

Origins of the Albanian National Awakening

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Abstract: *On 26 August 1830, in the present day city of Bitola in Macedonia, then known as Manastir, the Grand Vizier, Reshid Pasha, met with five hundred southern Albanian beys. Reshid Pasha lured the Albanian leaders to Monastir on the premise they would receive an award for their loyalty to the Porte and for helping to fight alongside the Ottomans in the Greek War of Independence. Instead, that afternoon, over a thousand Ottoman troops killed the five hundred Albanian beys and their guards. This massacre occurred in order to prevent Albanian resistance movements, inspired by their involvement in the Greek War of Independence and other revolutionary events that had or were occurring in the Balkans and in other parts of Europe, and can be seen as one of the origins of the Albanian nationalist movement.*

Key words: Albania, National Awakening, Ottoman Empire, massacre

By the beginning of the nineteenth century the survival of the Ottoman Empire had come into question. After a series of military defeats and economic issues, the Ottoman Empire was beginning to disintegrate. Furthermore, nationalist ideas and movements were on the rise, as is evident by various uprisings in the Balkan states. In 1804 the Serbs revolted against the Janissaries and achieved some autonomy from the Ottoman Empire in 1817. Their independence became official in 1878 alongside Montenegro and Rumania in the Treaty of San Stefano at the Congress of Berlin. At this conference, Bulgaria was formally established as a principality. Additionally, Greece began its road to independence in 1821. Greece, in turn, achieved its goal as an autonomous principality when Russian, British, and French joint forces defeated the Ottoman fleets at Battle of Navarino on 20 October 1827, finally receiving its full independence in February 1832.¹ In the midst of all of this, Albanian Nationalism began to form.

On 26 August 1830, in the present day city of Bitola in Macedonia, then called Monastir, the Grand Vizier, Reshid Pasha, met with five hundred southern Albanian beys. Reshid Pasha lured the Albanian leaders to Monastir by saying they would be receiving an award for their loyalty to the Porte and for helping to fight alongside the Ottomans in the Greek War of Independence. Instead, that afternoon, over a thousand Ottoman troops killed the five hundred Albanian beys and their guards with bayonets.² This massacre occurred in order to prevent Albanian resistance movements, inspired by their intervention for both the Ottomans and the Greeks in the Greek War of Independence and other revolutionary events that had or were occurring in the Balkans and in other parts of Europe. Furthermore, the massacre allowed for

¹ Misha Glenny. *The Balkans, 1804-1999: Nationalism, War and the Great Powers* (London: Grant Books, 1999), 22-23; Miranda Vickers. *The Albanians: A Modern History* (New York: I. B. Tauris, 1999), 24.

² Henry Fanshaw Tozer. *Researchers in the highlands of Turkey: including visits to mounts Ida, Athos, Olympus and Pelion, to the Mirdite Albanians and other remote tribes: with notes on the ballads, tales, and classical superstitions of the modern Greeks* (Whitefish, MT: Kessinger Pub., 2007), 169; Vickers, 24.

the Porte to create a centralized government to better control the Albanian region. This paper will use a collection of travelogues, memoirs, and fictional literature to demonstrate that the massacre initiated the Albanian movement towards independence and how it has played into national identity.

Eric Hobsbawm argues “national consciousness develops unevenly among the social grouping and regions of a country.”³ This holds true in Albania as the beginning of their “national consciousness” began in southern Albania with the uniting of the beys and continued after the massacre with a series of rebellions against the Supreme Porte.

Hobsbawm also states that the first phase of the “national consciousness” is the emergence of culture, literary and folklore as the identity for the particular social group or region, followed more importantly by the emergence of “the national idea.” Hobsbawm however, emphasizes the second aspect of “national consciousness” and breaks the idea of “popular proto-nationalism” into four points: language, ethnicity, religion, and mass support.⁴ While the Albanian region did encompass areas outside of the present territories, for the most part the area in question in 1830s was largely composed of practicing Albanian Muslims. The massacre of Albanian beys who helped in the Greek War of Independence and the reforms following 1830 created a “national consciousness.”

Hobsbawm further argues that the popular masses are the last to be affected by the “national consciousness.”⁵ The beginning of the “national consciousness” started amongst Albanian elites, such as the beys and Pashaliks who were beginning to unite, in addition to foreign scholars. Piro Misha adds to this argument by stating that the national awakening started in the 1830s and ‘40s amongst scholars, travellers, ethnographers and philologists who also “noted the fact that the Albanians had a distinctive linguistic and ethnographic community in the Balkans.”⁶ Both Albanians and foreigners perceived the massacre of Albanian beys as a nationalizing event.

Miroslav Hroch, like Hobsbawm, argues that the first stage of nationalism is created by elites, such as intellectuals, who lay the foundation of national identity. Hroch believes, however, that these elites are foreigners. As stated above, in the case of Albania, it is a mixture of internal and foreign elites that lay the groundwork for nationalism through revolutions against the Ottomans. Hroch’s second point, however, is crucial in understanding Albanian nationalism. He argues that after the foundations of national identity had been laid down, “a new range of activists emerged, who now began to agitate for their compatriots to join the project of creating a fully-fledged nation.”⁷ After the massacre of Albanian beys, the region witnessed over a decade of revolts and in the 1870s a new group of Albanian leaders emerged to form the core of the “national awakening.”

The path towards Albanian nationalism is long and complex. The rise of Albanian nationalism, or the “national awakening” (rilindja), dates back to the 1870s with the founding of the Albanian political organization the League of Prizren alongside uprisings ends in 1914 when Turkish troops left Albania.⁸ The origins of the Albanian nationalism or “national consciousness”

³ Eric Hobsbawm. *Nations and Nationalism since 1780*. 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 12.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Hobsbawm, 12.

⁶ Piro Misha. “Invention of a Nationalism: Myth and Amnesia.” In *Albanian Identities: Myth and History*, edited by Stephanie Schwander-Sievers and Bernd J. Fischer (London: Hurts & Co, 2002), 33.

⁷ Miroslav Hroch. “From National Movement to the Fully-Formed Nation: the Nation-Building Process in Europe.” *New Left Review* 198 (1993), 10.

⁸ Tom Winnifrith. “Albania and the Ottoman Empire.” In *Perspectives on Albania*, edited by Tom Winnifrith (London: Macmillan, 1992), 85.

seen in the 1870s, however dates back to 1830 and the massacre of the five hundred Albanian beys for their involvement in the Greek War of Independence.

Historiography

The historiography of the massacre of Albanian beys in relation to nationalism is minimal. Albania itself is one of the most understudied nations in Europe. What scholarly work has been done on the nation has focused on the late nineteenth and twentieth century. The majority of monographs and articles that treat mid-nineteenth century Albania and their movement towards independence have reduced the massacre to at most a paragraph or even just a footnote. These works are primarily concerned with events that occurred after 1870, in what is considered to be “the National Awakening.” This lack of scholarly work on early nineteenth-century Albania is attributed to lack of archival sources. Albanian records have not been as well preserved as documents from other areas of the Ottoman Empire.

The brief arguments that historians have made about the massacre and its effects on nationalism are confusing and, at times, contradicting. Nathalie Clayer briefly discusses the massacre of Albanian beys in one paragraph of her monograph. She briefly mentions that the massacre and the revolts that followed in the 1830s and 1840s were not forms of nationalism. Yet, Clayer acknowledges that these events created a sense of “Albanité” or “Albanity.”⁹ The use of this term implies that this event did create a degree of nationalism.

Edwin E. Jacques opposes Clayer’s argument in his personal narrative of Albania. While his monograph is problematic, Jacques even admits that he wrote a “long history” of Albania to fill “the post-war informational vacuum in American diplomacy” and that it is “no exercise in scholarly futility,” he does raise some valid points.¹⁰ Jacques states that the massacre was a result of the Greek War of Independence and Albanian desire to receive autonomy from the Ottoman Empire. After Ali Pasha, a ruler of Southern Albania and pasha of Ioannina who managed to keep the region nearly independent from the Ottomans from 1796 until 1822, was killed during the Greek War of Independence, southern Albanians had to decide who would take Ali’s place as leader. “When [the beys] agreed with Mustapha Pasha of Skhodra (Shkodër) to make cause against the Turks in 1830, the Grand Vizier Reshid Pasha to their great surprise declared a general amnesty. He invited all the beys and chiefs to a great banquet near Monastir to declare their reconciliation with the government.”¹¹ The event however, ended with the “heads of Nobles [being] cut off, salted and sent to Constantinople (Istanbul).”¹² When southern Albania united to pick Ali’s replacement, the Ottomans saw this as the beginnings of a struggle against the Porte that needed to be stopped. According to Jacques, after the Ottomans had suppressed the southern Albanian beys they turned their attention towards Northern Albania, which was becoming increasingly independent from Istanbul.¹³

Tom Winnifrith has also entered into this discussion in his essay on Albania under the Ottoman Empire. In this essay, which examines the nearly six centuries of Ottoman rule in Albania, in which Winnifrith briefly mentions the massacre. He argues that after the massacre the Ottomans imposed a number of reforms, most notably the Tanzimat reforms, to stabilize Albanian society. These reforms, however, were seen as a violation of their freedom. Furthermore,

⁹ Clayer, Nathalie. *Aux origines du nationalisme albanais : La naissance d’une nation majoritairement musulmane en Europe* (Paris : Karthala, 2007), 160.

¹⁰ Edwin E. Jacques. *The Albanians: An Ethnic History from Prehistoric Times to the Present* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 1995), xvi-xvii.

¹¹ Ibid, 251.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Jacques, 252.

the division of Albanian territory into different *vilayets* was an Ottoman attempt to squash growing Albanian nationalism.¹⁴

Background

The Ottomans conquered the Albanian region in 1481, after nearly a century of military presence in the area.¹⁵ Despite this, Albania remained fractured for most of Ottoman rule. The conversion to Islam was gradual, with a higher rate converting in the north than the south. The region was also divided between two linguistic groups north and south of the Shkumbi river; the Ghegs in the north and the Tosks in the south. As Winnifrith describes, the difference between the Ghegs and the Tosks was the equivalent to the difference between Lowland Scots and the English. However “cultural distinctions were also involved, with the Ghegs remaining in a tribal structure akin to that of the Scottish Highland, while among the Tosks this structure had decayed, and there was more urbanisation due to Ottoman interference.”¹⁶

In the eighteenth century, after nearly four centuries of Ottoman rule, the Albania region began to change and two distinct powers began to emerge: The Bushati family in Shkoder and Ali Pasha of Tepelenë. Depending on their goals, the two families cooperated or worked against the Sublime Porte, the central government of the Ottoman Empire, and were rarely united. Despite this, by 1788 Ali Pasha had become the supreme ruler of southern Albania, Greece, and southwestern Macedonia.¹⁷ During this time, the tribal system south of Shkumbini River had disappeared. The beys had become independent rulers of provinces. They were often at war with each other in order to gain land and power. The Porte, afraid that they would unite and rebel, imposed laws on the beys.

The nineteenth century was marked by worsening relations between Albanians and the Porte, in addition to the Empire being in full decline. At the turn of the century Muhammad Ali Pasha, an Albanian commander in the Ottoman army who became the self-declared Khedive of Egypt and Sudan, went to Egypt in 1801 alongside an army of Albanian troops to help the Ottomans re-occupy the area. Muhammad wanted to get rid of the Mamluks, a powerful military group in the Middle East. After working his way up in Egyptian society, Muhammad invited the Mamluks to a party in 1811 in which all of them were killed.¹⁸ This event planted ideas in the minds of the Porte on how to get rid of leaders who posed as threats.

A contributing factor for the unity of the Albanian beys in 1830 and the path towards the creation of the Albanian state was caused by the Greek War of Independence, in which Muhammad Ali Pasha fought for the Ottomans. Albanians however, fought on both sides of the war. A significant number fought against the Turks to help Greece achieve their independence. For example, in July 1824, Ottoman forces defeated the Greek troops and killed all of the inhabitants near the main town in Psara. In retaliation to this event, a group of Albanians blew up a fort, killing 12,000 Turks and capturing seventy gunboats.¹⁹ Furthermore, Ali Pasha led numerous revolts in the area surrounding Epirus alongside other Albanians. A number of Albanians, however, were forced by Ottomans to fight against the Greeks without pay. In contrast, the oppressed beys, despite their differences, picked a leader to represent them against their move towards independence from the authoritative Porte.

¹⁴ Winnifrith, 80.

¹⁵ Staro Skendi. *The Albanian National Awakening, 1878-1912* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967), 3.

¹⁶ Winnifrith, 78.

¹⁷ Skendi, 22.

¹⁸ William L. Cleveland. *A History of the Modern Middle East* (Boulder: Westview Press, 2009), 67.

¹⁹ Dorothea Lieven and Guy Le Strange. *Correspondence of Princess Lieven and Earl Grey: 1824-1830*. London: R. Bentley & Son, 1890.

Albanian desire for autonomy from Istanbul was not suppressed by the massacre. After murdering five hundred leaders from southern Albania, Mehmet Reshid Pasha turned his attention towards the north, which was seeking autonomy. From 1757 to 1831 there were three Albanian pashas who ruled three pashaliks, spanning what is modern-day Albania, Kosovo, and Northwestern Greece. The longest lasting and remaining pashalik in 1831 was the pashalik of Shkodër, also referred to as the pashalik of Iskodra, from 1757-1831. This was a semi-autonomous pashalik that was founded by the Bushati family. The area of the pashalik of Shkodër encompassed parts of modern-day Albania and Montenegro. From 1810 until the end of the pashalik in 1831, Mustafa Reshit Pasha Bushati ruled the area. A few months following the massacre, the Ottomans, under direction of Mehmet Reshid Pasha, laid siege the castle of Rozafa and forced Mustafa Reshit to abdicate.²⁰ Just as the beys were pushing for independence from Istanbul, so was Mustafa Reshit. In this single event the Ottomans effectively ended an alliance between northern Albania and Bosnia, both of which were seeking autonomy from the Porte.²¹

With Albanian leaders gone in both the north and south, the Ottomans introduced a number of policies and a centralized government in order to re-establish their dominance in the region. As a result of various reforms and suppressing Albanian rights, a number of revolts took place throughout the area from 1833 to 1839. These revolts demonstrate further opposition towards the Ottoman government and growing nationalism.

In 1833, some beys who had fled to Greece started a rebellion in order to drive out Ottoman officials from southern Albania. Shortly following this rebellion, a second rebellion broke out in Gjirokastër, in which a number of employees of the Porte were killed.²² After this event, a number of civilians in the southern area of Tepelenë revolted. Under Balil Nesho, the uprising quickly spread to nearby areas.

The following year, another rebellion of nearly 10,000 men rose against Ottoman forces in Berat. Once again they besieged the castle of Berat, in which they demanded for their region to become autonomous. As before, in January 1835 the Ottomans gave into the demands and signed a contract with the rebels, which stated they would grant the region autonomy if the rebels disposed of their weapons. The contract was violated and the rebels rose up again. This time however, the rebels were met by a stronger Ottoman force and the rebels were forced to withdraw.²³

The growing unrest was not isolated to the Berat region. The regions of Shkodër, Ioannina, and Vlorë also had rebellions. According to Pollo and Puto these armed revolts occurred throughout the Albanian region, and were led by *berebeys*, *sipahis*, and *bayraktars*, like Zylyfta Poda, Tafil Buzi, Abdyl Koka, Zenel Gjoleka and Dasho Shkreli.²⁴ One of the primary reasons for why the armed revolts were able to occur was because Albanians carried arms, such as muskets, pistols, and swords to defend themselves and their properties from bandits.²⁵ These rebellions demanded more rights or autonomy from the Ottoman Empire. As seen through the rebellions of the 1830s, Albania had entered into a “national consciousness.”

²⁰ Stanaq Pollo and Arben Puto. *The history of Albania: from its origins to present day*, trans. Carol Wiseman and Ginnie Hole (London: Routledge, 1981), 104.

²¹ Barabara Jelavich. *History of the Balkans: Eighteenth and nineteenth centuries* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 349.

²² Skendi, 23.

²³ Edmund Burke, ed. “Modern Europe.” In *Annual Register or a view of the History, Politics, and Literature of the Year 1835* (London: Baldwin & Cradock, 1836), 496.

²⁴ Pollo and Puto, 105.

²⁵ Andre Gerolymatos. *The Balkan Wars: Conquest, Revolution and Retribution from the Ottoman Era to the Twentieth Century and Beyond* (New York: Basic Books, 2002), 116.

These revolts continued after the 1830s. In 1839 the Tanzimat reforms were introduced in Albania and other parts of the Ottoman Empire. These reforms were an attempt to modernize the Ottoman Empire and protect their territories from nationalist uprisings and foreign invasions by uniting all citizens living in Ottoman territories, no matter what the religion or ethnicity of these territories were. The reforms were not well received, as was the case in Albania where they were met with strong opposition from the beys and “wild tribes” in the north. These reforms led to a series of uprisings against the Porte, largely amongst northern tribes, that continued until the Tanzimat reforms were abolished in 1876.²⁶ The reforms were imposed on Albanians in order to stop the nationalist uprisings and prevent the country from gaining independence like other Balkan states had done.

In the 1870s, Albania entered its “national awakening” after decades of revolts against Ottoman rule. In 1878 eighty delegates, mainly clan chiefs and Muslim religious leaders, from Albanian speaking areas of the Balkans, founded the League of the Defense of the Rights of the Albanian Nation, commonly known as the League of Prizren. The organization, which was composed of two branches: the Prizren and the southern branch had the power to create an army and impose taxes. Ideology within the League was however, slightly mixed. While some delegates believed in creating solidarity amongst Muslims, the majority of them referred to themselves as “Albanians”, distinct from Slavs, Greeks, and Turks.²⁷ In 1899 Haxhi Zeka, a former member of the League of Prizren, founded the League of Peja. The League, which demanded that all three Albanian vilayets, an administrative division of the Ottoman Empire that was created in 1864, unite and receive autonomy from the Porte, was dissolved a year later following an armed conflict with Ottoman forces. Zeka was assassinated in 1902.²⁸

In 1910 a revolt occurred in Albania against the new policies of the Young Turk government. The Young Turks, or the Committee of the Union and Progress (CUP), was a secularist reform party that ruled the Ottoman Empire from 1908 until November 1918. Albanians helped the Young Turks come to power because they were promised lower taxes, constitutional rights, and the ability to teach Albanian in schools.²⁹ The revolt however, resulted in a suppression of Albanian culture; Albanian schools were closed and Albanian publications in a Latin alphabet were declared illegal.³⁰

Two years later Albania began their last revolt against the Ottoman Empire. The revolt lasted from January until August 1912 and ended when the Ottoman government agreed to all demands on 4 September 1912. Amongst the demands were an autonomous system of administration, the use of Albanian in secular schools, the ability to trade independently, and the right to establish private schools and societies. Shortly after the agreement was reached however, the First Balkan War broke out.³¹ The war lasted seven months. The Ottoman Empire fought against the Balkan League, composed of Bulgaria, Greece, Montenegro, and Serbia. The Treaty of London, which formally ended the First Balkan War on 30 May 1913, declared Albania as an independent state.³²

²⁶ Robert Elise. *Historical Dictionary of Albania*. 2nd ed. (Plymouth: Scarecrow Press, 2010), lvi.

²⁷ Nicola Guy. *The Birth of Albania: Ethnic Nationalism, the Great Powers of World War I and the Emergence of Albanian Independence* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2012), 16.

²⁸ Charles Jelavich and Barbara Jelavich. *The Establishment of the Balkan National States, 1804-1920* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1986), 86.

²⁹ Vickers, 54.

³⁰ George Walter Gawrych. *The Crescent and the eagle: Ottoman rule, Islam and the Albanians, 1874-1913*. (London: I. B. Tauris, 2006), 183.

³¹ Stanford J. Shaw and Ezel Kural Shaw. *Reform, Revolution, and Republic: The Rise of Modern Turkey, 1808-1975*. 2nd vol. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 293.

³² Elsie. *Historical Dictionary of Albania*, lix.

Five years after Albania declared independence from the Ottoman Empire, Mehmet bey Knoitza, an Albanian diplomat and minister of foreign affairs, wrote a history of Albania and the “Albanian question.” In 1918, Mehmet Konitza wrote that the Albanians fought for Greek independence because they were inspired by struggles within the Balkan Peninsula. “The Greeks were greatly helped, too, by the Albanians of the South, of whose valour Lord Byron tells. In return for this help they hoped that Greece would aid them, too, when their time came.”³³ In this book it is significant that Mehmet Knoitza argues that the Greek War of Independence was one of the origins of Greek nationalism. As an Albanian leader, he recognized that participation in the Greek War of Independence planted notions of Albanian nationalism amongst elites, which resulted in the massacre of the Beys.

Foreign Accounts of the Massacre of Albanian Beys

Henry Fanshaw Tozer, an English writer and tutor at Exeter College at Oxford in the second-half of the nineteenth century, paints a picture of Monastir and provides the most detailed account of the massacre thirty-nine years after it occurred, in his travelogue “Researchers in the Highlands of Turkey.” His account is corroborated by other newspaper accounts and travel logs of the event. He describes Monastir, “the military centre of this Turkish region,” as being beautiful on the outside but has been scarred by its recent history.³⁴ Tozer believes that the reason why the massacre occurred was because the Albanians were allowed to take up arms and pillage villages indiscriminately during the Greek war of Independence. Consequently the chiefs responsible for this pillaging then established themselves as an oligarchy to restore order. This was led by four men: Seliktar Poda, commander of Central Albania; Veli Bey, the second son of Ali Pasha who held Ioannina and the rest of Epirus; Arslan Bey, a young officer who represented the national party; and Mustapha Pasha of Shkodër, the last hereditary Pasha of that area. Of these men Seliktar Poda, Veli Bey, and Arslan Bey were rivals until they discovered the Porte’s intention to overthrow them.³⁵

While these three leaders were uniting, the Grand Vizier, Reschid Pasha, who was aware of Mustapha’s intentions, assembled an army in Adrianople to march to Monastir. When the Grand Vizier heard of the alliance “he conducted himself as if compelled to change his plan of action, and after proclaiming a general amnesty, invited all the Albanian Beys to a grand banquet at Monastir, to celebrate the re-establishment of friendly relations with the central government.”³⁶ The five hundred Beys accepted the offer and, headed by Arslan and Veli, they arrived in Monastir. According to Tozer, the Beys were kindly received by the Grand Vizier. However, when it came time for the banquet, the men were greeted by over a thousand troops. Tozer dramatically describes the massacre. “Veli Bey instantly fell, but Arslan and other survived and were wheeling off to the right, when the volley and charge of the second Turkish line took them in flank. From this Arslan alone escaped, and was soon at a distance from the bloody scene.”³⁷ When all of the beys were killed, their scalps were salted and sent to Istanbul.

Tozer describes the events that occurred in Monastir in more detail than any other source available in English or French. What is, however, even more important than Tozer’s description of the massacre is his perception of its aftermath. Tozer believes that this massacre was intended to suppress resistance and national uprisings that were occurring in other areas of

³³ Mehmet Konitza. *The Albanian Question* (London: W. Lea, 1918), 12.

³⁴ Tozer, 166.

³⁵ Richard A. Davenport. *The Life of Ali Pasha of Tepebni, Vizier of Epirus: Surnamed Aslan, or the Lion* (London: Thomas Tegg & Son, 1837), 97; Tozer, 168.

³⁶ Tozer, 168.

³⁷ Tozer, 169.

the Balkans. The massacre left only two major powers in Albania who were ultimately sought after by the Ottomans, who were then forced to surrender. One of which was Seliktar Poda from southern Albania who was in charge of Ioannina. After the massacre, 16,000 troops were sent against Poda and he was forced to flee to the mountains. As a result, "Epirus fell into the hands of conquerors."³⁸ The other was Mustapha Pasha, who married Ali Pasha's niece, who was compelled to surrender and then killed shortly thereafter.³⁹

William Smith Cooke, a British politician, adds to Tozer's perception of the event. Cooke states:

*"The Porte, however, gained little from this barbarous act, for the leadership of the national movement in Albania only passed from the Muhammedans to the Christians, who have continued to the struggle with such determination for their independence as to make the dominion of the Turks in these portions of the empire still a very doubtful matter."*⁴⁰

In this text Cooke is referring to the Albanians who fled to northern Greece and began revolts against the Porte following the massacre.

Benjamin Disraeli was Prime Minister of Great Britain in 1868 and from 1874 to 1880, who also traveled to Albania at the time of the massacre. In his book "Alroy: The Prince of the Captivity," he briefly mentions the event in Monsatir. Disraeli, stunned by the facts of the massacre wrote:

*"The Orientals are famous for their massacres: that of the Mamlouks by the present Pasha of Egypt, and of the Janissaries of the Sultan, are notorious. But one of the most terrible, and effected under the most difficult and dangerous circumstances, was the massacre of the Albanian Beys by the Grand Vizier, in the autumn of 1830."*⁴¹

Disraeli realized that this massacre was going to be a major event that would greatly affect Albania, one that would continue them on a path towards independence.

References to the Massacre in Contemporary Albanian Literature

Literature from a particular nation can provide insight into that nation's collective memory and national identity. Numerous literary works, mainly novels and poetry, have emerged from Albania over the past century that discusses the country's nationalism and the process of achieving Albanian independence. One key event that has appeared in several of these literary works is the massacre of Albanian beys. This demonstrates that this event is part of Albanian national identity.

Ismail Kadaré, an Albanian writer who has been nominated for a Nobel Prize for Literature, has discussed the massacre a number of times in different works. Kadaré's novels include historical events that occurred in the Balkans and nationalism in Albania.⁴² In "Komisioni i Festes" [The Celebration Commission], there is a battle between Albania and the Ottoman Empire. The main focus of the novel is the massacre of the Albanian Beys in 1830 and the conflict between Albanian and Ottoman ideology.

³⁸ Ibid, 170.

³⁹ Elias Skoulidas. "The Perception of the Albanians in Greece in the 1830s and '40: The Role of the Press." In *Albanian Identities: Myth and History*, edited by Stephanie Schwander-Sievers and Bernd J. Fischer (London: Hurts & Co, 2002), 174; Tozer, 170.

⁴⁰ William Smith Cooke. *The Ottoman Empire and its Tributary States With A Sketch Of Greece* (London: W. Clowes & Son, 1876) 179.

⁴¹ Benjamin Disraeli. *Alroy: The Prince of Captivity* (Echo Library, 2007), 169.

⁴² Janet Byron. "Albanian Nationalism and Socialism in the Fiction of Ismail Kadare." *World Literature Today* 54 (1979): 614-616.

In another novel, “The Palace of Dreams,” the palace is a metaphor for the Ottoman Empire. Focused on Albania, Kadaré briefly mentions the massacre. The protagonist asks in reference to the “Great massacre of the Albanian leaders at Monsatir...I suppose you’ve heard of it?”⁴³ The fact that this event is revealing itself in modern Albanian literature without much explanation to what the event actually is demonstrates that the massacre is well known by Albanians and embedded in the national identity.

Conclusion

The process which created Albanian nationalism took nearly a century. The movement towards the “national awakening” or “national consciousness” began with the massacre of five hundred Albanian beys because of their involvement in the Greek War of Independence, which in contemporary Albanian literature, has been interpreted as a major event in the development of their national identity. After the massacre, leaders and civilians throughout Albania began to rise up against Ottoman rule and, more importantly, for autonomy. By the 1870s Albania had officially entered the “national awakening,” with more civilians demanding independence.

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⁴³ Ismail Kadaré. *The Palace of Dreams* (New York: Arcade publishing, 1998) 125.

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