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## Sticking to Guns: The Disarmament Action in Kosovo 1955/56

**Abstract:** *Using contemporary documents and memoirs, the paper deals with the disarmament action conducted in Kosovo in late 1955 and during the first months of 1956. The reasons for it and its fallout are examined.<sup>1</sup>*

**Key Words:** Disarmament, Kosovo, Albanians, Serbs, Montenegrins, UDB

There is a clear tendency in large part of historiography to regard Kosovo Albanians as historical victims – firstly of the Ottomans, then of the Yugoslav monarchy, of the Communist political police, and finally of the Milošević regime. If this view were confined to Albanian historiography alone, one could easily dismiss it as political propaganda. The real problem is that this Albanian nationalist version has entered large Western historiographies contaminating thus not only historiography but public discourse at large. The reasons for wide acceptance of this one-sided view of the past are to be found mostly in the political events of the 1990s when the repressive Milošević regime – due to its faulty policy and underinvestment in currying favor with the Western press – finally lost its propagandistic race against Albanian lobbyists who managed to influence not only Western politicians but many scholars too. Thus, the then picture of suffering Albanians was projected deep into the past, depicting the Albanians as eternal victims and the Serbs as eternal persecutors. Many historical periods and situations when the Albanians were the persecutors and the Serbs the persecuted, were conveniently forgotten, creating thus a very much black and white picture in favor of the Albanians.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Albanian crimes against the Serbian population of Kosovo and beyond are well documented, albeit insufficiently known in the West. The persecution of the Serbs during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries were largely pushed under the carpet thanks to contemporary interests of Great Britain, and Austria-Hungary. (*Преписка о арбанским насиљима у Старој Србији 1888-1889*, (Београд: МИД,

Among other goals, the Communists, who came to power in Yugoslavia after WWII strove to overturn the policy of national inequality pursued by the pre-war governments. To this end, they not only forgave the Albanians their collaboration with the Germans and Italians, their wartime crimes against Serbian and Montenegrin civilians,<sup>3</sup> as well as their rebellion against the new Communist post-war authorities<sup>4</sup> but started immediately integrating them into the new political system and the Communist Party, opened schools in Albanian, cultural associations, launched Albanian-language journals, founded alphabetization and educational courses, a theater, etc.<sup>5</sup> To be sure, the Albanians, like citizens of other nationalities, had also

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1899); Милан Ракић, *Конзулска писма 1905-1911*, (Београд: Просвета, 1985), 45, 59, 91, 95, 100, 102, 115, 280-289; Димитрије Богдановић, *Књига о Косову*, (Београд: САНУ, 1985), 148-157; Bogumil Hrabak, "Albanians of Kosovo and Метохија from the League of Prizren to 1918", *Kosovo. Past and Present*, (Belgrade: Review of International Affairs, 1989), 56-60; *Косово и Метохија у српској историји*, (Београд: СКЗ, 1989), 178-188, 228-272, 277; Dušan Bataković, *The Kosovo Chronicles*, (Belgrade: Ћигоја, 1992), 119-120, 126-154, 157-158; Михајло Војводић, "Србија и албанско питање крајем XIX века", *Србија и Албанци у XIX и почетком XX века*, (Београд: САНУ, 1990), 72, 76-79, 82-85 ) On the other hand, the repression of the inter-war authorities aimed at quelling resistance was often taken out of context and blown out of every proportion. (For a more balanced view cf. *Југословенска држава и Албанци*, I-II, (прир.) Љубодраг Димић, Ђорђе Борозан, (Београд: Службени лист, 1998-1999); Bogumil Hrabak, "Reokupacija oblasti srpske i crnogorske države s arbanaškom većinom stanovništva u jesen 1918. godine i držanje Arbanasa prema uspostavljenoj vlasti", *Gijurmine albanologjike*, 1, 1, (1969), 254-297; Zoran Janjetović, *Deca careva pastorčad kraljeva. Nacionalne manjine u Jugoslaviji 1918-1941*, (Београд: INIS, 2005), 100-108, 111-114).

<sup>3</sup> Ненад Антонијевић, *Косово и Метохија 1941-1945. година – ратни злочини*, (Београд: музеј жртава геноцида, 2017); Ђорђе Борозан, *Велика Албанија – поријекло – идеје – пракса*, (Београд: Војноисторијски институт Војске Југославије, 1995), 284-447, 452, 457, 477, 481-482; Павле Целетовић Иванов, *Балистички покрет 1939-1952. Масовност, сарадња са италијанским и немачким окупаторима и злочини над Србима*, (Београд: Архив Србије, 2000), 6, 48-52, 55, 65-76, 103-111, 161-169, 179-183; 201-202, 207, 217, 219; Franziska A. Zaugg, *Albanische Muslime in der Waffen-SS. Von Großalbanien“ zur Division „Skanderbeg“*, (Padernborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2016), 155-156, 160-163, 174-175, 256-257; Бранислав Божовић, Милорад Вавић, *Сурова времена на Косову и Метохији. Квислинзи и колаборација у Другом светском рату*, (Београд: ИСИ, 1991), 27-43, 57-58, 64, 85, 202-253, 299, 309-312, 328-335, 396-402.

<sup>4</sup> Божовић, Вавић, *Сурова времена*, 482-532; Борозан, *Велика Албанија*, 494-507; Иванов, *Балистички покрет*, 248-280, 288-297; Душан М. Бојковић, "Сузбијање оружане побуне балиста на Косову и Метохији током зиме 1944/1945 године", *Косово и Метохија у Другом светском рату – седам деценија касније*, (Косовска Митровица: Филозофски факултет у Приштини, 2016), 225-242; Војан Dimitrijević, "Šiptarski oružani izazov komunističkim vlastima u Jugoslaviji 1945-1950", *Istorija 20. veka*, 22, 2, 2004, 49-59.

<sup>5</sup> Момчило Павловић, "Албанци (Шиптари) у Србији и Југославији 1944-1991", *Косово и Метохија у великоалбанским плановима 1878-2000*, (Београд: ИСИ, 2001), 149-152; Миомир Гаталовић, *Косово и Метохија у државној политици Југославије 1958-1965*, (Београд: ИСИ, 2016), 43-44, 52-53, 55, 68, 303-312; Isabel Ströhle, *Aus den Ruinen der alten erschaffen wir die neue Welt! Herrschaftspraxis und Loyalitäten in Kosovo (1944-1974)*, (München: De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2016), 133-135, 144-149; *National Minorities in Yugoslavia*, (Belgrade: Jugoslavija, 1959), 17-18, 25-26; Љубиша Стојковић, Милош Мартић, *Nacionalne manjine u Jugoslaviji*, (Београд: Rad, 1953), 141-159;

to suffer many forms of government pressure during the first ten years after WWII: mandatory sale of agricultural products at low prices to government agencies, reduction of agricultural holdings, pressure to join cooperatives, mandatory work in factories and at building sites, etc. Apart from these, there were also certain duties incumbent only on Muslims – such as the abolition of polygamy, ban on scarves and veils, abolition of Muslim religious schools, etc. that hit the Albanians, who were almost exclusively Muslims, not only in Kosovo.<sup>6</sup> They also found it hard to send female children to school, as well as to let their womenfolk go to public works and meetings, to let them join political and other associations, or to take any part in public life.<sup>7</sup> All this, coupled with ardent but frustrated nationalism that sought unification with Albania were reasons for Albanian dissatisfaction with Socialist Yugoslavia. Despite equality granted them, the Albanians tended to see all political and economic measures as aimed at them in particular which spawned the feeling of being a persecuted national minority.<sup>8</sup>

The large disarmament action that was undertaken by the authorities in late 1955 and early 1956 became one of the favorite Albanian myths of martyrdom.<sup>9</sup> Although the action was certainly not conducted without violence, it was not on an unprecedented scale. What is even more important – it was not aimed against the Albanians as such, nor only against the Albanians, but all real or perceived enemies of the regime, Albanian or Serb. It is also not true that the action was conducted only in Kosovo.<sup>10</sup> It is even

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Oliver Jens Schmitt, *Kosovo. Kurze Geschichte einer zentralbalkanischen Landschaft*, (Wien, Köln, Weimar: Böhlau Verlag) 2008, 238-245.

<sup>6</sup> Радмила Радић, *Држава и верске заједнице 1945-1970*, I, (Београд: ИНИС, 2002), 256-260; Ströhle, *Aus den Ruinen*, 115-124, 137-139; Miloš Mišović, *Ko je tražio republiku Kosovo 1945-1985*, (Beograd: Narodna knjiga, 1987), 55-56; Violeta Achkoska, “Lifting the Veils from Muslim Women in the Republic of Macedonia following the Second World War”, *Gender Relations in South Eastern Europe: Historical Perspective on Womanhood and Manhood in 19th and 20th Century*, edited by Miroslav Jovanović, Slobodan Naumović, (Belgrade, Graz: Udruženje za društvenu istoriju, 2002), 183-194.

<sup>7</sup> Ströhle, *Aus den Ruinen*, 133-134.

<sup>8</sup> Some measures were oppressive, and some were in fact enlightened, but were perceived as oppressive.

<sup>9</sup> Miranda Vickers intertwines trial of Albanian youngsters who hoisted Albanian flags, disarmament action and alleged mass emigration to Turkey to prove just how downtrodden the Albanians had been. She pin-points the year of 1956 as the worst in that respect, although emigration from Kosovo was strictly forbidden at that time. She also does not explain why the authorities put this ostensible infernal plan into action exactly at that time. She even invents an alleged „second colonization“ (i.e. another one, after the inter-war colonization of the Serbs and Montenegrins by the royal regime that left so much bad blood in inter-ethnic relations) from Plav, Gucia (sic!!!) and Podgorica. (The very slip of Gucia proves she had no idea what she was writing about.) (Cf. Miranda Vickers, *Between Serb and Albanian. A History of Kosovo*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998, 157).

<sup>10</sup> This was the erroneous view of the Albanians themselves during the disarmament action. (Državni arhiv Srbije, Bezbednosno informativna agencija (DAS, BIA, III/140), Vladimir Šiljegović, Izveštaj, Priština, May 23, 1956, (henceforth: DAS, BIA, III/140, Vladimir Šiljegović, Izveštaj) However, due to the initial success of the action Serbian Minister of the Interior Vojin Lukić gave the order

less true that the disarmament was a function of the alleged coercive resettlement of the Albanians into Turkey.<sup>11</sup>

The Albanians as such were no special target of the feared Yugoslav political police, the UDB, but due to the persistent opposition of most Albanians to the regime, many of them had that feeling. The feeling was increased by the fact that most operatives of the UDB were indeed Serbs. However, this was not the fruit of deliberate ethnic discrimination, but rather due to the fact that the political police came out of the war-time partisan forces, whereas almost all Albanians had been fighting on the other side. Thus, it was difficult to find reliable Albanian operatives in larger numbers, although Albanian Communist loyalists always had a place in the political police, even among the top brass. Thus, the motive for the disarmament action was no anti-Albanian sentiment on the part of the regime or the political police, but security. The impulse was given by the surge of Albanian separatist activities that were observed at the time: although they had been continuous ever since the end of the war,<sup>12</sup> at that time their scope and possible impact were perceptibly increased.<sup>13</sup>

The action in question would become ill-famed only later on. Contrary to unsubstantiated claims by superficial or malicious authors,<sup>14</sup> it was neither the first nor the only such in Kosovo,<sup>15</sup> nor in Yugoslavia at large.<sup>16</sup> Depending on political and security situation, such actions had been undertaken occasionally in different parts of the country<sup>17</sup> ever since 1944 to reduce the number of weapons that remained among

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on February 22, 1956, to expand it into the neighboring districts (srez) of Vranje, Leskovac, Prokuplje, Kruševac and Novi Pazar. (DAS, BIA, III/140, Izveštaj o radu Komisije na utvrđivanju deformacija i zloupotreba i o preduzetim merama na reorganizaciji Službe državne bezbednosti u AP Kosovo i Metohija, Priština, November 1, 1966 (henceforth: DAS, BIA, III/140, Izveštaj o radu Komisije).

<sup>11</sup> During the action some Albanians tended to see it as *punishment* for the wish of many Albanians to emigrate to Turkey! (DAS, BIA, III/140, Akcija prikupljanja oružja na području Prištine, Đakovice i Kosovske Mitrovice, izveštaji u vezi oduzimanja oružja po srezovima za 1956 (henceforth: DAS, BIA, III/140, Akcija prikupljanja oružja).

<sup>12</sup> Иванов, *Балистички покрет*, 297-382; Божовић, Вавић, *Сурова времена*, 537-553.

<sup>13</sup> Александар Ранковић, *Дневничке забелешке*, (Београд: Југословенска књига, 2001), 158-159.

<sup>14</sup> During the campaign against the UDB after Ranković's removal from office, one of the leading Albanian politicians, Ali Shukriu claimed "there had been no such action in whole of Yugoslavia" (sic). (Миомир Гаталовић, *Бурна времена. Косово и Метохија у државној политици Југославије 1966-1969*, (Београд: ИСИ, 2018), 52).

<sup>15</sup> DAS, BIA, III/140, Gliša Krstić, Analiza u vezi sa situacijom oduzimanja oružja sa terena ispostave za unutrašnje poslove u Đakovici, Đakovica, May 31, 1956 (henceforth: DAS, BIA, III/140, Gliša Krstić, Analiza); DAS, BIA, III/140, [No title], [s.l. s.a.] (henceforth: DAS, BIA, III/140, [No title], [s.l. s.a.]). To be sure, the difference was that previous actions were not conducted in the whole territory of the Autonomous Region of Kosovo.

<sup>16</sup> Ранковић, *Дневничке забелешке*, 159.

<sup>17</sup> Vojin Lukić, the then Interior Minister claims the action of 1955/56 was undertaken due to relatively good political situation in relations with East European countries after the rift from 1948

the people after WWII.<sup>18</sup> 66.103 rifles, machine guns, and pistols have been confiscated in Yugoslavia between 1951 and 1955 alone, as well as 10.097 hand-grenades, 640.337 bullets, and 20.327 kilos of explosive.<sup>19</sup> The action geographically and temporally the closest to the one we shall presently deal with, was conducted in the Sandžak in 1952, with the methods no whit different than those soon to be applied in Kosovo.<sup>20</sup> At that time they have not deemed something worth writing home about. They fell into disrepute only after the fall of Aleksandar Ranković, when it became important for the Kosovo top brass to sling as much mud on Tito's former deputy-president – to kiss up to Tito and his entourage, to rehabilitate some of the discredited Albanian politicians and to achieve larger autonomy for Kosovo and some privileges for the Albanian national minority.<sup>21</sup>

The subsequently ill-reputed action was conducted in Kosovo and adjacent districts in late 1955 and early 1956. According to Vojin Lukić, the UDB realized there was a large number of weapons among the population that caused concern due to the widespread custom of blood feud<sup>22</sup> and subversive actions from Albania that destabilized law and order.<sup>23</sup> On the other hand, the Serbs and Montenegrins kept arms to defend themselves against the Albanians – having been viciously persecuted

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(when Yugoslavia refused to obey Stalin's diktat) had been healed. (Vojin Lukić, *Sećanja i saznanja. Aleksandar Ranković i Brionski plenum*, (Titograd: Novica Jovović, 1989, 206).

<sup>18</sup> Even if one disregards bad inter-ethnic relations and resistance of many groups and strata against the Communist regime that were typical of Yugoslavia in 1940s and 1950s, almost daily mass shootings in the USA nowadays testify just how pernicious large quantity of weapons among the populace is.

<sup>19</sup> Arhiv Jugoslavije (AJ), holding SIV, 130, 992/1502, Stenografske beleške sa sednice Odbora za unutrašnju politiku SIV-a, Beograd, May 18, 1956, henceforth: AJ, 130, 992/1502, Stenografske beleške). Similar data on the weapons confiscated since 1951 were presented at the meeting of the same Committee in April 1956. (Димитријевић, *Ранковић*, 181).

<sup>20</sup> DAS, BIA, V/59, Izveštaj o muslimanima u deževskom i šavničkom srezu, April 28, 1952 (henceforth: DAS, BIA, V/59, Izveštaj o muslimanima).

<sup>21</sup> On how the Albanian political leaders used decentralization processes and discovery of alleged aberrations of the UDB in order to gain larger autonomy for Kosovo cf. Ströhle, *Aus den Ruinen*, 242, 254, 257, 263, 268, 370-373. Ströhle claims the Albanian leaders had gained direct political influence on Tito and the Yugoslav top-brass only after the fall of Ranković. According to her, only then did Tito elevate them to independent political actors. (Ströhle, *Aus den Ruinen*, 285). Despite all the nuances she observes, she follows the mainstream historiographical and publicist opinion that postulates that there had been no real autonomy of Kosovo prior to 1966. This is particularly seen on page 291 of her work.

<sup>22</sup> Disarmament was the least successful where "blood was owed", i.e., in cases of outstanding vendettas. (DAS, BIA, III/140, Čedo Topalović, Analiza akcije oduzimanja oružja na teritoriji sreza Priština, (I opšti deo), [1956]. (Henceforth: DAS, BIA, III/140, Čedo Topalović, Analiza, I). Despite all efforts of the authorities, blood feud remained a serious problem in the following years. In 1962 an increase in number of cases was noticed: in just 21 communes there were 340 feuding families. (Гаталовић, *Косово и Метохија у државној политици Југославије 1958-1965* (Београд: ИСИ, 2016), 91). In mid-1969 some 600 families did not dare leave their homes due to blood feuds. (Гаталовић, *Бурна времена*, 195).

<sup>23</sup> In his memoirs Ranković stressed this aspect, without mentioning blood feud. (Ранковић, *Дневничке забелешке*, 158).

by them in WWII.<sup>24</sup> The Law on Weapons passed in Serbia in 1954 did not bring about larger legalization of firearms, since only hunting weapons could be legalized, whereas the population of Kosovo kept mostly military weapons.<sup>25</sup> Several previous attempts at disarmament bore only partial results, causing great discontent, fleeing into the woods to bands of outlaws or emigration to Albania, so they were given up. According to Vojin Lukić, in 1955 the conditions were ripe for action on a larger scale: the political situation in Kosovo improved significantly due to the normalization of relations between Yugoslavia and East European countries. At Kosovo's Interior Ministry's suggestion, Aleksandar Ranković, vice-chairman of the federal government and chairman of the Committee for Domestic Policy and Security, in agreement with Tito, allowed the disarmament action to start.<sup>26</sup> According to Lukić's claims, an organization preparing armed rebellion was discovered in a village in the District of Peć.<sup>27</sup> A list of members with their weapons was found. Security Service searched the village and found arms also with other individuals. The action was then tentatively extended to neighboring villages and it lasted 20 to 30 days. When the police realized that weapons were being handed over with little resistance, the UDB asked for permission to conduct disarmament in the whole Province.<sup>28</sup> According to the second, also subsequent version proffered by Dragoslav Novaković, deputy Interior Minister of Serbia, who became Kosovo's Interior Minister in December 1956, the action started spontaneously after the murder of a district official in the District of Peć. During the investigation, weapons were uncovered and therefore the idea occurred to conduct a general disarmament action.<sup>29</sup> According to Mišović (one of the chiefs of the Security Service at the time), it was the Regional Committee of the League of Communists that decided to expand the action to the whole territory of the Autonomous Region, whereas the main task of the Communists was to convince people how dangerous keeping of arms was.<sup>30</sup> According to the fourth version launched

<sup>24</sup> Contemporary police sources also adduce vendetta, regime-hostile motives and the like as reasons for keeping fire-arms. (DAS, BIA, III/140, Živorad Topličević, Osvrt na akciju za prikupljanje oružja 1956. godine, [Kosovska Mitrovica?], [after 1960]. (Henceforth: DAS, BIA, III/140, Živorad Topličević, Osvrt na akciju); DAS, BIA, III/140, Akcija prikupljanja oružja).

<sup>25</sup> Lukić, *Sećanja*, 203-204.

<sup>26</sup> Lukić, *Sećanja*, 203-204. At Serbian officials' demand Ranković informed Tito first, and then the Executive Committee of the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia. They all agreed that the action be conducted and Tito, according to Ranković, even protested that it had not been organized earlier. (Ранковић, *Дневничке забелешке*, 159). Unlike Lukić, Ranković does not describe the political situation in Kosovo so favorably. On the contrary: he adduces the upswing in irredentist activities as the rationale of the disarmament action. (Ibid., 158).

<sup>27</sup> This fact also speaks in favor of Ranković's assessment of the political situation.

<sup>28</sup> Lukić, *Sećanja*, 204-205.

<sup>29</sup> Mišović, *Ko je tražio republiku*, 94-95; Ströhle, *Aus den Ruinen*, 209.

<sup>30</sup> Mišović, *Ko je tražio republiku*, 95. This was claimed also by former UDB operative Budo Gajić. (Ljiljana Bulatović, *Prizrenski proces*, (Novi Sad: Književna zajednica Novog Sada), 1988, 179).

by the political nomenclature afterward (probably to shirk responsibility for popular dissatisfaction caused by the disarmament), the action had been started by the police with cognizance of the League of Communists, but the latter had joined in only later.<sup>31</sup>

As on other occasions, the use of force was not the first choice. The action usually began with village conferences where villagers were asked to hand their guns. People were then sent home and then, depending on the results of these general calls, individuals of whom information was available that they possessed weapons, were summoned to the police station and talked into handing them in. Some people were summoned several times, and if need be, the pressure was put to bear upon them: from intimidation, over keeping in cold water in a cellar or out of doors in winter, all the way to beating.<sup>32</sup> Although these methods did not correspond even to the then understanding of human and civil rights, it must be said that violence was neither unusual nor all-encompassing or random.<sup>33</sup> On the contrary: numerous reports show that it was applied on persons for whom information existed that they had weapons, as well as on known political opponents of the government. Where no information was available who had an illegal gun and where no prominent “enemies” were registered, violence was not applied. Sometimes it was not applied even in some villages that offered stubborn resistance.<sup>34</sup> In some villages, members of the League of Communists and other political organizations supported the action, but more often than not, despite orders of their superiors, they remained passive or even opposed it. Many Communists were hiding guns themselves. In some villages, the Party leaders were the main organizers of resistance, and in some places, village elders sent petitions and delegations to higher authorities.<sup>35</sup> In some villages before

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<sup>31</sup> Mišović, *Ko je tražio republiku*, 92

<sup>32</sup> DAS, BIA, III/140, Vladimir Šiljegović, *Izveštaj*; DAS, BIA, III/140, *Dopuna izveštaja o oduzimanju oružja*, s.l. s.a.; DAS, BIA, III/140, *Akcija prikupljanja oružja*. Vojin Lukić writes about listening to “fake beatings” through a closed door in order to frighten the victims into handing over their weapons. (Lukić, *Sećanja*, 206). In one of his reports Vladimir Šiljegović also describes this kind of intimidation. (DAS, BIA, III/140, Vladimir Šiljegović, *Izveštaj*).

<sup>33</sup> Budo Gajić testified later on that the Regional Committee did not prosecute those UDB operatives guilty of beating people to death during investigations in the course of the disarmament campaign. They were simply sent back to their regular duties. (Bulatović, *Prizrenski proces*, 179).

<sup>34</sup> DAS, BIA, III/140, [No title], [s.l. s.a.]. Probably because the leaders of the resistance were not known, so the police did not know whom to put under pressure.

<sup>35</sup> E.g., the village of Vrelo whose inhabitants filed complaints with the County and District Committees. Thanks to what the UDB perceived as excessive charges, the District Committee intervened on their behalf, which encouraged the villagers to put up an even stiffer resistance. (DAS, BIA, III/140, [No title], [s.l. s.a.]). Bearing in mind that Vrelo was the second village to be searched, before the action was extended to the whole Province and that a dozen guns had already been found there (Mišović, *Ko je tražio republiku*, 95), the objectivity of the villagers is doubtful, especially when one knows that the whole village collaborated with the occupiers in WWII. There was a gendarmerie station in which many locals served and a strong branch of the Fascist Party. The villagers excelled in persecution of the inter-war Serbian settlers and in fighting partisans in Sandžak and Montenegro. After liberation 13 men

the arrival of the UDB, khojahs swore people not to hand over their rifles and pistols. Those who did hand them over were ostracized by their fellow villagers.<sup>36</sup> In some villages, resistance was not only passive, but it turned into attempts at a mass attack on the police – although this happened only exceptionally. There was resistance in some Serbian and Montenegrin villages too,<sup>37</sup> as well as pressure on individuals, but on the whole, the Serbs and Montenegrins offered much less resistance: some gave up their weapons willingly – which testifies to higher trust in the government. At the same time, some Serbian and Montenegrin villages were not particularly pressurized to hand over their firearms, because they were deemed “unproblematic”,<sup>38</sup> which testifies to the trust the authorities had in them. Few arms were also taken in some Albanian villages because they had not been “worked out”, i.e. advance information

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ran to the woods and joined the outlaws and the first two post-war village heads sheltered bandits. In 1949 the chairman of the village council was gunned down and three Communists wounded with hand grenade. Allegedly, because of this the whole village was held suspect and all males tortured. Several suspects were held in custody for months only to be released due to lack of evidence. Five persons were sentenced to prison for supporting the Resolution of the Cominform countries against Yugoslavia, one of them being member of the Serbian Parliament. According to police estimates, a large number of people in that village was opposed to the regime. Because of that, the UDB deemed the village „problematic and interesting”. It was estimated that if disarmament of that village succeeded, it would also succeed in neighboring ones. Members of the League of Communists not only offered no help to the police, but rather obstructed their work and complained to District and Regional Party Committees. (DAS, BIA, III/140, [No title], [s.l. s.a.]; DAS, BIA, III/140, Izveštaj o radu Komisije). According to Vojin Lukić, the action was opposed by some Albanian political leaders headed by Fadil Hoxha, who allegedly complained to Tito himself. Ostensibly he claimed the disarmament had spoiled the political situation and disturbed the Albanians for whom weapons have higher significance than for other peoples. Conversely, Kolë Shiroka allegedly demanded the strictest measures to be undertaken against those who refused to hand in their guns. (Lukić, *Sećanja*, 208). There are claims that the action was ended due to complaints to the federal top-brass. (Mišović, *Ko je tražio republiku*, 92; Lukić, *Sećanja*, 210). Lukić adduces satisfaction with the results as the other reason for stopping the action, although he says (contradicting himself somewhat) that more weapons could have been collected – which is born out also by contemporary police documents. (That was the usual remark in reports on most villages.) (Cf. DAS, BIA, III/140, [No title], [s.l. s.a.]).

<sup>36</sup> Some members of the League of Communists took oath on Party membership booklets! (DAS, BIA, III/140, Gliša Krstić, Analiza).

<sup>37</sup> Thus, all weapons were taken from the Serbs in predominantly Serbian and pro-Chetnik villages of Poljane and Osojane. In predominantly Albanian-inhabited village of Muževine almost all arms were taken from the Montenegrins. All guns were also taken away from the Montenegrins in predominantly Montenegrin village of Srbobran. Also, in predominantly Serbian-inhabited village of Sinaje, all weapons were confiscated from the Serbs, sometimes after application of pressure. (DAS, BIA, III/140, [No title], [s.l. s.a.]).

<sup>38</sup> For instance, the Montenegrin colonists' village of Banja. (DAS, BIA, III/140, [No title], [s.l. s.a.]) For the same reasons sometimes arms were not demanded from some Albanian villages, such as Zulfaja in the district of Đakovica (DAS, BIA, III/140, Gliša Krstić, Analiza), (where people nevertheless gave up couple of pieces on their own accord). (DAS, BIA, III/140, [No title], [s.l. s.a.]) This example alone is enough to prove just how groundless Miranda Vickers' claim that the UDB dealt with the Albanians “as a whole” is. (Vickers, *Between Serb and Albanian*, 154).

as to who owned a rifle lacked.<sup>39</sup> In some villages, the most accommodating were the worst “enemies”, who helped the authorities in the search for weapons. Fear did the trick. There were many cases of people buying and selling weapons: some of the people who were pressurized to hand them in had none, so they bought a rifle to avoid the pressure. Others were buying so as not to stay unarmed after having given up the weapons demanded of them.<sup>40</sup> Just how difficult it was to obtain information about who had a gun is proven by the fact that in some villages people more easily denounced the hitherto unknown war criminals than those having weapons.<sup>41</sup> From all these different cases it is plain to see that the action, although centrally planned, was conducted to suit the local situation. It was organized to collect weapons and was not aimed at anyone in particular, i.e. those who were most suspicious to Security Service suffered most – and they were to be found within all ethnic groups.<sup>42</sup> Victims of violence were carefully targeted, which means violence was not used against the whole population (especially not against the whole Albanian population!), but only against individuals and groups for whom one presumed, they would give information or weapons when put under pressure. There were rumors of excessive force being used, but eventually, all district committees of the League of Communists assessed the action well.<sup>43</sup> This case is one of those that show that in popular perception the violence a group suffers blends with previous bad experiences with government organs, and tends to be spontaneously magnified, creating thus bad long-term political consequences that often eventually outweigh the actual security gains.

Although it seems the action was approved from the very top,<sup>44</sup> it is less clear to what extent the peaks of the government were informed about all aspects of its execution. Reports were sent every other day to the Regional and Republic Interior

<sup>39</sup>Distinctly inimical Albanian village of Golubovac was skipped during the disarmament action because the police had no information who kept arms, although it was presumed there were weapons in the village. Perhaps the village was skipped also because it was small. (DAS, BIA, III/140, [No title], [s.l. s.a.]).

<sup>40</sup>DAS, BIA, III/140, Milosav Bojović, Analiza po pitanju oduzetog oružja, Peć, June 4, 1956 (henceforth: DAS, BIA, III/140, Milosav Bojović, Analiza); DAS, BIA, III/140, Vladimir Šiljegović, Izveštaj; DAS, BIA, III/140, Čedo Topalović, Analiza akcije, I; DAS, BIA, III/140, Čedo Topalović, Analiza akcije oduzimanja oružja na teritoriji sreza Priština, (II posebni deo), February-March 1956 (henceforth: DAS, BIA, III/140, Čedo Topalović, Analiza akcije, II); DAS, BIA, III/140, Živorad Topličević, Osvrt na akciju; DAS, BIA, III/140, Gliša Krstić, Analiza u vezi sa situacijom; DAS, BIA, III /140, [No title, s.a.].

<sup>41</sup>DAS, BIA, III/140, Analiza po pitanju oduzetog oružja, Peć, July 1956 (henceforth: DAS, BIA, III/140, Analiza po pitanju oduzetog oružja).

<sup>42</sup>Edvin Pezo, *Zwangsmigration in Friedenszeiten? Jugoslawische Migrationspolitik und die Auswanderung von Muslimen in der Türkei (1918 bis 1966.)* (München: Oldenbourg, 2013) (henceforth: Pezo, *Zwangsmigration*), 301.

<sup>43</sup>Mišović, *Ko je tražio republiku*, 96.

<sup>44</sup>Knowing how the Communist government functioned, it is hardly imaginable that the action could have undertaken without Tito’s approval.

Ministries<sup>45</sup> and to the Regional Committee of the Party<sup>46</sup> – which testifies to the importance of the action – so one can safely presume that the very top brass was very well informed of the course and results of the disarmament. This, as well as the fact that representatives of some villages and maybe even officials, carried their complaints as far as Belgrade, proves the subsequent claim of the Commission for Establishing Malfeasance of the Security Service, that the action had been conducted without knowledge and consent of government organs and political bodies, was a lie. The more so since the Commission contradicts itself by saying (in an attempt to avoid the responsibility for the consequences of the action) that “the leadership and organizations of the League of Communists supported the collection of illegal weapons only politically”.<sup>47</sup> According to Vojin Lukić, some 12.000 rifles, some 100 machine-guns, and heavy machine-guns, several thousand pistols, several mortars, and even a cannon the Chetniks had left with a Serb, were confiscated. The weapons came from various times: from museum articles, through WWII weapons, up to the latest Soviet items smuggled by commandos from Albania.<sup>48</sup>

Although in relevant literature one comes across different quantities of confiscated arms, that aspect of the action is not debatable: not even Albanian nationalists dispute the populace had been armed. However, the use of force became disputed later on. As we have seen, contemporary documents paint the picture of moderate use of violence – but they need not tell the whole truth: no government agency brags before its superiors of overstepping its competencies and of its malfeasances.<sup>49</sup> Curi-

<sup>45</sup>DAS, BIA, III/140, Živorad Topličević, Osvrt. The commission that in 1966 investigated malfeasances of the UDB confirms that the leading persons in Serbia and in Kosovo were informed, but does not say if the federal leaders knew of it too (DAS, BIA, III/140, Izveštaj o radu Komisije). However, if Ranković gave his OK for the action with Tito's consent, then he must have been informed of its course and results. And if he was informed of the details, it is not likely that Tito was not.

<sup>46</sup>Mišović, *Ko je tražio republiku*, 94.

<sup>47</sup>DAS, BIA, III/140, Izveštaj o radu Komisije. According to the statement of Budo Gajić, the Regional Committee new even of cases of people who were beaten to death, but did nothing to punish the perpetrators, i.e. they were just sent back to their regular duties. (Bulatović, *Prizrenski proces*, 179).

<sup>48</sup>Lukić, *Sećanja*, 207; Димитријевић, *Ранковић*, 180. Mišović, Dimitrijević and Gatalović write about 14.000 pieces of fire-arms (Mišović, *Ko je tražio republiku*, 95; Димитријевић, *Ранковић*, 178; Гаталовић, *Бурна времена*, 21), although Mišović mentions 12.000 in another place. (Mišović, *Ko je tražio republiku*, 96). Quoting Ranković, Bataković adduces as much as 26.000 pieces (Dušan T. Bataković, “Les Albanais du Kosovo en Yougoslavie 1945-1995: Minorité en Serbie, majorité dans la province autonome”, *Minorities in the Balkans*, Dušan T. Bataković ed., (Belgrade: Institut des études balkaniques, 2011), 178; Ранковић, *Дневничке забелешке*, 160). The most precise, albeit incomplete data (for 1956/57) are supplied by Ljiljana Bulatović. According to her 11.522 rifles, 10.004 pistols, 100 hand-grenades, 434 machine-guns, 260 heavy machine-guns, 9 mortars, 12 mortar grenades, 4 cannons, 500.000 bullets, and a large quantity of explosives were confiscated (Bulatović, *Prizrenski proces*, 148). Because of all this, we are inclined to believe that the actual number of weapons was around 12.000 pieces. The number 26.000 maybe includes pieces of ammunition too.

<sup>49</sup>Thus, in some documents “heavy pressure” used to obtain weapons is mentioned (DAS, BIA, III/140, Analiza sela, [s.l. s.a.] (henceforth: DAS, BIA, III/140, Analiza sela).

ously enough, the use of force against citizens became an issue only after the fall of Aleksandar Ranković.<sup>50</sup> Even more curious is the fact that only a few UDB operatives were punished for using excessive force that caused death.<sup>51</sup> As in so many cases, we have a riddle concerning both the numbers of victims and perpetrators, but we have no conclusive evidence. What is at our disposal can at best help ascertain the magnitude of physical violence (psychological violence being much more difficult to assess). In that context, the question of when violence becomes massive is in place. Thus for instance Vladimir Šiljegović reported on May 23, 1956, that 37 out of a population of 12.000 inhabitants were beaten in the commune of Glogovac, whereas that some 20 were beaten in Obilić.<sup>52</sup> In the district of Peć some 300 Party members were hiding weapons and over 40 people were beaten.<sup>53</sup> The commission that dealt with the UDB malfeasances in 1966 claimed in its report that several thousand people were beaten up and tens of thousands manhandled.<sup>54</sup> Not only because of incomplete data in the UDB reports (that need not be accurate) these numbers, especially the latter one, seem exaggerated if one has in mind human resources of the Security Service, and especially if one remembers that only 885 complaints of malfeasances were filed – even if one takes into account that certainly not all victims (or their relatives) have submitted their complaints.<sup>55</sup> On the other hand, the very notion of ill-treatment is extremely stretchy.<sup>56</sup> Furthermore, one should take into account the credibility of those filing complaints. To assess their credibility, we would need biographies of all those who reported malfeasances. Unfortunately, we do not have them. On the example of the village of Vrelo, we have seen that in some cases

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<sup>50</sup> Mišović noted that the very same people who set on Party committees that lauded the disarmament action, changed their minds 11 years later after Aleksandr Ranković was toppled, and started criticizing it. (Mišović, *Ko je tražio republiku*, 96.)

<sup>51</sup> Tito pardoned 18 high officials of the Security Service nationwide, and only few operatives in Kosovo were sentenced in 1967/68. The Provincial government demanded in 1968 cessation of prosecution of several UDB operatives for the murder of an Albanian who sheltered outlaws, as well as abolition for six officials in the same case. Mišović supposes this was done in order to prevent data that could compromise higher officials from becoming public. (Mišović, *Ko je tražio republiku*, 98-99.)

<sup>52</sup> DAS, BIA, III/140, Akcija prikupljanja oružja.

<sup>53</sup> DAS, BIA, III/140, Akcija prikupljanja oružja.

<sup>54</sup> DAS, BIA, III/140, Izveštaj o radu Komisije; Ströhle, *Aus den Ruinen*, 246-247.

<sup>55</sup> Among the known plaintiffs 763 were Albanians, and 51 Serbs (Гаталовић, *Бурна времена*, 66, 73). A little later, the delegation of Kosovo presented to Tito somewhat different data on UDB crimes against citizens (not only during the disarmament action). It depicted the situation of members of the Albanian national minority under alleged tyranny of the UDB in even darker colors. According to them 1.045 people filed complaints, 995 of them Albanians and 44 Serbs. 382 state officials were indicted, 143 from the Security Service. According to their claims the UDB committed 96 murders (39 by beating), instigated 7 suicides and caused 83 GBHs (Гаталовић, *Бурна времена*, 78). The number of those convicted in courts was exceedingly small. (Ibid., 102-103).

<sup>56</sup> Some people would say they have been ill-treated just because they have to queue up for some time.

blue murder was cried by villages that – due to their behavior in WWII and after it – had a well-deserved collective bad image in the eyes of the Communist police.<sup>57</sup> The report of the Commission for Establishing Malfeasances of the Security Service mentions the following places as those where the worst offenses against the citizens were committed: Smira, Loda, Rakoš, Suva Reka, Srbica, Kruša, Klokot, Šalja, etc.<sup>58</sup> It would be interesting to compare their behavior during the occupation and after the war with the complaints against their treatment at UDB operatives' hands and see if there is a correlation. Unfortunately, the documents at our disposal give data only for Rakoš. Its collective biography is, if possible, even worse than that of Vrela: some 80 anti-partisan volunteers (vulnetari) were recruited there in WWII. They persecuted the Serbs and Montenegrins and in 1943 they killed as many as 63 Serbian settlers. The UDB accumulated much data in connection with this by 1956, but by then no one was punished for the crime. After liberation 50 men were called up into the partisan army, out of which 8 deserted. One villager was shot by the partisans. During the disarmament action, the village offered organized resistance. The aid lent to the police by the local authorities and members of the League of Communists was quite poor, so *only a few* "enemies" were put under pressure. In the opinion of the UDB operatives, some 50% of weapons had been collected there *since 1944*. During the disarmament campaign of 1956 8 rifles, 3 pistols, and 3 hand grenades were confiscated.<sup>59</sup> Obviously, it was a village very ill-disposed towards the government, whose inhabitants had all the reasons to complain against their treatment by the UDB, once the situation changed in 1966. On the other hand, the UDB had all good reasons to subject the village to repression. Although we have no data for other villages mentioned in the Commission's report, there are data in historiographical literature that show that a similar correlation between the stance of the village and police oppression existed at least in one more case. The highest number of complaints filed after the investigation into the Security Service's malfeasances started, came from Srbica (164). The place was known as an anti-communist bulwark that played important role in the Albanian rebellion of 1944/45 and opposition to the government later on.<sup>60</sup> In the early sixties, one of the leading Kosovo Communists, Dušan Mugoša, mentioned Srbica as one of the places where chauvinism was rampant and where Serbs were forced to leave due to threats and violence.<sup>61</sup> There was a connection between anti-communist and

<sup>57</sup> The question how objective police observations were, is legitimate. However, since they were made in order to enable the police to act in certain areas, and since police reports approach every village and various parts of its population individually, we are prone to believe them.

<sup>58</sup> DAS, BIA, III/140, Izveštaj o radu Komisije.

<sup>59</sup> DAS, BIA, III /140, [No title], [s.a.].

<sup>60</sup> Ströhle, *Aus den Ruinen*, 75, 127, 235.

<sup>61</sup> DAS, Đ2, Organizaciono-instruktorsko odeljenje, k. 215, Dušan Mugoša, Aktuelni idejno-politički zadaci SKS na Kosovu i Metohiji, referat na VIII plenumu Oblasnog komiteta SKS za KiM, Priština, December 1962 (henceforth: Dušan Mugoša, Aktuelni idejno-politički zadaci).

anti-government behavior of certain villages and the degree of violence applied against them. The example of Vrela also proves this. However, the fact that these villages were opposed to the regime suggests that complaints of the Albanians living in them against the police forces need to be taken with more than just one grain of salt. From the available documents, it is impossible to determine if the scope of violence was excessive, or if the subsequent complaints were exaggerated. Because of that, it is also impossible to determine the scope and degree of violence for the whole of Kosovo during the action of disarmament. Probably the simple psychological mechanism of fear having magnifying eyes was at work. Probably the cumulative effect of observing more or less simultaneous violence in many places, magnified through the prism of rumors, contributed to violence being perceived as larger than it was. Undoubtedly, there was violence. The police documents confirm this too. Was there also excessive violence (even by the standards of the time)? Occasionally there certainly was, since some traces of it were seen during the action itself, and the sentences for some UDB operatives confirm this. Were there also other kinds of malfeasances? One should suppose that there were since there are traces of them in the documents too and also because, in the words of Lord Acton, “power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely”.<sup>62</sup>

As in so many cases, the number of the dead is also disputed. The commission dealing with transgressions during the disarmament campaign after the fall of Aleksandr Ranković did not reach the final number, i.e. the numbers adduced range between 37 and 70.<sup>63</sup> The Commission investigating „deformations” of the Security Service adduced some 50 cases of death under torture.<sup>64</sup> To complicate the matter further, Political Secretary of the Regional Committee of the League of Communists, Veli Deva mentioned at the conference of the Executive Committee of the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Serbia 50 Albanians killed between 1956 and 1960<sup>65</sup> – which would imply that the number of victims during the disarmament campaign had been lower. That the number of those who died of beating during the disarmament campaign was lower is also indicated by the fact that the delegation of

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<sup>62</sup> Thus a report on outlaw hunting in Sandžak states that allegedly, “the masses realized the necessity of such measures, so no-one complained if he was beaten during the interrogation for hiding bandits, even if he was innocent” [Or they did not dare complain? – Z.J.]. However, the UDB operatives then lost all moderation and started beating people even in places where there were no outlaws. (DAS, BIA, V/59, Izveštaj o obilasku nekih srezova u Sandžaku po pitanju muslimana, [1952?], (henceforth: DAS, BIA, V/59, Izveštaj o obilasku nekih srezova). The Regional Committee warned district committees in 1953 that during the struggle against harborers of outlaws there had been “tough administrative measures” that should be suppressed since they were against the Party line (Mišović, *Ko je tražio republiku*, 93-94).

<sup>63</sup> Ströhle, *Aus den Ruinen*, 210. Five suicides and 84 crippled are also mentioned. In late 1966 a report was sent to Tito mentioning 37 dead (Pezo, *Zwangsmigration*, 299).

<sup>64</sup> DAS, BIA, III/140, Izveštaj o radu Komisije.

<sup>65</sup> Гараловић, *Бурна времена*, 49. The number of indicted/suspects ranged between 10 and 15 police officers.

Kosovo mentioned only 39 victims to Tito in February 1967.<sup>66</sup> The Chairman of the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Serbia, Petar Stambolić treated the Yugoslav president to the number of 70 killed and 40 died as a consequence of manhandling.<sup>67</sup> As expected, Lukić reduces the number of deaths by beating to a couple of cases.<sup>68</sup> Dragoslav Novaković, who became Provincial Interior Minister at the end of 1956 claims that between 5 and 8 people died during the action of disarmament.<sup>69</sup> As always when the difference in numbers of casualties is great, it causes suspicion. Based on previous research of such cases, this author is inclined to believe that the number of beatings cases ending in fatalities was not that high. The fact that Albanian diplomatic documents rarely mention these “crimes”<sup>70</sup> proves that the level of violence was within the limits of the usual and politically acceptable at the time, or only slightly above it,<sup>71</sup> and especially that the number of cases of death was not very high. The fact that only three UDB operatives were subsequently prosecuted for deaths of 12 persons who succumbed to beating, and that before that only four others received small or suspended prison sentences, seem to confirm the supposition that the level of violence was comparatively moderate and the number of victims much lower than was averred.<sup>72</sup> If all this is taken into account, the question of credibility of so many complaints of torture and manhandling<sup>73</sup> arises – even if we acknowledge that in order not to impair their credibility and future loyalty of the Security Service the authorities could not punish severely its transgressions.<sup>74</sup> The leniency towards

<sup>66</sup> The total number of the killed mentioned on that occasion was 96 (Гаталовић, *Бурна времена*, 78).

<sup>67</sup> Гаталовић, *Бурна времена*, 83.

<sup>68</sup> Lukić, *Sećanja*, 206.

<sup>69</sup> Гаталовић, *Бурна времена*, 50.

<sup>70</sup> Pezo, *Zwangsmigration*, 296. Pezo supposes that Albanian diplomatic service was poorly informed due to lack of consulates in the territory inhabited by the Albanian national minority, but this author is inclined to believe that few news reached Albania because “there was not much to write home about”, i.e., that the level of violence the authorities applied during the disarmament action was within the usual limits to which citizens were used.

<sup>71</sup> One of the leading Kosovo Communist officials, Predrag Ajtić said in March 1957 about the disarmament action and the “Prizren Trial” (that could have compromised high Albanian politicians) that they had gone a bit too far and accused (in Communist a stereotype manner) “Serbian chauvinism” for it. (Pezo, *Zwangsmigration*, 298).

<sup>72</sup> DAS, BIA, III/140, Izveštaj o radu Komisije. For similar data on mildly punished officials cf. Гаталовић, *Бурна времена*, 102-103.

<sup>73</sup> This holds true even when one knows that some crimes always go unreported and especially that never all culprits receive the deserved punishment.

<sup>74</sup> At the “Brioni Plenary Session” where Ranković was deposed Tito himself praised the services the UDB and Ranković himself had rendered in struggle against all kinds of enemies. However, he said that because of old services one could not forgive them “deformations” (Димитријевић, *Ранковић*, 332). To make things more curious, the “deformations” in Kosovo during the disarmament action of 1955/56 were never mentioned at the “Brioni Plenary Session”, even though highest Albanian Communist politicians, Fadil Hoxha and Veli Deva were present! The accusations for crimes during that

real or alleged perpetrators from among the UDB agents was explained with the alleged wish not to stir Albanian intolerance of the Serbs – since the Serbs made up a large majority of the Security Service.<sup>75</sup> On the other hand, Albanian politicians used mild punishments for the UDB officers to obtain a reduction of prison terms for members of the Revolutionary Movement for Unification of the Albanians who were sentenced in 1964. Their actual goal was to reduce among the Albanian population their unpopularity for being part of an oppressive regime.<sup>76</sup>

Other results of the action received much less attention. According to contemporary police reports and Lukić's memoirs, they were increased security, lower crime rate, and reduced number of murders – especially of those related to blood feuds. Taxes were paid more quickly and punctually. According to Lukić, people used to keep firearms to resolve their disputes, but after the disarmament action, they started turning to the authorities.<sup>77</sup> His opinion that this was the first time that Socialist Yugoslavia managed to impose and fortify its authority in Kosovo<sup>78</sup> is much more debatable.<sup>79</sup> The same goes for the claim from a UDB report that Party organizations were purged and strengthened during the action.<sup>80</sup> An undeniable fact is that some war criminals who had avoided capture for ten years after the war were discovered and brought to justice.<sup>81</sup> Despite different facets of the whole disarmament affair, the parties involved as well as historians stick to their guns and refuse to see the episode in a more nuanced and realistic way.

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action appeared only in fall 1966 when general realignment within the political establishment began. Not without reason Lukić perceives belated accusations of the UDB in Kosovo as part of breaking of Serbia's resistance to Ranković's toppling and loosening of the Yugoslav federation (Lukić, *Sećanja*, 175-176, 191, 198-199; Ströhle, *Aus den Ruinen*, 241).

<sup>75</sup> Ströhle, *Aus den Ruinen*, 253.

<sup>76</sup> Ströhle, *Aus den Ruinen*, 278-279, 283; Bataković, *Les Albanais*, 180.

<sup>77</sup> DAS, BIA, III/140, Izveštaj o radu Komisije; Lukić, *Sećanja*, 208. An insight into documents of fiscal, juridical and police authorities could shed light on that, but it would be a huge task – provided the relevant documents still exist.

<sup>78</sup> Lukić, *Sećanja*, 208.

<sup>79</sup> Even if such effects were achieved, they did not last long: after just a few years the number of vendettas was again (or still?) high (Cf. supra.).

<sup>80</sup> DAS, BIA, III/140, Izveštaj o radu Komisije; Bulatović, *Prizrenski proces*, 166. From the police documents quoted in this paper it is clear that a number of Party organizations helped the action in no way whatsoever, and that many, as well as many Party members, offered active resistance. It remains to be ascertained through study of Party documents if that led to purges.

<sup>81</sup> DAS, BIA, III/140, [No title], [s.l. s.a.]; Pezo, *Zwangsmigration*, 298.

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## Резиме

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### Акција разоружавања на Косову и Метохији 1955/1956.

У добром делу западне историографије постоји стереотип о наводно „угњетеним косовскометохијским Албанцима“. Као један од доказа за ту тезу се често наводи акција разоружавања становништва 1955/56. године. На основу савремених докумената и мемоарске грађе овај рад покушава да прикаже шта се заиста десило. Акција није била прва те врсте у Југославији. Од краја Другог светског рата сличне акције су предузимане у разним деловима земље. За акцију о којој је овде реч као узроци се наводе велика количина оружја код становништва, субверзивне делатности албанске обавештајне службе са ослоном на месно становништво и крвна освета. Акција је почела локално, али је онда по одобрењу највиших власти проширена на целу Аутономну област. Оружје је одузимано од свих непријатеља поретка: Албанаца, Срба и Црногораца. Тамо где је било отпора, коришћена је и сила – иако у много мањим размерама него што се касније тврдило. Заплењено је око 12.000 пушака и другог ватреног оружја, као и доста муниције. Акција је постала спорна тек 1966. године после обарања Александра Ранковића, али је упркос наводно врло распрострањеним злоупотребама јако мало припадника Службе безбедности кажњено.

**Кључне речи:** Разоружавање, Косово и Метохија, Албанци, Срби, УДБ