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**Abstract:** *Albania was in a very specific situation with regard to its foreign policy during the second half of 1946. It really was a very hard time especially after the communists had taken power in late November 1944. This second part of the paper focuses on the main problems Albania faced in its foreign policy. The country's participation in the Paris Peace Conference was yet another achievement for the communist government led by Enver Hoxha. Due to this participation, the country avoided its dismemberment; it earned the right to obtain war reparations from Italy and sign a peace treaty with this country. However, one of the greatest achievements of Albania at the Peace Conference was, beyond any doubt, the victory over Greece, which claimed the south of the country by introducing Albania as a hostile country which had sided with the defeated powers. However, two of the major setbacks that Albania faced in its foreign policy were not becoming a member of the United Nations and above all the Corfu Channel incident. During such events, two British warships were severely hit by sea mines with the death toll claiming twenty-two British lives. The paper is focused almost entirely on archive documents, some of them published for the first time.*

**Key words:** *Albania, diplomacy, recognition, Peace Conference, Corfu Channel, United Kingdom, Soviet Union, UNRRA, Greece.*

### **The ongoing problems with the southern neighbor (Greece) and with UNRRA**

In the foreign policy of the new Albanian state after the end of World War II, an important place was occupying the question of war reparations. The desperate economic situation of Albania, forced the government to try hard to find financial sources for the country to survive. In the first session of the Conference for the Reparations of War that was held in Paris November - December 1945, with the proposal of the Yugoslav part, Albania was invited to participate.<sup>1</sup> At that conference 18 countries were

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1 *Arkivi Qendror i Shtetit i Republikës së Shqipërisë/The Central National Archive of the Republic of Albania* (hereinafter: AQSH), Fund (hereinafter: f.) 14/Strukturat/

invited to participate except with the exception of Poland and the Soviet Union whose part for the reparations was settled since the conference of Potsdam.<sup>2</sup> From the diplomatic point of view, this was a success for Albania because it has been considered as an ally country of the winning side of the war against Nazi Germany, but the fee (in the document are not presented numbers) that was assigned to Albania was considered unfair by the Albanian government.<sup>3</sup>

The main problem which the country was facing in the foreign policy was absolutely with Greece because the latter asked for the annexation of Southern Albania which was called Northern Epirus by that country's government. Greece pretended that it was her historic, ethnographic, geographic and strategic right to claim that territory even because Albania, according to her, has been an ally of fascist Italy and has attacked Greece during 1940-1941.<sup>4</sup> Between Albania and Greece the peace treaty was not yet signed and no agreement was in sight. Also Greece claimed territories from Bulgaria in the size of 4950 km<sup>2</sup> along with 200 000 inhabitants and 950 km<sup>2</sup> of land from Albania.<sup>5</sup> According the above-mentioned treaty, Albania should answer to her southern neighbor, and on 20 April has been drafted a document from the Albanian government when was recommended to claim from Greece the return of Çamëria because the Greeks had never respected the right of the Albanian minority there and also to claim the issue of Albanian properties in Greece after their forcefully displacement from the Greek bands and their migration to Turkey.<sup>6</sup>

Albania's foreign policy was also a concern for Albanians living abroad. Enver Hoxha as prime minister and minister of Foreign Affairs, received not few letters from the Albanians abroad above all on the necessity of Albania's participation at the Peace Conference.<sup>7</sup> There were also from them who dared to present complete platforms on how should Albania diplomatically move to be accepted at the Peace Conference and in what way the Albanian society should be organized to achieve that goal.<sup>8</sup>

No matter how Albanian diplomacy relied on Yugoslavia and the Soviet

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Structures (hereinafter: Str), Year (hereinafter: Y.) 1946, File (hereinafter: F.) 152/1, page (hereinafter p.) 10. Report and working plans for the international recognition of Albania and the attitude of the Albanians abroad concerning this matter.

2 *Ibid.*

3 *Ibid.*

4 *Ibid.*

5 *Ibid*, p. 11.

6 *Ibid.*

7 *AQSH*, f. 14/Str, Y. 1946, F. 174, p. 9. Letters and telegrams from different persons abroad sent to Enver Hoxha concerning personal and foreign issues.

8 *Ibid*, p. 10.

Union, still in the international arena a little was known about Albania and also the friendly countries like Poland or other communist states in Eastern Europe knew little about it except for the fact that it was in Europe.<sup>9</sup> Another problem that was put into evidence at that time concerning Albania's foreign policy, was the lack of a true diplomatic personnel apparatus and this was strongly emphasized from the report sent to the Central Committee from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.<sup>10</sup>

Albania in the first years after the end of World War II, should carefully move in the international arena. It should absolutely present the image of a democratic country in the eyes of the world. Yugoslavia shared a long line border and the premier Hoxha has taken the first steps to strengthen the relations with it. To show his openness with the Yugoslavs, the Ministry of Education in Tirana accepted the request of Kërçisht village in the district of Peshkopia to open an elementary school in the Macedonian language, based on the Albanian state laws.<sup>11</sup> This was a double movement for the Albanian state. Not only was it shown to Yugoslavia that it would respect the rights of Slavic minorities in the country, but was sending a clear message to Bulgaria about the Macedonian community living in Albania.

Nevertheless, the biggest problem of Albania in the foreign policy had to do with the political emigrants living in Italy. The escaped Albanian political element had the full attention of the Albanian state. Their estates and properties were sequestered. Their families were evicted. Within the country the situation seemed to be under the total control of the Communist Party concerning their political opponents. In 1946, the relations of Albania with UNRRA were getting through serious problems. This fact was a true concern for Enver Hoxha. The further aggravations with the American and the British missions in Albania meant further delay from becoming a member of the UN and continuation of official refusal to recognize the Albanian government from the Western Allies. As all these were not enough, on 18 January 1946, in the newspaper "Bashkimi" was published a report concerning the meeting of the Albanian students federation in

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9 *AQSH*, f. 490/Këshilli i Ministrave/Council of Ministers (hereinafter: KM), Y. 1946, F. 138/1, p. 2. Report of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Albania's international situation and the duties of the Albanian government in international policy.

10 *Ibid*, p. 6. Excerpt from the report: "Thus, we put an end to our job that aimed to study the foreign problem of the State by posing a concrete plan before the Party. At the end we repeat what we've said in the beginning that we consider important at these times to be studied and organized the foreign affairs by establishing the necessary apparatus for this matter".

11 *AQSH*, f. 490/KM, Y. 1946, F. 157, p. 1. Correspondence of the Ministry of Education with the Executive Committee of the Peshkopia Prefecture on the demand from the village of Kërçisht, on the opening of a school in the Macedonian language".

Italy.<sup>12</sup> According to this reportage, UNRRA has granted financial support to them and in the paper was labeled as a reactionary organization. This made that the chief of UNRRA mission in Tirana Oakley-Hill, sent a letter of protest to “Bashkimi” on 25 January 1946 where vehemently was stressed the fact that UNRRA didn’t forge politics and was interested only in the economic reconstruction of the world.<sup>13</sup> In the same line with Oakley-Hill, the deputy chairman of the mission P. C. Floud, clarified two months later on 14 March 1946, concerning the paper published in “Bashkimi”, that Mr. Keeny, chairman of UNRRA’s mission for Italy clarified that this organization has given no help of any kind to the Albanian political migrants in Italy, but only to those which were deported from the Nazis and to those who favored the activity of the United Nations. To every other Albanian that did not belong to this category was turned down.<sup>14</sup> At the end of the information, it was stressed the fact that the return of the Albanian war criminals was a responsibility of UNRRA, but of the military authorities in Italy, and to them should be referred to this matter.<sup>15</sup>

During the entire first half of 1946, the relations of the Albanian governments had not few high and lows. UNRRA’s mission on 11 February 1946, intervened near the Albanian government for a special request to be allowed to take by renting the offices and the apartments of the former Italian mission, or at least to take care of the above-mentioned properties because the mission has not accepted the responsibility for them.<sup>16</sup> With this act, the mission wished to make known to the Albanian government that it had no deal and had no connection with the former Italian mission which had already left Albania. Nevertheless, the Albanian state didn’t trust UNRRA anymore. This was related to the fact that a month later on 13 March 1946 through a ship owned by this organization for four Italian engineers to escape.<sup>17</sup> Until July 1946, there were other breakouts of Italian

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12 *AQSH*, f. 490/KM, Y. 1946, F. 160, p. 1. Effort to deny UNRRAs mission on the publication of an article in the newspaper *Bashkimi* concerning the help that UNRRA provides for the Albanian emigration in Italy.

13 *Ibid.* Excerpt from the protest of Oakley-Hill: “UNRRA, as you should know, is an Aid and Recovery organization founded by all the United Nations and certainly includes all those countries that of course are “Reactionary”, whatever the meaning of this word might be. Even the Albanian government has presented an appeal for membership in UNRRA. UNRRA does not forge political weapons, but is interested only in the Economic Reconstruction of the World, without taking into consideration race, nationality, faith or every political doctrine”.

14 *Ibid.*, p. 3.

15 *Ibid.*, p. 4

16 *AQSH*, f. 490/KM, Y. 1946, F. 170, p. 1-4. Correspondence of the Council of Ministers with the UNRRA mission concerning the properties left from the Italian nationals.

17 *AQSH*, f. 490/KM, Y. 1946, F. 186, p. 1. Correspondence of the Council of Ministers with

nationals with UNRRA's ships and for this fact the mission was accused by the Albanian Council of Ministers as collaborators in these hostile actions towards Albania.<sup>18</sup>

### **The Paris Peace Conference and the Albanian attitude**

Albania to be accepted in the Peace Conference had presented its demands to the Four Great Powers on 26 April 1946.<sup>19</sup> In this demand signed by Enver Hoxha in the quality of the prime minister and minister of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of Albania (hereinafter: PRA) sent to the four foreign ministers of the USA, Great Britain, Soviet Union and France, had presented Albania's demand to be accepted in the Peace Conference because had been one of the first victims of the fascist aggression in the world and was liberated relying on its own forces by paying a heavy price fighting at the side of the great allies.<sup>20</sup> At the end of the letter, Hoxha expressed the belief that his country's demand to be part of the Peace Conference would be taken into consideration from the above mentioned powers in order that Albanian people too had to be given the right to say its word on that occasion.<sup>21</sup>

For Albania to be accepted as a country of full rights in the Peace Conference, it was imperative to have the support of the Soviet Union. On 7 June 1946, Koço Tashko was Albania's envoy in Moscow to strengthen his country's demands, moreover now that Greece was facing enough problems from the territorial requests presented against her by Bulgaria.<sup>22</sup> For Albania it was necessary to participate in the Peace Conference, but the problems she was facing in the foreign policy were a serious problem. In a radiogram sent to Tuk Jakova in New York, Enver Hoxha ordered him to do the utmost for the colony of Albanians in America to strongly embrace the demand for the PRA to be accepted in the Peace Conference.<sup>23</sup> Even though he was not yet admitted and was not known if would participate or not, on 31 July 1946, the Albanian government presented the names of the delegation that would represent Albania in this important event in the

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the UNRRA mission on the hostile attitude of the UNRRA mission for helping to escape the Italian engineers.

18 *Ibid.*

19 Arkivi i Ministrisë për Europën dhe Punët e Jashtme i Republikës së Shqipërisë/Archive of the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Albania (hereinafter: AMEPJ), Year (hereinafter: Y.) 1946, File (hereinafter: F.) 146, page (hereinafter: p.) 95. Documents on accepting the People's Republic of Albania in the Paris Peace Conference.

20 *Ibid*, p. 96-97.

21 *Ibid*, p. 97.

22 *Ibid*, p. 2.

23 *Ibid*, p. 26.

international relations, which would temporarily be chaired by Hysni Kapo and would have had a wide composition.<sup>24</sup>

Enver Hoxha in the position of the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs was personally engaged for Albania to be represented in the Conference. He was fully aware that Albania's independence and consequently his power were on the brink of staring down the barrel of a gun. A stroke on Albania in the international relations would possibly mean a dismemberment for the country and loss of independence. He knew well that the USA at that conference would be "first violin", thus had to show the good will to come into terms with them. Before Albania was to be invited, when still nothing was decided if she would participate or not, on 19 July 1946, the Albanian premier sent a letter to the US Secretary of State James Byrnes, writing among others:

*"Albania's claim to participate in the proceedings of the Conference with the same title and degree of the other ally countries, is based on her right of its heroic war of its people against the nazi-fascist invaders and from the great and incalculable sacrifices that she made by resisting the common enemies. As Your Excellency is aware, this contribution of the Albania people in the common cause has been recognized many times and rightly praised from the most authorized representatives of the Great Allies".<sup>25</sup>*

Before writing to Byrnes, the Albanian ambassador in France Kahreman Ylli, in a meeting that he had with the American ambassador there, clearly expressed that Albania fully trusted the USA, but the ambassador knowing the problems between the Albanian government and the American Mission in Albania, changed the conversation.<sup>26</sup> Nonetheless, Albania would have the possibility to participate in this conference. The clash with Greece concerning the latter claims according to the information of the ambassador Ylli in Paris, were unavoidable nevertheless the support of Yugoslavia and above

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24 *Ibid*, fl. 9. "The official delegation in the Paris Peace Conference according to the note sent to the Albanian embassies in Moscow, Paris, Belgrade and Sofia on 31/VII/1946, would be the following:

Hysni Kapo, Deputy in the People's Assembly, Albanian ambassador in Yugoslavia.

Manol Konomi, Deputy in the People's Assembly, Minister of Justice.

Kahreman Ylli, Deputy in the People's Assembly, Albanian ambassador in Paris.

Pëllumb Dishnica, Deputy in the People's Assembly.

Behar Shtylla, General Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Dr. Dhimitri Popa, Adviser in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Prof. Aleks Buda, Prof. Petraq Pepo, Ing. Sali Angoni, Misto Treska, Press Director. The delegation would temporarily be chaired by Mr. Hysni Kapo, Ambassador of Albania in Belgrade".

25 *Ibid*, p. 17. See also the pages 98-99 for the complete letter.

26 *Ibid*, p. 35.

all of the Soviet Union would not lack towards Albania.<sup>27</sup> The discussion to accept or not Albania, was held in the conference on 10 August 1946, but met the stern opposition of the Greek premier Tsaldaris.<sup>28</sup> The Greek intervention against Albania's participation was not efficacious according to the information of the Albanian ambassador of 11 August 1946, and Albania would be invited to officially participate in the Peace Conference on 12 August.<sup>29</sup> This was a great achievement for Albania, which finally would be recognized on the winning side of World War II. Albania would have the right to participate in the plenary session of 17 August 1946.<sup>30</sup> The Albania delegation started the journey to Paris on 13 August 1946 from Belgrade by train and arrived on 20 August.<sup>31</sup> The chairman of the delegation by decision of the People's Assembly of 17 August 1946, was appointed the Prime minister and minister of Foreign Affairs Enver Hoxha.<sup>32</sup>

On 21 August 1946, Enver Hoxha kept his speech in the Paris Peace Conference.<sup>33</sup> He exposed in length the contribution of Albania during World War II, the sacrifices of the Albanian people, the great losses this country suffered both humanly and in properties and at the end asked to be recognized by Albania the rightful compensations.<sup>34</sup> The Albanian premier's speech in the conference was widely reflected at the time world press, but without specifications.<sup>35</sup> Hoxha in his speech mentioned the message that the American Secretary of State Stettinius sent him on 22 May 1945 on the Albanian people's war at the side of the Great Allies.<sup>36</sup> It was a strong testimony showing that it wouldn't be easy at all for Greece to convince the allies to claim southern Albania. The question of

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27 *Ibid*, p. 36. Message from the ambassador Kahreman Ylli for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Tirana, August 3<sup>rd</sup> 1946.

28 *Ibid*, p. 51.

29 *Ibid*, fl. 54.

30 *Ibid*, p. 56.

31 *AMEPJ*, Y. 1946, F. 147, p. 8, 13.

32 *Ibid*, p. 44.

33 *AMEPJ*, Y. 1946, F. 148, p. 3. Speeches and declarations of our delegation in the Paris Peace Conference.

34 *Ibid*, p. 3-4.

35 *Ibid*, p. 4.

36 *Ibid*, p. 52. Message from Edward Stettinius sent to Enver Hoxhës: "We are aware of the continuous war of the Albanian people against the aggression and we understand the heroic sacrifices of this small people for the liberation of its country and also his efforts to help the allies to contribute in the final victory against the common enemy. I want to assure you of the entire sympathy and love that the people of the United States feel towards the Albanian people and all of Albania. I affirm that Albania will contribute much more in the cause of Peace in the future as it has contributed in the realization of the latest victory".

the Greek claim was beyond any doubt “the Achilles heel” in the country’s foreign policy to defend territorial integrity. Certainly, the premier Hoxha would focus during his speech on the Greek pretensions and to reject the statements of the Greek premier Tsaldaris. According to Hoxha, the Greek premier tried to prove in the conference that Albania in the Conference was not an ally, but an enemy and therefore should be treated accordingly.<sup>37</sup> Hoxha publicly asked Tsaldaris why he didn’t mentioned Europe’s quislings and especially the Greek quislings but was focusing only in the Albanian quisling Vërlaci?<sup>38</sup> All Albanian quislings according to Hoxha that were captured from the partisan forces paid with their lives the treason towards the nation.<sup>39</sup> Moreover, the Albanian premier quoted what the western French and English press said about the partisan groups that helped the Greek forces by attacking the Italian convoys in their war against the Greek state.<sup>40</sup> “*Is France, Hoxha directly asked Tsaldaris in his speech, an aggressor country because Hitler launched from the territory of that country the attack against the island power?*”<sup>41</sup> Of course this question remained without reply from the Greek prime minister.

The compensations were another “hot potato” where Hoxha was focused. According to him, Italy for the harms she caused Albania had to pay to her 4 544 232 626 golden francs.<sup>42</sup> The peace treaty with Italy and compensations the latter owed to Albania, were for the Albanian premier non negotiable and asked the Peace Conference to establish the amount the Italian state had to pay to Albania and also the conditions of the payment.<sup>43</sup> Also Hoxha openly demanded on behalf of the Albanian delegation that Italy was to be forced to not pose any sort of threat for Albania, and demanded that all the war criminals that had found shelter there to be sent in Albania and in this could be established normal relations with the new Italy truly democratic, but only after carrying the obligations towards Albania.<sup>44</sup>

The matter with Greece had totally engaged the Albanian government to send to the delegation materials on southern Albania, starting from the census of population during 1923, 1930 and 1945.<sup>45</sup> All the statistics about southern Albania showed that starting from below the Shkumbin river,

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37 *Ibid*, p. 53.

38 *Ibid*, p. 54.

39 *Ibid*, p. 53.

40 *Ibid*, p. 54.

41 *Ibid*, p. 55.

42 *Ibid*, p. 58.

43 *Ibid*, p. 59.

44 *Ibid*.

45 *AMEPJ*, Y. 1945, F. 150, p. 19. Documents on the proceedings of the Paris Peace Conference.

were sent to the Albanian delegation in four copies from Tirana.<sup>46</sup> In all the statistics sent to the delegation in Paris to present them as evidence against the Greek claims, it was clearly seen that the Albanian population was dominant even in the areas of Korça and Gjirokastra.<sup>47</sup> Not only that, but in those documents was shown even how many hectares of land have profited the Greeks living in Albania from the agrarian reform after the reply from the district of Gjirokastra.<sup>48</sup> Enver Hoxha in the telegrams sent to Koçi Xoxe in Tirana pushed him to act swiftly even by buying expensive documents in Greece that the Albanian delegation could present as evidence in favor of the Albanian question.<sup>49</sup> Also Hoxha informed that if the Great Allies supported Greece and gave right in her claims against Albania, then Yugoslavia would pose its claims on Macedonia and Aegean that according to Hoxha would force the Greeks to pull back.<sup>50</sup>

Nevertheless in the Peace Conference the speech of Hoxha made a good impression, Albania again had a big handicap compared to Greece. Was not a UN member, while Greece was. This fact made the job difficult for the Albanian delegation nevertheless the letter protests were sent from the People's Assembly of PRA to the UN for not accepting Albania.<sup>51</sup> Meanwhile in Paris, the Soviet Union through its envoy Malinovsky, continued to support the question of Albania against the Greek claims, stressing that Albania in no circumstances posed a threat for Greece.<sup>52</sup> Also, on 28 August 1946, the Soviet deputy Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko openly supported Albania to become a UN member by emphasizing that the country fulfilled all the conditions to become a member of the organization and also would be able to fulfill all the obligations deriving from the Charter that were compulsory for every member.<sup>53</sup>

A success for Albanian diplomacy in the conference proceedings was the signing of the peace treaty and the decision to pay the compensations. The Conference decided that Italy should pay as consequence for aggression against the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, Greece and Albania the amount of \$300 000 000 dollars.<sup>54</sup> From this amount, the lion's share of \$100 000.000

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46 *Ibid.*

47 *Ibid*, p. 26.

48 *Ibid*, p. 19.

49 *Ibid*, p. 69.

50 *Ibid*, p. 70. Telegram cipher of Enver Hoxha for Koçi Xoxe. Paris, 29 August 1946.

51 *Ibid*, p. 75.

52 *AMEPJ*, Y. 1946, F. 153, p. 16. Documents of the political and territorial Commission of the Paris Peace Conference.

53 *Ibid*, p. 17.

54 *AMEPJ*, Y. 1946, F. 155, p. 19. Documents of the judicial and editing Commission of the Paris Peace Conference.

dollars belonged to the Soviet Union.<sup>55</sup> The signing of the peace treaty with Italy and the decision on compensation were a bitter pill to swallow for the Greek premier Tsaldaris. In the press it was written that Tsaldaris nourished more anger towards Albania rather than Italy.<sup>56</sup> The acceptance of Albania in the conference, the signature of the Peace Treaty with Italy and the compensations, were a big blow to the Greek claims. Nevertheless the support from the American and British delegates, again Greece failed to justify that it was attacked from Albania and the latter posed a threat to her security.<sup>57</sup> Albania was strongly supported by the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, Poland, Czechoslovakia. The Yugoslav delegate Moša Pijade was the first who spoke in the favor of Albania when the latter had not yet received the invitation to participate in the conference.<sup>58</sup> The prime minister Tsaldaris was a lonely voice when sought that Albania question should be treated separately from the other countries that had fought against Nazism for the fact that had attacked Greece.<sup>59</sup> Sometimes yelling and sometimes showing self-restraint, Tsaldaris failed to win over Albania. Also even his demand to give back to Greece 100 million drachmas that were taken from the Axis powers at the time entering Athens to reward Albanians for their war, was not accepted.<sup>60</sup> For Tsaldaris it was difficult to deny the Greek quisling government which participated in the war against the Soviet Union, and between them were ministers serving in his own cabinet.<sup>61</sup> Another fact that should be put into evidence in the protection that Yugoslavia made to the Albanian question in the conference, was the declaration the Yugoslavia and Albania signed a friendship and cooperation treaty based on the United Nations Charter and this treaty obliged the Yugoslav state to protect Albania against every attack.<sup>62</sup> The Greek claims were officially withdrawn from the day order in the conference on 21 September 1946.<sup>63</sup>

Another great success for Albania was the establishment of the amount Italy had to pay as compensation for invading Albania. The exchange rate for Albania was fixed 1\$=3.04 golden Albanian francs.<sup>64</sup> This fact

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55 *Ibid.*

56 *AMEPJ*, Y. 1946, F. 156, p. 25. Press conferences and materials on what has written the press for Albania during the Conference.

57 *AMEPJ*, Y. 1946, F. 158, fl. 57-66. Report on the Paris Peace Conference.

58 *Ibid.*, p. 3.

59 *Ibid.*, p. 6.

60 *Ibid.*, p. 58.

61 *Ibid.*, p. 64.

62 *Ibid.*, p. 22.

63 *Ibid.*

64 *AMEPJ*, Y. 1946, F. 160, p. 30. Documents for economic problems (reparations etc) concerning the Peace Treaty with Italy.

demonstrated how strong was still the Albanian currency and what a gaffe was the economic agreement with Yugoslavia for the parity between the two currencies. Even if we make a comparison with Greece, the Albanian currency was stronger (1 000 drachmas (Dr)=8.96\$).<sup>65</sup> The Compensation Commission decided that \$3 million dollars of damages as consequence of the robbed gold from Albania and other damages as i.e. in the Museum of Vlora and in archaeological sites based on the value of 1938 (2 652 000 US\$) to be paid to Albania.<sup>66</sup> This amount according the Commission correspond to the amount for building the strategic roads without economic value (Le dommage correspond à la construction de routes stratégiques sans valeur économique).<sup>67</sup> Nevertheless, the Commission declined to give Albania 66 million (it's not specified in which currency in the document) that the Italian firms had deposited in the National Bank of Albania during the occupation years.<sup>68</sup>

Of the same importance for Albania was to sign the peace treaty with Germany and to take the respective compensations. For this reason, in October 1946, Albania presented the respective memorandum to the Peace Conference.<sup>69</sup> According to the presented memorandum, Germany caused Albania damages in national assets 749 036 235 Albanian francs (= \$246 393 498,39 dollars) in the currency rate of 1938.<sup>70</sup> On the national revenues, the nazi occupation caused damages in the amount of 338 961 333 golden francs (= \$111 500 450,33 dollars); the expenses to maintain the national-liberation army in the war against the Nazis according the Albanian memorandum were 1 329 007 568 francs (= \$437 499 211,88 dollars).<sup>71</sup> In total the damages caused to Albania presented in this memorandum were 749 036 235 golden francs (= \$246 393 498,39 dollars).<sup>72</sup> In another report presented from the Albanian government the amount of damages caused from both Italy and Germany during the occupation of Albania was \$773 579 571,96 US.<sup>73</sup> These facts showed that Albania didn't possess unique data to present in the conference, but through massive exaggerations sought to

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65 *Ibid.*

66 *Ibid*, p. 31.

67 *Ibid*, p. 33.

68 *Ibid*, p. 35.

69 *AMEPJ*, Y. 1946, F. 162, p. 1. Documents on the war damages caused from Germany to Albania.

70 *Ibid*, p. 29.

71 *Ibid.*

72 *Ibid*, p. 30.

73 *AMEPJ*, Y. 1946, F. 163, p. 190. Documents of the Commission on war damages in the Peace Conference. In golden francs according to the Albanian government it was 4.146.659.211.

gain as much as possible even for another reason. The Albanian economy was broke and the only hope for its survival was Yugoslavia. The relation with it meant saying “farewell” to the economic independence and perhaps in the near future the total obliteration of the political independence.

### **The diplomatic isolation of Albania from the Western allies and the Corfu channel incident**

The relations of the Albanian communist government with the British missions started in the World War II period. My distinguished colleagues of the Institute of History, the professors Hamit Kaba, Ana Lalaj, Sonila Boçi and Romeo Gurakuqi have written with details about the British missions in Albania during the war and their papers were a big help for me for this research. Nevertheless, in the first half of 1946, the foreign policy of the Albanian state was not definitively accomplished. The establishment of diplomatic relations with Great Britain would have been a great advantage for the Albanian government. The beginning of 1946, was not good to establish diplomatic relations with that country. On 22 January, the chief of the British military mission in Albania sent a letter to Enver Hoxha concerning the information about the Greek minority in southern Albania.<sup>74</sup> In the note sent to Hoxha were not specified maltreatments against the Greek minority.

According to the information given from PRA's Ministry of Foreign Affairs concerning Albania's image in Britain, the British press considered the Albanian attitude as anti British and the members of the British mission were not allowed to move outside Tirana, only if possessed with respective permissions from the capital's military headquarter.<sup>75</sup> Indeed, the information about the British were such as to consider Albania's attitude as indifferent towards England and this fact was observed in the governmental speeches that considered the Soviet Union “our most sincere ally”.<sup>76</sup> This fact was a direct indicator that Albania was slowly aligning herself under the Soviet influence.

On 11 April 1946, from Italy's Bari, the British government sent a memorandum to the Albanian government informing the latter that from the British mission came the recommendation to restart the diplomatic relations between the United Kingdom and Albania.<sup>77</sup> The possibility of establishing diplomatic relations between the two countries quickly evaporated because

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74 *AMEPJ*, Y. 1946, F. 27, p. 12.

75 *Ibid*, p. 100.

76 *Ibid*, p. 101.

77 *AMEPJ*, Y. 1946, F. 25, p. 19. On the problems of establishing diplomatic relations between Albania and the United Kingdom.

of an urgent telegram sent from Belgrade through the ambassador Hysni Kapo on 15 May 1946.<sup>78</sup> Through this note, Kapo informed that the diplomatic representative of the United Kingdom in Yugoslavia, had presented a note based on the previous one sent from the Albanian government on April 22 accompanied with the request to establish diplomatic relations, but as consequence of artillery shelling of two British ships from the Albanian coastal guards and until the clarification of this matter, the British government could not establish diplomatic relations with the Albanian government.<sup>79</sup> Concerning this information, the Albanian ambassador in Belgrade was waiting for the necessary instructions from Tirana.

The reply came from Tirana for Hysni Kapo after four days, precisely on 19 May 1946.<sup>80</sup> Enver Hoxha, in the position of prime minister and minister of Foreign Affairs, instructed ambassador Kapo that Albania's government would inform the British representative the matter in word was being studied and would have a reply after two days.<sup>81</sup>

The government sent a note on 21 May 1946 that had nothing to do at all with the establishment of the diplomatic relations, but it was about the provocations that two British ships have done in Saranda's sea shore, and such a provocations according to Hoxha was given the proper answer from the Albanian coastal guards by firing.<sup>82</sup> Hoxha had justified this action of Albanian coast guards with the fact that the ships had not raised the flag of the United Kingdom, because if they would have done so, nobody would fire against them.<sup>83</sup> Also in the note it was emphasized that the British ships, because of the lack of the flag, were suspected to be Greek sailing in the Albanian waters and fearing another provocation (after listing the provocations since 1945), they were shot.<sup>84</sup> The note of the Albanian government concluded with the hope that the incident of Saranda was not to be taken into consideration to serve as an obstruction of establishing diplomatic relations and the strengthening of the future friendship between the two countries.<sup>85</sup>

The reply from the British government about the Albanian note came through the British embassy in Yugoslavia on 30 May 1946.<sup>86</sup> In the note

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78 *Ibid.*

79 *Ibid.*, p. 57.

80 *Ibid.*, p. 61.

81 *Ibid.*

82 *Ibid.*, p. 63.

83 *Ibid.*

84 *Ibid.*

85 *Ibid.*, p. 64.

86 *Ibid.*, p. 73.

it was said that the British government was dissatisfied with the Albanian note concerning the incident of Saranda and that was not true the British ships had not raised the flag.<sup>87</sup> The British note clarified that according to international law, existed an usual rule that granted the right to inner passages through territorial waters and also existed a special rule on the straits that granted the passage in both times of peace and war.<sup>88</sup> This had to do with the fact that the straits were part of a major international traffic route and were linking two sides of the space in the sea.<sup>89</sup> The British note called an infamous ignorant Albanian officer for not recognizing both the international law for sailing and the British flags and for ordering the shooting against the British ships, and demanded Albanian authorities to punish him accordingly.<sup>90</sup> At the end of the note, the British government demanded from the Albanian government to apologize and to punish the officer that was responsible. Only after the fulfillment of these two points, the British government would take again into consideration the possibility of establishing diplomatic relations with Albania.<sup>91</sup>

The reply from the Albanian government to the British note came on 19 June 1946 and was entirely disappointing and rejected every possibility of apologizing delaying like this the possibility of establishing diplomatic relations between the two countries.<sup>92</sup> The summer of 1946, was an exchange of notes within the limits of courtesy between Britain and Albania "via Belgrade" where the most meaningful was the British note of August 2<sup>nd</sup>, in which the Albanian government was informed that in the case such an incident would occur again, if the Albanian coastal guards would fire against the British ships, then the ships of His Majesty would not hesitate to fire back with all their might the Albanian batteries.<sup>93</sup> Looking the disappointing attitude of Albania concerning the May's incident, according to a information from United Press on 27 June 1946, the Foreign

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87 *Ibid.*

88 *Ibid.*, p. 77.

89 *Ibid.* Excerpt from the British note: "...the straits within the territorial waters or the passage through them, is not called passage through the territorial waters. There is no doubt that within this definition the Corfu Channel is within this definition and exists some sailing lines from Brindisi and other parts of the Adriatic that usually pass from there".

90 *Ibid.*, p. 78. "Seems that the commander of the respective battery was totally ignorant in both understanding the international law and also to identify the ships of His Majesty, and totally unsuitable to be trusted with such an important command. Nothing can justify the strike with heavy cannons at times of peace friendly ships, in an international maritime line".

91 *Ibid.*

92 *Ibid.*, p. 81.

93 *Ibid.*, p. 86-87.

Office spokesman, stated that the Great Britain would possibly give up the support for Albania to become a UN member and also expressed the regret that the relations between London and Tirana were deteriorating.<sup>94</sup> As all this was not enough, the British foreign minister Bevin could change his attitude in Albania's support to demand reparations from Italy.<sup>95</sup>

However, the fact that put an end to Albania's efforts to establish diplomatic relations with the United Kingdom was beyond any doubt the Corfu channel incident of 22 October 1946, where two British ships hit on marine mines and consequently 22 British sailors died.<sup>96</sup> The passage of the British ships was called by the Albanian government a premeditated provocation in the Albanian national waters.<sup>97</sup> This incident would mark the definitive interruption of the efforts to establish diplomatic relations between Albanian and Great Britain until the end of the Cold War.

From the end of May to the end of December 1946, the British press in the news on Albania, presented the situation in the small Balkan country as very dark and discouraging.<sup>98</sup> Great Britain wanted to make abundantly clear that it was not establishing diplomatic relations with Albania especially after the Corfu channel incident. The Albanian government could not hope for the help from the British government to intermediate her membership in the United Nations Organization, even why in the beginning of 1946, His Majesty's government was ready to recognize the regime of Tirana.<sup>99</sup> The incident of Corfu channel has thrown away every possibility of recognition from the part of Britain moreover when in an information of 6 December 1946, Albania demanded only Albanian and Greek ships to sail through the channel<sup>100</sup>, what was another political blunder from the Albanian government. The British press considered as very soft the attitude of His Majesty's government towards Albania in a time when the American allies had given a term of 48 hours to Yugoslavia to apologize and compensate for hitting two American planes who later crashed.<sup>101</sup> Also the British press

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94 *AMEPJ*, Y. 1946, F. 28, p. 99. On the statement of the Foreign Office spokesman, 27 June 1946.

95 *Ibid.* "The national political observers see that the belligerent attitude of Albania towards Great Britain can affect the attitude of the Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin towards Albanian claims for reparations from Italy, which is now under negotiation between the Council of Foreign Ministers of the Four Big in Paris".

96 Paskal Milo, *Të vërtetat e fshehura; incidenti i Kanalit të Korfuzit* (Tiranë: Toena, 2010), 148.

97 *Ibid.*

98 *AMEPJ*, Y. 1946, F. 28, p. 1. The British press on Albania.

99 *Ibid.*, p. 3.

100 *Ibid.*, p. 7.

101 *Ibid.*, p. 11.

openly wrote that the Albanian leaders were following the wrong path in their efforts for the country to become a member of the UN in a time when now were on the way to detailed investigations on the Corfu channel incident by demand of the British government.<sup>102</sup> Even the American press was at the same line with the British press making Albania totally isolated from both big western allies.<sup>103</sup>

## Conclusions

The only window for her voice to be heard in the UN, Albania had the Soviet Union which through a statement in the Security Council praised Albania's attitude during the war and indirectly mentioned the British efforts to destabilize Albania through the political emigration groups.<sup>104</sup> About the Soviet insinuations and about the nature of the political regime in Albania, the American delegate demanded additional information on the peaceful character of the regime in Tirana and about the Albania political parties.<sup>105</sup> Concerning this fact, the demand of the American delegate was purposeful because was widely known that in Albania there were not political parties except the Albanian Communist Party (Partia Komuniste Shqiptare, hereinafter: PKSH), and through this fact was aimed to be shown the totalitarian nature of the Albanian communist regime.

Because the relations between Albania and Greece would remain very bad even as a consequence of weapons supply from the Albanian government to the Greek communists during the civil war in Greece, according to the Corfu incident Greece was totally acquitted from the accusations that it was responsible for mining the channel.<sup>106</sup> Whatever kind of protest Albania was doing concerning the violation of her national waters integrity, would fall into a deaf ear nevertheless the big propaganda from the Albanian press.<sup>107</sup> The golden days of good relations between the Albanian communists and the British and American missions during the World War II in Albania<sup>108</sup> were definitively falling for as long as Enver Hoxha's regime would exist.

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102 *Ibid*, p. 14. News from Reuters agency.

103 *Ibid*, p. 16.

104 *Ibid*, p. 24.

105 *Ibid*.

106 *Ibid*, p. 28.

107 *Ibid*, p. 61. The newspaper "Bashkimi", 1 November 1946.

108 *Ibid*, p. 62. Enver Hoxha's speech on 20 October 1944 on the help given from the Anglo-Americans for the liberation of Albania. "The allies have helped us in sending weapons and ammunition (standing ovations "Long Live the Allies"). This help that they have given us we shall not forget and we will be grateful to them, but those aids were not sufficient".