

American Missions in Albania during World War II

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Abstract

As is known historically, part of the World Anti-Fascist Grand Coalition was also another great ally, United States. Even the allies had issued the Declaration of December 1942, for recognition of the anti-fascist resistance of the Albanian people, as well as Great Britain and the Soviet Union, making it part of the International Coalition and part of his war against the common enemies nazi and fascists. Nevertheless, beyond the lack of these interests, the Americans under the World Anti-Fascist Grand Coalition few months after the British began in the tiny Balkan military missions, although few toward British ally.

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But why American ally was delayed in sending missionaries to Albania? As it is known historically United States had no direct interests in the Balkans and much less in Albania. Although the United States had knowledge of the data that was being prepared long occupation of Albania, they did nothing to prevent it (Historia e Popullit Shqiptar, 2007: 373). However, the occupation of Albania by fascist Italy on April 7, 1939, the US issued a statement which became known ignorance of the invasion, while the UK government had officially recognized this invasion. Statement of US Secretary of State came just a day after the invasion, on 8 April 1939 (Konomi, 2014: 156). Further, the US almost had a political line similar to that of the British government regarding Albania and its problems, as King Zog in immigration or other issues (Kaba, 2015: 20). But in December 1942, in the framework of the Great Allied Coalition, the United States joined the act of recognition of the state that would emerge after the war, a goal to promote and strengthen the Anti-Fascist resistance in Albania. Even in the Declaration that gave Secretary of State, Cordell Hull, had significant differences in at least two of its elements, in relation to the Declaration of the British government issued us. First, the American Declaration of Albanian Resistance assessed against the fascist invaders and, secondly, the declaration recognized the right to self-determination of the Albanian people after the war, was directed by the Atlantic Charter.

In this context, the Balkan and the less Albania during that period did not constitute a direct interest in the US. But, nevertheless, beyond the lack of these interests, the Americans under the World Anti-Fascist Grand Coalition few months after the British began in the tiny Balkan military missions, although few toward British ally.

While, on the other hand is already historical fact, that the US-led missions in the Balkans OSS, including Albania was made possible only through closed agreements between senior OSS on one side and SOE on the other hand. Agreements were reached in June 1942 and August 1943 (NARA, 1943: 1-23). According to one of agreements it was decided that, until the fall of 1943, will take the carrying lead British SOE and American missions from October 1944 would be more independent in their activity. This division in aspect of dependence or independence, leadership, and tasks between two allies, confirmed by another US source, in which it is stated: "*Functions of the British and American groups in Albania: According to the directive issued by the Middle East Command in Cairo, activities in Albania are defined and clearly separated from allies British and American representatives. Briefly these activities are divided as follows: a. Americans are focused primarily on Intelligence functions [Secret Intelligence-SI] and can operate fully independent in circumstances dictated*" (Kaba, 2015: 203-204). Below in this source emphasized the leading role of the SOE missions in joint operations with their American counterparts, these actions that must be reconciled among themselves as well as for policy and operations plans.

The first small mission, mentioned above, went to Albania after a study conducted by the Office of Strategic Services (OSS). Then it will follow a greater military mission who stayed in Albania until the complete liberation of the country. Although the US military mission can not be compared in number, as well as in people with multiple missions British allies, their contribution to the organization, strengthening and supporting the Resistance forces in Albania was appreciated. For this reason and for Declaration of Recognition December 1942, in the years of World War II and later, their name and their work seen and enjoyed greater respect in relation to British!

But a full US military mission will came Albanian territory there since March of 1944. To prepare the arrival of the mission was taken directly to the OSS office, which prepared and submitted a draft, which take account position key

strategic and Albania on the Adriatic sea. The project, which was approved by the director of OSS. Under this project that was related to the activity of missionaries in Albania US military, which would operate alongside the allied British, they were scheduled to be performed several tasks with a combative character. Such were the ones to attack and stop the German lines of communication and movement of the occupying forces, damage and destruction of different warehouses, which serve to supply them, and preventing the interaction of local collaborators collaboration with the enemy. Also, in these projections they enter the support and supply of Albanian fascist forces, who had embraced the cause of the war against the German occupiers.

In the course of these preparations was part of a special material, he recognition of Albanian military-political groups operating in Albania at the time. Albanian resistance forces were unable to supplied with light weaponry, clothing, medical equipment and other drugs like these. This obligation was because Albania was not part of the list of "Lend Lease".

Further, in terms of preparation, the consent and approval, began prepared group of people who would make up the mission, which will be sent to Albania. In these preparations and most difficult was special selection and recruitment of the team that will be part of the mission. But this proved to be the most difficult part in the preparation of the mission chain. Earlier, the recruitment of personnel for the mission was taken OSS office in Istanbul and Harry Fultz. But it did not succeed.

According to the plans provided by the OSS, thought building a base intelligence on the territory of Albania, there since November 1943. But the idea did not seemed not easy.

Meanwhile, as the British SOE continued to operate with their missionaries in the Balkan region, included Albania, albanian section of OSS, shifted its center from Cairo to Bari, Italy, following the british example. Now in head of albanian sector of OSS was named Harry Fullci (Lucas, 2008: 32).

Despite the dedication and efforts of numerous preparations to organize the group of men specialist who would make up the US mission, soon saw that the work was difficult and not achieved the expectations: According to observations and conclusions Makadu-t all the difficulty lay in the fact that "*Albanians simply did not believe the British ...*"(Kaba, 2015: 40).

However, the first US mission to Albania completed preparations and was ready to start a few days after the middle of November 1943. It was in November of this year, some military missions British ally, is now made more than six months, who came down and acted in Albanian territory, the support and assistance of recognition, anti-fascist organizing local military forces. On 18 November (Kaba, 2015, 41) of this year, on a British allies in the Karaburun in the Adriatic Sea, landed a small mission of American service coverage (Lucas, 2008: 19). This was the first US mission in Albania that was deployed with small boat on the basis of the British military mission named Seaview (Lucas, 2008: 19). Even the American mission carrying coded label "ERIK". US military intelligence mission, launched with the task of OSS was a small team, commanded by Major Dale Mekadu. They took part in the mission Orahodou, a radio technician to misioniy-talkie and an Albanian informant named Ismail Karapici Hasani, Kane, 2013: 189-193), who served as a translator and guide of American mission.

But although the two missions, the British SOE and the American OSS for about six months did together, roles and their duties were changes and features from each other.

ERIK US military mission, sent to Albania by the OSS, mainly had to perform reconnaissance tasks character. Mission was interested to come about and maintaining those forces and Albanian Resistance. Meanwhile, American missionaries were required to gather information with data on the number and movement of German military forces in Albania. These data served commands Allied measures in anticipation of the movements of German forces went in and reinforcement of German units in Italy.

But without doubt, the network of informers of the American mission, shed light and bring the data and the relationships between Albanian forces, the different political groups, data on economic issues, to fighting the forces of LNC with the German, but, of course not excluded from the other data.

For this purpose, using the skills and professional agent services albanian Karapici Ismail, who was part of the US Mission, they succeeded to raise as quoted P. Lucas, "... a network of agents and, in January 1944 were reported via radio commands to the Germans battles, economic information and intelligence on the severity of rival groups" (Lucas, 2008: 36).

Different from what did SOE in Albania, which also performed operations or other actions of a military nature, American OSS did not instructed performing combat its missions. The only special operation conducted in the territory of Albania, was the 1943 to find and rescue some American nurse and specialist medicine, as well as the crew of a US plane crash benefited the soldier in a remote area of Albania. After getting Americans of aircraft they were sent to Panorama mission base, from where they were transported by ship, in secret, to Bari, Italy.

As we have written SOE and mission aimed at organizing resistance groups in Europe and beyond, as well as enter in the rear where guerrilla warfare evolve, without excluding the fronts facing (front).

American mission remained on the Karaburun, an area that controlled at the largest time by the National Front for about six months.

In March 1944, a mission in Albania reached another American, with the largest team in number. This mission codenamed carrying BESA. Thus the number of US allies operating missionaries now in Albanian territory, was increased significantly. The mission team led by an Albanian-American lieutenant, who landed in Albania on 13 March 1944, Tomy Stephany. Meanwhile, members of the American mission, was appointed to settle and operate at headquarters several major UNÇSH units such as divisions of this army. This really discovered and proved the author Albanian-American who, wrote for mission US in Albania notes that their forces, "... were located mainly in the partisan army of Enver Hoxha." (Lucas, 2008: 52-53). Thus, the distribution itself and its deployment American BESA completely alone at the General Staff and the staffs of large units of forces benefited the soldier NLM Albanian was the best indicator that US allies had a clear picture of the situation that existed in the Albanian forces of the Resistance, in relation to the fight against the German occupiers at the time of their arrival in Albania. They knew well the role and position of irreversible NLM combat forces in the fight against the invaders. Meanwhile they know that a part of the National Front forces supported and collaborated with the Germans, while the nationalist forces continue to trade Legality awaiting being put conditions allies, but decided to go to war against the Germans.

This mission, together with the first mission, according to data that provides P.Lucas in his book: "*In Albania, across the country had 4 sets SI (Intelligence - Service, E.H) and about 25 people in service ...*" (Lucas, 2008).

Meanwhile, it estimated that Americans made the main political forces in Albania fighting seemed they had good data for recognition of the political and ideological situation, time of creation, organizational, geographical origin and their division. These data even go further by penetrating religious faith of these clusters. However, in this aspect knowledge of American missions but not only had its own limitations, which often lead to inaccuracies associated with some of the indicators and characteristics, or above affiliations Albanian forces. These seemed to outrun the following passage that describes these forces: "*Although they were all nationalists, two groups BK (National Front, -EH) and legality on the one hand, and Hoxha and the communists on the other - as geographically varied and politically. Albania was divided into two parts, separate and Shkumbin river. Communists tended to come from the south of the river....*" (Lucas, 2008: 40).

While associated with the National Front and Legality knew that: "*National Front was established by the Tirana businessmen, landowners, intellectuals and some conservative heads of tribes. Legality consisted entirely by highlands of northern Albania, who lived in the context of the tribes and took a solitary life and quite rough.. They were Catholics, keen family, tribal and conservative*" (Lucas: 2008: 40-41)

In view of US allies, the above groupings of "hated and feared" from each other.

It was Albanian reality that found the US military mission, separate forces, who did not want to cooperate for freedom and independence of their country. The reasons for this division were different but the most important from all was those those with political and ideological content that was important to the end of the war and who would take political power after the war.

To resolve these contradictions, to attract all forces in the common fight against had failed for British and American missionaries, especially since early in the spring of 1944. This was the time when Albania amounted to US military mission led by the Albanian-American lieutenant Thomas Stefani.

Although this mission toward more numerous missions of this early in the Albanian territory, he would have tried to accomplish the tasks for which was sent here. And in these efforts, building relationships with the Albanian Resistance forces and especially the support and assistance of those military groups fighting the common enemy was the key to solving the problem.

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