



e-ISSN: 2980-2628 | www.jomiss.com.tr

CİLT 1, SAYI 1, Haziran 2023 | VOLUME 1, ISSUE 1, June 2023

## Atıf Bilgisi | Reference Information

Vedat Bajrami- Redžep Škrijelj, "Bosniak Muhajirs in Vardar Macedonia Between the Annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Balkan Wars (1908-1912/13)", *Journal of Migration and Settlement Studies*, C. 1, S. 1, Haziran 2023, s. 93-110.

Makale Türü | Article Type  
Araştırma Makalesi | Research Article

DOI No: 10.29329/jomiss.2023.560.7

Geliş Tarihi | Received Date  
28 Mayıs 2023 | 28 May 2023Kabul Tarihi | Accepted Date  
19 Haziran 2023 | 19 June 2023

## Bosniak Muhajirs in Vardar Macedonia<sup>1</sup> Between the Annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Balkan Wars (1908-1912/13)

### Bosna Hersek'in İlhakı ile Balkan Savaşları Arasında Vardar Makedonya'daki<sup>2</sup> Boşnak Muhacirleri (1908-1912/13)

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## Özet

Boşnakların kesintisiz göç süreci, heterojen Balkan topraklarındaki zorlu tarihin yalnızca küçük bir bölümünü yansıtır. Avusturya-Macaristan'ın Bosna-Hersek'i ilhak etmesiyle durum, daha da karmaşık hale gelmiştir. Ardından gelen Balkan Savaşları (1912/1913) ile Balkanlardaki Osmanlı idaresi sona ermiş, Vardar Makedonya toprakları bölünmüş ve diğer devletler tarafından paylaşılmıştır. Bükreş Antlaşması (Ağustos 1913), Sırbistan Krallığı'nın Vardar Makedonya'yı işgaliyle eşzamanlı olarak yürürlüğe girmiş, Makedonya'nın parçalanmasına yol açmıştır. Bu eylem, Sırp burjuvazisinin yıllardır süren çok önemli Moravya-Vardar Vadisi'ni işgal etme hayalini gerçekleştirmiştir. Öte yandan, komşularının yayılmacılığıyla kalıcı olarak ağırlaşan Makedonya sorununun itibarı ve bu sorunun giderek uluslararasılaşması daha da önem kazanmıştır. Askere alınanların, şehitlerin ve savaşın diğer kurbanlarının sayısı da çok artmıştır. Savaş, Boşnak Muhacirlerini birbirine düşman orduların saflarında savaşmaya zorlamıştır. Osmanlılarla birlikte birçok Boşnak aile Küçük Asya'ya doğru hareket etmeye başlamıştır ve bu aileler bu süreç zarfında kısa bir süre Makedonya topraklarında ikamet etmişlerdir. Ayrılışları, neredeyse otuz yıl önce Makedonya'daki Boşnak Muhacir tarihinin zorlu hikayesinin başladığı birkaç önemli yerleşim bölgesinin nihai olarak terk edilmesine sebep olmuştur.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Makedonya, Boşnaklar, Balkan Savaşları, Muhacirler, Osmanlı İmparatorluğu.

## Abstract

The continuous process of migration of Bosniaks reflects only a slight segment of the difficult history of the heterogenous Balkan territories. Instead of a conclusion, the entire situation is becoming even more complex with the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina by Austria-Hungary. The consequent Balkan Wars (1912/1913), marked the end of Ottoman rule, the division, and abduction of the territories of Vardar Macedonia. The Treaty of Bucharest (August 1913) led to the fragmentation of Macedonia, which was put into effect with the simultaneous occupation of Vardar Macedonia by the Kingdom of Serbia. This act fulfilled the decades-long dream of the Serbian bourgeoisie to occupy the crucial Moravian-Vardar Valley. On the other hand, the reputation and gradual internationalization of the Macedonian Issue, which was permanently aggravated by the expansionism of its neighbors, became more significant. The number of conscripts, martyrs, and other victims of the war was enormous. The fate of the war also forced Bosniak Muhajirs to fight in the ranks of opposing armies. Together with the Ottomans, many Bosniak families began moving towards Asia Minor, meanwhile, they resided briefly on Macedonian territory. Their departure marked the final abandonment of several crucial enclaves where almost three decades earlier began the difficult story of Bosniak Muhajir history in Macedonia.

**Keywords:** Macedonia, Bosniaks, Balkan Wars, Muhajirs, Ottoman Empire.

1 Vardar Macedonia (as well as Epirus) was created following the Balkan Wars (1912-1913).

2 The name usually refers to the central part of the region of Macedonia attributed to the Kingdom of Serbia by the Treaty of Bucharest (1913) after the Balkan Wars (1912-1913). The territory is named after the Vardar, the major river that cuts across the region from northwest to southeast, to distinguish it from Greek part of Macedonia.

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## Introduction

The forced migrations of Muhajirs represent a significant part of the very extensive and completely complex ethnohistory of the Balkan areas.<sup>1</sup> The gradual reduction of the Ottoman territory signaled the mass emigration and withdrawal of its Muslim population. The effect of such ethnic shifts leaves unfathomable consequences to the heterogeneous and multi-ethnic picture of bustling Rumelia. The science of history relates this problem to the “Eastern Question” and the issue of the survival of the Ottomans in the Balkans. Since the first violent migrations which were registered following the failed Ottoman campaign in Vienna (1683), and the deep Austrian penetration into the interior of the Balkan areas (1690), began the processes of mass displacement of the Muslim population, which, with occasional interruptions, lasted until the beginning of the 20th century and Balkan Wars (1912/13) that marked the definite end of Ottoman domination in the area. Addressing this issue, Vladimir Ortakovski pointed out: “Until the end of the last quarter of the 19th century and the first part of the 20th century, the Ottoman Empire was a theocratic state with its population divided, not along the languages of its various ethnicities, but according to their religious affiliation. Within its framework, religion has traditionally been one of the distinguishing factors between ethnic groups. Parts of the population accepted Islam as the religion of the new ruling classes, which allowed the Pomaks in the Rhodope Mountains and some sections of the population in Bosnia and Macedonia to preserve their possessions and prestige. Yet, unlike Western Europe, the Ottoman Empire was essentially non-assimilatory and multinational, as it lacked technological and institutional possibilities for the integration and unification of its subjugated peoples.”<sup>2</sup> Nikola Samardžić also justifies this attitude by the assessment which points out that history hasn’t recorded any other large Islamic state with such a large number of non-Muslim subjects.<sup>3</sup>

Mainly due to this, it is necessary to clarify the term *muhajir-i*, which is a collective noun for mutually diverse peoples (Turks, Albanians, Bosniaks, Pomacs, Circassians, Tatars, and others) who lived in these Balkan areas, and whose religious affiliation during the Ottoman withdrawal from Rumelia (Balkan) areas acquired a specific socio-political character. According to its essential meaning, the term *muhajir* (Turkish: *muhacir* (مهاجر)) originates from the stem *hijr* (Turkish: *hicr* - حجه) separation, detachment; or from *hijret* (تجره) which means migration from one place to another; the abandonment of one’s own country and migration to another. In essence, the word itself does not mean escape, or fleeing, but instead, the term *hijra* may have an additional meaning, which could be interpreted as connection or support. A *muhajir* is a person who leaves his homeland under duress and the threat of death. The Turkish term *göçmen* (English: migrant) is a synonym used in the new Muhajir terminology.<sup>4</sup> By the term Muhajir movement, we mean the emigration of the Muslim population due to their inability to adapt to the new regime of the occupiers.<sup>5</sup> In Bosniak sciences and literature, in addition to the term *muhajir*, we also come across the synonym *muhajer-i*<sup>6</sup> which also means *emigrant, immigrant, or refugee* (Arabic: *muhağir*).<sup>7</sup>

The gradual weakening of Ottoman military positions in the Balkans legitimized the occurrence of continuous Muhajir migrations towards and through multi-ethnic Macedonia - a bridge to cross into the remaining territories of the Ottoman Empire. That endlessly long, difficult, and uncertain Muhajir suffering caused the disappearance of entire family communities.

Along with the strengthening of the national liberation movements of the Balkan peoples, the aversion and dislike of the colonized Muhajirs grew stronger among the local population, first of

1 *Migracii na Balkanot* (Bilateral researches), INI, Skopje 2011, p. 7-8.

2 Viladimir Ortakovski, *Malcinstvata na Balkanot*, Skopje 1998, p. 51.

3 Nikola Samardžić, “Stvarnost institucionalizovanog ranog osmanskog multikulturalizma: pravo i sudovi u imperijalnoj strukturi i svakodnevnici”, *Novopazarški zbornik*, br. 32, Novi Pazar 2006, p. 59.

4 Kemal Demiray, *Temel Türkçe Sözlük*, İstanbul 1980, p. 871.

5 Aleksandar Apostolov, “Muhadžir(i)”, *Enciklopedija Jugoslavije*, knj. 6, JLZ, Zagreb, MCMLXV, p. 175.

6 The term Muhajir is presented in the works of Bosniak prose writers: *Ram Bulja* (Čamil Sijarić), *Junak ili hajduk* (Muhamed Abdagić), *Tuđe Gnijezdo* (Husein Bašić), *Kolašinski muhadžeri* (Šefko Alomerović), *Gusinjska godina* (Zuvdija Hodžić) and others.)

7 Redžep Škrijelj, *Muhadžirskata kriza i naseľuvanje na Bošnjacite (1875-1901)*, Bigos, Skopje 2006, p. 72-73.

all, because of their privileges and their complete loyalty to the Ottoman state. Particularly significant is the very successful and difficult adaptation of Bosniaks to new environments, followed by the easy acceptance of identical Ottoman customs and language. In those conditions, Bosniaks became an integral part of the institutions of the Ottoman general administration system (administration, education, army, police, etc.), especially in the segment of the economy.

### **Muhajir Bosniaks Between the Young Turk Revolution and the Balkan Wars (1908-1912/13)**

The critical reinterpretation of the history of the Balkans is necessary to liberate it from its widespread pseudo-mythical and pseudo-historical schemes, numerous stereotypes and biased, burdensome historical representations. Macedonia was a multi-ethnic and multicultural region that was not spared by the long socio-political and military turmoil, which affected the entire Balkans with its scope and intensity. After the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (1908) and the Young Turk Revolution (1908-1909), there was an increase in the number of Bosniak emigrants in Macedonia. Statistics show that in that emigrant wave, there was a tenfold increase in the number of groups of 200-300 people, which at one point posed a problem for the occupying authorities in Bosnia, as there were about 5,000 requests for issuing passports.<sup>8</sup> Ottoman authorities re-settled them from Old Serbia and Macedonia to Asia Minor.<sup>9</sup> According to some reports, during the colonization of the Muhajirs, the Ottoman authorities adhered to “primarily ethnic, strategic, and economic principles”. In locations where the Turkish population was smaller and the “Slavs rebelled against the regime”<sup>10</sup>, they carried out an “interpolation of the Christian element”<sup>11</sup>, Jews, Bosnian-Herzegovinian immigrants, and other non-Christians.

Before the Balkan wars, the settlement of emigrants in Macedonia crowded the Macedonian countryside as its peasants were constrained “in order to create the possibility of housing newly arrived families from Bosnia”.<sup>12</sup> The duty of distributing Muhajirs was entrusted to the Grand Vizier and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, who directed a specially formed “Muhajir Commission” (Turkish: Muhajir Komisyonu) which had representatives in the so-called Rumelia from its founding in 1860 until the end of the Ottoman rule.

The situation of Bosniak immigrants in the territory of the three vilayets (Turkish: Vilayat-i selase) of Vardar Macedonia<sup>13</sup> and beyond was closely monitored by the consular-diplomatic service of the Kingdom of Serbia, which regularly reported to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Serbian Royal Government. Attempting to resolve the issue of Bosnian immigrants, the Ottoman authorities settled them on Macedonian territory between 1878 and 1912.<sup>14</sup> At least twenty documents from this correspondence bear witness to the fate of colonized Bosniak settlers in the area of the three vilayets (Salonika, Monastir, and Kosovo), as Macedonia was located in their administrative borders Macedonia until the Balkan Wars (1912/13). Judging the content of these documents, the settled Bosniak Muhajirs protested to the sultan about their difficult position, complaining about the paucity and harshness of the allocated land.<sup>15</sup> “Bosniak mahalas” in Skopje, Štip, Bitola, and the surrounding towns bear witness to the intensity of the colonization of Bosniaks.

8 Gligor Todorovski, “Prilog kon prašanjetu za sostojbata na muslimanskite iselenici (muadžiri) vo Makedonija po Mladoturskata revolucija”, *Glasnik INI*, br. 1-2, Skopje 1982, p. 135 - 138.

9 Gaston Gravije, “Emigracija muslimana iz Bosne i Hercegovine”, *Pregled*, no. 7-8, Sarajevo (15 January), 1911, p. 112.

10 Ferdinand Schmid, *Bosnien und Herzegovina unter der Verwaltung Österreich-Ungarn*, Leipzig 1914, p. 247-252.

11 Archive of Yugoslavia, Belgrade, *Ministarstvo inostranih dela Kraljevine Srbije, Fond Jovana Jovanovića Pižona, PP, br. 756 (10. 2. 1910)*.

12 *Ibidem*, 34.

13 Vardar Macedonia (as well as Epirus) was created following the Balkan Wars (1912-1913).

14 Gligor Todorovski, “Kon prašanjetu na migracionite dviženja vo vremeto od 1878-1912 godina”, *Istorija* (spisanie na Sojuzot na istoriskite društva na SR Makedonija), god. III, br. 1, Skopje 1967, p. 93 - 97.

15 Archive of Serbia (AS), Belgrade, *Ministarstvo inostranih dela (MID)*, f. *Prosvetno privredno odeljenje (PPO)*, no. 1964, 10. B. 1906, „I“ shelf 799/1906.

The Ottoman authorities entrusted the colonization policy to a special commission headed by Dr. Nazim Bey<sup>16</sup> (Turkish: Nâzım Bey), also known as Thessalonian Nazim (Turkish: Selanikli Nâzım), doctor and politician, one of the leading representatives of the Young Turk reformist movement who indirectly encouraged the migration of Bosniaks.<sup>17</sup>

This can be clearly seen in the report on March 16, 1910, sent by the General Consul in Thessaloniki, Živojin Balugdžić, conveying the claim of Dr. Nazim Bey - the head of the "Committee for the reception of emigrants" - that he collected considerable funds to meet the necessities of Bosnian immigrants. According to the same source, the Muhajir Commission spent 300,000 golden Lira in two years to implement the plan for the accommodation of Muhajirs from Bosnia and Herzegovina in the European part of Rumelia. Furthermore, for the year 1911/12, another 100,000 golden Lira were planned in the budget.<sup>18</sup> The aforementioned funds were used to accommodate 2,284 Muhajir families in the provinces of Kosovo and Salonika, while 441 of them were from Bulgaria and the remaining 1,775 were from Bosnia and Herzegovina.<sup>19</sup> Using his position and authority, he started negotiations with local landowners (Turkish: çiftlik sahib) for purchasing plots of land feasible for the construction of settlements for the reception of Bosnian-Herzegovinian refugees. Some sources claim that the purchase was exacerbated by the high prices of the properties, which made Nazim Bey change his plan. Instead of buying them, he opted for the construction of brand-new settlements, which had to be carried out on public land (Turkish: Arazi Mirî) or on unexploited pastures. This led to the formation of four small Bosniak Muhajir settlements with about three hundred houses each. Two of them were in the vicinity of Strumica,<sup>20</sup> one of them besides Gevgelija, and one besides Katerini in Central Macedonia.<sup>21</sup> Six new Bosniak settlements were also built in the Maleš Kaza (120 houses in Bezgaštevo or Bezgaće, 25 in Barišica, 30 in Glavovica, 20 in Crkvenec, and 25 in Berovo).<sup>22</sup>

Analysing the Serbian consular correspondence, shows that the attention of their diplomatic representatives in the vilayets of Kosovo, Manastir, and Salonika was particularly focused on Bosnian Muhajirs. Their sojourn, position, and survival are frequent topics of the aforementioned consular correspondence, indicating a certain political tendency and attitude of Serbian foreign policy towards the issue of Bosniak immigrants.<sup>23</sup> Several of these documents contain important information regarding the position of Bosniak refugees after the wave of migration in 1908. The same sources disclose the efforts of the Ottoman authorities to resolve their issues and provide them adequate accommodation. The situation of the lower social categories was particularly difficult. In their written address, these immigrants demanded an improvement in the conditions or a return to Bosnia.<sup>24</sup>

16 Doctor Nazim-bey (1870-1926) was one of the founders and ideologues of the Young Turk movement. After the election of the Constitutional Monarchy, he was appointed as Governor of the Anatolian Vilayets (Turkish: *Anadolu Vilayetleri Umumi Valisi*). In 1911, he was appointed chief physician (Turkish: baştabib-i) of the Thessaloniki Municipal Hospital. During the Balkan wars in 1912, being a high-ranking official of the Young Turk Movement and a Turkish nationalist, he was captured by Greek forces in Thessaloniki and sentenced to 11 months in prison in Athens. After receiving two death sentences that were not executed, in 1926, he was tried and sentenced to death by hanging due to the "Izmir Plot" against Atatürk. (Vahit İpekçi, *Dr. Nâzım Bey'in Siyasal Yaşamı*, Yeditepe Üniversitesi Atatürk İlkeleri ve İnkılap Tarihi Enstitüsü, İstanbul 2006.)

17 Milutin Zebić, "Unutrašnja kolonizacija u vezi agrarne reforme", *Almanah udruženja pravnika*, Belgrade, 1921, p. 292-296.

18 Archive of Serbia (AC), Belgrade, *Ministarstvo inostranih dela* (MID), f. *Prosvetno privredno odeljenje* (PPO), br. 215, 4. V 1911. (Pismo srpskog generalnog konzula u Solunu, Živojina Balugdžića).

19 *Ibidem*

20 Dimitar Galev, *Beloit teror vo jugoistočna Makedonija (1910-1941)*, kn. I, Štip 1991, p. 35-38.

21 Archive of Serbia (AC), Belgrade, *Ministarstvo inostranih dela* (MID), f. *Prosvetno privredno odeljenje* (PPO), no. 215, 4 May 1991 (copy from the author).

22 Archive of Serbia (AC), Belgrade, *Ministarstvo inostranih dela* (MID), f. *Prosvetno privredno odeljenje* (PPO), no. 7161, 3. XII 1911 (red. 122/1911).

23 Gligor Todorovski, "Sostojbata na muslimanskite iselenici (muadžiri) vo Makedonija po mladoturskata revolucija", *Srpsko-makedonskite odnosi vo minatoto*, NIO "Studentski zbor", Skopje 1987, p. 143.

24 Archive of Serbia (AC), Belgrade, *Ministarstvo inostranih dela* (MID), f. *Prosvetno privredno odeljenje*, no. 5564 (13. IX 1910, column I. 108 (1910).

In 1909, the Ottoman authorities settled about forty Bosniak families in the Zletovo village of Troolo. They were called “Turks” by the local Macedonian population.<sup>25</sup> On that occasion, an appropriate number of “city-type” houses,<sup>26</sup> a school building, and a mosque were built, while “each Muhajir family received several hectares of land taken from the farmland”.

With the overthrow of the Ottoman government (1912), the invasion of the Macedonian-Bulgarian Komitaji movement forced newly settled Bosniaks to move to the territory of Ottoman Turkey, while their houses and mosques were destroyed.<sup>27</sup>

Almost at the same time, the “Bosniak Mahala” was built in Štip, alongside several Bosniak Muhajir villages (Ljuboten, Dolani) in its surroundings. On November 28, 1928, Belgrade newspaper “Politika” devoted space to the Štip (“Bosniak”) Mahala on its front page.<sup>28</sup> The aforementioned Bosniak enclave was built after 1908, at the very entrance to the city, on the left bank of the Bregalnica River, near “Fethije”.<sup>29</sup> In this location, the Ottoman authorities built about forty houses, with two entrances, for about 80 families, which corresponds to several about 400 500 inhabitants. Although the “Fethija Mosque” existed earlier, over time it acquired the name “Bosniak Mosque”. Bosniaks also had their school in the Bosnian language, their teacher, and their religious teacher.<sup>30</sup> British sources claim that at the beginning of December 1911, 28 people were killed or injured in a Komitaji bomb attack near this mosque, and about sixty were “seriously injured”. The same source estimates that the total number of seriously and lightly injured was around 500.<sup>31</sup> These Bosniak colonies remained in Štip and the surrounding villages until the beginning of the Balkan War, but they all left these places in early October 1912 together with the Turks. In a fierce Bulgarian-Serbian clash, almost all Bosniak houses in Štip and Ljuboten were destroyed and burned down.<sup>32</sup> Consequently many Bosniaks moved to Asia Minor in the Balkan Wars and during the First World War.<sup>33</sup>

Nor could the problems with malaria, which permanently claimed human lives, be eradicated. In 1911, the Vilayet authorities in Salonika announced that they could not provide accommodation for new Muhajirs due to rising cases of “pond fever” (fr. “fièvre paludienne”) which was spreading mercilessly and constantly decimated the Muhajir population. The Muhajir Commission estimated that in the last two months of 1910, 125 people died of fever in the Muhajir settlement in Avret Hisar, there were also 35 victims in Strumica, 82 in Gevgelija, 30 in Tikveš, 16 in Petrič near Strumica, 28 in the vicinity of Salonika, and 38 in Katerini.<sup>34</sup> In March 1911, Ottoman authorities presented the

25 “In the village of Troolo, the so-called Turks were immigrants from Bosnia. Until 1932, only four of those houses existed and they disappeared later as well. Yugoslav royal authorities assigned their farmland to local farmers.” (Todor Kondev, *Osnovni prirodno-geografski odliki na Zletovskata oblast i naselenieto i stopanstvoto na Probištipската oblast*, Zletovska oblast (geografsko-istoriski osvrt), Skopje 1974, p. 20, 130.

26 J. J., “Zadužbina vojvode Relje u Štipu”, *Politika*, Wednesday, 28 November 1928, p. 1-2.

27 *Ibidem*, p. 2.

28 E. Josimovska-J. Josimovski-V. Josimovska, “Bošnačkoto maalo vo Štip do i po Balkanskite vojni”, *Bošnjacite na Balkanot*, Skopje 2003, p. 179-182.

29 Local Macedonians call the modern church “*Holy Forty Martyrs*” with a similar name – Fitije.

30 In Štip, there were four Muslim elementary schools, a military school and a madrasah until 1912. (Verica Josimovska-Oliver Cackov, “Kulturata i prosvetata vo Štip vo vreme na balkanskite vojni”, *Zbornik: četvrta megjunarodna naučna konferencija «Megjunaroden dijalog: Istok - Zapad» (Kultura, Slavjanstvo i Ekonomija)*, Sveti Nikole, R. Makedonija - Tambov, Russian Federation 2013, p. 221.

31 Despite a large number of dead and injured Muslims, it is not clear if there were any Bosniaks among them; *Britanski konzuli u Makedoniji 1797-1915* (dokumenti), State Archives of the Republic of Macedonia, Skopje 2002, p. 412-413.

32 Josimovska-Josimovski-Josimovska, “Bošnačkoto maalo vo Štip ...”, p. 179-182.

33 After the First World War, despite the departure of a large number of Bosniaks, several families returned to their homes in Štip. The Bosniak community functioned solidly until 1941, they also had a school where they had their teachers: Hasan ef. Osmanović, Pulherija Đorđević and Filip Mitrović. Doctor Asim Kulenović worked as a surgeon in the hospital in Štip, and also run “Sanatorium Kulenović” as a private enterprise. Bosniaks also had their own shops and workshops in Štip. Older residents of Štip remember Ferid Muftić, a prosthetist who had his own ordination. All that remained was the saying “*Take care of your teeth, so you don't have your canines implanted by Ferid*”. In 1929, Bosniaks founded a branch of the cultural and educational association “*Gajret*” in Štip.

34 Archive of Serbia (AS), Belgrade, Ministarstvo inostranih dela (MID), f. *Prosvetno privredno odeljenje* (PPO), no. 215, 4 May 1911 (copy from the author).

public with information on the number of deaths, a total of 1,079 people (4.5% per year).<sup>35</sup> It also states that out of approximately 9,000 emigrants in the settlements of the Vilayets of Kosovo and Manastir, 6,936 remained until 1911, whereas it lacks more detailed data for the Vilayet of Salonika.

28 people were killed in the terrorist act that took place during the market day near the mosque in Bošnjačka or Fethija Mahala in Štip, on December 4, 1911, and another 60 people were seriously wounded and transferred to the hospital. There were about 500 serious and lightly wounded persons according to total estimates.<sup>36</sup>

The Ottoman authorities also settled Bosnian Muhajirs in the village of Vetersko (Veles) next to the Vardar River and Đidimirci (Negotino).<sup>37</sup> The village of Saranzali (Turkish: Saranzalı)<sup>38</sup> is one of several settlements in Skopje's Blatija region, placed between the villages of Ržaničino and Katlanovo, next to the old Skopje -Veles road. In 1910/11, Bosniak immigrants settled there together with Circassians, but after the wars of 1912/13, their houses were demolished and the village deserted.<sup>39</sup> Related to Bosniaks in Macedonia was the protest in Skopje, in July 1912, when 362 soldiers from Novi Pazar were imprisoned "for open disobedience to their superiors".<sup>40</sup> The feat of Ahmed Kulender, a high school student (Turkish: Lise) in Manastir (Macedonian: Bitola) is also important. He printed his "Turkish-Bosniak Pocket Dictionary" (Turkish: Türkçe'den Boşnakça'ya Cep Lugatı) in the Trading Printing House (Turkish: "Manastir ticaret Matbaası") in 1912, on 206 pages of small format and containing about 7,500 words.<sup>41</sup>

### **Bosniak Muhajirs in the Balkan Wars (1912/13)**

The atmosphere of general military tension, which foreshadowed the upcoming bloody drama with the epilogue of the two-year Balkan Wars (1912-1913), marked the definitive end of Ottoman rule in the Balkans. With the end of these wars, the Kingdom of Serbia annexed a considerable area of former Western Rumelia (Sandžak, Kosovo, and Vardar Macedonia), while a large number of Muslim immigrants lived there. The horrors of the Balkan slaughterhouse are synonymous with the fate of the civilian population and Muhajirs as they are manifested in the reports of the Carnegie expert commission.<sup>42</sup>

Not a single Balkan country was spared from the great wave of migration, and the most numerous occurred during and after the Balkan wars, but without more precise statistics. The influx of Muhajirs as a separate ethnic group had a particular impact on the course and epilogue of the Balkan Wars (1912/13). They took part in it on the side of the Ottomans, which is why members of their families were killed in later revenge actions. There are numerous examples of violent mobilization in the ranks of Christian armies, so it was not uncommon for brothers to meet on opposite sides. Available archival documents and records of vilayet muhajir commissions, foreign and domestic sources, diplomatic correspondence, world press, military and other analysts provide a detailed insight into the investigation of the complex muhajir problem and the further fate of Macedonia until World War I.

In the historical labyrinth of the Balkan wars, we find the basic reasons for the exodus and permanent resettlement of the refugee population. The whirlwind of the Balkan wars caused the

35 *Ibidem*.

36 Štip niz vekovite, bk. One, Štip 1986, 460-463.

37 Todorovski, "Sostojbata na muslimanskite iselenici ...", p. 141-142.

38 A conjugate of the Turkish adjective *sarı* (yellow) and the personal name *Amzalı – Sarıamzalı*.

39 Jovan Trifunoski, "Dva čerkeska sela u okolini Skoplja", *Geografski horizont*, y-III, no. 3-4, Zagreb 1957, p. 47-48; also: Jovan Trifunoski, "O Čerkezima u Makedoniji", *Etnografski pregled*, br. 2, Beograd, 1963, p. 162-163.

40 Archive of Serbia; *Ministarstvo Inostranih Dela, Prosvetno-propagandno odeljenje*, F. IV, 1-2, dok. III, br. 4272.

41 The author of the dictionary, Ahmed Kulender, was born in 1890 (Hijri, 1308) in Sarajevo. The dictionary was written during his schooling at the gymnasium in Manastir. He died tragically, after drowning in the Bosna River near Zenica in 1918 (Hijri: 1336); Mehmed Handžić, "Rad bosanskohercegovačkih Muslimana na književnom polju", *Glasnik IVZ*, I, 1, Sarajevo, 1933.

42 *Poranešnite balkanski vojni* (1912-1912), Izveštaj na Karnegievata balkanska komisija, Skopje 2000.

relocation of a large number of exiles from regions of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia, and Kosovo to Macedonia. These relocations are the result of a series of unsuccessful attempts to reconstruct the Ottoman state. Attempts for its “Reottomanization” through the deployment and systematic colonization of Bosniak and other Muhajirs also failed.

As the situation worsened, the three allied Balkan countries delivered a harsh note to the Ottoman Empire on October 13, 1912, through Ottoman ambassadors. It contained an ultimatum for reforms and the stopping of military mobilization which had to be implemented in 6 months.<sup>43</sup> Takvo upozorenje sadrži i strana diplomatska korespondencija. According to a series of French documents, some of the demands of the Balkan states were: “the government’s obligation not to change the ethnic composition of the population in the Rumelia provinces by bringing in Muslim settlers.”<sup>44</sup> On the other hand, a large number of volunteers, a significant number of whom were Muhajirs, signed up for the defense of the empire during October. After receiving a report that the Serbian military command was encamped in Niš during that period, a volunteer with a bottle in his hand stood in front of the gathered crowd in front of the Bosniak Muhajir mosque in the Skopje village of Hasanbegovo and chanted: “Şişe, şişe, götür beni Nişe!” (Turkish: Bottle, take me to Niš!).<sup>45</sup>

The lack of travel documents was an insurmountable obstacle in the heated atmosphere of war because the Muhajirs, who were permanently arriving from different parts of Macedonia,<sup>46</sup> were checked by the transport ship services at the port in Salonika. Muhajirs also used rail transport. The question of the fate of Salonika was of particular importance to the warring parties. The events that followed resulted in the surrender of Salonika in November 1912 to the Greek authorities.<sup>47</sup> As one of the closest transport centers, Salonika represented the most suitable destination for the further deportation of Muhajirs. Apart from the convenience of rail transportation, one of the reasons for the Muhajirs to go in that direction was the expectation that the Ottoman defense forces of Hasan Tahsin Pasha would manage to defend Salonika.<sup>48</sup> The brutality of the Balkan wars brought great unrest in the ranks of the unprotected Muhajir population in Macedonia in the form of threats, humiliation, and torture by soldiers. For days, emigrants poured into the port of Salonika in columns, expecting to be transferred to the interior of the Ottoman territory.

The population of Salonika doubled in a short time. This was caused by military operations which, for days, brought whole columns of Muslim fugitives from lost Ottoman territories from all directions. We learn from British diplomatic sources that more than 5,000 refugees poured into the city at the end of October 1912.<sup>49</sup> In the following days, their number increased from 10,000 (October 27) to 40,000 (November 1) and 50,000 (December 16).<sup>50</sup> The seriousness and strength of the conflict are the main reason that Ottoman Salonika became the safest shelter for the Muhajirs against the invasion of various Balkan Christian armies and organized criminal gangs. Due to the influx of Muhajirs, the population doubled and its number exceeded 300,000 people.<sup>51</sup> The same source states that the lack of accommodating capacities and the inability of the Muhajir commissions forced the Muhajirs to seek shelter in mosques, churches, and empty houses, while some of them remained outdoors exposed to hunger and cold. The care of the accommodation and feeding of the Muhajirs

43 İbrahim Artuç, *Balkan Savaşı*, İstanbul 1988, p. 86.

44 *Documents diplomatiques français* (1871-1914), c. IV, bölge 146, TTK Ankara.

45 Redžep Škrijelj, *Muhadžirskata kriza i naseluvanje na Bošnjacite vo Makedonija*, Bigos, Skopje 2006.

46 Hasip Saygılı, “Birinci Dünya Harbi’nde Rumeli’nden Osmanlı Ordusuna Müslüman Gönüllü Katılımları”, *Hacettepe Üniversitesi Türkiyat Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 18, Ankara 2013, p. 231-255.

47 Državen arhiv na Republika Makedonija, Skopje; *M-1966: Foreign office 371/1507/50525*. (Further: DARM; ...)

48 According to Ottoman censuses, during 1905-1906 the number of Muslims was 24,699 (30.75%). The number of Orthodox was 10,594 (13.19%), 44,331 (55.20%) were Jews, and 675 (0.84%) belonged to smaller communities. According to the first Greek census in 1913, the results are as follows: out of 157,889 inhabitants of Salonika, 39,956 (25.30%) were Greek, 61,439 (38.91%) were Jewish, 45,867 (29.05%) were Turkish, 6,263 (3.96%) were Bulgarian and 4,364 (2.76%) were members of smaller communities. (Meropi Anastasiadou, *Tanzimat Çağında Bir Osmanlı Şehri Selanik*, Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, İstanbul 2001, p. 89-90.)

49 DARM: Izvješčaj britanskog konzula u Solunu (26. X. 1912); FO 371/1507/50278 (M- 1965).

50 DARM: FO 371/1505/47817 (M-1965); FO 371/1506/48282 (M-1965); FO: 371-1508-53714 (M-1966).

51 *Ibidem*.

was entrusted to the Mutesarif (manager) of Salonika, Osman Said Bey. With the invasion of the allied Greek and Bulgarian armies, the condition of the Muhajirs worsened, and a large number of them died due to a lack of food and medicine.<sup>52</sup>

In addition to the long-established Muhajir commission that operated in larger centers (Skopje, Salonika), Ottoman authorities established a special “Muslim Committee for Transport” with the task to organize the transport and accommodation of the Muhajir population.<sup>53</sup> European diplomatic correspondence and historiography assess that the Balkan Wars (1912/1913) with their cruelty, huge human casualties, and violence against the Muhajir refugees and local non-Christian population were the main cause of the systematic ethnic cleansing, demolition, and burning of their homes and general regional unrest.

The course of the Allied advance in the wars increased the suffering of some Muslims who carefully awaited their outcome at home. The defeat of the Ottomans brought guerilla gangs into their villages, and their attacks forced them to flee. Salonika, Kavala, and other ports became relatively safe shelters bringing the possibility to sail over to Anatolian areas. The blockade on land communications imposed by the Allies ruled out the possibility of a transfer to Istanbul.<sup>54</sup> The danger of hunger and disease particularly struck those families who had been waiting for transport for days. Statistics show that in March 1913, 30,000 refugees were waiting for transport at the port of Salonika. Consul Lamb wrote about the massacre of Muhajirs who remained unburied from eight to ten days.<sup>55</sup> Judging by the brutal murders committed during the military operations, these wars belong to the “ethnic-racial” category and were prepared by organized Komitaji groups.<sup>56</sup> In Macedonia, the actions of Serbian forces against the Albanian population were the most brutal and bloodiest. In European reports, we find that around 20,000 people were killed in the Kosovo province alone.<sup>57</sup> Because of the crimes committed in Veles and the surrounding towns, apart from the 5,000 people who fled to Salonika and Bulgaria, 15,000 people were prepared to cross over to Ottoman territory if they previously paid 15,000 Lira.<sup>58</sup> That money should have been used for their transportation.

At the beginning of December, between 30,000 and 40,000 refugees from Macedonia and Serbia were waiting for the ships that would take them to Anatolia at the port of Salonika. Among the displaced persons 7,000 of them were refugees from Bosnia.<sup>59</sup> Položaj muhadžira je bio veoma težak pa je formirana međunarodna komisija. The transportation of the Muhajirs from the port of Salonika was entrusted to several foreign companies. A large number of those transported were deployed to Izmir, Istanbul, and other coastal provinces in Anatolia (Antalya, Mersin, Iskendrun, and Syria). The ship would load from 1,200 to 1,500 people. The mass exodus was the consequence of the occupation of the Balkan areas, in which the Muslim population of Macedonia was exposed to the greatest danger. Two Egyptian ships participated in the action of transporting Muhajirs to Izmir and the Egyptian coast; Bahr-i Aher, and Bahr-i Amal.<sup>60</sup> On July 7, 1913, a Russian ship transported about

52 Nataša Kotlar Trajkova-Vera Goševa, “Sudbinata na civilnoto naselenie vo Solun za vreme na Balkanskite vojni”, *100 godini od Balkanskite vojni (Contribution from a scientific symposium on 3 and 4 December 2012)*, Macedonian Academy of Arts and Sciences, Skopje 2013, p. 195-203.

53 Faruk Kocacık, “Balkanlar’dan Anadolu’ya Yönelik Göçler (1878-1890)”, *Osmanlı Araştırmaları*, I, İstanbul 1980, p. 161.

54 Justin McCarthy, *Death and Exile*, Princeton, New Jersey: Darwin, 1995, p. 135-177.

55 Professor of history at the University of Louisville (Kentucky, USA), Justin McCarthy writes that “the historical map is an important visual tool for a better understanding of the devastating burden suffered by the Ottoman Muslim community in the Balkan wars.”(Justin McCarthy, “Muslim Refugees in Turkey: The Balkan Wars, World War I, and the Turkish War of Independence”, *Humanist and Scholar*, Ed. Heath W. Lowry-Donald Quataert, İstanbul 1993, pp. 87-111; McCarthy, *Death and Exile*, pp. 135-177; *Forced Migration and Mortality in the Ottoman Empire* ([http://a.pk40.net/m/fd/Forced Displacement. pdf](http://a.pk40.net/m/fd/Forced%20Displacement.pdf)).

56 McCarthy, *Death and Exile*, p. 149.

57 Ahmet Halaçoğlu, *Balkan Harbi Sırasında Rumeli’den Türk Göçleri (1912-13)*, TTK, Ankara 1995, p. 37.

58 *Ibidem*.

59 Ottoman authorities wanted to colonize them in Macedonia, but most of them returned with the Karmen ship to the pier in Trieste, from where they went back to Bosnia. (Halaçoğlu, *Balkan Harbi Sırasında ...*, pp. 51-52.)

60 *Ibidem*, p. 56.



750 people to Izmir. Most of them were Jews.<sup>61</sup> For the sake of protection from Komitaji crimes, part of the Muhajirs from Kosovo and Macedonia also went to Izmir.<sup>62</sup> British historian Mark Mazover wrote about the chaos and general insecurity that caused the mass exodus of Muhajirs and the local Muslim population to Istanbul, Izmir, and other areas in the interior of Ottoman Turkey.<sup>63</sup> With the conclusion of the Bucharest Peace Treaty (August 10, 1913), the emigration of Muhajirs and the local Muslim population from Macedonia continued. Austrian diplomatic sources testify about the 140,000 evicted persons after the Second Balkan War, of which “at least half were Muslims”<sup>64</sup>

Apart from the report of the Carnegie Commission, the brutality of the “Slavic allies in the Balkans” towards the Muslims during the Balkan Wars (1912-1913) is most convincingly shown in the well-known “War Correspondence of Leon Trotsky: Balkan Wars 1912-1913”.<sup>65</sup> These reports contain a relevant critical analysis of the complicated relationship between war and the reality of war, memories that, apart from the dominance of journalistic experience, polemical brilliance, detailed information, and personal assessment of the social movement in the Balkans, are a rare primary source as well. In a text entitled “Crimes of Chauvinism and Democracy” (“Behind the Curtain”), Trotsky described the horror of war after the end of the Battle of Kumanovo and his visit to Skopje: “I started suspecting that the people who manage this war do not have a particularly clear conscience, and that, down there, they are doing things that do not match with the official reports in the government’s press releases... Entire Albanian villages were turned into pillars of fire... this was the most genuine example of merciless mutual destruction among people that I have ever seen in a war zone. Houses and property acquired by fathers, grandfathers, and great-grandfathers were turned into ashes. With a prevailing sense of monotony, this picture remained the same all along our way to Skopje... As night came... Turkish and Albanian houses were attacked: looting and killing... You could see everywhere how peaceful Turkish peasants were slaughtered without any reason, with their property being taken away, and their wives and children left to starve, and your heart breaks in grief. Between Štip and Radoviš, approximately 2,000 Turkish refugees, mostly women and children, died of hunger - literally of hunger. The Turks fled and abandoned their properties and the seizure of Turkish land is now in full swing.”<sup>66</sup> In a letter to the Russian politician and historian Pavel Nikolayevich Milyukov,<sup>67</sup> who was renowned for his Slavophilia and was the editor of the party magazine “Riječ” (English: Word), Trotsky assessed: “Didn’t you hear during your travels - we must assume that it would be interesting for you - about the monstrous acts of brutality perpetrated by the victorious Allied soldiers along their battle route, not only against unarmed Turkish soldiers, wounded and prisoners, but also against peaceful Muslim residents, the elderly and children. If you have heard - as not hearing of it is impossible - why are you silent then? Why is your “Word” silent? How couldn’t those indisputable and continuous facts make you realize that Bulgarians in Macedonia and Serbs in Old Serbia, in their national fervor... engaged in the systematic destruction of the Muslim population in the villages, cities, and their surroundings.”<sup>68</sup>

A similar fate befell the Muhajir enclaves in the villages of the Salonika field. Anastasija Karakasidou argues that “the hegemony of contemporary nationalism in Greece often silences the discussion of the similar fate of Muslim refugees fleeing Greece... most Muslims from Ottoman Macedonia were, above all, poor herdsmen and serfs, not wealthy landowners or merchants. R. Klog

61 *Ibidem*, p. 57.

62 *Ibidem*, p. 77.

63 Mark Mazover, *Salonica, City of ghosts: Christians, Muslims, and Jews, 1430-1950*, New York: Vintage, 2006, p. 311-332.

64 Kotlar Trajkova-Goševa, “Sudbinata na civilnoto naselenie ...”, p. 200-201.

65 Leon Trotsky, *The War Correspondence of Leon Trotsky. The Balkan Wars 1912-13* (translated by Brian Pearce), New York, Monad Press; Australia, Pathfinder Press, 1993, p. 266-267.

66 *Ibidem*.

67 Trotsky expressed his greatest anger against Pavel Milyukov (1859-1943), the right-oriented leader of the Constitutional Democratic Party (Kadets) who later became an enemy of Bolshevism, because of his suppression of the truth on the raging war in the Balkans. (Leon Trotsky, *My Life: An Attempt at Autobiography Charles Scribner’s Sons*, New York, 1930, p. 289.

68 Maria Todorova, “War and Memory: Trotsky’s War Correspondence from the Balkan Wars”, *Perceptions*, Volume XVIII, no. 2, Summer 2013, p. 5-27.

assesses: “Although the population exchange caused enormous human misery... it ensured that Greece itself became an ethnically homogeneous society... it was transformed into a country literally without any problems with minorities, at least according to Balkan standards.”<sup>69</sup>

British sources say that “ever since the occupation of this area, Serbian policy has aimed at the forced migration or destruction of Muslims and the confiscation of their land. It is the same policy that Serbia usually imposes towards Muslims who were unfortunate enough to find themselves in a subjugated position against them. Not a single act of oppression that could make their survival impossible was left out. During such persecution, life itself had no worth whatsoever, not to mention the most basic religious and civil rights.”<sup>70</sup> With the withdrawal of the Ottoman administration and military units, began the displacement of a large number of Bosniak Muhajirs towards the interior of Asia Minor, i.e. Anatolia.

The incursion of Serbian units into Skopje caused fear and panic among the 900 wounded Ottoman soldiers residing in the city hospital. When the staff and doctors discharged them, they were literally left to “scoot” around the streets of Skopje trying to get to the railway station.<sup>71</sup>

Dimitrije Tucović wrote about the crimes against local Muslim and Muhajir populations during the First Balkan War (1912), especially against the Albanians, criticizing the conquering policy of the Serbian bourgeoisie.<sup>72</sup> The complexity of the problem and the seriousness of the military horrors that were a consequence of the initiated Balkan Wars brought major changes to the nature of the social structure of Macedonia. This is evident from the acts of burning Muhajir enclaves, killings, violence, and mass looting of property, which were recorded in the reports of international diplomatic services and the aforementioned Carnegie Commission of Experts.<sup>73</sup> Due to the permanent redundancy of emigrants from different areas, during the second half of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, Macedonia was transformed into a true ethnographic museum.

### **Psychological and Economic Consequences of the Balkan Wars for Bosniaks and Other Muhajirs**

The Balkan Wars (1912-1913) marked the definitive end of Ottoman rule in the Balkans. The Kingdom of Serbia annexed a significant area of former Western Rumelia (Sandžak, Kosovo, and Vardar Macedonia, where a significant population of Muslims remained. Not a single Balkan country was spared from the huge wave of migration, especially from those caused by the Balkan Wars, as no precise statistics about it are present. The situation was the most unfavorable for those Muhajirs who participated in the Ottoman or Christian allied army units. This provoked revenge actions and the suffering of their families. The situation during and after the Balkan wars fueled the aspirations of almost all structures of the Macedonian liberation movement. The movement was looking forward to the onset of a “period of peace and tranquility” that would create the possibility to realize aspirations towards democratization, decentralization, and autonomy of Macedonia,<sup>74</sup> which would contrast its dividedness, denationalization, and the assimilation of Macedonian Christian and Muslim populations.

Carried away by the whirlwind of war (1912-1913) and the defeat of the Ottomans, the allied Balkan states tried to seize Macedonian territory. With them and their aspirations the “liberating” character of the wars was changed, as it very quickly turned into a struggle for the ethnic extermination of the indigenous and non-combatant.

69 Richard Clogg, *A short history of Modern Greece*, Cambridge: Cambridge University press, 1979, p. 121.

70 *Britanski konzuli u Makedoniji 1797-1915* (documents), State Archive of the Republic of Macedonia, Skopje 2002, p. 436.

71 Slobodan Đurić, *Dnevnik pobeda Srbija u Balkanskim ratovima 1912-1913*, Belgrade, 1988, p. 244.

72 Dimitrije Tucović, *Srbija i Albanija (jedan prilog kritici zavojevačke politike srpske buržoazije)*, Belgrade, Kultura, 1946.

73 *Poranešnite balkanski vojni* (1912-1912), Izveštaj na Karnegievata balkanska komisija, Magor, Skopje 2000.

74 *Istorija na makedonskiot narod*, INI, Skopje, 2008, p. 212.

Muslim population, and with them the Muhajir people who were colonized half a century ago (1864-1912). A short Muhajir episode of refugees and colonized Muhajir families had its epilogue at the beginning of the 20th century when, in the whirlwind of the Second Balkan War (1913), their path of no return to Anatolian and Middle Eastern countries was eventually set.

A large number of displaced persons arrived and left, and it was difficult to precisely determine their number. Such social changes did not stop even after the signing of the Bucharest Peace Treaty (1912-1913) and the consequent territorial division of Macedonia. They caused new problems, movements, displacements of Muhajirs, and the territorial fragmentation of Macedonia as part of the former Ottoman province of Rumelia. Hatred of immigrants and fear of the consequences due to their military participation in the Balkan Wars caused the emigration of a significant number of Circassians and Bosniaks from the Skopje settlements of Hasanbegovo, Katlanovo, Medžidije,<sup>75</sup> villages in the Kaza's of Tetovo (Porojska Tekija), Kumanovo, Kratovo (Varovište), Sveti Nikole, Veles, Štip (Radanje), Kriva Palanka, Radoviš, Strumica (Dabilje), Maleševo, Gevgelija, Prilep, and Bitola.<sup>76</sup> After 1910/11, some migrants (Circassians, Tatars, and Bosniaks) settled in the area of Katlanovska Banja. As they were placed between the rivers of Pčinja and Vardar, they were the first to face the danger of incursions by Serbian units and were forced to move in different directions.<sup>77</sup>

With the withdrawal of the Ottoman administration and army from the Macedonian territories, the exodus of a large number of Bosniaks began. Bosniak villages in the Skopje Basin were deserted (Hasanbegovo, Ognjance, Mralino, Kadijino selo, Adžilare (Miladinovci), Mrševci, Umin Dol, Deljardovci, Tekija, Agino Selo, Đidimirci, Idrizovo, Jurumleri, Katlanovo, Saramzalino, and others). A similar fate befell Bosniak villages in the Kumanovo-Preševo region (Nikuljane, Sarimiš, Varovište) and those residing in Kumanovo, Kratovo, Kriva Palanka, Kočani, Sv. Nikola, Štip, Strumica, Radoviš, Kavadarci (villages of Bunarče, Bojančište and Begnište), Veles and Manastir. Muhajirs disappeared from the Kočani Basin (Bućevce village), Zletovo Region (Troolo village),<sup>78</sup> the northeastern part of Makedonska Kamenica (Kostin Dol), Maleševo region (Bezgaštevo, Bošnjacko Selo) and the Debar region. They mostly retreated to Asia Minor, more precisely Anatolia.<sup>79</sup>

One of the chroniclers of the Bosniak Muhajir process, Avdulah Mehmedović, a resident of Hasanbegovo in Skopje, wrote about it: "Since the Turkish-Serbian battle at Kumanovo was lost... there was an exodus of Muhajirs in the village of Hasanbegovo... While the Serbs established power in Macedonia one of our Muhajirs moved to the borders of Turkey (names to follow, R. Š.)... These Muhajirs left their land, houses, and all their possessions, without selling them to anyone. No one wanted to buy them because they all wanted to move to Turkey. The population continued to shrink even after the creation of the state of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes in 1918. The settlement of Serbs and Montenegrins began in the vicinity of Skopje, Kumanovo, and other cities. Honored settlers - Salonika Veterans (Serbian: Solunci) - were assigned the land that the emigrants left behind, as well as the land of those owners who did not have proper title deeds."<sup>80</sup>

This not only destroyed Macedonia but also the Balkan areas where antagonisms and anarchy intensified. Judging by the events, emigration was the only possible way to protect themselves. The epilogue of such a demographic turmoil was the occupation of the property of the evicted Muhajirs. The usurpation was carried out by immigrant Serbian families during the occupation of Macedonia (1912-1915) and the formation of so-called Southern Serbia. Greater Serbia had to include Kosovo and parts of Macedonia, so they were heavily colonized during the existence of the Kingdom of Serbia. Mass emigration after the Balkan Wars led to a decrease in the number of the Turkish population. Apart from the casualties during the devastating wars at the beginning of the century, a peaceful and gradual retreat continued throughout the 20th century.

75 Jovan Trifunovski, "Raseljena sela u Skopskoj Kotlini", *Zbornik za narodni život i običaje Južnih Slavena*, br. 43, JAZU, Zagreb 1967, p. 615.

76 Redžep Škrijelj (R. Škrijelj), "Çerkesler, Tatarlar ve Makedonya'daki diğer Kavkas Muhacirleri", *BAL-TAM Türklük Bilgisi*, no. 4, Prizren, mart 2006, p. 46-59.

77 Jeremija Pavlović, *Maleševo i Maleševci* (etnološka ispitivanja), Belgrade 1928, p. 373.

78 Aleksandar Apostolov, "Kolonizacija na Muhadžirite vo Makedonija i rastrojstvoto na čifčiskite odnosi kon krajot na XIX vek do 1912. godina", *Glasnik na Institutot za nacionalna istorija*, year 4, Skopje 1960, p. 113-137.

79 Škrijelj, *Muhadžirskata kriza i ...*, p. 197, 200, 203, 205-207.

80 Džemail A. Mehmedović, *Memoarske bilješke*, Hasanbegovo, Skoplje 1972, p. 17.

## **Conclusion**

The continuous process of Bosniak Muhajirs is related to the fragment of the rigorous Muhajir history on the heterogenous territories of the Balkans. The first decades of the XXth century were characterized by revolutionary backwashes which intensified the forced migrations. The two-year Balkan Wars (1912/13) marked the definite end of Ottoman rule in the Balkans followed by the division of the territories of Macedonia.

During the war, several important Bosniak enclaves in Macedonia were formed by Ottoman government colonization after the Berlin Congress (1878) and the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (1908) by Austria-Hungary. The Treaty of Bucharest (August 1913) marked the division of Macedonia and the consequent occupation of Vardar Macedonia by the Kingdom of Serbia thus the old dream of the Serbian bourgeoisie of conquering the Vardar-Morava Valley was fulfilled.

On the other hand, the notoriety and the internationalization of the so-called Macedonian Question which was permanently jeopardized by the activities of its neighbors increased. The number of mobilized and recruited civilians and casualties of the Balkan Wars was significant.

A large number of Bosniak Muhajirs joined the Ottoman retreat towards the inner parts of Asia Minor. Their departure marked the extinguishment of numerous enclaves in the regions of Skopje, Kumanovo, Ovče Pole, Zletovo, Strumica, Maleševija, Bitola, Thessaloniki, and other parts of Macedonia. In these territories, three centuries earlier, began the difficult and uncertain Muhajir history of the Bosniaks in Macedonia.

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### Extended Abstract

The exodus of the Bosniak represents one of the many Muhadjir episodes of the great migration movement of the heterogeneous Islamic population on the Balkan in the second half of the XIX century. That caused panic displacement and movement of the Moslem population from the newly-developed independent countries (Bulgaria, Romania, Serbia and Monte Negro), that changed into humanitarian crisis. Namely, the exiled and neglected Islamic population from these countries, seeking new and safer conditions, withdrew into the provinces of the country ruled by Turks, and great Muhadjir files flooded Macedonia which was burdened by economy and wars, and it became a focal point, more than a million and a half displaced and homeless people went through.

No matter how great was the influence of fleeing of the Muhadjir, its influence caused significant negative effects on the economically shaken Turkish country that faced with their massive invasion, was unprepared and incapable to undertake a balanced and appropriate approach for a determinate removal of the consequences of this problem. The solution for the economic and social problems of Muhadjir, who carried only memories, represented not just political, but also a human responsibility. Starting from this objective, the Turkish authorities were forced to seek additional resources in order to solve this problem that was becoming economically difficult.

Our report represents one of the possible manners of explaining the tumultuous events connected with the Muhadjir and with their dramatic suffering that lasted for many decades, as well as the efforts of the Turkish administration to face this difficult and uncertain challenge.

The dictated decision (article 25) of the Berlin Congress (1878) anticipated annexing of the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The decisions of the Congress had shown a special triumph of the violence on minor people, and between the damaged people were the Bosniak and the Macedonian people. Due to their implementation, the discontent and the uncertainty of the Moslem element started to grow bigger. Namely, the new conquering Austria-Hungary imperial politics for the Bosniak meant losing the necessary trust, safety and privileges they had in the time of the previous Turkish reign. These events became an essential problem for the population of Bosnia and Herzegovina, especially for the Bosniak who permanently submitted applications for immigration in Turkey. That was the way in which the earlier actions for massive displacement of the Bosniak continued, throughout the places of the Turk Empire that were still under the control of the same. The movement of the Muhadjir through Monte Negro, Serbia, Kosovo or Albania, inevitably turned to Macedonia, where in the years of the Great Eastern crisis there was a real demographic explosion.

However, with the application of the article 23 of the Berlin Congress, Macedonia remained in the frames of the Turkish state. Hard and uncertain time came for the economically deprived Macedonian land, burdened with Muhadjir. These events had an especially inviolable effect on the poor Macedonian population, exhausted by the wars which found it hard to bear the new burden. Instead of realization of the promised obligations regarding the introduction of the necessary reforms in Macedonia, the Turkish authorities tried to retain the existing conditions. Except for the planned regions, the families of the Muhadjir were settled in the properties and homes of the Macedonian Christian population. Due to these reasons, the Macedonian population showed its open protest and discontent from this type of assimilation and colonization politics by leaving for the neighbouring countries (Bulgaria, Greece and Serbia), where it sought safer living conditions and better economy. This type of governmental and economic politics led by the Turkish Empire in regard to Macedonia during the 90's of the XIX century and the beginning of the XX century, sent a large part of the Macedonian autochthonous population to the neighbouring countries and overseas, since with the settlement of the Muhadjir, the Macedonian population was more and more squeezed in its own land.

The Bosniaks, together with their families, were mostly concentrated in Skopje's districts, but also in the neighbouring villages, where we can register coexistence of families from all Bosniak milieus. But, in time, due to the discontent of the later Serbian colonizing politics, they left for Turkey and there were no more Bosniak in the village.



The Bosniaks were collectively settled after 1908, when following the arrival of the Young Turks, for their settlements the estates in the vicinity of Skopje and other places in Macedonia were bought. This wave contained massive Bosniak settlers from the aristocratic classes, mainly from the cities of Bosanska Posavina and others (Bijelina, Brčko, Bosanski Šamac, Tuzla, Sarajevo, Banja Luka, Bihać, etc.). One of the reasons for the reducing number of Muhajirs were the different climatic conditions and the heat, as well as the contagious diseases, that caused high mortality in Bosniak families.

Still, in the constellation of these events we should emphasize that with the settlement of the Bosniaks in separate enclaves in Macedonia, their social and material condition was improved. The distribution of the fertile, cultivable soil and the favourable material aid incapacitated the improvement of their considerably disturbed economic standard. The permanent withdrawal of these Muhajir families towards Asia Minor and the countries of the Middle East resulted from their inability to adapt to the climatic and other conditions in the new environment. Understandably, there were other reasons, especially the settlement of the Muhajir population in the suburbs, with which the displaced were disabled to continue with their former work. These massive displacements of the Muhajirs had negative effects on the further conditions in the places and the cities the Bosniaks had left. The movement of the refugees from their homeland into other strange places was not painless, although there were seldom examples of their repeated repatriation. Especially negative effect had the depopulation of certain former Bosniak regions, where immediate colonization of other families (Croatian, Montenegrin, Serbs, etc.) was conducted there. With those measures, the ethnic progress of the overall community of the Bosniak. The building of the relationships of the displaced with their homeland, explains their constant sorrow and craving for the space of “a country of despair, futility and a spiritless speech” (*Bernard Shaw*). The Muhajir are the ones to fill the pages of the severe exile history on the Balkan. Completely forgotten by their native multinational Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Bosniak Muhajirs had chosen the long, exhausting and insecure road to new, strange places as their unique, favourable solution.

However, due to the active engagement in the Turk military troops, some of the Bosniak died in the Balkan Wars (1912/1913) and a part of the ones that survived, fearing the revenge, retreated towards the Turkish regions together with their families. The continuous process of Bosniak Muhajirs is related to the fragment of the rigorous Muhajir history on the heterogenous territories of the Balkans. The first decades of the XXth century were characterized by revolutionary backwashes which intensified the forced migrations. The two-year Balkan Wars (1912/13) marked the definite end of Ottoman rule in the Balkans followed by the division of the territories of Macedonia.

During the war, several important Bosniak enclaves in Macedonia were formed by Ottoman government colonization after the Berlin Congress (1878) and the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (1908) by Austria-Hungary. The Treaty of Bucharest (August 1913) marked the division of Macedonia and the consequent occupation of Vardar Macedonia by the Kingdom of Serbia thus the old dream of the Serbian bourgeoisie of conquering the Vardar-Morava Valley was fulfilled.

On the other hand, the notoriety and the internationalization of the so-called Macedonian Question which was permanently jeopardized by the activities of its neighbors increased. The number of mobilized and recruited civilians and casualties of the Balkan Wars was significant.

A large number of Bosniak Muhajirs joined the Ottoman retreat towards the inner parts of Asia Minor. Their departure marked the extinguishment of numerous enclaves in the regions of Skopje, Kumanovo, Ovče Pole, Zletovo, Strumica, Maleševija, Bitola, Thessaloniki, and other parts of Macedonia. In these territories, three centuries earlier, began the difficult and uncertain Muhajir history of the Bosniaks in Macedonia.

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Yazar katkı oranı	Eşit
Author contribution percentage	Equal
Makale adı	Bosna Hersek'in İlhakı ile Balkan Savaşları Arasında Vardar Makedonya'daki Boşnak Muhacirleri (1908-1912/13)
Article name	Bosniak Muhajirs in Vardar Macedonia Between the Annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Balkan Wars (1908-1912/13)
Geliş- Kabul Tarihi	28 Mayıs 2023 - 19 Haziran 2023
Received-Accepted Date	28 May 2023 - 19 June 2023
Hakem Sayısı	<b>Ön İnceleme:</b> Dört iç hakem (Editör, Alan Editörü, Türkçe ve İngilizce Dil Editörleri) <b>İçerik İnceleme:</b> İki dış hakem
Reviewers	<b>Preview:</b> Four internal reviewer (Editor, Field Editor, Turkish and English Language Editors ) <b>Content review:</b> Two external reviewer.
Etik	Bu çalışmada etik ilkelere uyulmuştur.
Ethic	Ethical principles were followed in this study.
Benzerlik taraması	Yapıldı - Turnitin
Plagiarism checks	Done - Turnitin
Çıkar Çatışması	Çıkar çatışması yoktur.
Conflict of Interest	There is no conflict of interest.
Finansman	Herhangi maddi bir destek alınmamıştır.
Grant Support	No financial support was received.
Etik Beyan	
Ethical Statement	
Etik Kurul İzni	
Ethics committee approval	
Telif Hakkı	Yazarlar dergide yayınlanan çalışmalarının telif hakkına sahiptirler.
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