

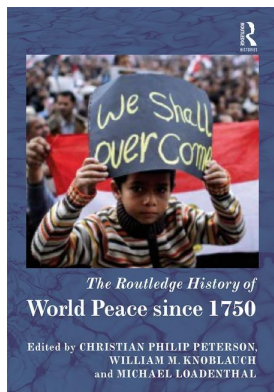
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IBRAHIM RUGOVA AND HIS PEACEFUL RESISTANCE FOR INDEPENDENCE OF KOSOVO

Jusuf Salih

Introduction

During the dissolution of Yugoslavia, Ibrahim Rugova (1944–2006) struggled with the abolishment of his native Kosovo's autonomy and the nation's transition from communism to political pluralism. Widely regarded by Kosovars as the “father” of the Kosovo nation, he helped establish the first legal political party after the collapse of communism, a party that became a national movement for Kosovar Albanians who sought equality and self-determination within Yugoslavia. Rugova also organized a parallel state for Kosovars by peacefully boycotting Serbian rule. These efforts proved influential, as they helped bring about the military intervention of the North Atlantic Treaty Alliance (NATO) that ended the Yugoslavian Civil War and in effect led to the independence of Kosovo.

Rugova was born on December 2, 1944, in Cerrca, a village in Istok, Kosovo. Weeks later, he became an orphan when communist partisans executed his father and grandfather in January 1945. Rugova completed his secondary education in Peja, Kosovo and then attended the University of Pristina, where he received a literature degree in 1971 and doctorate in Albanian literature in 1984.¹ Rugova also spent 1976 in Paris, where he studied under Roland Barthes.² One year later, he returned to Kosovo to teach Albanian literature at the University of Pristina.³ In Kosovo, Rugova also edited literary and scholarly publications and authored several books; by 1988, he was elected president of the prestigious Kosovo Writers Union.⁴

During the late 1980s, Kosovo went through a series of tumultuous events. After Serbia revoked Kosovo's autonomy, Kosovar Albanians strongly opposed the Serbian regime. Rugova's Writers Union became the center of the anti-Serbian movement.⁵ In April 1988, the organization presented a draft of the national Albanian program and emerged as the main voice of Kosovo to the national and international communities.⁶ At the time, the Communist party was the only political party allowed in Yugoslavia, but in 1989, with the collapse of communism came new political possibilities. On December 23, 1989, a political movement named the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK) formed with Rugova as its leader. The LDK rapidly became a broad-based political platform and the epicenter of Kosovo's opposition to Serbian rule.⁷

Before heading the LDK, Rugova showed little interest in politics. But his fame quickly grew, in part because his party was the first non-communist political movement established

in Kosovo.⁸ As Rugova's profile and appeal rose, so did his recognition in the International PEN (now PEN International), a worldwide association of writers who worked on behalf of human rights.⁹ Tens of thousands of people joined the party in its first five weeks.¹⁰ By 1992, after three years of leading the LDK, Rugova was elected president of the parallel state of Kosovo. Symbolically, he held his office in a wooden bungalow close to Pristina's football stadium; he also issued daily communiqués about his activities, and ordinary citizens frequently visited his office. Appreciating his resistance against Serbian rule, Rugova was starting to be regarded as the father of the nation by the Kosovars.¹¹

Compared to his communist predecessors, Rugova's governing style was lenient; he did not suppress those who opposed his policies.¹² He was successful in keeping his people far from the war and therefore became a symbol of peaceful resistance against Serbian rule. Eventually, war broke out in Kosovo, resulting in fulfillment of Rugova's dream of making Kosovo an independent country.¹³

The dissolution of Yugoslavia and the Kosovo problem

Established in 1945, the Yugoslav Federation maintained stability under the rule of Josip Broz Tito, a Communist revolutionary leader who came to power after World War II (1945–1980). After Tito's death in 1980, the presidency of Yugoslavia rotated among the candidates from each unit of the republic. In 1991, due to political and ethnic tensions, the country started to break.¹⁴ Tito's slogan "Brotherhood and Unity" had conveyed the impression that socialism trumped ethnic divisions; now, that perception of unity had eroded.¹⁵ As Janez Drnovsek (a Slovenian who acted as Yugoslav president from May 1989 to May 1990) remarked, Yugoslavia's dissolution was obviously not a convenient or desirable option within the context of rigid, post-Cold War European structures.¹⁶ But with the decline of the communist ideology, Yugoslavia's discord and instability were inevitable.

Kosovo was central in the dissolution of Yugoslavia.¹⁷ In 1989, Serbian leader Slobodan Milošević abolished Kosovo's legal autonomy within the federation.¹⁸ He had assumed power in Serbia in September 1987 by controlling the media, which he used to connect the nationalism of the Serbian intelligentsia with the populist mood of the people.¹⁹ His nationalistic desires for power precipitated the termination of Yugoslavia and caused four wars during the 1990s.²⁰ As the head of the Serbian Communist party, Milošević visited Kosovo to argue that Kosovar Albanians were oppressing Serbs. Playing to nationalistic sentiments, he grew popular rapidly among Serbs but also fueled nationalism among other ethnicities.²¹ On June 28, 1989, in an address to more than one million people on the six-hundredth anniversary of the fall of the Serbs to the Turks on a Kosovo battlefield, he rose to almost revered status as he roused the crowd for coming conflicts.²² He asserted that no one could touch Serbs anymore.

The autonomy that Milošević had abolished in 1989 dates back to the Yugoslav Constitution of 1974, which made Kosovo an autonomous province.²³ It accomplished this task by giving Kosovo its own federal status within the Republic of Serbia and separate representation on the collective presidency of the Yugoslav Federation.²⁴ The 1974 Constitution also gave Kosovo its own structures of governance defining its territory.²⁵

The people of Kosovo, however, wanted equal status as a republic, not merely as an autonomous province. On March 11, 1981, a protest at the University of Pristina that started with requests for better food quickly turned into demands for Kosovo to become a republic within Yugoslavia.²⁶ Hostility toward Kosovar Albanians grew; many were harassed and

arrested.²⁷ This general sentiment toward Kosovo persisted as Milošević rose in power. He was aware that giving back Kosovo's autonomy would have a cost. Kosovo was important to Yugoslavia's prosperity: Its industries—mining of lignite, lead, zinc, gold, silver, and other elements; chemical factories; electric power plants—contributed significantly to the Yugoslav economy.²⁸ The mines produced 50 percent of Yugoslavia's nickel, 48 percent of its lead and zinc, and 47 percent of its magnesium, in addition to other metals and coal—representing actual and potential value to Serbia.²⁹ Serbian leadership recognized the economic significance of keeping Kosovo as a profitable land.³⁰

Political activism and the Declaration of Independence

After Milošević increased police control, Kosovars responded with mass demonstrations from 17 to 21 October 1988. By February 1989, striking workers of the Trepça mine joined in; one month later, the Serbian regime imposed a curfew and arrested several prominent Albanian political leaders.³¹ In response, many joined the Trepça miners in their dissent, turning a local protest into a national one.³² In addition to growing the protest movement, Kosovo miners' demonstrations helped bring about a shift toward non-violence.³³ About 3,000 miners left their pits to march 45 kilometers to Pristina, and as many as 300,000 people joined them from around Kosovo.³⁴ The miners' protest was a protest by the working class—the class upon which Yugoslav socialism was ideologically constructed—and therefore it helped to build understanding and solidarity with the rest of the population.³⁵ By December 1989, Kosovo intellectuals, mostly writers and professors, had joined the miners' cause. Many were former members of the Communist party who also initiated the LDK, which by 1991 would have 700,000 members. As a moderate, pragmatic, and genial intellectual, Rugova was an ideal leader; for nearly a decade, he set the political platform for the Kosovars based on principles of non-violence.³⁶ He objected to any armed resistance to Serbian rule and believed that negotiations were the only realistic solution.

After losing autonomy, Kosovars pursued peaceful resolutions.³⁷ On July 2, 1990, they elected their own parallel government after 114 out of 123 Albanian members of parliament cast their votes to establish Kosovo as a republic of Yugoslavia. On September 7, Kosovo's deputies met in the town of Kaçanik and adopted a constitution.³⁸ Between September 26 and September 30, 1991—four days after the assembly drafted a “Resolution on Independence and Sovereignty of Kosovo”—Kosovars also organized a referendum on Kosovo's independence, and from more than one million registered voters, 99 percent were in favor of independence.³⁹ Rugova was the main figure behind these events.

Because Slovenia and Croatia declared independence from Yugoslavia, the Kosovar Albanians did not want to be part of Yugoslavia. Initially, Kosovo Albanians established a government in exile. As the LDK leader, Rugova stayed in Pristina, while others were appointed as representatives outside the country to have a voice among Kosovo Albanians living in the diaspora, mainly in the West.⁴⁰ This “virtual” government had its headquarters in Ljubljana, Slovenia, until May 1992, when it moved to Germany. During this period, Rugova's policy was to stay non-violent. For as long as Yugoslavia continued to exist, his initial goal remained to establish a republic for Kosovo within the nation state; if Yugoslavia were to collapse, however, Rugova's goal would switch to full independence.⁴¹ Consequently, on May 24, 1992, Kosovars organized elections for a parliament and presidency of Kosovo. Some twenty-four parties took part, and the results reflected the LDK's dominance.⁴² Among the 130 seats in Parliament, 100 members arrived through direct election, and LDK

candidates won ninety-six spots. Rugova, the only presidential candidate, won 99.5 percent of the vote. The parliament, however, never actually gathered, mainly because of Serbian police interference,⁴³ enabling Rugova to exercise full personal control and for LDK to become the sole legitimate authority.⁴⁴ Though Serbs knew about these elections, they did not prevent them, possibly because Rugova was leading a non-violent resistance against them, but also possibly because Serbia was not interested in triggering another war on its southern front while it was engaged in wars with Croatia and Bosnia that started in 1991 and 1992, respectively.⁴⁵ Kosovar Albanians did not accept Serbian or Yugoslav constitutions, and from 1990 onward, they took no part in any Serbian or Yugoslavian election. On March 22, 1998, Kosovar Albanians held their own parliamentary elections and elected Rugova President.⁴⁶

Parallel state and peaceful resistance

Milošević's goal was to change the ethnic makeup of Kosovo through depopulation, a genocidal process later dubbed "ethnic cleansing." His discriminatory policies began with systematic job dismissals of Albanians and arbitrary expropriations to resettle Serbs, including refugees from the Croatian Krajina region, in Kosovo.⁴⁷ For this purpose, for example, on January 13, 1995, the Serbian government decided to move 100,000 Serbs into Kosovo, though this action was never carried out because of the political instability.⁴⁸

In his 1998 book on Kosovo, the journalist and academic Noel Malcolm wrote that human rights abuses against Kosovar Albanians were extensive. Arbitrary arrests and police violence became routine.⁴⁹ Almost every Kosovar Albanian family experienced police brutality.⁵⁰ The abuses were so numerous that on December 27, 1992, outgoing US President George H. W. Bush promised that the United States would not let Kosovo become a second Bosnia.⁵¹ Bill Clinton's administration, which succeeded Bush's, agreed.⁵² As Kosovo suffered some of the worst human rights violations in Europe, the vast majority of Albanians lost their jobs; if they were not fired, they were asked to sign loyalty oaths to the Serbian regime.⁵³ In government jobs, the best of its socialist economy, Serbs replaced the fired Albanians.⁵⁴ The growing presence of nationalist paramilitary militias prompted Kosovar emigration abroad, mainly to Western Europe. By 1993, an estimated 400,000 Albanians had left Yugoslavia.⁵⁵ Despite the dire situation, between 1992 and 1996, the Kosovo problem was not on the top agenda of the international politics because of the wars in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina.⁵⁶ An important strategy in seeking a peaceful solution for the crisis in 1990 was the declaration "For Democracy, Against Violence," a grassroots petition in Kosovo that intellectuals initiated and that gathered some 400,000 signatures. Along with this came a plan "to make each death a public act." Rather than stage mass street demonstrations, protesters took up new forms of resistance that they could enact in their everyday lives, such as sounding factory whistles and car horns at specific times of the day. Later, these became five-minute protests in the streets. Other forms of symbolic resistance included putting candles in windows or balconies and marking the beginning of curfew by rattling keys in a tin.⁵⁷ As part of Rugova's peaceful resistance, these activities became news in the international media.

Under the leadership of Rugova, the systematic repression described above led to the self-proclamation of the Republic of Kosovo.⁵⁸ Consequently, Kosovars created their own parallel government covering practically all aspects of social and political life.⁵⁹ One task of this government was to re-employ those who had lost their jobs. To do this, Kosovar

Albanians paid 3 percent of their income and companies 10 percent of their profits into government assets. Probably more valued were contributions of Kosovo Albanians living in the West.⁶⁰ Most of the revenue from the parallel state went toward education, the central component of the passive resistance.⁶¹ School documents contained the stamp “Republic of Kosovo,” although Serbia refused to recognize these developments.⁶²

Kosovo Albanians’ civil resistance had four primary objectives: Contesting the legitimacy of institutions imposed by Serbia and counterbalancing them with the institutions maintained by the Albanian population of Kosovo; refusing to allow Serbian police brutality to provoke Kosovar Albanians to acts of violence; mobilizing international support; and maintaining the life of the Albanians in Kosovo.⁶³ No one knows exactly when the Kosovar Albanians decided to adopt a policy of non-violence.⁶⁴ Nonetheless, with parallel institutions, Kosovars acknowledged that their key strength was social solidarity.⁶⁵ Even though they lacked a police force or an army by the mid-1990s, Kosovars had reorganized to a point of de facto self-rule.⁶⁶ By developing parallel institutions, Kosovars engaged in the strategy “as if,” which meant to behave “as if” Kosovo were not part of Serbia; persistence in such a strategy, so the idea went, might eventually draw the international intervention Kosovo needed to become independent.⁶⁷

Kosovo’s shadow government also attempted a self-defense structure starting in late 1991 that consisted of sending people for military training in neighboring Albania.⁶⁸ But Rugova was pragmatic and followed a peace policy.⁶⁹ He was aware that the violence taking place in Croatia and Bosnia could occur on an even larger scale in Kosovo because its citizens were mostly unarmed.⁷⁰ In April 1992, he justified passive resistance, saying Kosovo had no chance of successfully resisting the Serbian army.⁷¹ Moreover, Rugova not only promoted non-violence in pursuit of independence, but also suggested that demilitarization accompany independence: “The practice of nonviolence in this situation corresponds to an aspect of our character, to a tradition of patience and prudence in the face of all domination. By means of this active resistance based on nonviolence and solidarity, we ‘found’ ourselves,”⁷² highlighting that Kosovars always preferred peace and not war.

Rugova acknowledged that Serbs were in fact waiting for a pretext to wipe out the defenseless Albanians; it was preferable, he contended, to stay alive than to be massacred.⁷³ “We have learnt,” Rugova said, “that nonviolence is the modern European preference.”⁷⁴ Regardless of their differences, the European nations formed a strong European Union. But Rugova also acknowledged that Belgrade officials cautioned him explicitly in late 1997 that any rebellion meant war and that they had “a scorched-earth plan that could be implemented in twenty-four hours to destroy Albanian villages.”⁷⁵ Milošević could have had Rugova imprisoned at any time, but he tolerated Rugova’s non-violent resistance precisely because it kept the Albanians quiet.⁷⁶ Milošević wanted to avoid war on a second front, and Rugova knew that with the Serbs’ firepower, the Kosovars had no credible likelihood of prevailing in a violent confrontation.⁷⁷ He also was aware that movements against dictatorships could count on Western support.

By suffering human rights abuses, Kosovars earned legitimacy before the international community by framing their struggle in terms of non-violence and human rights.⁷⁸ The language of human rights strengthened their non-violent strategy and played a powerful role in uniting Kosovars in a struggle to construct their common identity.⁷⁹ With this strategy, Rugova won admiration from the international community, and in 1998, the European Parliament awarded him the Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought.⁸⁰ The prize was,

Rugova said, “for me and for all the people of Kosovo, recognition of our peaceful struggle and our sacrifices.”⁸¹ With his policies, Rugova began to be referred to as the “Gandhi of the Balkans.”⁸² Some were drawing comparisons to programs of the Dalai Lama, while his party considered him a spiritual leader and the “father of the nation.”⁸³

However, Rugova’s non-violent course meant that Kosovo needed recognition from the international community, which remained unpersuaded on its case for independence.⁸⁴ The Western nations praised the Albanians’ commitment to non-violence and issued declarations to encourage dialogue and end Serbian repression, but in general, the West paid little attention to Kosovo during the eight years of Rugova’s pacifism; instead, they focused on the violence of Bosnia and Croatia. This led some Kosovars to believe that only war would get the international community to pay full attention to the crisis, and they began to criticize Rugova’s policies as ineffective.⁸⁵

Resistance in education and healthcare

In 1989 the Serbian parliament abolished Kosovo’s educational system, and replaced it with a curriculum that expanded instruction in Serbian history and culture. But this move signaled a new phase in Kosovo’s struggle for autonomy. Now, education became a central symbol of the non-violent movement for the Kosovar Albanians because they did not recognize Serbia’s verdict.⁸⁶ Consequently, by March 1991, the Serbian rule had fired 21,000 teachers and 1,855 doctors and medical staff for rejecting these changes.⁸⁷ At the start of the 1991–1992 school year, armed police surrounded school buildings to keep Albanian teachers and students away. Payment of Albanian teachers stopped in 1991.⁸⁸ When the government banned Albanian children from schools, teachers protested and conducted classes in empty houses, warehouses, garages, and basements. University students organized in a similar way.⁸⁹ In response, Serbian police frequently subjected teachers and organizers of education to arrests and intimidation.⁹⁰

Elementary schools routinely reopened after brief closures, though they had meager resources and remained segregated. Secondary students, who remained shut out of their school buildings, received instruction in private homes.⁹¹ From 1992 to 1998, most of the schools functioned in makeshift classrooms lacking writing surfaces for the students, although as the years progressed, parents made improvements in equipment and facilities.⁹² In 1993, the parallel education system employed 20,000 teachers and other staff and had nearly 400,000 students from preschool through college.⁹³ The curriculum mainly focused on promoting Albanian consciousness and identity, and thereby promoting resistance to Serbian rule.⁹⁴ Financing this educational system was a challenge, but in 1993, the parallel government began to pay wages. They were not enough to support a family, however, and complaints of late payments were common; nevertheless, the financing of education was a success of voluntary taxation.⁹⁵

On September 1, 1996, Rugova negotiated with Milošević about the education through the mediation of the community of St. Egidio, an Italian Catholic charity. They reached an agreement that schools—though not salaries—would be available to the Albanian parallel education system.⁹⁶ Milošević and Rugova did not meet in person but both men signed the agreement.⁹⁷ However, it was never implemented.⁹⁸ Despite Rugova’s success in peacefully reaching this deal with Milošević with the help of St. Egidio, the failure to implement it bolstered armed resistance as an alternative.⁹⁹

Health care was another important achievement of the passive resistance. While a complete reorganization of health care was practically impossible after the firing of Albanian doctors, many doctors tried to find ways to deliver medical services. Objecting Serbia's control of the health system and hesitant about using Serb-controlled hospitals, many turned to private practice. The first large-scale organization to offer free medical services was the Mother Teresa Association (MTA), formed in 1990. In 1992, MTA established its first clinic, and by 1998, ninety-one medical clinics and 7,000 volunteers distributed humanitarian aid to 350,000 people.¹⁰⁰ The healthcare system generally offered free treatment to certain categories of people.¹⁰¹ Most clinics did not have sufficient equipment and medical supplies, and about 750,000 people were without insurance. The majority of children did not receive immunizations against illnesses because families believed that the Serbian vaccines would cause sterility as a part of Belgrade's plan to reduce the Albanian birth rate.¹⁰² Diseases such as measles and polio increased.¹⁰³

On October 1, 1997, the appeal of Rugova's non-violent strategy began to collapse. University of Pristina's students had a massive demonstration against Serb occupation, contrary to Rugova's desire. Furthermore, the emergence and rapid growth of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), which started armed struggle against Serbian forces, became the most significant sign of the erosion of public support for Rugova's policies.¹⁰⁴ Kosovars started to believe that without war, the status quo would not change, and they wondered how much suffering they would need to endure in order to achieve independence.¹⁰⁵

The failure of peaceful resistance and the beginning of the armed confrontation

The peaceful model that worked for Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr. failed to work for Rugova.¹⁰⁶ It failed because voices for armed resistance became too strong to ignore. The main promoter of armed struggle was the group: Popular Movement for the Republic of Kosovo (LPRK).¹⁰⁷ This organization believed that Rugova's policy could not resolve the Kosovo problem—a claim that became more frequent after the wars in Bosnia and Croatia and the Dayton Peace Accords that ended the war in Bosnia.¹⁰⁸ Since 1990, Rugova had assured Kosovars that the West would address their problem, but the international community did not include Kosovo in Dayton. Hence, three months after the Dayton agreement, the KLA intensified its attacks on Serbian police.¹⁰⁹ The LPRK, as the organizers of the KLA, rejected Rugova's peaceful resistance policies as ineffective, undermining the leader's authority and appeal.¹¹⁰

In April 1996, a Serbian man attacked and killed an Albanian student in Pristina. Despite Rugova's calls against protesting this incident, masses gathered in front of the suspect's house. The following day, the KLA, still little known, staged attacks against Serbian forces.¹¹¹ Rugova claimed that these outbreaks were the works of Serbian secret police, acts aiming to provoke Kosovars and provide a pretext to increase persecution. Asked what he was planning to do next, his response was that he would listen to "big brother," meaning he will follow instructions of the Western powers.¹¹²

In March 1998, Serbian forces surrounded the compound of the KLA to capture its leader, Adem Jashari; they killed more than fifty people, including at least two dozen women and children and forty-two members of Jashari's family. This marked the end of Rugova's peaceful politics; Jashari became an iconic hero and thousands joined the KLA.¹¹³

The international intervention and the instituting of peace

Rugova's policy and international diplomacy had failed to prevent another war. Quickly, fighting between KLA and Serbian forces intensified.¹¹⁴ American diplomats arranged a meeting in Belgrade between Rugova and Milošević on May 15, 1998, but the meeting accomplished nothing. On May 29, Rugova went to Washington to meet President Clinton and then to New York to meet UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, but the meetings produced no results.¹¹⁵

On January 15, 1999, in the village of Racak, a massacre of 45 peasant farmers and their children triggered a vigorous international response.¹¹⁶ William Walker, heading the observer group from the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), accused Serbians of an "unspeakable atrocity and a crime against humanity."¹¹⁷ This sort of outcry led to the convening of an international conference in Rambouillet, France, to resolve the conflict that took place in February 1999. The Kosovars signed the agreement, but Belgrade refused.¹¹⁸ At this conference, KLA leader Hashim Thaci overshadowed Rugova and became the head of the Kosovo delegation.¹¹⁹

After the failure in Rambouillet, the first NATO air raids began on the night of March 24.¹²⁰ Milošević retaliated with a campaign of mass expulsion of Kosovar Albanians.¹²¹ Within weeks, this campaign resulted in the expulsion of 850,000 Albanians—almost half the population—and the killing of 10,000.¹²² During the military campaign, Rugova appeared with Milošević on Serbian national television, raising queries about Rugova's integrity, though Rugova later said he was coerced.¹²³ Rugova's appeal to stop NATO bombing infuriated KLA supporters, and some accused him of treason.¹²⁴ After Milošević permitted him to leave Serbia, Rugova stayed in Italy for the remainder of the war. But his failure to return to Kosovo immediately after the war proved to be controversial, though Rugova said the decision was motivated by concerns about his personal safety.¹²⁵

On June 9, military leaders from NATO and Yugoslavia signed an agreement that ended the fighting.¹²⁶ Finally, peace came to Kosovo, but the tension between supporters of Rugova and the KLA remained high even after the war.¹²⁷ In February 2002, Rugova appeared before the War Crimes Tribunal at The Hague to testify against Milošević for crimes committed in Kosovo; in March 2002, by a vote of eighty-eight to thirty-one in the Kosovo parliament, Rugova was elected president of Kosovo, a position he held until his death on January 21, 2006.¹²⁸

Two days after Rugova's death, US President George W. Bush issued a statement:

I am deeply saddened by the death of President Ibrahim Rugova. For many years, President Rugova led the campaign for peace and democracy in Kosovo. He was a friend of the United States, and he earned the world's respect for his principled stand against violence. Throughout years of conflict, he was a voice of reason and moderation that helped Kosovo's people lay the groundwork for a peaceful future.¹²⁹

In an extraordinary parliamentary session in Pristina on February 17, 2008, Kosovo unilaterally declared its independence from Serbia. All 109 deputies present voted in favor of independence.¹³⁰ Though Rugova was not alive to see this historical event, he remains one of the major political figures of the modern history of Kosovo.

Rugova's patience, wisdom, and strategy saved Kosovo's people from a possible massacre. His peaceful strategy proved to be successful since it led the way to the independence of

Kosovo. Today, even his political opponents recognize his legacy and speak of him with admiration. He proved that with non-violent actions, a nation can achieve its highest aspiration for freedom, although that freedom and independence can be slowed down. Even after the war, he called for reconciliation between Serbs and Kosovo Albanians and opposed revenge. He was aware that the ethnically diverse Balkans should choose peace over their long history of violence.

Notes

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