



ERP KIM Newsletter 23-10-03

ALBANIAN USURPATION OF THE SERBIAN ORTHODOX INHERITANCE IN KOSOVO AND METOHIJA

In addition to the systemic expulsion of the Serbian population from the territory of Kosovo and Metohija, Albanian historians and the Roman Catholic clergy are waging a war with unabated fervor to prove that the greatest Serbian shrines belong to Albanian culture and tradition. The biggest stumbling block for both is the [Serbian Orthodox Church](#), which is not only encouraging Serbs to remain in their centuries-old homes but also unshakably attesting to hundreds of years of presence, and the identity of Serbian Orthodox spirituality and the Serbian cultural inheritance in this region.



**Serbian Orthodox Church of Bogorodica Ljeviska
or Albanian Roman Catholic Church of Sh'n'm'ria Levishka**

Orthodox Cathedral of Bogorodica Ljeviska (the Mother of God of Ljevis) in Prizren is an age old Byzantine Orthodox church restored by the Serb King Milutin at the end of the XIII to the beginning of the XIV centuries. According to Albanian revisionist "historians" and new school history textbooks, Sh'n'm'ria Levishka is "one of the oldest Roman Catholic Churches converted forcibly the Serbs into an Orthodox church" (<http://www.albanian.com/information/countries/kosova/prizren/index.html>). Albanian Muslims also frequently refer to the Church of Bogorodica Ljeviska as the Juma Mosque because during the XVII century, the Turks converted the church into their own shrine, adding a minaret. Attempts to re-tailor the history of Kosovo and Metohija are one of the least apparent but most dangerous forms of preventing the survival and stay of the Serbian people and the Orthodox Church in this region.

More about the Bogorodica Ljevica cathedral in Prizren:

<http://www.kosovo.com/ljevicka.html>

This text is available in MS Word and PDF formats (for easier printing) at the following addresses:

<http://www.kosovo.com/erpkim23oct03eng.doc> 132Kb

<http://www.kosovo.com/erpkim23oct03eng.pdf> 163Kb

ROMAN CATHOLIC CLERGY IN KOSOVO CONTINUE ITS AGGRESSIVE POLICY TOWARD THE SERBIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

According to the Pristina Albanian language daily "Zeri" (October 18, 2003), Dr. Shan Zefi, the chancellor of Bishop Marko Sopi, told representatives of the National Liberation Movement of Kosovo (LKCK) that "The Serbs built their churches on the ruins of Albanian churches, thus supplanting spiritual values with political ones". The ERP KIM Info Service's attempt to get a statement from Dr. Zefi in direct telephone contact ended without success because the party on the other end of the line hung up.

The Diocese of Raska-Prizren and Kosovo-Metohija once again publicly condemns the continuing aggressive policy of the Roman Catholic bishopric in Kosovo and Metohija, and other Albanian institutions, which during a period of persecution of the Serbian people and their Church, are greedily reaching for the greatest Orthodox shrines in the attempt to appropriate them or indirectly offer legitimacy to their further destruction and desecration.

ERP KIM INFO SERVICE

Gracanica, October 23, 2003

(Photo: Dr. Shan Zefi, chancellor of the Roman Catholic bishopric for Kosovo: "The Serbs built their churches on the ruins of Albanian churches")



The Pristina Albanian language daily "Zeri" published an article on October 18, 2003 under the heading "NATIONAL UNITY IS THE NATURAL AND LEGAL RIGHT OF ALBANIANS" discussing a meeting between representatives of the radical Albanian political organization "National Liberation Movement of Kosovo" (LKCK), which advocates the unification of all so-called Albanian countries in the Balkans, with representatives of the Roman Catholic bishopric of Prizren.

According to "Zeri", Dr. Shan Zefi, the chancellor of Bishop Marko Sopi, told representatives of the LKCK that "The Serbian Orthodox Church built its churches on the ruins of Albanian churches, thus supplanting spiritual values with political ones". The ERP KIM Info Service's attempt to get a statement from Dr. Zefi in direct telephone contact ended without success because the party on the other end of the line hung up.

This shocking statement by Dr. Shan Zefi, who is well-known for his radical nationalistic views, unfortunately, is neither the first nor likely to be the last statement of this kind. In October of last year the Diocese of Raska-Prizren openly protested the comments of the Roman Catholic Bishop of Prizren Monsignor Marko Sopi, who in Enzo della Pellegrina's book "Guerre ethnique: una fatalita? Un esempio - IL KOSOVO (Ethnic wars, fatality? An example - Kosovo) published by Caritas of Vinceza (2001), presented an entire series of flagrant lies not only negating the centuries-long presence of the Serbian Orthodox Church in this region but de facto justifying the systematic post-war destruction of Orthodox churches, which Bishop Sopi calls "political". After these views, Bishop Sopi's further claims that "The churches we see on the maps of Kosovo existed before the arrival of the Serbs" came as no surprise. Of course, neither Marko Sopi nor any contemporary Albanian historians are able to cite a single valid "historical" source confirming their theses. Not that the Albanian "academic public" considers such evidence to be important since the interpretation of history in this region is increasingly becoming a matter of politics and ideology, not of science that rests on valid arguments. In the process of aggressive "nation building" in Kosovo, the Serbs must be stripped of their cultural and historical inheritance or it must be destroyed so that Kosovo is not only politically but also historically forever separated from its motherland, and the Serbian people and their Church forever denied their historical roots.

We wish to remind our readers of some of the other statements of the Roman Catholic Bishop of Kosovo. According to Marko Sopi, the Serbs transferred their church seat to Pec "only after the London Congress" of 1896, after they "occupied the north of Kosovo"?! According to the Albanian revisionist history of Kosovo, during their "occupation of Kosovo and Metohija", where

they were not an autochthon people, the Serbs allegedly "found Albanian Roman Catholic churches, which they destroyed or took over". Hence Bishop Sopi's claim that "Orthodox churches that were recently built were destroyed because they represented the political power of the Serbs" (op. cit.) represents a clear message and lesson to Albanian extremists to complete their process of destruction or usurpation of the Serbian cultural inheritance, which was supposedly built on the ruins of centuries-old "Albanian churches". The recent initiative of the Kosovo ministry of education to tear down the incomplete cathedral of Christ the Savior in downtown Pristina is only one of the examples of how new historical theories are being implemented in practice, sadly, with the silent blessing of the Kosovo Albanian Roman Catholic clergy, which, according to a senior UNMIK representative who wished to remain anonymous, plans to build a large Roman Catholic cathedral right on that very spot.

(Photo: Bishop Marko Sopi: "The churches we see on the maps existed before the arrival of the Serbs")



An educated reader will not require special proof to recognize that these false claims, spread for several years by the Roman Catholic bishopric in Kosovo and other Kosovo nationalist institutions are representing the ideological basis for wave of destruction that has reduced 112 Orthodox churches since the armed conflict of 1999 into ashes and dust, are groundless. This attitude on the part of the Roman Catholics toward the Serbian Orthodox Church is not only unacceptable from the moral and spiritual aspect but is also completely unjustified, since the war conflict of 1999 did not result in damage to a single Roman Catholic church, and Bishop Sopi spent the entire period of war safely in Prizren. The Serbian Orthodox Diocese of Raska-Prizren and Kosovo-Metohija has been one of the chief initiators of dialogue among representatives of the religious communities in Kosovo and Metohija since 1998, in the hope that the voice of tolerance and mutual respect might reduce the intensity of ethnic violence and hatred. However, a series of meetings where various declarations were signed obligating the parties to tolerance and respect was followed by completely opposite actions and statements by the Roman Catholic clergy and Muslim leaders; consequently, the Diocese was forced to discontinue its participation in the dialogue as a sign of protest. In an open letter written at the beginning of 2002, Bishop Artemije openly criticized the views of Bishop Sopi, which also failed to produce any results.

One of the most illustrative examples of the attitude of the Roman Catholic clergy toward the remaining Serbs in Kosovo and Metohija can be seen in Djakovica, [where five Serb elderly women are still living in the parish home](#) of the Church of the Most Holy Mother of God. In the past four years, no Albanian has offered these women so much as a piece of bread, despite the fact that there is a Roman Catholic monastery in Djakovica and several missionary priests who are well aware of the fate of these five Serb elderly women.

"According to a large number of historical documents many monasteries and churches Serbs today claim as their own were actually originally Albanian churches simply taken over or Churches built over the grounds of Albanian churches destroyed."

**Kosovapress, Pristina, July 28, 1999 god.
(Kosovo Albanian press agency close to former UCK)**

Unfortunately, Albanian quasi-historical theories are increasingly becoming an official justification for the "paradoxical" fact that a region the Albanians stubbornly claim as an authentically Albanian ethnic territory, where the Serbs were only "occupiers and looters", contains so many Orthodox churches and cultural monuments, many of them of world importance. In fact more than 80% of entire Kosovo's cultural heritage belongs to the Serbian tradition. The most succinct explanation of contemporary Kosovo history was offered by the current president of Kosovo and Metohija, Ibrahim Rugova, on August 25, 1995 to the Kosovo Information Center: **"Kosova was inhabited by the Albanians since the ancient times - Kingdom of Dardania within the Illyrian Kingdom. Afterwards it was one of the Roman Provinces. Whereas, during the Byzantium Age, Middle Ages, and through the Ottoman Empire, Kosova was a separate entity with a distinct identity. Monasteries and churches in Kosova were originally Albanian later taken over by the Serbs who destroyed a large number of Albanian catholic churches."** (Cited from <http://www.hri.org/news/balkans/kosova/95-08-25.ksv.html>) (Refutation of these quasi-

historical claims of Kosovo's president may be found on the following address:
http://www.kosovo.com/rugova_hist.html)

(Photo: Ibrahim Rugova: "Monasteries and churches in Kosova were originally Albanian later taken over by the Serbs who destroyed a large number of Albanian catholic churches")



At the same time, the newly established Kosovo Ministry of culture and sports, which does not include a single Serb, is determined to push through a law on the protection of cultural property that would place jurisdiction over the Orthodox cultural inheritance in the Province exclusively under the authority of Kosovo Albanians. Currently several foreign donations remain frozen because the Serbian Orthodox Church has refused to allow the process of protection and restoration of churches and frescoes to be conducted under the direction of Pristina without the participation of the Serbian Ministry of Culture through the Coordinating Center for Kosovo and Metohija. Frequent protests by the Coordinating Center against attempts to usurp jurisdiction over Serbian churches and monasteries by an ethnically clean Albanian ministry are regularly ignored by UNMIK, whose position seems to be that the "Kosovo cultural heritage" should be administered by Kosovo institutions. It is not necessary to emphasize the possible consequences that may result if the protection of the Serbian cultural and historical heritage is placed under the exclusive jurisdiction of the Kosovo Albanians, taking into account that "experts" of the aforementioned Kosovo ministry and the Albanian Institute in Pristina are among the chief ideologists of the theory of "Albanian churches taken over by the Serbs". By the way Minister of culture Mr. Blakcori has never visited a single Serbian Orthodox Church, and has never uttered a word of regret for systematic destruction of Orthodox Christian heritage after the 1999 conflict.

This aggressive attitude toward the Serbian Orthodox spiritual inheritance in Kosovo and Metohija on the part of the highest representatives of the Roman Catholic Church in Kosovo and Metohija and "the Albanian intellectual community" represents one of the chief obstacles to interethnic reconciliation and the establishment of tolerance among religious communities in the Province. Unfortunately, even a meeting between the Serbian Orthodox Bishop Irenaeus of Bachka with Monsignor Sopi in Rome in May of this year failed to result in a noticeable change in attitude. On the contrary, while Bishop Sopi tried to fool the representatives of the Serbian Orthodox Church, claiming that he was wrongly accused, in practice he continued tolerating aggressive behavior of the Serbian Orthodox Church, a fact amply attested to by the most recent official statement of the second most senior official of the bishopric and his deputy, given in his personal presence.

Bishop Artemije has in the meantime strongly forbidden ethnic Albanian tourist guides lead tours of KFOR and UNMIK personnel in Serbian Orthodox shrines because on several occasions it happened that they used these opportunities to indoctrinate internationals with theories full of historical lies and ethnic prejudices.

According to sources close to the Belgrade Roman Catholic archbishopric, Marko Sopi, although officially a member of the Conference of Catholic Bishops of Serbia-Montenegro, does not attend meetings because he refuses to acknowledge the name of the Conference (as well as of the state to which Kosovo and Metohija belongs according to Resolution 1244); consequently, he is de facto acting as the independent Roman Catholic head of a "phantom state". As these views on the part of the Roman Catholic clergy in Kosovo and Metohija appear to be known to both to the Belgrade Roman Catholic Archbishop, Stanislav Hocevar (a Slovene), as well as the papal nuncio in Belgrade, Monsignor Eugenio Sbarbaro, and certainly to Rome, it is very difficult to believe that the Kosovo bishop and his deputy do not enjoy at least silent support for their radical behavior. Delegation of the Serbian Orthodox Church which visited Vatican in May 2003 and met with Pope John Paul II strongly expressed its concerns because of barbarous destruction of the Orthodox Christian heritage in the UN administered province and requested more cooperative and Christian position of the local Roman Catholic clergy.

The Diocese of Raska-Prizren and Kosovo-Metohija once again publicly condemns the continuing aggressive policy of the Roman Catholic bishopric in Kosovo and Metohija, and other Albanian institutions, which during a period of persecution of the Serbian people and their Church, are greedily reaching for the greatest Orthodox shrines in the attempt to appropriate them or indirectly offer legitimacy to their further destruction and desecration.

Fr. Sava Janjic
Diocese of Raska-Prizren and Kosovo-Metohija

We enclose a translation of an article published in the Pristina Albanian language daily "Zeri" on October 18, 2003 mentioning the statement of Dr. Shan Zefi.

ZERI, Pristina, October 18, 2003

NATIONAL UNITY IS THE NATURAL AND LEGAL RIGHT OF ALBANIANS

translation from Albanian:

National unity is the natural and legal right of Albanians, said the leaders of the LKCK (National Liberation Movement of Kosovo) at a meeting with the bishop of the Albanian Catholic Church in Prizren.

Dr. Zhan Zefi, the secretary and chancellor of the bishopric of the Catholic Church in Kosovo, emphasized that humanitarian, spiritual, moral and cultural values represent the most important values that must precede reunification, pointing out that basic moral values should become obligatory in our human and ethnic goals.

"We have influence on Western circles with respect to the Kosovo issue and we are proving to the world that the church of our culture is the Albanian Catholic church, while the Serbian Orthodox Church built its churches on the ruins of Albanian churches, thus supplanting spiritual values with political ones," said Zhan Zefi. Leaders of the LKCK stated that this political groups expresses its respect for all spiritual missionaries who suffered losses for national goals.



Barbarism before the eyes of the whole world

Destroyed Serbian Orthodox Churches, desecrated icons, dug up cemeteries are the consequence of a new cultural and historic cleansing that Albanian ideologists are carrying out in Kosovo and Metohija with the support of the Roman Catholic clergy with the goal of creating a new, ethnically pure Albanian state (click to enlarge left picture). Right - The book Crucified Kosovo (click to enlarge right picture).



CRUCIFIED KOSOVO

HISTORY OF KOSOVO AND METOHIJA

(articles, online books, studies, analyses)

<http://www.kosovo.com/default3.html>

SERBIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH - DIOCESE OF KOSOVO AND METOHIJA

History, monasteries, parishes, organization

<http://www.kosovo.com/default1.html>