

Steps towards Recognizing the New Albanian State by the United States of America (1921-1922)

Ada Ramaj

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Abstract

Our referral will focus on the time frame of 1921 to July of 1922, when the Albanian state was recognized by the United States. The introduction will briefly treat the state of Albania post World War I, notably (particularly) after Lushnja Congress in January 1920 and the formation of the temporary government lead by Sulejman Delvina, (followed by its) and the struggling effort to consolidate the new Albanian state in the domestic affairs and foreign affairs, two of which were the achievements of Albania's accession to the Leagues of Nations on December 17th 1920 and the Albanian State Recognition from the Ambassadors Conference on November 9 1921. This was followed by the recognition of Albanian origins from other European countries and onwards. Firstly, it will examine the level of affairs between Albania and United States throughout the year 1920, where the Albanian side tied relations with U.S. authorities through a diplomatic path and requested its support for recognition of the Albanian state by the Congress of Ambassadors in Paris. Simultaneously, it will reflect the government's requirements for recognition of the Albanian state in the U.S. Department of State, starting from March 1920, continuing to repeat these claims even after. At the same time Albanian government representatives engaged its diplomatic corps at the nearby countries in which it had established diplomatic relations to enter into negotiations with American representatives there. Subject treating will be the establishment of an Albanian consular office near the famous Albanian society in Boston "Vatra" (the "Hearth"), the office that would keep constant connection with the U.S. government. Secondly, it will treat the role of the Federation "Hearth" to sensitize the American public opinion, for the recognition of the Albanian state from the United States, strengthening its ties with the local press for this problem; as well as a variety of politicians personalities of American society to support its lobbying. Additionally, it will give the facts about its contacts with the U.S. Department of State for the implementation of Albanian's state recognition. This issue will indicate the role of some American personalities, old cognitive of Albania and its long-time friends such as the Kennedy couple, Çarls, Telford. Erickson, etc. Thirdly, this paper will follow treating the further growth of the Albanian request near by U.S. by the end of the year 1921, when by this time the Conference of Ambassadors had already recognized Albanian state. These efforts were increased in the spring of 1922. In particular, attention will be paid to the reaction of the American party that decided to investigate the political, economic and social origin in Albania. In this context, we will analyze the activity of Maxwell Blake, the representative of the United States arrived in Albania in June 1922. He would inform the Department of State in America of the degree of stability in the Albanian government as well as for investment opportunities of American capital in Albania, which was accompanied by a recommendation for recognition of the Albanian state, which was held on July 28, 1922. The process of establishment of diplomatic relations associated with its acts and its relevant clauses will not be part of the scope of this referral but perhaps of any other scientific activity. The referral will be based mainly on literature and monographs and various scientific articles surrounding the issue at hand as well as archival sources, Diplomatic Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Albania and in some organs of the press of the period we are confronting.

Plans to liquidate the independence and partition of Albania among the "Greats" in the Paris Peace Conference, gave a new powerful impetus to the Albanian National Movement. Diplomatic efforts of Durres government in Paris during that time were called inadequate.

Albania in 1920 entered with the unresolved issue of the states status and with the burden of its borders. Paris Peace Conference did not solve this problem, therefore it remained in the fate of the Ambassadors Conference in Paris and the League of Nations to establish the Albanian borders. This was the reason that (us), the Albanians politicians invigorated the political life and in January 1920 was organized the national historic Congress, that of Lushnja. There it was formed a Supreme Council by which the prime minister was appointed, who would form the government, led by Sulejman Delvina. There was held a series of important decisions, the first one for the reinstatement of Albania and the second to reject any mandates or foreign protectorate, in its entirety borders (Duka, 2001).

With powerful manifestation of Albanian patriotism found in the decisions of Congress Lushnjes was not without influence even U.S. President W. Wilson. U.S. and President Wilson played a crucial role in the Paris Peace Conference of the Albanian issue, by not recognizing the hidden Treaty of London, in April 1915 for the partition of Albania and by not binding the issue of the Adriatic, with that of the Albanian independence. On February 10, 1920, also recognized with the decisions of the Congress of Lushnja in January 1920, with Sulejman Delvina telegrams addressed to him, etc..., Wilson in his reply to the European Allied Powers, rejected their projects of the January 14th for the petitioned of the Albanian

people (Milo, 2013). The President with a passionate defense of the principles of the American foreign policy, expressed these words:

"We can not recognize, - he concluded, -any unfair solution based on a secret treaty, the terms of which are incompatible with the new situation in the world, even a wrong adjustment that seeks to be achieved using this secret treaty as an instrument of coercion."

The approach of the U.S. and especially the reaction of the president's plans for the dismemberment of Albania may have surprised the traditional diplomacy of France and England. It became clear that they did not expect such an American commitment to the debate on the regulation of peace in Europe and less so in the Albanian issue. However, the American position and Wilson's repeated interventions in defense of the Albanian issues were not a momentary gesture, nor random. They were an expression of an opinion that America was rupturing paths and was starting to be sensible about the great injustice that was taking place at the expense of the abused population, far away in the Balkans. There has definitely been an impact and the efforts of Albanian-American communities that were showing particularly active during the First World War. Particular interest, with frequent interventions for linking the relations between the two countries had already been expressed by the American citizen, Telford Erickson, who was long known in the Albanian community, especially during the Peace Conference, it should be mentioned the major role of Kennedy couple who began anew many activities and strenuous, but tireless in supporting the Albanian patriotic movement (Gogaj, 1995).

The attitude of the U.S. president together with the American delegation in Paris had a decisive influence in the Paris Conference of resolving the issue of Albania in its entirety. He prevented premature solutions, which at the time would have surely harmed Albania. Through this holdup it was possible for the matter to be presented to the League of Nations and to the Conference of Ambassadors in Paris at the time when Albania was already a member of the League of Nations with full rights and when the international circumstances imposed a different solutions and perspective. Albania became a member of the League of Nations on 17 December in 1920 and it was admitted to the League of Nations as its member with equal rights to other countries, and finally, the Conference of Ambassadors, with the verdict of 9 November 1921, reaffirmed the Albanians' international status as an independent and sovereign state. However, it did not happen the same with its internal government, hence remained a difficult situation in the field of foreign policy (Puto, 2003).

Following the receipt of the League of Nations on 17 December 1920 and that of the decision of the Conference of Ambassadors in Paris for Albania on November 9, 1921, which reaffirmed the status of an independent Albania and its territorial integrity in 1913, the first official steps of the Albanian government was put forward for its recognition by the U.S. government, where a number of European states were recognizing it (Dervishi, 2006). In these domestic and international conditions was made possible diplomatic recognition of Albania and its government by the U.S.

Federation "Vatra" of Albanians in America was known everywhere in Albania and Diaspora for its starting time as an organization, as well as its manifold activities, which played an important role in the initiatives and the first steps of the Albanian Party for it to be recognized by the United States (Meta, 2001).

The Albanian government official request was submitted to the U.S. Department of State from K.Çekrezi on March 27, 1920, which also handed over the credentials that had been signed Sulejman Delvina and Mehmet Konica (Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Albania, 1920). Therefore, this institution recognized him as a semi official representative of a country, that America had not previously recognized. From that moment he regularly contacted with the appointed diplomatic representatives for the Near Eastern, nearby this department. He held open the Albanian representation in Washington until 4/14/1922, where in New York it was opened a sub-consulate and Konstandin Tashko became the Albanian Vice-Consul in America (Silajxhiç, 1999).

The request of March 1920 was repeated again two months later, on May 19, 1920, a step that was prompted by the response of the U.S. representatives at the State Department B.Colb, who claimed that it was still necessary to wait (Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Albania, 1920). While the facts claim that this initiative did not fall on empty grounds and the U.S. were gathering information about Albania, where it was allegedly strong nationalist feelings in the country and the support of people around the Albanian government, that there was "great religious tolerance" and that Albanian had no foreign deficit or deb (Silajxhiç, 1999).

Around that time, the activity of the Federation "Vatra" became more intensified, next to the U.S. administration, with numerous letters and petitions. "The Sun" newspaper informed that there had been sent from the branches of "Vatra" over two thousands requests for the recognition of the Albanian government (Konica, 2001). To make the country even more attractive for American businessman, executives of "Vatra" did not skip mentioning the many natural assets of Albania, such as oil, iron, chromium, and the need for their exploitation by foreigners through investments.

By the end of 1921 it was clear by the archival sources that the Albanian side increased its efforts for recognition

by the U.S., firmly relying on the determination of the Albania's interantional status by the Conference of Ambassadors on November 9, 1921. In this framework, in December 1921 the Albanian side repeated its request again . Whilst in January 1922, F.Noli at the time foreign minister conveyed to the U.S. State Department another formal request fot the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries. F.Noli supported this step as admission to the Leagues of Nations and in recognition of an independent Albanian state and ts territorial integrity as well as recognition of the Albanian government from England, Frande and Italy. By the end of 1921, the Albanian government had addressed all countries of Europe and America, with a request for recognition by their part (Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Albania, 1922).

At this preliminary stage even diplomatic representatives of the Albanian state were engaged in this issue, accredited in countries that had established doplomatic relations, such as Italy. In March 1922, Tefik Mbroja Charge d'Affaires of Albania in Rome, acknowledged Tirana for his continious efforts at the U.S. Embassy for the diplomatic recognition of the Albanian govemrnet (Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Albania, 1922).

Another attempt by the Albanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs at the U.S. State Department was on June 7, 1922. In this request form the Prime Minister Ypi, which also covered the job of the foreign minister, conveyed to the U.S. government a new reuests, noting that such an attempt was carried out earlier (Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Albania, 1922).

Meanwhile, in April 1922, Koco Tashko, the surrogate of Çekrezi, on time charters was listed as the head of the Albanian vice-conulate. In september 1922 a document of the Albanian Ministri of Foreign Affairs, pointed out that since Albania was not recognised by America, "his master cabinet (K. Tashko), had remained hanging until today" (Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Albania, 1922).

Thirdly, an important step towards establishing diplomatic relations between Albania and the United States was sending in Albania Blake Maxwell. The Albanian government was informed of this on May 19, 1922 by the Albanian legation in Rome. This legation potrayed Blake as a consul of the State Department who had previously been the American general consul in Tangier- Morocco. He came to Albania on June 10, 1922, to observe the internal situation and would inform at the time to the center about the situation in the country, in order for it to assess the possibility of recognizing the Albanian government (Milo, 2013). In correspondence with the Albanian government, he labelled himself as the "America's unofficial commissary," while his office as "American commissars". These labeling were derived from his correspondence with the Albanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Albania, 1922).

According to U.S. government guidelines, Blake would be informed and would announce the primarily of the two problems: the degree of stability of the Albanian government and the possibility U.S. equity investments in Albania (Dishnica, 2007).

One of the problem was economic and the other political. For the political aspect, frequent changes of the Albanian governments did not speak in favor of Albania, although recognition the Albanian government in several states was a good test for the USA. On the economic aspect of the information collected the data was positive. According to him, Albania had no external debt, that its subsoil was rich with precious minerals; the country is sourrounded by numerous streams with significant potential for electricity and also covered with forests, to extract from its timber. This stirred and set in motion especially the American companies for the extraction of oil (Puto, 2001).

On June 23, 1922 Blake sent a letter to the Albanian Prime Minister, who raised the issue regarding with the respect for the Albanians who hold the American citizenship residing in the U.S. and a temporary stay in Albania as well as the protection of American interests, according to the principle of the most favored nation, as a clause in any future trade agreement Albanian-American (Milo, 2013 & Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Albania, 1922).

In his reply on June 25 Albanian Prime Minister accepted Blake's proposals. The tone of the letter was quite warm. He stated "I feel deep satisfaction to access unofficial correspondence with the representative of the U.S. government, which has more than once saved Albania from dismemberment and dissolution, defending its case in the most complex periods in its history". Xh. Ypi also accepted Blake's proposals _ and clearly expressed the Government's willingness to give concessions to American capital and determining the U.S. as "the nation (nation) more favorable". In this paper Albanian government went further in its proposals. "The Albanian Governor – underlined there - is ready to show any kind of facilities for the installation of the American capital in Albania and to give concessions t o the American societies" (Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Albania, 1922).

With this correspondence according to researchers H.Silajxhiç, was set the basis of the the first agreement, the Albanian-American, which had significant impact on the future of the relations between the the two countries (Silajxhiç, 1999).

In this context, the American diplomat Blake created his belief that there should not be any further delays for the establishment of diplomatic relations between the the two countries. In his information in December 1922 he was of the opinion that the current government representing all sections of the people; it has been recognized by the League of Nations and 20 countries; that the country was rich, that the attitude of the government and the Albanian people against American interests was "particularly advantageous as they were convinced the Americans disenchantment politically". Disagreeing with the view for the further delay for the recognition of Albania, he suggested that the recognition of Albania from America, to be done much earlier, before September 1922, when the Albanian Parliament assembled (Silajxhiç, 1999).

Fourthly, the U.S. State Department, positively evaluating these trials, decided to officially recognize the Albanian government and to tie diplomatic relations with it.

Therefore on July 28, 1922, M.Blake, through a letter sent to Xh.Ypit, notifying him in accordance with the instructions of the Secretary of the U.S. Department of State that the this government recognized the Albanian one, since the July 28 and forth . He informed in this paper that under the guidance his center, he would continue to be called commissioner of the U.S. in Albania, but at the current time he would have had a higher rank, that of Minister Plenipotentiary (Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Albania, 1922).

Regular and full diplomatic relations between this two countries would be made with the arrival of the head of the American legation W.Grand Smithin Albania, this of a career diplomat, who his credentials (as Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary) , had been presented on the 4th of December 1922 in the Supreme Council, which then performed the functions of chairman of the state collegiate. These credentials that hold the date of 26 October 1922, have been signed by former U.S. President, Warren G.Harding and countersigned by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Ch.Hughes (Charles Evans Hughes) (Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Albania, 1922).

In this letter disposed in the Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the president of the United States addressed it to the Secretary of State expressing: "Desiring to prove the goodwill and friendship of the American government towards Albania, the United States Congress in its latest session, enabled for an extraordinary diplomat and plenipotentiary minister of the United States for the Albanian government. Having stated my greetings to Your Excellency, it is my duty to inform you in accordance with Mr.Grand-Smith choice, a distinguished citizen of a United States will stand by the Albanian government as a Exeptional diplomat and Plenipotentiary minister. "He, -the letter continues , - knows of mutual interests of both countries and the sincere desire of this government, the opportunities to cultivate our greatest friendship that should exist between them. My recognition for his strong character and his logical skills give me great confidence that he would make a constant effort to develop interest and prosperity by being self-confessedly by Your Excellency. Therefore I urge your Excellency of accept with favour and give full credibility to what he says by the U.S. and for the security that I have charged in the realization of great desires for the prosperity of the government of Albania" (Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Albania, 1922).

On December 4th G. Smith presented credentials at three senior members of the Council: Sotir Peci, Refik Toptani and Xhafer Ypi (the latter had occupied the post recently) and prime minister Ahmet Zogu and External Affairs, Pandeli Evangjeli , that held and the occasional speech (Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Albania, 1922). Regarding the appointment G.Smith expressed: "I feel honored to have been selected as the first accredited American to this country, that finally won his freedom after so many centuries of foreign invasion. I am allowed to observe and assist in the early stages of your development, as long as it remains in my consistent and in my position". "I assure you - he continued to conclude his speech - in the great interest of the government and people of the United States in the progress of the people of Albania and that of selfgoverning"(Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Albania, 1922). He finished his mission on February 8, 1925, a date that marks his departure from Albania.

In August 1922, a month after instituting US-Albania diplomatic relations, the Government appointed its diplomatic representative in Washington to the rank of Envoy Extraordinary. This was Mithat Frashëri, whose credentials were sent to Paris, where he was at the time. But he did not depart to the the U.S. after being appointed to the same post in Greece, where it was thought that his contribution would be greater (Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Albania, 1922).

The instructions that accompanied M.Frashërit in Paris, it was recommended that "first dilligence should be towards the U.S. equity interest, for (this) to be installed in Albania (Puto, 1922). Meanwhile in his accreditation letters in the was made the same political formulation, presented by P.Evangjeli on on the 4th of December 1922, at the time of the submission of credentials from G.Smith, where it was stated that the Albanian people recall with deep gratitude that "in its most critique and resistance moments, the great noble nation of U.S., through its worthy representatives in the peace conferance, was one of the most valuable defenders towards the Albanian issue ..." (Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Albania, 1922).

The establishment of diplomatic relations U.S. - Albania marks a milestone in relations between the two countries and in particular for the new Albanian state. Soon this act would be followed by other evolving agreements , to switch to a full freeze during the communist regime after World War II and a successful resurgence after its fall.

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