RESEARCH ARTICLE

ITALY AND ALBANIA: THE STORY OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A KINGDOM

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Abstract
The Italian awareness toward Albania is historically recognized and can be detected since the beginning of the XIX century. The factors that determine such interest can be evidenced in geographical, economic, cultural, political, and military aspects. Nevertheless, these interests took a wider dimension when Ahmet Zogu became President of Albania (1925) and Mussolini became Prime Minister of the Italian Kingdom (1922). From 1925-1928 Italy build the most relevant foundations of its hegemony in Albania. The diffusion of the Italian dominance was accomplished through important political and military treatments, though the creation of the National Bank of Albania, through the fund SVEA and some investments in different economic sectors like in the mines, in infrastructure, in trade and in transport. Moreover, in 1928 Ahmet Zogu became “King of the Albanians” by some skillful institutional and political techniques and which is more important by the Italian support. The aim of this paper is to analyze exactly why Italy aspire the creation of a kingdom in Albania. In what way Ahmet Zogu could succeed to get the trust of Mussolini. How this event changed the position of Albania in the Balkans, but also the relationship itself between Italy and Albania. The analysis will be focused on the primary historical sources, such as diplomatic documentation from the Italian and Albanian archives of the respective Ministers of Foreign Affairs that coincide with this period of time. At the other hand, this study will highlight the perceptions of the most important states of the Balkans and of Europe on the Albanian Kingdom, thought different articles that have been published in relevant journals of that period. What was the report between Italy and Yugoslavia or between Italy and United Kingdom on the Albanian Monarchy? What were the characteristics of the relationship’s between Ahmet Zogu and Italy? The diplomatic scripts and reports will show some significant elements, that probably remarked the relations between Italy and Albania during the establishment of the first and the last monarchy in the Albanian history.

Keywords: Albania, Italy, Ahmet Zogu, Albanian Kingdom, International Relations

The historical efforts of Italy in setting a hegemony in Albania
The Italian interest towards Albania can be justified from the geographical position of Albania in the Adriatic Sea. This strategic position has been historically recognized from Italy and the Austro-Hungarian Empire (Biagini, 2000: 51). The Vlora’s Bay has some characteristics that make it a strategic object. It has a natural port, with deep waters and is defended by the wind. In front of it, there is the island of Sazan that can serve as a guardian in military actions. The Otranto Strait is only 70 km wide and can be considered the door of the Adriatic Sea. If another power would get Vlora, the Adriatic Sea could not be used by Italy. For this reason, from the Italian point of view, Vlora could never be part of Austro-Hungaria (Jarey, 2006: 112-113). As the former Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs Titoni assumed: “Albania per se doesn’t have any relevance. Its entire importance sources from the seaside and the harbors. Italy will never permit Austria to get it, and vice versa” (Jarey, 2006: 114).
While from the economic point of view, the Italian interest was not so relevant. Nevertheless, in 1913 the Italian Association of Science and Progress, during an expedition discovered some mineral source in the areas of Berati and Devolli, which increased the
Italian interest towards Albania (Borgogni, 2007: 16). Also, in 1914 Esat Toptani asked the help of Roma, and this fact pushes Italy in a new perspective. Afterward, Roma ordered Sonino to do further research in Albania (Smirnova, 2004: 81).

Historically, Italy has tried to guarantee its interest in Albania through some very important treatments like: the Treatment of Monza with Austria in 1897 (Fischer, 2004: 96); The Secret Treatment of Roma in 1913 again with Austria; the Secret Treatment of London in 1915 with Russia, France, and the UK during the Ambassador's Conference (Smirnova, 2004: 83); the Treatment called Titoni-Venizellos in 1919 with Greece (Cici, 1998: 34). Anyway, as a consequence of its diplomatic efforts Italy could win the role of guarantor for Albania in the Conference of Versailles in 1920 (Akademia e Shkencave (A. Shkenc.), 2000: 86).

However the green light to Italy was switched on in 1925 when Zogu went on power. Immediately after this, in 1925 Zogu sent a personal request to Benito Mussolini in order to find an economic and political supporter. Four days later, Mussolini replied that he recognized the Albanian government and promised a friendly collaboration. At the beginning Mussolini didn’t appreciate Zogu because he had participated in the War of Vlora and was an ally of Jugoslavia (A. Shkenc. 2000: 257). This was the reason why during the July’s Revolution, in 1924 Mussolini has supported Fan Noli. Nevertheless, the interest of Mussolini was to disconnect Zogu from the Yugoslavia (Di Nolfo, 2008: 72).

What’s more, this period of time was appropriate for Mussolini to start an international policy, because he could eliminate his most important enemies within his regime, like Matteotti for instance, and was ready to start an international policy. In this period of time Roma had two different approaches in the direction of Albania: the first one supported the idea of a pacific economic expansion; the second one which had a long time perspective was based on an imperialistic view (Borgogni, 2007: 88).

Since the beginning Mussolini sent in Albania Ugo Sola, who was instructed to examine the rich areas of oil and other minerals. Sola stayed for about two months in Albania close to the new government (Smirnova, 2004: 148). Anyway, Mussolini got the endorsement of the United Kingdom on his policy in the Balkans. In September 1925 he had a meeting with English Foreign Minister Chamberlain in Livorno. In fact the UK was interested in having good relations with Roma, because it was interested in having an alley in the Balkans, which could serve a counterweight toward France (Smirnova, 2004: 159).

The first official document between Italy and Albania was signed on 20 January 1924. It was the First Secret Sea Treatment (Fischer, 2004: 99). This treatment has never been approved by the Parliament. After one month, was signed the Treatment for the Consular Services (Giannini, 1940: 179), followed by a memorandum which confirmed the arrival of colonists as workers in some sectors (Fischer, 2004: 99). Anyway Zogu was determined not to recognize the decision of the Conference of the Ambassadors to give to Italy the role of the guarantee for Albania (Borgogni, 2007: 98).

In 1925 was created the Bank of Albania with Italian capital. Through this act Italy could build its economic hegemony. At the same time with the bank, was established a fund named (La Societa’ per lo Sviluppo Economico dell’ Albania) SVEA that was supposed to make investments in Albania through the Italian companies (Trani, 2007: 28). The President Ahmet Zogu got 3 million of gold fringe as a reward from Italy (Milo, 2013: 682-683).

The political hegemony became stronger in 27 November 1926 when was signed the Treatment of Friendship and Alliance, known also a the First Treatment of Tirana. The treatment had a duration of 5 years and included some element of military alliance (Biagini, 2000: 157). In a general point of view the Italy and Albania affirmed that every violation of the status quo of the Albanian territory, will be considered against the interest of both parts. The pact opened the door to Italy to enter every time there was a risk about the status quo (A. Shkenc., 200: 264). The pact has been registered with the League of Nations (A. Shkenc., 2000: 265). In the change of the pact Ahmet Zogu got another reward, but at the same time allowed a lot of concessions to the Italian companies (Puto, 2009: 461).

One year later on 22 November 1927, was stipulated and signed the Treatment of Alliance. The signature of this treatment has been pushed by the internal situation in Albania. Zogu felt in danger as a result of some protests that started in the country, especially in the north area (Smirnova, 2004: 162-164).

This treatment market the Italian hegemony. Mussolini could ensure the control on the Otranto Strait, as during this period started officially the military mission. This mission consisted in the building of fortifications and the organization of the Albanian Army under the direction of the Italians (Jacomini, 1965: 57). Some of the military organizers were experts in different areas. They were inserted in order to get information and to build an Italian political and an economical clan (Besciani, 2013: 8).
At the same time Zogu could ensure his regime toward Yugoslavia and Greece (Borgogni, 2007: 95).

The establishment of the Kingdom in Albania
In accordance with the Italian diplomatic documentation, the establishment of the Kingdom was an Italian suggestion. This purpose has been directed to Zogu in September 1927, from the Italian minister in Tirana Ugo Sola, immediately after the stipulation of the second treatment. In the beginning Zogu has hesitated, but it was Mussolini to instruct Sola to continue his efforts with prudence (Documenti Diplomatici Italiani (DDI), VII/5: 390).

Italy was interested in the foundation of the Monarchy for different reasons. First of all, if Zogu would continue to be a President, in 1932 it was necessary to run for the elections. That was supposed to mean, that Italy would pay again for the candidates of the Parliament. Secondly, Italy has invested financially and politically in Zogu. They have worked a lot for his political manipulation. Under these circumstances, it would be a lost of money and time, if he would be substituted by another candidate as usually happen in every presidential regime (DDI, VII/1: 426). Thirdly, Italy was convinced that Zogu was the right person because he was appropriate for the Italian politics: he was mediocre and subordinated to control of Italy, as Edit Durham argued (Vickers, 2008: 198). In fact the only hesitation of Zogu was connected with the weak economic situation of the country. Following the confirmation of Sola, on the Italian economic support of the Kingdom, Zogu agreed to become a king. As Sola confirmed in his reports “After he consulted himself and only himself, after twenty days from the first proposition, he confirmed to be included in the entire political Italian program”. The program was composed of three points:

1- The Alliance of the Defence between Italy and Albania;
2- The establishment of the kingdom;
3- The marriage of Ahmet Zogut (DDI, VII/5: 439).

The process that was supposed to lead to the announcement of the Monarchy was planned to be realized through institutional changes, more concretely with some amendments to the Basic Statute of the Republic of Albania. Thus, in continuous consultation with the Italian side, represented by Sola, Zogu had decided to call the two chambers in an emergency session, during the period of summer (1928), in order to ask for some constitutional changes. Both chambers of the Parliament would understand the incompetence to create relevant amendments, would declare early elections for the establishment of a Constitutional Assembly. This was supposed to happen on October 1st, 1928 (DDI, VII/6: 280). Part of the plan for the regime change, would also be a tour in different districts of the country like in Korça, in Gjirokastra and in Vlora during the summer of 1928. In these trips mayors of municipalities or representatives of the Parliament would require a change of the regime from the Republic to the Monarchy. Exactly based on these requirements Zogu would ask for constitutional changes (Duka, 2007: 129).

The setting of the monarchy would help in the establishing of the peace and order in the country (DDI, VII/5: 429) and in the whole political life that also was very aggressive (Fischer, 2011: 26). Camilo Libardy, who has served in this period in Albania, assumed "Albanian politics had no links with governance, but with the rule by any means by any means" (Lombardi, 2012: 56). Although crowds were easily crushed, they were clear signals that the population did not like his regime. From this was born the need to organize a more solid state form as was monarchy (Fischer, 2004: 49).

Except for the monarchy would eliminate once for all, the electoral choices of the Head of State, from the historical point of view, the establishment of the monarchy would consist in a continuity. Albania would be similar to all the countries around it and it would be more accepted by the other states in the Balkans and in Europe, as the monarchical form of state was more prevalent (Xhafa, 2011: 40). Based on this fact, as Swire assumed, the other European states would not look with skepticism (Swire, 2005: 402). Western European tradition was rooted in the institution of monarchy. History had shown that monarchies were consolidated and inherited (Milo, 2013: 734).

From the social and cultural point of view, the Monarchy was more acceptable by the society. Albanian people were used to follow a pasha, or a be’, so they are used to follow a personal power, instead of an institutional power. As Ahmet Zogu argued; “We are a primitive and backward population, educated with the principles of heritage, and we could not appreciate the significance of the republic... People need a permanent authority which would be superior to personal and group conflicts. The crown would be the authority which would bring belief. Albania has in the past suffered from the lack of a stable government. This had prevented people start working for the exchange of a State.” (Tomes, 2012: 174)

As it was predicted by previous plans of Sola and Zogu, the chambers of the parliament on 7 June 1928 voted for the revision of the Statute and decided to meet the next day in a National Assembly. The national assembly immediately recognized the inadequacy of its authority to elaborate and approve
constitutional changes. For this reason it was decided to consult the electorate through professional electing a Constituent Assembly. Immediately after this decision, they decided to merge the rooms. In fact, it resulted that the most difficult stage of the preliminary plan was implemented more easily and faster than was predicted by Zogu and Sola (DDI, VII/6: 344). Zogu used the event to show some kind of loyalty to the preliminary planning. Therefore, according to his philosophy of doing the things, the time was right to ask for financial aid from Italy. Sola promised 10 million lira, half of which was supposed to be given after the declaration of the Kingdom (DDI, VII/6: 406).

At the other hand the facility with which Zogu achieved his aims, worried Italy. Sola had a long correspondence with Mussolini (DDI, VII/6: 406-4116) in order to find the ways to enforce their position toward the future king. Sola thought about a declaration or a secret treatment, between Zogu and Italy. It could serve as a promise, but Mussolini was more pragmatic, and he preferred powerful tools like some kind of verbal note in order to declare to the entire world that the monarchy was a creation of Italy (DDI, VII/6: 507-508). In other words, there was necessary a personal, solemn involvement of Zogu toward Mussolini (Milo, 2013: 80).

In the end, one night before the change of the regime, on 31st August 1928, Zogu signed some secret treatments with Italy with the aim to ensure all the necessary tools for the implementation of the second treatment. Mainly the object of the treatments concerned with the army, which could make possible the creation of a military power that could be able to force Yugoslavia (A. Shkenc., 2000: 288). The military treatment was signed by Sola and General Alberto Pariani as representatives of Italy in one side and Iliaz Vrioni as Minister of Foreign Affarisë and Colonel Qemal Aranitasi as Head of Armed Forces from the side of Albania. In accordance with the treatment in cases of war, the two forces would work under one direction through a common coordination (DDI, VII/6: 538-543). This treatment was as well accompanied with some reward for Zogu (Fischer, 2004: 151-152).

The plan for the declaration of the Monarchy, was implemented without the slightest problem. As was anticipated, on Saturday, August 25 took place the first session of the Constituent Assembly, where Zogu did not interfere. In the following two days, it became the verification of mandates and on Wednesday, August 29th was setting up a committee which made proposals to change the statute. On 1 September 1928 the Commission proposed the creation of the Kingdom. Shortly thereafter the Assembly chooses Ahmet Zogu "King of Albanians" and sent a delegation to offer the crown to him (DDI VII/6: 578).

**The kingdom of Albania and Italy in a European point of view**

The only issue that created some diplomatic confusion, as expected, was the choice of the title that Zogu choose as "King of Albanians". This title brought dissatisfaction primarily to Yugoslavia, who felt affected by a behavior that at first glance seemed an irredentistic one. The same concern was also shared by the United Kingdom in the preparatory phase of declaration of monarchy. British minister in Tirana, Seeds in a meeting in 1928 with the Italian minister Ugo Sola was expressed that in fact this title would influence the peace to the Balkans. Seeds had argued: "It is true that Albania was done an injustice, setting outside its territory a significant population. This was a big mistake that should be solved one day, but would have been fatal to the peace in the Balkans and in Europe, if Albania supported by Italy would allow the irredentistic movements in Albania" (DDI, VII/6: 45).

The same concern was also shared by the Yugoslavia. One day before the announcement of the monarchy the minister of Belgrade expressed to Sola that his government would not recognize the monarchy if Zogu was going to be proclaimed "King of Albanians" (DDI, VII/6: 603). In fact, Yugoslavia did not recognize immediately Zogu’s Kingdom, without the consulting firstly with Paris and then to London (DDI, VII/6: 588-589).

However, the title "King Albanians" was supported by Zogu as it suited best with the Albanian tradition. Sola states in one of his memories that Zogu had not thought much about this issue and if he would have serious difficulties from Yugoslavia or the UK, probably would have chosen the classic title "King of Albania" (DDI, VII/6: 547). Italy assumed the duty to undertake lobbying activities, for the recognition of the Zogu’s kingdom. Through its diplomatic propaganda Italy, ensured the Great Powers that despite the sovereign title, it would play the role of a guarantee of the neutrality of Albania, because in fact Italy was not interested in the internal affairs of Albania as it was for example the choice of the title. This kind of propaganda was transmitted to all the Italian Embassies in the major capitals such as: Athens, Budapest, Madrid, Washington, Bern, Prague, Sofia and in some Latin American countries (DDI, VII/6: 557).

As expected Italy was the first country to recognize the Albanian Kingdom. In an official note on the occasion of the proclamation of the Kingdom, the Minister of Italy to Tirana Ugo Sola wrote: "Royal
Italian Government considers the establishment of the monarchic regime in Albania a happy event, that will strengthen furtherly the existing ties between the two countries. It will ensure the sustainability of the common policy to the Treaty of Alliance. Therefore Italy will always remain deeply loyal to the organic understanding that has produced such excellent results thank to the general policy followed by Your Excellency. I can assure you that the Italian Government would not fail to consult with the Government of Albania for any problem you may have to do with our common interests and act to deal with all matters relating to the situation in the Balkans (Swire, 2005: 408).

After Italy, the Albanian monarchy was recognized by Greece, Hungary and Uruguay. On September 13, 1928 it was also recognized by the United States of America with a telegram sent by President Coolidge (Ikonomi, 2011: 44). The recognition from the United States was very important. It pushed UK and France to make their recognition soon after. In the beginning the United Kingdom showed some kind of hesitation, in not giving immediately its consent for the announcement of monarchy. So did France and as a consequence, so did Yugoslavia. The two Great Powers had planned to push the act of recognition as much as possible, but after the declaration of the United States they couldn’t wait anymore (Milo, 2013: 786).

The only state that clearly and publicly refused to recognize the monarchy was Turkey. This happened because the Turkish domestic policy was so focused on the consolidation of the Republic form of state, undertaken by Mustafa Kemal. In the concept of Mustafa Qemal there was necessary to give an example that could show that a man elected by the people can not proclaim himself a king. The international press widely commented his statement: WMid They are doing theater, aren’t they?" (Tomes, 2011: 103). Actually a crisis in the relations between Albania and Italy was in the interest of Italy. In this concept the break between Albania and Turkey would facilitate the strengthening of the relations between Italy and Albania. On the other hand, with the Italian concept, Albania should be distracted once and forever from the ancient ties of Turkey and Balkans in general, and to build a new European approach as an Adriatic-Mediterranean country (DDI, VII/8: 79). In the Italian archives there is a secret report dated 20.11.1930 where the Minister of Italy in Ankara informed about the possibility that Turkey finally recognize the Albanian Kingdom, but Foreign Minister Grandi, instructed to continue the efforts to stumble this reconciliation (DDI, VII/9: 560). Indeed the recognition of Ahmet Zogu as King of Albanians by Mustafa Kemal happened in 1931 (Milo, 2013: 788). However, in the international arena, the proclamation of the Kingdom of Zogu, was commented as a product of the Italian policy in the Balkans and in Albania in particular. The French newspaper "Le Flywheel Paris" on 28th September 1928, so a few days after the proclamation of the kingdom, wrote: "Ahmet Zogu became a king with the special authorization of Italy, but although his throne was fabricated by the madness of Mussolini it is not a safe seat. Ahmet Zogu is aware of the fact that he can fall down of power from one moment to another and his people will not and feel threatened by him" (AQSh 251/1928/73: 138).

Even the British newspaper "Christian Science Monitor" wrote that Albania pretends to be free but Italy is controlling it. In addition, the newspaper declared that the influence of Italy was comprehensive and all over accepted by the government elite and by the simple people. According to this newspaper: "In the end, Albania is a new country and in such circumstances it absolutely needs protection. As Bulgaria was assisted by Russia, as Poland of France, also Albania needs the help of a powerful state. The only possible friendly ally is Italy. Of course Italy has its own objectives, but also Albania also has its goals. In this case they are both using each other. Albania does not want to be a colony of Italy. Indeed, in the country exists a harsh opinion that a king cannot give the land to foreigners. King Zogu is aware of this fact, and for this reason he had invited different nationalities to assist the development of the country as English, Austria, German, who actually are working in Albania" (AQSh 251/1929/289: 189).

It is obvious that the Italian policy in Albania was not a secret anymore. It was publicly known that the proclamation of Ahmet Zogu as “King of Albanians was a product of Italy for its own interests.

The King of Albanians and Italy
The relations between Italy and Albania started to change immediately after the change of the regime. This happened because Ahmet Zogu used to feel powerful after the proclamation of the kingdom. In addition, in his government style, was not included any kind of consulting. That was supposed to mean, that everything that happened, happened because of his willingness and mainly for the reason of his well being. The new king started to show some kind of self-satisfaction, combined with a sense of opposition towards Italy (Fischer, 2004: 70).

Zogu began a rebellion behavior. This feeling of superiority sourced, but the fact that the situation positively changed as a result of the Italian collaboration. Zogu could ensure the internal order,
especially in the North. On the other hand, his team of collaborators usually was composed of unprofessional and unskillful people that often couldn’t understand the real importance of the events. According to the author Amedeo Giannini, Zogu preferred to gather around him people educated in Turkey, instead of people educated in western countries. (Giannini, 1940: 183)

The new king was aware of the fact that the two treatments represented a danger of Albania, as they could sign forever the hegemony of Italy. Initially, he started to make some institutional movements in order to limit the Italian hegemony. Hence he asked the Constituent Assembly to include in the constitution an article in accordance to which, Albania can not give military assistance without the permission of both Parliament and the King (Fischer: 171). In this way Zogu avoided the responsibility derived from the Guarantee Pact of 1927 based on which, the country was supposed to take part in case of a military conflict on Italy and if Italy was going to ask for it. At the internal reports of the Italian Embassy in Albania have expressed strong doubts, about the personality of the King. In 1929, the Italian representative stated that they knew that the Albanian people did not like Italian presence, but they were hoping to assure some kind of sympathy by supporting the king. In accordance to this report, one year after the establishment of the kingdom: "Zogu has a tendency to make all the easy issues, much more difficult. For any matters, he discusses again and again. He tried to find any way to avoid his responsibility and all this was accompanied by a tendency to megalomania. If in any occasion, he has difficulty in finding the right argument, he starts to speak about the government and the people. There is nothing more ridiculous than Zogu speaking about the good of the government and of the people. His personality is a incomprehensible. He points in power corrupted people, but having in mind that all his officers are sold to Yugoslavia... When we approached the Red Cross to go in the Dukagjin area, to bring help, King stopped us, because he hates residents of that area, who expressed their dissatisfied... We believe that this behavior is the extreme care that we had for the king. Perhaps we handle it with more consideration than it should. The King in turn was convinced that our desire to be in Albania and to have some freedom in military terms, make us to close an eye and an ear on certain issues" (AQSh 251/1929/148: 1-5).

However Italy was not so worried about the behavior of Zogu or his lack of honesty. At this moment Italy could ensure its hegemony in a direct way through the treatments of 1926, 1927 and 1928. The enforcement of the power of Zogu was seen in a positive way because in the end he was the person that they have financially supported (Swire, 2005: 402). In the end Zogu was aware of the fact that the wealth of his regime depended on Italy. This approach had the aim to sell his alliance and trust as much as more. In accordance to Sola sometimes he couldn’t even recognize what was his real interest. In this regard Sola has declared: "Italy wants to make you a nation, but with one condition: you truly have to deserve it. If you continue to be ungrateful to Mussolini, it will come a day that he will reverse his policy against you, and will turn into a nation of slaves." (DDI, VII/9: 288).

This difficult character of Zogu is confirmed also by other collaborators and contemporaneous. In the memories of Faik Konica the former ambassador of Albania in the United States of America, Zogu is described like somebody that never tells the truth, that never keep a promise, egoistic, insatiable, unfaithful and unscrupulous. In addition, Konica has accused Zogu for the reduction of the dignity of Albania in this period of time (Konica, 2010: 154). Even Eqrem Bey Vlora, another contemporaneous of Zogu’s period shared a similar opinion about his personality and his work’s philosophy. Among his writings, we can highlight: "Ahmet Zogu represents the synthesis of all the good and bad qualities of the man from new Albania and this is the reason of his succeed." (Vlora, 2003: 451).

Despite the strange attitude of the new King, in the first two years after the establishment of the kingdom, Italy continued to show maturity by respecting the treatments (DDI, VII/7: 125). This was the right moment for Italy to start implementing its military plan in accordance with its own interest. After a deep analysis of all the alternatives at the Palazzo Chigi, Italy choose to work with the Albanian Army in order to create a potential threat against Italy. This option needed some more fortifications (DDI, VII/7: 159), more investments in the road network, which had already started by SVEA (DDI, VII/7: 284).

The entire Italian strategy was composed of the two platforms: the military platform and the political one. The first was supposed to depend for the second. The main aim of Italy was to make the world think that nobody could consider Albania without asking first Italy. In the Italian concept the Great Powers should understand once and forever, that Italy was controlling Albania. All this was done because of the Adriatic Sea. In order to control the Adriatic Sea Italy needed the Otranto Strait in one side and Vlora on the other side. In this way Italy could release the block of the
Yugoslavia and the normal functioning of the Italian Army in the Mediterranean Sea. (DDI, VII/8: 147-149).

The strategy was combined with some provisions in cultural and educational sector. With the Italian support have been constructed some schools, some humanitarian organizations, etc. Italy was convinced that helping the development of the country would contribute to reduce the skepticism of the population toward Italy. On the other hand, with the Italian concept, it was very important to build some kind of believe between the king and the population. Therefore the Italian support would contribute to the strengthening of this belief (DDI, VII/8: 515). In fact thank to the Italian spot there were possible to achieve some important developments in infrastructure, in trade, in the educational system and health. The economic improvements made possible the public order, especially in the north (DDI, VII/8: 218).

However, as Sola argued all these improvements couldn’t build any kind of sympathy of people towards the Italian presence in the country (DDI, VII/8: 516).

Conclusions

The Italian dominance in Albania was so evident and strong before the establishment of the kingdom in all the economic, political, cultural and military aspects. We can assume that Italy could build this supremacy, especially starting from 1925 when the Republic of Zogu have been affirmed. On one hand it was the willingness of Zogu as President that opened the door to the Italians, but on the other hand the interest of Italy towards Albania have been always evident and ready to come in.

It seems an historical coincidence that in 1925 also Mussolini was ready to evaluate an international approach of his politics. From 1922 to 1925 he could work for the strengthening of fascism within Italy, by eliminating his internal enemies. The invitation of Zogu to contribute to the economic development of the country was done in a very appropriate moment for Mussolini and fascism in general.

Anyway, Mussolini didn’t have any positive consideration on Zogu, but the invitation was a good chance to accomplish some objectives of the fascism’s expansionist policies in the Balkans. The period 1925-1928 is an intensive one because the most important treatments have been signed. Some of them have been registered with the League of Nations, but some of them have been not. Above all, the treatments consisted in considerable costs like costs of investments, for the organizers, but also for Zogu himself. In these conditions, the priority of Italy was to make sure that all the investments done, could have permanence and could accomplish the Italian the long term objectives in Albania: the building of an absolute and exclusive hegemony.

For this reason Mussolini purposes Zogu to change his regime from Republic to Monarchy. Italy could explore deeply the personality of Zogu, was obvious and his ambition to go through this adventure. In fact, he accepted this purpose only with a slight hesitation, that lasted only twenty days.

Without doubt Zogu was aware of the risk that his kingdom was supposed to depend strongly from Italy. This idea was also enforced by the most important journals that commented the Albanian monarchy as a pure product of Mussolini’s regime. For this reason Zogu approached a difficult behavior immediately after the change of the regime. This attitude combined with his personal characteristics became a real problem for the Italian presence. The period soon after the deliberation of the kingdom up to 1931 was marked by some communication difficulties between Italy and Albania. Even though Italy was not worried about this, because it was sure that Albania could not survive without her help. Mussolini knew that from one moment to another Zogu would ask again for the Italian financial support. And he was right.

In fact this happened in 1931 when the relations between Italy and Albania entered on a new phase: the state of crises. Albania directed by Zogu needed financial support as was not able to pay from its own budget, but Italy was not so available anymore to respond to its younger alley.

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