



Munich Personal RePEc Archive

**Multinational Battle of Gallipoli:
Emerging Certain Nation States and
Recent Tendencies of Its Reference for
Regrouping the “Victorious” Nations**

Mulaj, Isa

Institute for Economic Policy Research and Analyses (INEPRA)

30 April 2015

Online at <https://mpra.ub.uni-muenchen.de/65032/>

MPRA Paper No. 65032, posted 14 Jun 2015 13:13 UTC

Multinational Battle of Gallipoli: Emerging Certain Nation States and Recent Tendencies of Its Reference for Regrouping the “Victorious” Nations

Isa Mulaj

Institute for Economic Policy Research and Analyses (INEPRA)

Pristina, Republic of Kosovo

E-mail: isa.mulaj@gmail.com

April 2015

Abstract

The Battle of Gallipoli/Çanakkale or the Dardanelles Campaign as one of the greatest catastrophe of World War I (WWI) and major Axis victory, apart from Turkey, received little attention in the history textbooks of European countries until recently. It was most likely neglected because the Allies emerged victorious of WWI in aggregate terms. The belligerents from many nations in the Battle of Çanakkale, especially from the Balkans, ended up in the camp which they fought against – the victorious Allies. The sacrifice in that battle went missing for taking part and falling for the “wrong side.” In such a vacuum, the suffering, pride and legacy of the battle remained rightly to be exploited by Turkey to the present day. The aftermath impact of the battle was the establishment of new nation states among the Allies fighting mainly under the command of British Commonwealth, then the event was silenced. Its use by Turkey due to the territory in which the battle took place for a national pride and subsequent nationalism, does not imply that the Turks had absolute or exclusive role in waging that war. Looking more closely at the evidence, events, causes, course and consequences of the time, makes it more clear that what is presented as a Turkish sacrifice and victory, was a participation of multinational defenders with German and Austro-Hungarian support. This paper aims at unfolding some crucial aspects of the Battle in Gallipoli which in modern times show a tendency of sharing the contribution by many nations, Albanians in particular, as an inspiration of alliances not for future wars, but as a common heritage for longer term perspective and peace.

Keywords: Ottoman Empire, Battle of Gallipoli, Turkey, WWI, Allies, nation states.

Methodology and sources

The first sources which this paper begins with, is the secondary evidence or already published stories about the event concerned, to provide a reinterpretation which may give a different meaning and understanding. Although used as a benchmark which takes into consideration some neglected roles from the mainstream theory, this is supplemented by primary evidence consisting of: i) a critical analysis from recent observation how the Battle of Çanakkale is presented in its 100th anniversary, where a conference was organized and held by the Yunus Emre Institute in Prizren on 21st March 2015; and ii) a case study of an individual Albanian participant from Kosovo who survived the battle and died of natural causes in 1951. Unlike popular belief that many Moslem volunteers from the Balkans fought in Gallipoli, much of which have also fallen, the available evidence gathered from still alive eyewitnesses suggest that he did not go as a volunteer but was taken in a kind of forced mobilization. These two cases of primary sources add as new in the series of a very broad approach and stories about the Battle of Gallipoli.

1. Neglected role of Albanians and Germans

The geopolitics in the early second decade of 20th century was marked by dramatic changes in the Ottoman Empire. Ottoman possession in the Balkans was reduced to mainly Albanian inhabited areas, known as Albanian Vilayets (Arnavutler Vilayeti).¹ The Ottomans lost control in the Balkans after the first Balkan War in late 1912.

The Battle of Gallipoli is presented, understood and used as a Turkish victory, and became more labeled in this way after the Turkish War of Independence. In fact, the battle at the time was Ottoman, despite Turkey accounting to present day as the sole successor of the Ottoman Empire. It is true that the Ottoman Empire emerged from the Seljuk Turks, but in its growth and expansion, it relied on the contribution of people who joined the rule under the system known as *millet* (community) were the role of

¹ The four Albanian Vilayets totalling 90 170 km² were: i) Kosovo, the largest with 32 900 km² (three times larger than modern day Kosovo); ii) Manastir 28 500 km²; iii) Ioannina 17 900 km²; and iv) Shkodra 10 970 km². See more in Miftari, Faik (2001), "Pakëz dritë për Kosovën" (Little light for Kosovo), Prizren: NGL "BAF".

ethnicity or national identification was negligible. Ottoman Albanians became the most prominent rulers of the empire after Ottoman Turks. The first man climbing the walls of Constantinople when it fell in 1453, was an Albanian named Mikel (Michael), who became known as Ballaban Pasha and was appointed Sanjabey (governor) of Ohrid.² Between 36 and 39 grand viziers or sadriazems (prime ministers) of Ottoman Empire were Albanians by origin, the second largest number only to the Turks who accounted for around 70.³ However, Albanians joined later the Ottoman rule upon the latter arrival and consolidation of rule in the Balkans, and some Albanians left a little earlier due to secessionist movements on national lines in the empire that was crumbling. It only suggests what a great role the Ottoman Albanians had. Who were they in the Battle of Çanakkale? They were the second largest contributors in manpower after the Turks, but first or primary in command and combat during the battle. Let us have a look at some sources which report the national identity of key commanders on the Ottoman side, and to which almost everyone agrees with.

The commander of the Ottoman Fifth Army was the German general of Jewish origin Otto Liman von Sanders (1855-1929).⁴ He was appointed as German military advisor to the Ottoman army. The second in command of the battle was Mehmed Esat Bülkat (1862-1952) an Albanian from Ioannina, who led the Ottoman III Corps. He had earned the honorific title *pasha* while in Greek captivity after his defense of Ioannina. His brother Vehib Pasha (1877-1940) led the XV Army Corps along with German colonel Hans Kannengieser. Mustafa Kemal (1881-1938) as one of the commanders who would later, in 1934, become Atatürk (the father of Turks) was half Albanian (from his father) and half Turkish (from his mother) and under the command of Mehmed Esat. The only high ranking commander of Turkish ethnicity was Cevat Cobanlı (1870-1938) in charge of the Dardanelles Fortified Area Command. Mustafa Kemal began to be known as the commander of the 7th, 9th, and 19th division of the 5th Army in Gallipoli. He was appointed in that position by Liman von Sanders who later noted in his diaries that it was Mehmed Esat who organized the defense in Gallipoli and led the Ottoman army during the battle. Liman von Sanders would have been happier to address this merit to

² Barleti, Marin (1410 [2005]), *Historia e jetës dhe veprave të Skënderbeut: Princi i Epirotëve* (History of Life and Deeds of Scanderbeg: The Prince of Epirus), botimi i katërt (4th ed.), Tiranë: Infobotues, translated from Latin into Albanian by Stefan I, Prifti.

³ Danişmend, İsmail Hâmi (1971) *Osmanlı Devlet Erkânı* (General Staff of Ottoman Empire) İstanbul: Türkiye Yayınevi.

⁴ Engelmann, Bernt (1984), *Germany without Jews*, translated from German by D.J. Beer, New York: Bantam Books.

his appointee – Mustafa Kemal. The III Corps which Mehmed Esat was commanding proved to be the most combat effective formation during the battle, consisting of soldiers from the Balkan wars with fresh fighting experience.⁵

Who were these combatants with *fresh fighting experience from the Balkans*? They were mainly Albanians, the extent of whose commitment in the battle remains to be clarified and investigated into more details. This claim can be backed by the fact that majority of Albanians in the Balkans were Moslems, and as noted earlier, their role in the Ottoman Empire has been massive. If we are unable to name one by one every Albanian participating and falling in the battle, at least we know that all three key Ottoman commanders (Mehmed East, Vehib Pasha, and Mustafa Kemal) were from the Balkans, they were Moslems, and they were Albanians. This was not an accident why the key commanders were Albanians. The leader of the 1908 Young Turk Revolution, Enver Pasha (1881-1922) was of Albanian origin, who prior to, in the course of, and after the battle, was the minister of war in the Ottoman Empire. Contrary to Ottoman Albanians, the Ottoman Turk majority wanted an alliance with the Allies. The Albanian alternative prevailed, thus the Ottomans found themselves aligned with Germany through a secret agreement signed on 30 June 1914, just two days after the outbreak of WWI. In addition, Mehmet Akif, the son of an Albanian from Kosovo who as of his early 1913 poem “Ben ki Arnavudum” (My name is Albanian), in his largest poem titled “The cleric on the chair/throne” expressed a sympathy towards the Germans against the French, and recommended that the Turks should learn lessons from the Germans.⁶ The Turkish youth who fell in the battle, or those which the Allies had expected to face it as an “ill-prepared conscript Turkish army”, indeed fell, after which the Ballad of Çanakkale (Çanakkale içinde – Inside Çanakkale) is dedicated to them, but the backbone of resistance were the experienced fighters from the Balkans. A documentary made and released by the respected Discovery Channel in 2005, raised the question as what might have gone wrong among the Allies, especially with highly trained British soldiers who in the initial onslaught were repulsed by a handsome of Turkish defenders?⁷ How could so

⁵ Erickson, Edward J. (2007), *Ottoman Army Effectiveness in World War I: A Comparative Study*, New York: Routledge/Taylor & Francis.

⁶ Yayinevi, Gonca (2009), *Mehmet Akif Ersoy: Safahat – vepra poetike e plotë* (Mehmet Akif Ersoy: Safahat – a complete work of poems), 2nd ed., translated from Turkish int Albanian by Mit’hat Hoxha, Shkup: LOGOS-A. Mehmet Akif has also the best known poem about Çanakkale martyrs, published outside Safahat.

⁷ Discovery Channel (2005), “The Gallipoli Catastrophe Documentary”, available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8dj8mQ6cgR8>, accessed on 29 March, 2015.

few Turkish ill-prepared defenders pin down so many highly trained British soldiers, the Discovery Channel documentary further asked? It maintained that the Turks were not at all ill-prepared, and addressed the failure of invasion to terrain which reportedly favored the defending Turks. The only critical thing that the Discovery Channel and the Allies have not yet discovered was neither the landscape favoring the “ill-prepared Turkish conscripts” nor defensive positions, but highly experienced fighters from the Balkans. There was, and still is, a difference between *highly trained* and *highly experienced*. Trained soldiers not necessarily imply a guarantee of fierce and effective fighting, but experienced ones, mostly Albanians both in command and operative level, actually did in Çanakkale. This is the answer to the “mystery” of ill-prepared “Turks”, and which can be proven by investigation. From leadership and commanding point of view, the Battle of Gallipoli appears as predominantly Albanian, not Turkish. That is why we prefer to call it an Ottoman battle, or as it was originally. One crucial question arises: while the leaders of the battle are known, how did the [Ottoman] Albanian fighters as a bulk of operational level occurred? The answer remains to be discussed in the forthcoming section.

How much did the landscape helped the defenders for eight months and two weeks? In the initial Allied attack, the defenders were well positioned to surprise the enemy. Occupying a territory in WWI needed a commitment of large number of troops as infantry, as opposed to modern warfare which can employ a more sophisticated technology and material. Storming by a large number of troops in WWI like in Gallipoli was a risky one if the defense lines were well-prepared by the adversary. The Ottomans awaiting the Allied landing indeed were in a position to inflict massive casualties, most notably by the German supplied machine guns, but for how much longer? If the course of the battle rapidly turned into what the documentary by Discovery Channel said “static trench warfare”, then the landscape of Gallipoli would have favored the Allies, not the Ottomans. Given the very high number of casualties from both sides estimated at half a million (killed, wounded, sick, missing, and prisoners) with quarter a million each, the Ottoman defensive position experienced a larger change in newcomer troops in front lines than the Allies. In that case, the British fighters thousands of miles away from Britain in the shores and “static trenches” of Gallipoli became more familiar with the terrain than the new Ottoman recruits who might had come from only dozens of miles away from Gallipoli but never visited the site until they found themselves there in front of the enemy. Poor leadership from London is also not the due answer to find the cause of failure in occupying the Gallipoli Peninsula. It was the Albanian experienced

contingent both in command and fighting that made the Allies fail. An approximate number of Albanian fighters died in Gallipoli is not yet known, but it can be investigated properly. Unofficial Albanian speculations today put the number as high as 50 000, in another 40 000, and in the lowest estimate at 25 000, though I have never come across any methodology used in proving any of these claims. In the Albanian textbooks of history this battle is not even mentioned at all when talking about WWI. That is similar if a country in its textbooks of history teaches you a lot about WWII but does not consider the Battle of Stalingrad as a part of it!

Having experienced fighters and organizing good defense networks still could not win the battle for the Ottomans. Germany, an adversary of Russia in WWI, was supporting the Ottomans with weapons and military advisors. The weapons were modern by the standards such as machine guns, heavy artillery, sea mines, navy, and a squadron of fighter planes. The battlefield positions in Gallipoli might have continued as mutual costly stalemate after the Allies' August offensive. In November 1915 the conditions worsened on both sides as a result of rains and flooding of the trenches. The Allies reportedly decided to evacuate at this time. The evacuation was not taking place until the road from Germany through the Balkans was opened after Austro-Hungarian and Bulgarian invasion of Serbia, enabling the shipment of heavy artillery to the battlefield to destroy the Allies' trench networks.⁸ If the Allies had lost the ground earlier on potential taking the site intended, it was at this time when German artillery supplies ended any hope of keeping a stalemate either, eventually forcing the Allies to withdraw.

2. The issue of Moslem volunteers

There might have been many Moslem volunteers going to fight in the multinational Battle of Gallipoli, an exact number of which would hardly ever be established. On the 100th anniversary of the battle, Yunus Emre Institute in Prizren (Kosovo) organized a panel on 19th March 2015, to discuss the importance and legacy of the battle. Participants included various institutions and representatives; Embassy of the Republic of Turkey in Kosovo, Turkish peacekeepers deployed in Kosovo, professors from Mehmet Akif University of Burdur, historians and researchers from Kosovo,

⁸ Gilbert, Greg (2013), "Air Warfare over the Dardanelles", *Wartime*, Canberra: Australian War Memorial, no. 61, pp. 42-47.

Bosnia, Albania, Turkey, Sanjak (a region in southwestern Serbia and northeastern Montenegro), and many others.

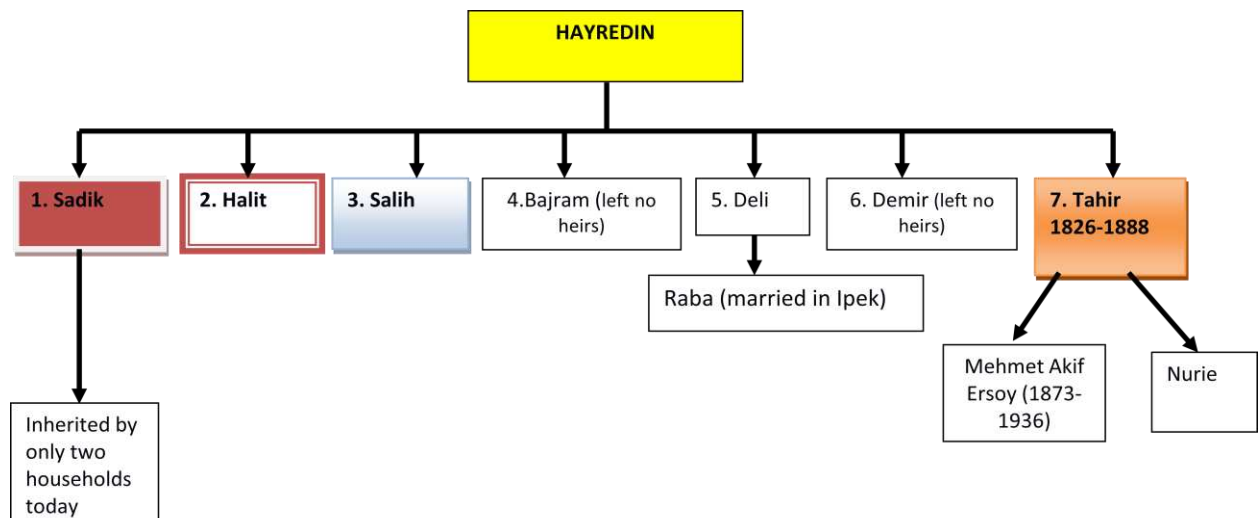
The general impression from that event was Çanakkale as the battle in defense of Islam, with some sensational claims in presentations as follows: i) it was a defense of moon crescent against the cross; ii) Liman von Sanders asked a soldier “what are you fighting for” and the answer received was “for Allah.” The general then replied: “Only those fighting for the Allah do the right job!”; iii) a presentation by professor Redžep Škrijelji showed some pictures of the time purported to be Bosnian Moslem volunteers from Sanjak to join the defense of Çanakkale; iv) volunteers from all over different nationalities across the Balkans of Moslem faith went there.

To what extent these claims are true? Let us shortly consider them. First, the defense of Gallipoli as a gateway through the Dardanelles Straights to Constantinople (then quite a multinational and multi-faith city) had exclusive geopolitical objective, irrespective in what name some fought for it. Germany as a “nation of cross” was equally eager to defend it against other Christian nations like the British, French, and Russians. Second, we might have not known the attitude of Liman von Sanders as a German Jew about Allah. He might have simply inspired the defender in Gallipoli, if he ever had maintained that attitude towards the Allah. Third, professor Škrijelji who after his presentation in Turkish told me that he is Albanian, showed some important evidence (pictures) of volunteers from the Sanjak.⁹ What we saw from the pictures, majority of armed people were with white caps, a distinctive mark of Albanians. In another picture he showed a larger group of fighters under a big Austrian flag in Novi Pazar, also bearing white caps. Although the picture is worth 1 000 words, it cannot speak if the lined up armed Albanians were volunteering to Çanakkale, or they were mobilized in late November 1915 by Austro-Hungary. True, as stated earlier, Austro-Hungary invaded Serbia in order to have the road open for the Axis to directly support the Ottomans in the battlefields of Gallipoli. Fourth, it is not clear what was the participation by ethnic minorities from the Balkans such as Gorani, Torbesh, and Pomaks, for which the world has not heard about their identity or existence until the late 20th and early 21st century.

⁹ Shkreli is one of exclusive Albanian tribes originating from northern Albania. It can never be a Bosnian Moslem or any other nation, just as we cannot say that the names Rubin or Cohen are Greek by nationality.

2.1. A case study of Selim, the “King’s asker”

Selim was Mehmet Akif’s uncle son born in 1866 in Shushica village of Istog (then Ipek or today Peja/Peč), modern day Kosovo, who took part in the battles around Constantinople, including Çanakale. Many eyewitnesses still live, including my father Adem (1929-) who at the time of Selim’s death was 22, report that Selim was the “King’s [Sultan’s] asker [soldier]” in the Vilayet of Kosovo, who had been awarded the medals for his service. He is described by current eyewitnesses as being little shy, brave, and stubborn. A part of information about him, especially during his service as “kings’ soldier” is reported and inherited by my grandfather Beqir (1892-1967). Figure below, showing genealogical tree, indicates the key people that this section talks about.



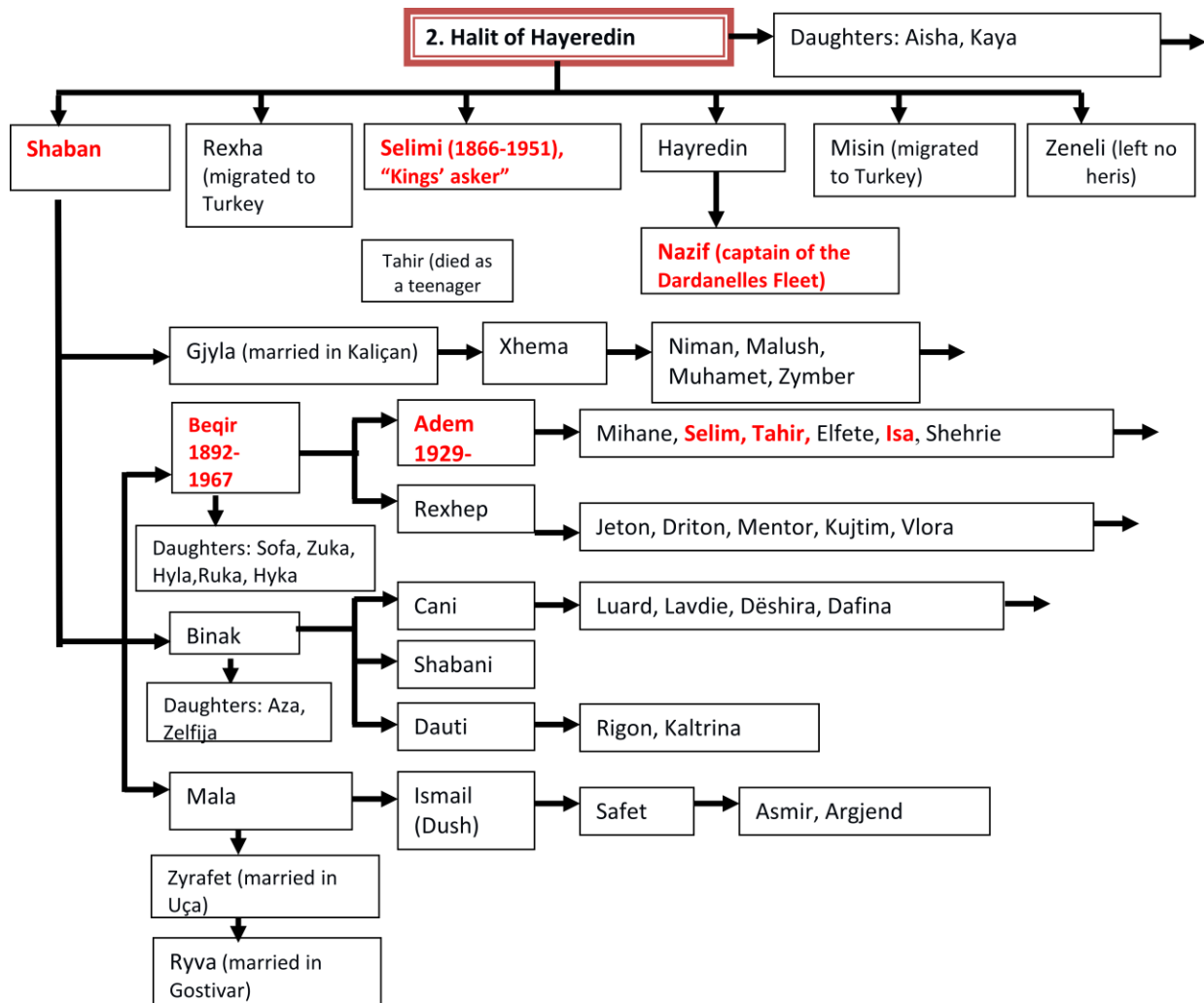


Figure 1: Genealogical tree of Mehmet Akif and of "King's asker"

Note: Turkish sources indicate the name of Mehmet Akif's grandfather as Nuradin. If they do not have any official document on his personal data as a source, it is likely that they have mixed the name Hayredin with Nuradin.

After the Balkan wars, Selim was reported as being taken by the Young Turk authorities as a "hostage" and sent for three years somewhere in the border between Bulgarians and the Turks, and later near Istanbul where Turkey was waging a great war against Britain and France. He returned home in late spring 1916, which implies that three years earlier was in mid-1913. His actions and deeds during his three year experience as a "hostage", remain undocumented from our side, thus we cannot go into assumptions. The only hope is to look at the Ottoman archives about the battles with Bulgarians in the Turkish part of Europe, and of Gallipoli. However, the events of the time offer the clues to clarify why the decorated "kings' soldier" for bravery was taken "hostage."

Kosovo Vilayet was lost to Serbia after the First Balkan War in the second half of 1912. Selim was the *asker* of Sultan Abdulhamid II, or the one who used to call Kosovo the *diamond of Ottoman Empire*.¹⁰ In 1913, what was left as Ottoman Empire, entered into alliance with Serbia against the Bulgarian hegemony. This was the year in which the Young Turks who were in power since August 1908, took Selim in a kind of forced mobilization, with a justification that the *kings' asker* must appear for duty whenever the king (Sultan) calls for. He had refused as the new Sultan, Mehmet Reshat V, did not have the same power and ideology (absolutism) to which Selim served as a distinguished and decorated fighter. In 1913 Selim was 47, still a good age for fighting. The claim that he was taken hostage reported even today by eyewitnesses is misunderstood. The Young Turks did not take him as a hostage, but had the obligation to recruit previous Ottoman fighters who survived the Balkan wars. This is simple; if you lose the war and the territory, the soldiers dispatched or even melted away with local civilian population, are still considered part of the establishment to which they served. The Turks did not need Ottoman Albanian experienced fighters to be taken away as prisoners, but to fight. Moreover, the American military historian Edward J. Ericson who has written some 13 books about Ottoman Empire and modern Turkey, who can be regarded as a champion in this respect for the volume of his works, had no reason of referring to the Balkan participants, Albanians in particular, as the most combat worthy formation in the Battle of Gallipoli. If Selim hesitated to go there, it does imply that he was taken hostage, but a call to duty.

What did he do after returning home? He served as a deputy imam in the mosque of Shushica.¹¹ Shushica did not have an imam, who needed to come from another village, and was always missing in the night prayers known as *yahtsia*, in which Selim replaced him. Selim was reported to have acted as a consultant from his home to largely illiterate villagers who needed to write letters and learn Islam over different matters of life. Still according to eyewitnesses, in Selim's own words, helping Moslems in this way (through

¹⁰ This, however, is unattested in this paper by any credible source, but given that it was referred to in TV interviews by few Albanian scholars, it certainly can be found somewhere if the Sultan had ever called Kosovo by such a name.

¹¹ The construction of this mosque begun in 1855, the same year when Selim's uncle Tahir (1826-1888, the father of Mehmet Akif Ersoy) went to Constantinople to be educated for imam and return to the same mosque in Shushica but never returned, and was finished, as an Arabic inscription in a marble above its door shows, in 1278 according to Hijr (Moslem) calendar, which corresponds to the year 1861 of Gregorian Calendar. The mosque was burned by the Serbs in April 04, 1999. It is rebuilt by the funding of Turkish Agency for Cooperation and Development (TIKA) in May 2015.

literacy and teaching of Islam) is a more effective way of advancing the Moslem cause on its own than in the battlefield against the enemy. He died childless in 1951. His sole son named Tahir in honor of his uncle Tahir Efendi (Mehmet Akifs' father) died as a teenager. This may be the reason why Mehmet Akif did not assign any of his first sons the name of his beloved father, but to his fourth or the last son, after Tahir of Selim passed away. When my father is asked as why he did not give his sons some Albanian names but Turkish and/or Arabic such as Selim and Tahir (see these names marked in red from Figure 1), his answer was, and still is: "Selim was the kings' *asker*, a brave decorated fighter, and a committed Moslem. Tahir [his second son] was the father of Mehmet Akif [although he, i.e. my father, knows nothing else about Tahir Efendi as a tutor at Fatih Maddrasah]. This is our heritage and pride under whatever circumstances", he sums up. Rising of Selim at higher importance than of Tahir Efendi by their close relatives in Kosovo is based on their personally knowing the first, while the negligence of the latter (including of his son Mehmet Akif) is caused by non information until 21st century. The opposite can be proven from the Turkish side; Mehmet Akif, Tahir Efendi, but still no information and importance whatsoever about the decorated kings' *asker*.

3. The impact on nationalism and new states among the Allies

Though the Ottoman victory came at very high cost, it generated the belief that the Turks can beat the Allies. Immediately, on April 1916, the Turks attacked, surrounded and forced the surrender of the British at Kut Al Amara in Mesopotamia. The campaign of this confidence ended in the Battle of Romani (3-5 August 1916) near the Suez Canal in Egypt, and more evidently came to be rolled back in the Battle of Meggido (19-25 September, 1918) which brought the destruction of Ottoman 4th, 7th, and 8th army led by Mustafa Kemal and Otto Liman von Sanders. The Allies (Great Britain, France, and Kingdom of Hejaz) outnumbered the Ottomans 2:1 in troops (over 70 000 versus 35 000). Within a week, of 35 000 Ottoman soldiers, 29 000 became victims and only 6 000 escaped capture.¹² The glory of the battle in Çanakkale at that point had come to be useless. Shortly after Germany and Austro-Hungary were forced into ceasefire as losers of WWI, the Allies quickly invaded Gallipoli, Çanakkale, the

¹² Cutlack, Frederic Morley (1941), *The Australian Flying Corps in the Western and Eastern Theaters of War, 1914-1918*, Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-19178, Vol. 8, 11th ed., Canderra: Australia War Memorial.

Dardanelles Straights, and Constantinople itself as a capital city. Without underestimating any of the components in defending the Gallipoli because all of them were in a cluster effect, the German support was the key in defeating the Allies. With enormous losses in Çanakkale, the confidence of Ottomans in beating the Allies experienced a shock when parts of Turkey were conquered and divided between the Allied states. However, a group of officers headed by Mustafa Kemal emerged as the forerunners in the Turkish War of Independence, who brought back and sealed the glory of the Battle in Gallipoli, with a reinforced belief that the Turks again can beat the Allies.¹³ Albanians again emerged as prominent commanders in the Turkish War of Independence. Kâzım Fikri Özalp (1880 – 1968), an Albanian nicknamed as Kâzım Köprülü in honor of his town of birth (currently known as Veles in modern Republic of Macedonia), participated in several war fronts. He was the first Minister of Defense of the Republic of Turkey (1921-1924), Assembly Speaker of the Parliament of Turkey (1924-1935), and again Minister of Defense (1935-1939). His role in the war of liberation and later in higher positions in the Turkish government, may be credited to him as *deputy Atatürk*. The Father of the Turks (Mustafa Kemal) and Deputy Father of the Turks (Kâzım Köprülü) were Albanians.

The spirit of Turkish nationalism and self confidence which the Battle of Çanakkale and the Turkish War of Independence fueled onwards was to result in Turkey's invasion of Northern Cyprus in 1974. Six years later, generals in the Turkish Army organized a *coup de tat*. The pioneer of this military coup was general Kenan Evren (1917-), an Albanian of Presevo or Buajnovac (modern day Southern Serbia) origin, who became the 7th president of the Republic of Turkey from 1980 to 1989. Following the emergence of Justice and Development Party (AKP) and the rise of charismatic Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the issue of military interference in Turkey's government is reviewed, and the Battle of Çanakkale is viewed with a tendency to be interpreted and used differently as a legacy. Yet, attempts by the military to overthrow or otherwise interfere in the Government resurged, in what resulted as Ergenekon trials. Interesting, one of the key suspected leaders, was general Ilker Başbug (1943-), of Albanian origin, 26th Chief of Staff of Turkish Army who was sentenced to life imprisonment in August 2013 but released and cleared of charges six months later.

¹³ This time, the ally and supporter of Turkey with weapons was her former foe, Russia. The main reason why Russia supported her earlier fresh adversary (Turkey), was that it wanted to keep her allies of WWI engaged in combat with the Turks during the Russian Civil War in which the Allies were supporting Russia's White Army against the Red Army.

General Başbug was born in the city of Afyonkarahisar. The retired officer of Turkish Special Forces, Fikret Emek, also comes from the same city, who was sentenced to over 40 years in prison. The same place or city of Başbug and Emek, both of which with high profile expertise over military affairs, does not suggest a potential cooperation between them in alleged conspiracy to overthrow the Government. This is a matter of Turkey's courts and verdicts.

Apart from the impact on Turkey's history and national consciousness, the Battle of Gallipoli had considerable impact among the Allies who sent their forces under the command of British Empire. The political effect of the battle was the emergence of Australians and New Zealanders as independent nations, who earlier were considered as British people. Australia and New Zealand committed a large force known as ANZAC (Australia and New Zealand Army Corps), suffering over 35 000 casualties (dead, wounded, missing, and prisoners of war). The campaign had a much stronger political impact in Ireland that resulted in the Irish War of Independence (1919-1921) associated with the slogan "It was better to die near an Irish sky than in Suvla or Sed el Bahr."¹⁴ Had the Allies made a swift victory in Gallipoli, these identity or separatist movements certainly would have not happened, or at least would have been delayed for an undefined future for other causes. But the aftermath resulted in more divisions between the Moslems who won that battle and lost the war.

The prosecuted Moslems in the Balkans are now creating the belief that their perspective and defense relies on forging alliances with the countries adhering to Ottoman heritage. Any random investigation about the Battle of Gallipoli, finds the undisputed role of Albanians. Not a single participant or fallen Albanian in Çanakkale from Kosovo, Albania, Macedonia, Greece, Serbia is ever raised as a martyr or hero. During communism in former Yugoslavia, two fallen volunteers from Kosovo in the Spanish Civil War (Asim Vokshi and Xhemajl Kada) were declared national heroes of Albanians. Ironically, they (the volunteers in the Spanish Civil War) went to fight and died for the communist cause backed by Serbia's ally, Soviet Russia, at the time when Serbia as Russia's key ally in the Balkans was ruling Albanians in Kosovo through a reign of terror, and planned to forcefully deport all of them to Turkey, beginning in 1939. It was the Axis Powers defeating the communists in Spain, the outbreak of WWII and invasion of Serbia that stopped the depopulation of Kosovo from Albanians by Serbia.

¹⁴ Orr, Philip (2006), *Field of Bones: An Irish Division at Gallipoli*, Dublin: Liliput Press.

4. War ethics in Gallipoli

Despite considered as one of the worst experiences in combat and with toughest fighting conditions during WWI, the Battle of Gallipoli is distinguished for some best practices of war ethics in its course and aftermath. And this ethics came from the Ottomans who were defending their homeland. The Allies were suspected of bombing the Ottoman hospitals. Chemical weapons were brought to the theater but not used. Upon withdrawal, the Allies took with themselves what could be taken and destroyed what could not be evacuated, though a large quantity of supplies still fell to the Ottomans. The act of deliberate killing of 508 mules by the Allies as reported by Aspinall-Oglander just not to let the fall into Ottoman hands, was unethical.¹⁵ The Gallipoli Peninsula was already a bloodbath with many human bodies as casualties left unburied to decompose in the open, thus it added more to the heavy environmental consequences of the war. Irrespective of this bizarre behavior, it was the Ottomans and later modern Turkey, especially Mustafa Kemal, coming to regard with a respect the enemies in Gallipoli. He used the battle as a lesson for reconciliation and friendship between the belligerent nations. Turkey hosts the cemeteries for the ANZAC with healing words of Atatürk, which Australia and New Zealand have copied into their Kemal Atatürk Memorial in their respective capital cities, Canberra and Wellington respectively. *There is no difference between the Johnnies and the Mehments to us where they lie side by side*, Atatürk wrote in the memorial. But there was a difference between the Johnnies and the Mehments in the battle. The first came well-equipped to invade the land of the latter whom Mustafa Kemal was ordering not to fight but to die – in case you do not have ammunition, fight with the bayonet!

This kind of lesson is much different from what happened in WWII and some 80 years later in Bosnia and Herzegovina known as the Bosnian Genocide involving concentration camps, death camps, and mass rapes of Moslem women by Serb forces and paramilitaries. A similar example of crimes against humanity to a smaller scale was repeated by the Serbs against Kosovo Albanians in 1999, and the Western “code of war conduct” through Guantanamo concentration camp, secret prisons for detaining and torturing of Moslem suspects of terrorism. The Abu Graib prison in Iraq is only one of

¹⁵ Aspinall-Oglander, Cecil Faber (1992), *Military Operations Gallipoli: May 1915 to the Evacuation*, History of the Great War Based on Official Documents by Direction of the Historical Section of the Committee of Imperial Defence II, London: Heinemann, IWM & Battery Press Ltd.

(in)famous examples of crimes by the American military personnel reaching the public. How many more have not yet made the way through to the public? The mission goes on in Iraq and Syria in suspected backing of ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria) crimes by the United States, to give the Moslems a collective epithet as terrorists and criminals. What were the Moslem and Christian crimes in the Battle of Gallipoli, we understood more or less from this section.

Conclusions and implications

The belligerent in the Battle of Gallipoli from the Axis side were the Ottoman defenders from the *millet* involving a large contingency of experienced fighters from the Balkan wars, with Albanians being the most notable commanders and combatants. The Ottoman minister of war was Albanian who strove for and aligned through a secret agreement the Turks with the Germans. German support with Albanian experienced commanders and fighters, won the battle in Gallipoli. The landscape which the Allies continued to debate to this day, played a minor role in the beginning and none thereafter. The contribution by Albanian, Bosnian and other Moslems of the Balkans is now being recognized, but their volunteering in the battle is (re)considered only in recent times that should be dealt with, and this classifies them into following groups: i) Albanian defenders who already found themselves in the Ottoman Fifth Army prior to the battle; ii) regrouping of Ottoman officers from the lost territories and disintegrated corps in the Balkans (Mehmet Esad Bülkat); iii) a call for duty to the demobilized soldiers after defeat in the Balkan Wars (Selim); and iv) mobilization by Austro-Hungary after the invasion of Serbia, taking place from mid-November 1915, to link up the Axis support in the defense of Gallipoli. Not all Balkan Moslems were volunteers.

Would any historian today maintain that the Battle of Normandy during WWII was French because the territory in which it occurred immediately remained part of France? To what extent the Battle of Normandy was French, so was the Battle of Gallipoli Turkish. Dwight Eisenhower (American), William Montgomery (British) in Normandy were like Enver Pasha, Mehmet Bülkat, and Mustafa Kemal in Gallipoli. The role of the American and British soldiers in Normandy was like that of the Albanians in Gallipoli.

The unbeatable combination why the Ottomans won the battle in Gallipoli, consisted of: Albanian commanders and experienced fighters, German weapons and military advisors, Turkey's landscape, Allied poor intelligence and underestimation. While the Balkan Moslems contributed with the bulk of defenders in Gallipoli, the legacy and impact of the battle was suppressed in the countries they came from. Under such circumstances, it was obvious that Turkey remained as its sole and exclusive heir. Now, according to evidence, the battle should be viewed as an Ottoman struggle, to which the Balkan Moslems should have their contribution assessed, appreciated, and the right to its legacy. Fed up by the Western rule, especially in Bosnia, and in Kosovo, with Albania and the Republic of Macedonia as fragile states, the right to the Ottoman heritage by these countries is a legitimate one. The feeling of Moslem ethnic minorities in the Balkans to have their piece of cake in heritage, suggests that modern Turkey should interpret that battle in line with geopolitical tendencies for her own strategic interests.

The Battle of Gallipoli as likely the worst horror of WWI offered some of the best lessons of war ethics for the late 20th , early 21st century and beyond. It is better to learn from the experience of 100 years ago than from late 1990s in former Yugoslavia and first two decades of 21st century across the Middle East. This is a lesson to be learned and utilized in cooperation between the nations, not in the alliances for future wars, but for sustainable peace. The Moslem war ethics demonstrated in Gallipoli served as a cause of emerging new nations: Australia, New Zealand, Ireland, and Turkey. The war is an ugly thing with unpredictable consequences that should be avoided, but this does not mean that one should be relaxed as it will never happen. The peace can be guaranteed if you are ready for war, just as a Latin phrase put it, *Si Vis Pacem, Para Bellum* (If you want peace, prepare for war).

References

Aspinall-Oglander, Cecil Faber (1992), *Military Operations Gallipoli: May 1915 to the Evacuation*, History of the Great War Based on Official Documents by Direction of the Historical Section of the Committee of Imperial Defence II, London: Heinemann, IWM & Battery Press Ltd.

Barleti, Marin (1410 [2005]), *Historia e jetës dhe veprave të Skënderbeut: Princi i Epirotëve* (History of Life and Deeds of Scanderbeg: The Prince of Epirus), botimi i katërt (4th ed.), Tiranë: Infobotues, translated from Latin into Albanian by Stefan I, Prifti.

Cutlack, Frederic Morley (1941), *The Australian Flying Corps in the Western and Eastern Theaters of War, 1914-1918*, Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-19178, Vol. 8, 11th ed., Canderra: Australia War Memorial.

Danişmend, İsmail Hâmi (1971) *Osmanlı Devlet Erkânı* (General Staff of Ottoman Empire) İstanbul: Türkiye Yayınevi.

Discovery Channel (2005), “The Gallipoli Catastrophe Documentary”, available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8dj8mQ6cgR8>, accessed on 29 March, 2015.

Engelmann, Bernt (1984), *Germany without Jews*, translated from German by D.J. Beer, New York: Bantam Books.

Erickson, Edward J. (2007), *Ottoman Army Effectiveness in World War I: A Comparative Study*, New York: Routledge/Taylor & Francis.

Gilbert, Greg (2013), “Air Warfare over the Dardanelles”, *Wartime*, Canberra: Australian War Memorial, no. 61, pp. 42-47.

Miftari, Faik (2001), “Pakëz dritë për Kosovën” (Little light for Kosovo), Prizren: NGL “BAF”.

Orr, Philip (2006), *Field of Bones: An Irish Division at Gallipoli*, Dublin: Liliput Press.

Yayınevi, Gonca (2009), *Mehmet Akif Ersoy: Safahat – vepra poetike e plotë* (Mehmet Akif Ersoy: Safahat – a complete work of poems), 2nd ed., translated from Turkish into Albanian by Mit’hat Hoxha, Shkup: LOGOS-A. Mehmet Akif has also the best known poem about Çanakkale martyrs, published outside Safahat.