter hinted, between the rise of the Committee for Union and Progress (CUP) to power in 1908 and the years leading up to World War I, the political situation

in European Turkey deteriorated rapidly. Balkan activists of various groups and nationalities initially welcomed the CUP, and even forged a partnership with it, because it stood for a modernizing government according to the European constitutional parliamentary model. However, by early next year things began to change.

Although the CUP's rise to power was a welcome alternative to the absolutism of the past three decades, the two parties ultimately had different goals.<sup>189</sup> Nationalist leaders saw the partnership as a vehicle to obtain more say in government. CUP activists, on the other hand, needed their support to start up, but ultimately saw nationalist activism as a decentralizing force. Its own prerogatives were on creating a united polity of Ottoman citizens and remaking the empire as a great power. Once in office, among the first actions that the CUP took was to proscribe the political activity of the national clubs that it had encouraged only months earlier.

In addition to political proscription, the CUP enacted a number of general policies, which had varying impact for the populations of European Turkey. Among these: it increased the number of state schools; increased taxes and levies; interfered with local elections; discouraged cultural activism, especially vernacular education, tampering with private and ecclesiastical schools and structures; forcefully crushing rebellions; disarming the local Christian population; persecuting band leaders and activists; and finally, attempting to alter the mixed demographic landscape by buying land and importing Bosnian *muhajirs* (refugees) to settle along the Greek and Bulgarian borderlands.

The response from the many different groups inhabiting the region, among which Albanians, Bulgarians, Greeks, Jews and Wlachs, was likewise varied. At first, a number of politicians from these groups joined the *Ahrar Party*, essentially the liberal opposition led by the

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<sup>189</sup> Zorka Parvanova, "Birth of the Conflict: the Young Turk Regime and the National Movements in European Turkey 1908-1910," *Etudes Balkaniques*, no. 4 (2000), 23-43.

future Albanian Prime Minister Ismail Kemal Bey, which argued for decentralization as a way to counter the nationalities questions in the European provinces. Given their essentially religious national organization, Bulgarian and Greek clubs were more resolute in their stance toward the CUP. By contrast, considering their religious, regional, and tribal divisions, Albanian leaders mounted a mixed response, although in general, they too had reservations about the CUP's intentions. When it came to dealing with tax levies in 1909 and 1911, both years of drought, and subsequent economic downturn, Albanian leaders in the provinces of İşkodra and Kosovo mounted rebellions.

When CUP directors tampered with municipal elections for parliament candidates, local leaders walked out in protest. Similarly, when Muslim sympathizers promoted the Arabic script as a “righteous” alternative to the Latin alphabet favored by the Kyriases and many other Christian and some Muslim Albanian activists, Christian Albanian activists took it as an affront upon their “rights”. But while Bulgarian and Greek leaders went underground and developed radical platforms of nationalist determination, the Albanian response remained more cautious. In fact, for a time, one prominent Bektashi Muslim leader maintained in his publication, *Lirija* (Freedom), that the two movements, Young Turk and Albanian, had a common goal.<sup>190</sup> There was also some support for the toppled sultan, Abdulhamit, remaining among Albanian sympathizers in the vilayet of Kosovo.

The repressions had the general effect of spurring band activity, which often times escalated in armed violence and chaos, especially along border regions. But while tensions flared from time to time, the CUP had the upper hand until 1912. In January of that year, another Albanian revolt exploded in Kosovo, protesting tax increases, conscription in the Ottoman army,

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<sup>190</sup> Соколова, Б. Албански възрожденски печат в България. София, 1979, с. 102 in Parvanova, 33.



civil disarmament, and demanding Albanian-language schools and officials.<sup>191</sup> In the process, local Albanian leaders made arrangements with Balkan states like Bulgaria and Montenegro to enlist support, while some effort was also made to secure European support as well. The revolt that grew out of Kosovo lasted all the way until the fall, when the Ottoman government finally gave in to their demands on September 4, 1912.

Ottoman concession to Albanian demands and news of defeat from the war with Italy in Libya signaled the opportunity that generations of Balkan leaders had hoped for.<sup>192</sup> Slavic and Hellenic expansionist aspirations were well known at this point, and are covered in a vast body of literature. One good illustration of this, Henry Wilkinson's now classic 1954 *Maps and Politics: A Review of the Ethnographic Cartography of Macedonia* indicates how the Balkan states articulated their territorial claims, through cartography, after the Treaty of San Stefano and the Congress of Berlin. While these claims covered significant portions of Ottoman Europe, they overlapped considerably in the mixed provinces of İşkodra, Kosovo, Monastir, Ioannina, Rumelia, and Thrace.<sup>193</sup> Great Power politics had both tampered and fueled these aspirations, but while they were often framed in the desire to liberate their brethren, such aspirations can also be regarded as regional demonstrations of power.

Seen from that perspective, a perceived moment of Ottoman weakness invited scrutiny. The Albanian uprisings protested Ottoman misrule, but they also widened opportunities for broader action. When the uprising succeeded in driving Ottoman forces south of Monastir, the Ottoman government granted autonomy to it. It was at this point, that the Serbian government

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<sup>191</sup> Hasan Bej Prishtina, *Nji Shkurtim Kujtimesh mbi Kryengritjen Shqiptare të Vjetit 1912, Shkrue prej Hasan Prishtinës*, (Shkodra: Shtypshkronja Françiskane, 1921), 5.

<sup>192</sup> Misha Glenny, *The Balkans 1804-1999: Nationalism, War, and the Great Powers*, (New York: Penguin Group, 2012), 228.

<sup>193</sup> Henry R. Wilkinson, *Maps and Politics: A Review of the Ethnographic Cartography of Macedonia*, (American Council of Learned Societies Humanities E-Book, 2009), 5.

decided to declare war on the Ottoman Empire. In the coming months, it persuaded the rest of the Balkan kingdoms: Bulgaria, Greece, and Montenegro to join the effort. For nine months, between October 1912-May 1913, the Balkan League waged a successful and much publicized war on the Ottoman Empire. One of the results of the conflict was Albanian statehood.

### *The Relevance of Networks*

The previous chapter has already laid out the responses that Young Turk decentralization provoked from cultural activists like the Kyriases. Given the picture of the broader radicalization of nationalist activists in the European provinces of the empire provided above, their embrace of politics is sensible. But how did that process occur? Using the narrative thread from chapter two, here I demonstrate that for them, like their Albanian colleagues, the most effective approach around the looming confrontation between 1910-1913 involved their networks. It was within the matrix of American Protestantism and Albanian nationalism that the idea for Protestant Albania was born.

Much of the negotiation that the Kyriases implemented in the 1910s is rooted in the trip that Sevastia Kyrias took to the United States in 1904. While I have already described how her conversations with Professor Florence Fensham and the Kennedys tentatively led to the establishment of a permanent mission in Görice, I extend it here further to show its implication in the combined religious-nationalist project.

Of the two American missionary families who came to Albanian-speaking Görice in 1908, the Kennedys were the most stable and pragmatic. They stayed on in “Kortcha”, as they transliterated the city’s name in their correspondence, extending the mission and coordinating education and the local society for women through much of World War I and the 1920s, before

retiring to the U.S. in the 1930s. Their colleague, Rev. Charles Telford Ericson, on the other hand, was a more ambitious and more adventurous missionary. Previously stationed in Rangoon, Ericson was forced to return early to the United States, because his wife Carrie developed a mental illness while in the field. He had since reapplied twice to enter the mission field, and was twice denied. On his third try, when the call to Albania opened up, he reasoned differently.

It was a challenge and his colleagues warned him about the newness of the terrain, but perhaps Carrie would recover in this “European land”. And given his persistence, the Board must have given in. In the fall of 1908, Ericson made it to Görice, but after a brief stay, he decided that he could not work with his “self-righteous” colleague, and that he was more motivated to work among the Muslims of the north.<sup>194</sup> For all his audacity, the journey cost him too much. His wife and one of his sons passed away within the next five years. Nevertheless, the impulsive Ericson fashioned theories about the convertibility of Albanians that the Board found interesting.<sup>195</sup>

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<sup>194</sup> In his letters to the Board and memoirs, *My Retreat from Civilization*, Erickson claimed that he found “Kortcha” too easy a spot to work in. See Dr. Charles T. Erickson, *My Retreat from Civilization*, 8-10. Box 10. Folder 18. pp 4-6. Panarity, Gerim M Papers, SCRC, University of Chicago.

<sup>195</sup> Erickson believed that when presented with the alternative, both Muslim Albanians and Orthodox Christians would *naturally* embrace the progressive and reformed Christian Protestant faith. Where the Orthodox were concerned, it was easier to speak, given the Protestants’ own difficulties with the Orthodox Church establishment. Protestant proclivities to reform Christian practice by purging it of the “superstitions” of the Catholic and Orthodox Churches were vigorously denounced as “free-masonry”. The reform approach was less evident in Görice, and more of an early Protestant vision among Bulgarian-speakers.

The Protestant approach in Görice involved nursing a political antipathy toward the Orthodox Church, painting it as anti-national, and as a pan-Greek institution, bent on Hellenizing the local population. Archival records of the Görice Mitropolia (Metropolitan Church) do contain a number of appeals by local Albanians to be allowed to use their language in a number of life-cycle celebrations, such as nuptial ceremonies, and also in schools. But they are few in number. I have not come across correspondence to these petitions. Curiously, however, I have seen an ordinance sent from the Patriarchate in Istanbul to the metropolitan of Görice in 1908, explaining that Albanian could be integrated into school curriculum, as an elective subject. I do believe that the Protestant narrative of the developing nationalist struggle in the town has been exaggerated. Particularly telling for me was the low number of petitions from would-be Albanian activists on the use of the mother tongue in Church services. Two of the appeals that I have seen are dated between 1904-1908, and one is dated in the mid 1880s. Given the vigorous tenor of Protestant literature in describing the “struggle” for Korça, I would have expected to see more such remonstrative materials included in the Mitropolia’s records.

To Muslims, the Protestant appeal— as per Erickson’s construction, again – was slightly more intriguing. Though in “Albania” for a short period of time, Erickson made the comment that unlike their “sisters” in the “North”, Muslim women in the “South” had a natural inclination for independence of spirit, refusing to accept such “backward” Muslim practices like polygamy and veiling.

On her way back from that eventful trip, Sevastia Kyrias made connections with Albanian intellectuals while stopping to visit students of the Albanian settlement in Bucharest, Romania. It was one of many similar diaspora units in which young and often upwardly mobile Albanians formed cultural societies in their university settings or business venues. Between the mid 1870s-1910s such associations sprang up in the metropolitan cities of Europe, Turkey, North Africa, and North America, and they developed collaboration through shared cultural platforms, publications, and fund raising to support Albanian education, broadly defined.<sup>196</sup>

One such activist, Christo Dako, then a young mathematician originally from Korça, agreed to help Kyrias draft textbooks in arithmetic and more advanced subjects like algebra and geometry. Owing to those discussions, the two entered a vigorous correspondence over the next five years, resulting in their marriage in 1910. The religious and sentimental Kyrias considered theirs a courtship by divine design. But others in the *kolonia Rumune* (Romanian colony) like the future Prime Minister, Pandeli Evangjeli or the Minister of Education, Hil Mosi, would also help her in the years to come, after Albania became independent.

Such networking plugged Kyrias' family and associates into a two-pronged religious-activist network system of influential Albanians and Americans that made her school visible and opened professional doors. Whether divine by design, or human coincidence, maintaining these connections made the Kyriases highly sophisticated middle-women and men. This positioning was so effective, that at the outbreak of the Balkan Wars they found themselves in a new profession. The former educators were becoming political entrepreneurs.

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<sup>196</sup> For a description of some of them see, Nathalie Clayer, "Shfaqja e Një Rjeti Veprimtarësh të Shqiptarizmit, in Arben Puto, trans., *Në Fillimet e Nacionalizmit Shqiptar* (Tirana, 2007), 173-208.

Dako, *Albania: A Master Key to the Near East*, (Boston: E.L. Grimes & Co., 1919), 20-35; Stavro Skendi, "Role of Societies and Press Abroad," in *The Albanian National Awakening* (Princeton, 1967), 145-165.

*Framing Protestant Albania: a New Prospect for the ABCFM*

In spring 1911, Edwin Bosworth, the Dean of Theology at Oberlin College was travelling through Europe by train and found himself in the company of Charles Richard Crane, a philanthropist travelling to Istanbul. The two men shared a passion in education: the first with regards to missions, the second with a broader vision. When the conversation turned to Albania, Crane became interested. He had never been to the general area, but he may have heard that a few students of that origin attended Constantinople College for Girls, which he administered at the time. Bosworth recommended that he get in touch with an Oberlin student of divinity, Christo Dako.<sup>197</sup>

Somewhat in the fashion of other tycoons of his day, Crane, who inherited his father's burgeoning plumbing business, supported promising individuals and movements of the time, at home and abroad. He devoted much of his life and resources in immersing the United States in world affairs: engaging foreign political leaders and their causes, and furthering American knowledge and contact to less known parts of the world like Central and Eastern Europe<sup>198</sup>, Russia, and a vast breadth of countries from the Near to the Far East.<sup>199</sup> In addition, he invested generously to women's education. And thus when Constantinople College separated from the mission boards in 1908 Crane became its President of the Board of Directors.

It is not known exactly how or why Christo Dako decided to attend Oberlin College, but it can be assumed that his Protestant fiancé, Sevastia Kyrias, may have had something to do with it. Some years her junior, he may have been sufficiently impressed by his daring colleague and thus decided to join his fortune with hers. Nevertheless, that choice was decisive as it put him in

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<sup>197</sup> Dako, 33.

<sup>198</sup> Crane cultivated a passion for Slavic studies, a passion influential in launching Russian and Slavic studies in the U.S., particularly with Tomáš Masaryk's lectures.

<sup>199</sup> See Saul, Norman. E. *The Life and Times of Charles R. Crane, 1858-1939: American Businessman, Philanthropist, and a Founder of Russian Studies in America*, New York: Lexington Books, 2012.

touch with Crane, a man who changed the course of their lives. A few short weeks after their wedding, the Kyrias-Dakos were somewhat surprised to receive an unknown caller at their residence in Monastir, and decided to entertain his curiosity about “Albania”. Dako accompanied him on a tour of major towns, northward to Tirana, and eventually the border with Montenegro.

When Dako took off with Crane in May, the northern Albanian-speaking regions of the Empire were engulfed in violence. That spring, mountaineers in Kosovo launched another rebellion, and Ottoman authorities responded with matched brutality. If there ever was a time to visit a land in need, this was it. What Crane saw, convinced him to do what he could for Albania. Dako, then a makeshift journalist, publicized the “barbaric” imprisonment of a female refugee. His vivid depiction of her treatment in jail was sufficient to irk the Ottoman *mutasarrif* in Elbasan, who then issued a warrant for his arrest because he was “inciting rebellion”.<sup>200</sup>

The brave deed was quickly rewarded when Crane interceded, and secured his release by paying bail. Seeing ahead of the troubles at hand, Crane also decided that the Albanian struggle warranted his sympathy and help. He decided to fund the education of six boys and six girls, to be a mix of Muslims and Christians, at Istanbul’s two American colleges over the next decade, and he appointed Dako to select them. The scholarships’ leading condition was, that when they finished their education, these “apostles of the nation” were required to return to Albania and help direct its future.<sup>201</sup>

Sometime after this episode, Dako returned to the United States to conclude his studies. This time, he took with him his younger sister-in-law, Paraskevi, who decided to undertake an M.A. in education. What led her to make this decision? Those records are missing, but given the outcome of their combined efforts, the two, their wider family, and their sympathizers clearly

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<sup>200</sup> Dako, 45-48.

<sup>201</sup> Dako, 45-49.

saw beyond the rebellions, and envisioned a time in which Albania would become its own state. For at the conclusion of her studies, Paraskevi defended her M.A. with a thesis entitled *An Ideal Education System for Albania* discussed in chapter four.

Then in autumn 1912, as Albania declared independence, the two approached their Oberlin professors with a proposal to extend their school in “Kortcha” and eventually succeeded in involving them into a Board of Trustees to govern their school. Oberlin was already involved with a similar school in Shanxi, China, but by spring 1913 accepted their proposal. The proposed board, twenty individuals—Kyriasis acquaintances from missionary and academic institutions including the ABCFM, the Women’s Board of the Interior, Oberlin College and Constantinople College for Girls— as well as British and American cheerleaders of Albania, were to help it and the new country academically and politically.

Such reorganization, the Kyriases thought, would privilege their school, but there was a debate about designating it as a “Christian” institution. Oberlin supported this, citing their interest in providing “broad Christian education”<sup>202</sup>. But two of the other backers, Dr. Patrick of Constantinople College and Charles Crane persuaded them instead to keep its current name so that it would suit the needs of “independent Albania”.<sup>203</sup> This is interesting to note, because after much trouble with both of these missionary boards, not only had the ambitious Dr. Patrick successfully transformed the fledgling Istanbul high school, the former Constantinople Home,

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<sup>202</sup> Missionaries, however, would be “wise” to not interfere in the school, maintained the dean of the Oberlin School of Theology. I have not seen evidence of the Kyriases conveying this in person, although it is striking that Dean Bosworth clearly had them in mind when he emphasized that detail to Charles Crane. Edwin Bosworth to Charles Crane, 22 December 2013, Operating Records- Academic Programs- Kyriasis School, RG II Graduate School of Theology, Oberlin College Archives (hereafter O.C.A.)

<sup>203</sup> Dr. Patrick was the one to insist on this emphatically. She saw an opportunity to

into an international college governed by the independent board of trustees headed by Crane, but she also devoted it to the development of the new nations in Eastern Europe and Western Asia.<sup>204</sup>

Armed with this support, Dako and Paraskevi began what eventually became a tripartite debate between their American mentors (Crane, Oberlin faculty, the ABCFM), Constantinople College for Girls, and the Albanian government, on expanding their school for girls in post war Albania in 1922. Urging Oberlin professors on to join the plan in 1913, President Mary Mills Professors, wrote to Dean Bosworth that her own faculty members,

Feel great enthusiasm in regard to the education of women in Albania and we are planning to join with the Kortcha school in carrying on the work of education as rapidly as possible and as successfully as possible.

In a tone reminiscent of Kipling's "White Man's Burden", Patrick's endorsement of Albania and Albanians sounded as imagined as the Board's would be, and none the less patronizing. Albania, she argued further, was one of the "most interesting provinces" of Eastern Europe, and its people were "upright and generous and worthy of education."<sup>205</sup>

Supporting the plan, Secretary Barton cabled Dean Bosworth to inform him that the Board appreciated the plan that Mr. and Mrs. Crane intended for the Kyrias School for Girls under an independent Board of Trustees, with the caveat that the school would do all it could to "Christianize Albania."<sup>206</sup> The Board would extend financial support, hoping that a few of the young ladies who graduated from it, would "supplement" the mission's work or become teachers. But what persuaded the Board to support independent Albania? Secretary Barton's argument to the members had been that independent Albania presented a momentous opportunity.

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<sup>204</sup> The American College for Girls at Constantinople, *Report of the Year 1911-1912*, (Constantinople: H Matteosian, 1912), 20.

<sup>205</sup> Mary Mills Patrick to Bosworth, 1 September, 1913, Kyrias Girls' School Correspondence, Special Programs, Subgroup II, Theological Instruction and Special Programs, Box 2, Record Group 11 Graduate School of Theology, OCA.

<sup>206</sup> Barton to Dean Bosworth, 9 September 1913, *ibid.*



As secretary of a global missionary organization, Barton was keen on political developments abroad, especially as they concerned the Board and its advancement. In December 1908, only a few months after the Young Turk Revolution began to unfold out of Monastir, he finished a comprehensive manuscript similarly suggestively entitled *Daybreak in Turkey*. This promotional-cum-informative treatise described the historical, religious, racial, material, and national questions of the previous century that were now influencing the empire's transformation from "absolute monarchy into a constitutional and representative government".<sup>207</sup> Interwoven with the Board's evangelical work in the empire, *Daybreak* deployed an orientalism that valorized missionaries as harbingers of modernity.

Noting the general failures to convert people in the area, Barton argued that the success of the ABCFM had to be assessed in terms of its civilizing work instead. "The missionary is an educator, a physician, a scientist, a peacemaker, a neighbor, and an example of civilized living," was how one interviewed commentator put it<sup>208</sup>. The missionary medical centers were "the brightest spots" in the Ottoman Empire. Missionaries in Istanbul had a geographical advantage to impact people in Europe and Asia, if not through the religion, then through its American values instead Barton finally pointed out. And thus, even though it saluted the apparent democratic changes in Ottoman governance, at its core *Daybreak* read like a consolation prize, juxtaposing purported Protestant superiority to Islam's supposed opposition to progress and education.

Albania, however, represented a strange opportunity to reclaim what had been the starting motivation for ABCFM missionaries. The London Conference of Ambassadors acknowledged Ismail Kemal's appeal and recognized it as an independent principality, chiefly to preserve balance of power in the wider region. Austria-Hungary, Great Britain, and Italy were opposed to

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<sup>207</sup>James L. Barton, *Daybreak in Turkey*, (Norwood: The Plimpton Press, 1912), 117.

<sup>208</sup>George Barton, *ibid*, 117. This Barton was professor of Semitic languages at Bryn Mawr, and director of an American school in Palestine.

Slavic expansion in the Balkans, because it interfered with their access to the Adriatic region. As the Great Powers deliberated, Reverend Erickson— expelled during the war from Durrës by the Serbian army— had gone to England.

While there, according to James Barton, he spoke at numerous engagements to Christian congregations, propagating that Albania’s Muslims were ready to give up Islam and all become Protestants.<sup>209</sup> Through their leaders, Barton explained to the Prudential Committee in his tract, Albanians communicated their desire for Protestant missionaries to extend their Christian schools and Christian instruction and to help them reorganize “their race upon the new religious basis.”<sup>210</sup> Barton evidently interpreted this as an invitation!

Erickson’s interaction with Barton is unclear, but it must have been sufficient for him to persuade Barton that this was *possible!* Indeed, it was a “situation that the Board [had] never faced before” and one that needed careful consideration. In *Christianizing Muslim Albania* Barton saw the opportunity to Christianize the “Mohammedans of Turkey”. He made his point clearer. Until then, the Board had seen Armenians as the way to the Muslims, but as powerful as their influence had been on Muslims in Asia-Minor, it could not compare with what could be achieved through educated and Christianized Albanian workers. Barton reasoned that in being coreligionists, Albanians wielded more persuasive power over the ten million Muslims in the empire than either of their Christian counterparts, Armenians or Greeks, could. The singular Albanian, “held in esteem by Muslims everywhere, will find easy access to the confidence of the Moslems of Turkey.”<sup>211</sup>

The implication seems to have been, that if these well-regarded “nominal Moslems”, as Erickson had reported them to be, could give up their faith, surely their Christianized

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<sup>209</sup> I have no data on how many such he visited, at this point.

<sup>210</sup> Barton, 14-15.

<sup>211</sup> Barton, 16.

representatives could be prevailed upon to persuade their Muslim brethren elsewhere in the empire to do the same. As under informed and strangely impulsive as Barton's proposition was, the Prudential Committee did actually approve his plan to Christianize Albania. It is important next to explain why this was the case.

Barton was convinced in Erickson's ability to deliver on his word, because he was young and a persuasive speaker. The British press believed him to be the most authoritative person on Albania, and the religious press itself gave him many opportunities to speak on the subject.<sup>212</sup> Barton also believed that Erickson could raise the asked sum to expand the Albanian mission field that autumn in the United States.

In addition, the six Christian workers on the ground<sup>213</sup> had cultivated such respect and confidence among Albanians, he told the Board, that their school texts, using the Latin alphabet approved for use in all of "Albania", were now being used in other vernacular schools. Christo Dako and Paraskevi Kyrias, both of whom he met in person, had cleverly suggested that in order to "influence and hold the Albanians, the work must be started in a way that will command their respect."<sup>214</sup> Should the Great Powers recognize Albanian independence, Paraskevi Kyrias had concluded in her own appeal to the Board, "Unprecedented opportunities will be before us for the extension of the Kingdom of God. The only question is will we be able to meet these opportunities?"<sup>215</sup>

Clearly, there was plenty of wishful thinking and rhetorical posturing on all sides.

Telford's experience among Muslims in Elbasan and Tirana between 1909-1910, contrasted the

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<sup>212</sup> Barton appended a copy of his interview for the *British Weekly Special* entitled "The Future of Albania: A Talk with an American missionary". According to the *Weekly Special* Erickson believed that after the war, the million Muslim Albanians "may embrace Christianity".

<sup>213</sup> They included Dako, the two Kyrias sisters, the teaching assistant Fanka Eftim, as well as the Tsilka couple, Katarina and Grigor.

<sup>214</sup> Barton, 19.

<sup>215</sup> Paraskevi Kyrias, *The School for Girls, Kortcha Albania* (Chicago: Women's Board of Missions of the Interior, 1913), 14.

hyper confidence he displayed to the English crowds and, by proxy, to the ABCFM. Reports to the Board of being chased by Muslim mobs, and Carrie's growing mental ailment, especially after his arrests for sedition by Ottoman and Serb officers, although optimistic, pose a serious dilemma. Either Barton did not read them, or he simply omitted them, when recommending Erickson's character to the Prudential Committee.<sup>216</sup>

How influential, really, was Erickson? Although he rose above his personal troubles in Albania, these challenges should have raised serious doubts among the Board about what was actually possible on the ground. In Tirana, Erickson befriended Refik Toptani, a local notable, and gained through him, some protection. In Elbasan, he similarly befriended an Orthodox activist, Lef Nosi, when investigating where to settle. In different ways, both Toptani and Nosi were leaders. But was this sufficient to the illiterate and indifferent (sometimes hostile) masses?

Perhaps all that mattered to the Board was the keyword "leader". Erickson's politically enthusiastic early reports to the ABCFM and his own memoirs fall far short of making a case to substantiate the claims that he made to English newspapers. In the end, Erickson's assertions amounted to words of an ambitious missionary skillfully using mediums that were familiar to him. And the general impression one can form of the other parties involved in this religious-nationalist project is that they too were skillfully advancing their own agendas.

### *The Independent Principality with the Protestant Prince*

For many reasons, beyond the fact that it was based on exaggeration and impractical aspiration, the combined religious-educational mission failed to launch. Though Barton did not

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<sup>216</sup> Erickson wrote a number of letters to the Board reporting his local whereabouts, movements, and general plans in Albania and Macedonia, between 1908-1910. For these particular reports see, Erickson to Barton, Nov. 11, 1908-Dec. 13, 1910, Papers of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, European Turkey Mission, Reel 579, Vol. 18, 1900-1909, HGL, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

discuss it in these terms, the other very encouraging factor in Erickson's projections was that the *Albanian people* "wanted a Protestant prince"<sup>217</sup>. Not entirely incorrect, the fact of the matter was that Albanian leaders and the six European Powers<sup>218</sup>, who ultimately decided for them, thought that a Protestant prince "with connections to several royal houses" would be conciliatory. Their (mutually) leading criterion was to find a "man without any impediment in terms of nationality or religion... who would not contribute further to international tensions."<sup>219</sup>

In November 1913, the Powers finally agreed to nominate a minor German prince who had such connections (but no knowledge of Albania), Wilhelm Friedrich Heinrich von Wied, proposed by his aunt, Queen Eleonora<sup>220</sup> of Romania. Unprepared for the task, Wilhelm reluctantly agreed. However, contrary to Telford's projections, Wied's selection was received with mixed feelings. Ismail Kemal, head of the provisional government, which declared Albania independent, was unhappy about this completely unknown candidate. And within months, he and his rival Essad Pasha, who claimed central Albania, became complicit in a plot to restore it to Ottoman rule. The Great Powers intervened, and set up an International Commission of Control<sup>221</sup> as interim administrator until Wied arrived.

His six months in power, March to September 1914, were a failure. Essad Pasha, initially an advisor, counseled him against engaging his subjects. As a result, Wilhelm won little public support. In addition, his already weak government was twice challenged with rebellions in the

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<sup>217</sup> Erickson's interview with the *British Weekly News*.

<sup>218</sup> The six were: Austria-Hungary, Britain, France, Italy, Germany, and Russia.

<sup>219</sup> Duncan Heaton-Armstrong, *The Six Month Kingdom*, (London: I.B. Tauris, 2005), xi.

The initiative to find a prince was Austro-Hungarian. The candidate's religion mattered, because religion delineated the possibility of non-recognition by the Powers among themselves, and also between the religiously divided Albanians, for whom neither a Muslim, Orthodox, or Catholic prince would have worked. Albanian leaders wanted a British prince, initially, but the Powers disagreed. Austria-Hungary and Italy both vied for direct influence over Albania, and disagreed over French, Italian, and British aristocrats. The Russians ideally wanted a Muslim, but this Albanians did not desire.

<sup>220</sup> Eleonora corresponded with Charles Crane, but I have not found evidence that this was somehow coordinated, given the idea for a Protestant Albania.

<sup>221</sup> The Commission was composed of six representatives from the Great Powers, an Albanian, and 15 Dutch army officers, brought to build and train an Albanian army.

center and the south of the new principality. The first, a “peasant revolt”<sup>222</sup> led by Haxhi Qiamil, baba (leader) of a Bektashi *tekke* (lodge) near Tirana, began as a movement for social equality and wealth redistribution. Soon, however, it devolved into a “Muslim uprising” which aimed to install General Izzet Pasha, the Ottoman War Minister, in Wied’s place.<sup>223</sup> Among the things that the proposed school board noticed, were not Albania’s external threats, but the very intrigues taking place within.<sup>224</sup>

The second, more complex, challenge came from the south. Before Wied even came to power, Orthodox Christians, self-identified as Greeks, proclaimed the “Autonomous Republic of Northern Epirus” under the leadership of Georgios Christakis-Zografos, a lawyer from the area around Ottoman Ergiri (Albanian Gjirokastër) and onetime Foreign Minister of Greece. Zografos similarly organized attacks against Wied’s forces, and by May, persuaded the Great Powers to recognize this unit, which included now contested Korça/Κορυτσα, effectively as autonomous under the Protocol of Corfu.<sup>225</sup> Thus confronted by both Muslim and Orthodox Christian opposition, Wilhelm was forced to leave Albania in September, when Haxhi Qiamil’s rebels took the provisional capital, Vlora (formerly Ottoman Avlonya) in September. With Wied’s departure ended any hope that the ABCFM entertained to Christianize the “Mohamedans of Turkey”.

### *Escaping the Second Balkan War*

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<sup>222</sup> Because Haxhi Qiamil’s forces confiscated and destroyed the property of wealthy landowners, communist historiography interpreted his rebellion as an act of the “proletariat”.

<sup>223</sup> Arben Puto, and Stefanaq Pollo, *The History of Albania from its Origins to the Present Day*, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. 1980), 102.

<sup>224</sup> Arthur Baldwin to Charles Crane, 11 May 1913, Folder 1, Box 3, CFP, BAR, CU in Saul, *The Life and* 126.

<sup>225</sup> See Edith Pierpont Stickney, *Southern Albania or Northern Epirus in European International Affairs 1912-1923* (Stanford University Press, 1931).

Naturally such news upset the ABCFM and the Board of Trustees. At Easter, Greek army units, which kept making incursions into disputed Korça/Κορητσα, surrounded the School for Girls for three days, and ordered the staff and teachers to come out and shut it down, or be burned alive. Fortunately, this did not happen. The unrelenting Sevastia found out years later that this mysterious “miracle” was nothing less than a personal appeal by Mary Mills Patrick to the queen of Greece that army units spare the school.<sup>226</sup> The incident did, however, make it clear to the family that it was no longer safe for them to stay in their beloved city or operate their equally beloved school.

During the summer, she fled to Monastir where she wrote her sister and husband that she was unsure whether the school could reopen in October. The Greek administration in the city consistently asked for the keys, on the pretense of needing a hospital, but she disputed such claims. All the soldiers wanted to do, was to ransack it.<sup>227</sup> Christo and Paraskevi returned to Thessaloniki in September, but could not get on to Korça, because the Second Balkan War was underway. The American consul at Thessaloniki, John Kehl, personally accompanied Paraskevi to the city in spring 1914, and waited to gather his own impressions about the situation to place the school under American protection.

The Greek army was supposed to evacuate the city at the end of December, but stayed on till March. The school reopened, only to close again in June. It remained closed until August 1917, when the Kennedys returned to Albania.<sup>228</sup> And then on the advancing Greek army’s

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<sup>226</sup> Sevastia Kyrias, “A Struggle to Emancipate the Daughters of the Eagle,” 18.

<sup>227</sup> S. Arthur Baldwin, one of the proposed Board of Trustee members, in a letter dated September 12<sup>th</sup>, 1913 to Professor Bosworth informing him of the latest news he had on the Kyriases. Kyrias Girls’ School Correspondence.. Box 2. Record Group II Graduate School of Theology. OCA.

<sup>228</sup> James Barton to Dean Bosworth, 15 August, 1917, Correspondence 1913-21, Special Programs: Kyrias Girls’ School, 1913-1921, Record Group 11, Graduate School of Theology, OCA.

“most wanted list”, the Kyrias-Dakos and Paraskevi, finally fled to safety with the help of the Monastir British consul’s *kavass* (Ottoman for porter) in the night of June 14, 1914.

Through the summer and December, the family first moved to Bucharest, Romania where Dako’s family lived, and then among other missionaries in Sofia, Bulgaria, where living conditions were reportedly cheaper. They were travelling with family friends, Elpiniqi and Mihal Grameno with children, all awaiting safe passage to the United States. Oberlin professors expressed worry, and suggested that the Board find a way to bring them over. They thought that Massachusetts would be suitable because some Albanian families there remembered the good work that Dako had done with the New England Home Missionary Society.<sup>229</sup> Perhaps they could set up night schools in the general area between Worcester, Hudson, Marlborough, and Southbridge and continue their evangelical work there...

Modified to favor nationalist education in place of proselytism instead, that task fell onto Crane, who advanced them \$1000 out of his promised school fund, to distribute among remaining school staff and pay for their passage to New England.<sup>230</sup> In total, Crane was to give \$15,000 to the family during the war, supporting not only them, but their propaganda activities among New England Albanians as well.<sup>231</sup> There, they would politically organize impoverished Albanians in a society turned political party that they called the *National Party*, and run the Christian review *Ylli i Mëngjezit* (The Morning Star), between 1917-1920. As president of the party, and editor for *The Morning Star*, Sevastia and Paraskevi respectively consolidated their vision for postwar Albania.

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<sup>229</sup> Baldwin to Bosworth, 17 September 1915, Correspondence 1913-1921, Special Programs, Kyrias Girls’ School, Record Group 11 Graduate School of Theology, OCA.

<sup>230</sup> I have not come across evidence that the Kyriases evangelized among Albanians between 1916-20. Clearly, there is indication that Dako had done this earlier.

<sup>231</sup> Saul, 282.



## *Diaspora Politics*

The shift to politics was not happenstance. It was tied to earlier foundations, the plan, the wars, and the route that the family took to the U.S. One key in this mix of events was the fact that Christo Dako had prior connections to New England Albanians before the family arrived there in 1916. While a student at Oberlin, Dako had also thrust himself into organizing American Albanians, first as editor-in-chief of *Dielli* (The Sun) and then as the first president of VATRA, the Pan Albanian Federation, the organization that published the new paper later. What made VATRA particularly important was that the bulk of its early members were immigrants from Görice. Therefore, when the issue of boundaries between Albania and Greece came up at the Conference of Ambassadors, VATRA members had a lot to say. To them Korça was Albanian, and they appealed persistently and successfully to the Conference of Ambassadors to include it in Albania.<sup>232</sup>

In addition to VATRA, the Kyriases gained political recognition and visibility as Protestants. En route to the United States, with all the hardship that the transit posed, Paraskevi Kyrias travelled to Germany to meet the exiled Queen Sophia in Waldenburg, at the request of “some leaders”, whose identity is not revealed in the sources. It is known, however, that the Queen of Romania, aunt to Wilhelm, had proposed that Paraskevi become Sophia’s lady-in-waiting, quite possibly out of the knowledge that as a leading Protestant woman, she would be the best companion for the new queen.

The two met briefly and communicated to the degree where Sophia conveyed “her love for the people of Albania”. This may have been her way of conveying solidarity with the Albanian people, but it can also be read as recognition of Paraskevi as their representative.

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<sup>232</sup> In a report to the Board of Trustees at Oberlin, Dako credits Crane with conveying its importance to “his many friends among the distinguished diplomats of Europe”. Whether that was sufficient is not clear, but that a combination of many factors perhaps was, is.

Whether the two spoke about the Board's plans, Dako's upbeat and polite correspondence does not show. But such occasions must have been few and far in between, because by 1916, his correspondence places the family in Boston's Jamaica Plains neighborhood, where they remained until returning to Tirana in 1921. Campaigning for Albanian independence, at a time of competing claims and visions, gave the Kyriasis-Dakos an opportunity to stake out their own territory.

Upon arrival, they first teamed up with VATRA. However, their greater ambitions for influence and rifts within the Albanian leadership prompted them to establish themselves independently. VATRA's equally ambitious leader seemed to hold the Kyriases' rise in check. Bishop Fan Noli, then also spiritual leader of the Orthodox community which he led in campaign for autocephaly, had previously complained about the growth of Protestantism in Görice.<sup>233</sup> We do not know to what extent this shaped their rivalry in the U.S., but the *Trinia* (Trinity) as Noli regarded them, criticized him as an autocrat, and raised concerns over the control that VATRA placed on *Dielli's* publicists (Dako presumably being one of them). VATRA evidently envied the Kyriasis' connections.<sup>234</sup> However, the threesome's accusations against Noli eventually cost them their membership.

Soon after, a Çam immigrant approached them to reorganize his struggling association, *Partia Politike*, a unit made up of poor and illiterate immigrants from Kosovo and Çamëria (today part of northeastern-Greece)<sup>235</sup>. With its ranks of older, established immigrants, VATRA

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<sup>233</sup> Noli had noted with some worry the growth of "Protestant" education in Görice. This appeared in a local newspaper in 1908. See,

Theofan Noli, "Shkolla Protestante e Korçës," *Dielli*, March 28, 1909, 5.

<sup>234</sup> Soon after the Kyriases met Crane, he received an invitation to meet with another VATRA officer, Faik Konitza. This future ambassador to the U.S. wanted to interest Crane in VATRA.

Faik Bey Konitza to Charles R. Crane, 11 August, 1911, Box 2, Folder 16, Crane Family Papers, Bakhmeteff Archive, RBML, Columbia University.

<sup>235</sup> Çamëria was a region of Muslim and Orthodox Albanian speakers in northwestern Epirus, which became part of the Greek state in 1913. During the population exchanges between Greece and Turkey in 1923, Albania protested

looked down on this society, and as the Kyriases suspected, supported an Italian protectorate over Albania. On the other hand, *Partia Politike* wanted to politicize demands to include Kosovo and Çamëria to Albania after World War I, in its view Albanian territorial outliers ignored by the Treaty of London. Although details of this encounter are lacking, it is easy to assume that the ambitious Kyriases saw it as a new opportunity.

At this point of contact, the society-turned-political party needed a defined program and proper organization. Much of this unfolds in the correspondence of Sevastia Kyrias with Edith Durham, an English traveller and author of books on the Balkans who actively advocated for Albania in Great Britain.<sup>236</sup> It is further instructive because it shows the Kyriases as entrepreneurs, and it contradicts local scholarship by depicting the “Albanian cause” as a contested idea. Durham seemed reticent<sup>237</sup> about the Kyriases, but she did push Sevastia to define a political vision larger than her initial parochial concerns over Korça.

It is useful to break here, and contextualize the evolution of the Albanian question during World War I. As portrayed by the Kyriases, the Albanian movement became one example of what Erez Manela has most recently termed anticolonial nationalism in his study of such global movements during World War I. Manela has particularly focused on the way in which nationalist

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against the removal of this population on grounds of nationality. As a result, Muslim Çams were allowed residence in Greece and gained semi-official recognition. However, their complicity with fascism during World War II spelt doom for the community, as most of it was expelled across the border into Albania. Orthodox Çams, on the other hand, have never been recognized by the Greek state. Albanian nationalists continued to claim Çamëria, but it was mostly done outside the group itself. Thus, Çams for the most part have not organized around national identity to the same degree that Kosovar Albanians, or more recently Macedonian Albanians have, for example. Instead, what there is of a “Çam debate” today focuses on property and visitation rights in Greece by the predecessors of Çams who immigrated to Albania after the Second World War. For further information see:

Eleftheria K. Manta, *Muslim Albanians in Greece: The Chams of Epirus 1923-2000* (Thessaloniki, 2008).

<sup>236</sup> She set up the *Friends of Albania* society along with a British army officer, Aubrey Herbert.

Bejtullah Destani, Jason Tomes, eds., “The Anglo-Albanian Society, 1918” in *Aubrey Herbert and the Making of Modern Albania: Diaries and Papers 1904-1923*, (London: I.B. Tauris, 2011), 229-233.

<sup>237</sup> Durham first met Kyrias while travelling through southern Albania in 1904. Over the years, they developed a sporadic correspondence around mutual contacts, which in turn gave “Albania” and the School for Girls publicity.<sup>237</sup> When Sevastia wrote to her to consider being on the school’s Board of Trustees in 1913, Durham declined, but forwarded her memorandum denouncing the Autonomous Republic of Northern Epirus to the Conference of Ambassadors.

leaders of colonized countries harnessed Wilson's defense of the right to self-determination and ideas about a new world order after the war. As these notions gained traction world wide, Egyptian, Indian, Chinese and Korean leaders among many others, expressed great hope that the United States would endorse their liberation struggles against Asian and European empires ahead of the Peace Conference in 1919. They appealed directly to Wilson and the European representatives there on that count. However, as it became increasingly apparent that the United States would be unable to stand by Wilson's rhetoric, these parties appropriated it for their own ends instead.<sup>238</sup>

Where I see parallels with the Kyrias construction of the Albanian cause is with regard to their suspicions about the Italian protectorate over Albania, and their subsequent attempts to secure an American mandate to prevent Albania's annexation. In some ways, Albania's question was not as clear-cut as some of the cases that Manela engages. After all, the Great Powers had recognized it as an independent and neutral principality just a few years earlier. However, its occupation by the armies of the Entente, with Austria-Hungary occupying the north and center, France the southeast around Korça, and Italy the southern crest, effectively rendered it an "undesignated colony"<sup>239</sup>. Also, more specifically described as a "small-state movement" by Nicola Guy, Albania's status at the end of the war would be articulated in relation to the territorial claims of neighboring countries (Greece, Italy, and Yugoslavia) and by Great Power interests over them. Several times during the war, the occupying armies declared protectorates over Albania.<sup>240</sup>

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<sup>238</sup>See Erez Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment: Self-Determination and the International Origins of Anticolonial Nationalism* (New York, 2007).

<sup>239</sup>Nicola Guy, *The Birth of Albania: Ethnic Nationalism, the Great Powers, and the Emergence of Albanian Nationalism*, (London: I.B. Tauris, 2012), 4.

<sup>240</sup>Ray Stannard Baker, *Woodrow Wilson and the World Settlement, Volume I*, (New York: Doubleday, Page and Company, 1922), 55.

But while they were all tentative, the Italian one seemed the likeliest to persist after the war. As part of the deal to get Italy to switch over to the Triple Entente, the Secret Treaty of London in April 1915, granted it a number of territorial gains in Austrian domains in Tyrol, and others along the Dalmatian coast, including the provinces of Carinthia and Carniola, the port of Vlorë in Albania, a protectorate over Albania, as well as the Dodecanese islands, and some of the German colonies in Asia and Africa.<sup>241</sup> In his famous Fourteen Points address, Wilson specifically attacked the Secret Treaty for its behind doors approach, and considered it invalid.<sup>242</sup> And rightfully, the Kyriases interpreted it as a sign of support.

In sight of this, some Albanian leaders like the Kyriases looked to the British and Americans to provide a mandate as the safest alternative to an anticipated Italian annexation. As much as Italy liked to offer Albania its “protection”, the news from the Italian military zone did not convey this in the least. Harry Lamb, a British adviser to Wilhelm Wied, noted daily reports of

growing unrest in the Italian occupation zone, and resistance to the Italian protectorate, with the Italian troops needing to use coercive measures to control the local population... restriction of liberty, disregard of property rights, and attempts of denationalization.<sup>243</sup>

With Wied out of the way, and many parts of the country in disarray, Albanian leaders naturally worried about the war’s outcomes. All the same, their lack of a common consensus as to whether Albania was capable of self-rule, or which power was the most disinterested, or a plan of action

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<sup>241</sup> “Shqipëria, Italia, dhe Konferenca e Parisit,” *Yll’ I Mengjezit*, no. 12 (1917), 130-1.

<sup>242</sup> Wilson delivered his Fourteen Points plan to guide the post World War I peace negotiation process to the United States Congress on January 8, 1918, a full ten months before armistice was proclaimed between the Allies and the Central Powers. His first point specifically attacked the London Treaty with the following: “There should be open covenants of peace, openly arrived at, after which there shall be no private international understandings of any kind but diplomacy shall proceed always frankly and in the public view.” See, John L. Snell, “Wilson on Germany and the Fourteen Points,” *The Journal of Modern History* 26, no. 4 (1954), 367.

<sup>243</sup> Guy, 177.

forward made things quite difficult. And these considerations make the correspondence between the two women particularly interesting.

In two letters between May 1916 and January 1917, Durham cautioned Sevastia against furthering divisions. From their exchange, it is implied that Sevastia favored an independent Albania, but that she provided no plan of action. That is why she sought advice from Durham. For her part, the Englishwoman believed that Albania was small and powerless. Each of its prominent leaders was in the pay of one Great Power or another.<sup>244</sup> Moreover, they had divided up the country between them, and Korça was now an autonomous republic.<sup>245</sup> It was clear to Durham that Albania needed time to become organized, and that it needed the protection of one power “to keep others away.”<sup>246</sup>

Both she and a fellow British sympathizer, Aubrey Herbert, supported the idea of an Italian mandate, which greatly clashed with the Kyriases’ position. But the greatest problem confronting Albania, as Durham saw it, was the lack of a united front by Albanian activists. There was too much idle gossip and thought of religious difference, no vision, and constant quarrelling. She advised Sevastia to think of Albania beyond Korça, to think about whether it ought to be a republic or a monarchy, and whether it ought to have a local or a foreign ruler. Durham also encouraged her to unite and organize the diaspora community (an estimated 100,000), so they could express a single goal when the time came.<sup>247</sup> Finally, Durham added that

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<sup>244</sup> Durham was referring to Essad Pasha Toptani, Ismail Kemal and Prenk Bib Doda, chieftain of important tribes in central, south, and northern Albania respectively.

<sup>245</sup> This was a counter response to the Epirote movement by Albanian nationalists. The Republic was established in 1916 and dissembled in December 1918, with the blessing of the French troops who were then occupying the city. It replaced the Greek administration, in place during the Second Balkan War, and declared Albanian the official language.

<sup>246</sup> Durham to Sevastia Kyrias, 31 May, 1916, Fondi 47, Dosja 15, F.1-2, Arkivi Qëndor Shtetëror (henceforth AQSH).

<sup>247</sup> Durham to Sevastia Kyrias, 17 January, 1917, Fondi 47, Dosja 15, F.3-4, Arkivi Qëndor Shtetëror (henceforth AQSH).

that Albania's best hopes lay with America. In Europe, as a colleague had told her, "it had no chance".<sup>248</sup>

Durham's correspondence may have achieved two things. In pointing to the U.S. as a source of support for Albania, and in drawing attention to money as an important resource, she may have helped Kyrias realize that the diaspora could be a powerful unit to mobilize. We do know from VATRA's figures that it collected an estimated \$150,000 to support the delegates it sent to the Peace Conference. In addition, her emphasis on conciliation, may have given Sevastia an implicit conceptual role to undertake. She thus laid a path that Kyrias could take to step into the political arena.

Kyrias took the advice, but only insofar as it served her. Only a few months later, she renamed the Party, and came up with a statute. In part mythologized historical justification and in part idealized listing of "Albanian values" and potential, the program of the National Party called for an independent Albania based on "natural borders", a constitutional government, and social reorganization through an educational system. The Albania Sevastia had in mind, would contribute to order and peace in the Balkans, but to ensure this, it had to regain the borders of 1913. Among the reasons why Albania deserved independence, she argued, was that the Albanian nation had given sufficient proof of "liberal conception in the fields of public and political affairs."<sup>249</sup> The West owed its present stage of civilization and learning to Albanian historical figures. Alexander the Great and Scanderbeg defended Europe from the Persians and the Turks.

Notwithstanding such posturing, her program blamed the current state of affairs on Great Power negligence and the greediness of Albania's neighboring countries. Cherry picking

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<sup>248</sup> *ibid*, F. 4.

<sup>249</sup> Sevastia Kyrias, Program the National Party (in English), Fondi 47, Dosja 5, F.1, AQSH.

somewhat, she pointed out that British statesmen had foreseen the importance of the Albanian question, but that ultimately the Great Powers had recommended administrative reforms for the “Turkish” provinces, without putting them into practice. Had this happened, the current state of affairs would have been “obviated”.<sup>250</sup> The Powers had caused more problems since the Conference of Ambassadors in advising Greece and Serbia not to evacuate occupied territories. This, she concluded, had led to the dissolution of the new Albanian state, prompting the Epirote movement and the subsequent formation of the Republic of Korça. Finally, she called on the Allied Powers to note the divisive role that some leaders were playing, especially Essad Pasha.<sup>251</sup>

This program bridged together Durham’s input and the Kyriases’ own style. In talking about unity among Albanians, on paper Kyrias bypassed the ongoing issue of disagreement among Albanian leaders, which her sister describes further during her time in Paris. In practice, however, she knew that this was far from the truth. But in altering the name of the organization from the more vague *Political* to *National* Party, her ambitions became clear. To what extent this was to draw distinction from the Pan Albanian Federation is not known. But within a short period of time, the National Party began to cultivate its own following. To create it, the Kyriases used two means: publication and presentation.

#### *Consolidating Support for Albania: A Christian Review and Conferences*

The details surrounding the growth of the National Party may seem narrow. But what makes them worth analyzing, beyond chronology, is that they give us to understand how the Kyriases deployed their expertise as cultural mediators, and how their originally vague vision molded to Wilson’s ideological rhetoric. In addition, they also help us to sustain an

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<sup>250</sup> *ibid.*, F. 2, AQSH.

<sup>251</sup> Essad Pasha had supported the Epirote movement, and created a limited state in central Albania.



understanding of how women emerged in the public sphere, through the convergence of Protestantism and nationalist activism. Although coincidence played a large role in casting the Kyriases in the public spotlight, they purposely capitalized on their gender, while promoting the party and Albanian sovereignty.

Among the significant first steps that the National Party took was to conceive a bi-monthly and bilingual cultural newsmagazine, which they called *The Morning Star* (Yll i Mëngjezit), appearing in the press between January 1917-September 1920. Described as a Christian review by Caroline Borden, a trustee of their proposed new school,<sup>252</sup> it was Christian in form and more subtly, perhaps, in spirit. Appearing in the press between January 1917-September 1921, it aimed to “enlighten and uplift Albanian-Americans.”<sup>253</sup>

Although the Kyriases did not emphasize their faith in it, for strategic reasons, its religious inspiration as expressed in its mission quoted above is unmistakable. Charged with building a national organization for a multi-confessional community like Albanian-speakers, the Kyriases obviously had to prioritize national identity. However, they did not sacrifice the religiously rooted methods that defined them. By tackling aspects familiar to Christian workers such as education, literature, health, and politics, *The Morning Star* effectively combined the Kyriases’ Protestant-derived “civilizing” mission with nationalism. Through such coverage, it aimed to educate Albanians in Albanian, and Americans about Albania in English.

The *Star* did not always discuss party dynamics, but it was understood from the start that it would spell out its vision for Albania. The Party grew slowly, and remained small numerically, but it made inroads among American and Canadian Albanians as the question of statehood drew

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<sup>252</sup> *Ylli i Mëngjezit* was the namesake of an earlier Bulgarian Christian magazine *Zornitsa* (also Morning Star). As she did with Constantinople College for Girls, Borden ascribed its “Christian” quality broadly. Borden’s notes for history of ACG, 1907-1917, American College for Girls Records, Box 8, Folder 69, 104, RBML, Columbia University.

<sup>253</sup> Ibid.

closer. In the spring of 1917, Paraskevi Kyrias and Christo Dako started giving presentations on Albania to Albanian and American audiences. Their first stop, a conference at Wellesley College defined the importance of their educational work for Albania, and it defined the Albanian question as a problem for international diplomacy. Through the following year, she gave presentations to similar audiences throughout New England, the Midwest, and Canada (Ontario).

At the end of August 1917, the *Morning Star* announced that “Miss Kyrias” had decided to visit the “Albanian colonies” in America to study the “field of the national movement”, and that she was willing to hold conferences where this advertisement was made. Once among such audiences, some of which were hospitable, and others downright indifferent, Paraskevi spoke about the political uses of education, encouraging local assemblies to unite, and establish educational clubs for the youth.

As she noted in her diary, people who were employed, earned well, and had no time to quarrel did not have the problem of organization. But this was not the case everywhere she stopped. In Buffalo and Syracuse, for example, where the Albanian storeowners and customers did not bother to greet her, she noted wryly that they “were in desperate need of a good leader.”<sup>254</sup> However, in Toronto she was able to raise funds for the Party, and sign up more readers for the *Morning Star*. When stars aligned, like they did there, she would remark more jubilantly: “Patriots they wanted, patriots they will have”<sup>255</sup>.

With American audiences, her goal was different. By casting Albanian-Americans as “good citizens”, she aimed to secure the sympathies of her crowds, and inform them about Albania. Although her method was the same, mainly connecting the family’s educational work to the national movement, she showed savvy in her delivery. Speaking to the Massachusetts

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<sup>254</sup> Paraskevi Kyrias, September 7-16, 1917, Fondi 52, Dosja 3, F. 3, AQSH.

<sup>255</sup> *ibid.*

Women's Educational Association, for example, she noted that Albanians looked to the U.S. for help as their statehood would soon be discussed.

Albanian Americans, she noted, had come to the U.S. to grow intellectually, not for money. "After a hard day's work, the Albanian draws to his room to read and write, ambitious for progress through educational, literary, and musical societies." As such, they treated women with great consideration, "never got drunk"<sup>256</sup>, volunteered for the Red Cross, contributed to the war library, and bought liberty bonds, sometimes in highest numbers.<sup>257</sup>

So virtuous as "they" were, one wonders if she was speaking about her own family. But *The Morning Star* did indeed congratulate the Albanians of Hudson, Massachusetts for raising ten percent of the city's quota to contribute to the nation-wide plan to raise a million dollars to create a war library for the American army.<sup>258</sup> In part, the magazine hoped that the initiative would allow them to send a few books on Albania to the city's public library.

Her goings-on received attention. Cleveland's *Plain Dealer* quickly picked up her talk on "The Forgotten Race". The most impressive of her remarks hinged on the Greek atrocities on her people, which according to the *Plain Dealer* exceeded those of the Germans in France and Belgium. On reading this, the editors of the New York based *Atlantis*, a Greek-American newspaper, followed up with a criticism to Kyrias to consider herself "Greek". They were sorry to hear that she considered "Mohammedans" compatriots. Christo Dako, who kept the magazine

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<sup>256</sup> This denotes that the audience was also Christian, as she seems to have worried about their views on temperance. Paraskevi "remembered" that the police station in Manchester, New Hampshire, offered a prize to anyone who could find, and take to the station a drunken Albanian.

<sup>257</sup> Paraskevi Kyrias, "The Women's Educational Association Hears of the Forgotten Race", *The Morning Star* 3, no. 2 (1918), 75-8.

<sup>258</sup> "Shqiptarët e Hudson-it Lavdurohen", *Yll i Mëngjezit* 1, no. 18, (October 1917), 169.

running in her absence, considered this “proof” that Greek editors paid very close attention to her lecture tour.<sup>259</sup>

As she toured, changes took place in the European front. The Inter-Allied Conference of Paris decreed that the French, Italian, and British armies had to leave the Greek mainland. Citing reasons of “security”, Italy was reluctant to leave Albanian territories in the south. This troubled *The Morning Star*. While Albanians, in general, were happier to see Italian soldiers in the place of Greek ones, they were not certain what would happen. Would Italian forces remain? Would they cede these territories to Greek control again? Would peacemakers uphold the Secret Treaty of London, and grant Italy a protectorate over Albania?<sup>260</sup>

At this point, the *Morning Star* and the *National Party* began to heat up their campaign for securing American assistance. As late as May 1918, Sevastia Kyrias believed that Albania could be independent. But as a writer for *The National Geographic*, who had just published an essay on Albania, reminded crowds in Worcester, Massachusetts, presenting right alongside Sevastia Kyrias and another party official, Prince Nouredin Vlora, Albania’s future was uncertain. It was not ready to govern itself, and at the end of the war it might need the protection of one or more Great Powers.

Charles H. Woods said there were other reasons why the U.S. needed to consider Albania as a mandate candidate. Among others, it was strategic from a geographic point of view: it could block a German “Mittel Europa”. But if Albanians wanted an American mandate, they would have to demonstrate this. The United States, he concluded, had no other interests there other “than to extend freedom and promote knowledge.”<sup>261</sup>

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<sup>259</sup> Christo Dako, “Ushëtime nga Shtypi i Huaj per Konferencat e Z-zes Paraskevi Qirias”, *Yll' I Mengjezit* 1, no. 19 (1917), 186-7.

<sup>260</sup> “Shqipëria, Italia, dhe Konferenca e Parisit”, *Yll' I Mengjezit* 1, no. 12 (1917), 130-1.

<sup>261</sup> “Albanian People Hear of Homeland” in *Worcester Telegraph*, in *Yll' I Mengjezit* 2, no. 2-3 (1918), 35.

In July 1918, the magazine printed Dako's telegram to President Wilson, "Albania's Rights and Claims to Independence and Territorial Integrity" and printed Wilson's speech at Mt. Vernon in which he renewed his pledge to free the world. Dako claimed that as a friendless nation, Albania needed the protection that "mighty, just, and freedom loving America" could give. Indeed, it would be an honor for the U.S. to do so. While such an invitation was daring, it was anchored in a belief that the U.S. was committed to the right of small nations for self-determination.

On January 1918, the President delivered his famous "Fourteen Points address" to Congress calling for the end of colonialism, national self-determination, free trade, and a "general association of nations" (League of Nations) that would enable "political independence and territorial integrity to great and small nations alike."<sup>262</sup> From Paraskevi's diary entries, it appears that she originally put strong faith in Wilson's principles, only to be disappointed a few months later. Nevertheless, the belief held her steady enough to get on the road to Paris.

When Germany signed the armistice on November 11, the National Party began to prepare its case for the Peace Conference. There would be an official Albanian delegation representing the provisional government formed on Christmas 1918, with Italian backing, but owing to intense opposition, many diaspora communities sent their representatives to contest. For its part, the National Party at first wanted to send Ismail Kemal to act as its European spokesman, even as Edith Durham had warned Sevastia Kyrias about trusting this "corrupt" personality. Certainly, as a former Ottoman diplomat, and a recognizable entity, she may have thought that he would have more leverage. But his sudden death in early January 1919 put her sister Paraskevi in his place.

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<sup>262</sup> Arthur S. Link et al., eds, *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson 68 Vols.*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966-1994), 45: 529 in Scot D. Bruce, 2003, "Woodrow Wilson's Colonial Emissary: Edward M. House and the Origins of the Mandate System, 1917-1919," Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Nebraska, 1.

*Defending Statehood: The Peace Conference*

Paraskevi's going to the Peace Conference was as much a deliberate choice, as it was coincidence. With Kemal gone, some of their peers thought that Christo Dako would be a suitable representative, as someone well known and well cultured. He, however, was finishing a book intended as a propaganda piece specifically for the Conference. *Albania: Master Key to the Near East*, was a project Dako had begun in 1913, and one that he thought he could best finish in the U.S. Sending a woman instead, he and others of the National Party thought, would be a mark of Albania's "social progress" at a time when few women entered politics.<sup>263</sup>

There was merit to this. Those who made Paraskevi's acquaintance at the Conference were impressed with the fact that she was a woman working in an environment surrounded by men. On a number of occasions in subsequent years various of her proponents touted her as an Albanian "Jeanne D'Arc" and as the only woman delegate at the Peace Conference.<sup>264</sup> While such publicity made her a precedent in the Albanian context, and while it served her well in it, it begs the question of how to properly situate her activism in a broader sense. For, as her diary clarifies, Paraskevi was far from the only woman there. She was helped by a number of female colleagues, a number of them journalists, and also mentored by her old professor, Dr. Mary Mills Patrick.

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<sup>263</sup> Dishnica, 247-8.

<sup>264</sup> This began during her time at the Peace Conference. While in Paris, she received telegrams from Albanian students in Geneva (June) and Istanbul (September), thanking her for her service to their country, and hailing her as a "Jeanne D'Arc". See, Paraskevi Kyrias, Ditar, Fondi 42, Dosja 2, F. 59-60, 115-6. After the war, a number of Albanian newspapers features on her repeated it the moniker. Her American mentors also similarly singled her out. Dr. Mary Mills Patrick visited her in Paris, and included her in a list of celebrated students in her memoir. See, Mary Mills Patrick, *A Bosphorus Adventure: Constantinople Woman's College, 1871-1924* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1934), 68-73.

That Paraskevi's work was grounded in nation building goes without saying. But this alone did not set her apart. Women's activism in nation- and state- building efforts of various forms like social justice and social welfare in both national and international frameworks were already established at this time. Of particular note are the contributions to democracy that activists like Florence Kelley and Jane Adams were doing in conjunction with German colleagues across the Atlantic between the 1880s and 1930s, thus very much contemporaries to the Kyriases.<sup>265</sup> But to the best of my ability, I have not yet been able to embed either of the Kyrias sisters in such networks, despite their time in the United States, which is suggestive, of course.

However, the lack of such evidence does not necessarily imply their lack of awareness. But as far as evidentiary basis is concerned, I am of the opinion that Paraskevi Kyrias is better understood (for now at least) in terms of the American Protestant educational global export and the networks it created. They trained her. She operated within them, and as the next two chapters reveal, she also sought to extend them. And as her diary reveals, much of her time in Paris cannot be understood without the network of Protestant educators turned political advisors because of their contacts in and knowledge of the Near East.

It was no coincidence that the very commission, which decided American policy on the Middle East, the King-Crane commission, was made up of Oberlin's Henry Churchill King, Alfred Lybyer, and Charles Richard Crane, men whose missionary educational connections to the region have been emphasized earlier in this chapter. It was similarly no coincidence that as Paraskevi and the National Party framed their propositions for an American mandate over

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<sup>265</sup> See Kathryn Sklar, Susan Strasser, Anja Schuler eds., *Social Justice Feminists in the United States and Germany : A Dialogue in Documents, 18851-1933* (Ithaca, 1998).

Albania, her mentor and backer of the plan to train Albania's future elites in Istanbul's American colleges, Dr. Mary Mills Patrick, or that her Turkish contemporary, graduate of Constantinople College and intimate associate of both Crane and Patrick, Halide Edib, simultaneously published a list of reasons why the Middle East and Turkey should consider the same political alternative.<sup>266</sup>

Protestant Albania did not work out for reasons already mentioned, but the conversations created around it had huge ramifications for the Kyrias projects. And it is also an additional reason why her unpublished diary matters. American Protestant-sponsored institutions prepared their students for national service, and this was one exemplary testimony of its pedagogical success, and they also informed American diplomacy by virtue of their extensive connections there.

Kyrias' account begins on January 1, 1919, and ends in October of the same year. A small pocket-book type, it records her preparations, her journey, her hygiene habits, dining, her correspondence, people she met, outings to Paris, and the frequent unannounced visits by Albanian colleagues. Written in Albanian and English, with a smattering of French and Turkish, it displays her love of language peculiar in one who campaigned for a pure Albanian. The major themes in the diary are the viability of post-war Albania, and her vexation at the inability to work with most of the delegates. Charles Crane's occasional visits are moments of great joy and consolation, as well as financial relief. She is often in the company of Christo's nephew, Dhimitër, whom she detests for his pro-Italian sympathies.

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<sup>266</sup> 1) Mary Mills Patrick, Fourteen reasons for an American mandatory over Turkey, King-Crane Commission: Reports and Correspondence, 1918-19, Henry Churchill King Papers, 1873-1934, RG 2/6, Box 128, Folder 3, OCA.  
2) Sina Aksin, *Turkey from Empire to Revolutionary Republic: the Emergence of the Turkish Nation from 1789 to the Present*, (New York: NYU Press, 2007), 140-141.



Other protagonists are Pandeli Evangjeli and Nouredin Vlora, two like-minded associates with whom she gets along. Though she complains of loneliness, there is never a shortage of interesting visitors and visitations. Her entries get tedious from time to time, yet they reveal a woman of complicated character living in fascinating times. Her transformation from timid schoolgirl to obstinate idealist, as described by her professors is a testament.<sup>267</sup>

January was preparation. The Kyrias-Dako household received plenty of visitors. Letters came in, letters went out. Paraskevi telegrammed President Wilson, then in Rome, to support Albanian independence. Husband and wife, Christo and Sevastia, spoke at High Park Congregational Church in Boston about Albania, and “felt strongly satisfied” by the audience’s reception.<sup>268</sup> Then, the trio was invited to speak for the Federal Society in Boston where Paraskevi even performed for them.<sup>269</sup>

The family was in the constant company of the Gramenos. In fact, Paraskevi and Mihal were going to Paris together. The State Department mailed them their passports, and she wrote to Charles Crane about their travel arrangements. A few days later, she also stopped at the Italian Consulate “to inquire about the passports”<sup>270</sup>. Could this have been a matter of visas? Already busy with the editorials for *The Morning Star* and Grameno’s newspaper *Koha* (Time), Paraskevi declined a recommendation by the Massachusetts State House for work with the YWCA. In between her to-and-fros, she was a caring aunt and industrious housekeeper. Lovingly, she knitted a sweater for little nephew George and busily tended to the house she shared with Sevastia and Christo.

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<sup>267</sup> Heather Donaldson Jenkins, *An Educational Ambassador to the Near East: The Story of Mary Mills Patrick and an American College in the Near East*, (Fleming H. Revell, 1925), 107.

<sup>268</sup> Ditar i Parashqevi Qiriazit nga Konferenca e Parisit, 1 Janar, 1919-25 Tetor, 1919, 10 January entry, Fondi 52, Dosja 4, Fl. 1, AQSH.

<sup>269</sup> January 15.

<sup>270</sup> January 21.

In mid March, she arrived in New York City, along with Mihal Grameno and Christo and must have solicited Crane's advice and assistance. On the morning of the 18<sup>th</sup>, one of Crane's secretaries, a Mr. Spond, took them down to the French Line Co. office. There, he purchased two first class tickets and exchanged \$500 into 2600 francs for her to use. She and Dako had also thought about propaganda material to bring along. While in New York, they visited with a Mr. Plympton who introduced them to a few publishers for Christo's book. Putnam publishers liked the idea and took his manuscript along. Earlier the two had also visited a mapmaker in Boston to design a map of Albania's borders as outlined by the party's program.

"Papers all over the country announced today my departure for Paris and Christo Dako's election as president [of the National Party] and accredited [Albanian] representative in the United States" wrote a self-indulgent Paraskevi as the *Espagne* rolled up its anchor and took its course. The seventeen days of journey were very active and full of observations. She makes note of the meals served on board with almost epicurean delight. Inspired by the voyage, she began writing a short story she called "The Sea Ship". Inspired by *her*, the man she called "Uncle Mihal" devoted a new novel to Paraskevi.

She was often on deck, playing cards with Grameno, or making acquaintances. She must have made a favorable enough impression, for on the last night aboard the ship while talking to YMCA girls, "an elderly lady came by introducing herself". She had heard that an Albanian girl was on board. It was Mrs. Morgenthau." She was none other than the wife of the American Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, Henry Morgenthau. Though Paraskevi had just parted from her family, she wrote to them and thought of them a great deal. There was entertainment, and lament. There was talk on the ship about a little baby, and an old Greek gentleman who died of the grippe. In the evenings, passengers applauded the singing of YMCA girls and laughed at

gentleman comedians, fundraised for the Red Cross and danced at gay soirees. The lighthearted fun temporarily relieved her anxiety about what lay ahead.

On the morning of April 4<sup>th</sup>, the *Espagne* docked at Havre. After authorities looked at their papers, Grameno and Paraskevi got on the train to Paris. Sitting in their car were four Japanese, one of whom was also a delegate to the Peace Conference. Mr. Akama and Paraskevi engaged in the “only interesting conversation he had had throughout the trip,” and each promised the other they would keep in touch.

At this point, Paraskevi switched her narration back to Albanian. She sank into work almost the moment she arrived. Visitors and visitations were innumerable. Paris brimmed with life and excitement. Already on her first day there, the road opened for conversation with American and Albanian representatives. After lunch with “Mr. G”<sup>271</sup>, Mr. Crane, “the dear father”, took her to lunch where she met with a few Englishmen, and then to Hotel Crillon where the American delegation was staying. Crane then gave her a spin around the city in an “automobile *with* seating”. In the afternoon, she and Mr. G. went to the Grand Hotel and met with the Albanian delegates from Romania.

The official Albanian delegation, headed by Turhan Pasha’s Provisional Government, that which first served Prince Wied, had arrived in February.<sup>272</sup> The rest, representing the Albanian communities living in the U.S., Istanbul, and Romania- began trickling in April and all through the summer and fall of that year. Turhan Pasha had an audience with the Supreme Council on February 24<sup>th</sup>, where he represented the Government’s request for territorial reconstitution. Specifically, he asked that all lands granted to neighboring countries

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<sup>271</sup> Paraskevi gives Grameno the acronym Z-ti G, or in English Mr. G.

<sup>272</sup> Turhan Pasha, like most early Albanian politicians, began his career in the Ottoman civil service. He was the governor of Crete during the defining revolt of 1896, and ambassador to the Russian Empire.

(Montenegro, Serbia, and Greece) by the Congress of Berlin and the Treaty of London be “given back” to Albania.<sup>273</sup>

These did not include the additional concessions of actual Albanian territory (post 1913) made by the Secret Treaty of London to Italy in 1915. Depending on what steps Italy decided to take in Albania, some of these territories could go to Serbia and Greece. Turhan Pasha’s government came to power with Italian assistance. After discussing its representation in Paris, the Italian Foreign Minister, Baron Sidney Sonnino, suggested that the entourage include additional delegates (known for pro-Italian sympathies). Paraskevi interpreted them as believing that Albania needed Italian protection and that it was unable to care for itself. The National Party viewed Turhan’s government as a puppet of Italian imperialism, fearing that Italy would demand a protectorate over Albania. After that, Albanian leaders would be powerless to stop any further “territorial bleeding” as Italy negotiated with Balkan countries. Margaret MacMillan confirms the Party’s suspicions,

During the war, Greece and Italy had talked in a desultory way about coming to a compromise, and early on in Paris, Sonnino and Venizelos, the charmless and the charming, met several times to see whether they could put together a deal. Sonnino suggested that Greece let Italy have all the coast of Albania and about half the interior; in return Greece could have the area around Korçë, the Dodecanese, and the area around Smyrna on the coast of Asia Minor...<sup>274</sup>

At the same time that Turhan Pasha appeared before the Supreme Council, Sevastia petitioned them to delay such border adjudication until the National Party representatives, Grameno, Paraskevi, and Nouredin Vlora could get to Paris. Their delegation faced considerable difficulties in obtaining passports, and she asked the Council to “open the way for us to lay our just claims before the Peace Conference.” And thus, the seeds of distrust were sown even before Paraskevi arrived. No wonder that the Supreme Council was at a loss for what to do!

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<sup>273</sup> Lavdosh Ahmetaj, “Shqipëria në Konferencën e Paqes së Parisit- Qëndrimi i Delegacionit Zyrtar”, *Gjurmime Albanologjike-Seria e Shkencave Historike* 36 (2006): 142.

<sup>274</sup> Margaret Macmillan, *Paris 1919: Six months that Changed the World* (New York: Random House, 2007), 452.

As soon as she settled in Paris, Dr. Mihal Turtulli, a Korça native, and member of the official delegation briefed her on their activity. She first got in touch with Americans at the Conference. A few of the peace commissioners were her former professors: Oberlin's Albert Lybyer, Henry King, and a Prof. Puppin. Lybyer told her that the Albanian question had not come up at all and then directed her to two other Americans working on a commission studying the Albanian question. Dr. Day and Mr. Carpenter, two other commissioners, told her that they were only dealing with the "enemy's borders for now".<sup>275</sup> Nevertheless, she gave them maps of Albania and memoranda that she had brought along.

In the Albanian group, thirty delegates altogether, cliques emerged from the outset. Paraskevi expected that the border issue could be settled soon, but delegates first had to agree to cooperate. When more Romanian Albanians arrived on the 10<sup>th</sup>, she telegraphed the party that they stood for the national program. But very soon it turned out that one of them, Prince Albert Ghica<sup>276</sup>, was an adventurer. Her meddling nephew, Dhimitër Berati, furthered the looming chasm with rumors of Mehmed Bey Konitza's<sup>277</sup> "secret dealings with the Serbs". On the other hand, Paraskevi suspected *him* of collaborating with the Italian government.

The resolute woman confided her objections to Italian interests in Albania several times to the Japanese delegate Akama, and he assured her that they would not prevail. His connections to Italy are unknown, but I speculate that Paraskevi intrigued him with her courage and passion. Perhaps he could offer no more than kind words to a woman with little formal experience in world diplomacy. And so, his visits stopped altogether at the end of April.

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<sup>275</sup> It is unclear if this meant the Central Powers.

<sup>276</sup> Ghica, a Romanian nobleman of purported Albanian ancestry, availed himself of every opportunity to become an Albanian leader, with no credit either to a good name or actual knowledge of the country. Several Albanian cultural clubs in Bucharest gave him honorary presidency. Ghica attempted to turn this act of goodwill to his advantage in arenas where Albania was discussed but remained little known. See, Henry Brailsford, *Macedonia: Its Races and their Future*, (New York: Arno Press, 1906), 194.

Her real anchor was the man who affectionately called her “Priskie” and whom she called “Father”. Charles Crane’s generous contributions to the Democratic Party in general, and his extensive business and philanthropic commitments throughout the “East”, in particular, made him a suitable negotiator in the American delegation. In late May 1919, he travelled to the Middle East as part of the King-Crane Commission to assess the readiness of local people for self-determination and determine the nature of American policy there.<sup>278</sup>

He was often outside Paris, but when he came in, he made sure “Priskie” was well taken care of. Crane instructed his assistants to help her financially every time she needed help. That was often the case! More, importantly, however, he was an intermediary for her and influential Americans. And so, already in April, Paraskevi met with a “throng of journalists” at Crane’s residence, and dignitaries at the American Ministry in Paris. Crane also spoke about Albanian affairs.

The other major concern that Paraskevi felt was the lack of cohesion and consensus among the various Albanian groups in Paris. Those who like her represented the Albanians of outlying “colonies”, often felt out of the official delegation, and were ignorant about its proceedings. Her telegrams to the family indicate confusion, frustration, and alarm that nothing was being done. Contrary to her expectation and those of others, the government delegation was not holding common meeting.

On the other side of the Atlantic, the Party and VATRA hung their hopes on an American mandate. But it seemed elusive. The rivalry between the two Albanian parties continued to jade their mutual perceptions. The Party believed that VATRA’s appeal for an American Mandate was a cheap mask. Knowing full well the Americans’ reluctance, VATRA was in fact— the

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<sup>278</sup> Saul, 167-213.

Party maintained— waiting for an Italian alternative. Among other duties, Paraskevi was also charged with finding out whether this was true.<sup>279</sup>

The “colonial” delegates met among themselves in mid April. Though frustrated with the negligence of the official delegation, they still determined that coming to an agreement with the government party was prudent. Their other task was to draft a protest against Italian designs on Albania to be signed among all representatives in Paris. Prince Nouredin Vlora, wavered, and expressed concern that Halil Pasha’s credentials as *charge d’affaires* of Istanbul Albanians were fraudulent. Paraskevi provides concise summations of these proceedings, but her participation must have made a certain impression. She became the go-between them and the official delegation.

When the meeting took place, Turhan Pasha relented after great pleading on Paraskevi’s part. “For my sake, he said”, she wrote, “there would be a meeting, because I am she who loves Albania truly and the others only do so out of interest and do not work well.” Whether the frail old man really thought that, is not verifiable, and maybe not important. It is an indication, however, of her self-esteem as a nationalist. To achieve this end, she also nudged colleagues whom she could sway. Nevertheless, as a telegram referenced days later shows, the “crisis continued”. But, she reported, the majority of the colonial delegates supported the national program, a majority which coerced influential members of the government delegation to collaborate with them.

Paraskevi and her other “unofficial” colleagues congregated at the office of the official delegation. She often reports shouting matches and repeated accusations against two particular delegates— Dr. Mihal Turtulli (from Korça) and Mehmet Konica— that they brought on all the

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<sup>279</sup> April 15 telegram from Dimitri Balla, National Party Secretary to Paraskevi, 15 April diary entry.

confusion and entanglements. Her tone of reference to these visits conveys a sense of ease and confidence which allows me to surmise that she was comfortable being among the men and that they interacted with her.

When she left in October, she complained that they realized too late how valuable her work and partnership was. Their frequent, “incessant”, visits to her place however positively indicate that the men definitely considered her as one of their colleagues. Why else would they bother to “irritate me” as Paraskevi often complained they did? Written correspondence between her and several of the male politicians she worked with in Paris and beyond reveal that she was indeed an accepted member.

Paraskevi had a warm and *reliable* colleague in Pandeli Vangjeli, a future prime minister, and also Prince Nouredin. Her tone also implies that she respected and *was* respected by more senior figures, like Turhan Pasha, Patër Fishta and Bishop Bumçi (official delegates). Strength of conviction also comes through strongly in the diary. Not once did she relent her stance on the national program, even though she grudgingly realized that its chances of realization were slim if not entirely hopeless.

Admirable as her steadfast resolution was, it made her political vision flawed. When Pater Fishta and Luigj Gurakuqi visited her initially in April, they regarded it mere idealism. She begged to differ! Progress stalled for different reasons. Some colleagues were unfit to work with on account of their drunken follies and their flaring tempers. Certainly a few among them were adventurers and opportunists. However, the single greatest barrier was the difficulty of predicting how viable of a state Albania would be.

As Paraskevi came to realize, her small and weak Albania *needed* assistance. The question was, would it come from across the Adriatic, or across the Atlantic? Supporting an



American mandate over an Italian protectorate had logic. An American mandate, however unlikely, removed the possibility of territorial annexation. For her part, Paraskevi unjustly deemed her Italophile colleagues as unpatriotic. “Charlatans, beasts, dogs...” she called them.

Attempts at “unity” among the government delegation and the informal colonial ones dragged out in the months to come. Promises came that a meeting would be held, as protesters pour in but none came. In the meantime, Paraskevi was supplied with “all” of the paperwork, memoranda, petitions, etcetera that the government had submitted to the Conference as proof that there was no difference in their respective positions. However, she maintained that there were differences.

Paraskevi’s schedule was always busy. She often visited Hotel Gallia to meet with her former Professor Puppini, who briefed her on the American perspective over Albania’s affairs—that they feared Italian entrance in the Balkans was unavoidable. She also sought out Mr. Baker, head of the foreign press, in the American Ministry, to publicize the Albanian issue, and spoke with some journalists to clarify what her work was about. The list of meetings is a long one. In between her rendezvous, she wrote to Baron Sonnino and Lloyd George, asking for interviews and telegrams to President and Mrs. Wilson petitioning for Albania and asking for an audience. She also went to meet Essad Pasha in person, who also asserted his own claims over Albania.

At the end of April, newspapers released Wilson’s memorandum to Italy. As she read the contents pertaining to Vlora—the coveted port at the mouth of the Adriatic—her spirits were crushed. Vlora was to be ceded to Italy for strategic reasons. Paraskevi’s idealization of that “wonderful man” gave way to cynicism and gradually, a very pessimist outlook. Mostly, she blamed the “anti-nationalists” working among “us” for Vlora. Early in May, Akama met with her and other Albanians once more to promise them he would do all in his power for their rights.

This was the last bit she saw of him. What could he even do? To Wilson, however, the Albanians sent a protest. Amongst themselves, they drew up a program specific to the informal delegations.

Some of her written requests bore fruit. Mrs. Edith Wilson replied to her, but the absence of further note on the subject indicates that the two probably never met. More accessible Americans did oblige her instead, replying that the United States would not intervene in Balkan affairs and advising her to meet with other influential Americans. A French linguist, Louis Dufour, whose work on Albanian the *Morning Star* had published, promised to come see her. However, further encounters with other delegates made it painfully clear that there was still no sign of collaboration. "Time flies in the search of an agreement, but the divisive propagandas are much too powerful," she wrote to her sister and brother in law in Boston.

Fortunately, or unfortunately, Paris commotion did at times redirect her increasingly depressed state of mind. On May Day, coffee houses, shops, and restaurants emptied out as protesters poured into la Rue Royal, Place de la Concord, and other important places. Gunshots were heard all around; many died and others were wounded. Similar agitation took place all over Europe, and in the U.S. "36 bombs were sent to senators." On May 8<sup>th</sup>, newspapers published the treaty that spelled Germany's doom- the conditions were quite harsh and many questioned whether it would be signed.

Visitors also dropped in, and invigorated her spirits. Professor Lybyer called on her one fine morning, and so did a Major Dennison- head of the American Red Cross. The latter gentleman reported that he had visited Albania in 1918, and that he was now going to the U.S., to collect donations for clothes. She was delighted to hear him praise her people, and moreover, that they deserved American support. But just as soon as her hopes were roused, they were dashed once more! The major opined that Italy would step into Albania, and ask for a mandate

afterward. “Ah, these men are rarely men when they speak like children,” she confided in her diary. In his next visit, the Major added that Italy would not stop at the mandate, but would occupy the whole of Albania.

At about the same time, her much older colleague Grameno, resigned himself to drinking and made public scenes. Paraskevi cringed as he made a pass at her in a Paris restaurant in front of other colleagues. When he roused the entire hotel with his drunken admissions of his love for her, and beseeched to be admitted into her chambers, the poor woman cried in agony.

Whom could she confide in about this? He was a married man in his fifties, and a close family friend at that. The Kyrias-Dakos were basically looking after his wife in Boston at this time. Paraskevi was at her wit's end. To get him out of her sight, she snatched his passport and implored others to do what they could to send him back to the U.S. He eventually returned to Boston late in the summer, but not before causing her further financial distress, and making an utter fool of himself. When he did come to his senses, he apologized to her. By that point, however, he had lost face with the entire delegation.

News of an undesired but anticipated elopement of a niece to a Gheg Muslim Albanian further unsettled her. Then, in mid May the mailman brought her a circular from the Albanians of Switzerland commending her and others on their “heavy burden” and “asking the delegates to work with justice to win our national rights.” Professor Lybyer too confessed his displeasure with the current peace, as little justice was to be had. It was at this time that her resolve really began to wane. She saw no end in sight, and little purpose in staying on in Paris. However, her sturdy mentor Crane urged her to have faith and not reach hasty decisions until the turbulence began to clear.

But the confusion showed no sign of subsiding. On the one hand, government officials wined and dined each other, promising to meet officially. On the other, they blamed each other for consorting with “foreign interests”. A small group of colonial delegates, Paraskevi among them, met on their own to talk out issues as they perceived them and resolved to call a meeting.<sup>280</sup> To be sure, the general confusion helped the official delegation to keep all others at bay while itself struggling to figure out a course of action, more or less. Nevertheless, Paraskevi stayed on.

The closing weeks of May brought anxiety from the German side. On the 22<sup>nd</sup>, she noted, “the news today, not good.” German negotiators needed more time to sign the Peace Treaty. She had been in Paris barely two months, but the longing for her family wore her down. Paraskevi retreated for evening of cinema viewing at “Pathe Palais”, and even took up French lessons three times a week to ease her mind. In spite of her depressed mood, delighted, she let it slip that her instructor was impressed with her progress.

That month, Dako sent her several copies of his published book to distribute among people at the Conference. Positioning Albania as *the* entry point to the Near East, on account of its history as an Ottoman province, Dako’s propaganda reproduced the arguments of the Political Party mixed with a selective telling of the family history in cultural and political activism. On the question of a protectorate, there was no room for compromise.

The Albanian question is a comparatively simple problem for the Peace Conference to solve. The country is inhabited almost exclusively by Albanians; and, if the statesmen assembled at Paris throw overboard the old diplomacy, striving only to seek the interest of the Albanians; if they apply impartially the sacred principles of nationality and self-determination, as they are announced in the 14 points of President Wilson, then it would be easy to determine fair frontiers, that would take in all territory inhabited by Albanians, and to confirm the recognition of the London Conference, which gave Albania a place of a sovereign state amongst her sister states of the world. Whatever the peace makers will decided, they will do it with the full knowledge of the situation...<sup>281</sup>

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<sup>280</sup> May 21.

<sup>281</sup> Dako, 200.

Albanians knew, he argued, that a protectorate was a veiled attempt to institutionalize the country's annexation. In the final chapter, Dako listed the issues that would concern the Albanian government among which administration, agriculture, industry, roads, a monetary system, and that of foreign schools. The issues he listed were glaring, but he ended on the sanguine note that the Albanians of the New World were the best indication of "Albanian potential". If within ten years, 85% of men aged between 20-55 could learn to read and write their own language, the country itself could "get on its feet in a short time".<sup>282</sup>

As full of holes as Dako's propaganda was, it gave Paraskevi hope. Within days of receiving it, she approached her more senior associate, Pandeli Evangjeli, to call a meeting with the troublesome Mehmet Bey. When she went to Mehmet's other colleague, Dr. Turtulli, about coming he replied that there was no use, since it could only end in counter accusations. On approaching yet a third, Myfit Libohova, she had to hear that none of the Great Powers wanted an independent Albania.

For his part, Libohova knew that the rest regarded him as an Italophile, and he did not care. He confided in her that he was waiting for Colonel Castoldi, a member of the Italian negotiating team, before making up his mind. As he worked on the issues of the eastern Adriatic, many in the Albanian group, Paraskevi included, visited his offices. However, her move remained ineffective. When invited to lunch with a mixed party of delegates, she observed that wherever the conversation took them, it would always come back to Italy.<sup>283</sup>

On meeting with Dr. Day, head of the American Commission to Negotiate Peace, Paraskevi got a much clearer picture of where the Albanian issue stood. Although its fate still hung in the balance, Day told her that there was little hope that Albania would include Kosovo

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<sup>282</sup> Dako, 205.

<sup>283</sup> Paraskevi diary, May 30.

and Çamëria. President Wilson, he said, “desired her salvation”, but it seemed that Albania’s borders would not extend beyond those set in 1913. An American mandate, which she so desired, was doubtful. Italy would shortly obtain a mandate over Vlora, he said. The British, Albania’s steadfast friends, were entangled. Aligned with France, which wanted to give more territories to Serbia and Greece, the British could do nothing. But he did invite her to come and speak at the Commission with another delegate to speak about the railway that the “Serbs” were planning to construct across northern Albania.<sup>284</sup>

This projection ran counter to her vision, and she called Day’s projection a tragedy. In 1919, both of these provinces were in Serb and Greek administered ground. Notwithstanding a lack of realism, the Kyrias-Dakos held out in favor of an American mandate, however slim the prospects remained. To that end, she mailed President Wilson a copy of Dako’s book and gifted another to Dr. Day, who “accepted with pleasure”.

When she appeared before the Commission to talk about the railroad, with government delegate Mehdi Frashëri, the American position seemed like a compromise. America, Dr. Day went on, would allow the Serbs to build the railroad, as long as they respected Albanian rights. The U.S. was prepared to cancel the Albanian debt, and would invite an organization to help Albania establish a news agency. Moreover, he argued that Albania did not need a mandate or membership in the League of Nations, “because it was not like one of the nations of Africa or Asia”.<sup>285</sup> The undertones were clear: the United States did not want to establish a protectorate over Albania.

She soon had the opportunity to interview the Italian Ambassador to the U.S., Count Marci de Celere, as well as Colonel Castoldi. The arrangement came via the incidental

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<sup>284</sup> June 2 entry. This planned railroad would connect Serbia to the Adriatic Sea. If France wanted to give more territory to Serbia, in this case it would mean, annexing today’s northern Albania.

<sup>285</sup> Paraskevi diary, June 5 entry.

appearance of a Miss Amy Bernardy, an Italian American journalist previously introduced to Paraskevi while writing a book on immigrants to the U.S. The chance encounter with Bernardy, who had actually come looking for Paraskevi at her hotel, also gave her a chance to see more of Paris: the Louvre, St. Germain, Notre Dame, and la Rue Claudet, which “Dante had mentioned in the Divine Comedy”.

Before meeting with the Count, she drew up a list of discussion points with the help of her friend, Pandeli Evangjeli. Paraskevi and Count Marci de Celere had a very frank talk. He told her he was worried to see that Albanians instead of working seriously, “only made matters worse with their behavior”. She then laid out the issues that concerned Albanians: that Italy could only salvage the small country’s situation by abstaining from its imperialist demands, the protectorates, and the annexation of Vlora. He replied to them one by one, attempting to assure her that Italy had no imperialist inclinations towards its neighbor. The protectorate was *protection*, and Italy did not desire “an inch” of Albanian soil. Rather, Italy recognized that Albania needed protection from foreign ambitions and to build itself up.

The very next day, Colonel Castoldi, who was working specifically on the “Adriatic question” i.e. the borders with Yugoslavia, belittled the Albanian cause during a meeting with Paraskevi. The Colonel chastised Albanian delegates and their “childlike behavior” for their inability to conduct affairs. To him, they were untrustworthy liars. Italy had no plans for a protectorate, or to colonize Albania. As temporary precaution, while Albanians remained unorganized, it became necessary to preserve the country. Albanians were unable to govern. They had no educated elite for the proper conduct of political affairs. In business too, they were childlike. He was ever so sorry that Paraskevi had not come to him before. To top it all off, the cheeky Colonel showed her documents, which compromised the already mentioned troublesome

delegates, “revealing” their connections to Serbs and Turks.<sup>286</sup> She does not mention her reply, but it is safe to say that at least with regards to the behavior of her colleagues, the two agreed!

In June, Paraskevi seems to have felt better. Outings around Paris and visits with the other delegates took place. Miss Bernardy came around often, and wanted to go to Albania with her. But Paraskevi hesitated; she was waiting to see Crane again, who was still engaged in the Middle East. Also, what would happen with the delegates... However, explicit instructions from the Party in Boston took care of that. Her family did not want her to go to Albania. Christo Dako implied that their cause did not *need* to be resolved in Paris. There would also be the League of Nations...

To dispel rumors that Turhan Pasha was an Italophile, the Albanian government replaced him with the prelate Monsignor Bumçi, archbishop of Durrës. Letters from Albania showed discontent with naming a religious figure as lead negotiator, but the delegation remained inactive.<sup>287</sup> Paraskevi and a score of other Albanians resolved to continue on in Paris, and work in spite of it. Telegrams from the States urged them to come together. Dako wrote from Washington D.C. that the U.S. Senate was *now* willing to study the possibility of an American mandate over Albania. He was working with Senators Lodge and Barach, and American representatives in Paris were instructed to look into the matter. Professor Archibald Cary Coolidge and a Mr. Buehler took over matters of the Greek-Albanian borders, while a Mr. Johnson worked on the north.

In Paris, Albanian leaders urged Paraskevi to meet with Americans to explore the idea more in depth. On a couple of occasions, she and they met with a Mr. Johnson who had just replaced Dr. Day. Johnson argued that Albania needed the protection of a power with no

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<sup>286</sup> June 11.

<sup>287</sup> Prince Nouredin shared these with Paraskevi.



immediate interests in the region. But that was as close as an indication that *America* would be that power as this American representative gave. On other occasions, Paraskevi met with a Capt. Collins, an American who had just returned from Albania. Collins was introduced to her through Gurakuqi and Medhi Frashëri. The trio told him that the south was in the greatest danger, especially the villages burnt by Greek forces. He added that Italians behaved atrociously, that he was willing to fight to spare Albanians of that... They gave him notes on the country that he could then pass on to “American capitalists so that they come and undertake the great works in Albania.”<sup>288</sup>

Americans were rendering all manner of interesting services to Paraskevi just then. Violet Kennedy wrote with a marriage proposal, greatly praising the prospective groom, a brother of one of her old friends. But Paraskevi could not make up her mind. On the 10<sup>th</sup>, Dr. Mary Mills Patrick, then herself advancing the idea of an American mandate for Turkey, sent her a note from Hotel Roosevelt telling her that she was in town, and would like to see her. Her old professor received very well, “like an Albanian diplomat, a writer, etc...” Paraskevi let out all her worries about the cause, and Patrick comforted her with words of hope and support of ego! She wanted to meet all the other Albanian delegates. They in turn, wanted to meet her, Johnson and Professor Coolidge.

In July, it was southern Albania that most worried those in Paris. Paraskevi and Medhi Bey Frashëri met with the European head of the Red Cross, about the urgent needs of Albanian peasants in the south. He too notes, and assured them that he would send orders for the area and its needs to be surveyed. The other problem in the south was that the Greek representatives in Paris, were raising claims (again) over Korça and Gjirokastra. On June 25<sup>th</sup>, newspapers published the memorandum that Alexandros Karapanos, Minister of Foreign Affairs in the

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<sup>288</sup> July 17.

provisional government of Northern Epirus, sent to the Conference arguing that the two cities were Greek. Now, Karapanos represented that government in Paris, and based his claims on the Protocol of Corfu, negotiated between the Great Powers, Albania, and the North Epirote Government in February 1914.<sup>289</sup> In addition, Epirotes from the U.S. he said, sent a memorandum bearing 2500 signatures by which they professed the desire to be united with Greece.

When she read the paper, Paraskevi became incensed. Over the next ten days, Albanians in Paris worked on an article refuting Karapanos' claims. Over the next ten days, Albanians in Paris worked on an article to refute Karapanos' claims.<sup>290</sup> This new leaf towards the U.S. was maybe what the official delegation had needed. All of a sudden, as Dr. Patrick and Prof. Coolidge finished their lunch with Paraskevi and the others, the government sent an invitation for an official meeting on the afternoon of the 25<sup>th</sup>! Paraskevi does not link the two together in her diary, but it is curious that the government called a meeting only after this new link with the U.S. was forged. Perhaps, only then the official delegation became fully convinced that the other groups (or Paraskevi) did have the power to work on their own.

Paraskevi had long waited for this! On July 25<sup>th</sup>, all Albanian delegates finally met, and received copies of the official working program. They also resolved to meet at the Government's office twice a week.

### *The Long Road Home*

The end of July brought most of the Albanian groups working in Paris closer together. Paraskevi moved into a more affordable hotel, "closer to the government's office". But the old

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<sup>289</sup> William Miller, *The Ottoman Empire and its Successors, 1801-1927*, (New York: Routledge, 1966), 301-3.

<sup>290</sup> July 9.

problems persisted. Now the troublemakers turned their knives on her. Dr. Turtulli dumped all his gossip on her. He had covered all of Mehmet's misdoings, and now regretted it. Mehmet accused her of being an intriguer, to which she replied time would tell! Day later, Halil Pasha, head of the Istanbul group, expressed his mistrust of Mehmet. In their second meeting, all of the delegates agreed to be rid of entanglements, but they continued. Two days later, Erickson spoke out against Paraskevi saying that she "did not know what she was doing", and that "she had no faith in other delegates". Where did she go? To Dr. Patrick who spoke so highly of her former student. She asked for her picture for the book she was writing.

Was Erickson correct? It is hard to say. However, it is obvious that there was no agreement among the Albanians. Their visions conflicted, and the influence of Great Power politics was obvious. Their tempers barred progress. She was no exception, and certainly no less complicated than the rest. But if he was correct, in August, her complaints towards her colleagues became severely paranoid. Dr. Turtulli was no help in that direction: daily he fed her reports on what failures the other delegates were, and who was in whose "grasp". Her entries are littered with angry epithets, and the repetitive conclusion that Albania lacked "men". When news about a secret Italo-Greek agreement about the division of southern Albania surfaced in papers on the 5<sup>th</sup>, she assumed that it was the "great agitator" Castoldi and that smaller, Gurakuqi's, doing. Turning to Dr. Patrick for comfort she writes,

Foreigners are capable of understanding our worth, but our own have evil hearts, are jealous devils, may the Lord forgive me.<sup>291</sup>

She kept her guard against her relative, Dhimitër Berati, for fear that he was a spy. In the second week of August, the Party sent another delegate from the U.S. Nikolle Ivanaj immediately came to pay his respects to her. On the 14<sup>th</sup>, he came to see her twice. On the 15<sup>th</sup>,

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<sup>291</sup> August 6.

three times. On the 20<sup>th</sup>, she had her fill. “That fool” was courting her by reading poems. During a walk in the park, the words that some said about the delegates could not be written. “Mother Albania finds herself bereft of her own, the poor wretch.”

Nevertheless, work kept its previous pace. Visits with the Albanians, visits with the Americans. The official delegation also asked that she come to the office and work two-to-three times a week: routine typing, and translations to and from English. Paraskevi also took care of the mailing and communication between the government and the U.S. in August. Monsignor Bumçi urged that the Party and VATRA collaborate, and so Dako happily reported that the former rivals had now come to an agreement. From Washington D.C., Dako instructed Paraskevi that Bumçi send an official plea to the American Department of Foreign Relations for an American mandate. Early in the month, the majority of Albanian delegates in Paris worked in favor of American assistance.

Finally, she also met with the *Associated Press* and *The Chicago Tribune*. Professor Coolidge and Mr. Johnson brought no happy news; indeed, they brought no news. The Albanian question still had to surface. It needed broader exposure. Paraskevi and a fellow delegate came to an agreement to publish a series of articles on *The Chicago Tribune*. Despite the tremendous cost, 3000 francs, Paraskevi’s article was published on the 22<sup>nd</sup>. The nature of this article is unclear. She does not explain it, nor have I found it on the August 22<sup>nd</sup> issue of *The Tribune*.

To promote the Albanian question in the U.S., the delegates in Paris voted to send Patër Fishta. Their original choice had been Dako, given his connections and residency there. However, the fact that the Kyrias-Dakos were ill disposed towards the Italians made the Padre a better choice. Although this was no doubt upsetting, Paraskevi made no comment.

For the last two months, she waited for Charles Crane to come back. She was now without money, and weary of her colleagues. Longing for home and family was also taking its toll. Her headaches, dreams, and nightmares had grown constant and worse. Delirious with anxiety and confusion, she dreamt of a “rising sun” and hoped that it was a good omen. In a few days, Dako telegraphed her that she should come with Crane. On the 27<sup>th</sup>, the beloved mentor returned.

No sooner had he come back, than he left for Prague again. She spent most of September making arrangements to leave Paris. Soon, however, she began thinking about what she would do back in the U.S. First on her agenda was to resume *The Morning Star*. But when she broached the subject with Pandeli Evangjeli and another colleague, they “wanted to stop [her] from leaving by all means.”<sup>292</sup> In late September she mailed announcements that publication would begin anew. She felt that she could not stay in Paris longer. Who would she work with? Dr. Turtulli found it hard to agree with the rest, and told her he would soon leave as well.<sup>293</sup> Also disillusioned, Nouredin Bey came to bid farewell. On the 5<sup>th</sup>, he left for Albania.

Notwithstanding, she made it her busiest month in Paris. Meeting with Prof. Lybyer and Mr. Buehler gave her assurance that the Americans “really sympathized” with the Albanian cause and all hope was not lost. Paraskevi hoped to get to the heart of the American center in Paris; she wanted to speak to Frank Polk, chief American delegate, about Albania. To that end, several people of *The Chicago Tribune* were influential. A Miss Groth and Betty Benthysen, who worked for the paper, invited her on several occasions in September to talk things out and give her an opportunity to present her case. With their help, she was ultimately successful in talking to

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<sup>292</sup> September 1.

<sup>293</sup> September 3.

Polk's assistant, Mr. Shaw, at the Hotel Crillon. He promised to do what he could to secure her an audience.

Betty Benthysen also helped her to expose the situation in Korça to the outside world. Paraskevi met the editor of *The Tribune*, Mr. Gibbons, and asked to do a piece on the situation in the occupied city. It is not entirely clear how, but she managed to bring along Korçar refugee women, who had come to Paris, to give accounts of their flight. At the same time, she attempted to publicize the city's plight through the *Associated Press*. Edit Smith there asked her and Medhi Bey for their notes. Grateful for their assistance, the Albanian delegation gifted Miss Benthysen a beautiful beaded purse in the value of 500 francs, and her friend 300 francs. Of course, this was all done in consultation with Paraskevi's feminine touch.

It is difficult to say, what influence, if any they played. Unfortunately, Dako's attempts in D.C. to lobby for an American mandate were not successful. On October 4<sup>th</sup>, Paraskevi recorded sharp discussions in the American Senate. "No one wants the Albanian mandate", she wrote. The Albanian delegates in Paris saw this coming. At a meeting on October 3<sup>rd</sup>, they decided in favor of an independent Albania even if an American mandate did not come their way.

The situation in Albanian continued to be uncertain. In late September, the President of the Italian Senate, Tommaso Tittoni made the Italian claims on Albania public. Venizelos made similar announcements about Epirus about a month earlier. Paraskevi says that on both cases, the Albanians in Paris decided to protest the Italian and Greek claims. However, her suspicion of the Albanian government's Italian leaning persisted. A colleague, Blinishti, told her of their Italian sympathies, excluding himself. But this is not entirely clear. When Italian troops entered Korça on September 19<sup>th</sup>, only some of the delegates in Paris were in favor of Italian presence there. Albanians in the U.S. sent a telegram asking for the government's permission to send men to

Korça, and that an American consul be established in the city.<sup>294</sup> During the meeting, however, members of the government responded that they could not permit the movement of men to Korça right then. Accusations of collaboration with the Italians persisted, this time about Suleyman Bey Delvina. “Union there is, I dare say. In reality, I don’t know what will turn up”, wrote Paraskevi on September 18<sup>th</sup>.

Arguments between delegates were also frequent. Usually, they were about the different stands people took. In mid August, Pater Fishta and Mehmed Bey quarreled in open session over two different propositions by Luigi Gurakuqi and Mehmed Bey. Paraskevi and others left early so that the government could settle it among themselves. At the end of the month, Gurakuqi “spoke very roughly” to Dr. Turtulli [unspecified reasons] and Paraskevi remarked that their quarrel threatened their union. The Istanbul group felt alienated and was not attending any meetings at this point.

But the worst yet came at the end of the month. The dispute involved the position towards Tittoni’s words in the Italian Senate and President Wilson’s reply to Senator Moses in the American Senate, “both damaging to Albania”.<sup>295</sup> She continued,

The delegates of the colonies were asked what they thought on this point, and what we could do collectively. Halil Pasha took the lead and said we must protest, etc. Everyone gave his opinion, but word after word lead to a big fight... an indescribable tumult. Pasha, Gurakuqi, and Fuad lost all control, and if this had taken place elsewhere, it could have ended in murder. We split in different directions. My head hurt so much, that I did not sleep at all that night.

A chance meeting with a British officer, General Philipps, who had just returned from Shkodër, he pointed out that this particular aspect was damaging to Albanian interests. Disappointed that Great Britain was not actively helping the cause, Paraskevi retorted that this was merely an excuse. “We don’t fight as much as the others do,” she told him.

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<sup>294</sup> September 16.

<sup>295</sup> September 11.

Before she went to sleep, after that terrible fight, she found Crane waiting for her at the hotel. In late September he had left a check for 1000 francs, and now he had come to take her home. The appointed hour had come. She and Crane would sail away to the US. Yet she delayed it for a bit, because the other delegates “staunchly” opposed her departure. Although she frequently complained about them, it was apparent that they were reluctant to part with her.

In September alone, her to-and-fros for the government delegation were exhausting. Press releases for Monsignor Bumçi, translations, setting up appointments, arrangements with American dignitaries and the press, note taking... On more than one occasion, she also served as an alternative face, as a more palatable figure with whom foreign diplomats spoke. Colonel Castoldi, General Philipps, the Serb Foreign Minister Radevitch, and Count Marci de Celere were all delighted to meet with an Albanian female diplomat and granted her polite receptions.

Colonel Castoldi sympathized with her plight as a woman working among “drunkards”. As far as the diary shows, her presence at these meetings was uncompromising. Paraskevi politely stood her ground in defense of her vision for an independent Albania, however illusive a position it may have been. Radevitch saw right through her in these aspects. During their meeting on September 27, a meeting he had requested, Radevitch proposed an Albanian alignment with Yugoslavia. He pointed out that Albanians were asking for an Italian mandate, and the dangers this carried. She replied,

No sir. We do not want a mandate. Assistance we may agree to, but never a mandate, because we are a European people, not an African one. Not only have we not requested it, but we have protested it.

Radevitch provoked her further. Albanians must not live in illusions. The Italians had their mandate, but it only went so far. Albanians could and should save what they could.

Vlorë is dead. Gjirokastër left... Korça still debatable. We are the only people who desire your independence, and we will lend you all our support to save the country from Italy's clutches. We not only grant you the Albania of 1913, but are ready to come to an agreement to rectify borders and give you all you own. We do not



want a foreign administrator. He must be Albanian. If not Essad Pasha, then someone else, so long as he is Albanian...

But before the Yugoslavs could save Albania, the Americans withdrew their support of the Italian mandate a mere few days later (October 2<sup>nd</sup>).

Perhaps Radevitch called her for a meeting because he knew of her anti-Italian disposition. Perhaps because she was a woman... But in the end, the Albanians too may have looked upon her services differently, precisely because she was not one of the typical male negotiators. On October 14<sup>th</sup>, Redjep Bey Mitrovica came to Paris from Albania on a mission to investigate the delegates. Before Paraskevi left six days later, he approached her requesting that *she* draw up a report on the activities of the delegates until that point. He assured her that, “[her] point of view will be taken as true, and that the report will be quite important”.<sup>296</sup> That she may have exaggerated this point is plausible. However, she was different from the rest, even if no less complex.

As a woman, and a Christian missionary worker at that, Paraskevi was held up to different standards, and they were made obvious. She could not be seen drinking, and she could not be seen openly bickering with her colleagues, in a vulgar manner no less. Again as a woman, she had the advantage of a different perspective as an observer during the previous six months. Redjeb Bey did not *point* this out to her. But others had, and as the only member of the opposite sex, who was simultaneously well educated and connected, she did stand out in the (rowdy) crowd of Albanian male delegates in Paris.

In spite of her frequent grumbling towards the delegates, they did respect her. Pater Fishta accompanied her twice to the Italian Consulate to get a *foglio de via*. When the Italian authorities refused the visa, her relative Dhimitër Berati, took her to the Serbian Consulate where

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<sup>296</sup> October 17.

she at least succeeded in securing a passport.<sup>297</sup> Her last days in Paris were filled with visits. In fact, she complained that she had no time to pack. “They still did not leave me alone”. In the afternoon, an unrecorded number of colleagues came to bid her farewell. A student, who had come to their office, delivered a “long and beautiful” dedication to her, extending a bouquet of flowers. Then at 7 p.m., they accompanied her to the Paris Train Station. She took off for Havre, and the next morning, October 18, she arrived in Southampton. Charles Crane was waiting for her aboard the luxurious *Mauritania*. Once on the ship, she set down to compose a report of her experiences in Paris for the Party and Crane. And that too, marks the end of her diary.

### *Conclusion*

A significant portion of this chapter has drawn on Paraskevi’s experiences of political negotiation and state building at the Peace Conference. That choice was deliberate. As scholars of autobiography note, diaries allow a closer level of scrutiny because they are recorded under the pressure of a moment. Rather than controlled, they are haphazard. As Joanne Cooper argues, “A daily diary is all the more instructive because it is more like raw data than synthesized memory”<sup>298</sup>. My attempt here was to understand a personality, who although playing an important role as a diplomat at a moment of great historical importance, has been rendered in the minority by virtue of being in the minority due to her gender, her religious beliefs, and political points of view.

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<sup>297</sup> It is unclear why she needs travel documents from these consulates it being that she was going to the United States. I can hypothesize that since Albanian territories were under military occupation, and Albania lacked a clear status, she technically had no legal papers. Therefore, something else anything else was needed to document her travel from France to the United States.

<sup>298</sup> Joanne E. Cooper, “Shaping Meaning: Women’s Diaries, Journals, and Letters- The Old and the New,” *Women’s Studies International Forum* 1, no. 10 (1987), 95.

Here, the diary reveals complexities in the personality of Paraskevi and in the circumstances that determined her operations. It reveals a woman for whom advocating “national unity” became a way of life, a platform that allowed her to fashion an outward identity that suited who she had become. This is not to say that her patriotism was a mask. This is, however to say, that nationalism became a vocation around which she bound her identity. She propagated “national unity”, but when the opportunity came, she acted first and foremost as the agent of a splinter political organization perfectly content to carry on its own propaganda and, if possible, take the helm.

Paraskevi faulted her colleagues for being “Italophiles”, although she well understood the fundamentals of political and monetary backing. Charles Crane, whom the National Party also designated as an honorary representative in Paris, himself very much connected with the American Commission supported her financially for much of her time there. Indeed, missionary organizations had also provided as much support as they could. As much as she valorized her patriotism, on a fundamental level, her position and those of her colleagues, were motivated by the same interest. They all came to Paris with one idea or another to create an Albanian state.

Realizing how challenging that was in 1919, they attempted to work with the outlines of international politics, using means and methods they were most familiar with. Susan Pedersen has called the mandate system a discursive arena, and not a proper administrative system as such.<sup>299</sup> Designed to facilitate the transition of people in former German colonies and Ottoman territories to eventual self-rule, it was, as the Italian Colonel Castoldi told Paraskevi in person, perceived to be an assisting mechanism. Kyrias and like-minded others saw such proposed

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<sup>299</sup> See Susan Pedersen, “The Meaning of the Mandate System: an Argument”, *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 32, no. 4 (Oct.-Dec. 2006), 560-582.

Italian protection, however, as a means to political annexation. They were right. Ethiopia and Albania both exemplified this fear decades later.

But although she understood that an American mandate was unlikely, Paraskevi very much used her American connections with the effect of creating an alternative political counterweight. By campaigning for an American mandate and by petitioning international diplomats on the need for an *independent* Albania, Kyrias helped to streamline a process of “generating publicity”. This, Susan Pedersen argues, was *the* enduring impact of the mandate system. Thus, while a mandate remained tentative, Paraskevi demonstrated skillful maneuvering that, in the long run, helped the Albanian cause.

She was not the only one to do so, but certainly the personal experience of negotiating with missionary organizations clued her into the imperialist potential of any kind of foreign assistance, however that was framed. The plan of the ABCFM to Christianize Albania hinged on the unlikely possibility of converting Muslims in the Ottoman Empire. The Kyriases clearly read Barton’s argument, and however much they fomented “Protestant Albania”, when push came to shove, they did *not* want its oversight over their school. Minute as that small detail seems, it symbolizes something far greater.

As much as Christian workers were conduits of American influence into their respective domains, as cultural brokers, they were also its gatekeepers. The Kyriases clearly understood their position in this hierarchy of cultural transmission. The school as they and Dr. Patrick argued, had to suit the *needs* of an independent Albania. The ABCFM could not object, for it was Albanians who were inviting it to Christianize them. As interwoven as their projects seem to have been, these parties built their communication in ways that positioned themselves

clearly. The Kyriases, as Dr. Patrick had done before them, learned to work the system to their own favor.

That the process of state formation in this case was fragile and highly contingent is evident, both in the ever changing tenor of Great Power politics, as well as in the very circumstance of the Kyriases politicizing Korça's inclusion within Albania. Their religious nationalist ideology, their situation there, and their connections helped to make an otherwise obscure town a focal point of international diplomacy. And therein Paraskevi's very profession was born, as she sought to protect and further her livelihood.

## Chapter 4

### Instituti Kyrias: Training “Soldiers of the Nation”

What the nineteenth century did for the educational movement of the women of the western world, the twentieth century is doing for the women of the East... The Kyrias School of Tirana, Albania, founded some forty years ago, with but a handful of veiled girls, has now a student body of about one hundred and fifty unveiled splendid examples of *new womanhood*— Anna Catell, 1929

Anna Catell was proud of the school in which she taught for two years. Instituti Kyrias was unusual in many regards. Its instruction was multi-lingual, and the staff was international. Its methods and materials were described as a mix of American and European. Spatially well designed and equipped for the time, it offered the finest learning environment for the young women of Albania in the 1920s and 30s. Both the Albanian government, which heavily funded it, and the American sympathizers who backed its conception in 1913, expressed high expectations that it would mold a new generation of women— or as Catell put it, a “new womanhood”.

Such anticipation placed the school under considerable local and international scrutiny. Indeed, the 1913 cluster of Kyrias supporters persistently encouraged the transformed Kyrias educational venture during the constant political upheavals of the 1920s. As a state-in-name only, the new Albania was far from stable. Internally, religious and clan factionalism impeded centralization. Externally, the need for foreign capital made it especially vulnerable. When Ahmet Bey Zog, until then a relatively little known military figure from the powerful Mati tribe, seemed to put Albania on the course of stability, he turned to neighboring fascist Italy for financial support.

But with Adriatic expansion as its goal, Italian assistance became costly. By the mid 1930s, Italian presence in Albania, organized through the Società per il Sviluppo dell'Albania (Society for the Development of Albania, henceforth SVEA), increased rapidly in the public and private arenas. Thus threatened, the Zog regime took control of the spheres of social development crucial to nation building: the sectors of education and religion. In this, women became important subjects of debate.

In this chapter and the next, I will use a micro-historical approach around Instituti Kyrias as well as four women's magazines published between 1922-1930, to examine the broader discursive, political, and cultural spheres in which the "New Woman" emerged in order to situate the Albanian example in a larger context. Essential to such analysis in this chapter is to show what became of the plans to enlarge the school in 1913, and how they were modified to fit the needs of independent Albania. In addition, I aim to show how debates around the school were relevant to Albania's struggles with Italian interwar expansion.

I begin with an overview of what "new womanhood" meant and how it resonated in Albania. Taking in consideration the political picture after World War I, I then contextualize the debates for national schools and women's education and situate the invitation to set up Instituti Kyrias in Tirana within them. After providing thick detail and comparison about the school's vision, its students, and its mission, to its mother school, the Istanbul American College for Women, I conclude with an assessment of its closure due to Italian expansion, and its legacy in the interwar period.

*New Womanhood and its Relevance to Albania*

Numerous studies indicate that this term was linked to a variety of images and phenomena relating to women's emancipation in many different contexts. Whether in reference to dress, behavior, or expanded educational and professional opportunities, being a "new woman" generally signified a break with tradition and an increased mobility at the turn of the nineteenth century. Women bikers in imperial Germany<sup>300</sup>, college graduates in French Mandate Lebanon<sup>301</sup> and the United States, and women reformers in India<sup>302</sup> were all examples of this new phenomenon. Increasingly, such women were called upon to contribute to modernizing societies and national communities.

The way in which Anna Catell used the term linked the new womanhood of Albania to an earlier generation in the United States. As chapter two has already clarified in part, the educational opportunities for women in the early and mid nineteenth centuries similarly grew out of discussions about women's place in republican society. "New Woman" also applied to the first generation of women missionaries who graduated from schools like Vassar, Mt. Holyoke, Wellesley, etc.<sup>303</sup>

Christian reformer Frances Willard, founder of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, encouraged it to further develop and further their "individualities" and set their goals beyond domestic life. Willard's *How to Win* (1888), modeled on a book for boys, was a device

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<sup>300</sup>Beth Muellner, "The Photographic Enactment of the Early New Woman in 1890s German Women's Bicycling", *Women in German Yearbook* 22, (2006), 168.

<sup>301</sup> Nadya Sbaiti, 'If the Devil Spoke French': *Strategies of Language and Learning in French Mandate Beirut*, in *Trajectories of Education in the Arab World*, ed. Osama Abi-Mershed (London: Routledge, 2010), 239.

<sup>302</sup> Susan Haskell Khan, "From Redeemers to Partners: American Missionaries and 'Woman Question' in India, 1919-1939," in Sklar, Shomo, Reeves-Ellington, eds., *Competing Kingdoms: Women, Mission, and the American Protestant Empire, 1812-1960*, (Raleigh: Duke University Press, 1980), 151-159.

<sup>303</sup> Helen Barret Montgomery, *From Campus to World Citizenship*, (New York: Fleming Revell, 1940), 114.



encouraging girls to look within, understand their capabilities and desires, and mobilize them “to apply their special gift to the world at large.”<sup>304</sup>

In this respect, professors at the American College for Women like Mary Mills Patrick and Hester Jenkins were themselves ‘new women’. They went into the Ottoman world to educate generations of would-be new women like the Kyrias sisters. Mills Patrick, for example, graduated from the Lyons Collegiate Institute, a female seminary in Lyons Iowa, but turned down a scholarship from Vassar out of pride. She entered the missionary profession as a way to earn a living.<sup>305</sup> Her younger colleague, Hester Jenkins, was the second college graduate in her family, and after finishing her B.A. at Vassar and M.A. in English at the University of Chicago, decided to teach English and history at still then Constantinople College for Girls, when a friend made the arrangements. The nine years that she spent in Istanbul were “among the most interesting” and “significant work” she did.<sup>306</sup> It took more than Christian ideology to attract women like them to international mission and teaching, but all the same, it gave them the initial push.

For Mills Patrick, who came from a family of modest means, the decision was partially financial. She knew that she would have to earn her own living and educate herself. Jenkins, whose family was well off, chose to go because the adventure appealed to her sense of intellectual curiosity, missionary impulse, and Wanderlust. Her father also thought that the experience would be very interesting for her. Individualized as these paths were, their convergence with the transforming Near East had significant repercussions.

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<sup>304</sup> Frances Willard as quoted in, Jane Hunter, *How Young Ladies Became Girls: the Victorian Origins of American Girlhood*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 403.

<sup>305</sup> Patrick, Mary Mills. *A Bosphorus Adventure: Istanbul (Constantinople) Woman's College*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1934.

<sup>306</sup> Hester Donaldson Jenkins, *Captain Weston Jenkins and his Descendants*, (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1940), 71.

At the point in which the Kyriases were invited to reestablish their school in Albania, the missionary movement was declining worldwide. Where modernizing “backward” societies had once been a missionary initiative, nationalist elites were now shaping those debates. But they often capitalized on the foundations already laid. Thus, in Turkey, Japan, and Albania, among a host of other places, onetime mission-sponsored schools became gradually nationalized during the interwar period. And they made significant contributions to educating local elites. As educational cultural intermediaries, the Kyriases had some privilege in this matter.

*Dilemmas of Statehood: “New Woman” meets the New Balkans*

The interwar period charted new terrain for countries all across Eastern Europe. Life at a time when the League of Nations institutionalized the idea of “nation” in a new way, gave politicians a new opportunity to “define and sharpen their visions.”<sup>307</sup> If until then nationalist ideologists had addressed gaps between the west and the east, now they worried about how to organize postwar societies.

The demographic changes were great. Much of the region faced the combined pressure of accommodating a large and now freed peasant population, and national minorities leading to new questions about defining national community. In addition, new capital relations and rival ideologies— Bolshevism on the far left, and radical nationalism and fascism on the far right— complicated social tensions.

In varying measure, some of these realities touched ground in Albania as well. Focusing heavily on politics and its protagonists, the literature of the interwar period categorizes this era of

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<sup>307</sup> Katherine Verdery, Ivo Banac, eds., *National Character and National Ideology in Interwar Eastern Europe*, (New Haven: Yale Center for International and Area Studies, 1995), xx.

nation building as one of state consolidation and foreign resistance. The immediate issues confronting Albanian statesmen right after the war were the country's unsettled borders and an undefined system of government.

The power vacuum set in place with the departure of the Ottoman and the Wied administrations created an atmosphere where the political arena was shaped more by strong personalities and interest groups, than an a well-developed political culture. In one sense, the lines of opposition were clearly drawn: those who wanted to perpetuate the Ottoman status quo—the Muslim landowning aristocracy— and a long list of individuals and organizations devoted to uprooting them in favor of ideological distance from the Ottoman era and setting the country in a western course. But beyond these simple facts, however, both ideological specificity and political form remained embryonic.

The new bureaucracy reflected Albania's lack of social cohesion: a small but powerful network of Muslim landowners, former Ottoman officials, Kosovar irredentists, and a smaller upper middle class of marginalized Orthodox and Catholic minorities better known internationally than they were locally.<sup>308</sup> These activists-turned-bureaucrats with high ideals of social reforms each had agendas of their own. They had envisioned an Albanian nation in the decades leading up to the war, but now that opportunities loomed before them to enact their ideas, they advanced the interests of marginalized constituents whom they represented. They were the *Other* religious communities: the Orthodox, Catholics, the (much) smaller but influential Protestants, and the Bektashis.

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<sup>308</sup> Robert Austin has argued this in terms of Fan Noli. As a member of parliament, and then as a prime minister who had spent the better part of his life in Greece and the United States, he had an awkward relationship with Albania and Albanians. See, Robert Austin, *Founding a Balkan State: Albania's Experiment with Democracy 1920-1925*, Toronto, 2012).

Porous borders with Yugoslavia to the north and Greece to the south meant that irredentism, in particular Kosovar, frequently spun dangerous political coalitions that destabilized central authority. The reluctance of regional power holders, northern Gheg chieftains, in particular, to cede long held privileges like the right to bear arms, also posed further challenges. Sometimes acting alone, and others in conjunction with many of the dissatisfied parties described above, they engineered rebellions that seriously called statehood into question. The most serious of these, to be discussed in chapter five, culminated in what Robert Austin has recently called Albania's great missed opportunity: Theofan Noli's Democratic June Revolution (June-December 1924). While the end of the Revolution brought much needed internal political stability, it also increased the Italian foreign threat.

Trade and Italian exports during the early 1900s identified Albania as an Italian sphere of interest, but the collapse of the Central empires during World War I actually shifted Italian policy toward the Balkan area as a whole, and Albania in particular. Barely a year after the League of Nations recognized Albanian statehood the Conference of Ambassadors set it back. The Conference acknowledged Italy's special interest in Albanian territory by reconfirming the borders approved at the London Conference in 1913, with the added caveat that Italy could intervene militarily when Albanian territory became threatened.

This threat never materialized, but Albania's precarious finances and internal turmoil made it difficult to avoid Italian help. Albania applied to the League of Nations for a loan, but the lack of collateral had made it impossible to secure one.<sup>309</sup> The League did send in financial advisors to observe the state of finances and recommend development projects, but the June

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<sup>309</sup> Bernd Fischer, *King Zog and the Struggle for Stability in Albania* (Boulder: East European Monographs, 1984), 23.

Revolution interrupted their work and forced Noli's opponent, Ahmet Zog, into exile in Yugoslavia. Safely ensconced there, he then made plans to get back to Albania.

Zog's return to power was the result of Italian financial backing and secret political dealing. For a number of years, Italy had unsuccessfully competed with other European and American financiers to raise development projects in the country, but Zog's request for financial backing provided the opportunity to directly engage in Albanian affairs. Through a number of secret trade agreements, the Italian state provided fifteen million lire, paid in stages between 1925-1931. Zog got the financing needed to mount a successful invasion, while granting the Italian government a monopoly in Albanian oil fields and forestry, public work contracts, and a national bank of issue.<sup>310</sup>

Between 1925-1935, the two countries tried different routes to capitalize on the secret agreement. For its part, the Albanian state paid lip service to Italian demands for more political concessions, but in fact did little to implement them. In the field of education, for example, Italian demands grew more aggressive year by year. First, it was one hour of Italian language per week, and then pointedly sending Italian teachers to teach Albanian students Italian culture and civilization. While the scope of encroaching Italian expansion can be investigated on a number of different levels, where education was concerned, the competition involved, as the example of *Instituti Kyrias* shows, played an interesting, but under studied dynamic in the politics of constructing womanhood.

### *Debate for National Schools and Women's Education*

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<sup>310</sup> See Roselli, Alessandro, *Italy and Albania: Financial Relations in the Facsist Period*, (London, 2006).

Within the context of the postwar state, women's education surfaced in bureaucratic and intellectual debates repeatedly in the 1920s and '30s. First, it was broached in parliamentary proceedings that replaced Ottoman legal infrastructure.<sup>311</sup> Coupled with legal propositions concerning women's position in the family and the institution of marriage as decisions appropriate for civil courts, women's education garnered strong support at the official level.

The protagonists of these intellectual and legal debates were male and female, established intellectuals and newly trained elites then returning from their university studies abroad.<sup>312</sup> Collectively, they defined the problem of educating women as one that would impact national and social progress. At first, their debates raised the need for institutional spaces. Once schools were in place, reformers argued, they would shift traditional attitudes, allowing young women to get out of the home. And ultimately, they would use their education for the benefit of the nation. Support for their schooling thus marked the first step toward their emergence in the public sphere.

In my research, I came across a number of writings that deal with this subject, discussed in this chapter and the next. Collectively, they register the need to use education as a way to assign women a role in the formative process of nation building. They betray an intense awareness that an Albanian national community was at the point of takeoff. The "racial survival" of what they deemed to be a numerically small national community, they frequently argued, depended on elevating women to be members, through their ability to work and through their moral strength. Social progress would need to happen from within, and teachers had a special role in making it happen. While they were inspired from historical precedents concerning women

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<sup>311</sup> Musaj, 68.

<sup>312</sup> The cultured elites of the 1920s had diverse backgrounds. While a significant number of bureaucrats had been educated in Istanbul, younger generations had attended university in Greece, Romania, Italy, England, France, Switzerland, and the United States.

in the west and in contemporary developments there and in the more immediate vicinity, such writings also reflect the effort of thinkers to frame their ideas of social progress in ways that conformed to local time and place.

In the 1920s, Mit'hat Bey Frashëri, career diplomat and man of letters,<sup>313</sup> wrote one of the most poignant pieces that positioned Albanian society as a space-in-between (emerging from Orientalism while borrowing from Western civilization), in which he argued that educating was ultimately an exercise toward national emancipation and enlightenment. What he lamented most, was the fact that when he wrote *Gruaja: Libër për Gratë dhe Burrat Kushtuar Trupit Shqiptar (Woman: A Book for Women and Men Dedicated to Albanian Educators)*, the laws of education were ignorantly sidestepped.

According to the existing law, girls could and should go to elementary school. Yet, they represented only *one* quarter of the student body. Statistics he cited showed that the number of girls eligible to attend school in the capital Tirana (400) far exceeded the number of those enrolled (180).<sup>314</sup> Of those one hundred eighty, ninety-two were Muslim. Given that Muslims were a majority in the capital city and in the country, that statistic was worrisome.<sup>315</sup>

Frashëri's treatise was meant for teachers, but through it, he criticized parties he judged to be impeding social progress. Tirana's Muslims were steeped in ignorance and conservatism, yet he directed even greater admonition to people in the highland regions:

Yes, my friend, we have lived until today, you as an individual, as a tribe, as a mountaineer. Now we are making a nation, a state, and we have duties towards this nation and our state, and we are no longer free to live the primitive life of the mountains, without union, without an obligation for progress...<sup>316</sup>

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<sup>313</sup> Frashëri came from a family deeply entrenched in the nationalist movement. He was a colleague of the Kyriases, especially of Paraskevi, having worked by her side at the Congress of Monastir where the two chaired the committee that administered the various alphabet proposals.

<sup>314</sup> Frashëri, Mit'hat. *Gruaja: Libër për Gratë dhe Burrat Kushtuar Trupit Arsimor Shqiptar*. Tirana: Libraria Lumo Skëndo, 1929.

<sup>315</sup> Frashëri, 8.

<sup>316</sup> *ibid*, 12.

Frashëri cautioned that education did not have to promote a *false* sense of modernity. Being modern, he wrote, did not mean performing the Charleston or the foxtrot, wearing western fashions, or promoting “feminist individualism”, which according to Frashëri was, for the time being, unsuited to local conditions. Education was not about displacing tradition; it was about reforming it. If Christianity exalted women in the example of Mary, Islam provided Muslims with Fatime and Hatixhe<sup>317</sup>. This, in particular, he aimed at Muslim clerics, who were often presumed to be conservatives.<sup>318</sup>

Women’s rights, he educated his audience, was a concept formulated by the French. “Read Michelet’s *La Femme*<sup>319</sup> and Ernest Legouve’s *Histoire Morale de Femmes*,” Frashëri urged his readers. “Consider Defoe’s statement (paraphrased): ‘God in his greatness made woman so famous, gave her such pleasant qualities, endowed her with great beauty, with a soul as fine as man’s.’ If that was the case, did God intend for woman to be our (read: male) slave and servant?”<sup>320</sup>

Ultimately, acknowledging women as fully human and integrating them actively into society, was about elevating Albania and Albanians from their presently “primitive” conditions. As custodians of family, *the* cornerstone of national society, educated women would raise a civilized nation. It was up to teachers to make this happen. So, when writing to Oberlin’s President Henry C. King, to thank him for the gifts sent to the new campus of Instituti Kyrias,

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<sup>317</sup> These names render the Albanian spelling for the Prophet Muhamad ‘s next of kin: his daughter Fatima, and his first wife, Khadija Bint Khuwaylid.

<sup>318</sup> Religious leaders in other communities also resisted state intervention in communal affairs initially. When liberal deputies in Parliament came forward with a proposal to make marriage and family law a matter for civil courts, Visarion Xhuvani, also a deputy, and would-be primate of the Albanian Autocephalous Orthodox Church was one of the first to oppose it. While he supported women’s education, he thought that the time had not yet come to take any further steps in the direction of “women’s rights.” Marriage and family law should remain in the purview of religious courts. See, Fatmira Musaj, 191.

<sup>319</sup> Frashëri did not really provide a reason as to why readers should read these works.

<sup>320</sup> Frashëri, 14.



Christo Dako, as its secretary, added that, “Your [Oberlin’s] share in the investment to educate and uplift the Albanian woman will surely bring satisfaction, for its interest shall up build a nation and make her blessed.”<sup>321</sup>

Although analytical depth on this topic varied from one thinker to the next, Frashëri’s closing statement represented the rhetorical consensus that cut across the board, binding activists to bureaucrats. Educating women constituted a leading cause for those activists and bureaucrats who associated it with national progress during the interwar period. Although the government responded to their sentiments by nationalizing education, it first had to turn to experienced parties like the Kyriases, who could help to bring nationalization about.

### *Starting Instituti Kyrias*

The impetus to start Instituti Kyrias came from three sides. Sometime in 1920, fellow Korçar activists, Dr. Mihal Turtulli and Sotir Peçi (consecutive Ministers of Education <sup>322</sup>), offered Christo Dako a position of service. This invitation and the unfulfilled plans to set up the school envisioned in 1913, prompted Dako and Paraskevi to return to Tirana that fall.

But on arrival, neither Turtulli nor Peçi could do anything for them. Less a reflection of lacking good will, it had more to do with the fact that Albania changed seven cabinets that year.<sup>323</sup> The succeeding Minister, Kristo Fllloqi, also a Korçar took the unemployed Dako under his wing, and appointed him Inspector of Education. As the two spoke further, Dako proposed founding a school, titled Instituti Kyrias, in Tirana, with the purpose of “furthering the cultural

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<sup>321</sup> Dako to Henry King, December 31, 1925, Operating Records- Academic Programs, Kyrias School, RGII, Graduate School of Theology, OCA.

<sup>322</sup> Sotir Peçi succeeded Kristo Fllloqi. Political turnover in the early 1920s was very rapid.

<sup>323</sup> Dishnica, 302.

propaganda of spreading the Albanian language.<sup>324</sup> Fllloqi liked the idea, and Paraskevi submitted a formal request to the Ministry of Education on April 1<sup>st</sup>, 1921, which he then presented before Këshilli i Ministrave (Council of Ministers).

As it turned out, the government was very interested in the plan. On April 27<sup>th</sup>, the Council approved Paraskevi's request on condition that the institute be built in central Albania, close to Tirana— where such a center for young women was needed most— and that it include eight grades, regulated by an educational program decided by the Ministry of Education. Këshilli awarded Paraskevi Kyrias 1500 gold lira<sup>325</sup> as an advance on the loan it issued to the private “Lycee-Internat” to travel to the United States to acquire necessary start up materiel, and it exempted the customs tax on those items brought from abroad.<sup>326</sup>

Two months later, in June 1921, Caroline Borden<sup>327</sup> wrote rather adamantly to the two in Tirana, and to Dr. Bosworth, Dean of the Oberlin Theological Seminary, about taking the remaining necessary steps to permanently establish the school. Confirming the vision of the Albanian government for the school, she impressed on both parties the fact that Sevastia ought to return to Albania as soon as possible. The school was *hers* and it must operate independently.

Borden's primary motivation in writing the letter was reinserting Sevastia, founder of the original school, in this incipient project. Sevastia had been ill<sup>328</sup>, and needed help in getting back

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<sup>324</sup> Dishnica, 302.

<sup>325</sup> The total expenditure of the Albanian government for 1921 was 18,797,455 gold francs. Maxwell Blake, “Economic Conditions in Albania, April 1923,” in Berndt Fischer, *King Zog and the Struggle for Stability in Albania*, (Boulder: East European Monographs, 1984), 47.

<sup>326</sup> Fllloqi, *Foleja Kombëtare*, (Tirana: Gutenberg, 1931), 44.

<sup>327</sup> Caroline Borden had been on the Board of Trustees for the American College for Girls since it was first chartered as a college in Massachusetts. It is unclear when she first heard of the Kyrias sisters, but they were known to her by 1913, when Oberlin faculty, the ACW, the ABCFM, and Charles Crane spoke of expanding the Protestant mission and the existing Kyrias School for Girls. In the letters exchanged between her and President of the ACW, it is clear that she met both sisters and Christo Dako repeatedly in their time in the United States during the war years.

<sup>328</sup> The cause of her illness is not known. She did, however, undergo an operation of some sort.

to Albania. If her husband could not give up his political responsibilities as an MP<sup>329</sup> and as Inspector of Education, Borden wrote to the duo, Paraskevi had better hurry back to the States and set the move back in motion! To Bosworth she may have written to remark that, the School about which they had “so vigorously corresponded” before the War, was now close to actualization.

The Albanian government initially promised to cover one fourth of the annual expenses, while Charles Crane committed to two thousand dollars for the next five years. With this funding it could now get off the ground, concluded the nearly blind ninety-year old Borden who closed her eyes forever that same year.

### *The Problem of Private Education*

At this point in their discussions, the state of both primary and secondary education in Albania was “severely limited”<sup>330</sup> and completely unregulated. Indeed, the available data itself is often unreliable. According to the report submitted to the Carnegie Foundation by the French deputy Justin Goddard who visited Albania in the spring of 1920, there were a total of 532 primary schools, providing instruction at various levels. Of these, 472 provided two years of schooling; 51 offered three-five years; while the remaining 9 had seven-year programs.

In addition, there were two secondary level institutions, the French Lycée in Korça (founded during the war), and Shkolla Normale of Elbasan (the Albanian teaching school opened in 1909).<sup>331</sup> According to Fatmira Musaj, sixty of these, ten being for girls, were so called

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<sup>329</sup> Dako became a representative for Dibra, a district mostly in Yugoslavia, allying in the process, with Kosovar irredentists. Because Kosovar irredentists opposed Zog, then a Prime Minister, Dako was asked to leave the country for six months, between 1922 and early 1923. He left to Romania where his family lived, while continued pressure from the émigré communities in the United States and Romania brought him back to Tirana. After this, neither Dako nor the sisters tried politics again.

<sup>330</sup> Dishnica, 304.

<sup>331</sup> Justin Godard, *L'Albanie en 1921*, (Paris, Presses Universaires de France, 1922), 80.

*shkolla kombëtare* (national schools) while the rest were private schools either directly administered or simply funded by foreign religious organizations.<sup>332</sup>

One of the immediate concerns of education reform was the status of private schools. Between 1920-1924 three educational congresses held at Lushnjë 1920, Elbasan 1921, and Tirana 1922, resolved that *all* existing schools in the country must conform to government approved curricula and instructional material; that public instruction be entirely *secular*, that private schools be supervised; that normal schools (teacher training) be built; that professional standards be raised; and that steps be taken to address women's education.

Viewed by the state as tools of combined foreign religious and nationalist propaganda founded under the Ottoman system, they constituted a threat to nation building. This was particularly the case along the vaguely defined ethnic and linguistic margins of the north and the south.<sup>333</sup> Archival records between 1914-1933 show many cases of state authorities attempting to close down foreign schools (Greek, Italian, Serbian), or maintain oversight (American)<sup>334</sup>. As part of its agreement with the League of Nations, Albania was required to provide language-schooling and proper facilities to each of its recognized minorities. Their faculty, in turn, had to learn Albanian and also teach it. But compliance could, at times, be an issue.

A report from the Office of Inspection at the Ministry of Education in 1930 reveals that on his visit to an Orthodox village school in Shkodra's highlands, the prefect Ethem Toto and inspector Dhimitër Gjerga temporarily replaced three staff members, whose last names indicate

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<sup>332</sup>Fatmira Musaj, "Gjendja Arsimore e Femrës në Shqipëri dhe Zhvillimi i Arsimit Femëror (1912-1935)," *Perla*, no. 2 (2005): 75.

<sup>333</sup> Nathalie Clayer, "Education and the Integration of the Province of Gjirokaster in Interwar Albania", in *Albania: Family, Society, and Culture in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century*, ed. Andreas Hemming et al. (Berlin, LIT Verlag, 2012), 98.

<sup>334</sup> In addition to Instituti Kyrias, there was Shkolla Teknike Harri Fuzi (Harry Fultz Technical College), founded jointly by the Albanian government and the American Junior Red Cross, and Telford Erickson's Instituti Bujqësor Kavajë (Kavajë Agricultural Institute). While the government and Shkolla Teknike had a great working relationship, Telford Erickson succeeded in opening his school after countless attempts to gain official permission.

that they were Slavic (Andriq and Stajkoviq), by other administrators<sup>335</sup> for failing to comply with state regulations.

Among others, the order cited that the director Andriq failed to put up the proper signs designating the school as an Albanian state institution, that there were no Albanian readers, that “Serb” figures appeared on the walls and that two teachers, husband and wife Vuk and Milenka Stajkoviq, did not know Albanian, and that they had not taught any of the language classes they were supposed to.<sup>336</sup> Indeed, when the decision to be relieved from duty was read out to Milenka Stajkoviq, it had to be done in Serbian.

The problem of private schools was persistent, and one that this chapter turns to repeatedly. As Paraskevi Kyrias kept waiting for the school to open in 1922, she found that its status as a private school brought up continued roadblocks. For each successive government rotation, she had to resubmit all the proper documentation, stating intent, provisions, and organizational structure.

In her last proposal, Paraskevi notified the new Minister of Education, Rexhep Mitrovica, that the Lycée would: initially open up with the \$5000 that Charles Crane had pledged in 1913; would draw revenue from student tuition; would teach six grades; instruct in Albanian, English, and French; and that its staff would be made up of Albanian, American, and Swiss citizens.<sup>337</sup> In response, the government made it clear, that the school administration would have to report and subsequently expel any of the faculty who engaged in politics.<sup>338</sup>

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<sup>335</sup>The replacements were a teacher at the city’s Franciscan school, an Albanian village schoolteacher, and one unmarried female whose q suffix attached to her last name, Kadiq, indicates she too may have been of Slav origin. On a minor note, note the Gheg Albanian transliteration -q of the Slavic suffix ć.

<sup>336</sup>Ministria e Punëve të Brendëshme, Zyra Sekrete, Fondi 453, Dosja 304, Fl. 1-2, 2/3/1930, AQSH.

<sup>337</sup>Ministria e Arsimit, Fondi 195, Dosja 2, Fl. 287, AQSH.

<sup>338</sup> *ibid.*

A month before the school opened in October 1922, Sevastia Kyrias, submitted one last petition assuring the government that the school would submit itself to all regulations as a *shkollë kombëtare* (national school), and that it would continue the legacy of their original school to serve the nation and perform the “noble duty” of educating Albanian girls. Acknowledging that it recognized the legacy of that school, and its promise to elevate the education of Albanian girls, until then at a *nivel i prapambetur* (backward state), her plan received its final approval.

The compromise cut both ways. Indeed, considering that a reported twenty percent of schools in 1922 shut down for lack of funding— and that MPs donated to its opening— meant that great things were expected of Instituti Kyrias. The state granted Instituti a tax cut on all the materials and supplies that Paraskevi had brought back from the United States, and in addition it promised to provide scholarships for an unspecified number— as many as it could— of scholarships for poor girls to be trained as elementary school teachers, once it approved the building, materials, and furnishing of the school.<sup>339</sup>

While scholars of education and the family biographer, Dhimitër Dishnica, have singled out Instituti Kyrias as a founding block of women’s education, and even drawn some connections to their American learning, they have not explored much beyond the institution’s “modern” façade to understand either how deeply the Kyriases were implicated in the process of cultural transfer or how dynamically Instituti was positioned to contribute to the politics of conceptualizing womanhood in the interwar period.

By drawing comparisons to the American College for Women in the remaining sections of this chapter, I aim to point them out. First, I begin with Paraskevi Kyrias’ blue print for a national educational system, and then I proceed with a comparative analysis of the two

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<sup>339</sup> *ibid*, 293.

institutions, relating in the end how each of the supporting parties, as its own students, saw Instituti Kyrias and its work with women students.

*The School, Its Vision and its Students: Instituti in the Image of the American College for Women*

In her unpublished history of the American College for Women (henceforth referred to under the acronym ACW), Caroline Borden, member of the Board of Trustees of the ACW and mentor to the Kyrias sisters, described the relationship between it and the Kyrias School in terms of kinship. The ACW, she wrote, had two *daughter schools* in the Balkans: one in Albania, and the other in Serbia.<sup>340</sup> As interesting as it would be to have the added comparative benefit of this additional site, I have not been able to trace further references to the school in Serbia.<sup>341</sup>

However, correspondence between the college faculty and several faculty memoirs demonstrate a keen and continued interest in the progress of the Kyrias enterprise in Albania. Little in these sources indicates explicit stipulations that Instituti or the Kyrias Collegiate, as Mary Mills Patrick or Caroline Borden called it, should emulate the ACW in a prescribed fashion. The closest such implication that I have been able to find, is in a letter of Patrick's to the board of trustees, relaying hope that Prince Wied's coming to power, would make it possible for "our Preparatory School in Albania to reopen."<sup>342</sup> Nevertheless, similarities between the two emerged which help to illuminate what it meant to be a daughter school of the ACW.

As noted in Chapter Two, the concept of founding "daughter schools" was tied to the export of the pedagogical model of Mt. Holyoke Female Seminary. To establish a daughter school meant reproducing the form, method, and teaching mission of an older established

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<sup>340</sup> Caroline Borden's notes for history of ACG, 1917, American College for Girls Records, Box 8, Folder 68, p. 110, RBML, Columbia University Library.

<sup>341</sup> It is one of the considerations for expanding the dissertation into a book project.

<sup>342</sup> Mary Mills Patrick to Kyrias School for Girls Board of Trustees, September 10, 1914, American College for Girls Records, Box 4, Folder 7, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University Library.

institution at a new site by its alumnae. In the process, former student teachers propagated an American ideal of educated Christian womanhood, at a new site where this original mission assumed a local direction, triggering a variety of broader social responses.

One of the most important principles that the ACW imparted to its students was the idea of service to their national community. In three prominent cases, that of Halide Edib and the Kyrias sisters, whose careers remarkably mirrored each other, the notion took on cultural and political meaning. And clearly, this had important ramifications for the interwar period. Edib founded schools throughout the empire, and was even called upon to design curricula.<sup>343</sup> While a graduate student at Oberlin (1911-1913), Paraskevi Kyrias similarly designed a national educational system for Albania. This roadmap, which she later wanted to use to gain a post at the Ministry of Education, first materialized as an M.A. thesis defended in May 1913.

Sitting in the Hotel Violet in early July 1919, bleakly wondering about Albania's future and her own, Paraskevi Kyrias thought of giving her 1913 M.A. thesis, "The Development of Schools in the Ottoman Empire and an Ideal Educational System for Albania," to the then Minister of Education, a man whose Italophile leaning she slightly distrusted. Days after giving it to him, she was delighted to observe how, in the presence of an American Peace Commissioner, Luigj Gurakuqi ardently defended her political vision and view that Albania must have the patronage of a power not directly interested in it- the United States.

Her diary entries do not cover the extent of agreement that the two must have had about her idea for a national school system, though he likely considered it. Like her, Gurakuqi was one the architects of Albanian education.<sup>344</sup> As he announced to Paraskevi at the end of their

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<sup>343</sup> For more on Halide Edib and her activism on nation-building see her memoir, Halide Edib, *House with Wisteria: Memoirs of Turkey Old and New* (Los Angeles, 2009).

<sup>344</sup> Whether they met at the Congress of Monastir, which decided the Albanian alphabet in 1908, is unknown, but Gurakuqi became the first director of Normalja e Elbasanit.



conversation on July 8<sup>th</sup>, he would leave the “world of politics” for that of education.<sup>345</sup> It was exactly what she herself had in mind, and as she confided in ACW’s President Mary Mills Patrick, who herself was in Paris at the time, and dined with the Albanian deputation, she aspired to become an official at the Ministry of Education.<sup>346</sup>

While her aspiration did not materialize, Paraskevi’s projection of a functional educational system, nevertheless says a great deal about the course that the Albanian state pursued in constructing it after the war. The Kyrias family biographer, Dhimitër Dishnica, alleges that the request to develop the scheme actually came from the government of Ismail Kemal Bey.<sup>347</sup>

Although the Albanian government did in fact send her a cablegram to return to Albania and help organize schools, a decision she announced to her readers in the last published edition of the *Morning Star* (September 1920) I have not come across such a request predating it. However, a coincidence of conversations that preceded the writing of her thesis may be an indication that the first provisional government was aware of the discussions between Oberlin, the ACW, and the ABCFM to support and expand Albanian education.

Twice, in October of 1912 and again in 1914, Dr. Patrick notified the board of trustees of the colleges’ plans for receiving an Albanian contingent of students. On October 24, 1912 Patrick had a meeting with Ismail Kemal Bey, a “leading Mohammedan Albanian chief”, who had presented himself as a personal friend of Charles Crane, President of the Board of Trustees. They spoke about his lifelong commitment to reviving the Ottoman constitution and his latest decision to decline an invitation to join the Ottoman cabinet. During the course of the meeting,

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<sup>345</sup> Parashqevi Qirazi Ditar, Fondi 52, Dosja 2, F. 112, AQSH.

<sup>346</sup> Mary Mills Patrick, *A Bosphorus Adventure: Constantinople College for Women*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1934), 189.

<sup>347</sup> Dishnica, 297.

Patrick asked him to select three Muslim girls on behalf of the college, out of the six provisioned for by Crane scholarships.

Kemal promised he would do so.<sup>348</sup> It seems that the Christian Albanian girls reached the college, while the Muslim ones were unable to reach Istanbul; Kemal had notified the school that they would depart as soon as “steamers started running again regularly.”<sup>349</sup> Worried, perhaps, that this part of the contingent was not represented as per the Crane plan, the ACW learned that Kemal and his family were visiting Istanbul in the fall of 1914. Patrick expressed her hope that two of his granddaughters would enter the college, “if necessarily partly on the Crane fund.”<sup>350</sup>

Given this auspicious meeting, and the implicit acknowledgement of the people it involved, at a mere four weeks ahead of the declaration of independence on November 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1912, it would be odd if the Albanian provisional government and Paraskevi Kyrias had not connected on that winter, as she was getting ready to finish her studies and write her thesis.

“An Ideal Educational System for Albania” offers an understanding of how far the ideas of the Kyriases had progressed, once it became clear that Albania would be its own state. In conceptualizing the Albanian educational system, Paraskevi first provided a set of considerations of the country, its people and customs, their characteristics and needs. What Albania *needed* was a, “system of training, as far as possible adapted to its characteristics and its present needs and capable development in such a way as to meet both present and future national needs.”<sup>351</sup>

Mimicking a tone similar to that of her missionary associates, Paraskevi’s treatise drew a stark dichotomy between European enlightenment and the ineffectiveness of the “Turkish” educational system. After presenting the movements toward national education among other

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<sup>348</sup>Annual Report of the President, 1912, Box 19, Folder 12, pg. 5, Records of the American College for Girls, RBML, Columbia University Library.

<sup>349</sup> *ibid*, pg.6.

<sup>350</sup> *ibid*.

<sup>351</sup> Dako, 251.

Balkan countries like Serbia, Romania, and Greece, she somewhat apologetically offered her reasons as to why the dormant, and at times self-destructive (but ultimately) deserving Albanians should be allowed their freedom to do the same.

Citing Turkish *divide et impera* as having hindered Albanians, “noble successors” of that “civilized” ancient race, the Pelasgians, who passed on their learning to the ancient Greeks, Paraskevi argued that before a national education system could be conceived the following would have to take place:

... establishment of some organization which will uplift the nation, and enable it to distinguish its real interests. The unification of the nation and the elimination of Greek Orthodox, Roman Catholic and Moslem intrigues... the effort to maintain, after civilization is introduced, the present high moral standard. The abolition of the feudal system, by allowing equal opportunities, to all people of all classes, and by introducing the ideal of a democratic nation...<sup>352</sup>

She visualized a centralized system, similar to that of Germany, administered by a minister of education, and the chairman of a committee of education, responsible to the parliament. Cities would have both primary and secondary schools, while “country places” only primary schools. A Board of Education would manage schools and their staff locally and coordinate accordingly with the ministry of education. She then enumerated the types of schooling institutions, ranging from kindergarten to university, and supplied the subject matter, teaching methodology, and also academic preparation of the teaching staff appropriate for those institutions respectively.

In addition to this structural outline, Paraskevi drew cursory but pointed attention to details, which impacted the efficacy of the educational system. Specifically, she stopped at questions of gender, disability, and private education. With regards to gender, she argued that

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<sup>352</sup> Dako, 260.

though Albanians *had*<sup>353</sup> equality of the sexes, the principle of true social equality required that this be achieved in the classroom as well.

“We”, she concluded, “must work for social equality and [my italics] *equality of the sexes in education* (for otherwise we have it.) Not only boys, but girls too, should receive a complete intellectual physical and moral training.”<sup>354</sup> On that count, secondary education, in particular, should be segregated. It was the only effective means of reaching out to the Muslim population in countries like Albania, she maintained. Social betterment also demanded that facilities and work be provided for students with special needs (“defectives” in her language).

Paraskevi reserved her most cautionary note for private schools. Because they were run by foreign entities, such as Italian, Austrian, and Greek organizations, such schools had to be supervised by state authorities. She pointed out that they were tools of foreign propaganda, whose aim it was to “denationalize” Albanians instead of educating them. Paraskevi saw the “system” as a way for the Albanian nation “to start right”. Slowly but steadily grounding students in a combination of liberal arts, physical and *moral culture*, she believed, would allow them to become good *citizens*. To achieve that, each of the component institutions in the educational system must coordinate their efforts.

Paraskevi’s conceptualization was a synthesis of local field practice and American training. She drew on works by the leading American experts on education. These included Paul Henry Hanus, Nicholas Murray Buttler, John Dewey, and Jackson Davis.<sup>355</sup> Her bibliography

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<sup>353</sup> Paraskevi did not elaborate this point.

<sup>354</sup> Paraskevi Kyrias, “An Ideal Educational System in Albania” in Christo A. Dako, *Albania: A Master Key to the Near East* (Boston: E.L. Grimes Co., 1919), 260-66.

<sup>355</sup> Of their works, published by 1913, the time in which she had likely consulted them for the purposes of her thesis, the following titles are likely to have been among them: Hanus, *A Modern School, Educational Aims and Educational Values, Adventuring in Education, Beginnings in Industrial Education and Other Educational Discourses*; Dewey’s *The Educational Situation, Moral Principles in Education, Psychology and Social Practice, The Child and the Curriculum, The School and Society, Being Three Lectures by John Dewey*. I have not been able to identify the works of Buttler or Davis that may have been influential to her.

references cites “books on education by Hanus, Buttler, Dewey, Davis”, without supplying a list of the specific works that she cited. Nonetheless, all of their names carried weight.<sup>356</sup>

Whether or not Gurakuqi took them into account, circumstantial evidence suggests that Paraskevi’s ideas made it into the discussions about the nature of education taken up at the three congresses of Lushnjë, Elbasan, and Tirana (described above).<sup>357</sup> Such a system further signified the passage from empire to nation-state, and it gave the Kyriases an important stake in the process. And as long as the competition remained in their favor to provide such service to Albania, the government was all too happy to work with the Kyriases.

However, Paraskevi’s suspicion of private education was ultimately a double-edged sword. While it gave Instituti Kyrias leverage as a nationalist institution, it also made it easier for the state to control. But for another decade at least, the school expanded, happily complying with official demand.

If the ACW drew students from different ethnicities in the Empire, Instituti Kyrias opened its doors to young women of different regions and different religious backgrounds. Enrollment and matriculation records, however modest<sup>358</sup>, reflect its evolution from the parochial, Protestant-funded School for Girls in Ottoman Görice into a national institution after the War. Here is how Sevastia Kyrias described its goals to the Ministry of Education in the fall of 1922:

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ibid

<sup>356</sup> Her bibliography references cites “books on education by Hanus, Buttler, Dewey, Davis”, without supplying a list of the specific works that she cited. Nonetheless, all of their names carried weight.<sup>356</sup> Hanus had set up the Graduate School of Education at Harvard University. Nicholas Murray Buttler established what became the Teachers College at Columbia University, while John Dewey was a well-known public intellectual whose work connected education and social reform. The last of them, Jackson Davis was an educational reformer, who had specialized in interracial problems in the American South.

<sup>357</sup> Paraskevi was in Albania at the time that the last two educational congresses were held. Whether she attended is not known, but the family biographer, Dhimitër Dishnica argues that teachers in Tirana nominated her to become inspector of education in a petition to the Ministry of Education in 1921. Her “system”, no doubt was taken into account for such a petition to be made. Instead, the post temporarily went to Dako.

<sup>358</sup> These records appear in a commemorative brochure celebrating 40 years of Kyrias educational activity. Between 1922 and 1933, twenty-five students in total graduated, and 165 more were enrolled in 1929.

[It would] bring together as great a number of young ladies from all regions, faiths, and social classes across Albania to endow their minds and souls with a thoroughly national learning, and with such principles enable them to be true *soldiers* to liberate the country's soul from backward mentalities, to heal social wounds, and to serve the nation by sowing in its heart true patriotic feeling.<sup>359</sup>

Another way to think of this in context of the relationship forged between the two schools is that Sevastia offered a localized expression of the ambition and vision that the American College wished to fulfill in the more dynamic environment of the imperial metropolis, especially once it proclaimed itself a center of “non-sectarian” learning.<sup>360</sup>

Student last names, as revealed in the commemorative brochure, an important primary source for this chapter, indicate that the school hosted students from other parts and religious communities in Albania. Partly to answer for this, was the fact that some of them were daughters of bureaucrats and families who had moved to Tirana once it was designated capital city.<sup>361</sup> Take, for example Zenepe Vokopola, daughter of the sitting minister of agriculture, Ferit, whose family originally came from Berat (central Albania).

The same was true of Lina Popa, daughter of Dhimitër Popa, also sitting minister of justice whose family originated from Durrës.<sup>362</sup> Whereas before the war, the Kyrias School for Girls had received primarily students of Orthodox Christian background, after the war names indicative of Muslim and Catholic background appear. Distinguishing family background in terms of religious affiliation and geographical location is challenging since many of the names do not convey this clearly. While school administrators claimed that they were teaching girls across regional and religious lines, rarely do records indicate their backgrounds as such.

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<sup>359</sup> Shoqëritë Shqiptare në Sh.B.A, Fondi 12, Dosja 59, Fl. 7, AQSH.

<sup>360</sup> Refer to chapter two.

<sup>361</sup> Of all major urban centers, Tirana experienced the greatest population boom in the interwar period doubling from 10,845 inhabitants in 1923 to 25,079 by 1938. Migration trends of the time were directed toward Tirana in the interior, and the United States outside the country. See, Gentiana Kera, “Age at Marriage in Tirana”, in Andreas Hemming et al., *Albania: Family, Society, and Culture in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century* (Berlin, LIT Verlag, 2012), 39.

<sup>362</sup> Names appear in school enrollment and matriculation records, as recorded in the commemorative brochure *Foleja Kombëtare*, edited by Instituti itself in 1931. Popa was of Orthodox background. <http://mobile.gazetastart.com/index.php?cat=18&hid=10502>

Nevertheless, a name like Fatime, in the person of Fatime Ullagaj, suggests a Muslim background. Nazmie, in the person of Nazmie Xhepa, too, which is frequently a name borne by girls of Muslim background is another example. (Vokopola was also of Muslim background). By conjecture, Antonetta de Bella, the daughter of an Italian attaché was likely Catholic, as may have been her Albanian counterpart, Liri Dodbiba. In the example of the latter, Liri simply means “Freedom”, a non-descript name. However, her last name, Dodbiba, places her in the Dodbiba family, leaders of the Mirditë clan, primarily Catholic, and coming from the northern highlands.

By virtue of their teaching mission, both institutions were able to wield considerable influence with government authorities and foreign bureaucrats. On the one hand, they made arrangements to take in contingents of scholarship students.<sup>363</sup> On the other, they took great steps to protect their students<sup>364</sup>. Turning to Insituti, by the end of the 1920s, the demands of the Albanian government for teachers had grown so, that eighty percent of all enrolled students were on scholarships to become elementary school teachers.<sup>365</sup>

It is not clear how socially inclusive Instituti Kyrias was. To start with, Ana Catell’s account leads us to think that social inclusion was broad. According to her, “students range in age from eleven to twenty years old, and in social scale from nieces of the king to girls from the

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<sup>363</sup> Before the war, the ACW entered into agreements with the governments of Greece, Serbia, Bulgaria, and Romania, and the Ottoman government itself nurses and teachers.

<sup>364</sup> When the Kyriases were forced out of Görice by the invading Greek armies in 1913, Mary Mills Patrick pressed the Queen of Greece to intercede with the proper authorities to guarantee the safety of their School for Girls. See, Mary Mills Patrick to Samuel Darling, November 14, 1913, Box 4, Folder 6, RBML, Columbia University Library. In the same letter Mill Patrick conveyed to Darling, a college trustee during World War I, that her decision to intercede on behalf of the Kyrias School came at an opportune moment. The Greek queen had written to Patrick, thanking her and commending the fine work that the ACW alum Cleoniki Klonari was doing as the head of a hospital in Athens patronized by her. The Queen had also offered to set up an agreement whereby Greek girls studying at ACW could train in England or the U.S. as nurses through her own funds. It was then that Patrick asked her to intercede to spare the Kyrias School in Korça or as the Greek forces referred to the city, Κορυτσα. Sevastia’s memoir confirmed that what she thought was a miracle turned out to have been the result of Patrick’s interference.

<sup>365</sup> Dishnica, 305.

most primitive conditions.”<sup>366</sup> Additionally, the school’s outreach was broad. Students came through government recommendation, newspaper advertisements, as well as the Kyrias social network. But to what extent these overlapped, remains hard to say.

On the one hand, the fact that a majority of students came to study on scholarship, suggests that not all were privileged. Not knowing the basis on which scholarships were granted, however, complicates this question. On the other hand, the fact that some students were related to the Kyrias’ peers indicates a presence of students from middle- to upper-middle class and educated family background.<sup>367</sup>

In one case, Instituti refused admission to a girl of “magjyp” origin (today some of the group classifies itself as Egjiptian<sup>368</sup>) citing fear that she would not be accepted by her peers, because of her “different race”. The girl’s father, recently returned from the United States, made it known that he could afford her fees, and that he wanted his daughter to get the best education possible.<sup>369</sup> While a rare example, it nevertheless demonstrates that the school administration did see differences, and race was one component.

As to the names of girls of purported “primitive” social rank, they are presently impossible to identify. The school had a history of promoting its own. Some examples include their nieces Victoria Kyrias and Helen Trayan, and daughters of fellow colleagues who started

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<sup>366</sup> Anna Catell, “The Kyrias School for Girls, Tirana, Albania” in *Foleja Kombëtare*, ed. Instituti Kyrias (Tirana, Gutenberg, 1931,) 92.

<sup>367</sup> This was the case for Adelina Nosi, niece of Lef Nosi, opposition deputy and Dako’s colleague since 1909 when the two helped Telford Erickson open the second mission station in Elbasan. (Among others, the Nosis owned and managed a thermal resort built in 1929). Another example, Tefta Nuçi Naçi, the first teacher to graduate in 1928, was related to Nuçi Naçi, a teacher and a fellow founder of the Evangelical Brotherhood for the Propagation of Albanian Letters with Gerasim Kyrias in 1891.

<sup>368</sup> The Egjiptiani (Albanian spelling for Egyptian) are a contemporary grouping of earlier settlers of alleged North African origins who began to self identify as such after 1980. The term follows from the more commonplace reference to Albanians of color as *jevg*, itself a dialectical form of *evgjitë*, similarly meaning “from Egypt”. For more see,

Ger Duijzings, “The Making of Egyptians in Kosovo and Macedonia,” in Cora Govers, Hans Vermeulen, eds., *The Politics of Ethnic Consciousness*, Houndmills: Macmillan, 1997, 194-222.

<sup>369</sup> Sevastia Kyrias, Fondi 47, Dosja 13, Viti 1925, Fl. 2, AQSH.



out at the school in Görice, and later graduated from the ACW.<sup>370</sup> While the government did extend scholarships, there is no evidence to suggest its methods of selection. Catell's letter, was also written for a happy occasion, one meant to promote the school's image. Thus the question of social inclusion remains open-ended, seemingly favoring the middle-class element.

Spatial design and utilization is another analytical dimension that gave purpose to Instituti Kyrias. American (Protestant) institutions, in general, used architecture, location, and materials to attract audiences. Growing up in the 1870s, the Bulgarian missionary who came to Görice, Katerina Tsilka, colleague to the Kyriases, attributed her conversion to Protestantism to the "nice surroundings" she was exposed to at the mission schools in Bansko and Plovdiv. Her teachers and fellow students were kinder, softer-spoken, the furniture and outlay inviting, and she found that she learned much quicker there than at the Bulgarian school — which she had fled, not being able to endure her classmates' relentless taunting.<sup>371</sup>

The early founders of the ACW had a similar purpose in mind. When Constantinople Home first expanded in 1876, on the cliffs overlooking the Bosphorus in the Üsküdar district of Istanbul, in "the center of Mohammedan power" where it "looked down on the mosque of St. Sophia, and on the palaces and seraglios of the sultans,"<sup>372</sup> they liked to think that their imposing school would inspire cultural and religious conversion of women to American Protestantism.<sup>373</sup>

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<sup>370</sup> Victoria Kyrias, daughter of George (Gjergj) Kyrias, graduate the ACW and thereafter became a teacher at the Kyrias School for Girls in Görice. Helen also attended the ACW, and went on to specialize in nursing at Massachusetts General Hospital. After the war, she returned to Albania, and became the head nurse for Shkolla Teknike Harry Fultz. Other students that the Kyrias School advanced for study at the ACW were Ollga Gorguzi, daughter of journalist Zhan Gorguzi from Görice, Elena "Ellenchie" Cilka, daughter of pastor Grigor Cilka, and Shega Luarasi, daughter of Petro Nini Luarasi. Both Gorguzi and Petro Nini worked with the Kyriases in Görice, and were likewise nationalists.

<sup>371</sup> From Tsilka memoirs, selected and assembled by her nephew Richard Cochran, who has curated them on the World Wide Web:

<http://cochranfamily.net/popstefanov/popstep5c.htm>

<sup>372</sup> N.G. Clark, "The Gospel in the Ottoman Empire" in Barbara Reeves Ellington, *Domestic Frontiers: Gender, Reform, and American Intervention in the Ottoman Balkans and the Near East*, 1.

This was again the case when the campus had to be relocated to Arnavutköy, adjacent to Robert College on the Rumeli Hisari side of the Bosphorus, because of a fire that damaged it in 1905. (Patrick invited the Kyriases to the inauguration ceremonies). When she worked out its design, based on a master plan she had seen at Bryn Mawr, with the prestigious Boston architectural firm Shepley, Rutan, & Coolidge, Mary Mills Patrick wanted to make sure that her school for girls would stand out from the sea just as much as its male counterpart. According to Zeynep Çelik, “the novelty of the ACG campus stemmed from the fact that its majestic buildings would shelter an institution dedicated to women’s education”. Unlike the campus of Robert College, which had no overall flow, the new ACW displayed an organized, linear lineup of buildings directly facing the sea. It was, per Çelik, very much a reaction to Robert College. Although it took Patrick ten years to achieve her purpose, it inspired profound jealousy in an Ottoman observer.

One such anonymous author published an article in the popular Ottoman journal *Servet-i-Fünun*, recording admiration for the “size” (vusuat) and “perfection” (mükemmeliyet) of the buildings, which made him reflect on “the negligence” that a civilized country showed toward the instruction of young Ottoman ladies. The author expressed disappointment that the projected Imperial School for Girls (Mekteb-i Sultan-i Inas) had been abandoned because of financial problems.

Plans had been made to repurpose a palace on the hills of Kandili “in a large garden with beautiful views and very fine air”. However, the failure of a lottery to raise enough money put a stop to them. To him, this was nothing less than “a dark reflection on the fragility of the Ottoman commitment to educate girls, a social and vital matter...so important for a nation”.<sup>374</sup> To awaken

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<sup>374</sup> “Kızların Talim ve Terbiyesi: İstanbul’da inasa Mahsus Amerikan Koleji,” *Servet-i-Fünun*, v.45, no. 1154 (4 Temmuz 1329/July 13, 1913), 228-229 in Zeynep Çelik, “Kampüs, Şehir, ve İmparatorluk: Robert Kolej ve

his readers, the author portrayed Patrick as a dedicated and resourceful administrator, and published a perspective.

In Albania, the Kyriases and the government displayed similar eagerness to make Instituti visually compelling. As some visitors remarked over the years, one reason for this, was that it was molding the “mothers of the future”<sup>375</sup>. As she managed the initial bureaucratic uncertainties, Paraskevi spent much time looking for an appropriate building. She finally decided on a large house, formerly used as an army barracks, at the edge of the city, far from noise and distractions, and importantly, in clean, fresh air. Inside, five rooms were used for teaching purposes, and five for student residence. The first floor included the kitchen, the dining hall, a piano room, and the library. Though it is not clear where the “sick room” was located, the school had one bathroom and one such nursing room— most likely outside.

Outside, the school was surrounded by high, thick walls, and partitioned into four large gardens. Faculty and staff relied on the two water wells and the plentiful fruit trees for consumption, and animal husbandry— tending sheep, cows, and chickens— as means of self-reliance, and practicing domestic science. The walking grounds outside the school were carefully tended, as students did gymnastics and took nature excursions to promote physical wellbeing.

The medical doctor commissioned by the government to inspect the school’s grounds recommended its location as “truly optimal” for the student’s health, and its interior modifications, among which the new large windows which let in plentiful sunlight, as “quite modernized” for the promotion of learning.<sup>376</sup> As the first academic year came to an end, Instituti

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Amerikan Kiz Koleji’ nin Erken Mimarisi” (The Campus, the City, and the Empire: The Early Architecture of Robert College and the American College for Girls”, in *The Anatomy of a Tradition: 150 Years of Robert College, 1863-2013*, Istanbul Research Institute, (Istanbul Research Institute Publications, 2013), 235.

<sup>375</sup>Dishnica, 306.

<sup>376</sup> Raport mbi Institutin Kyrias, 8 Dhjetor 1922, Fondi 30, Dosja 30, F. 1-2, AQSH .

Kyrias received two other government officials: the Foreign Minister, Pandeli Evangjeli, and the inspector of the Ministry of Education, Salih Ceka.

Evangjeli, long acquainted with the Kyriases from Görice, left too moved for words to record the “great appreciation” he felt for the service that they were rendering. Ceka elaborated in greater detail his equally positive impressions of this first “feminine institution, which [would] usher into the world of *shqiptarkave* (Albanian lasses) “the idea of progress and the flowering of the noble sex”. Unlike Evangjeli’s comments about service, Ceka commented on the state of the school. He thanked the staff for the “order, cleanliness, and the great care he observed in the female dormitory” and expressed his hope that Instituti Kyrias would become a “cradle of knowledge and civilization for our women.”<sup>377</sup> When scarlet fever struck Tirana in 1923, it was the only school that stayed open.<sup>378</sup>

Within a year of opening, the Ministry of Education approached Instituti Kyrias with a proposition. Because it was unable to finance the construction of a suitable women’s teaching school, it planned to send twenty scholarship students to Instituti Kyrias to be trained as elementary school teachers. It would also pay an American professor of pedagogy to handle this specifically. The two parties subsequently drew up an agreement, where Instituti Kyrias stipulated that: students could enter after passing entry level examinations; that it would provide room and board for up to fifty girls; and that it could arrange the selection of a fitting professional candidate.<sup>379</sup> The girls would follow a state-approved pedagogical training course.

The Kyriases welcomed this challenge, and indeed, invited the government to send more students each succeeding year. In the first year, they had attempted teaching at an accelerated rate, to get the first students to finish the primary level. It is not clear how effectively this

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<sup>377</sup> Sali Ceka Parashqevi Qiriazit, 4 Prill 1923, Fondi 52, Dosja 13, Fl. 4, AQSH.

<sup>378</sup> Gazeta “Shqiptari i Amerikës” Korça, June 14, 1923.

<sup>379</sup> Marrëveshje midis Min Arsimit dhe Institutit Kyrias, 2 Maj 1923, Fondi 47, Dosja 13, Fl. 1, AQSH.

worked, but Sevasti Kyrias reported being pleased with the girls' willingness to learn and the efforts they put into their studies.<sup>380</sup> But Instituti Kyrias's sights were set on expansion, and the current facility was insufficient. Land was purchased in 1924, and the plans were made to build a larger, better school on a campus even further out of the city.

The new facility, finished in 1931, was astonishing both in sophistication and in cost.<sup>381</sup> Six kilometers away from Tirana, tucked away on a hill in the village of Kambëza, overlooking the Lana River and the Dajti Mountain in the distance, the thirty-two thousand dollar site<sup>382</sup> comprised multiple buildings. The main facility, a long rectangular two-story brown tone brick and stone building housed six classrooms, two science laboratories, the library, and an auditorium designed to host conferences and theater performances for the annual closing ceremonies.

Nearby stood the infirmary, teachers' residences, a dormitory, the dining hall, the Kyrias-Dako family home, a bakery, and the animal shelter. As before, there was an emphasis on self-reliance<sup>383</sup>. Off to the side were the exercise grounds and a tennis court. A paved path lined with cypresses connected it to the road for Tirana. Most uniquely, a five kilowatt powered hydro-central station built on site, provided electricity.

There is no recorded evidence that registers either input or advice on the design of Instituti Kyrias. However, many of the principles taken in consideration when constructing it reflect an adherence to those followed by the American colleges in Istanbul, Robert College and the ACW. Just before work began on the campus site in Kambëza, Sevastia Kyria notes in her

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<sup>380</sup> Gazeta "Shqiptari i Amerikës", Korça, July 4, 1923.

<sup>381</sup> The school was moved from Tirana to Kambëza in 1927, but construction stopped in 1931.

<sup>382</sup> Listë Shpenzimesh, 3 Mars, 1926, Fondi 42, Dosja 12, Fl. 1, AQSH.

<sup>383</sup> I have not found information that suggests this was necessarily a practice common to American schools. During WWI, the ACW kept sheep on campus, when food supplies to the city were scarce, but that seems to have been an isolated case.

unpublished memoir, that she and her husband travelled to Istanbul in 1924 when their eldest son, Alexander Dako, graduated from Robert College.<sup>384</sup> Whether they took notes for their own school is not commented upon in her writing, however, the setting of the two colleges situated on beautiful hills overlooking the Bosphorus cannot have escaped them.

In matters of size, the new campus of Instituti Kyrias at forty-three acres, was in between when compared to other American colleges in Anatolia and the broader Middle East. Emulating the architecture of Robert College, in large foursquare buildings with gardens, some like that of the Ras Beirut campus of the Syrian Protestant College (forty acres) or Central College in Aintab (sixty acres), had been built at the edge of cities. Occasionally, more contained campuses like the college at Harput in eastern Anatolia (three acres), were built inside the city.

All of these campuses, however, were built at higher elevations, often enclosed by walls containing varieties of (fruit) trees, lush vegetation, and overlooking sceneries, which often set them apart as “healthy and pleasant” sites.<sup>385</sup> On occasion, as with Instituti Kyrias, elevation was said to help isolate them from infectious diseases like malaria, a concern for the founder of Robert College. Varying in complexity, each of them comprised multiple buildings, sometimes between twelve and fourteen of them, for: teaching (classrooms), learning (libraries), medical care (infirmaries), physical education (sports grounds) and recreation (auditoriums, theaters, gardens). Often, their laboratories boasted the most advanced technologies in medicine and the sciences.

Campuses developed over time, and displayed varying degrees of stylistic unity, some like ACW pointedly more streamlined than its male rival, Robert College. Their neoclassical buildings typically borrowed on the architectural traditions of New England Colleges, designed

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<sup>384</sup> Sevasti Kyrias, “A Struggle to Emancipate the Daughters of the Eagle,” 24.

<sup>385</sup> Zeynep Çelik, “The Campus, the City, and the Empire: the Early Architecture of Robert College and the American College for Girls,” in *The Anatomy of Tradition: 150 Years of Robert College*, 221.

by American architects who had studied at MIT and the Ecole des Beaux Arts. When Protestant schools began to be projected in the Near East, there was indeed an expectation that they would embody characteristics of New England colleges.<sup>386</sup> The early buildings of Robert College, for example, were styled in the image of Bowdoin College and Bangor Theological Seminary, alma maters of Cyrus Hamlin, its founder.

Occasional rivalry aside, as was the case with the construction of Robert College and the ACW, the point to make is that they were built to impress, and impart on the viewer the idea that their undertaking had serious goals.

When Instituti Kyrias originally opened in 1922, the length of study was proposed at eight years. Sevasti Kyrias had initially described it as a:

lycée internat for girls [that] will have eight grades. The first four will provide a general academic course equivalent of the first four years of lycées in Europe. The succeeding four years will be designed in five branches...<sup>387</sup>

She did not offer a reason for categorizing it as a *lycée internat*. But ultimately this did not matter, because the school came to be known through different names. Locally, Tirana neighbors have casually referred to it as “shkolla e Dakos” (Dako’s school).<sup>388</sup> Formally, however, there were different variants. In 1925, a document printed on letterhead showed its name as “The Kyrias Girls’ School, Tirana, Albania” and below it, to the left stood, “Miss Paraskevi Kyrias, Diretrice”. In correspondence with American mentors, and in the memoirs of Mary Mills Patrick, between 1925-1927 the school was referred to as the Kyrias Collegiate. In the regulations guidebook from 1931, the name changed again to Instituti Kyrias: Kolezh për Vajza (College for Girls).

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<sup>386</sup> “Miscellaneous Notes on Robert College History,” May 30, 1857, Box 53-1, RBML-CU, in *ibid*, 215.

<sup>387</sup> Ministria Arsimit Sevasti Kyrias Dako, Fondi 195, Dosja 40, F. 1-2, AQSH.

<sup>388</sup> Dishnica, 303.

It was understood from the beginning that the school would have a dormitory, hence the part about it being a *lycée internat*. But why call it a *lycée* or a *kolezh*? And why did Sevastia refer to herself as director in Italian? All terms were essentially foreign. Albanian had as yet no substitute for them and there were few institutions of advanced learning. The only two secondary schools in the country in 1922 were both named lycée: Liceu i Korçës and Liceu i Gjirokastrës. They began to admit women in 1933.

Considering that the family was well attuned to the tenor of Albanian politics in the 1920s- a tendency toward reforms that aimed to outwardly fashion Albanian institutions in the likeness of “European modernity”<sup>389</sup>, it is possible to read that declaration in a number of ways: the first of them is political posturing; the second may have had to do with local competition.

1925, for example, was the first year in which Albania conducted its first agreements with Italy, thus partly explaining Paraskevi’s designation as “director” in Italian. But was it an attempt to somehow engage foreign presence in Tirana? By framing their school as a gendered alternative to the two existing, foreign-directed secondary schools, it is likely that the Kyriases may have thought they could make their appeal more interesting. I have not found evidence implying a direct connection. However, the coincidence was also far too strong to ignore, especially as Korça was their previous field of operation.

Although there seems to be no direct connection, an additional influence may have come from Istanbul.<sup>390</sup> At the same time, the ACW itself was forced to change its own name to *lise* (Turkish for lycée) and downgrade its curriculum offering to that of an American equivalent of junior college (which is also how M. M. Patrick describes the “Kyrias Collegiate” in her

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<sup>389</sup> Robert Austin, 1.

<sup>390</sup> The continued correspondence between faculty members at the two schools through many years, with interruptions in the middle, implies that there are gaps in documentation in between. From the Albanian side, we know that Paraskevi Kyrias burnt substantial amounts of letters (two sacks full according to her grandson) years of communist persecution and inspection.



memoirs, *A Bosphorus Adventure*). The change came about because of a law in 1924 stipulating that no private school of any kind could carry out university level instruction.<sup>391</sup>

Regardless of its institutional appellation, Instituti Kyrias opened up a growing number of possibilities to its students throughout the nine years that it was open. When the new campus was completed in 1931, students ranged in age between seven to twenty, and their respective length of study varied on which one of the three *seksione* (sections) students they decided to enter beyond the secondary level described below.

At this point, academic study was organized in three phases, designated separately as *departamente* (departments): *fillor* (primary) at seven years; *gjimnazial* (secondary) four years, and *superior* (specialized tertiary level) at two-four additional years. Departamenti Superior was further subdivided into three *seksione*: *shkenca dhe ekonomi shtëpiake* (domestic science) two years; *shkenca pedagogjike* (pedagogical science) three years; and *dega liceale* (preparatory course for university entrance exams) four years.

Beginning in 1928, training was expanded to allow recently graduated teachers to practice their skills in *departamenti fillor*. Two years later, the sisters thought of introducing the first kindergarten in the country, attaching it to the school, bringing in children from the capital city by bus.<sup>392</sup> Curriculum, likewise, evolved. Christo Dako originally justified the idea to open the school, on the premise that it would further the “*cultural propaganda* of spreading the Albanian language”.<sup>393</sup> However, the ongoing discussions with the Ministry of Education brought up the subject of foreign teachers to teach English and French (and later on Italian). But while finding foreign teachers was not always a problem, retaining them was. For that reason,

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<sup>391</sup> Faith Childress, “Creating the ‘New Woman’ in Early Republican Turkey: the Contributions of the American Collegiate Institute and the American College for Girls,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 44, no.4 (2008), 555.

<sup>392</sup> This would happen after a bridge would connect Kambëza to Tirana.

<sup>393</sup> Kristo Flloqi, “Një Vepër e Shkëlqyer Patriotike” in *Foleja Kombëtare*, 83.

the number of academic subjects offered in a given year, and the textbooks used to teach them, also varied.

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Albanian was the language of instruction during the entire course of *departamenti fillor*, as well as the first two years of *departamenti gjimnazial* – grades one through nine. Fanka Eftimiu, the veteran teacher who had joined the School for Girls in Görice/Korça after finishing her studies at the Samokov Theological Seminary, was in charge of *departamenti fillor*. At this level, students studied geography, history, general science, and mathematics, and may have begun to delve into pedagogy and psychology.

Departamenti Gjimnazial and Superior combined study in French, English, and later on, in Italian. At this level, instruction was organized around which of these languages were to be spoken at a given day. For example, English would be spoken all day for two days of the week. After that, French came along. Italian instruction varied by the politics between the two countries at given moments.<sup>395</sup> In all, eighteen foreign teachers came to work between 1924-1933 at the Kyrias Institute. The lack of Albanian textbooks and the lack of university qualified female personnel, made it imperative to have subjects at the higher levels be taught in a foreign language. So, for example, a former student, Tefta Nuçi Naçi recalled that hygiene, zoology,

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<sup>394</sup>ibid.

<sup>395</sup>Adelina Nosi unpublished diary in *Rrëfimet në Tre Kohë*, Ina Kosturi (Tirana: Ombra GVG, 2012), 51.

domestic science, drawing, and piano were taught in French, using corresponding French textbooks. Chemistry, physics, physiology, botany, and gymnastics were in English, again with corresponding textbooks in English.

Why the choice was made to designate these subjects in those languages is not clear. The Kyrias family had brought back some English instructional materials itself, and regularly contacted libraries, people, and organizations to send them materials. Christo Dako for years had been developing textbooks in math, science, and history. Algebra, geometry, trigonometry, cosmography, geography, and history were subjects that he taught.<sup>396</sup>

Little is known about the American, French, Swiss, and Italian instructors who came to work at the Kyrias Institute between 1924 and 1933. Some of their names, however, do exist. There were the Swiss Venera Pfeninger (1928-1930), the Americans Robbie Hamilton (1924-?), Angie Eames (1925-?), Anna Cattell (1926-1928), Mary C. Rogers (1931-1933)<sup>397</sup>, and Yvonne Piddoux, whose actual nationality is unclear. Pfeninger, Cattell, and Piddoux left behind recollections of the work environment, but no details about their duties. In some cases, they also visited years later. There were also the two Italian teachers, one Grillo and her successor Luiza Tartufori. In many cases, it is unclear what they taught or when they had come. What is known is that they were all contracted by the Ministry of Education, and were not allowed to participate in political activities.

Robbie Hamilton and Yvonne Piddoux had been the earliest to arrive at the school, and were there through 1925. Piddoux later returned for a visit in 1928. When the Ministry of Education appealed to the Kyriases to train a number of students in pedagogy, it specifically

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<sup>396</sup>Kristo A. Dako, *Shënime Historike nga Jeta dhe Vepra e Nalt Madhërisë së Tij, Zogu i Parë, Mbret i Shqiptarëve*, (Tirana: Gutenberg, 1937), 5.

<sup>397</sup>Mary C. Rogers was a graduate of Oberlin who came to teach English. See in, *Oberlin Alumni Magazine* 28, no. 2 (1931), 57.

requested that students be placed under the direction of an American professor. So it is likely, that Hamilton, being the first to arrive, fulfilled that duty. Whether she stayed on and for how long, is unknown. Angie Eames of Ithaca, New York, who came to work in early fall 1925, was an English teacher, referred by Hester Jenkins, Paraskevi's former English professor, to whom Sevastia wrote in August of that year.<sup>398</sup>

The two Italian teachers, Grillo and her successor Luiza Tartufori, taught Italian language and to some degree, perhaps Italian culture and civilization. Beginning in 1926-27, the Ministry of Education permitted the teaching of Italian for a few hours a week, but discontinued it the next year. That first instructor Grillo was replaced through the influence of the Italian attaché to Tirana (1927-1933), General Alberto Pariani, because she had allegedly not "fulfilled her country's aims" in Albania.

To correct the situation, Pariani appealed to his superiors in Rome twice to push harder for the teaching of Italian in the school and to find a replacement inspired by "high fascist sentiment", and also to provide a number of scholarship to Albanian students, so that it would be possible that Italian be taught intensively among these "Albanian women".<sup>399</sup>

Knowing full well the limits imposed on foreign teachers, and also the difficult situation of Italian teachers in particular given the Kyriases' intense opposition to Italian politics over Albania, Pariani did ask his legation to send propaganda materials: books and various publications, photographs of Italian art and cultural monuments, so that students of the Instituti Kyrias could engage with Italian culture.<sup>400</sup>

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<sup>398</sup>Sevastia's letter to Jenkins indicates that Eames' travel was arranged in New York, where she picked up a pre-paid steamship ticket at the Brooklyn office of Mr. Ilia Chapullari— a Kyrias middleman for some time— and she arrived to Tirana via Naples presumably entering the port of Durrës. Hester Jenkins taught at ACW between 1900 and 1909. Paraskevi graduated in 1904, and Jenkins met Sevastia in 1908

<sup>399</sup> Iljaz Gogaj, "Ndërhyrja Arsimore Italiane në Shqipëri dhe Qëndresa Kundër Saj," in Dishnica, 183.

<sup>400</sup> ibid in Dishnica 183.

The last of the teachers who arrived in the fall of 1931, was a Miss Mary Rogers, a young Oberlin graduate of “high ideals and of much ability.” Rogers was the daughter of Dr. Charles Rogers, a professor of comparative zoology at Oberlin, and was going to teach English at Instituti Kyrias.<sup>401</sup>

Two years later, when the Kyriases may have alerted Oberlin faculty of the possibility of the school’s impending closure, they circulated a petition directed to all those who knew the Kyriases to grant Paraskevi Kyrias an honorary doctorate, as a measure of forestalling such plans, because of the added prestige it would confer to their school. Rogers’ father, Dr. Charles Rogers, sent the petition around to people like Charles Crane, Dr. Mary Mills Patrick, and Prof. Albert Lybyer, who had seen and worked with Paraskevi during her time in Paris.<sup>402</sup> Thus, the Kyriases had wisely used their connections to propel their educational work in Albania.

The administration looked in several directions to secure teaching materials. Some they had procured personally. Others they obtained by writing to their extensive contacts. Exchanged letters provide one type of evidence for these tendencies. A second is their existing book collection, currently held in the library of University S & P Qiriazi in Kambëza, Tirana. As mentioned earlier in the chapter, the Ministry of Education issued a credit advance to Paraskevi Kyrias to bring back from the United States teaching materials. With the existing evidence, it is a challenge to ascertain titles that she may have brought back from that particular trip, and what titles the family may have already had in its possession by 1922. It is possible, however, to make an educated guess as to which of those were likely used for the dual purposes of reference and instruction.

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<sup>401</sup>The Oberlin Alumni Magazine from 1931 indicates that Rogers was teaching English at Insituti Kyrias that year. See, *Oberlin Alumni Magazine* 28, no 2 (1931), 57.

<sup>402</sup>Letters were exchanged between late March and April 1933.

(Selected) titles range from: William McKeever's 1922 *Teaching the Girl*, the Keystone Company's 1920 *Visual Education: Teacher's Guide to Keystone "600 set"*, John Dewey's 1915 *Schools of To-morrow*, Lillian Lincoln's 1915 *Everyday Pedagogy with Special Application to the Rural School*, Frederick Woodbridge's 1916 *The Purpose of History*, Albert Guérard's 1916 *French Civilization in the Nineteenth Century*, Borden Browne's 1917 *Theory and Thought of Knowledge*, and finally Oliver and Virginia Woodson's 1917 *The Teaching Profession*. There was also the British Wilena Hitching<sup>403</sup>'s *Home Management: A Three-Year Course for School*.

These stand out for two reasons. First, they were published within a time frame that would render them "authoritative", if an educator was looking to purchase such, as Paraskevi undoubtedly was. Second, they correspond to the school's profile as a teaching institution, in good part, and to a lesser extent, to the subjects included in its curriculum.

What the directors could not bring themselves, they secured through a third party. In the mid 1920s, the administrators seem to have built a relationship with a textbook supplier in New York City, the Ginn & Company Publishers. In December 1926, E.M. Schwarze, secretary to Mr. Pimpton, the company director, addressed a letter to Paraskevi writing that "Mr. Pimpton was greatly interested in your [her] letter of November 18, enclosing the annual report of the Kyrias Girls' School" and that he sent a packet of materials. It included: twelve copies of *The Jones Readers by Grade Book II*, six copies of *The Jones Readers by Grade Book VI*, six *The Jones Readers by Grade Book VII*, six copies of *The Jones Fourth Reader*, and finally twelve copies of *Wentworth & Smith Complete Arithmetic*.<sup>404</sup>

When he needed to get a hold of a play that the school wanted students to perform, Christo Dako wrote to his colleague Aleksandër Drenova and his brother Rafail to mail their

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<sup>403</sup> Hitching was an organizer and inspector of Home Management to the Derbyshire County Council. She had also been the late headmistress of Meanwood Road Girls' School in Leeds.

<sup>404</sup> E.M. Schwarze to Instituti Kyrias, December 12, 1926, Fondi 52, Dosja 16, Fl. 3, AQSH.

texts to him from Bucharest. Although “Prinjt e Bandit” (Leader and Bandit) eventually arrived, finding such materials was not easy. The leading issue was that the literature for such specific purposes, in Albanian, was still in its early stages. Faced with a dearth of available materials, the Kyriases eventually resorted to their own creativity. Retelling her experience on an Atlantic steamer on her way to the Paris Peace Conference, Paraskevi composed “Anija Detit” (The Steamer). And in 1931, students staged “Foleja Kombëtare” (The National Nest) an allegorical reconstruction of the school’s own history performed to mark its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary, that Sevastia wrote.

*Toward a Sisterhood of Unus Animus: The Soldiers of Nation*

In 1931, Instituti Kyrias decided to celebrate forty years of Kyrias educational activity. To mark the occasion, it raised a committee of students to organize and stage an anniversary celebration. Former visitors and distant admirers were asked to send in memories and recollections of the Kyriases and their work, which have been preserved in a commemorative brochure that this chapter has at times referred to.<sup>405</sup> What makes it useful for analysis is that the sources in *Foleja Kombëtare* reveal much about what the school expected of students, as well as how competing ideas of womanhood came to be shaped through it.

At this point, Instituti Kyrias had a hundred and fifty female students, between the ages of eight and twenty years. Of these, seventy-six were studying to become elementary school teachers, fifty four were preparing to enter the university, and only twenty were studying domestic science. Thus, an overwhelming eighty-six percent of the student body was training for a career that would tie them to national development and bring them out of the home. And, as the

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<sup>405</sup> The organizing committee of girls sent out a circular announcing the impending celebrations in January 1931. *Foleja Kombëtare*, was simultaneously, a synonym for the school, the title of the commemorative brochure, as well as the play that students performed on May 24<sup>th</sup>, 1931.

many congratulatory letters, poems, and articles demonstrate, theirs was a generation of young women whose progress was watched over with a mix of enthusiasm and anxiety.

Seventy-six of them— those studying in *dega pedagogjike*— were funded by the government. It similarly monitored the academic progress of those who would be continuing their university studies abroad. Commentators widely anticipated that these young women would make an impact on Albanian society. Collectively, their ideas hinged on three overlapping themes: motherhood, nationalism, and modernity. What these ideas meant, however, and how they related to each other, depended on how onlookers viewed the Kyrias Institute.

The connection between motherhood and nationalism was the most outstanding, and also the most straightforward one. When the pool of commentators represented literary figures— men disengaged from active politics—who intimately knew the Kyrias sisters and Dako through their cultural activism, the link between motherhood and nationalism was the one most often drawn out. The then young poet Llazar Gusho made that connection most directly.

The perpetuation of life belongs to women... To have *Albanians* there must first be Albanian women, and the more exalted they are mentally, physically, and morally, the greater the Albanians who will emerge will be. Women are the foundations of a nation. Today in Kambëza, where Instituti has installed *the* factory to create Albanian women, I see full of joy the daughters and sisters who are being taught to create a beautiful Albania. There where the able patriot Mrs. Dako has activated the eternal factory of *Albanianism*, I kneel. It cooks [prepares] those Albanians who will beget Albanians.<sup>406</sup>

More soberly, a counterpart who went by the nom- de-plume Milo Shini, thanked the Kyrias family for educating an “army of mothers,” labeling their training a civilizing mission. The Institute’s history, he wrote, went hand in hand with that of the nationalist movement. It was among the first parties to sow patriotic sentiment. In closing, he stated that he implored fellow

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<sup>406</sup>Llazar Gusho, no title, in *Foleja Kombëtare*, ed, Instituti Kyrias, (Tirana: Gutenberg, 1931), 89. Llazar Gusho. Gusho (1899-1987), later known through his pen name Lasgush Poradeci, first studied in Pogradec and Monastir, and later in Greece, Romania, and Austria. I have no indication that he visited the school in person, or was an admirer from a distance.



Albanians to take an example in this woman [Sevastia] who had educated an army of mothers who knew what Albania meant, who knew what fulfilling civic obligations meant.<sup>407</sup>

All of the government officials who sent laudatory remarks paused along the same line of thinking. “Educated womanhood is the pillar of the nation”, wrote the Prime Minister Pandeli Evangjeli. Hil Mosi, the Minister of Education, noted that he had witnessed the school’s promise when he visited it after meeting the Kyriases at the Congress of Monsatir in 1908. The Kyrias-trained girls, he added, were the first to break the custom of adolescent seclusion, a custom that missionaries sometimes referred to as *purdah*.<sup>408</sup> Pointing out the school’s contribution to social progress, he nevertheless aligned its work to the needs of the time, as the representative of the government that he was.

After World War I, he noted, the outside world began to attach a particular importance to the proper raising of children. This *mod* (Albanian for trend) of thinking was making way among Albanian society as well. Alongside the wealthy families who sent their children to schools within and outside the country, less fortunate ones, he wrote, were doing all they could to secure for theirs a scholarship for a well-rounded development.

Mindful of this trend, he went on, the government showed great interest in the development of this school as well as the education of the country’s mothers. He praised the administration for building the school in a location where they could thrive, away from the noise of the capital city, and the “pseudo-modern” centers, which too now were making headway into the country.

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<sup>407</sup> Milo Shini, no title, in *Foleja Kombëtare*, ed. Instituti Kyrias, (Tirana: Gutenberg, 1931), 92.

<sup>408</sup> Unlike some of his colleagues’ somewhat exaggerated comments, Mosi pointed to a custom that Sevastia herself had broken after months of argument with her brother Gerasim’s support to study at then Constantinople College for Girls. Although Mosi mentioned it here, the custom is mentioned very little in women’s press, examined in chapter five.

In addition, he praised Instituti's nationalist administration. What the government wanted and desperately needed in its' schools for women were "simply nationalist technocrats". To that end, it would finance an additional contingent of future specialists who would continue their studies abroad to be of service at home. Knowing the extensive contribution of the family, he expressed his full opinion that the school would thrive and deliver on its promise to train the mothers of tomorrow.

Looking among the students, his colleague, Ministry of Education inspector Jonuz Blakçorri, thought something else. During the final examinations, he noticed that a number of foreign young women— Armenian, French, and Italian – who were studying there, spoke with him in surprisingly fluent Albanian. They spoke it almost as well as if they'd "been born and raised in country", he wrote. *This*, he pointed, was perfect indication of the wholesome education that the school provided:

by encompassing in its bosom all of the needs of the universal human spirit. Hence a welcome news for us [Albanians]! This artistic work of Albania sends its rays beyond our borders, and is able to service not only the country, but the world around as well.<sup>409</sup>

The list of available names confirms one student whose name and last name imply her Italian background: Antonetta de Bella. There are no indications as to who the Armenian and French student(s) were. Given that Instituti Kyrias was known to and visited by foreigners, it is reasonable to assume that they were the children of foreigners who had come to Albania officially or for other personal reasons.

Instituti Kyrias, Blakçorri concluded, provided a high and broad education for the orderly upbringing of the Albanian female. It was a liberal education. It wakened and nurtured feelings. No abstractions and no impediments existed within. There, the face of every woman was radiant.

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<sup>409</sup> Jonuz Blakçorri, *Foleja Kombëtare*, 98.

The pleasure of their soul brought rays to their faces. The school was a temple, not only romantic and picturesque, but also an ideal location. And because it received students of different religious and regional backgrounds, the Prime Minister, Pandeli Evangjeli, called Instituti Kyrias a “temple of national unity”<sup>410</sup>.

Modernity, on the other hand, was a theme that both foreigners as well as Albanian onlookers touched upon. It was far more ambiguous than either motherhood or nationalism, but one just as frequently voiced. Analyzing from various points of view, onlookers compared the school and its students to outward symbols of progress that implied a veneer of the country’s modernity. Frequently, what such perceptions hinted at was that Instituti Kyrias was helping to widen the chasm between Albania’s Ottoman past and its projected western future.

Where Albanian parties were concerned, modernity was at times implied in the quality of the education provided to these girls as well as in the orderly conduct of the school. Hil Mosi, referenced above, wrote that they were getting beyond such *backward* mentalities that bound woman to “home and hearth” as a virtual slave to her husband and family. Another visitor, Llazër Çeta, remarked that in watching the students at work he recognized that the “country of Scanderbeg” had such women [Kyrias sisters] resembling their forefathers [Scanderbeg] in teaching our girls how to be wise mistresses of our homes, deserving and hardworking in their lessons, culture and breeding. “They make us say with pride that *we too are occidental*.”<sup>411</sup>

The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mihal Sherko, wrote in terms of the school’s size and the quality of its program. He noted that, as the largest and most progressive school for women that the country had at the time, it was a school with which Albanians could proudly parade “in

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<sup>410</sup> Pandeli Evangjeli, 99.

<sup>411</sup> Llazër Çeta, “Foleja Kombëtare” in *Foleja Kombëtare*, 94.

front of foreigners.”<sup>412</sup> Speaking for the school’s program, framed around the motto “sound mind in a healthy body”, the teacher Fanka Eftim argued that several factors made Instituti Kyrias comparable to the best of its kind in Europe. She enlisted its American and European trained faculty, its modern facilities, its athletic training that developed student bodies, the recreation that livened student minds, and the conferences that helped them elevate their souls. Writing for the newspaper *Shqipëria e Re* (New Albania) Dr. Zoi Xoxa succinctly described their training as one of “nationalist education and occidental culture.”<sup>413</sup>

Foreigners generally recorded similar impressions. Their angle of observation too was informed by the relationship they had to the family and the school. The French teachers, Yvonne Piddoux, M. Bouffard<sup>414</sup>, and Venera Pfeninger, who had spent between one-two years at the school, were impressed with the expansion of the campus itself and the breadth of culture that the students were exposed to. “Bref un petit village”, Bouffard called the new school built in Kambëza. The students had the best example in their director, Paraskevi, the Jeanne D’Arc Albanaise. She was “un model du douceur, de tact, de gentillesse, et de modestie.”<sup>415</sup> The students, she continued, were generally immersed in the cultures and languages of Italy, France, and England. In addition, they also learned to play tennis, marching, and “l’escarpolette.”<sup>416</sup>

Americans — the other sizeable group of commentators — focused on the staff exclusively. James L. Barton, former president of the American Board, and Mrs. Arthur Baldwin, the wife of its attorney, sent well wishes commending Sevastia for forty years of “unfaltering faith ... [to fulfill] her appointed task, until her school achieved a national reputation

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<sup>412</sup> Mihal Sherko, “Instituti Qiriaz për Vajza”, in *Foleja Kombëtare*, 55.

<sup>413</sup> Xoxa was a journalist trained as a lawyer at the Faculty of Jurisprudence at the University of Rome. His connection to Instituti must likewise have been that of an admirer.

<sup>414</sup> First name is unknown

<sup>415</sup> Bouffard was the second source to regard Paraskevi as a “Jeanne D’Arc”. Albanian nationalists first gave her the epithet during her time in Paris.

<sup>416</sup> *ibid*

for the creation of character and for sound learning.” Mrs. Baldwin was, however, the only one to directly speak about the Kyrias’ Protestant background. Referring to Sevastia, she concluded that, “Her culture is broad, her Christian character ‘far above rulers’. Her influence will be immortal among the women of Albania.”<sup>417</sup>

Clearly, each of these commentators had individual motivations. However, Instituti Kyrias was the most modern institution for female education in 1920s Albania, and it did foster a distinct culture of learning and perspective that the students carried with them when they left it. Testifying to these, in part, was a booklet of guidelines given to each student and their families on the first day of school. *Kushtet e Pranimet në Institutin Kyrias (Kolezh Për Vajza) Themeluar më 1891*<sup>418</sup> urged a careful reading of each of the regulations. It opened with a statement of King Zog:

We must be convinced that laws are insufficient to effect change in social life. To achieve such change, the progress and elevation of Albanian women is necessary.

The booklet listed the course of study, and provided information about enrollment, length of study, and the path of student advancement. To register, students needed to have the documented proper age, good health, good behavior etc. The persons responsible for the child needed to submit: birth certificate; certificate of previous school (if older than seven); certificate from family doctor verifying student’s good health; certificate stating student was cured of chicken pox; and a certificate from the dentist. The registrar needed to review each of these, and issue written permission for the student to proceed with registration. Once issued these, students were to report on October 1<sup>st</sup>, at 9 a.m. at the campus in Kambëz, on the first day of school.

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<sup>417</sup> Mrs. Arthur Baldwin, letter to Instituti Kyrias, February 21, 1931, in *Foleja Kombëtare*, 103.

<sup>418</sup> The English translation is: Rules of Acceptance into Instituti Kyrias, College for Girls, est. in 1891. It was first printed in 1931.

They would be issued a *kartolinë pranimi* [acceptance card], which they would use to enter class as well as the cafeteria. They could not arrive before September 30<sup>th</sup>. Tuition would be paid at the time of registration. The cost for learning the piano was listed separately from the rest of overall tuition. Once these formalities were taken care of, the student needed to bring an enumerated listing of work/study materials and proper clothing for each of the seasons in which school was in session. They had to turn in a list of the items they brought with them, signed by a parent or caretaker.

Exams could be retaken, if such permission had been granted, only at a given date and time. Students were permitted to see their parents, having previously submitted a written request to do so, Sundays between 10 a.m.-12 p.m. and after lunch between 2-5 p.m. Correspondence was permitted between them and family members alone. Students were *required* to write home once a week, on Saturdays outside of class time when the postbox was open, to “keep alive affection for family”. A post-mistress checked the letters they received. Students and servants were forbidden to tamper with received letters.

The telephone could be used for emergencies and outside of class hours. On the occasion of illness, student would first be treated at the infirmary on site. If it advanced, parents would be telegraphed; if they did not reply in a timely manner, the student would be taken to the Tirana hospital and her parents would be required to pay all incurred financial damages. Parents were also strictly forbidden from bringing their children food other than chocolate or fruit. Reason: the cafeteria provided them with enough. In closing, the students were bound to obey all these regulations or face expulsion.

The paucity of documents that would allow me to analyze comprehensively how the students themselves responded to the life, academic structure, and culture that Instituti Kyrias

passed on to them, makes it challenging to speak definitively on that count. However, two sources that have permitted me to formulate some conclusions in that direction were chance encounters with the granddaughter and great grandniece of two former students.<sup>419</sup>

Adelina Nosi (mentioned above) and Irini Shomos had come to the school via different routes. Adelina was related to the Kyriases through her aunt, Evgjeni Grameno, wife of Mihal and friend of Paraskevi. She hailed from two leading families: the Kosturis of Görice and the Nosis of Elbasan in central Albania. Irini's mother, Evanthia Rrapi Çomo<sup>420</sup>, may have been a graduate of the Kyrias School for Girls in Görice, and she herself was born in Görice. Adelina and Irini were both enrolled in *dega pedagogjike*.

They were active in the school's activities, and began a friendship that spanned their entire lives. Irini became a mathematics teacher. Adelina failed to become a teacher twice, before and after WWII, and became a housewife instead. Her granddaughter related that on both occasions her candidacy was turned down because her family had fallen out of favor with the political establishment: first during the 1920s when Adelina's uncle, Lef Nosi, was a leading opponent to Ahmet Zog, and second under the communist regime, when her family was persecuted as *bejlers* (great landowners).

Of the two, Adelina died in 2008, while Irini still lives, now in Italy with her family, and unable to communicate much at the age of a hundred four. Shortly after Adelina passed away, her granddaughter, Ina Kosturi, found a diary of dedications exchanged between the two and other friends during their Instituti days. She was kind enough to share those with me, as well as

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<sup>419</sup> I met the descendants of Adelina Nosi and Irini Shomos while researching in Albania. Irini's great grandniece, Elena Shomos, was one of the other Fulbright researchers. Adelina's niece, Ina Kosturi, was a fellow presenter at a commemorative event honoring the Kyrias sisters at Instituti Kyrias' present-day resurrected version Universiteti S & P Kyrias.

<sup>420</sup> This is something I am uncertain about. The closeness of their last names: Evanthia's last name as Çomo and Irini's as Shomos would suggest a close degree of kinship. But from Elena, I know that Irini was born and raised in Görice/Korça.

childhood memories from her grandmother's stories of life during and after her time at the Instituti.

The diary records dedications exchanged between the students during Instituti Kyrias' last year standing: 1932-33. Paragraphs written from fellow students Lili "Lilly" Voga in English, Irini Shomos in French, and her French music teacher to Adelina, or "Addy" as she had decided to sign her name in the album, clearly convey the fact that they were exposed to multi-lingual and cultural education.

In addition the diary hints at a school society, a "sisterhood" held together by the slogan "Unus Animus: Athdheu na thërret!" (One Soul: The Fatherland Calls to us!) in which each member held a designated role, defined by a talent. Among a few provided examples, Naferit Biçaku was known as the school *poetessa* (the poetess); Afërdita "Dita" Osmani Tartari as *pianistja* (the pianist); Irini Shomos as *matematicienja* (the mathematician) etc. In the dedications to each other, they swore to hold dear the school and each other dear *deri në vdekje* (until death).

Ina had grown up with the frequent mention of "Zonjusha Kyrias", whom she later understood to have been Paraskevi, and of Instituti's unique academic discipline. She remembers her grandmother as a connoisseur of literature, drawing, sewing, the piano, and foreign languages. She likewise remembers her grandmothers' domestic culture: cooking recipes, a way of servicing guests, and a way of hanging clothes inside out to prevent them picking up dust.<sup>421</sup>

Adelina spoke fondly of her passions for music and art, ones that she passed on to her daughter, who became an actress, and to her granddaughter Ina, now a professor of violin at the University of Fine Arts (Universtiti i Arteve) in Tirana. She corresponded with her Instituti friends after graduation, and her family was one of the few who kept an open line of

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<sup>421</sup> Kosturi, 31.



communication with the Kyrias-Dakos in their days of persecution during the communist regime. What Ina considers remarkable was the constant friendship of these women, from their school days to old age.

She stated in an interview that they lived with the school's culture, its' learning, and with a love that made one believe in love between humankind.

It was a unique generation, and it seems that the school enlightened their minds with the culture it stressed there, from the classics of literature, foreign language, piano, but also a persistent interest in knowing everything, from cinema to politics.<sup>422</sup>

Of the students whom I successfully traced beyond 1933, a number became teachers, a few became artists, and one became a politician. The first two graduates came out in 1928, not altogether surprising, given that the school had opened in 1922. Tefta Nuçi Naçi and Çeçilia Lezha started their teacher training, assisting Fanka Efthim in *departamenti fillor*. Four more graduates came in 1929, and twelve additional in 1931. Given the agreement with the Ministry of Education to train teachers, and the fact that over fifty percent of the student body was enrolled in *dega pedagogjike*, a significant proportion of these graduates likely pursued professional opportunities to teach.

Of these, ones I have been able to find professional records of are few. Vrisilla Pepo became a teacher at the technical Shkolla e Vajzave (School for Girls) in Kavaja<sup>423</sup> setup by Rev. Erickson in 1931. Afërdita Tartari became a pianist, and wrote a biography of Chopin in 1964. Irini Shomos taught mathematics. The sisters, Amalia and Kristina Koljaka, daughters of an

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<sup>422</sup> Ina Kosturi Interview with Roland Qafoku, "Debati në Channel One", May 17, 2012.  
[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2\\_4quEtateo](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2_4quEtateo)

<sup>423</sup> Shkolla e Vajzave trained women for "domestic" professions. Pepo started teaching there in the 1930s.

engineer who had studied at the University of Malta (another Protestant mission school originally) became, the first a teacher, and the second a noted sculptor.<sup>424</sup>

The last student I have been able to trace is Musine Kokalari, born in Adana (today Turkey) to a small political dynasty who returned to Albania in 1920. Today, she enjoys a posthumous reputation as one of the few women politicians before the communist regime. After completing her early studies at Instituti Kyrias and other successor schools in Tirana, she studied literature at La Sapienza in Rome between 1938-1941, returning to Albania to write and found the Social Democratic Party in 1943. Her professional and political life was cut short with her imprisonment as a saboteur.<sup>425</sup>

#### *Closure: Confronting Italian Expansion*

Instituti Kyrias was abruptly ordered to close down in April 1933, along with all other private schools in the country. Its girls finished the academic year there, but had to take their final examinations at Gjinnazi i Tiranës (Tirana High School) in June. Those who had not finished their course of study, were transferred to the new and public secondary pedagogical school, Instituti Nana Mbretëreshë (Queen Mother Institute) in October of that year, merging girls from Liceu i Korçës<sup>426</sup>, Shkolla Stigmatine e Shkodrës (run by Stigmatine nuns), Shkolla e Vajzave Kavajë (Telford's school) and the private school opened in 1931 "Naim Frashëri".

The sudden closure primarily impacted sixty-six primary and secondary schools servicing both genders among the Catholic communities in northern Albania, as well as the Eastern

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<sup>424</sup> Suzana Kuka, *Kristina Koljaka: Skulptorja e Parë Shqiptare e Shek XX*. Tirana: Galeria Kombëtare e Arteve, 2002.

<sup>425</sup> Platon Salim Kokalari ed., *Si u Formua Partia Social Demokrate*, (Tirana: Naim Frashëri, 2000), 403-436.

<sup>426</sup> I do not know how reliable this source of information is, given that elsewhere sources make it known that Liceu i Korçës became co-ed in 1933. In some sources, Telford's school is included among those fused to form Instituti Nana Mbretëreshë, but not in others.

Orthodox Serbian, Vlach, and Greco-phone minorities spread through the east and south. Of these, Catholic Orders— Jesuits, Franciscans, and Stigmatines— ran seventeen schools: twelve in Shkodër, and five in Tirana.<sup>427</sup> The Stigmatine School for Girls preceded the Kyrias School by two decades. Four others in Gjirokastër, Berat, Korça, and Shkodër were technical schools founded in 1929, funded by the Italian government, and run by Italian directors. Eight others served villages in remote locations, leaving local students no alternatives. The remaining were: a music school in Tirana; the Protestant “Shkolla Kenedi” in Korça; and the American Harry Fultz Technical Community College.<sup>428</sup> Of the schools serving the Greek-speaking minority, only religious seminaries remained open, on condition that they abstain from anti-Albanian propaganda. Meanwhile, Italian instructors were told to leave the country at once.<sup>429</sup>

The blow for Instituti Kyrias was great. Sevastia Kyrias noted that 1933 was the bitterest moment of her life. “From 1891 to 1933 I have been engaged in public work and have not had a single moment free until now.”<sup>430</sup> Two years earlier the school celebrated its fortieth anniversary with much fanfare. It was its crowning moment. Invitations for the commemorative festivities went out four months in advance, with guests drawn from the Albanian government, and an impressive list of the foreign diplomatic corps.

The leading Italians: the Generals Pariani and de Ghillardi, in charge of the Albanian military; the Marchese di Soragna, ambassador to Albania; and Ing. Sotilli, head of SVEA, which oversaw Italian financial operations in Albania, were all there. The American Ambassador, Herman Bernstein, the Secretary to the Turkish Consul, Rushdi Bey, the Bulgarian Charges d’Affaires, Dr. Minkoff, the Czechoslovak Charges D’Affaires, Lev Volkach were also

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<sup>427</sup> The Stigmatine School for Girls preceded the Kyrias School by two decades.

<sup>428</sup> The American Technical School, today commonly known as “Harry Fultz”, was opened in 1922 under similar agreement between the Albanian state and the American Junior Red Cross.

<sup>429</sup> Fischer, 212-3.

<sup>430</sup> Sevastia Kyrias, “A Struggle to Emancipate the Daughters of the Eagle”, 63.

there. During the course of the ceremony, the two sisters, and Christo Dako were decorated with the highest commendation the government could bestow on civilians at the time: the Order of Scanderbeg, First Class, for [their] “enormous contributions to national education and the education of the country’s young women especially”<sup>431</sup>.

The speed with which Oberlin faculty, the former President of the ABCFM James L. Barton, Charles Crane, and Mary Mills Patrick got together a petition, between late March and April 12, 1933, urging the President of Oberlin Ernest H. Wilkins to award Paraskevi an honorary doctorate in education is telling both of how sudden the decision was, and how profoundly invested these outside admirers remained in the school. Mary Rogers, an English teacher, likely leaked the news, for it was her father, Oberlin Prof. Charles Rogers, himself who endorsed the petition.<sup>432</sup>

Kyrias, the undersigned parties noted, would arrive at Oberlin to celebrate the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of her class graduation. After supplying a long list of her qualifications, they concluded with the real reason for urging this on:

One reason for urging the granting of a degree at this time is because of the prestige which would naturally accompany such a degree, a prestige richly deserved and very much needed because of the attempts of the present government of Mussolini through the Minister of Education of Albania, who is a Roman Catholic, to gain control of the educational system of Albania. Anything which can be done to block this attempt, should be done for the sake of the education of Albanian womanhood.<sup>433</sup>

The plan to nationalize schooling had been in the works for some time. Ivanaj’s predecessor, Hil Mosi, among those present at the Kyrias festivities in 1931, had already projected curtailing the private school sector because of the pervasiveness of Italian instructors.

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<sup>431</sup> *Foleja Kombëtare*, 43.

<sup>432</sup> There is also a letter from Aleksander Dako, then a student in Rome, who contacted Charles Crane that spring letting him know of the impending closure. Unlike the letter circulated by Oberlin, Dako claimed that it was unclear where the change was coming from: the Italians or another Muslim uprising.

<sup>433</sup> Charles Rogers to Kyrias School for Girls Board of Directors, April 12, 1933, Records of the Graduate School of Theology, Kyrias Girls’ School Correspondence, Box 2, Record Group 11 Graduate School of Theology, OCA.

To him, they were “improperly using their positions as instructors in Albanian schools to politically and culturally influence their students.”<sup>434</sup> His selling point with the King, was that they were particularly active among the Catholics in the north, and that they had constructed a larger than needed network of schools in Shkodër (cultural center of Albanian Catholicism).

Afraid that this influence could be used to stir the northern tribes against central authority, Zog approved some of Mosi’s ideas, as Albanian relations with Italy began to deteriorate in 1931. Meant to strike a permanent blow to the system of private schooling, Mosi’s provisions would penalize parents who sent their children to such schools with two-to-six months of jail time, and a hefty monetary fine. His provisions also gave students who had finished their secondary education in Albania preference in government employment over those who had finished their studies abroad. Those who had failed to complete their course of study in the West were disqualified from official positions, until they completed their studies in Albania. Finally, Mosi’s stiff provisions discouraged students from accepting foreign scholarships. They would be imprisoned and unable to work for the state for three years.<sup>435</sup> The laws were approved in the last quarter of 1932. With Mosi’s death that December, nothing further was done. But four months later, Ivanaj and the King saw the ripe moment to implement them.

The reason behind this move was to force Italy to renegotiate a loan made in 1931. But when Albania did not concede to the conditions that Italy attached to it, negotiations were suspended. As a result, Italian-Albanian relations reached an all time-low. Within months, the Italian commissions in Albania dropped all financial and logistical assistance programs, and withdrew all their civil and military personnel.<sup>436</sup> In 1935 relations normalized, but by then Albania began its steady path to full Italian colonization. On April 7 1939, Italian forces invaded

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<sup>434</sup> Fischer, 203.

<sup>435</sup> Fischer, 211-2.

<sup>436</sup> *ibid*

the country and two days after, the Albanian Parliament gave the crown to the Italian King Vittorio Emmanuele.

### *Instituti's Legacy*

Education was the one sector where the Albanian state could and did exert itself. What embittered the Kyriases especially was that their school, unlike many other private institutions, was not reopened in 1935 when the International Court decided that Albania should reverse its policies. The Greek minority protested the April decree, based on the League of Nations provision to guarantee minority rights, when Albanian statehood was recognized. But the fused Instituti “Nana Mbretëresh” was built and there was no going back. The process of nationalization was complete.

But how should we regard Instituti Kyrias? In many ways, it preceded the creation of independent Albania, but in many others it was conceived to serve independent Albania. It developed with the moral support of American educators and institutions, once themselves identified as Protestant, and enhanced with Albanian government monetary support to educate Albanian womanhood. Seen from the perspective of nationalist historiography, the fact that it led to a public institution, gave Instituti a linear nationalist trajectory.

However, viewed from the perspective of the family's history and their varied connections, its legacy is more complex. To the Kyriases, the school was the fruit of their two missions, Protestantism and nationalism, one of which was essentially fueled and adapted to the other. During the commemorative exercises, Sevastia Kyrias concluded with the note that,

the schools' forty-year journey had been arduous. In that time, it assumed a spiritual vigor that allowed it to continue its divine mission (*vepër e shenjtë*) to serve the nation “under the shadow of his August Majesty the King” whose persistent interest in women's education had served as *spiritual* inspiration to give Instituti a fuller and more perfect

development allowing the girls of Albania the opportunity to “win a modern education in the full sense of the word, in their country, while observing national practice (zakon) and tradition.”<sup>437</sup>

To begin with, like many former mission schools in the 1920s, Instituti was a compromise. As the missionary enterprise declined with the rise of nationalism, many such schools modified their programs to national decrees. But unlike some led by American missionaries, it had some leverage with the government, because the Kyriases had a cultural advantage as insiders.

Sevastia’s language is that of a missionary educator and a cultural mediator. As Constantinople College evolved into the American College, her teacher, Mary Mills Patrick, had also emphasized the national character of her school as “American”, while she downplayed its Protestant origin.<sup>438</sup> Kyrias did not mention Protestantism, but the religious undertones of her speech, with emphasis on ‘divine mission’ and ‘spiritual inspiration’ can hardly be missed.

Second, a closer look at the ways in which Instituti’s pedagogical mission was communicated, received, projected, impinged upon, and lived through its students, would similarly suggest that it was much more than a simple template of nationalist learning. As all its observers noted, it was shaping a new generation. Anna Catell’s “new womanhood” took flesh in Sevastia’s militant but culturally motivated “soldiers of nation”. The Kyriases, however, did not specify the contours of this model.

The fields of learning that the school provided seemed circumscribed, and yet they were not. Fitting as its “mother” institution, the American College for Women, had also pitched its mission with broad ambiguity: to prepare women to serve “at home, society, and beyond”. Girls in Albania also had multiple choices: they could become housewives, teachers, all while advancing to university studies.

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<sup>437</sup> “Fjala e Zonjës Dako”, in *Foleja Kombëtare*, 24.

<sup>438</sup> Reeves-Ellington, op. cit. 58

To a select few bureaucrats, Insituti represented a symbol of Albania's rightful place in the family of "civilized" nations. Albania existed, but barely. Its biggest threat was there, among them, as they all celebrated the school's 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The presence of three Italian officers, one of whom had attempted to infiltrate the institution by replacing an "incompetent" fascist teacher, could hardly be read as a warm gesture.

The Kyriases had fought vigorously in the years leading up to the Peace Conference to prevent the possibility of an Italian protectorate over Albania. By 1931, Italian presence in Albania could not be ignored. Albanian politicians needed something to boast about. And here it was! A modern facility allegedly training Albanians of all social stripes, and a handful of foreign girls even: Armenians, French, Italian, all speaking Albanian fluently. Yet, none of Instituti's mission statements provided rigid definitions of how women were going to structure their lives. The only concrete prescription was that *atdheu* (fatherland) would play an important part in it.

From the American perspective, Instituti was a cultural bridge between western values and eastern symbols. The passage of time, for Anna Catell and Professor Miller, was remarked in learned behavior (individuality) and in dress (no veil). Publically, Sevastia Kyrias had said nothing about the look of her "soldiers". Although Albanian reformers who saw Muslim dress as a sign of the country's backwardness thought similarly, American staff members had their own ideas about Albanian womanhood.

So too, did the other teachers. To the French M. Bouffard, Paraskevi, the Jeanne D'Arc Albanaise, was herself the very model of what a woman should be: tactful, gentle, and sweet. It is equally possible that while the school did not prescribe behavior, these congratulatory statements were a reflection of what the staff encountered, and in turn, what students learned.



For the girls who attended Instituti Kyrias, in as much as it is possible to gauge the impact that the school made upon their lives, it seems to have been a source of livelihood both in a professional sense as well as in an experiential one. Between 1928-1933, Instituti graduated twenty-five students. Existing records point to combined practice: careers in teaching, art, and home making. The possibilities were, again, numerous. Government quotas may have decided how many became teachers, but nothing precluded these students from combining domestic and professional lives.

If the diary of a schoolgirl who affectionately referred to her friends and her piano teacher in Anglicized nicknames is a window into the cultural horizons that the school exposed them to, scholarship has also to account for other ways in which students were encouraged to see themselves. Yes, their education was based on American methods, yes they were supposedly taught to think of themselves as Albanian cultural warriors (and did they think about the gendered dynamic of this mission?)<sup>439</sup>, but their multi-lingual education must have provided other ways of understanding themselves and responding to the world around them. In other words, their subjectivities were complex and multi-dimensional.

In this regard, Instituti was not an exception. Responding to feminist critiques of the Kemalist period who argue that Republican imposition upon female education and school curriculum somehow limited the efforts of foreign educators and confined women to traditional gender roles as house hold managers and child nurturers, in her work on American colleges in interwar Turkey, Faith Childress shifts attention instead to the *possibilities* that Turkish students acquired through their education. While such schools (originally missionary establishments) were obligated to substantially modify their curriculum to integrate “practical skills” like

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<sup>439</sup> I have not yet come upon evidence that would suggest how students responded to this. Whether this was Kyrias’ way of implying motherhood as a woman’s cultural mission to administrators at the Ministry of Education, who applauded that aspect of the school, or also a direct suggestion to students, is presently open to interpretation.

domestic science, and subjects tailored to “Turkish national character” (geography, history, and civics, military science, and sociology) into their core offerings, and trimming their extracurricular subjects, they were able to both meet and exceed the expectations set upon them.

The administrators, who subscribed to the idea that education, however defined, must prepare students in a broad sense, were creative in their attempts to play with requirements and extracurricular activities in ways that maximized student exposure. Extracurricular activities, like writing for the school newspaper or performance, were ways that students honed skills like English composition and speaking outside the classroom, and ways through which the schools perpetuated their prior practice and vision.

The Turkish government, like American educational practice at the time, reformed education in ways that would integrate women into a broad cultural project of nation building. At the same time, Atatürk desired women to transcend traditional gender roles. Working through the ambiguity of such cultural-cum-political projects, American schools, Childress argues, were able to contribute to the making of the “New Turkish” woman. Her evidence: broadly ranging examples of Turkish graduates who worked in the home and outside it.<sup>440</sup>

Working with the materials that document *Instituti Kyrias* in the interwar period, does however permit the vantage point that, the essentially American ethos of women’s service to nation, home, and society, was negotiated on many levels. Superficially, it resulted in a model called “soldiers of nation”. The broad consensus of the parties that shaped it, an array of individuals and official representatives of different institutions, coalesced around the expectation that *Instituti* would mold a new generation of women. However, their sometimes overlapping and sometimes seemingly contradicting projections reflect that the politics of constructing gender, in this case a historically contingent model of womanhood- extended beyond the

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<sup>440</sup> See Childress, 561-564.

individual. As much as projections preceded the model, they themselves became transformed in the faces that it assumed. The end result was a generation that was defined primarily by time and place.

Albanian womanhood, thus defined, was many things: she was first a student of American schooling, secondarily meant to embody and manifest “progress” and “civilization” at a time when her very state was called into question. In time, it was assumed, she would transmit her learning to the children and family she would nurture. At once gentle and tactful, she could also be a “warrior”. Her person was mobilized to *somehow* perpetuate cultural propaganda and thus build a nation. She had to be made a shield from outside influence.

And yet, the planes on which she could deploy this learning and strategy, varied. As a student, she was observed. As an adult, her venues widened. She could become a mother, or she could become a homemaker. She could teach, in a broad sense of the word, at home and in the (badly needed) institutional settings. She could also pursue advanced training. In the end, she could combine all these possibilities.

The school itself had a cultural agenda and a political mission. It inculcated students with a nationalist ideology, but it also gave them tools to shape their own destiny. Neither administrators nor bureaucrats could determine what any of these students became once they left school grounds. All they could do was *attempt* to mold them. What happened afterward they could only anticipate.

But lest this conclusion seem inconclusive, here is something final to consider. Twenty-five graduates may not be a telling number, but in the nine years that Instituti existed, women’s literacy in Tirana jumped from 1.5% to 8.6%.<sup>441</sup> The growth in educational opportunity,

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<sup>441</sup> The first statistical figure comes out of an Austro-Hungarian census carried out in May 1918; the second comes out of a government census carried out in May 1930. See, Gentiana Kera, “Age and Marriage in Interwar Albania,”

according to Gentiana Kera, also accompanied a higher age of marriage. While the average age at marriage in 1918 was 19.9 years, the average of women married by age 20 declined from 81.2% to 70.5% in 1930. Literate women tended to delay marriage by five years in cities, and about six in villages. In addition, nationalist education encouraged a new attitude: inter-confessional marriage.

However incremental, the statistical data for this phenomenon showed a growing trend in the interwar period. In 1918, 0.1% women countrywide were married outside of their religious community. In 1930, 7.2% of Catholic women married Orthodox or Muslim men. The corresponding figures for women in these two communities were much smaller (0.8% and 0.1% respectively), but on the rare occasion that they happened, they were marked as a “step to modernity.”<sup>442</sup> The data do not correspond to Insituti Kyrias in a tangible manner, but they do reflect the impact that education was having on the capital city’s female population, where it operated.

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ed, Andreas Hemming et. al, *Albania: Family, Society, and Culture in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century*, (Berlin: LIT Verlag, 2012), 32-34.

<sup>442</sup>In her article, Gentiana Kera discusses the marriage of the daughter of Maliq Bej Frashëri (Muslim) and the son of Joan Basho (Catholic), hailed as a unique step forward in forging national unity in the newspaper *Arbënia*. See in Kera, 48.

## Chapter 5

### Which Feminism will be ours? The “Albanian Woman” in Print during the Interwar Period

Another step toward progress, was the initiative that my younger sister, Miss P.D. Kyrias took in founding the first women’s society, “The Morning Star” for the enlightenment and uplift of Albania. Hundreds of women eager to learn to read and write their mother tongue joined the society. In addition, the society gave weekly lectures. The topics were home building and home economics, but the auspicious Young Turks, recognizing the underlying nationalism, sued Miss Kyrias of sedition with the purpose of dissolving the club, but they failed...- Sevastia Kyrias<sup>443</sup>

A quarter century passed between the time in which *The Morning Star* was formed and the time in which Sevastia Kyrias wrote her (unpublished) memoir “A Struggle to Emancipate the Daughters of the Eagle”. Nationalizing education in 1933 was meant to rebuke the Italian advance. While the Kyriases opposed Italian expansion at the end of World War One, this broke Sevastia’s heart. Her school for girls closed and the forty years of her public service abruptly came to an end. She was a teacher no more!

However, two venues of expression remained open to her: writing and *Shqiptarja* (The Albanian Woman)— the society for women nationalized in 1928. Feeling embittered and betrayed Kyrias wanted to tell her story. She would publish it.<sup>444</sup> The memoir was a way to fill time, and a form of personal redemption. But it also reflected a moment in time. As the state became consolidated in the interwar period and Albanian nation building took off, women

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<sup>443</sup> Sevastia Kyrias, “A Struggle to Emancipate the Daughters of the Eagle,” 20.

<sup>444</sup> Instituti’s most recently-employed English teacher, Mary Rogers of Oberlin, Ohio, gave up her summer teaching at the renamed Istanbul Amerikan Kız Koleji (the former ACW) to type her manuscript. In a few months Kyrias sent it to the United States. Her mentors, Mary Mills Patrick and Hester Jenkins, read it, and recommended anecdotes to liven it up. In the last surviving communication with Jenkins, four days after Italy invaded Albania (April 7, 1939) Jenkins informed Kyrias that she had taken the manuscript to four publishers.

activists and male bureaucrats alike engaged in extensive debates that addressed women's places in that process. The language that Kyrias used reflected this. Education and home building became the lexical staples of her civil society colleagues.

Such debates concerning Albanian womanhood originated with the Young Turk Revolution in 1908. The Kyrias educators entered into these debates on the eve of a new era of Ottoman cultural liberalism and political decentralization. Their *Yll i Mengjezit* (The Morning Star) was a society for women that utilized the American Protestant missionary methods that they, as Christian workers, brought when they set up the school for girls in Ottoman Görice in 1891. Bible reading circles, domestic science, training in hygiene and childcare (as Chapter One has established) were methods that American missionaries brought with them to attract “unreformed” Christian women in the Ottoman Empire and beyond.

Mission theories, as outlined in Chapter Two, maintained that reaching out to women was essential to world-evangelization. As stewards of the domestic sphere, they were bound to exercise significant influence over their families, deemed to be the founding blocks of society. Moreover, missionaries thought that these “modern” strategies, often mediated through vernacular education, would further convince women to embrace Protestant Christianity. But at a time when society was increasingly being framed in nationalist terms, these methods frequently served developing nationalisms. And simultaneously, female activism became framed in those terms as well.

In this chapter, I will analyze the ways in which the Kyrias activist input became translated during the interwar period vis-à-vis pressure by the Albanian government to contain feminist expression. Where local scholars have (with some good reason) linked the widening women's movement of the '20s and '30s to European feminism, here I aim to contradict such

debate by demonstrating the centrality and resilience of the Kyrias (and by extension also Protestant) platform regarding women's positions in society during this period.

At this point in time, Albanian print culture had existed for several decades. However, women's explicit input on the emerging public sphere was new, and so was feminism. In all, during the interwar period, we see four women's magazines displaying similar points of view. They each represented "historical" centers of Albanian civilization, and equally took on the task of inculcating *progres* (progress) and *qytetnim* (civilization) to their sisters nationwide.<sup>445</sup> All four: *Grueja Shqyptare* (Albanian Woman 1920-1921), *Mbleta* (The Bee 1921-2), *Shpresa Kombëtare* (The National Hope 1922), and *Shqiptarja* (The Albanian Woman 1929-1933), as their names indicate<sup>446</sup>, pitched Albanian women as central to nation building. Their shared goal was to define this model of womanhood.

While all four of these magazines shaped the women's movement, their impact varied. As the leaders of local movements in Shkodra, Vlorë, and Korça found out, their audiences were not receptive to their messages. The lack of funds was an important impediment for them, but so was language. Albanian intellectuals had made some promises to help them, in recognition of their wartime activity, however little came their way. Women activists raised the issue of political participation, and even attempted it when the opportunity arose (June Revolution), but their censure and the discontinuation of their publications indicated that the Albanian public was not ready to accommodate political feminism.

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<sup>445</sup> While *progres* is a loan word, *qytetnim* is a noun in the Gheg Albanian lexicon connoting urban civility, since its root, *qytet*, literally means city. While *qytetnim* has, at times, been used to prescribe ways in which Albanian society could and/or should approximate Western civilization, it also has had the effect (and continues to) of casting rural space and culture as an internalized "other". Thus, while an angle of reform discourse on *qytetnim* worried about outside projection, or how to adapt foreign trends for local consumption, it has also imposed a cultural hierarchy upon local projections of the city and the village as spaces with different potential for social and cultural development.

<sup>446</sup> When read in Albanian, these titles are understood to be in the feminine.

After returning to Tirana in 1921, the Kyrias sisters resumed women's organization, but they were in a better position to influence the growing movement across Albania. Today they are regarded as the first Albanian feminists. However, they did not claim the label at the time. In national print, where their ideas could simultaneously be disseminated *and* controlled, Sevastia argued for distance from "Anglophone" (read: political) feminism, as unsuitable to Albania's current social needs. At a time when Albanian bureaucrats saw *feminizëm* as an untimely foreign trend, her strategy was pragmatic. Paraskevi, then secretary of *Shqiptarja*, the umbrella organization for women nationalized in 1929, effectively oversaw the national expansion of a publication in which Albanian feminism was continuously debated. But she too did not claim the label.

In this regard, the Kyriases differed from their contemporaries, and the tactic gave them an advantage. Their affiliated publication *Shqiptarja* acquired state patronage and was disseminated more widely. In large part, this was tied to the Kyrias's relationship to Albanian politics. As nationalist activists, long familiar to the statesmen of the interwar period, they had an established record, especially when it came to women's education.

When the state considered how to streamline the nascent women's movement, who better could it turn to for effective guidance? Sustained push for reform came from places where the Kyriases had the most clout: Korça and Tirana. And while the arena of women's activism broadened considerably, to include an ever-growing number of new voices, ideas, and streams of influence, the Kyriases provided a platform that the state readily sanctioned.

This chapter considers the emergence of local women's organizations and their publications during the interwar period, and their subsequent cooption into a single state-sponsored agenda, administered by Paraskevi Kyrias between 1929-1933. I open with a



discussion of social reforms in the late Ottoman era, and link an emerging culture of women's writing and writing about them to the debates that Albanian reformers considered in the interwar period. Next, I outline the breadth and content of local women's magazines from three major urban centers across the country, analyzing along the way the reasons for their ultimate failures before the brief experiment to install a democratic regime suspended all activity by members of Albania's civil society.

Albania's monarchy was a trial by fire, and it needed legitimacy to survive. With this in mind, bureaucrats kept the lines of communication with women reformers open and in the space of a few years, they came to an effective agreement. As the government made preparations to announce the new European-styled Civil Code in 1929, it tasked Paraskevi Kyrias's Tirana-based society for women to launch a nationwide organization promoting education along the lines of hygiene, home economics, and benevolence. *Shqiptarja*, the society's magazine, ultimately ran aground because of the Great Depression. However, in the years that it paraded as a government sanctioned family magazine, women and male writers filled its pages with dicta about Albanian womanhood, and countless examples of what it could be.

In the second part of this chapter, I chronicle Albania's failed Democratic Revolution and the institution of the Zog monarchy to showcase the challenges that civil society (notably women's organizations) experienced during the early stages of state consolidation. Finally, I turn to the pages of *Shqiptarja*, highlighting the variety of pieces it offered to show why its essentially Protestant platform was better suited to women's organizations, and how the men and women writers used the magazine to frame women's place in national society, and how those boundaries could shift as women became educated.

Feminism became a hotly debated concept at the time. On the one hand, references to it indicated that Albanian activists were well attuned to international developments, and that they displayed genuine interest in connecting Albanian society with the outside world. On the other, they demonstrated a realization that while such connectivity was important to mobilize social reforms and becoming Europeans, local rhythm was also important. While male bureaucrats were apprehensive of women in politics, they were aware that collaborating with them mattered to the royal regime. Thus, the search for a local feminism resulted in a fluid compromise where women activists, and the occasional male colleague, acknowledged their patronage at the expense of flirting with those boundaries.

*Women's Social Reforms: Ottoman Legacies Reconsidered*

To legitimize post Ottoman nationalist regimes, Balkan scholars have drawn sharp distinctions between the late Ottoman era and the new Balkan societies that developed in that once shared space through pejorative description. "Backward" still remains an adjective they frequently use to reject that shared and varied history. However, research on this time period demonstrates that the nationalization of formerly Ottoman spaces was itself part of a long drawn out modernization of the Ottoman Empire. Reforms for women constitute one piece of that vast undertaking, and they continued to be a question that challenged reformers through the interwar period.

The American Protestant impetus played a role in that process, and print culture is one of the mediums that scholars like Barbara Reeves Ellington have used to analyze it in the late imperial context. Using the case of Ottoman Bulgaria, Ellington has recently shown how the mission newspaper *Zornitsa* (The Morning Star) played into Bulgarian domestic reform. Her

chapter on the mission press and domestic reforms makes it clear that the long running and well disseminated Christian family magazine gave Bulgarian women a platform to “examine their status in Ottoman Bulgarian society and construct a new position of maternal power grounded in their everyday experiences”.<sup>447</sup> *Zornitsa* and the throng of women’s associations formed at the dawn of the Bulgarian national movement in the late 1860s, emphasized the duties of women as enlightened Christian mothers and raised the need to educate them.

In this chapter, we observe a similar tendency in interwar Albanian society. *Shqiptarja* was an open platform for Albanian women to determine their places in the nation building of the late 1920s and ‘30s. But whereas the explicitly Christian *Zornitsa* and Bulgarian domestic reforms were emphatically concerned with preparing women for their maternal roles, Albanian reformers also flirted with the idea of a wider set of possibilities and opportunities for women.

The relationship of these two cases is tentative. Kyrias’ memoir, cited repeatedly in this dissertation, makes it clear that while a student at the onetime American College for Women, she befriended and roomed with the family of a *Zornitsa* editor in Istanbul in the late 1880s, the Bulgarian Mr. Gradinaroff.<sup>448</sup> The fact that she decided to Albanianize her society for women as *Ylli I Mëngjezit* (the Morning Star) and its succeeding publication out of Boston, is a good indication of a connection between Bulgaria and Albania.

But beyond this, I have not been able to establish a more concrete picture of how the two might intersect via Kyrias. Nevertheless, the other relevant point to raise here is that women’s reforms in both these Ottoman-influenced settings, is that Ottoman influence, politically and culturally, was connected to them. If Ottoman Bulgarian women reformers advocated their

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<sup>447</sup> Reeves-Ellington, “The Mission Press and Bulgarian Domestic Reform,” in *Domestic Frontiers, Gender, Reform, and American Intervention*, (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2013), 87.

<sup>448</sup> She did not provide his first name.

education while asserting loyalty to the Sultan<sup>449</sup>, their interwar Albanian counterparts built on groundwork already laid during the era of late empire.

Women's historian Fatmira Musaj argues that improving "women's situation" in Albania could *not* have been achieved under the circumstances imposed by Ottoman rule. In *Gruaja në Shqipëri në Vitet 1912-1939 (Woman in Albania between 1912-1939)*, her narrative begins at the moment of Albanian independence. From this premise, she ultimately argues that the country's liberation and the creation of the sovereign state opened up possibilities to transform their "downtrodden" position.<sup>450</sup> Using a broad variety of sources that shed light on Albanian women's "low" level of literacy and cultural development, Musaj blames their plights on a number of social and religious practices. She links seclusion and veiling, in particular, to the (read: "Asian traditions" (read: Oriental) of the Ottoman Empire.

This dissertation also confirms important precedents for this observation. Seclusion (local *mbyllje*) was a custom that Sevastia Kyrias herself broke off the summer in which she turned fourteen, after continued arguments with her parents. But with the support of her brother Gerasim, she enrolled at the American College for Women (then still called Constantinople Home) at the end of that fateful year (1889). But while it is true that Albanian activists used nation building as a framework for consciousness-raising initiatives, as Ottoman and Hapsburg counterparts did<sup>451</sup>, what Musaj's study blurs, is that these initiatives grew out of the very

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<sup>449</sup> Ellington has argued that in recognition of Ottoman reforms in education, whereby elementary school children would be allowed an education in their native tongue, Bulgarian women reformers carefully crafted their discourses for women's education by asserting their loyalty to the Bulgarian national movement as well as the Ottoman state. Op. cit, 100-101.

<sup>450</sup> Fatmira Musaj, *Gruaja në Shqipëri në Vitet 1912-1939*, (Tirana: Akademia e Shkencave, 2002), 55.

<sup>451</sup> 1) Jitka Maleckova, "Nationalizing Women and Engendering the Nation: the Czech National Movement," in Karen Hageman, et. al. *Gendered Nations: Nationalism and Gender in the Long Nineteenth Century*, (Oxford: Berg, 2000), 293-311.

Maleckova notes that Czech feminists were always a bit careful not to identify too readily with international feminism, and align their cause with the nationalist movement, for fear of alienating important male supporters. Masaryk, in particular, gave his support to the movement, early on, and was a noted guest speaker at feminist

imperialist context, which they grew to oppose. Paraskevi's organization, the *Morning Star* cited at the opening of this chapter, for example, was only one of many cultural organizations formed during the Young Turk Revolution.

Yet, Musaj's point is also partially correct. As Kumari Jayawardena's broad study on women's movements in the developing world shows, feminisms in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries grew out of overlapping agendas of anti-imperialist, nationalist movements that advocated secularism and social reform.<sup>452</sup> In the Ottoman Muslim context, Deniz Kandiyoti argues that the "women's question"—an outgrowth of the modernizing reforms that began with the Tanzimat—was part of a broader agenda of late Ottoman reforms concerned with "progress and the compatibility of Islam and modernity".<sup>453</sup>

Such debates were initially the purview of educated nationalist male elites, Young Ottomans like Namik Kemal and Ahmed Midhat, who debated questions of education and the practices of seclusion, veiling, and polygyny. Kemal's journal *Terakki* (Progress) published a women's supplement beginning in 1867 entitled *Terakki i Muhaderat* (Progress for the Virtuous Woman), where Muslim women discussed Islam, polygyny, education, and commonplace discrimination.<sup>454</sup>

In the 1880s, women writers in Istanbul took these issues up in their own magazines, developing a struggling but growing women's press. As Ellen Fleischman points in *The Nation and its "New" Women*, post-Ottoman societies that did not experience these phenomena, like

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gatherings.

2) Katherine David, "Czech Feminists and Nationalism in the Late Habsburg Monarchy: The First in Austria," in *Journal of Women's History* 3, no. 2 (1991), 26-45.

<sup>452</sup> Kumari Jayawardena, *Feminism and Nationalism in the Third World*, (London: Zed Books, 1986), 4-5.

<sup>453</sup> Deniz Kandiyoti ed., *Women, Islam, and the State*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1991), 24.

<sup>454</sup> George Gawrych, "Semseddin Sami, Women, and Social Conscience in the Late Ottoman Empire," *Middle Eastern Studies*, 46 (2010): 98.

interwar Palestine, were the exception, not the rule.<sup>455</sup> Thus where Musaj sees a radical break with the Ottoman past, the trend that emerges instead is one of continuities.

This is not to say that Ottoman feminism somehow had a direct influence on the Albanian one. Albanian thinkers looked to examples East and West when debating the nature of local reforms. But, certainly, there were similarities, and they were strong on a couple fronts. The developing press of the 1880s in Istanbul, for example, demonstrated similar approach in content and methods to the magazines analyzed in this chapter. To that effect, Elizabeth Frierson notes that the literary genres that emerged out of late Ottoman magazines were “harbingers” of the many forms of modern womanhood that appeared in the late empire and successor nations in the Middle East.<sup>456</sup>

The Albanian case also fits this mold. The leading Turkish titles of this period, *Aile (Family)*, *Kadın (Woman)*, *Çocuklara Mahsus Gazete (Children’s Magazine)*, and the long running *Hanımlara Mahsus Gazete (The Ladies’ Magazine)* produced by men and women, were intended to be read by families, and were justified on the grounds of providing continuing education. The Albanian magazines, *Shqiptarja (The Albanian)* and *Grueja Shqiptare (The Albanian Woman)*, were directed at women, but advertised as family magazines. Their purpose was similarly instructional.

Thematically, both sets of publications tackled similar issues: the importance of education for family and social progress, “scientific” housewifery<sup>457</sup>, proper child-care, and a cautious attitude toward “modern” (Western) fashions. Of course, one of the primary differences in the Albanian case was, that where Ottoman publicists stressed education as key to *social*

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<sup>455</sup> Ellen Fleischmann, *The Nation and its ‘New’ Women*, (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2003), 4.

<sup>456</sup> Elizabeth Frierson, “Women in Ottoman Intellectual History” in Elizabeth Ozdalga, ed.

*Late Ottoman Society: the Intellectual Heritage*, (New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2005), 136.

<sup>457</sup> This is Frierson’s term.

progress, in Albania reformers argued that it was key to *national* progress. And they made women vanguards in that process.

The Istanbul serials that Frierson has examined picked up on earlier intellectual threads. These issues had already been voiced previously in Namik Kemal's *Terakki* in the 1860s and also in Şemseddin Sami's 1876 treatise on women, *Kadınlar*, (further popularized through a pocketbook reprinted edition in the 1880s). Male patronage and collaboration was another important shared feature. When *Shqiptarja* was nationalized in Albania, some of the leading male voices, frequently writing to explain the relevance of state reforms, were former Ottoman bureaucrats. One of these was Şemseddin Sami's own nephew, Mehdi bey Frashëri.

Furthermore, the bureaucratic aspect of debates centered on women's place in Albanian national society substantiates the notion of continuity with the Ottoman past. The work of Nathalie Clayer, in looking at the bureaucratic and intellectual elites who engineered some of these very debates, as well as the construction of a new, "European" Islam in the interwar period, have made it easier to link them up to debates of modernization begun in the Ottoman Empire, long before they touched the ground in Albanian terrain.<sup>458</sup>

As Clayer points out, thirty graduates of the *Mekteb-i-Mülkiye*, the Ottoman School of Administration founded in 1859, became high-ranking members of the state bureaucracy in Albania in the interwar period. While their advocacy for social reforms was inspired by developments originating in the West, their views were shaped in the Ottoman context, linking them to postwar Turkish and Arab elites educated in the same setting.

The *Mülkiyelis*, as she calls them, were generally elitist. Viewing people as illiterate and backward, they desired government and social reforms, but advocated them to degrees reflecting

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<sup>458</sup> Nathalie Clayer, "Albanian Students of the *Mekteb i Mülkiye*: Social Networks and trends of thought" in Elizabeth Özdalga *Late Ottoman Society* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2005), 313-345.

their own social position. The sons of landowners, for example, tended to be conservative. The more reform-minded, like some of the Frashëris, Bahri Omari, Mustafa Kruja (mentioned above) undertook to educate society through the press. While most desired a strong state, some were republican and others monarchists.

The school brought them into contact with European ideas (positivism and nationalism) and local responses (Islamism, in some contexts, Albanianism and Ottomanism in others, in no specific order). As officials and (sometimes) intellectuals, the *Mülkiyelis*, mitigated both Albanianism and Ottomanism as conditions saw fit. In the interwar period, Islam played a particular role in shaping nationalist ideology. In this regard, as Clayer points out, Albania presented a unique case. As the majority religion, it rendered Albania the only predominately Muslim European state.

But in 1920 the state declared itself *afetar* or “without religion”, so as to strengthen the national bond between the Catholics, the Muslims, and the Orthodox.<sup>459</sup> Focusing on outside perceptions of the country, secular *Mülkiyelis* (a non-homogenous group) in conjunction with others, who had studied in Europe or elsewhere in the West, saw it as a tool to redirect the country’s political course westward. Although they had different ideas about how to achieve this, whether conservative, moderate, or liberal, they agreed that Albania had to distance itself from its Ottoman Muslim past.

The Muslim veiling ensemble, the *perçe* and *ferexhe*, notes Clayer, were cast as a “backward” Ottoman vestige, linked to the “socio-political decline of the Islamic community and the decline of the nation state”.<sup>460</sup> Wanting Albania to appear “modern” and “European”, some

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<sup>459</sup> Clayer, “Behind the Veil: The Reforms of Islam in Interwar Albania or the Search for a ‘Modern’ and ‘European’ Islam”, in Nathalie Clayer and Eric Germain eds., *The Reform of Islam in Interwar Europe*, (London: Hurst, 2008), 128.

<sup>460</sup> Clayer, 115.



like Mehdi Frashëri, the head of the would-be Civil Code commission, argued to ban them, and they used the women's press and the wider publishing networks to voice their opinions.

Geographically, he argued, Albania was in Europe. It was born in the twentieth century. These being the facts, banning the veil could lead the country toward progress and demonstrate that Albanians belonged in Europe.

Looking to his creed, the "liberal" heterodox strand of Islam, Bektashism, which prohibited polygamy and promoted "honorable behavior" over the veil, Frashëri argued for reform. In addition, he and others pointed to similar reforms implemented in other Muslim countries like Turkey, Iran, and Afghanistan. Ali Këlcyra, the deputy who initiated the debate against the veil and women's suffrage, argued in Parliament that Mustafa Kemal had appeared publically with his wife unveiled.<sup>461</sup> Nevertheless, the campaign (that unfolded in 1929 and reattempted in the mid 30s) was slow and carefully coordinated through persuasive means, to avoid antagonizing the Muslim majority.

#### *Spontaneous Expression: Magazine Form and Content before Revolucioni Demokratik*

Albanian women's social organization, within the independent state, dates to March 27, 1913 when a group of women in Korça (formerly Görice) led by the Kyrias School staff and friends, Sevastia Kyrias (secretary), Androniqi Grameno (undersecretary)<sup>462</sup>, Katerina Tsilka (missionary), Fanka Eftimiu (missionary teacher), and Paraskevi Kyrias, petitioned the provisional Albanian government in Vlorë to resume the suspended activities of the *Morning Star* banned by the Ottoman government.<sup>463</sup>

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<sup>461</sup> Musaj, 122.

<sup>462</sup> Androniqi "Niqkë" Grameno was the wife of Mihal Grameno referenced in chapters 2 and 3.

<sup>463</sup> Parashqevi Qiriazhi, 1912 F. 47, D. 13-14, AQSH.

There are allusions to a similar charitable society for women in the port city Vlorë organized to help refugees of “Greek persecution”, during the first Balkan War (1912), whose committee still functioned in the 1920s.<sup>464</sup> But overall, there is limited information about these units. And with organizers like the Kyriases leaving for the United States, the looming war and Albania’s fraught political status, any remaining initiative must have diminished. At war’s end, when discussion about sovereignty renewed, women’s organizations eagerly rallied efforts to help the national army and refugees flocking to urban centers from either side of Albania’s still contested borders with the kingdoms of Yugoslavia in the north and Greece in the south. Among these organizations were Shkodra’s *Grueja Shqyptare* (Albanian Woman), Vlorë’s *Shpresa Kombëtare* (National Hope), Korça’s *Përlindja* (Rebirth), and finally Paraskevi Kyrias’ very own *Gruaja Shqiptare* (The Albanian) located in Tirana, the new capital city.

Justin Goddard, a French deputy travelling through Albania in 1921 on a fact finding mission sponsored by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, mentions encounters with several women’s societies<sup>465</sup>. However, we only know of four such associations/societies. The women of Shkodra, Goddard noted, thanked him and his travel partner, the senator Constant D’Estournelles, for speaking to their colleagues in the French parliament and senate about “correcting” the image that Europe wrongly held of Albania as a “savage country” divided by different faiths (*i egër e i damun prej besimevet të ndryshme fetare*).<sup>466</sup>

In Korça too, local women eagerly sought out foreign visitors, among whom the Dean of Northwestern University’s School of Education, Elmer Jones, and a Swiss couple, Eugene Pittard and wife Hélène Dufour to help their new country out. When they learned that Prof. Jones

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<sup>464</sup> Marigo Posio mentions this in a defense of her activities as its secretary. See, Posio, *Shpresa Kombëtare*, no. 1, 1921, 3.

<sup>465</sup> Justin Goddard, *L’Albanie en 1921*, (Paris: Les Presses Universitaires de France, 1922), 12.

<sup>466</sup> “Gjustin Godard”, *Grueja Shqyptare* no. 6, 1921, 46.

was dispatched by the Board of Foreign Missionaries of the Methodist Church to see whether there was a genuine desire by Albanians “to have an institution of higher learning where the leaders of tomorrow will be educated,” Korça’s society women convened a general town meeting to see how much support they could get locally for a women’s college. In H el ene Dufour, member of the Geneva Women’s Union, they saw an opportunity to establish contact with a foreign organization.

As they shared with her their desire to conceive a national platform under which to unite Albanian woman, Dufour provided them a charter of the Geneva Women’s Union along with supplies collected and clothes sewn for the Red Cross by Geneva Women. Her recommendation to Albanian women: organize societies of benevolence. But as the aspirations indicated on the pages of their publications, that was only one component of their respective agendas.

They printed this correspondence with notable foreigners, hoping to win broader social support for their platforms locally. In that effort, they addressed everything from the need to increase the low literacy rate and build schools to reforming attitudes, behaviors, and traditions that impeded women’s integration into society. In verse and prose through forms as accessible as news and anecdotes and sophisticated as essay and satire, they explored issues like: childrearing and family relations, health and hygiene, Albanian cooking, modern marriage, modern dress and entertainment, as well as political developments.

Ideologically, the publications were motivated by a similar sense of urgency: educating women was necessary to build the new nation from the basis of the family as the founding block of Albanian society. As a whole, this tendency replicated the vision laid out early on by the *Morning Star*, a focus on what the Kyriases called “home building”. The path to national progress began in the home, and women played a huge role in that process. Female activists,

some of whom used pseudonyms, vocally expressed their desire to impress upon Albanian society the necessity of allowing women a say in the social, political, and economic changes of their day.

Creating a framework within which to discuss ways of integrating women into processes of social development necessitated an alignment between “Familja” (family) and “Kombi” (nation). Piece after piece defined and explicated these categories in the sense of an imagined glorious and “moral” past, a critiqued present, and a hoped for future rooted in their fervent aspirations for *progres* and *qytetnim* (civilization). Early on, the magazines also spoke of women’s progress as a function of local patronage.

Although they saluted and acknowledged each other as sister publications, part of their marketing strategies lay in playing up local ego. As long as the question of government structure remained open, and with it the possibility that their communities would become the very center of the new nation, they expressed the desire that their particular magazine would serve as an example for women in other parts of the country.

But the tendency of the majority of contributors to use pseudonyms, and the pleas for financial and moral support, partially indicate that such support was limited. In general, readership was very limited and so was patronage. Within a few months of circulation, magazines complained that readers pay their dues or face closure. In urban centers with a longer tradition of women’s organization, such as Korça, membership was generally large (two hundred) and spread out to nearby villages.

In other areas like Tirana and Shkodra, where women’s organization had no recorded precedent, securing the patronage of local aristocracy and religious orders was necessary for survival. To build up her society committed to “progress and national unity”, Paraskevi Kyrias

drew on the support of a number of wives of local Muslim notables. In Shkodër, Catholic organizer Marie Çoba relied on the discounted rates offered by the Franciscan friars and used their press to print *Gruja Shqyptare*. Most magazines stopped coming out within the first six months. The Korça-based *Mbleta* (Bee) was active for a little over a year.

Other reasons undermining their success were poor reception and social skepticism. In Shkodër, for example, a city steeped in religious conservatism, the editor received complaints about a piece on family planning. Another letter addressed “issues” with her satirical timeline of the evolution of marriage, essentially a criticism on polygamy. Çoba’s “historical” satire of social evolution entitled “Familja” (family) blended notes of Christian and Darwinist thought, dividing the development of human relations into three phases: communism, polygamy, and monogamy. She argued that,

History teaches us that even in the midst of the civilization of some ancient nations, woman has not been accorded the scale and honor and importance which belong to her. That began to change once the contemporary concept of family [monogamy] began to take root.

The persistence of polygamy, Çoba concluded, demanded social attention.

Her reader GegëToska (synonymous with national unity by tying together the two Albanian dialect groups), who either failed to grasp her learning, or more likely disagreed with it, lauded “Mrs. Director” whom he/she assumed to have written “Familja” for endeavoring to explain the problems women faced in polygamous unions, but pointed out that the principles on which she based her argument were *të gabueme* (misleading or erroneous). The one example GegëToska griped about was the theory of evolution. It is unacceptable to articulate that “mankind evolved from beasts” GegëToska pointed out. The analysis I can make from inference is that what was actually taking place through such writings, pointed to a lack of proper reception of her ideas.

Çoba was a woman unlike many of her generation. Born into a family of “Rilindja” (Albanian Renaissance) thinkers, the Catholic Shirokas of Shkodër, Shaqe Marie Çoba had a thorough education: primary and middle schooling in Shkodër, high school at an Austrian convent in Zagreb, and finally university in Venice, where she studied pedagogy. Later, she married into the Çoba family, an ancient and socially powerful unit in Shkodër, where she and her ideas found stimulation.<sup>467</sup> Neither “Mrs. Director” nor “Minerva” replied to GegëToska, but in a later issue of *Grueja Shqyptare*, the editor complained, again, in a witty response that the readership had misinterpreted the point in an article that addressed the costs of keeping a child as “offending the morality of the people”.<sup>468</sup>

How could that be the case, she wrote, when both religion and science raised the necessity of tracking expenditure? For reference, she turned to verse 7:42 of Ecclesiastics, and to a quote of the Scottish philosopher Samuel Smiles<sup>469</sup>, both more or less arguing that to survive, one needed to record income and expense. If it were true, that a people like the Albanians, where avoiding shame and upholding moral were the potent focal points of civil life, took offense to a publication of the expenses needed to take care of children, and lowering the number of orphans, then it would be against keeping accounts of the expenses needed to sustain, say, the dormitory of a seminary. “God await the day”, she ended on a sarcastic note, when a father of many children decided to “decapitate his own in these desperate economic times”.

In its first issue Çoba’s *Grueja Shqyptare* noted that it was dedicated to help Albanian woman on the path to progress, culture, and civilization, knowing full well the “great faults” of

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<sup>467</sup>Zenepe Dibra, “Shaqe (Marie) Çoba 1875- 1954” in *Biographical Dictionary of Women’s Movements and Feminisms in Central Europe*, ed. Francisca de Haan, Krasimira Daskalova, Ana Loutfi (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2006), 99-100.

<sup>468</sup> “Për një Halë Në Përpeq,” *Grueja Shqyptare* 1, nr. 3, 1921, 4.

<sup>469</sup> Samuel Smiles was a student of utilitarian philosophers, Jeremy Bentham and James Mill and himself an advocate of material progress based on individual enterprise and free trade. Peter W. Sinemma, “Introduction to the First Edition,” in *Self-Help*, Samuel Smiles, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 6-9.

the Albanian family along these lines. It directed a number of calls to Albanian girlhood to take stock of what her heart and mind asked her to do, and harness it to develop her family. The Albanian girl could well play music, and she could well do gymnastics, but she should most strive to develop those qualities that would make her a “queen in the family”.<sup>470</sup> Referring to linguistic disputes—the knowledge of which is implied rather than specified—by parties that the editors considered unqualified to pass opinion on the form of Albanian, it urged Albanian mothers, as guardians of linguistic tradition, to put them in their right place.

Elsewhere, Çoba cautioned “Muslim and Catholic mothers” not to take their girls away from school at a young age. Girls had to learn domestic skills, it was true, in addition to academic skills, but there was time to develop both. Should they succeed in this, Albania would be fortunate and able to stand up alongside the recognized states of Europe.<sup>471</sup> At another point, it presented a fictive dialogue between a mother and her soldier son, who upon returning from battle, was told to return back there, to defend his homeland.<sup>472</sup>

In thus outlining the qualities and duties of an Albanian woman, Çoba’s magazine invited men to give greater support to its platform. A writer by the alias “Grua Shkodrane” (Shkodran woman) set out to clarify the meaning of feminism. Feminism was a word that Albanian newspapers were writing a lot about lately, she noted. “We women have stayed out of the debates”, she wrote, “waiting perhaps that out of shame, if nothing else, men would acknowledge and accept our rights, but are coming to conclude that the vast majority of them have not understood or simply do not wish to understand these rights which stem from nature and the laws of God.”

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<sup>470</sup> “Vajzës Shqyptare”, *Grueja Shqyptare*, no. 2, 8.

<sup>471</sup> “Detyrat e Nanës”, *Grueja Shqyptare*, no 2., 10.

<sup>472</sup> “Nana Shqyptare”, *ibid*, 13.

Offering the perspective that Albanian women, generally speaking, had been kept as “slaves of men” she explained that, “feminism was about promoting civilization, a social elevation that stems from intellectual motion.” It was sad to see, she noted, how often women in metropolitan centers openly abused their freedoms, in ways often contradicting their dignity. Real feminism, she cautioned, was not about dressing modern or indulging in dance and entertainment.

In asking men for her freedom, honor, and regard, the Albanian Woman would act on the basis of that same unshakable wisdom and nobility “which have always kept unbeaten the character and morality of our people”. Women are, she concluded, the first means and the most necessary to instill that kind of civilization upon which universal wisdom and the honor of families with which human society is built.<sup>473</sup>

None of the other publications took local society to task quite in the style of Çoba, although they used other forms of persuasion. In an appeal to men in Vlorë, mother and daughter publicists Ferëniqi and Marigo Posio of *Shpresa Kombëtare* likened women to angels that held family together. Woman is your mother, your sister, your wife, your daughter... As leaders and decision makers, is it right then to leave her behind, and uncared for? You have to answer yourselves.

In several issues, *Shpresa* published biographies of high-profile women: a glossed account of Catherine the Great’s rise from humble beginnings to statecraft, the other about Mrs. Lloyd George and Mrs. Herbert Asquith, noting them as the driving force behind the British elections in 1921. Responding to a local newspaper, it brought up the issue of suffrage. Political candidates, said *Mbrëmja Kombëtare* (The National Evening), campaigned on a school for boys

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<sup>473</sup> “Feminizmi”, *Grueja Shqyptare*, nr. 7, 1921, 1-2.



that would be funded by the Board of Foreign Missionaries of the Methodist Church<sup>474</sup>. If women were allowed to vote, Posio wrote, none of these candidates would have their support.

On its third issue, an unidentified person announced being present at the fiftieth<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations of the *Ligue Française pour le Droit des Femmes*. After providing a background history of the organization, which the journalist Léon Richer had founded, the reader recorded the impression of hearing René Viviani and others speak at the Trocadero Palace on what women's societies could do:

The sight of women, emerging like pearls, giving convincing arguments, made me wonder: Will Albanian women ever achieve this level? I thought of Elena Ghika, writing under the pseudonym Dora D'Istria<sup>475</sup> who stunned the whole world. This thought at once gave me hope, and my thoughts flew to *Shpresa Kombëtare*.<sup>476</sup>

There is no way to confirm whether someone was actually there, or whether the reported emotions were those of Posio's in reading about the anniversary celebrations in another newspaper. This is not to say that Posio did not know the conventions of journalism, but perhaps the technique was meant to enhance the image of *Shpresa* to its readership. It may have also been yet another way to demonstrate the values it stood for. The society was open to any Albanian or foreigner who desired the education and awakening of Albanian womanhood. It would act "as an interminable push" in the progress and elevation of the "moral" and material elevation of Albanian womanhood.

Its focus toward those goals lay intently on their education. Several times in its statute it raised the need for education, whether by helping poor students along, or by sending a number of them abroad. Education was not just about the mind; it was also about encouraging spiritual and

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<sup>474</sup> The drive behind this was very likely that of Prof. Elmer Jones.

<sup>475</sup> Elena Ghica, or Dora D'Istria, was a mid nineteenth century feminist writer of Romanian nobility who used a theory of Albanian descent to advance the idea of Albanian nationalism in European circles, something that many Albanians found advantageous. See Antonio D'Alessandri, *Il Pensiero e l'Opera di Dora d'Istria fra Oriente Europeo e Italia* (Rome, 2007).

<sup>476</sup> "Një Ligë për të Mbrojtur të Drejtat e Gruas," *Shpresa Kombëtare*, no. 3, 1921, 1.

physical wellbeing. As one learned, one grew aware of her characteristics and desire to be active, and take care of her own health. Then, yes, Albania would prosper among her own “friends”.<sup>477</sup>

But their calls found limited support. The last publication, *Mbleta* (Bee), published by friends and former students of Paraskevi Kyrias, used a similar but less polemical approach, keeping some distance from politics and hot-button terminology like feminism. The member’s first duty was to be a good *nikoqire* (from the Greek νικοκυρια) a homemaker. Their second was to gain awareness of what “uplifts a woman outside the home.”

When it issued a call to other Albanian women at home and abroad to collaborate, *Mbleta* emphasized motherhood as the key to upholding the “noble moral of the Albanian nation”, because that was “what the outside world admires about Albanians.” In typical Kyrias rhetoric, the statute spelled out, a mother has more capacity than others to strengthen in her child the feeling of love for co-nationals, leaving her feelings and actions as a testament for her child.

For some time, the magazine’s approach was instructional. Noting the insufficient education of Albanian women and unavailability of Albanian books for the needs they had, the magazine invited any one who had ideas to step forward with contributions on subjects like child rearing, education, foreign translations, in addition to “to Albanian women’s morals”. It is difficult to ascertain the number of women who responded to the call, since the majority of selections published bore no name.

But the editor, Evdhoksi Gërmenji, published an anecdotal exchange between a publisher and his young wife, in which he gifted her a “list of skills that women must learn” instead of the dress she was eagerly hoping for. Several other unsigned pieces chimed in with advice for appropriate behavior for young women, elegant dress, cooking recipes, serving guests, bathing, arranging sleep, and proper exercise. One of the few women identified by name, Viktoria

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<sup>477</sup> Shpresa Kombëtare, “Nevoja Për Arësim,” *Shpresa Kombëtare*, no. 2, 1921, 4.

Mborja, urged the city to consider the publication of instructional manuals detailing the proper care of newborns and infants.

We must borrow examples from Americans and Europeans on how to raise, educate, and nurse our children to Albania faster progress and civilization. They say that a healthy mind needs a healthy body.<sup>478</sup>

But it too had things to say about traditions it deemed harmful to women. For example, it criticized the excessiveness of wedding rituals, in terms of their egregious expense (often by those who could not afford it), but more so in terms of what customs like dowry or its display on the wedding day did to stigmatize young brides, financially and emotionally.

...what happens is that when a woman gets married, people gather to see her dowry. If she is very wealthy, some curse her for being so wealthy and so wasteful. May God shorten your days, they say. When her choices are too poor, they blame her parents for not doing more. I think that injustice is done both ways. Think on this: on the one hand, the bride already arrives embarrassed at her husband [his home], embarrassed to open her eyes and her mouth. On the other hand, all their friends gather to be shown what she has to put on.<sup>479</sup>

This excerpt was actually from a letter to the editor about a city woman. Possibly as a response, *Mbleta* printed a news piece about the “war on dowry” that the women’s club in New York had declared, enumerating several counts on which the elimination of dowry would readdress gender relations.

The heart of woman hides many treasures; let men find and use them. The loss of dowry will in and of itself lead to the elevation of the prize that is in every woman. The loss of the dowry will bring into the world the good, the love, with the only everlasting joy being love.<sup>480</sup>

But even this sort of “softer” approach did not seem to make a difference with local readers. Just like the other two magazines, *Mbleta*, reported receding sales and printed reminders to subscribers to pay their dues. In a last ditch attempt to awaken local sympathies, its counterpart in Shkodër, *Grueja Shqyptare*, called on to city intellectuals and patriots to keep their promise. Society women had been active in the War, they had sought out foreigners on behalf of

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<sup>478</sup> Viktoria Mborja, “Foshnja e Sisës”, *Mbleta*, 1922, 21-22.

<sup>479</sup> “Dy Fjalë mbi Prikat”, *Mbleta*, no. 3, 1922, 30.

<sup>480</sup> “Prika”, *Mbleta*, no. 11, 1922, 6.

their country. Now it was up to them to support the women of the city through their one publication. But none came.

In Vlorë, their colleague Marigo Posio ultimately ended her publication because she fell ill. In Tirana, Paraskevi Kyrias kept her society going, holding weekly conferences, hosting literacy and domestic skills circles, and evening classes teaching foreign languages, spreading books and leaflets.<sup>481</sup> But sadly there too no organized records remain, however, the women of the capital city and the rest of the country would get a family magazine at the end of the decade.

### *The Case of Politics*

The reasons for such failure seem to have been complex. On the one hand, financial patronage was hard to secure, and readers did not show sufficient interest in regular subscriptions. On the other hand, the magazine's content seems to have been out of touch with the general populace. But general female literacy itself was also very low. Magazines wrote in the local dialect, but even so, it was clear that their tone was at times underappreciated. Marie Çoba's heart may have been in the right place, but her attitude could be misinterpreted for hauteur, feminist hauteur at that. Women's magazines were also a new literary genre. There may have been such magazines in the late Empire, but for the most part, they seemed to be a novelty on Albanian ground. This may also explain the initial tendency of society women to become involved in charity.

Even so, not all was bad news. In terrain where women's organization had a longer history, like Korça, women were able to transcend the goals initially laid out by the Kyrias

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<sup>481</sup> When the society was created, Paraskevi Kyrias addressed its statute to *Shpresa Kombëtare* in Vlorë in March 1921.

platform. Conceived, as it was, by their former students and colleagues in town, it was natural that it would follow in the footsteps of its predecessor. The fact that the Kyriases do not seem to have contributed to it directly, or maintain some kind of oversight, is an indication that this second generation of women activists felt a measure of confidence earned through the combined experience of education and local organization. The emphasis on home economics, motherhood, and health education linked the society to *The Morning Star*. But this new generation of activists took its earlier platform a few steps further.

They were literate, and one of the goals of *The Morning Star* had already been achieved. Albania was now a sovereign state. Whereas beforehand the enemy to progress had been the Ottoman Empire, now “progress” lay in the ability of women to uphold national morality, by becoming educated mothers. They dared to envision a local university for women. They convened a town meeting for that very purpose. They dared to speak about a national platform and ties with the outside world. Moreover, they now had a publication, which encouraged local women to contribute to its agenda and diversify it further.

In Tirana, the Kyrias sisters built and ran the leading center of learning for young women (chapter 4), and coordinated a local society which however little we know about it, kept momentum going in the capital city, a place where this mattered, as it was within an earshot of bureaucrats. What was wonderful about these forms and structures of female expression, was that they were spontaneous, free of ideological imposition. Nationalism served them well, and kept their platforms going, but it was their choice to endorse it.

When the time came to demonstrate to society that politics mattered to them, they did. In spite of the setback they faced in publication, women activists showed that they could mobilize in the streets. Their biggest opportunity came at a moment of political revolution. In early April

1924, women in Tirana and Vlorë took to the streets in protest, demanding the resignation of Prime Minister Ahmed Zog, widely suspected to be behind the assassination of Avni Rustemi, a young nationalist radical, whose death provoked country-wide demonstrations and the ire of the political opposition, waiting for years to take the helm.

At the heart of the turmoil was a widely rumored family feud. Rustemi had a strong record of radicalism. During the Peace Conference he had assassinated Zog's maternal uncle, a notoriously divisive local leader, and returned to his native Vlorë triumphant from the Parisian trial, which surprisingly acquitted him. In October 1923, he formed the Union of Young Albanians, a nationalist youth movement, dedicated to eradicating the conservative coalition of feudal landlords headed by Ahmet Bey Zog and Shevket Vërlaci. Months later, at the height of Albania's political and economic plight, one of its members entered the Parliament and shot at Zog.

Beqir Valter failed in his mission, but during the deposition, he betrayed Rustemi and other Union leaders as the brains behind the plot. A month later one of Zog's henchmen assassinated Rustemi, leading to the public outcry in which women, too, joined in. Two days after the murder, Sevastia Kyrias assembled a group of women all disguised in *ferexhe* in front of parliament chanting "Avni's ideal lives on".<sup>482</sup> The brave bunch demanded that Zog leave his post, before police dispersed them. In Vlorë, Marigo Posio, who had at this point recovered sufficiently, led her organization in the massive funerary procession, leaving wreaths on their hero's tomb. All things considered, these demonstrations were but specks in the mosaic of opposition that Zog faced. Nevertheless, their outcry was sufficient for him to consider them a threat. Within a few weeks, the opprobrium grew so intense, that Zog found it impossible to

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<sup>482</sup> Musaj, 107-139.

retain his position. Forced into exile in the Yugoslav capital Belgrade, Zog bid his time, waiting for his opponent, Bishop Noli's coalition to collapse.

In spite of the "democratic" character that Noli's program has been traditionally given by communist historians, and to a lesser extent, the continued idealization that his persona continues to evoke vis-à-vis his "missed opportunity" to reform society at all levels, Noli did not have the time, clout, or the practicality, to enact his ideals. According to him, national unity was undermined in five directions and it would only be achieved when they were eradicated.

Albania's "five anarchies" were religious, social, moral, patriotic, and ideological. Albanians practiced four faiths, but as long as the Orthodox continued to be under the control of the "Greek" Patriarchate, and the Muslims under the influence of Turkey, there could be no unity. As head of the Albanian Orthodox community, while representing the country at the League of Nations, Noli successfully persuaded international opinion against Yugoslav and Greek claims to block statehood owing to their allegations of "Muslim oppression" of the Christians (Catholics in the north, and Orthodox in the south).

But with regard to the other "anarchies", Noli had a much tougher time accomplishing anything. He saw no proper social structure, no awareness of moral or ideological direction, and an utter lack of steady patriotic conviction<sup>483</sup>. To move forward, he merely prescribed that Albania had to eliminate these ills, replace landlordism, and confront the modern (Italian and Yugoslav) imperialism that threatened its borders.<sup>484</sup>

As much as he saw such ills, Noli's real issue was that others did not see them in the same light. And yet he pursued his vision anyway, using means and methods that contradicted his ideas at their core. He claimed to represent the peasantry, yet he made no significant effort to

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<sup>483</sup> According to Noli a patriot could be made into a traitor within a day.

<sup>484</sup> Austin, 6.

interact with them on that basis. For their part, peasants gave no impression that they desired reform. Between their general indifference and conservative outlook, the peasantry continued to regard the *bey*s (landlords) as their protectors.

Noli's opposition to the *bey*s was well known, but not all in his coalition agreed that liquidating the landowning class was their end goal. Indeed, there was a *bey* in the coalition itself, Sulejman bej Delvina. Noli's colleagues were also split ideologically. Despising Zog did not make one a republican. Important associates like Luigj Gurakuqi, for example, remained steadfast monarchists. Finally, the Kosovar irredentists who gave him vital military support, did not care as much about altering the status quo, as they did to see Noli uphold his promise to publicize Serbian chauvinism abroad.

Worst of all, was the fact that his coalition came together at a time, when the form of government was still undecided and never took steps to legitimize it by holding elections. The insurrection was illegal and it contradicted the tenets of the Congress of Lushnjë. In the words of Grant Smith, American ambassador to Tirana at the time, Noli's was a "provisional government sitting at a provisional capital acting illegally under a provisional constitution."<sup>485</sup>

Within days of coming to power, the coalition proposed a twenty-point reform agenda, which took into consideration the League's recommendations as well as ones corresponding more closely to Albanian notions. Broadly, they called for disarmament and national unity, ending feudalism and integrating the peasantry into political decision making, creating a patriotic bureaucracy, tackling the health and education sectors, facilitating the entry of foreign capital and organizing an independent economy.

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<sup>485</sup> Department of State, Grant-Smith to the Secretary of State, no. 355., 20 November 1924, 875.00/163 in Austin, 59.



Had it focused on the deeper goals for reform, such as the economy, education, and health, and had it held elections, the fractious coalition would have stood a better chance of long-term success and recognition. Instead, it busied itself far too much with purging the opposition, using questionable means to ensure support and to confiscate the wealth of exiled landowners. Effectively, these tactics did little more than redistribute privilege and power.<sup>486</sup> For his own part, Noli additionally erred in that he relied too much on Rustemi's zealous army of disciples, who repeatedly decried the "slow pace of reform". As the Union's partisans went village to village to find supporters and root out opposition, its ranks swelled. Many of these members joined the bureaucracy.

Noli's other mistake was leaving the country having accomplished little internally, while trying to gain recognition and financing in Geneva (and returning with neither). His moderate colleagues questioned his methods, and the remaining member of the Regency Council, Sotir Peçi, noted that the better course would have been legitimation first, reform second. Outraged with the unprecedented cruelty of the Revolution, the international community withheld both. None of the twenty points, with the exception of "punishing fratricide" were carried out. Many parties predicted downfall. And soon enough, rifts emerged within the coalition.

When the Union staged a mass protest in Berat calling for further confiscation of the major landholding families (the Libohova, Toptani, Vërlaci, Vlorë, and Zogollis), the government responded by saying that it did not intend to persecute them further. The cabinet also disagreed about agrarian reform. Noli came back from Geneva embattled on many fronts. The

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<sup>486</sup> The government extended an existing court martial in the prefecture of Durrës, originally set in place after the murder of two Americans, to appease the United States by pinning the crime on Zog's henchmen. In addition, it set up a political court to try those officials who had fought the revolution using a variety of sentences from death, life imprisonment, expulsion and confiscation of wealth. The last was the most widely used. Once reports of the violent interrogations reached the outside world, Noli was chastised for employing the same harsh means that Zog used, all the more so given his position in the Church and his many years in the civilized West.

conservative wing of the coalition now held the ground. The army, which he had done so much to underfund and depoliticize, feared that he was unable to defend the country.

Shkodrans were disappointed that he had not fulfilled their regionalist agenda. The Catholic newspaper, *Ora e Maleve*, continued to argue that Shkodra was better suited as capital city. In August, Muslim, Orthodox and Catholic educators met in Tirana to discuss a unified school system. When the Muslim and Orthodox parties raised the possibility of eliminating separate (read: religious) schools, Catholics walked out of the meeting.<sup>487</sup> Sotir Peçi demanded that he either resign or call elections. With little choice in the matter, considering the lack of achievements and recognition, he agreed to the Regency Council's call for new elections to be held in December 20.

To be certain, any one of Noli's contemporaries would have faced tremendous difficulty to fulfill his broad vision, given the utter lack of internal stability, financial resources, and outside tension. However, many a foreign political councilor had recognized in Zog someone of [greater] ability to bring order to Albania. His British advisor, Harry Lamb, was of the opinion that as a disunited tribal society, at this stage of development, what Albania desperately needed was stability and centralization. It was too soon to speak of democracy. Of all his rivals, Zog had the proper background, understood Albanian terrain better<sup>488</sup>, and was savvy enough to use connections and resources to his advantage.

Ensnared in Yugoslavia, which was concerned with Italian expansion in the country, Zog was in a favorable position. His lack of commitment to Kosovo was encouraging. Yugoslavia viewed Noli's revolution as a temporary victory of Christians over Muslims. While there, Zog mounted a smear campaign through the press against Noli's illegitimate regime as a

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<sup>487</sup> Department of State, Trojan Kodding to the Secretary of State, no. 310, 24 August, 1924, 875.00/158. See in Austin, 73.

<sup>488</sup> The word "mentality" has sometimes been used in this context, but I prefer terrain.

danger to regional stability. Capitalizing on his continued mistakes, it was easy for Zog to point out that his coalition was too diverse to sustain itself in the long run. He was only too happy to encourage Yugoslav conclusions that his country's chaos grew out of regional differences between Ghegs and Tosks.

For their part, the Yugoslav elites saw him as someone who could be bought when their interests served. Noli had relied far too much on the belief that the international community would back him, while Zog was prepared to make some tactical concessions to resume power. Noli's government tried in vain to extradite him, but failed to make a gesture of goodwill toward the Pašić government when the opportunity arose, or so the Yugoslavs interpreted it.<sup>489</sup> Albanian reports concluded that he was busy bribing supporters along the border regions.

Most importantly, however, the Yugoslavs eventually supported Zog's return to Albania because he entered into a kind of "gentlemen's agreement" with the government of Nikola Pašić. Although the nature of their understanding remains unknown, Zog basically agreed to eliminate the Kosovo Committee; build schools for the Serb and Macedonian minorities; improve trade and economic links in Yugoslavia's favor; and to cede two key territorial units that Yugoslavia and Albania had tried hard to settle through the Conference of Ambassadors, the Orthodox monastery, St. Naoum on the shared Macedonian-Albanian Lake Ohrid, and the village of Vermosh.<sup>490</sup>

Having settled along these lines, on December 14, Zog launched an invasion from the Yugoslav border with five hundred of his own clansmen, and a combined Yugoslav force of two

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<sup>489</sup> While in Geneva, Noli was interviewed by two Yugoslav newspapers, *Vreme* and *Politika*, where he appealed for good relations with Yugoslavia and other countries in the region. This to Pasic was insufficient; Noli need have said something stronger about good Serbian-Albanian relations. Also, the Yugoslav government interpreted Noli's request for a loan as out of place, worrying that the money could be used to fund a Kosovar armed struggle. Noli also continued to associate with Kosovar irredentists.

<sup>490</sup> Austin, 89.

thousand sixteen officers, volunteers, and reservists, along with forty officers of General Wrangel's exiled White Army. From Kakavia in the Greek border, Zog's accomplice Myfid Libohova<sup>491</sup>, launched another offensive. With little support and a weakened army, the Noli government made a plea to the League to intervene and pushed elections into January. It even approached the Italian government for military assistance. But within nine days of their offensive, the combined forces entered Tirana, reportedly welcomed by the population. Noli's retreat to Vlorë, on the other hand, was somewhat less dignified: onlookers noted an automobile outside of the Ministry of Finance being loaded with valises carrying the state funds (which had also happened when Zog took flight to Belgrade).

Back in power, Zog aimed to consolidate the country and hush opposition. Just not in the manner that Noli's government had done! Among Zog's first executive decisions issued in January of 1925 was to close down all societies, including those for women. He had forgotten neither Sevastia Kyrias' veiled protest, nor her colleague's demonstration in Vlorë. Noli's failed revolution, concludes Fatmira Musaj, also ended any hopes that the local women's movements could/might enact their own agendas. Bashkimi was among the few societies known to accept women in its ranks. Among its calls for democratic reforms, Bashkimi also advocated increased rights for women.<sup>492</sup>

Ever the shrewd politician, Zog knew that to retain power in the long run, he had to make concessions. When the right time came, some of the organizations censored in 1925, were later revived and brought under state surveillance. Of the four societies that predated the revolution, only one, the Tirana-based society organized by Paraskevi Kyrias survived. The next, and final,

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<sup>491</sup> Libohova later negotiated the SVEA loan with Italy in March 1925.

<sup>492</sup> Hysen Kordha, *Formimi i Shoqërisë Bashkimi dhe Veprimtaria e Saj Demokratike*, (Tirana, 1977), 75.

section of this chapter analyzes the ways in which women persuaded the government to permit them to resume their prior activism.

### *Nationalizing Shqiptarja, 1929-1933*

After the Revolution, women activists in Korça and Gjirokaštër petitioned the government to allow their societies to resume activity. While (then) President Zog promised that he would do so, his approach was cautious. As local scholarship suggests, he and one of his advisors on the matters, Mehdi Frashëri, feared that this could lead to demands for political rights.<sup>493</sup>

Given Albania's low cultural development, they argued that that was momentarily out of step with the country's internal development, and it would be best to delay the entry of "certain foreign ideas as much as possible."<sup>494</sup> All the same, it was clear that bureaucrats and social reformers wanted to keep the lines of communication open with women. As they contemplated new legislation to be included in the Civil Code, they realized that women activists could become allies in the process of diffusing it broadly onto Albanian society.

The first step that the new government took toward social reform was to call together a commission of lawyers in 1926 to draft a Civil Code. They would look to the existing ones in Italy, Switzerland, and France, and combine them with the "best of Albanian tradition". In particular, the selected legal commission dispatched some of its members to northern Albania to consult with the *Gjykata e Paqit* (Court of Peace) to study and select the best of highland tradition.

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<sup>493</sup> Musaj, 136.

<sup>494</sup> *ibid*, 139.

The commission headed by Mehmed Frashëri presented its findings to the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate, arguing that both existing customary law and Ottoman law needed overhauling since they impeded Albania's development. While some northern traditions were observed to have a "noble character" they could not be applied because "they were out of touch with the present day." Ottoman law, on the other hand, was based on Muslim religious doctrine, and as such, it was unsuited to serve Albania's other religious communities.<sup>495</sup>

Most notably for women, the Code allowed associations to resume their activities, and it reformed family law, defining marriage as a union between two people, male and female, sanctioned by a state authority first, and if so desired, a religious cleric second, allowing both parties to refuse an engagement entered into against their desire. In addition, it gave both partners the right to initiate divorce, and decreed that women were to have an equal share in inheritance. The question of the veil reemerged again, but the steps to abolish it were piecemeal, taken at moments of religious reform (1929) and political crisis (1936).<sup>496</sup>

Crucial details are missing, but sometime before 1928 the Albanian Red Cross<sup>497</sup> made an overture to the matriarch of the Royal Family, HRH Sadije Zogu, to become the patron for a nationwide association for women, based on the model of the Tirana society founded by Paraskevi Kyrias in 1920. This seems to have turned the tide in women's favor again, and the proposal was implemented in 1928, when the Code was being publically announced. Organized as a charitable organization, the society would continue its earlier campaign against illiteracy.

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<sup>495</sup> *ibid*, 134.

<sup>496</sup> Clayer, Nathalie, "Behind the Veil: The Reform of Islam in Inter-War Albania or the Search for a 'Modern' and 'European Islam' " in Nathalie Clayer, Eric Germain eds., *Islam in Inter-War Europe* (London: Hurst, 2008), 129.

<sup>497</sup> Eugène Pittard, a noted anthropologist at the University of Geneva and head of the League of Nations Commission to Albania, founded the Albanian Red Cross in 1920.

<http://www.unige.ch/communication/Campus/campus105/tetechercheuse.html>

The society statute confirmed that its activists acknowledged the limitations that the government set upon them. *Shqiptarja* undertook the education of society by: hosting conferences on hygiene, charity, enhancing industry and the arts, and collaboration with the Red Cross in times of war and natural catastrophe. In addition to these duties, it opened branches throughout the country, and began to publish its own family magazine, by the same name. As for monitoring, the King graciously accepted the invitation of the Red Cross, and presumably kept close tabs by appointing a member of his own family as a patroness. Ever the clever mediator, Paraskevi Kyrias essentially handed him the reins of her society. By making it seem like she and other activists invited official patronage, the once silenced groups got the funding that they needed, even as it came with the cost of supervision.

The move has been interpreted as one that set the women's movement backwards.<sup>498</sup> However, a careful analysis of the official magazine shows that those activists, who wanted to make their different views about the potential of Albanian womanhood known, found ways to communicate them in print, even as the government sanctioned a seemingly narrow platform. As long as they paid lip service to their "sponsor", the Royal Family, and seemed to conform to the framework prescribed by the government, women and male activists still managed to make their views known by demonstrating what women *could* do. And in this, the typical Kyrias approach, crafting an ambiguous relationship between the paper, the bureaucracy, and other funding sources, proved key.

The leading source on the society is the magazine it published in eighteen issues from December 1929-1933, of which only nine will be covered here.<sup>499</sup> *Shqiptarja* (The Albanian Woman) called itself a family magazine, and while it adhered to the principles outlined in the

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<sup>498</sup> Musaj, 176.

<sup>499</sup> All of the magazines analyzed in this chapter are catalogued at the National Library of Albania. Some of the issues, like numbers ten through eighteen are missing.

statute, it also persistently challenged them. Refuting Fatmira Musaj's observation that the association was merely a "charitable organization", the magazine reveals that while its contributors acknowledged the political limitations set upon it, they also tested and widened those boundaries. Open to both male and female authorship, *Shqiptarja* reflected a constantly conflicting set of agendas.

In many ways, *Shqiptarja* followed patterns and themes discernible in the previous publications. Even as it was officially sanctioned, many contributions, from both men and women, continued to bear pseudonyms. In some part, this probably corresponded to the fear of censure. Women activists had pushed boundaries in 1924, and the price had been a heavy one. But their male colleagues, some of whom had previously been in the bureaucracy and some who had fallen out of favor, also wrote under pseudonyms.

A number of sitting officials eschewed this. For some of them, this was merely style. However, it seemed to be a trend that authors recognizable to the Albanian reading public, either avoided provocative pieces, or acknowledged the state's agenda in some form. Some of the authors, like the Kyrias sisters, Lumo Skëndo (Mehdi Frashëri), Milo Shini (Ali Këlcyra) etc, were known entities. But many others were newcomers.

A number of the appointed women advisors like Ismihan Alizoti, Qefser Tirana, Kudret Tepshia, Mrs. Hiqmet Delvina etc, or the deputy director Emine Toptani, were the wives of old stock aristocrats and were selected by one of the royal princesses, Senije, herself honorary director. Other much younger women, Ana Dr. Pekmezi, Ikbal Çika, Kaliopi Plasari, Sara Blloshmi<sup>500</sup> etc, represented a younger generation of socialites, and sometimes career women,

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<sup>500</sup> Not much is known about many of *Shqiptarja*'s women writers. Sara Blloshmi, one small exception, was a granddaughter of Ismail Kemal, mentioned in previous chapters. She emerges as one of the leading society women of the interwar period. Daughter of an Ottoman general and an Albanian mother, she married Salaudin Blloshmi, a



who had travelled outside the country and frequently pushed the boundaries of commentary to show that Albanian women were attuned to outside developments.

In its second year, the society expanded nationally, acquired its own office, and probably complicated its publication further, by replacing Emine Toptani as editor with Mihal Sherko (male), who according to later reports, was “an intelligent opportunist, and an inefficient and jealous bureaucrat”.<sup>501</sup> Paraskevi Kyrias, the official *sekretare* (spokeswoman) was the only paid staff member, receiving an annual salary.

Notwithstanding the dearth of information about much of the staff, women in particular, it seems that this set up represented a workable compromise between all the parties that wanted a stake in the semi-ideological venture. Kyrias, quite likely the only woman with formal university education *and* vast experience in activism, was remunerated because she perhaps ran the society and its publication. Sherko was there to do the governments’ bidding, though he too may have received remuneration in another capacity.

And the Royal Women were appointed as patrons, because it seemed “fitting” that a benevolent cause should have their sanction. Something had to be done with six young women who were suddenly thrust in the public limelight, with very little prior experience.<sup>502</sup> Journalists like Iqbal Çika or the future Radio Tirana commentator Kaliopi Plasari probably looked to *Shqiptarja* as a place to expose their craft and further develop their talents.

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military man, and onetime ambassador to Romania. In addition to writing, Sara was known to grace the halls of salons and society soirees and was notably one of the best dancers of her day. See, Ismail Kadare, *Mëngjezet në Kafë Rostand: Motive të Parisit*, Tirana: Onufri, 2014), 6.

<sup>501</sup> Sherko had previously been the head of the Albanian Telegraphic Agency. See, Robert Elsie, *A Biographical Dictionary of Albanian History*, (London: I.B. Tauris, 2012), 411.

<sup>502</sup> Jason Tomes’s biography of Zog, the most recent publication on the subject, seems to imply this with regard to the women of the Royal Family, who had been out of the limelight until then, and suddenly found themselves part of it. Jason Tomes, *King Zog of Albania: Europe’s Self-Made Muslim Monarch*, (New York: New York University Press, 2006), 132-145.

And as for the bureaucrats, and the revolving cast of male writers, *Shqiptarja* was a platform where they demonstrated their allegiance (and often genuine support) to social reform and nation building (always with the King in mind). Thus, in many ways, *Shqiptarja* was a meeting place, and a blank slate upon which to redirect some of themes taken up by women activists a decade earlier. It should also be mentioned that while religious content was absent on its pages, the American Protestant methods of women's organization served as a crucible for enlarging female organization in Albania.

The first issue opened with a translated excerpt of Robert Ingersoll's 1877 speech, "The Liberty of Man, Woman, and Child"<sup>503</sup> specifically the section "Liberty of Woman".<sup>504</sup> In one sentence, its Albanian adaptation set the tone for the magazine's mission:

The rights of men and women should be equal and holy; marriages should lead to harmony- children must be governed with mercy- each child ought to be a state, and each hearth a Democracy.<sup>505</sup>

*Shqiptarja* addressed the position of women vis-à-vis male partnership, marriage, and children. In this piece, as was the case in others later on, the translator asserted that woman was the intellectual equal of man; she had lost opportunities, but not her mental ability. Nothing promised her future more, other than the fact that woman was securing her bodily and intellectual freedom.

In the next piece, Ikbal Çika introduced readers to the "evolution of women" in China in the twentieth century by translating an article from the Turkish newspaper *Muhir*, which it

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<sup>503</sup>This bore no citation, however, for the English version, see:

Robert Ingersoll, *The Liberty of Man, Woman, and Child* (Whitefish, 2005).

<sup>504</sup> The greatest argument I can make in favor of Kyrias as opposed to the other writers is observed pattern. She, of all other contributors, was the likeliest to be familiar with American writing on women. The journalist Ikbal Çika, whose name became the most recognizable among the women writers, usually translated from the Turkish *Muhir*, and in one case advertised the new dry cleaning facility, Fabrika "Pastërtija", that has just opened in Tirana. I cannot confer with certainty the educational exposure that other members of the executive committee had. The writings of Emine Toptani and Ismihan Alizoti, for example, were stylistically simple and less complex than that of Kyrias. Ana Pekmezi and Sara Blloshmi showed greater analytical skill, but they came into the membership a year later in 1930. The other factor that leads me to think that this may be Kyrias, is that anonymous contributors left clues that implied their sources or their preferences.

<sup>505</sup> Didiu, "Të Drejtat e Gruas", *Shqiptarja*, no. 2, 1929, 25.

seems, ran a number of feature articles about women's movements in Turkey, and Japan.<sup>506</sup> Çika adapted those in later issues. The somewhat racist, but otherwise enthusiastic article, saluted the achievements of Chinese women in breaking traditional barriers and entering new professions en masse as doctors, teachers, drivers, bankers, and pilots.

It drew attention to the national union of women's associations, and to the appearance of celebrated women, like Ida Kang, at international conventions (Kang for example had attended the international congress of medicine held in New York). Çika pointed out that, "If she only decides that there is something she wants to achieve, the woman of any nation can overcome all impediment on her way there<sup>507</sup>." Female pursuit of higher education, in China and abroad, explained the fast pace of Chinese progress. They returned to their home communities to work and their example in the workforce helped to convince Chinese families that boys were not the only source of honor. These women had also broken down traditions like foot binding, and seclusion at the age of four.

Drita, whose real identity hid behind her pseudonym meaning Light, next considered whether "women should wear makeup", drawing on the texts of Lucie Delarue-Madrus.<sup>508</sup> In spite of the occasional philosophical condemnation and the more commonplace ridicule of women who were *heavily* made up, it remained a fact that make up was tied to attraction. And because attractiveness played a role in becoming a mother, the magazine would strive to give readers beauty and conduct tips for social occasions like buffets and soirees.

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<sup>506</sup> Contributors always attributed their sources, at least, in simple form.

<sup>507</sup> Ikbāl Çika, "Evolusjoni i Gruas në Kinë", *Shqiptarja*, no. 2, 1928, 29.

<sup>508</sup> Madrus (1874-1945) was a prolific contemporary French writer and designer. It is not clear which specifically of her writing Drita drew on. See, Anna Livia, "Introduction: Lucie Delarue-Madrus and the Phrenetic Harlequinade," in *The Angel and the Perverts* New York: New York University Press, 1995), 1–60.

In “Dimri a Do të Jetë i Fortë sivjet? Pak Njohuri Astronomike dhe Pak Profeti” (Will this Winter be Strong? A Little Astronomical Knowledge and a Little Prophecy) WHIP introduced knowledge on astronomy and prediction. A mix of conventional wisdom and spurt of information on the empirical methods of famous scientists<sup>509</sup>, gave readers a sense of the tools that they used to predict weather patterns. Although the science of meteorology was in its beginnings, the article explained how seasonal and plant behavior could be used to get a general sense of what, winter in this case, would be like.

B.H.<sup>510</sup> looked at two contemporary high profile women: Isabel MacDonald, daughter of the British Labor Prime Minister, Ramsay Macdonald, and Edda Mussolini, daughter of the Duce. They had both played the part of hostess, and were influential to their fathers’ careers. Were these examples of feminism to the daughters of those in high power? Perhaps, noted B.H., but of the two, Signorina Mussolini, cultured in music and sculpture, was indifferent to politics. Miss MacDonald had been secretary to the Labor Party for four years, and as such, politics was the center of her life. While B.H. admired the diligent and intelligent MacDonald, Signorina Mussolini was more in keeping with “Latin tradition”. B.H. ended with the conclusion that the “real place” of girls and women is in the home.

N.C., assumed to be Nebil Çika, simply because he too translated from *Muhir* like his wife Ikbal, published in the second issue a survey which *Muhir* had “borrowed” from the pages of a “great” Parisian magazine. What did men and women look for in the opposite sex?<sup>511</sup> His colleague, the other journalist, Koço Semini, reported on the advancements of Egyptian women,

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<sup>509</sup> The physicist Alexander Stewart Herschel and the meteorologist Edward Bruckner. WHIP, “Dimri a Do Të Jetë i Fortë Sivjet, Pak Njohuri Astronomike dhe Pak Profeti”, *Shqiptarja*, no. 2, 1929, 37-39.

<sup>510</sup> Gender cannot be confirmed in this case.

<sup>511</sup> N.C., “Ç’të Metë S’ dëshironi të Shihni tek Burri që Doni”, *Shqiptarja*, no. 2, 1929, 33.

focusing on the journalist cum activist Ceza Nabarawi and her senior mentor, Hoda Sharawi. He used the younger activist's example in setting up *L'Egyptienne* as a model for Albanian society.

*L'Egyptienne* diffused themes about culture, arts, and morality chosen from among western literature in English, German, and French. It also documented the lives of famous women. The effect of this approach, Semini wrote, has been that through Nabarawai's fiery texts the Egyptian people have come to learn that the wellbeing of family depended on social and national progress. Recounting the struggles that Nabarawi and Sharawi had faced on the path to creating the society "Gruaja Egjiptiane" (Egyptian Woman), Semini looked to the "quick and easy union" which Albanian women forged under the protection of the Royal Family, remarking that it was a sign that Albanians had the ability to make progress. Aware of the society's troubles in taking off, Semini ended with a plea to hasten the platform of Gruaja Shqiptare so that Albanians could create a "state with healthy foundations" [quotations marks were his].<sup>512</sup> In the third issue, Semini came out with a miniature encyclopedia of the world's ten greatest women. It spanned the entire set of *Shqiptarja*.

In anecdotal form, 'Plaka' (Old Woman) informed readers about incidents in which women became confrontational "Tmerri i Dusseldorfit" (Terror of Düsseldorf) reported a mysterious crime wave involving the massacre of babies, seemingly done by young female servants. The unidentified perpetrator 'haunted' the police, sending them clues about his/her next crime. "Kur Zgjedhjet Gjermane S'janë Dakord" (When German Elections Are Contested)<sup>513</sup> showed women in Warburg 'tearing each others' hairs out' as election results were contested. "Grat Ruse Plaçkitin Miellin e Guvernës" (Russian Women Plunder Government Flour) detailed

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<sup>512</sup> Koço Semini, "Përparimet e Gruas Egjiptiane", *Shqiptarja*, no. 2, 1929, 38-39.

<sup>513</sup> Plaka, "Kur Zgjedhjet Gjermane S'janë Dakord?" *Shqiptarja*, no. 3, 1929, 63.

women's storming of a train carrying loaves of bread, as well as stealing from food stores during a period of famine in Moscow in 1929.

Were these meant to amuse and entertain readers? Or were they meant to communicate something different? Narses provided no commentary. But simply labeled the column under which they were organized as "Fakte, Mendime, dhe Anekdotë" (Facts, Thoughts, and Anecdotes) On a more positive note, "she" reported "Madame Curie's recent trip to the United States, where she received an honorary doctorate at St. Lawrence University."<sup>514</sup>

Their colleague, Narsis Vrana had reflected on the value of suffering for Albania's youth. According to him, suffering was the "best school for life", as it hardened character, and prepared them for larger challenges. He believed that it would make them enjoy life more, and make them morally and materially independent.<sup>515</sup>

In the fourth issue, Koço Semini began his series on biographies of "great women" while Ikbal Çika raised the example of Japanese women. Semini chose the German Emil Ludwig to develop his choice of the world's ten greatest women.<sup>516</sup> In this it was clear that he was following the example set by Nabarawai's *L'Egyptinene*. Arguing that great women could be found in any time period, Ludwig considered a long list of names from the Old Testament to Greek mythology, but chose Pericles' consort Aspasia as the first in antiquity, because it was she "who encouraged her friends to prove to their world that women could be friends to men, not servants and not property." Notably, advised the leading minds of the time in the Athenian Symposium: Hippocrates, Pheidias, and Anaxagora. Paraphrasing Ludwig, Semini ended with "She was an example of what it meant to be equal to men."<sup>517</sup>

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<sup>514</sup> *ibid*, "Madam Curie n' Amerike per nje Gram Radium," *Shqiptarja*, no. 3, 1929, 63.

<sup>515</sup> "Pak idealizma Praktike. Vuajta e Bën Të Fortë Njerinë," *Shqiptarja*, no. 3, 1929, 53.

<sup>516</sup> Emil Ludwig was a renowned German Jewish biographer of historical figures in the interwar period. See,

<sup>517</sup> Koço Semini, "10 Grat Me te Medha te Botes", *Shqiptarja*, no. 4, 1929, 85.

Çika's piece, translated from *Muhir*, on Japanese women as gatekeepers of tradition marked a shift from merely searching for templates, to considering the degree to which Western norms could mingle with local customs. Although in essence a further example in itself, her commentary pointed to the larger question that others in *Shqiptarja* also asked, and that is, how would women negotiate foreign ideas, as a national community was coming into being.

Japan's rapid industrialization, she pointed out, was well known to the world. Its factories, hand products, and handicrafts rivaled English and American counterparts. Thanks to scientific methods, Japanese social life had evolved in new ways, bringing women into every sphere of life. But they had not "surrendered" in the same way that women in other countries had, who became used to modern life. Instead, Japanese women performed many types of jobs in sectors as diverse as academia, medicine, clerical services, law, and engineering, and had become accustomed to civilized life, attending concerts, going to bars, cafes, the beach, etc. So, what was it that "held" them up, as a way to respond to her question? Çika, whose source was not revealed, pointed to "honor". Japanese women were stern in preserving morality and old traditions.

"The Japanese people have accepted many forms of liberalization, however, their system of education has been shaped to suit itself. The moral lessons taught at school, are the moral laws of Japan."<sup>518</sup> Japanese theatres, Çika continued, forbade vaudeville and censored "immoral" performances. Seeming to imply that what went on at home, was similarly filtered, she concluded, in this regard, Japanese woman is firmly tied to her house; it was the only kind of xenophobia she showed to strangers.

Then, the *Muhir* article referenced a two-sided caricature drawn up in a Caucasian (Georgian) magazine of Tbilisi by a Nasreddin Hoca showing in one panel a Muslim who saw

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<sup>518</sup> İkbāl Çika, "Grat e Japonis", *Shqiptarja*, no. 4, 1929, 55.

himself in the mirror, fixing his mustache, and in the second, a Japanese man busy with a machine before him. The first panel held the phrase, “How does a Muslim imitate the Occident?” while the other side asked the same about the Japanese man.

Çika then turned around to Albania, criticizing “those fanatics” who feared civilization and the modernization of Albanian woman. Verily, she said, the Turkish article made it clear that Japanese women could not be “spoiled”. They had not lost their morals, but had instead become cultured. It should be sufficient that woman take from western example the best it had to offer, being its knowledge and its arts, and not those principles, which defy “our traditions”. Being civilized while protecting traditions of honor and love of hearth, brings nothing else, she concluded, than familial and national happiness.

Up to this point, still early in the magazine’s circulation, Çika was the only woman who chose to identify herself in print. The magazine cover page acknowledged Emine Toptani as “Drejtoreshë-Përgjegjesë” (Director-Responsible Party), however, Toptani wrote but one piece, essentially a listing of French thought on women. But why the early writers (both men and women) chose to be silent about their identities, given that the society did have official sanctioning, is not all that clear. In the sixth issue, Nebil Çika appeared on the cover page as *Kryeredaktor* (Editor-in-Chief), but ceased to do so in other issues.

By the end of its first year, *Shqiptarja* reduced its frequency, from monthly circulation to every two months, and was placed under the “literary direction” of Mihal Sherko. Nebil and Ikbal’s views differed somewhat, he being more conservative, and defining the place of a “modern Albanian woman” in the home. Her pieces, as we have seen, while not actively encouraging women to seek a profession, made it seem like it was perfectly acceptable, perhaps even commendable, as long as they adhered to and maintained tradition.



Sherko<sup>519</sup>, on the other hand, had been appointed as director of the press bureau sometime between 1925 and 1929, and also placed in charge of publishing, or as his title “literary director” suggests, official overseer of *Jeta* (Life) and *Shqiptarja*, both affiliated with the Red Cross. Unlike Çika, Sherko gave the most resounding of support to women’s entry into professional life of any of the male writers identified in *Shqiptarja*’s pages. His brief treatise “T’i Hapim Rrugën Femrës” (Let us Upon the Path for Women) called on men to shift their attitudes about what it meant to allow women to develop on a physical and mental plane.

He questioned the value in feeling threatened by women who chose to build a career. What would be wrong about women wanting to become teachers, doctors, and lawyers? Professional women, he explained, thought about marriage differently. For them, it was not a way to financial security, as much as it was informed by the desire for “partneritet të sinqertë” (sincere partnership).<sup>520</sup> Was this a genuine reflection of Sherko’s beliefs? Or was it keeping up appearances? Sherko had a reputation as an “intelligent opportunist.” The issues that had the heaviest identified female presence were those in-between the two male editors: issues seven and eight.

Attribute seems to have been less of an issue for the male authors, most of whom were recognizable political figures, professional journalists, or intellectuals. This was especially the case, when they referenced government policy. In three cases, for example, the Minister of Justice, Dhimitër Popa, Kristo Flloqi, a lawyer, and Mehdi Frashëri, head of the Code Commission, highlighted the improvements that the Civil Code had made in women’s lives.

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<sup>519</sup> Sherko had also founded the Albanian Telegraphic Agency and the Tourist Motoring Agency, rising through ranks to assume several ministerial positions in the 1930s, and also during WWII. According to a British intelligence report, Sherko was “an intelligent opportunist, but inefficient and jealous”. See in, Robert Elsie, *A Biographical Dictionary of Albanian History*, (London: I.B. Tauris, 2012), 411.

<sup>520</sup> Mihal Sherko, “Ti Hapim Gruas Rrugën!” *Shqiptarja*, no. 9, 1930, 194-5.

Popa, whose daughter Lina attended the Kyrias School, asked women to educate themselves about what the Code demanded of their now elevated social position. Hailing the code as one of the most important of King Zog's achievements, he reminded women not to forget that if they thought their rights were now trodden upon by the egoism of men and social prejudice, they also had to know that rights were not *usually* given, but fought for. He also weighed in on the question of marriage age. According to him, a woman younger than twenty was simply too young. Better yet, women who reached twenty-two or twenty-three years were better prepared mentally for it.<sup>521</sup>

Kristo Flloqi, earlier a Minister of Education, now (1930) a lawyer, contributed his thoughts on women's role in marital relationships and family life. Flloqi was educated as a lawyer in Athens, and had also spent time in the United States, connected to VATRA. Interestingly he was also connected to Marigo Posio, by marriage to her sister.<sup>522</sup> Here, however, he seems to have reflected as a lawyer and as an agent of the state. Flloqi clarified his readers on *how* Albanian women should use their newly granted rights. Quiet and unassuming, she must rule her household with confidence and a smile. The contradictions that Flloqi laid out, were found throughout the magazine:

A woman is obligated to love her husband's *fis* (clan but here family) as her own; to prevent disagreement when necessary, and to stand beside her mate when required. That is a woman of today, the companion of progress!<sup>523</sup>

In a piece entitled "The Albanian Woman and the Future of Albania", aimed against polygamy and the veil, Frashëri constructed a strange yet persuasive narrative which argued that before the Ottoman invasion, the majority Christian population was monogamous, whereas

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<sup>521</sup> Dhimitër Popa, "Shqiptarja dhe Ligjet e Reja" *Shqiptarja*, no. 9, 1930, 188-9.

<sup>522</sup> Posio was ill with tuberculosis at this point. It would have been interesting to know how and what she and others of the earlier generation of activists thought about the takeover.

<sup>523</sup> Kristo Flloqi, "Gruaja Shqiptare si Bashkëshorte," *Shqiptarja*, no. 9, 1930, 191.

independence found the majority of Sunni Albanians in polygamous unions<sup>524</sup>, and the Christians and Bektashis in monogamy. In one swoop, Frashëri equated polygamy with the veil and to Sunni Islam, disregarding the fact that these elements could be, and often were, exclusive of each other, and that class and regional practices instead determined them.<sup>525</sup>

Monogamy, wrote Frashëri, was a step forward in social evolution. It was rooted in gender equality. Polygamy bound woman to her jealous husband, who also wanted to veil her in addition. Noting the legal progress that the Code had made in outlawing polygamy, he urged his readers that more than literacy was needed to elevate women.

We are under obligation to teach the meaning of responsibility that belongs to a free woman as the lady of the house, and as mother of a child. We must teach her the rules of health, child rearing, the principles of domestic economy. We must develop her aesthetic feeling. We must spiritualize moral feeling as individuals as well as members of society. To show her civic virtue, to let her understand that the level of civility in which she finds herself is much lower to that compared by women among civilized people...<sup>526</sup>

All these principles were necessary, he concluded, and they must be spread in schools, magazines, flyers, private propaganda, as well as large meetings.

Apart from playing the part of state representative, Frashëri's agenda was tied to his being the member of a religious minority, which suddenly found itself in a favorable position.

Unlike Turkey, which outlawed its Sufi orders along with the sultanate in 1923, Albania granted

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<sup>524</sup> Although not common, Frashëri's portrayal of Sunni Muslim marriage was grossly exaggerated, and the second such after Marie Çoba's. In 1918, about 3.6% of married men in Tirana had a second wife. By 1930, that went down to 1.9%. See, Komuniteti Mysliman (482) 1926, file 128, AQSH, p. 132 in Gentiana Kera, "Age at Marriage in Tirana" in Hemming, Kera, and Pandelejmoni eds., *Albania: Family, Society, and Culture in the 20th Century*, (Berlin: LITVERLAG, 2012), 47.

<sup>525</sup> I have not encountered ethnographic data on the subject, however, this is sufficiently clear in Clayer's study on the politicization of the veil in the interwar period. For example, the veil ban was protested in the conservative and Muslim-dense areas of Shkodër and central Albania, but no so much in the rest. Peasant women also were less likely to wear the veil than middle class or aristocratic Muslim matrons. Also because of the pressure to modernize, the Islamic leadership also allowed women to wear a "modern coat" with a simple scarf on their heads. Clayer, "Behind the Veil", 132-139.

<sup>526</sup> Mehdi Frashëri, "Gruaja Shqiptare dhe e Arthmeja e Shqiperise", *Shqiptarja* 2, no. 5, 1930, 73-75.

institutional autonomy to the Bektashis, relocating their world-headquarters in Tirana in fact.<sup>527</sup>  
Not so much a reform, the strategy was actually a way to consolidate state control.<sup>528</sup>

Frashëri's views were also a more updated version of those of his uncle, Semseddin Sami<sup>529</sup>. Sami's *Kadınlar* (Women) first written in 1879<sup>530</sup>, intended for the Ottoman public as the Turkish title implies, made many of the same observations with regard to polygamy and he also made Bektashi principles central to his views. He viewed monogamy as "the desired norm in Islamic religion and the natural course of human society."<sup>531</sup> In its place, he advocated marriage based on love (*aşk*) and like his fellow Ottoman reformer Namik Kemal, he similarly claimed that the, "the progress of the empire depended on the education of women."<sup>532</sup>

In addition, uncle and nephew shared similar feelings toward foreign influence, which Mehdi's termed "false civilization". As George Gawrych has observed, "Sami cautioned against blindly imitating the principles and customs of Europe."<sup>533</sup> While he accepted the fact that the West set (some) example for the Muslim world, Europeans were inconsistent in practicing

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<sup>527</sup> Clayer, 109.

<sup>528</sup> In 1922 Clayer notes that officials asked Muslim clerics to use the Friday *vaz* (sermon) as a way to persuade parents to send their children to school. The state wanted, or rather dictated, that the Muslim leadership do its part to promote "national fraternity", and guide the religious community, as it decreed reforms meant to enhance progress and modernization (Clayer, 108). The state first interfered in religious affairs by setting up criteria for "patriotic and liberal minded" clerics to attend the national Muslim Congress. By 1929, it controlled the community's budget. The Civil Code further stripped its authority by outlawing Shari'a courts. This measure was reluctantly accepted, as there was no feasible recourse, but when the state decreed that all provincial *medrese* (religious schools) close down in favor of an enlarged one in Tirana, to train new leaders, the Community happily complied. That same year, political authorities, as Clayer may have pushed Bexhet Shapati, Community leader, to advise the faithful to abandon the *perçe* (veil), while the Ministerial Council banned it and the *ferexhe* (the dust cloak worn by women outside their home).

<sup>529</sup> My choice to use Sami's Ottoman rather than his Albanian name is a deliberate one. Not only does recent literature refer to him that way, but Sami's reputation as an Ottoman reformer supercedes his recognition as an Albanian one (outside Albania that is).

<sup>530</sup> Because the first edition was popular, a second edition appeared in 1894 as a pocketbook in the series *Cep Kütüphanesi*.

<sup>531</sup> Gawrych, "Semseddin Sami, Women, and Social Conscience in the Late Ottoman Empire," *Middle Eastern Studies* 46, (2010) 97-115.

<sup>532</sup> Namik Kemal's article "A Memorandum on the Education of Women" spawned a series of social critiques on women in general, and their position in marital unions, specifically. Semseddin's treatise followed on the heels of other early advocates of women's rights, his friends, the reformers Namik Kemal and Ahmet Midhat. Calling attention to this intellectual pedigree is necessary if we are to understand interwar reforms in the context of Ottoman legacy, as opposed to reaction to the Ottoman past, as nationalist scholars tend to argue.

<sup>533</sup> *ibid*, 104.

gender equality. European women could be well educated and organize freely in salons and social gatherings; however, men consigned them to housework and raising children.

Americans, on the other hand, he viewed as more progressive because American women dominated the teaching profession, enabling them to teach both their own children and those of the country [my interpretation], thus extending their influence beyond the home. But whereas his nephew thought that unveiling would draw Albanians to European civilization<sup>534</sup>, Sami had found fault with European perceptions of veiling and the custom of seclusion. According to him, both practices predated Islam, and originated in the cultural exchange between Ancient Greeks and Iranians.

Mehdi and others, for reasons of political expediency and legitimacy, instead tied both to Sunni Muslim practice. And so, while some of his views borrowed from late Ottoman thought, the position he displayed in *Shqiptarja* seems to represent a conflict between some of those ideas, his position as a bureaucrat, and his search for an avenue to uphold Bektashi principle—given the order’s recent legitimation.

In another piece, entitled “Popujt Mysliman të Tjerë dhe Myslimanët e Shqipërisë” (Other Muslim Peoples and Albanian Muslims), Mehdi pointed out that Mustafa Kemal pursued violence (*shpadë dhe konop*) to “push” his people into progress. In a public gathering, he tore off a woman’s *perçe*. The Shahs of Persia and Afghanistan tried to integrate European traditions through war and revolution. But in *Shqipëria e Lirë* (Free Albania) this had never been the case.

He pointed to the example set by the Royal Family. The Queen Mother and the Princesses were the first to *hedh çarshafin*<sup>535</sup> (toss away the cloak) and wear *kapellën* (the hat).

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<sup>534</sup> Frashëri had also published a separate essay entitled “The Muslim Reforms in Albania” a year earlier in which he had claimed that for Albania to integrate Clayer, “Behind the Veil”, 138.

<sup>535</sup> Both italicized phrases are in the Albanian accusative case.

When they did this, their Highnesses made Albanian ladies understand that they could not admit covered ladies into their presence, so nobly suggesting that if they deemed themselves more honorable, they had better visit and congregate with others like them. On February 18<sup>th</sup>, 1930 the Princess Sanije, head of *Shqiptarja*, organized a *suare* (soirée), bringing together all the ladies of Tirana High Life [Mehdi's words], demonstrating for the first time the noble behavior, the natural dignity, and the genteel comportment of Albanian women before the diplomatic community in Tirana.

In the same piece, Frashëri also defended the idea that dress and comportment could make someone European. People, he wrote, said that uncovering women and going to balls and soirees did not make one civilized, but that training in European *zakon* (practice) could lead them there. This new direction, he said, would push men and women alike to learn, to work with joy, and earn more. Concluding, he once more raised his readers' attention to the need for a female gymnasium in Tirana, to ease the burden women were taking on by learning new ways of life. Perhaps the Royal Princesses, he hoped, would take on the initiative of creating it, and continue on the path of building up the new country from year to year.<sup>536</sup>

This was the second call by a government official to create a school that would follow in the footsteps of Instituti Kyrias. Frashëri did not refer to it, but his counterpart, the prefect of Korça and later Minister of Education, Hil Mosi, alluded to it as the Kyriases celebrated their school's 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary. While the Kyriases took offense at the closing of their school, this indicates that they must have known that there were plans to open a public gymnasium for women. I have no evidence that indicated that Frashëri and the Kyriases talked about this, but what it does help us to realize is that their state reaction to the parties at Oberlin or to Crane, via Sevastia's son, was in part posturing.

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<sup>536</sup> "Popujt të tjerë Musliman dhe Populli Musliman Shqiptar", *Shqiptarja*, no. 5, 1930, 14-7.

The plans to nationalize education had as little to do with a Muslim uprising, as they had to do with some Italian conspiracy, as Sevastia's son Aleksandër wrote to Crane in the spring of 1933. Quite to the contrary, the Kyriases must have at least suspected, and even understood, that the measure had little to do with them personally, and more to do with strengthening the state's fraught position, confronted as it was financial hardship, which for a time was relived by Italian subsidies. The foundations to nationalize had already been laid.

In "Shqiptarja e Re" and "Feminizëm ose Njerëzi" (Feminism or Humanity) another *Mülkiye* graduate, Ali Bej Këlcyra,<sup>537</sup> revealed other more earnest truths. In the first, he stated that the mere mention of feminism by the Shkodran newspaper *Agimi* (Dawn) in 1920 had been enough to unleash the fury of public opinion, which he deemed "Middle Aged", forestalling any proper discussion of the future of Albanian women. The first step the new Albanian woman had to take was to realize the state she was in at present.

Deploing the low level of cultural development, and general social poverty, Këlcyra pleaded God, "Whom to speak to, my Lord?" Posturing to the King, for his inspiration and the example he set, he then pointed to the work of the magazine, calling it uplifting, and urged readers to "open the book of truth and confess that the majority of our women find themselves in a miserable state because of poverty and ignorance. Our shame, and misery starts the day that we rely on civilization with hypocrisy and no ideas of our own."<sup>538</sup>

In his second piece, Këlcyra asked three bold questions: "What will be our Feminism? Where will we start our activism? What are the basic needs of the Albanian Woman<sup>539</sup>?" As he saw it, the most urgent task of Albanian womanhood was to improve and strengthen her "race".

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<sup>537</sup> Këlcyra's pseudonym, Milo Shini, is revealed in his statement that he had authored a proposal to acknowledge the efforts of highly cultured women and those who had helped the war effort by granting them suffrage when there was talk in the constitutional assembly that the constitution would be drafted in 1923.

<sup>538</sup> Milo Shini, "Shqiptarja e Re", *Shqiptarja*, no. 5, 1930, 100-101.

<sup>539</sup> Milo Shini, "Feminizëm ose Njerëzi" *Shqiptarja* no. 5, 1930, 172.

There were two models one could look to: the “fanatic model of Anglo Saxon Feminism” and the more “laid back” model of the Latin peoples, “where tradition considers women to be stronger than the presumed stronger gender.” The Italians, he noted, had taken the second course, following fascism, making women participate in the battles of life while being made to feel a citizen of her Kingdom without leaving her original and wider mission, the home. He had finished his studies at La Sapienza in Rome. Was this the reason he offered Italy as an example, or did it reflect the growing Italian presence in the country?

Albania must find itself between these two, he argued. All the preconditions necessary to develop feminism locally, like the one where women politically fought for their rights, as in England and the U.S., were presently lacking in Albania. Before women could even begin to think about organizing in that way, society had to look about and react to poor knowledge of hygiene, heavy physical labor and drudgery. Albanian society first had to unite with the legal reforms and its propaganda to understand the importance of this “feminism” *as* “humanism.”

Këlcyra articles seemed to be doing two things: 1) offering an apolitical perspective on why and how Albanian society must start its road forward by educating its women 2) offering the perspective that there were a number of ways to understand feminism. It need not be threatening. The Civil Code, for example, was an act of humanism, not an alien force of influence. Somewhat oddly, the issues that had the heaviest identified female presence were those in between the two male supervising editors, Çika and Sherko. In issues seven and eight, with the exception of two contributions by Milo Shini (“Feminism or Humanity” referenced above, and “A Dialogue ” in numbers 8 and 7 respectively) as well as one by Koço Semini’s “Ten of the Worlds’ Greatest Women”, women authors took up the entire space.



As mentioned elsewhere, in part, this seems to have coincided with the consolidation of the society. For example, in issue six, dated April 20, 1930 we learn that the society had just concluded its second meeting. It had been a year, as Paraskevi Kyrias noted in her speech, since Princess Senije had convened the first meeting, pressing upon those present the need to found a society for women to tackle women's social, educational, benevolent, and all other tasks that would elevate them.

That meeting had also settled the statute, which for unspecified reason was both in Albanian and French, and also in the foundation of twenty branches nationwide, in addition to Tirana, where the headquarters were. Although not presented as such, their greatest concentration (ten) was in the south, with only three in the general north (Mat the Zog family's home region, Shkodër, Peshkopi), six in the coast and center, and one, Sofia<sup>540</sup>, outside the country.

According to Kyrias, the society had made remarkable progress in its first year. She had organized three educational conferences, addressing their position at home and society. In addition to personally speaking about home economics, she had invited Dr. Hamdi Sulçebe, a licensed pediatrician to speak to mothers about infant care and nurturing.<sup>541</sup> The society had reestablished the connections initiated by Evanthia Kotte with the International Organization for Women in Geneva, and become a member.

At the start of the year, the society had given the *soirée* (referenced by Mehdi Frashëri above) and organized a lottery to raise funds (8611 gold francs in ticket sales). Society women had bought garment material to make and distribute clothing for the city's elementary school

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<sup>540</sup> Fatmira Musaj notes that women in society organized by Qamile Asllani formed a society for women in January 1930. Given the gap in documentation, perhaps Asllani got in touch with the women in Tirana in the course of that winter.

<sup>541</sup> Dr. Sulçebe became famous through the conference series, and aired a weekly rubric on Radio Tirana, "Medical Advice", from 1939 to 1992. He also lectured at the School of Nursing and the University of Tirana.

children. They had also bought and distributed coal (500 kg) in the winter for the city's indigent. Finally, *Shqiptarja* had seen five issues in print. Noting that the "first signs of progress and its converse, decline, of a nation were first noticed upon women", Kyrias thanked the Albanian and foreign press for all they had done to encourage "our movement".

Another invited speaker, Mehdi Frashëri, had addressed women on the topic of the veil. In a version that must have reflected the article referenced above, Frashëri drew a comparison for women attendants between the Occident and Albania, from a social perspective, discussing the country's "deficiencies" and what women could do about them. One thing that women who had forsaken the *perçe* and *ferexhe* could do, for example, was to boycott those who covered, interrupting all manner of communication and even social greeting with them.<sup>542</sup>

In issue number seven, the entire executive board, with the exception of Kyrias, gave their own reports, further elaborating the society's agenda. Elected to represent Albania at the eighth international convention for women, Ana Pekmezi gave a detailed report about the weeklong conference and its nature. She had met with "leading members", had delivered them the statute of the Albanian Woman, and had spoken about the society's goals and its achievements.

In addition, she gave generous details on the themes of discussion from women's legal rights, to suffrage, the role of physical education in schools, setting same standards of conduct between men and women, female slavery, public health, child nurture, international peace, women's professions, the role of the arts, literature, cinema, and economics. Pekmezi also wrote about the First International Conference for Rural Women, addressing a similarly interesting variety of themes like the role of peasant women in protecting country traditions like songs, handicrafts, folklore; protecting the environment in touristy areas; collaboration with city

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<sup>542</sup> "Mbledhja e Dytë e Shoqërisë" from *Arbënia* in *Shqiptarja*, no. 6, 1930, 123.

women, the possibility of setting up international organizations devoted to the issues of rural women.<sup>543</sup>

Her colleague, Ikbal Beshiri, for untold reasons acted as local correspondent for the convention, reiterating some of themes introduced by Pekmezi, and also adding others to showcase the political and economic importance of the congress, by highlighting its initiatives to nominate a woman to the League of Nations, the International Congress of Works, its call for the full application of the Kellogg-Brian Pact, the organization's expansion in Central and Eastern Europe.<sup>544</sup>

Ismihan Alizoti and Qefser Tirana<sup>545</sup> prescribed the manner in which women could administer their households efficiently. Though not in the most tactful of ways, in that she mocked women who used their time in make up, when neither the pervasiveness nor the availability of the needed accessories could be quantified, Alizoti reasoned that “Albanian Woman use her head” to elevate herself intellectually and morally to give the rules of economy their due respect by producing with ease and value. She had to understand not merely invest her physical energy into her loom, her knitting and sewing so that the needs of her own households would be covered, and so that she would keep pace with her husband, as *contributor*.

Qefser prescribed the methods a woman needed to employ to perform her role as lady of her household, commanding both respect and authority. A lady first needed to see household management as a responsibility. When done well, it enhanced familial harmony, health, fortune and morality. Her piece specifically considered the intelligence a woman needed to deploy in order to ensure help in her tasks about the home while establishing loyalty and authority. To

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<sup>543</sup> Ana Pekmezi, “Raport mbi Kongresin e Tetë Ndërkombëtar”, *Shqiptarja*, no. 7, 1930, 142-4.

<sup>544</sup> Ikbal Beshiri, “Kongresi i Shoqërisë Ndërkombëtare në Vienë”, *Shqiptarja*, no. 7, 1930, 147.

<sup>545</sup> Both names are Arabic in origin, Qefser coming from the Qur'anic chapter Al-Kawthar, and very likely meant that both women were Muslim. Alizoti was very likely married to Fejzi Alizoti, another graduate of the Mülkiye.

succeed a woman needed the help of her children and servants, but to solicit it, she needed to construct a relationship with them such that her orders, given in firm but melodious tones of voice, would inspire her confidence unto them, and their admiration unto her. Being trained in this manner would help the hypothetical her especially in times of crisis, when strength of mind and heart were necessary: an illness, professional crisis, an unexpected death, etc.

Sara Blloshmi proceeded next to give one of the most analytical pieces on feminism and its applicability to the Albanian context.<sup>546</sup> She described it as a familiar term, and “an active form, with passion and effort” leading women to become real warriors. It was the struggle of woman to save herself from the infantilization in which she finds herself today. She had been cowed into a half-infant by man through wars. Men determined each of her acts. From her paternal roof, she went to that of her husband’s.

Over time, she continued, woman had grown accustomed to this, seeing herself as weaker from a social perspective, turning into a half servant, and a type of slave. Transitioning into the importance of the feminist movement, she then linked “the situation of woman” as a great test for social welfare through the intellectual and moral development of children. By leaving women in an inferior level, by impeding their mental and character development, the sons<sup>547</sup> of these women, would undoubtedly not be able to cultivate great intellectual and moral achievement either.

“The condition of woman acts upon that of man, and hinders his success.”<sup>548</sup> This was precisely what the feminist movement meant to improve upon, having not only the interest of women at heart, but also that of society as a whole. Feminism also sought women’s political

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<sup>546</sup> Sara Blloshmi, “Feminizmi dhe Shqipëtareja”, *Shqiptarja*, no. 7 and 8, 1930, 153-4; 179-180.

<sup>547</sup> It is not clear if the emphasis on “sons” is purposeful, but it no doubt did not escape the readers, given the cultural preference for sons.

<sup>548</sup> Blloshmi, *Shqiptarja*, no. 8, 179.

status to improve, beyond her social empowerment. After acquiring the right to vote, women sought to become deputies and ministers. “Many parliaments have women deputies, and at least two civilized nations have ministers.” But this had not come about overnight.

To win their political rights, women in the outside world had gained much previously lost terrain by enhancing their combined intellectual, moral, and cultural development. Women’s salvation from their imposed “infancy” required long exertion, peaceful, and daily determination, with unbroken care, and a seriousness full of dignity. But in England this had not been the case. “Many of my generation recall the suffering of suffragettes in England, and their final triumph.”<sup>549</sup>

But did women in Albania need political rights, or should the society only strive to improve their “social standing”? After a long and good explanation of feminism, Blloshmi’s shift seemed forced. She certainly did not put emphasis in examining or explaining social complexity in her country. “We think it to be the second,” she replied. She gave the example of France, where women’s “cultural questions” outweighed their political counterparts. The most important role of the Albanian Woman, Blloshmi ended, “must rest on these points: home, society, schools, and hospitals”.<sup>550</sup> Lest her initial explanation of feminism read too much like a defense, Blloshmi continued in the very next issue with a conclusion fitting the official bill. “Although we have no need for feminism in a political sense, this does not mean that the tasks and burden that belong to women are any easier.”<sup>551</sup>

*Shqiptarja*’s eighth issue brought additional female perspective. Of those, Sevasti Kyrias and Kaliopi Plasari considered individuality, and women’s rights. Kyrias, more astute in her handling of external analysis than Blloshmi, started by acknowledging the fact that women at the

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<sup>549</sup> *ibid*

<sup>550</sup> Sara Blloshmi, “Feminisma dhe Shqipetareja” Nr. 8, 1930, 179.

<sup>551</sup> *ibid*, no.8,1930, 180. Blloshmi’s piece was published on two separate issues.

time had acquired opportunities to further their individualities like never before. In England, France, and the U.S., women had won freedoms and the ability to put them into motion. She attributed their success to three things: education, “expanded” ideas about human rights, and the ease of physical development. She too noted that these changes had broadened discussions about the “proper and deserved place for women”.<sup>552</sup>

Teaching, once a male profession, had now become thoroughly feminized. The world around, she noted, “allows us to see that education does prepare mankind to take on the challenges of life. These efforts strengthen character and limit the suffering she suffers from ignorance.” Never a feminist by admission, (but ever the emancipator and fervent nationalist), Sevastia avoided some of the pitfalls that Blloshmi’s piece potentially posed.

Instead of broaching politics directly, something that a savvy reader may have questioned, she simply weighed in on a question that pervaded all of the women’s magazines: how would an educated woman blend home and professional life? Although Sevastia conceded to the notion that education and a professional life enhanced their lives in unprecedented ways, in the second half of her essay she made it abundantly clear that her purpose lay in demonstrating that the “domestic element” was the first, that it was more “noble” than all other callings, that all other professions came in second, regardless of their value and their nobility.

Whatever qualities a woman may have, “she must sine qua non similarly possess a high ability for the work and task of home.”<sup>553</sup> Attempting a persuasive conclusion, she wrote that she disagreed with the voices of “some” for whom the education of women lessened their enthusiasm for “domestic situation”, that to her the opposite seemed to bear compelling truth. To illustrate her point, in the same issue, Sevastia contributed another piece, but instead of an essay,

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<sup>552</sup> Sevasti Kyrias Dako, “Individualiteti i Gruas”, *Shqiptarja*, no. 7, 1930, 170.

<sup>553</sup> Kyrias, 171.

this time she contributed “Një Përrallëzë Të Vërtetë” (A True Story). Her chosen genre, a pleasant (and accessible) short-story that revealed the centrality of Korça in her psyche both in language and as place, demonstrated a dimension of what she meant by a woman’s “ability” for home.

Donika Leka was a young woman who received a letter from her estranged grandfather, a wealthy Bey who lived in a castle in Korça, bidding her to come take care of him in his old age. Her father, the Leka Bey’s son, warned her that though her grandfather had wealth, she would find herself isolated and would be quickly bored. She hesitated. On the one hand, the experience could be unpleasant. On the other hand, this could be the time to reconcile father and son. A wayward young man, her father had rebelled against his own parents, indulging in a life of *aventurë* (adventure), until he settled down to marry her mother, a “wise and industrious woman” who gave him a happy home and family. At last, she decided to visit her grandfather.

While there, one of his servants, recently released from his duties when Leka Bey discovered he had stolen his valuables, plotted revenge. Overhearing his conversation with fellow conspirators, the brave young woman found her way to the police station in the middle of the night, saving her grandfather’s life just as the would-be criminals had entered Leka Bey’s premises. But on being presented with a delightful diamond necklace for her braveness and loyalty, Donika refused. Leka Bey was perplexed. Why, what young lady did not like diamonds? Moved, Donika then embraced her grandfather, and explained her reason. She did not want the diamonds; she wanted him to forgive the only son he had in this world!

*Shqiptarja*’s readership was very modest. From February 1 to February 1, 1930, subscriptions amounted to 429 francs, while other sales to 152 francs. In the second year, they were presumed to arrive at around 500 francs. While the magazine sold at 1 koronë in its first

year, and adjusted to the Albanian currency lek in the second, as 2 lek, (1 gold franc was worth 5 lek). With a franc valued at five Lek, (assuming that 2 lek equaled 1 koronë) this roughly means that there were an estimated fifty-eight readers. Distribution constitutes an interesting question in and of itself, since the magazine clearly targeted the public at large. It is easy to imagine that society members read it themselves; the same perhaps applied to women in subsidiary branches.

The very last piece written by a woman, Kaliopi Plasari, before Mihal Sherko took over as editor of the magazine, was the most assertive argument for women's rights. Not much is known about the young Plasari, then twenty-five years old, and a future speaker at Radio Tirana<sup>554</sup>; but she had the distinction of being an outsider to the magazine, and also one of the sharpest critics of the Albanian social condition. If others had advocated the need to elevate the status of women, Plasari made it clear why reforms were needed.

She had written about women's issues in other newspapers, making little impact, she noted.<sup>555</sup> Women's rights were being debated the world over, in Albania, and the Balkans, but until then, it was men who mostly did the writing. Women were born with rights, but generally speaking, had suffered from antiquity to the modern day. Man ruled over them in every way. And even with modern advancements, she remained unequal.

Plasari enumerated the forms of this inequality: the right to interfere in the issues of mankind, to choose and be chosen for parliament, to be trusted with higher office, to make and undo laws which affected her. And yet, women were held responsible before the law just like men, and were punished for the slightest misdemeanors according to laws that they did not know, because they had not participated in their making. In a bolder move still, she asked

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<sup>554</sup> "Portretet e Folësve dhe Radiokronistëve të Parë të Radio Tiranës", *Tirana News Observer*, October 23, 2010. <http://www.tiranaobserver.al/news-item/portretet-e-folesve-dhe-radiokronisteve-te-pare-te-radio-tiranes/>

<sup>555</sup> Kaliopi Plasari, "Të Drejtat e Gruas", *Shqiptarja*, no. 8, 1930, 174.



whether Deity should be punished, because it was said that it<sup>556</sup> had created woman as the weaker sex. But in its absence, perhaps those who should be punished were those who had not educated her?

Are we not all, without any exclusions, the same sex from nature? Are we not shadows that emerge and fade from this world? Therefore why these bad habits which divide the world into one of men and one of women? They also say that woman has not surpassed man intellectually, so that she too may be allowed to enjoy rights. Let us study this.<sup>557</sup>

She pointed to examples where woman's labor went unpaid. She pointed to examples in feudal societies, and Albania, where women took on men's work in addition to domestic duties. What made them so different from men, she questioned again. Over  $\frac{3}{4}$  of mankind lived off the labor of women. It was true that many famous men had become known professionals, but a woman raised them all. If women were allowed to become educated, and become doctors, lawyers, engineers, and ship captains, then they would find out that they were not different from men in any regard. Albanian women lived in similar conditions as their sisters abroad.

The fiercely secular Plasari blamed religion as the leading source of evil. But now that scientific theories had disproven theories of creationism, it would be easier to recognize that men and women were not different. Marriage had also played a great role in enslaving women, even as the Civil Code was trying to change the situation. The fact was, she said, that without broad education, very few individuals were capable of understanding its meaning or applying it to their situations.

In a defense of the official platform, she spelled out some harsh truths. Albanian women needed to be educated in hygiene, so that they and their infants would not die for lack of proper care. Birthing methods were still what they were "thousands of years ago". They would learn to go to doctors and not the town/village clergy. They would learn that corsets and heels/narrow

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<sup>556</sup> I purposely do not attach a gender qualification to Deity, because the category is genderless in Plasari's use, and "Perëndi" can be both genders in Albanian.

<sup>557</sup> *ibid*, 175.

shoes deformed their bodies and their feet, and that reason should determine their attire and not trends. They would learn that their dowries and large weddings were wasteful and that they brought on moral damage and corruption. She lauded the Royal Family and the educational campaign of *Shqiptarja*, pro forma, but few of her women colleagues had dared speak as openly as she. And while she argued that knowledge would make women better mothers, she did not define the home as her domesticity.

### *Conclusion*

As the Great Depression unfolded in Albania, *Shqiptarja* became hard pressed for resources. By 1933 publication all but stopped, and many of the local branches ceased their work altogether. Not surprisingly, Tirana and Korça were the only two that remained active, more or less. The one thing that they had in common was that energetic Protestant leadership was prominent in both. Paraskevi Kyrias and Emine Toptani attempted to revitalize the society through a “nation-wide” tour in 1933, but on encountering travel challenges reported that of all peripheral branches, that of Korça was the most resilient.<sup>558</sup> It could be that Kyrias was partial to her former mission station, but it was perhaps telling that Violet Kennedy was its vice director. The long tradition of local organization very likely was behind its longevity.

Nationalization, and Albania’s secularization, had the effect of co-opting Protestant methods for another type of conversion: nation building. The template of the “Albanian Woman” relied on a conceptual framework laid out by the Protestant mission’s *Morning Star* in Görice. Its early campaign to increase the literacy of local women became the cornerstone of the national campaign launched with alongside the Civil Code. Albania was far from alone in this regard. Similar developments played out in nearby Bulgaria, Turkey, the greater Middle East, and far

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<sup>558</sup> Kyrias and Toptani reported that most roads to the north were so treacherous that they were inaccessible. Instead their tour focused on the southern parts of the country, with Korça and Gjirokastër being mainstays.

away China and Japan. But Protestant methods succeeded in bringing women out into the public sphere. That was one of Kaliopi Plasari's greatest appeals in "The Rights of Woman": the right to "interfere" in the affairs of mankind. Increasingly, calls like hers persuaded legislators to allow the society's leadership and renowned to join parliamentary proceedings and also assist on occasion.<sup>559</sup>

But the Albanian Woman demonstrated other phenomena as well. For one, it showed the very international frames of reference that its women and male writers had in mind as they conceptualized role models for the "Albanian Woman". From England, Germany, France, Italy and the United States in the West, to China, Egypt, Japan, and Turkey in the East, *Shqiptarja's* writers connected readers to the outside world, keeping them abreast of women in new professions, their interactions with modernity, and their contributions to their developing societies and nations. They familiarized them with their rights and provided guidance for their roles as mothers and wives.

*Shqiptarja* was not too different from the earlier magazines of the 1920s. In basic format and content women's magazines asked very similar questions, and suggested similar solutions. Their scope, it is true, was different. However, as with *Instituti Kyrias*, it proved that the politics of womanhood were complex because of the competing agendas that placed women in nation building. It was a place to debate Europeanness and modernity on local terms. It was a place to debate feminism on local terms. It was a place where male reformers tried to set the boundaries of female activism, and it was a place where their women counterparts subtly tried to subvert them.

Albania was not ready for the kind of changes that early reformers wanted to back, like suffrage. An illiterate, impoverished, and politically indifferent population turned a deaf ear on

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<sup>559</sup> Musaj, 149.

the few magazines of the country's urban centers. And politicians were not forthcoming with wartime promises to back women's initiatives. Insofar as the failure of the pre-revolutionary magazines said something about their inability to stay afloat without proper support, the compromise between the government and the Protestant-defined platform defined by the Kyrias sisters was a sensible one. That platform provided a crucible for a national organization concerned with providing Albanian women the bare basics to become the kind of citizens that the state would need to ensure its future.

## Chapter 6

### Epilogue

My heart has been aching for you and yours for the last ten days. I watch the news several times a day. Of course I am interested in all the states in your neighborhood, as I lived there so long. Dear, don't think of anything as permanent and so say your prayers knowing that order and progress and freedom and growth must come with God's Kingdom. Take a long view and recall that in history such movements as are taking place all over Europe never have lasted but the right has won out in the end. We may not live to see it righted, but God's will for this world cannot be overcome.<sup>560</sup>

Hester Jenkins's encouragement of Sevastia in 1939 was heartfelt and profound. But regardless of their shared spirituality, or their historical perspective, it can be little doubted that to the family of Sevastia Kyrias, the Italian invasion resembled an avalanche: long expected but with an unpredictable outcome. Jenkins wrote her letter on April 12. Seven days earlier Italian naval combat troops seized key Albanian ports in Durrës, Vlorë, and Sarandë. On April 8<sup>th</sup>, 1939 land forces took control of government buildings in Tirana, with very little opposition. Finally, with the Royal Family in flight, the Albanian Parliament then voted to offer the crown to the Italian King Victor Emmanuel III.<sup>561</sup>

The invasion was not a surprise. Italian interest in Albanian affairs predated the country's emergence from the late Ottoman Empire. Control over Albania equaled Italian influence in the Adriatic and the wider Balkan region. Italian statesmen envisioned a foreign policy comparable with that of the late European empires, with far-flung colonies. Before World War I, Catholic

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<sup>560</sup> Hester Jenkins to Sevastia Kyrias, April 12, 1939, Fondi 47, Dosja 10, AQSH.

<sup>561</sup> Bernd Fischer, *Albania at War, 1939-1945*, (Purdue: Purdue University Press, 1999), 2.

and Italian state agencies actively supported Albanian nationalism through schooling, as a way to compete with Austria-Hungary.<sup>562</sup>

After World War I, Italy steadily expanded its influence in Albania's internal affairs, taking advantage of its weak economic position and subsequent desire for up building. Beginning with the bid to finance Ahmet Zog's return from Yugoslavia, the two countries entered into a series of financial and defense agreements, which enabled Italy to stake a powerful hold on Albania's economic and military sectors. By the end of the 1920s, Albania and Italy concluded two major treaties, leading to the constant flow of Italian monies, personnel, and oversight in the young, vulnerable kingdom.

For a time, this served the Albanian state well. However, when the Italian presence became too menacing, Albanian bureaucrats attempted their own trump card: nationalization. When asked to renew the 1926 Treaty of Tirana, the Albanian state refused. When asked to renew Italian loans on favorable terms, the Italian state refused. The obvious solution out of the quagmire seemed to strike Italian presence where it was most concentrated: education. Outlawing private education in the spring of 1933 did drive out countless Italian instructors. And it certainly irked the Italian state. Over the next two years Albania tried to assert its position regionally by improving relations with neighboring states and entering into trade agreements with Yugoslavia and Greece.<sup>563</sup>

From the late 1920s to the mid 1930s, nationalization policies played a crucial in the processes of state and nation building. On the one hand, it was cultural activists who had devoted their careers to the idea of an Albanian nation state, who spurred them on. These helped to

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<sup>562</sup> Jani Sota, "The Role of Italy in the Opening and Subsidy of Italian Schools in Albania Before and After April 1939," *The Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences* 2, no. 3 (2011): 3.

<sup>563</sup> Bernd Fischer, *Balkan Strongmen: Dictators and Authoritarian Rulers of South-Eastern Europe*, Purdue: Purdue University Press, 2007), 1.

catalyze and centralize state control, and to legitimize the new royal family. At the same time, they served as a defense mechanism against encroaching Italian colonialism. The Protestant platform, founded upon the principles enshrined by some of the very words Jenkins used in her last (recorded) letter to Sevastia— order, progress, and freedom— was crucial in giving a face to reforms in women’s education and social status.

Although bureaucrats had their sights on nationalization early on, the new state lacked the qualified womanpower and manpower to actualize these ideas. In the spheres of education and women’s organization, the Kyriases stood apart. Their long established expertise in transforming a local agenda into a national one, played a crucial role in centering their work in Tirana, from which point it was disseminated into the peripheries. Between 1922-1933 they were able to build the sort of educational activism they had long yearned to perform in an Albanian state.

In spite of the political instability of the 1920s, they managed to advance constructive debates about what it meant to be an Albanian woman. They managed to create an arena of discussion for what it meant to be an educated young woman in a new society that aspired to Europeanize. But as much as Albanian reformers like them looked to the outside world to formulate their ideas, they also wanted to advance concepts suitable to Albanian social realities. Sevastia Kyrias was absolutely clear on this count. She was a *student* of American ideas, who constructed a school for girls where Albanian women could become enlightened while upholding Albanian customs. Even as the forum of opinions by women and on women grew, the Kyriases’ Protestant platform provided a framework around which women’s pathways into the public sphere could be conceptualized.

In all this, navigating “private” and “public” produced unintended consequences. The Kyriases lamented the closure of their private school in 1933. The great irony there was that

Paraskevi Kyrias had defended her thesis, *A National Educational System for Albania*, on the basis that private schools were sources of divisive influence, because the great majority of them before WWI were foreign. But even though she and her family of educators championed public education for the entirety of their careers, their school always remained a private institution.

In its origins, it was one in a network of Protestant schools established throughout the late Ottoman Empire. That connection and its vernacular instruction marked it as a center of subversion. Not only because its Protestant teaching was causing social rifts in a town inhabited by Orthodox Christians who were under the spiritual and legal supervision of an Orthodox Metropolitan, but because the Ottoman administration was also trying to foster its own sense of a supranational identity, *Osmanlılık*.

Ottoman modernizers like their Albanian successors— their own students essentially— learned that to curb foreign influence in their realms, they would have to intensify the competition for the resources that locals craved. State (public) schools were one alternative. But, as Selim Deringil reminds us, the great problem they faced, was that the new direction came a little too late.<sup>564</sup> Several decades later, Albanian bureaucrats wrestled with a similar phenomenon. The major difference between them and their Ottoman predecessors was numbers. Whereas the Ottomans attempted to contain foreign influence from a plurality of directions, Albanian leaders concentrated on containing a single foe, Italian expansion. The one, and perhaps only, arena in which the Albanian state had some power was education. By taking control of institutions of learning, it could maintain the semblance of sovereignty and leverage.

Even without the Italian crisis, Albania was far from alone in nationalizing education. Instituti Kyrias had countless formerly Protestant analogs around the non-Western world that

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<sup>564</sup> Deringil, Selim. *The Well Ordered Domains: Ideology and the Legitimation of Power in the Ottoman Empire 1876-1909*, (London: I.B. Tauris, 2011), 133.



became slowly nationalized in the first decades of the twentieth century. Generally speaking, it was in the interest of nationalist regimes to maintain oversight over the generations of young people who constituted their future citizenry.

With regard to women, it became imperative to establish sophisticated and competitive centers of learning. Often Protestant schools became nationalized, for the very fact that they had once been the local variants of an avant-garde for women's education. In Albania, this was projected to happen. As officials noted in their addresses at the school's fortieth anniversary celebrations, Instituti Kyrias had rendered many valuable services to the nation. However, they were concomitantly searching for the right time and moment in which to build a bigger, public school to continue training the country's first generations of female instructresses.

The Kyriases presented a unique case in the extension of American Protestantism and its methods to the late Ottoman Balkans and to independent Albania subsequently. The venture for them was one of spirituality, nation and state building, as well as personal empowerment. They straddled the pathways of mission and nation with remarkable finesse and skill. Even in raising eyebrows on both sides of their extensive transatlantic networks, they managed to turn a peripheral (sub)mission station into a contentious nationalist periphery, facilitating the creation of the present Greek-Albanian border, and build a political career out of a grossly exaggerated venture to evangelize a supposedly welcoming Muslim nation that would guide the ABCFM into the heart of the greater Muslim Middle East.

From these foundations they touted Albanian womanhood not only as "queen of the household" and equal domestic partner, but also as a savvy diplomat at the most international of international venues at the time, the Peace Treaty of Versailles. Finally, the state's creation gave them the opportunity to actualize their flamboyant claims. Paraskevi Kyrias' platform of female

organization based on literacy, hygiene, and benevolence skillfully negotiated the prohibitions placed on Albanian civil society by the decrees that delegitimized the first Albanian democratic state in 1924.

Far from a narrow definition of activism, under Paraskevi's direction, *Shqiptarja* used the Protestant platform to expand discussions about women's place in Albanian society and their roles, rights, and possibilities beyond the home.<sup>565</sup> It provided windows into the outside world, both East and West, demonstrating to women what they could do, what they should do, and also that they could negotiate with the powers that be. The discursive boundaries of womanhood were fluid, and they could push them as conditions and possibility dictated.

The magazine standardized organizational practice for women, and cast Albanian women onto the world stage. Its writers introduced feminism to Albanian readers and defined it as a path for their elevation and empowerment, however much they were obliged to emphasize the importance of women to her home and hearth. Albanian women were well aware of their political limitations, as well as the work they had to do to enlighten their fellow sisters who ailed

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<sup>565</sup> On this regard, I will remark that the Protestant mission did more than “merely modernize the domestic dimension of indigenous women's identity” as historians or even biographers of western missionary education projects have pointed out. Among these, Inger Marie Okkenhaug cites L.A. Flemming's “A New Humanity: American Missionaries' Ideals for Women in North India”, or Ellen Fleischman's “Our Muslim Sisters: Women of Greater Syria in the eyes of American Protestant Missionary Women.” Among these, I will also add Jean Said Makdisi's *Teta, Mother, and I: Three Generations of Arab Women*, in which she suggests that despite raising female literacy, the missionary enterprise reinforced domestic traditions. It is obvious that taking charge of the home launched women's participation in the public sphere. However, as chapters four and five pointed out, the mission-inspired nationalist education and women's organizations prioritized the home for political reasons, encouraging women, where they could, to embrace a professional life. Doing so would also alter marriage as an institution where they were traditionally seen as dependent on men, to one where they could emerge as equals once women could earn their own income. In looking at an Anglican school in Palestine, Okkenhaug cautions us to take stock of context that missionary organizations differed and that the educational spaces they offered could not be experientially homogenous by virtue of their diverse student body and the complexity of their educational message and its reception. See, Inger Marie Okkenhaug, “She Loves Books & Ideas, & Strides along in Low Shoes like an Englishwoman’: British Models and Graduates from the Anglican Girls' Secondary Schools in Palestine, 1918-1948,” *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 13, no. 4 (2002), 461-479; Jean Said Makdisi, *Teta, Mother, and I: Three Generations of Arab Women* (London, 2006).

under ignorance about pre/postnatal care, domestic management, the physical constraints of “modern” fashion, as well as the undue/corrupting burdens of local wedding/family tradition.

The contributions of American Protestantism to the making of the post-Ottoman Europe were as much about a new religion, as they were about politics, as they were about cultural transmission. The last two are perhaps the greatest testaments of the Kyrias cultural experiment, although one should not discount the fact that the Protestant community today figures as the fifth officially recognized religious community in the country that they helped to create. Because the impetus to spread the Gospel supported the vernacular translation, dissemination, and teaching of biblical materials in community education, particularly that of women, and because it coincided with nineteenth century nationalism and modernization reforms in the Ottoman world, these three seemingly different phenomena reinforced each other in the Balkan context.

From the edge of empire, “Turkey-in-Europe” became a laboratory of cultural and nationalist activism. As Ottoman liberalism encouraged cultural activity, Albanian intellectuals formed cultural clubs by the dozen. But when the Young Turks backed away from their initial promises to decentralize, the response from the Balkans, and Protestant activists, led to uprising. Between the Congress of Berlin and the Balkan Wars, Ottoman imperialism shielded Albanian-speaking regions from Slavic and Hellenic expansionism. However, Ottoman repression and the inability to work with its Balkan constituents, led to a breakdown of cooperation and ultimately the goodwill to live under the same proverbial roof.

In one way, the Albanian case conformed to a seemingly universal trend where American Protestant missiology touched ground. Like many of the emerging national societies where schools for girls heavily marked the Protestant legacy, the greatest arguable testament was the introduction of a new kind of womanhood. She was new, because unlike the womanhood before

her, she was educated. She was new, because her destiny was tied to a new political project: to an imagined community that she would help shape into a new state and perpetuate through her biological capacity. She was new because she would be crossing frontiers that her predecessors had not and for the most part, could not. She was a cultural warrior, a feminist, a future mother, a professional and an educated homemaker.<sup>566</sup> However, given the Kyriases' unique position as cultural mediators, the American Protestant encounter in Albania may have ultimately also produced less controversy than seems the case in other documented studies.

Where Middle East mission scholars like Ellen Fleischman contend that the impact of missionaries on constructing middle-class female identity in Lebanon was multi-faceted, the Albanian students of the Kyrias School for Girls or Instituti Kyrias may have received a less complex message. Noting missionary pressure on Muslim Arab students to attend religious service<sup>567</sup>, Fleischman posits that they may have internalized a sense of inferiority. Did this happen in contexts where instructors and students connected via native language and culture? Where missionary educational institutions became increasingly secular in nature? Like Fleischman, I too conclude that the (unfortunately glaring) absence of student voices on the subject makes for difficult, not to say entirely tentative interpretations.

On the other hand, Albania was no less a recipient of the cultural complexity that missionaries travelled with. The underlying assumptions that Mary Mills Patrick made about the

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<sup>566</sup> In an analysis of the intersections of culture, nation, and gender, Geoff Eley points out that the feminist critique of modern political thought has frequently dealt with “gendered partialities of meaning.” So, for example, where nation-building projects are concerned he argues that, “the pioneers of nation making found familial metaphors excellently suited for a modernizing vocabulary of reform that simultaneously upheld the gender regimes of men”. The epithets conjoined to the woman question in Albania during the 1920s, particularly those having to do with reproduction and motherhood, definitely conform to this broad phenomenon, which touched ground in Europe and beyond. However, where Eley argues that such a tactic objectified women and stripped them of agency, I would instead argue that women reformers used this seemingly limiting framework to launch their own activism. While care of the home was a stated priority, it is equally clear that that was not the limit of their ambitions, but rather an opening.

<sup>567</sup> Ellen Fleischman, “The Impact of Missionaries on Constructing Female Identity in Lebanon,” *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 13, no. 4 (2000), 419.

Albanians being a “race deserving” of assistance definitely highlights the condescension and racial hierarchy that accompanied Protestant America’s civilizing missions, however secular and genuinely affable some of its missionaries became in the process.<sup>568</sup> It is further telling that the otherwise Albanophile Rev. Erickson commemorated his time there as a “Retreat from Civilization”. Finally, the Kyriases’ refusal to accommodate an Albanian-speaking student of color, regardless of their claim to act in her best interest, and their own projection of their educational mission as one connected to “civilization” reject otherwise simplistic interpretations of them as idealistic/benevolent nationalists.<sup>569</sup>

However, on the count that American Protestantism introduced a new model of womanhood, the record speaks clearly and powerfully. The Kyrias School for Girls evolved from an obscure institution in an otherwise obscure town on the linguistic margins of present-day Albania, Greece, and Macedonia to become the most sophisticated institution for women’s education in interwar Albania. Everything about it was modern, just as its American mentors had wanted it to be. Its interior design, its spatial occupation, its curriculum, its staff, its subtle defiance of Italian expansion, and its hosting of foreign students who learned Albanian made it the modern institution that Albanian bureaucrats bragged about. Sevastia’s nationalist “soldiers” emulated their teachers. At once cosmopolitan and patriotic, they became standard bearers for

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<sup>568</sup> In a family biography and memoir of sorts, Hester Jenkins related that she had undergone a deep transformation during her nine years in Istanbul. Harboring the prejudices that the average American brought in, she confessed that she came to “love those Orientals” and “appreciate their cultures”, because ACW’s student body was both multi-religious and multi-national. See, Hester Jenkins, *Captain Weston Jenkins and his Descendants*, Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1940), 71. In her other memoir, *Behind Turkish Lattices*, Jenkins frequently deploys the stereotypical White Man’s Burden prose in terms of educating the “backward” and “ignorant” simple, and loving Turkish mothers. In particular she argued that, “American education for women in Turkey has it very much at heart to make good mothers of these loving ignorant women and the best of whom long to be taught to train their children.” See, Hester Jenkins, *Behind Turkish Lattices: The Story of a Turkish Woman’s Life*, (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co., 1911), 25

<sup>569</sup> It is possible to read their rejection of the “magjyp” student as local racism. The Kyriases at times expressed ambivalence toward northern Albanians, whom they viewed as under developed. Therefore, it comes as no surprise that in an instance of socially sanctioned prejudice, they would express worry about the parents of their majority white students.

generations to come. As teachers and mothers or as university graduates, they combined professional and domestic cares, just like missionary school students did elsewhere. Had it not been the envy of the Albanian government, its students would not have been integrated into the public Royal Mother Institute (Instituti Nana Mbretresh) in 1933.

For all its (more-or-less) positive contributions to the making of a modern and Europeanizing Albania, the Protestant endeavor was cut tragically short. Although the mission in Korça flourished and expanded in interwar Korça under the dedicated care of the Kennedy couple, and as much as the Kyriases and Katarina Tsilka gave of themselves with running their school, *Shqiptarja*, and the Red Cross, their activities ceased completely in 1939. Although initially invited to help facilitate the Italian invasion<sup>570</sup>, the Christian workers of the Albanian Evangelical mission were expelled and forbidden from returning that same year.

Owing to their sheltering of Albanian communist partisans and ammunition, the Kyrias family, were arrested in 1942 and deported to a German concentration camp in Belgrade. Petitions to the postwar communist government fell on deaf ears, but their ultimate return after the war led to persecution and ultimately pragmatic silence. Their demonstrably strong American connections constituted a threat to the communist regime. Only slowly did it make steps to rehabilitate the family that gave so much to the state apparatus it inherited and the nation that it ultimately built.<sup>571</sup> The Albanian Protestant community is today the fifth officially recognized religious unit in the transitional Albanian democracy.

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<sup>570</sup> The Institute for Protestant and Albanian studies recently released a digital image of what appears to be a flyer to people on the ground by invading Italian forces urging them not to resist the invasion in the name of the Albanian evangelical mission, leading me to believe that there must have been some prior discussion on the matter between Italian forces and missionaries in Korça.

<sup>571</sup> After World War II, Sevastia Kyrias' two sons were arrested on charges of espionage. The eldest, Alexander, committed suicide by hanging in prison, while her youngest performed menial labor for the remainder of his life. Nephew Robert Dako, whom I interviewed in July 2009, has maintained that Sevastia Kyrias died of heartbreak after hearing of her son's untimely death. Beyond these circumstances, Protestants like them became suspicious in the eyes of the new communist regimes because of their ties to American and British people and institutions.

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Bulgaria, as an example, carried out an internationally broadcast trial of fifteen Protestant pastors in 1949, similarly accusing them as spies. See, Press Department, *The Trial of the Fifteen Protestant Pastors-Spies*, Sophia: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1949.

Paraskevi Kyrias survived the persecutions and gradually became part of communist era discussions of women's emancipation, giving on occasion highly censored accounts of her time as a delegate to the Congress of Monastir and broader narratives of the family's input on nation building. By the late 1980s, the family's story began to surface again, first through film, and later through official awards for their service to national education.

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