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Italian Politics in Albania and Albanian Factors February - December 1918

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Abstract

The paper consists of these key ideas, first, Italy in Albania reflects cautious, which was accompanied by the formation of an administration with an Albanian element but in the care of Italy. While, on the other hand, felt anxious, due to the publication of the Secret Treaty of London, which was associated with the distrust of Albanians towards Italy's care. Secondly, on the other hand, Italy's politics urged the Albanians of Switzerland to wake up in these very important historical moments for Albania, for the fact that the post-war political conditions of the First World required Albania to be represented in European politics through Italy. Thirdly, the Albanian political class was on its way to maturity, at the same time experiencing disagreement, in the mere political terms, under such conditions Italy had drawn into its politics, some prominent Albanian elements, who sought Italy's help for The formation of the Albanian state. This intervention had created discussions and disagreements between the Albanian political segments that with the echo of the past were perceived as different political streams.

Keywords: Politics, Statehood, politic diaspora, political factors, political diversity.

Italy, even though the winner of World War I, felt concerned about its interests in Albania, and moreover the fact that the Bolsheviks denounced the secret treaty of London. This had put in place a very difficult situation and, consequently, sought to ease this animated animosity to Albanians, using the propaganda and civilian and military administration built for several years in Albania.

Thus, on February 21, 1918, the Command of the XVI Italian Corps directed the prefectural civilian commissars to a circular, where they were committing to propaganda in favor of Italy "to reduce the great hatred that had generated in the Albanian people the publication of the Covenant Treaty London from Soviet Russia"¹ For this, the circular attracted the attention by four points:

1. Italy had entered the alliance when the fate of Albania was compromised between the Great Powers and the Balkan states;
2. The London Pact "published in Petrograd"² had undergone changes in the meetings that had taken place later between the representatives of the Entente;
3. These changes were not published because "the German philosophical Leninists were not interested in publicizing them"³ These changes were made at the time Italy had proclaimed Albania's sovereignty under the shadow and defense of Italy;
4. Therefore, Albanians should have confidence in the Italian government's policy, because they were always interested in love for the future of their country.⁴

⁵Whereas, on 23 February 1918, Sonino stated in the Italian Parliament that "Italy supported

¹ -Academy of Sciences, Institute of History: *The War of the Albanian People for National Liberation 1918-1920*, p. 17, Tirana, 1975

² - *GazetaPopulli, Shkodër*, year II, no. 59, dt. May 4, 1920, p. 3.

³ -*GazetaPopulli, Shkodër*, year II, no. 59, dt. May 4, 1920, p. 3.

⁴ -*GazetaPopulli, Shkodër*, year II, no. 59, dt. May 4, 1920, p. 3.

⁵ -*The War of Our People for National Liberation 1918-1920*, Tirana, 1975, p. 19.

the general principles of respect for nations and the self-determination of peoples, which inspired international alliances. But the fates of Albania sought a special interest from Italy, because they are completely connected, both with our own possession and with the general regulation of its territory "Thus Italy, according to Soninos, had no other interests than to protect Albania against threats that might come from other powers"⁶. In this focus, François Guizi, a clerk at the Italian Consulate in Lausanne (Switzerland), addressed the Albanians: "In such moments, you should raise your voice in defense of the Albanian interests. Italy is ready to help you in all ways, as it has promised, but you also need to help her to help, you should seek this help without which, as you yourself see, your cause so risky is compromised to miss"⁷.

On October 7, 1918, he asked one of the most prominent Albanians MihatTurtullit to be orientated by Italian politics, saying, "We can not keep you away from this and awaiting us to implement our wonderful plan of Action, in such important moments, you should raise your voice in defense of the interests of Albanians"⁸. While expressing Italy's readiness to help with all sorts of ways, on the other hand, he insisted that "you help him to help you. You should seek this help without which, as you yourself see, your right cause is jeopardized"⁹. While the Albanians of Switzerland, according to him, did not show any activity, "which is very harmful in these moments"¹⁰; And stated that they did not feel political responsibility even after they had elected their mayor: "they must not do anything without your participation".¹¹

In the course of these political situations, it seems that Italy wanted to manipulate Albanians to get into the scales of its interests. This required the attraction of other figures that had emerged in the politics of the time, such as the Beyonce of Vlora, who in October 1918 had started in Geneva to elaborate a "memorandum"¹² to meet Ali Këlcyra, PandeliCalen and Spiro Kolen¹³. That was exactly what the Italian politics liked, but at the same time it was a concern that they should not have been free, as otherwise unpopular situations would arise for Italian politics in Albania.

Meanwhile, Mehmet Konica in early December 1918 traveled from London to Rome and from there to Switzerland. The Department of Justice of this country had been informed in time for Konica's entry into Switzerland, either from Italy or from France, "and promised to give all the facilities"¹⁴ so that he would cooperate with many other Albanians Who were in Geneva. It seems that in adapting to these interests, the Swiss Albanians on 12 October 1918 sent a telegram to Soninos, seeking the establishment of the Albanian state under the protection of Italy. Pending the final decisions of the Peace Congress, they expressed their wish that "the entire territory of our country should be fully occupied by the Italian military forces, which had declared our full independence."¹⁵ This, according to them, should be done to calm the unfortunate Albanian people and to create the possibility of forming a national administration.

On October 22, 1918, with a special instruction by Foreign Minister of Italy, S. Sonino, Albanian representatives MihalTurtulli, MyfitLibohova, Turhan Pasha were called to Rome to talk about forming a government, and For this there was no time for two reasons:

First, the intersections of neighboring states of Albania were appearing for the concrete implementation of the London Treaty of 1915¹⁶.

Secondly, Albania was at a critical stage and had an administration which did not work.

This instruction consisted of six points:

1. Immediate call to Rome Turhan Pasha, Turtle of MyfitLibohova, as they should be the

⁶ -See the threat of Albania, 1918

⁷ -Central Archive. F. K. Lausanne, Oct. 7, 1918, p. 32

⁸ -There again.

⁹ -There again.

¹⁰ -Central Archive. F.K. Lausanne, October 7, 1918. Bien SherDoctor

¹¹ -There again

¹² -the Albany, Lausanne - Gare, Nr. 7/18. December 25, 1918. Memorandum of the Twelve Albanians of Switzerland signed by SyrrabeyVlora

¹³ -There again. Pg 59-60

¹⁴ -There again Central Archive. F.K. Lausanne, October 7, 1918.

¹⁵ -Albania, Lausanne - Station, 25 december 1918, nr. 18, f60

¹⁶ - Secret Treaty of London 1915

governing council and should immediately be in touch with the major Albanian centers and decide on the approach of two or four other members "who To be fairly represented by the different provinces and beliefs of Albania "¹⁷. Meanwhile, the name of BiboDoda¹⁸ was particularly evident, because, being Catholic, it was more appropriate; But also, according to them, during the First World War in Shkodra had maintained a dignified attitude and enjoyed a special authority in the mirditor and highlanders in general. "This prestige and authority enjoyed by mirditor and highlanders, - they noted - can make a remarkable contribution¹⁹." This document also mentions the issue of government, which would take "measures to appoint a council"²⁰.

2. He pointed out that "at first the government should be located in Shkodra but after it was first assembled in Gjirokastra, in conjunction with the statement of 3 June 1917"²¹; That the government should immediately announce the establishment of all European powers, and that organization should not come out of the control of Italian politics, which should think without delay and immediately "about appointing a representative to it"²².
3. After the establishment of order and tranquility, the established military authorities had to leave the administration of the Albanian territory after a very short, strictly defined transitional time was recorded, which would be regulated in agreement with the military authorities and The representative of the government in question. The military authorities would be limited to maintaining public order and guarding the Albanian territorial boundaries they would have under control.
4. The military authorities for all the needs of the troops "shelter, guarding"²³ could turn to the Albanian government through a royal government representative, except in cases of absolute urgency.
5. In principle, it was thought that a model state could not be built. It should be worked from Italian politics in Albania to keep it under Italian influence on the general lines of "our Balkan and Adriatic politics", without forgetting that "it is part of the Balkan Peninsula".
6. The military command in Albania had to act as quickly as possible and avoid unpleasant surprises, such as those of Serbs who were progressing rapidly in northern Albania²⁴.

Below it was stated that, after the rule was established, the military authorities would have to leave the territory of Albania after a very short transition period, which would be permanently regulated in agreement with the command and representatives in word. "The military authorities - according to them - will be limited to maintaining public order and guarding the Albanian territorial boundaries they will have occupied"²⁵. The military authorities of the invasion should not intervene in this government, because the intervention and protection of military authorities, for this very fact, "would remove the government that independence, at least formally, in its actions."²⁶ Sonino as Head of Italian State Diplomacy specifically instructed that in the new circumstances that were being created, new people were needed and each should adapt to those activities for which he had the skills and competences.

The military authorities, after establishing order and calm, should leave the administration in its work. For all the needs of the troops "requisitioning, shelter, etc.", they should turn to the Albanian governmental authorities through an intermediary royal representative, but cases of

¹⁷ - Galli - *Dial them and let them go*. Florence, Caza Edit. G.C. Zanzani, 1951, p. 313: - *Letter from the Head of Office for Albania and the Balkans to the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, F. Kastoldi (Italian)*

¹⁸ - Bib Doda

¹⁹ -Galli - *Dial them and let them go*. Florence, Caza Edit. G.C. Zanzani, 1951, p. 313: - *Letter from the Head of Office for Albania and the Balkans, to the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, F. Kastoldi (Italian)*.

²⁰ There again. Pg31

²¹ -There again. Pg328

²² - Galli - *Dial them and let them go*. Florence, Caza Edit. G.C. Zanzani, 1951 p. 317: - *Letter from the Head of Office for Albania and the Balkans, to the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, F. Kastoldi (Italian)*.

²³ -*War of the Albanian people for national liberation 1918-1820*. Tirana, 1975, p. 39.

²⁴ -*Serbian Progress in Albania 1918*

²⁵ -There again.

²⁶ -There again.

"absolute importance"²⁷ were singled out. For all other cases, they should seek authorization from the highest command, which, in agreement with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, should provide the appropriate provisions to its representative.

Basically, Italian politics propagated that a state should be formed in Albania, a fact which, apparently, appears through the letter of the Italian office that corresponds to the issues of Albania and the Balkans in general. This paper noted that "We must work in order for Albania to be held under our influence on the general lines of the Balkan and Adriatic policies of Italy"²⁸, always noting that Albania was a country with a very favorable geopolitical position²⁹.

In these conditions Albania was, at least from a political point of view, taking into account the domestic element, drawing attention to the fact that there should be as many Albanians in the institutions as well as technical advisers coming from Italy. These should be not numerous in number, but provided with prudence, influence, and wisdom. Italian politics was pressing in this movement for the fact that Italy's interests were being threatened by Serbs, who were advancing toward the south. This political movement was regarded as important to national interests, as the Albanians of Vatra considered Italy as the most important factor, not only that it was directly interested in the Albanian issue, but also that Italy was the winner of World War³⁰.

These two reasons sufficed for this grouping to propagate the view that it was important for Albania to have the support of Italy at the Paris Peace Conference. The political movement of the Albanians took place in due course for the fact that Paris was also targeted for EsadToptani, who had shown all possible premise to be considered a rival force in discussing the Albanian issue.

He was now considered "a good card in the hands of Serbian politics against Italy". Though he owed much to Italy³¹, "they should protect him, support him, because they knew he could betray him, as he was able to cross the other side"³². This was appreciated by Italy, making it more interested in securing a political support force in Albania that could fulfill its protectionist interests³³. These were some reasons that made the political compromise of Albanians more urgent with the fragrance of Italian politics. According to the Albanian newspaper, the government of Italy, through the three Albanians called to Rome, sought to influence American Albanians with both political and cultural organizations, especially Vatrass, but without forgetting and the diaspora of Albanians in other European countries³⁴.

But forecasts do not go according to Italy's political will. One of the most listening representatives of Albanians, MihalTurtulli, who according to the newspaper Albania had openly expressed his thoughts regarding his attitude towards Italy, had refused to go to Rome, for he had long doubted how he was acting Politically Italy to Albania. He was placed in Switzerland and published the newspaper "Albania" in French, while Vat, a year later, would appoint a delegate to the Paris Peace Conference. In a Gramenos telegram she is told of MihalTurtulli's patriotic stance, considering him as a political collaborator with MidhatFrashëri and opposed to the political views of MyfiliLibohova, who was pro-Italian, saying that "Italy will not do Albania a colony and would not keep it as a simple mortgage, as a commodity to exchange as Germany wanted to do with Belgium"³⁵. " This is a factor that clarifies Turtulli's unequivocal attitude, as a continual opponent of Italian politics in Albania, and this is confirmed by all the research we have done so far.

Turtle's doubts increased even when Italian agents in Switzerland exerted pressure on him to

²⁷ -Galli - Dial them and let them go. Florence, Casa Edit. G.C. Zanzani, 1951, p. 313: - Letter from the Head of Office for Albania and the Balkans, to the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, F. Kastoldi (Italian).

²⁸ -There again. Galli - Dial them and let them go. Florence, Casa Edit. G.C. Zanzani, 1951, p. 313: - Letter from the Head of Office for Albania and the Balkans, to the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, F. Kastoldi (Italian).

²⁹ -KristoDako, key east and west Albania, Tirana 2015

³⁰ -Winning Italy of First World War

³¹ -Reflections and Visions of the Great War in Albania - GVIDO Carni, MCMXXVII, f. 160

³² -There again. Pg168

³³ -Italian Protectionism in Albania

³⁴ -Newspaper, Albania, Uorcerster, December 1918-1919, no. 432

³⁵ - Newspaper, Assembly, Rome, November 9, 1918, p. 3 "The Myth of LibohovaProitalian Political Program" As in 1914, MyfidLibohova was a representative of Albania in the KNK, consisting of six representatives of the Great European Powers, staying in the city of Vlora. This commission worked until the outbreak of the First World War.

persuade him to accept the Italian protectorate in Albania, with the idea that this would condition the increase of Italy's aid to Albania. But Turtulli denounced the memorandum of 12 October, which was signed by the Geneva National Committee headed by Turhan Pasha³⁶, supporting the Italian protectorate over Albania. He also objected to the proclamation of 3 June 1917, because he thought that Albania could come to a difficult position at the Peace Conference in Paris if there were no support of a large political force, a role that Italy could make neighboring. Thus, even though he conceived the Italian protectorate in Albania as a great danger, at the same time he was able to appreciate and silently accept it as the lowest risk. But always imposing on Italy certain conditions that were deemed necessary to avoid colonization of the country and to find US support.

Rome, seeing Turtulli's views, found it unreasonable to seek his substitution with a more appropriate element, such as Mehmet Konica, with a more diplomatic experience to adapt to the political situation with Italy. This asked Italian officials a passport to go to Switzerland and deal there with the organization of Albanians. After July 1918, Mehmet Konica had held talks with Swiss Albanians, but without losing sight of contacts with Italian policy officials.

This movement of Konica encouraged the political direction of the Albanians. Thus, on October 14, 1918, Swiss Albanians sent Soninos a letter asking for help and support of Italy at the Peace Conference, which had not yet begun its work, but there had long been written media of Albanians. Out of Albania had begun lobbying for the solution of the Albanian issue through this conference, which would be dictated by the winners of the World War I. While, on the other hand, the possibility of attracting foreign troops from Albanian territory was extended, excluding the Italian troops, which at this time were stretched to the north of Albania. Not only that, but they, through a memorandum addressed to the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Italy, demanded the establishment of the Albanian state under the protection of Italy. They prayed to him to accept their previous thanks and "expressing our highest consideration"³⁷.

Mehmet Konica in November 1918 also managed to embark on a trip to Rome. As an object he had contact with the Albanians of Rome and those of Switzerland, and through this they came to common conclusions and conclusions regarding the very important event to be organized in Paris. Mehmet Konica did not see the solution of the Albanian issue without talks, contacts, compromises and with foreign diplomats, especially with the diplomats of the government of Rome, on the possibility of a cooperation between the Albanian national movement and Italy for resolving the Albanian political situation after the first war world.

Through the newspaper "Sun" we understand that Mehmet Konica was in charge of presenting to the Italian government the views of the federation "Vatra" for a free, independent Albania, with its ethnographic, natural and historical boundaries. Konica at the Corriered'Italia newspaper in March 1919 stated that the basis on which the Albanians would speak at the Peace Conference would be the whole and the independence for the whole of Albania, because the full restoration of national and human rights of the Albanian people in any part of his plot after the First World War would be a necessary condition for the peace and stability of the Balkan peninsula.

Such views were also expressed by Kolë Tromara in his talks with Italian diplomats in Washington. They had remained dissatisfied with the fact that, while acknowledging the usefulness of the Italian-Albanian compromise, on the other hand, Albanian demands, to national interests, meant the resolution of the London Treaty³⁸ and the unification with the national trunk of the two ethnic Albanian regions, Kosovo and Chameria. Mehmet Konica stated that Kosovo Albanians were overwhelmed and could never accept to lower their head under a foreign yoke; That they accepted nothing but the voice that came from their heart, and demanded nothing other than the principles proclaimed to the whole world to be applied even in their helpless country.

³⁶ - L'Albanie, Lausanne-Gare, No. 7/18 December 25, 1918, f. 59-60 "The telegraphic memorandum of a group of Albanians of Geneva in Switzerland of twelve people headed by Turhan Pasha and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Italy, S. Sonino requesting the deployment of the Albanian state under the protection of Italy. Geneva, 12 October 1918. " MyfidLibohova on 27 December 1918 will be elected as the head of the Government of Durrës and a representative of the official delegation of this government at the Peace Conference in Paris 1919.

³⁷ - Albania, Lausanne - Gare, nr. 7/18, 25 December 1918, p. 60.

³⁸ - The Treaties of London 1915

This agreement was supposed to be in the political interest of the Italian government because it would complement Italy's geopolitical interests in the Adriatic and the Balkan Peninsula, but at the same time would complement Albanian national interests. Thus, politically inspired that Albania and Italy would link a strong friendship between them, the premise would be created to lay the foundations for political agreements that would establish lasting co-operation and friendship, and this would bring Albania's integration into the world of European civilization³⁹. First, in this context, it is of interest to refer to the newspaper "La Nazione Albanese", which, through famous scholars Anselmio Lorechio, laid the idea that Albania is a country for Albania and the Adriatic is the Italian Sea, but also the Albanian⁴⁰. Lorechio put in front of the public an interesting question that sought to intrigue and revive their interests: how does it seem that although Albania was a small underdeveloped country, it represented so much interest in European politics. This, according to him, was about the geographical position of Albania, which, as a crossing bridge between East and West "is a favorable location for commercial transport in the Mediterranean basin"⁴¹. Albanians, following compromise and ongoing talks with Italian politicians, insisted Italy to pursue an open policy towards Albania and to influence the great European powers to remedy the errors of the London Underground Treaty of 1915. That, Naturally came the Italian politics in difficulty, because Italy itself had been one of the main actors of the fateful decisions of this treaty, which had created hostility between the Albanians and Italian politics.

But even though politically-juridical views between Italy and Albania were still unsettled issues, Vatra's⁴² leadership had expressed of a cooperation with Italy but under the condition that this would lead to the formation of an independent Albanian state, including within its borders All the territories dominated by the Albanian population.

This political movement had sparked a reverse reaction, especially in Albania, which accused him of signing a document (that is, of Geneva, who left Vlora to Italy, and then he forgave him as a representative of Vatra). Konica was criticized by the newspaper Albania⁴³ that the dollars accumulated by Albanian emigrants were broken and all the writings sent by Lady Durham⁴⁴ were not published because Konica was unable to provide any journalist friend. While Mihal Grameno, in the Albanian newspaper, stated that in the critical period Albania was, he considered Mehmet Konica's initiative for compromise⁴⁵ as a damaging political move and simply as a personal move. But contrary to this view was Turhan Pasha who addressed to Soninos⁴⁶, seeing in Italy the possible support for Albania to be politically represented in the official institutions of modern Europe. Although there were contradictions between the Albanian politics, the political situation was in their favor because they managed to organize politically and draw the political attention of Rome, a fact which proved that this was a political achievement for Albanians because they were becoming aware of the national self-government, Which could not be achieved without Italy's political support and other factors in the European policy world. From the other Albanian political class benefited from the support of Italy and through it, it was being prepared for the formation of the Albanian government in the city of Durres on December 25, 1918.

³⁹- Albanological Studies, Skopje, 2011, no. 3, f. 35-45 "Contribution of the Albanians of Italy to the function of the Albanian national community

⁴⁰- AQSH, V. 1987-1905, Document No.5.15, February 1916, Fund Lorekchio, fl, 24-29

⁴¹- AQSH, F, Anselmio Lorechio, File Nr, 12, October 11, 1899, Fl, 209 "Albanian Colony in Italy"

⁴²- Newspaper, Fire, Boston, December 1919, p. 2

⁴³-Albania Newspaper

⁴⁴- Look at the Balkans' concern

⁴⁵- Mehmet Konica compromises with Italy in 1918

⁴⁶-US RPSH. F. MPJ. Viti 1918, D. No. 6 f. 34