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**LUDWIG VON THALLÓCZY'S SECRET AND FATAL
ROLE IN THE 1883 MALËSIA E MADHE UPRISING AS A
CONSEQUENCE OF THE GREAT EASTERN CRISIS**

Abstrakt:

Kumtesa ime me titullin “Roli sekret dhe fatal i Ludwig Thallóczy-it në kryengritjen e Malësisë së Madhe 1883 si pasojë e Krizës Lindore” në konferencën shkencore “Kriza lindore 1875 dhe Shqiptarët”, e cila organizohet nga Instituti i Historisë “Ali Hadri” në bashkëpunim me Akademinë e Shkencave të Shqipërisë-Institutin e Historisë-Tiranë, më 24 tetor 2025 në Prishtinë ndahet në këto pjesë: situata nismëtare 1867; çështja e lindjes 1866-1875; Kriza Lindore 1875-1878 dhe Kongresi i Berlinit; pas Kongresit të Berlinit: politika e Ballkanit në shenjë të diplomacisë së aleancave; Austro-Hungaria dhe Lëvizja Kombëtare Shqiptare; Roli i Thallóczy-it në kryengritjen e Malësisë së Madhe 1883. Në fillim do të trajtohet pozita e Austro-Hungarisë në Ballkan rreth vitit 1867 dhe roli i saj gjatë Krizës Lindore. Pastaj do të shtjellohet pjesëmarrja e Austro-Hungarisë në diplomacinë e aleancave pas Kongresit të Berlinit në kontekstin e politikës së saj të Ballkanit dhe ndaj shqiptarëve brenda Perandorisë Osmane. Si pasojë e Krizës Lindore do të përshkruhet në hollësi roli i Ludwig Thallóczy-it, atëherë ende një agjent i ri i Monarkisë së Dyfishtë dhe më vonë albanolog i shquar dhe politikan austro-hungarez, në kryengritjen e Malësisë së Madhe në vitin 1883.

Fjalët kyç: Ludwig von Thallóczy, kryengritja e Malësisë së Madhe 1883, Kongresi i Berlinit, Austro-Hungaria, Lëvizja Kombëtare Shqiptare.

Initial situation in 1867

Why did Austria-Hungary focus its foreign policy on the Balkan Peninsula in particular?¹ Did it have no other alternatives? First of all, Austria-Hungary's general Christian missionary ideology played a role with regard to the Balkan peoples. Its geographical position between Western Europe and the Balkans and the responsibility derived from the successfully fought Ottoman wars suggested that the monarchy saw itself as a bulwark of Christianity and felt called to liberate and protect the Christian population of South-East Europe.² However, the main impetus for an active Balkan policy lay in the Habsburg Monarchy's ambition to become a great power, which had established itself as an influential player in the Arab Orient around the middle of the 19th century through economic, military, religious and prestige policy measures.³ The Middle East offered the monarchy the opportunity to expand economically and open up profitable overseas markets, to act as a protective power for Catholicism in the Middle East and to increase its own prestige through its presence in an important non-European region. It succeeded in gaining considerable market share, particularly in Egypt,⁴ establishing a dense consular network,⁵ playing a key role in the development of the Lebanon Statute⁶ and playing a pioneering role

¹ See the following Francis Roy Bridge (1989): Österreich (-Ungarn) unter den Großmächten. In: Urbanitsch, Peter; Wandruszka, Adam (Ed.): Die Habsburgermonarchie 1848-1918. Bd. VI/1: Die Habsburger Monarchie im System der internationalen Beziehungen. Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, p. 196-373., here p. 212-237.

² Ingrid Müller (1979): Die Handelspolitik der österreichisch-ungarischen Monarchie am Balkan zwischen 1890 und 1914. Wien: Diss., p. 181.

³ See in detail Fischer (2006).

⁴ Robert-Tarek Fischer (2006): Österreich im Nahen Osten. Die Großmachtpolitik der Habsburgermonarchie im Arabischen Orient 1633-1918. Wien, Köln, Weimar: Böhlau, p. 125-148.

⁵ Ibid, p. 158-161.

⁶ An international commission, composed of France, Great Britain, Austria, Prussia, Russia and the Ottoman Empire, to end the inter-religious conflicts separated Lebanon from Syria in the Statute of Lebanon of 1861 and placed it under a non-Lebanese Christian governor, assisted by a board of twelve members drawn from Lebanon's various religious communities.

in the exploration and development of Sudan.⁷ However, as the 19th century drew to a close, the role of the Dual Monarchy as an influential player in the Middle East began to decline.

In the middle of the 19th century, Austria was still a member of the German Confederation and ruler over large parts of northern Italy. In 1859, Austria lost the strategically unfortunate war against France and the Kingdom of Sardinia-Piedmont and had to cede first Lombardy and a year later the Duchies of Parma, Modena and Tuscany to the Risorgimento of Italy. Upper Italy thus ceased to be a sphere of interest and influence for the monarchy. From 1862 onwards, Austria's endeavours to resolve the German question in the Greater German sense were fiercely opposed by Bismarck, who for his part was striving to resolve the question in the Prussian sense. Already prepared in the Prussian-Austrian Customs War and the German-Danish War of 1864, Bismarck finally succeeded, in alliance with Italy, in defeating Austria in the Prussian-Austrian War of 1866, whose cause - or rather Bismarck's pretext - was the Schleswig-Holstein question, and forcing it out of the German Confederation. This meant that Austria not only lost its leading role within the German states, but also Veneto, which had been ceded to Italy. Where was the newly established Dual Monarchy to turn now? The north-west and south of Europe were closed to it, as was the Russian north-east. All that remained was the "historic mission" in the south-east, the defence and expansion of its "vital interests" in the Balkans.⁸ Its great rival in this was the Russian Tsarist Empire, which saw itself as the Orthodox protecting power of its Slavic brothers on the south-east European peninsula. The good relationship between the two conservative empires since the Congress of Vienna, from which both

⁷ Fischer (2006), p. 135-138 and 164-170.

⁸ The Albanian historian Zef Prela, who completed part of his secondary education in Austria and studied archive material from Vienna brought back by Aleks Buda, is also of the opinion that the Balkans should serve Austria as a substitute for the loss of the Italian territories and the leadership of the German Confederation. See also Zef Prela (1960): Mbi politikën austro-hungare në Shqipëri në çerekun e fundit të shek. XIX-të. In: Buletin i Universitetit shtetëror të Tiranës. Ser. Shkenc. Shoq., 1, p. 209; Zef Prela (1962): Problemi shqiptar dhe politika austro-hungareze (1897-1912). In: Mbi Lëvizjen Kombëtare Shqiptare. Tirana: 8 Nëntori, p. 103; Zef Prela (1965): Problemi kombëtar shqiptar dhe Kultusprotektorati austro-hungarez. In: Studime Historike 2, 3, p. 152.

had emerged as guardians and protectors of the new restorative order against all revolutionary movements in Europe, was severely disrupted by the events and behaviour of both during the Crimean War and was probably never fully restored. The price of the anti-Russian stance in this war, which resulted in the setback of the tsarist empire's Balkan and straits policy, was the Dual Monarchy's Balkan rivalry with Russia, which lasted until the outbreak of the First World War. This circumstance also meant a further narrowing of the Habsburgs' sphere of interest to the western Balkan peninsula, as the mouths of the Danube and the Black Sea lay within the sphere of influence of the tsarist neighbour.⁹

Eastern Question 1866-1875

Relations between Austria and Russia had been very tense since the Crimean War.¹⁰ An advance by the Russians on the Habsburgs' south-eastern flank either directly through Russian military action, for example the occupation of Romania, or through the establishment of satellite states such as Serbia, Montenegro, Romania and Bulgaria had to be prevented at all costs. A direct military confrontation with the overpowering Tsarist Empire was out of the question due to the Monarchy's relative military weakness, which is why the only option for safeguarding Austria-Hungary's interests in the Balkans was to preserve the status quo in the Balkans, that means to maintain the Ottoman Empire's rule over the Balkan peoples. In pursuing this political goal, the Imperial and Royal Ministers of Foreign Affairs always found themselves in the dilemma that any strengthening of their influence on the Balkan Christians inevitably undermined the position of the Ballhausplatz in Istanbul and any support for the Ottomans drove the entire Christian Balkans into the arms of Russia. In view of this difficult starting position, even the anti-Russian Julius Count Andrassy returned to the successful middle course policy of his predecessor Beust by cautiously distancing himself from the Ottoman Empire and attempting to bind the young Balkan states to the monarchy by means of trade agreements.

⁹ Müller (1979), p. 185.

¹⁰ See the following Bridge (1989), p. 237-249.

The Austro-Hungarian-Russian Convention of Schönbrunn on 6 June 1873 served to improve Austro-Hungarian-Russian relations in the interests of maintaining the status quo on the Balkan Peninsula, in which the two emperors pledged to cooperate in the event of an upheaval on the Balkan Peninsula, an agreement which the German Empire also joined a few months later and which was thus expanded into the so-called League of the Three Emperors, although it was to remain essentially an Austro-Hungarian-Russian instrument.

Great Eastern Crisis 1875-1878 and the Congress of Berlin

The Great Eastern Crisis caused by the uprisings against Ottoman rule in Bosnia and Bulgaria in 1875/76 and the declaration of war by Serbia and Montenegro against the Ottoman Empire in July 1876 gave the Habsburg Monarchy cause to fear that the Ottoman Empire might lose the provinces of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which were so important to it for strategic and economic reasons, to the neighbouring Slavic states of Serbia and Montenegro.¹¹ These countries would then have the opportunity to unite to a large Slavic empire - in the form of either an independent state or a Russian satellite state - which would not only cut Austria-Hungary off from trade with the southern Balkans, but would also make irredentist claims on the monarchy. For Vienna, it was absolutely clear: Bosnia and Herzegovina would either have to be Ottoman or Austrian - that means either preservation of the status quo or occupation of the two provinces by the Austro-Hungarian Empire, because there could not and must not be a third alternative!¹² Radetzky had already declared in 1856 that possession of the Bosnian hinterland was of strategic importance for the defence of the Dalmatian coastal strip and thus also for securing the rule of the Austrian fleet in the Adriatic. Finally, in July 1876, a meeting was arranged between Emperor Franz Joseph and Andrassy with Tsar Alexander II and the Russian Foreign Minister

¹¹ See the following Bridge (1989), p. 249-257.

¹² Ludwig Bittner; Hans Untersberger (Ed.) (1930): Österreich-Ungarns Außenpolitik von der bosnischen Krise 1908 bis zum Kriegsausbruch 1914. Diplomatische Aktenstücke des österreichisch-ungarischen Ministeriums des Äußeren. 8 Bde. Wien, Leipzig., p. 28.

Alexander Mikhailovich Gorchakov at Reichstadt Castle, which resulted in the so-called Reichstadt Agreement. The Emperor promised neutrality in the event of a Russian-Ottoman war. In return, Bosnia and Herzegovina were not to fall to Serbia and Montenegro but to the monarchy in the event of the collapse of the European part of the Ottoman Empire. Russia was only to receive southern Bessarabia back and a fair balance was to be maintained in the allocation of territories to the Balkan states. The success of this Reichstadt Agreement, which came about through the instrument of the Three Emperors' League, was the prevention of a direct conflict between Austria-Hungary and Russia.

After the Ottoman Empire's victory over the two Slavic states, the situation had changed completely. Under strong pressure from the Pan-Slavists, the Russian government felt compelled to intervene militarily against the Ottoman Empire. Austria-Hungary was unable to defend the Ottoman Empire because it would not have been able to cope with a war against Russia, in which the monarchy could not count on any help, and did not want to incur the wrath of all Slavs both at home and abroad. On Berlin's advice, the Ballhausplatz attempted to protect Austro-Hungarian interests by diplomatic means within the framework of the Three Emperors' League. The result of this diplomacy was the secret Budapest Convention in January 1877, which was intended to protect the interests of the Habsburg Monarchy in the event of a Russo-Ottoman war.¹³ It confirmed the Reichstadt Agreement and also assured Austria-Hungary of economic control over the Sanjak of Novi Pazar. Russia agreed to limit the possible war to the eastern Balkan peninsula and not to establish a large Slavic state in the Balkans.

In April 1877, Russia declared war on the Ottoman Empire, which was crushed with Romanian and Bulgarian help. Russia no longer thought of honouring the agreements with Austria-Hungary and, in the Preliminary Treaty of San Stefano in March 1878, provided for the establishment of an autonomous Bosnia and a large Bulgarian state extending as far as Lake Ohrid, which was to be occupied by Russian troops for two years. Due to its military inferiority, the monarchy had no choice but to use diplomatic means together with England and Germany to

¹³ See the following Prela (1962), p. 104.

oppose the provisions of the Preliminary Treaty of San Stefano. Bismarck offered to mediate and chair a congress of the Great Powers in Berlin to resolve the Eastern Question. The Congress of Berlin¹⁴ from 13 June to 13 July was a significant success for Andrassy thanks to the support of the other powers. At England's request, Austria-Hungary was given an international mandate for the occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and military and commercial control over the Sanjak of Novi Pazar, leaving the road to Saloniki open and access to the Adriatic blocked to the Serbs. Furthermore, the new principality of Bulgaria was only to extend from the Danube to the Balkan Mountains and remain subject to tribute to the Ottoman Empire. Andrassy was in favour of granting independence to Serbia, Romania and Montenegro and expanding their territories to an extent that was insignificant for the monarchy. Not least by enforcing provisions on railway and Danube policy, he laid the foundations for the development of Austria-Hungary's economic and political influence on the Balkan Peninsula during the 1880s.

After the Congress of Berlin: Balkan policy characterised by alliance diplomacy

The disgruntlement of Russian government circles against Bismarck's anti-Russian stance at the Congress of Berlin and the pressure exerted on the Dual Monarchy by St Petersburg's policy, which was influenced by pan-Slavist forces, led to the two Central Powers forcibly moving closer together, which found expression in the Austro-Hungarian-German alliance of 7 October 1879, the so-called Dual Alliance.¹⁵ This defensive alliance against Russia committed both signatory powers to mutual assistance in the event of an attack by Russia or another power supported by Russia. The negative British attitude under Prime Minister Gladstone

¹⁴ See the following Alexander Novotny (1977): Österreich-Ungarn auf dem Berliner Kongress. In: Zöllner, Erich (Ed.): *Diplomatie und Außenpolitik Österreichs. Elf Beiträge zu ihrer Geschichte*. Wien: Österreichischer Bundesverlag, p. 113-123.

¹⁵ See the following Bridge (1989), p. 257 ff. and Stephan Verosta (1977): *Die Bündnispolitik der Donaumonarchie vor dem Ersten Weltkrieg*. In: Zöllner, Erich (Ed.): *Diplomatie und Außenpolitik Österreichs. Elf Beiträge zu ihrer Geschichte*. Wien: Österreichischer Bundesverlag, p. 131.

in connection with the Montenegrin border settlement in 1880 prompted the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Heinrich Baron Haymerle, to declare his willingness to renew the Three Emperors' League on 18 June 1881, which provided for the maintenance of neutrality in the event of a conflict between one of the partners and a fourth power and the prohibition of independent military action against the Ottoman Empire without prior consultation, although this time it was primarily intended to be a Russian-German instrument. As Russia's demands were more important to Bismarck and he therefore hardly responded to Austria-Hungary's wishes, the point of Russian recognition of the Austro-Hungarian right to annex Bosnia-Herzegovina, which was so important to the monarchy, was relegated to the appendix of the secret treaty text.

In the Triple Alliance Treaty concluded in Vienna on 20 May 1882, the initiative for which came from Italy, which was at odds with France over the Tunis question, all three states attempted to assert their positions in accordance with their respective current interests. Bismarck, who had based his policy on the Dual Alliance and the League of the Three Emperors, wanted to secure the front against France by Italy's accession to the Dual Alliance. Italy, on the other hand, was interested in securing its possessions in the Mediterranean region. The defensive alliance stipulated that the alliance would be triggered for all three parties if one or two of the treaty powers were attacked by two or more states. They promised each other benevolent neutrality if one of the contracting powers felt compelled to wage war for reasons of its own security. In addition, Italy received the assurance of support from Austria-Hungary and the German Reich in the event of an unprovoked attack by France, for which it assumed a corresponding obligation towards Germany, while it only committed itself to neutrality in the event of a Russian attack on the Dual Monarchy. For Gustav Count Kálnoky, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Triple Alliance was a reinsurance treaty that guaranteed Italy's neutrality and allowed the monarchy to deploy all its armed forces in the East if the League of the Three Emperors failed and a military conflict with Russia broke out.

Because of the favourable starting position gained at the Congress of Berlin, the monarchy was able to expand its influence on the Balkan Peninsula. In Bulgaria, although it had to give way to Russia's influence

in the political sphere, it was able to secure economic supremacy in this country. In Serbia and Romania, the respective governments were definitely anti-Russian, in memory of the Treaty of San Stefano. As long as Prince Milan Obrenović retained his crown and the mutually beneficial trade relations could be maintained, Serbia was effectively a satellite state of Austria-Hungary. The relationship with Romania was much more ambivalent. On the one hand, Vienna and Bucharest agreed that Romania and the Danube Monarchy had to work together to form a dam against the Slavisation of Southeast Europe. On the other hand, Romania opposed the Austrian endeavours to control the International Danube Commission and there were fears within the monarchy of possible irredentist claims by the Romanians to Transylvania and Bukovina. Despite these differences, an Austro-Hungarian-Romanian defence alliance against Russia was concluded in the late summer of 1883, as there were fears of a Russian invasion of Bulgaria in view of the great tensions between St. Petersburg and Sofia. However, this alliance, which depended entirely on the position of King Carol and Foreign Minister Bratianu and complemented the Triple Alliance, was unable to prevent the outbreak of a customs war.

Austria-Hungary and the Albanian National Movement

According to Albanian communist historiography, Austro-Hungarian diplomacy had been trying to exert a constant influence on the Albanian National Movement since the Congress of Berlin. Depending on its needs, it supported either the Albanian League of Prizren or the Ottoman Empire. After the suppression of the Albanian League, the Dual Monarchy switched to a policy of status quo, which was most favourable for its “peaceful penetration” into the Albanian territories.¹⁶ Indeed, since 1896, its aim had been to establish an Albanian state as a bastion against Serbian-Montenegrin and Italian expansion.¹⁷ In the event of the collapse of the

¹⁶ Muin Çami (1976): Hyrja në Shqipëri e pushtonjësve austro-hungarezë dhe qëndrimi i Lëvizjes Kombëtare Shqiptare. In: Studime Historike 13, 2, p. 45-58.

¹⁷ Michael Behnen (1985): Rüstung-Bündnis-Sicherheit. Dreibund und informeller Imperialismus 1900-1908. Tübingen: Niemeyer, p. 362.; Kurt Gostentschnigg (1996): Zwischen Wissenschaft und Politik. Die österreichisch-ungarische Albanologie 1867-1918. Graz: Dissertation, p. 51-77; Dörte Löding (1969): Deutschlands und Öster-

Ottoman Empire in the course of the Crete crisis and the Ottoman-Greek War of 1897, Vienna launched the so-called “Albania Action”, the aim of which was to establish a protectorate over the Albanian territories while retaining Ottoman suzerainty and to drive a wedge between Montenegro and Serbia by means of the western Sanjak of Novi Pazar.¹⁸ However, only the last part of this plan was realised.

The game of permanent balancing between Ottoman and Albanian interests was repeated during the Albanian uprisings against the Young Turk regime in 1909-1912.¹⁹ On the one hand, Viennese diplomacy intervened in favour of saving the Ottoman Empire and on the other, it acted as the “defender of Albanian interests” by loudly campaigning for the fulfilment of Albanian demands.²⁰ Thus the Albanian National Movement always depended politically on the goodwill of Austria-Hungary. This asymmetrical relationship was also evident after the Balkan Wars of 1912/1913, when Austria-Hungary played a decisive role in the debate on Albania’s international status, in the definition of its borders and in the organisation of the new state.²¹

Thallóczy’s role in the Malësia e Madhe uprising of 1883

The following deliberately selected chapter provides a detailed account of how a single player in the Political Field was able to compromise Austro-Hungarian-Albanian relations in the northern Albanian region for decades through certain actions taken at crucial moments. This is all the more astonishing as this actor was to become one of the main players in this field twenty years later. For decades after the Congress of Berlin, there were almost annually recurring disputes over grazing lands on the

reich-Ungarns Balkanpolitik von 1912-1914 unter besonderer Berücksichtigung ihrer Wirtschaftsinteressen. Hamburg: Diss., p. 38; Hanns Dieter Schanderl (1971): *Die Albanienpolitik Österreich-Ungarns und Italiens 1877-1908*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, p. 141.

¹⁸ Gostentschnigg (1996), p. 60 f.; Behnen (1985), p. 361.

¹⁹ Peter Bartl (1995): *Albanien. Vom Mittelalter bis zur Gegenwart*. Regensburg: Pustet, p. 121-133.

²⁰ Gostentschnigg (1996), p. 64 f., 71-73.

²¹ Hanns Christian Löhr (2010): *Die Gründung Albaniens. Wilhelm zu Wied und die Balkan-Diplomatie der Großmächte 1912-1914*. Frankfurt/Main: Lang.

Montenegrin-Albanian border.²² At the beginning of December 1881, the Catholic mountain tribes north of Shkodra renewed their alliance against Montenegro. The Ottoman provincial government suspected Austro-Hungarian influence behind this. The Austro-Hungarian Consul General Friedrich Lippich in Shkodra, on the other hand, believed that British agents were behind it. At the beginning of 1883, two members of the Shala and Shoshi tribes were shot in the back by gendarmes in Shkodra. In response, a band of around one hundred men from Shala and Shoshi attacked Shkodra at the beginning of February, killing several soldiers. Rumours were circulating about Austro-Hungarian intentions to first annex Bosnia-Herzegovina and then turn to "Upper Albania", that means northern Albania. The premature announcement of the Provisional Defence Act had led to unrest in Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1881/1882. The uprising was put down by the Austro-Hungarian military. In 1882/1883, there was then a discussion in Vienna about converting the occupation into an annexation, whereby the then first section head of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Benjámín von Kállay, who had been Imperial Minister of Finance from 4 June 1882 and entrusted with the administration of the occupied provinces, pushed more strongly for an annexation. As a diversionary manoeuvre, he and military circles may have been interested in a centre of unrest in northern Albania.

At the turn of the year 1882/1883, when reports of foreign agitation in this region were increasing, the young Ludwig Thallóczy was sent to northern Albania on behalf of Hungarian political circles. Budapest distrusted Consul General Lippich and therefore sent Thallóczy to northern Albania under the code name "Lemaics" as a travelling salesman for little-known industrial companies in order to find out about the true attitudes of the highlanders. As early as the seventies of the 19th century, Hungary established its own independent and secret diplomatic corps.²³

²² See the following Engelbert Deusch (2004/2005): *Der Aufstand der Malësia e Mbishkodrës von 1883 und das Verhältnis der albanischen Katholiken zu Österreich-Ungarn*. In: *Südost-Forschungen* 63/64, p. 261-301.

²³ Krisztián Csaplár–Degovics; Lumnije Jusufi (2017): *The birth of the first Albanian-Hungarian dictionary (1913)*. In: Ramadani, Fehari; Kosumi, Bajram (Ed.): *International scientific conference "Relations between Albanians and Austria-Hungary (Austria) by mid XIX. century to our days"*. Skopje, Prishtina: Logos-A, p. 89.

This network of “economic correspondents” was subordinate to the Hungarian Ministry of Trade. Its well-trained members were not only concerned with economic issues, but also with gathering information and developing international relations. The most talented correspondent was none other than Thallóczy, who officially worked as a travel correspondent for the daily newspaper “Pesti Napló”, but as Lemaics unofficially sent secret political and economic reports, mainly to the Hungarian Minister of Trade, Baron Gábor Kemény.²⁴

In January 1883, as a result of Montenegrin border incidents, the Hoti and Gruda informed the local government that they had been promised help by a traveller, possibly in the form of money and weapons, in place of the Sultan, who seemed to be abandoning them. They also informed Lippich of the traveller’s visit and that, in the event of further territorial cessions at the expense of the highlanders, they would request their admission to the union of Austria-Hungary and seek its help against Montenegro. The mountain tribes sent a representative to Lippich to find out whether Lemaics’ mission had been carried out on behalf of the Imperial and Royal Government and whether they could count on the promised help, not only against Montenegro, but also against the Sublime Porte, from which they wanted to declare their independence after the capture of Shkodra and then submit to the protection of a great power.²⁵ Lippich then declared that Vienna had nothing to do with Lemaics and that he knew nothing about any mission. The mountain tribes should remain calm, as they were in no danger from any side. The Consul General was instructed by the Minister of Foreign Affairs not to encourage the mountain tribes to rebel against the Porte and not to raise any illusory hopes, the fulfilment of which the current situation did not permit.²⁶ The Ballhausplatz promised to support the highland tribes in their defence against Montenegrin and Pan-Slavic aspirations, the preservation of their national identity and any upheavals on the Balkan peninsula. However, maintaining the status quo in the Ottoman Empire was a priority for Vienna, so its intercession on

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Haus-, Hof-und Staatsarchiv Wien (= HHStA), PA 38, K 248, Nr. 35, Bericht Lippichs an Minister des Äußeren Kálmoky vom 20.3.1883.

²⁶ HHStA, PA 38, K 248, bei den Depeschen nach Scutari, Antwortschreiben des Ministers des Äußeren an Lippich vom 12.4.1883.

behalf of the Albanians was limited to friendly influence with the Porte. In the meantime, the Catholic northern Albanians had been misled by Thallóczy and some Franciscan priests. The main role in organising the resistance was played by Father Luigi da Lavello, parish priest of Bajza in Lower Kastrati, who told the highlanders that they would receive help from Austria-Hungary within 24 hours of the outbreak of hostilities with Ottoman troops. On 12 April 1883, the chiefs of the Hoti, Gruda and Kastrati tribes sent an address of loyalty to Emperor Franz Joseph. Due to the appearance of Lemaics alias Thallóczy, the highlanders could no longer be held back by Lippich and did not inform him that the address had been sent.

Secret border negotiations between the Porte and Montenegro to discuss the border disputes and define the border gave rise to rumours that the Ottoman Empire intended to cede the northern Albanian mountain regions to Montenegro in exchange for compensation. The strict secrecy surrounding the pending negotiations between Montenegro and the Porte led to a meeting held in Kastrati on 26 April 1883, at which it was decided to form a defensive league of tribes against any intentions of the Porte to cede the territories. The Catholic tribes of Hoti, Gruda, Kastrati, Shala, Shoshi, Nikaj and Merturi as well as the Muslim tribes of Krasniqi and Gashi joined this defensive league. Commitments came from Mirdita, Ksella and the mountain tribes of Lezha. In a further letter from Vienna dated 24 May 1883, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs clearly distanced itself from Lemaics' agitation trip. However, the damage had already been done: the local government in Shkodra distrusted the Consulate General for months as a result. In the meantime, the local government was preparing a military expedition. The state of siege in Shkodra was tightened. The highlanders waited hopefully for the "Hungarian traveller" and refused to send their chiefs to Shkodra. Father Luigi da Lavello prevented them from communicating with the Porte. Lippich assured Mustafa Asim Pasha, the Vali of the Vilayet Shkodra, that Vienna was not involved in any agitation and would not provide any support. He declared himself willing to influence the parish priest of Kastrati and the bishop of Pulti to favour an understanding between the local government and the mountain tribes. Montenegro had promised the Porte that it would not accept the tribes and their leaders if they were cornered by the Ottoman troops.

The fighting began on 2 June 1883 in Lower Kastrati, reinforced by Upper Kastrati. The Kastrati showed incredible bravery because they trusted Father Giampiero da Bergamo's information that Austrian help was on the way and that they would only have to resist the Ottoman troops for one day. Father Luigi da Lavello called for a fight against the troops in his church. Lippich, on the other hand, had no idea of these events. The bayraktar of Kastrati believed the words of the Franciscans, who in turn had been taken in by the pretences of Thallóczy and his interpreter Hil Loka. After a week, a total of around 3,000 armed men had gathered in Kastrati, from Hoti, Gruda, Shala, Shoshi, Pulti, Këlmendi, Riolli and Shlaku. The insurgent leaders asked Bishop Cracchi to persuade through Consul Lippich the military commander Hafiz Pasha to withdraw his troops in order to begin negotiations. However, Lippich refused and asked the bishop to work against the uprising. The insurgents wanted to bring about a decision and, in the event of failure, hold out for another three weeks if the arrival of material aid from Austria-Hungary could be guaranteed before the end of this period. Lippich, informed of this by a Father, had an express messenger sent to the insurgents to inform them that they had been misled and that no help was to be expected from Vienna, and that they should give up and enter into negotiations, while the Consul General, for his part, would lobby the Porte to grant them amnesty and secure their previous privileges. Lippich spoke to Vienna of the danger that the mountain tribes might turn away from Austria-Hungary after having been misled into false hopes by the unauthorised Lemaics, and of Montenegro using the opportunity to incite the mountain tribes against the Dual Monarchy through agents. On 9 June 1883, representatives of the rebels presented the Consulate General in Shkodra with a petition asking for the protection of Europe. The uprising was suppressed in the following days. The insurgents accused the Ballhausplatz and the Consulate General of having betrayed them and wanted to offer themselves to Montenegro if the Porte did not grant them honourable conditions. Vienna instructed Lippich to inform the mountain tribes that Lemaics was not authorised to speak in the name of Vienna and that the Ballhausplatz did not accept any responsibility for the uprising, but would intercede with the Porte on behalf of the mountain tribes if they recognised the Sultan's authority. With the help of the then Auxiliary Bishop of Shkodra, Pasquale Guerini, the

Consul General finally succeeded in convincing the rebellious mountain tribes to submit to the Ottoman government after they had been promised a general amnesty.

This was followed by state persecution of the leaders and punishment of the rebellious tribes. In the petition of 24 June 1883, twelve leaders, who were hiding in the mountains with their families and only wanted to surrender if impunity was guaranteed, asked the Consulate General in Shkodra to guarantee the safety of their lives and freedom. If their lives were threatened, they would flee to Montenegro. Lippich campaigned in Vienna for the amnesty to be granted unconditionally. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs forwarded the request of its consul general to the ambassador in Istanbul, who was to influence the Porte in this direction. Meanwhile, on 27 June 1883, General Hafiz Pasha began to discipline the refugees by burning their houses and devastating their fields. Only the British consul was willing to lobby his government to support any action by Vienna in favour of the signatories of the petition. The Italian consulate in Shkodra tried in vain to persuade the fugitive leaders to cross over to Italy. On 16 November 1883, Hafiz Pasha returned to Shkodra with 48 prisoners from Kastrati, who were imprisoned. The spoils such as weapons, household goods, cash and livestock were distributed among the officers and soldiers. The remaining property of the bajraktar of Kastrati was completely devastated.

New interpretations in the direction of government loyalty led to amnesties. The Vali now saw the fugitive chiefs as reliable subjects of the Porte because they had not allowed themselves to be bribed by Montenegro into accepting any border adjustments without resistance. He therefore had the troops withdrawn from the occupied tribal territories at the turn of the year 1884/1885. Montenegro lobbied the Porte against an amnesty to persuade the refugees to cross over to Montenegro. Lippich suspected the consuls of Great Britain, Italy and Russia in Shkodra of acting in the same spirit. In 1896, his wife claimed in a private letter to Foreign Minister Agenor Gołuchowski that she had gone to the Vali of Shkodra without her husband's knowledge and had obtained amnesty from him for the fugitive bajraktars, who had been hiding in the cellar

of the Franciscan monastery in Shkodra and had been cared for by her.²⁷ Lippich stood up for the fugitive chiefs against the Vali, pointing out, among other things, that they had only failed to make use of the general amnesty out of fear of Hafiz Pasha's cruelty. On the other hand, a refused pardon would mean that they would use their influence on the tribes in the interests of Montenegro. It was not until May 1886 that the bajraktars of Kastrati and Gruda were reinstated to their hereditary functions, thus taking a significant step towards complete reconciliation between the Catholic mountain tribes and the Porte.

The effects of the uprising were fatal for Vienna in the long term. The still inexperienced Thallóczy had made too big promises on his mission and raised unrealisable hopes. In addition, there had been occasional misunderstandings between him and the highland population. It can therefore be said that he and his patrons were to some extent partly responsible for the uprising of 1883. Because of Thallóczy's irresponsible agitation, this resulted in a lasting disruption of the long-standing trust of the Catholic mountain tribes in Austria-Hungary and an easing of Montenegro's efforts to win sympathy in the border region. August Kral also felt the mistrust during his first time in Shkodra. Counteracting this became a permanent task at the Ballhausplatz. Despite their reports to Vienna, the later consuls general Theodor Anton Ippen and August Kral were unable to get Gruda to use their old property. In the autumn of 1905, Kral obtained a pardon from the Vali for 35 border residents who had fled to Montenegro for various offences, which enhanced Vienna's reputation among the mountain tribes. Considering all these serious consequences, it is somewhat surprising that Thallóczy was still able to make such a career as a civil servant and politician.

²⁷ HHStA, PA I, K 473, Liasse 31, Brief von Frau von Lippich an Gołuchowski, 23.11.1896.