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THE COOPERATION OF ISMAIL QEMALI WITH THE NATIONAL POLITICAL PARTY IN THE USA, ON THE EVE OF THE PARIS PEACE CONFERENCE IN 1919

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Abstract

This article aims to shed as little light as possible on the circumstances that conditioned the close cooperation between the politician Ismail Qemali and the National Political Party in the USA, in the difficult moments, when the existence of Albania and Albanians was endangered.

The politician, Ismail Qemali has been described as the "Father of the Nation" for Albania and the Albanians. With the initiative and support of the Albanians of Albania and those of the Diaspora, he led the efforts by managing to finalize the Declaration of Independence of Albania on November 28, 1912. He left Albania in 1914, but never stopped trying to defend Albania's interests, especially on the eve of the end of the World War I. Ismail Qemali had a good understanding of the historical-political, national and international situations and moments. He not only designed, but took all the necessary steps, together with the Albanians of America united in the National Political Party to face the difficult situations in which Albania found itself. The cooperation with them aimed at sensitizing the international factor with the Albanian case, from the voice of real Albanians, who loved their country and their people more than anything else. It was the right moment for the voice of the Albanian representatives, to unite, to feel and be heard strongly at the Peace Conference in Paris. What united them was the national interest. This was also expressed in the goal of the National Political Party: "Salvation and security of all Albania".

Keywords: cooperation, union, Albanian attention, political platform, awareness, future

1. Introduction

The paper aims to highlight an important moment, but very significant and implicit, that of cooperation between Albanians, undertaken in the most difficult moments for Albania. This significant cooperation between the National Political Party in the USA and the well-known Albanian politician Ismail Qemali, it is not simply identified as a common cooperation, its goal was even broader. A number of questions can naturally arise, such as: Why exactly at this moment was such a cooperation realized? What was Ismail Qemali's interest, although he was old enough to take the step towards this cooperation? What guarantees and what support urged him to undertake this cooperation at this specific moment? Concerning the National Political Party of the Albanians of America, what did it evaluate and what did it claim to achieve through this cooperation with Ismail Qemali? What benefits would the cooperation bring to Albania and the Albanians? On the basis of what strategy or platform would the cooperation be carried out? What was the purpose that united them together in this cooperation and was it effective in achieving the announced goals?

The paper aims to go a little deeper in terms of specific aspects, which provide answers to the questions highlighted above. Media, historiographical literature and archival sources (taken from the Albanian Central State Archive) have been used in writing this paper. The media literature consulted in the preparation of it, is based on the newspapers of the time such as the "Albania" newspaper, organ of the National Political Party of the Albanians of America, the "Dielli" newspaper, organ of the Albanian Federation "Vatra"¹ in the USA. Albanian historiographical literature after the '90s of the XX century occupies an important place in this work too, especially the official sources of the Academy of Sciences of Albania: Academy of Sciences of Albania, (2007). *History of the Albanian people*, Vol.III Tirana: Toena; Academy of Sciences, *Albanian Encyclopedic Dictionary*, (1985), Tirana; Academy of Sciences of Albania, *Albanian Encyclopedic Dictionary*, (2009), Vol. III, Tirana; Academy of Sciences of Albania, *Albanian Encyclopedic Dictionary*, (2008), Vol. I-II, Tirana; *Encyclopedic dictionary of Albanian women*, (2009), Shkodër; In this paper there have been used summaries of documents: Xoxe, K., *Ismail Qemali*, (1983), Tirana, monographs of Albanian scholars, Duka, V. *Albanians in the course of the XIX century*, (2001); Tirana; Mita, R., Kordha, H., *Albanian political pluralism 1914-1924*, (2011), Tirana: Silver; Luarasi, S., *Three lives*, (2007) Tirana: Migjeni; and foreign scholars Silajdzic, H., (1999), *Albania and USA in the Washington Archives*, Macmillan, M., "Paris 1919", (2006), Plejad; Smirnova, N., *History of Albania during the XX century*, (2004), Tirana etc.

2. Methodology

The methodology applied in this paper has a scientific research character. The paper aims to reflect a small but detailed part, from the scientific research work started several years ago, for the completion of a monograph entitled "Albanian political pluralism during the period 1914-1924". (Mita, R., Kordha, H., (2011), Elbasan: Silver). During the realization of this study, some details and moments, served as indicators to us. Consequently, in the framework of a systematic work, we were able to finalize it through this work. It must be admitted and emphasized that the history of the birth and intensive, patriotic and national activity of the "National Political Party" is very little known. Indeed, this political force has great historical and political merit. The period when it was created and operated was not only the most difficult one in the History of the Albanian Nation but it was also created precisely to help its activities in the interest of the Albanian Nation. Highlighting the circumstances of the cooperation between them as well as the common goals in the initiated path along with the results of achievements in the interest of Albania and the Albanians, have been carried out through a scientific research work.

3. Support of the Albanian Diaspora in the USA for Albania and the Albanians (1912-1918)

The Independent Albanian State began its political life after the Declaration of Independence on November 28, 1912 under the vassalship of the Ottoman Empire.

Under such circumstances, the Albanian National Movement and all Albanians, especially the Albanian intellectual elite, patriots and nationalists faced with new tasks required for the organization, direction, construction, strengthening and consolidation of the new Albanian State in all areas of political, social, and economic life, etc. At the head of this historical-political process there was the Albanian diaspora in America. We have mentioned in particular its most prominent intellectuals and patriots, who had known and experienced the path and analyzed the factors that determined and influenced the development and progress of the USA. They tried to use and apply its experience and example for the construction and development of their Homeland of origin.

¹ This federation had included in its membership Albanian emigrants in America. So the Albanians of America were divided into two camps in that of the National Political Party and the "Fire" Federation. The Albanian emigrants of the United States at the Peace Conference in Paris were represented by separate delegations and platforms, but both aspired and acted in accordance with the country's existence and its future.

After the Declaration of Independence and the creation of the Independent Albanian State, the Albanian Diaspora in America, so closely attached and devoted to the fate of their Homeland was the one to form the First Albanian Political Party named "Albanian National Political Party" on August 27, 1917² in Worcester Mass, directed by Sevasti Dako and later by Kristo Dako, her husband. The leader of this party, Sevasti Dako, was the first Albanian woman to lead a political force. It was created with the help of many Albanian emigrants and members of the Vatra Federation (in the USA).³ In its political program that he announced, from its early beginnings, the alternatives of this political force were embodied in the solution of the historical tasks dictated to the Albanians, the political moments and situations that the Albanian Nation was going through at that time. It aimed at utilizing the patriotism, will, perseverance, readiness and commitment that existed in the Albanian emigrants that existed among Albanian emigrants to help and support them by any means. The party rapidly increased the number of its members and branches.

This enabled it to continuously expand its activity in many cities. The process pursued by the US policy towards small countries, especially the program consisting of 14 points of US President Woodrow Wilson for the new world order, regarding the implementation of the principle of self-determination of nations. "According to this principle, wherever possible" especially in "Central and Southeastern Europe", peoples with the same national affiliation, united by a common language, culture, history, had to govern themselves." (Sala, G., Filo, L., & Gashi, I., Contemporary History (Europe, United States of America during the XX century), (2009), Tirane, p. 46)

Albania during World War I, was occupied by the warring armies of the two military blocs, which had divided the country into several occupied zones. This derived also because of the fact that Albania had declared its neutrality in this war. The purpose of this political force in the diaspora was the main motive, which brought the cooperation on a sound basis between its and the well-known figure of Ismail Qemal Vlora. The latter as a former senior official in the Ottoman Empire, better than anyone else knowing the circumstances that the end of the First World War could bring, relied heavily on the Albanians of America, and especially on the National Political Party. It was a support that came from the early beginnings of its creation. The common goal was to help the existence and future of Albania and Albanians, which was the essence of this cooperation. What gave this well-known Albanian personality more security in this cooperation was the good intention and the influential power of this political force in the circles of Washington. According to him: The "National Political Party" was created at a time when the world was engulfed in flames during World War II. By this time Albania was occupied and turned into a battlefield between the troops of both military blocs. Ismail Qemali was pretty certain that it was the only political party that could send its representatives, not only to the Paris Peace Conference, but also to the highest political and diplomatic circles of the United States, in Washington. Another fact was the leitmotif of the activity of this Albanian political force in emigration, whose motto was: "**Salvation and security of the whole of Albania**".

4. Circumstances that conditioned the cooperation between Ismail Qemali and the National Political Party

During 1917, Ismail Qemali was in Paris. Given his advanced age, the impression was created that he would already retire from political life. But, even at this age he decided that despite everything, he would dedicate the last days of his life to Albania and Albanians.

This was his moral will, desire and obligation. The scholar Jacque, E., regarding such an attitude of Ismail Qemali said that: "... the old diplomat, this time too, came to the defense of his country ...", (Jacque, E., Albanians, (1995), p.404) He felt well, understood well the national and international historical-political situations and moments that the end of that world conflict would create. His concern was not unfounded. Through his frequent correspondence it remained a fact that "... Albania was in its greatest danger... engraved on all sides.

²Regarding the date of establishment of the National Political Party, there are different variants in Albanian historiography. In the authors Mita, R., Kordha, H., (2011), "Albanian political pluralism during the period 1914-1924", as the founding date is considered to be August 27, 1917, the author and historian Duka, V., (2001), "Albanians in the course of the twentieth century", accepts as the date of formation of the party January 22, 1917. p. 118, in the publication of the Academy of Sciences of Albania, (2007), meanwhile "History of the Albanian People", vol. III, p. 125, accepts its founding at the end of 1917.

³ On April 28, 1912, the Albanian diaspora in America founded the Albanian Federation "VATRA" in Boston. Its official press organ was the newspaper "Dielli".

As it was recognized by the London Conference in 1913, today Albania was torn apart by many foreign hands. On the day of peace we do not know who will be a defender that will be the true friend of Albania". (Luarasi, S., Tri jetë, 2007, p.107) Therefore, Ismail Qemali not only designed but took all the necessary steps, in collaboration with the Albanians of America enlisted in the National Political Party (which was created at the Worcester Mass in the USA) to face and avoid the existential danger of Albania and Albanians. The close cooperation between them aimed, not only to sensitize the international factor on this small and unknown country but also to urge them recognize the Albanian issue.

Recognition was achieved with the voice of true Albanians who loved their country and people more than anything else in life. History was an evidence which had shown the efforts and contribution of the Albanians of America in the Independence of Albania (in 1912).

Ismail Qemali demanded the undertaking of all appropriate political demarches in European forums and beyond, so that the voice of the true representatives of the Albanians be heard at the Paris Peace Conference. Ismail Qemali, was described as the old man (father) of Albania ("Albania" newspaper, Worcester Mass., USA, January 16, 1919) from the National Political Party. This personality saw in this political force, not only the contribution historically given by the Albanians of America, but also the support they could give him in those crucial historical moments, to successfully finalize his diplomatic efforts in giving a right decision for Albania and Albanians at the Versailles Peace Forum. The Political Party had started lobbying for the Albanian issue in advance. In its First Assembly, which was held from 12 - 15 May 1918 in Worcester Mass, (USA) (after the election of the governing bodies, and its presidency, in addition to the expansion with the creation of new branches), special and important attention was addressed to the Albanian issue. It was in such new circumstances and key moments that the existence of the Albanian State after World War I was endangered. Among the most important decisions of the National Political Party, it is to be mentioned the appointment of Ismail Qemali as its representative at the Peace Conference to be held in Paris in January 1919.

The election of Ismail Qemali as a representative of this political force was based on its high appreciation of this personality. Referring to this high evaluation for this politician, there was mentioned: "... that Elder (Old man) of Albania called Ismail Qemal who is also known by the stones of Albania, the one who raised the flag of Skanderbeg after 500 years of captivity ..." ⁴ ("Albania" newspaper, Worcester Mass., USA, January 16, 1919) This fact gave impetus to the work of the National Political Party.

5. Ismail Qemali's proposals and suggestions for the Political Party Nationals and Albanians inside and outside Albania

In the letter that Ismail Qemali addressed to the Political Party on the occasion of his appointment as its delegate to Europe, in addition to expressing gratitude for the selection, he expressed very valuable concrete opinions and proposals. His thoughts and proposals were aimed at successfully carrying out the tasks assigned to him by this high mission of participation in that world top forum. The organization of the work, the propaganda of the rights of the Albanian people which was the essence of the Proposal made by Ismail Qemali highlighted the creation of a Center in Europe consisting of five people. They would participate in it, he himself, two delegates of the Political Party, and two others proposed by him. It was proposed to place three letters ⁵ in the center in the languages: Albanian, French and English. ("Albania" newspaper, Worcester Mass., USA, February 28, 1918) In addition to the center in Europe, relations with it would also be coordinated and other centers established in America and London. This was also the expression, the clear presentation of a good image of cooperation (cooperation) and unification between Albanians in the eyes of the European and World diplomacy. Above all, this coordination was in the honor and interest of Albania. In his judgment it was important and necessary and the publication of a bulletin French - English, for dissemination and awareness of issues related to Albania and Albanians. Increasing the interest for Albania and defining Albanians was the publication of an informative book. It was intended to reveal and describe the most important aspects of the history, ethnography, economic geography, politics of our country.

⁴ He was one of the most famous political personalities in the country, according to the political background he was also for the formation of his intellectual stature.

⁵ This involved the placement of three persons, who would deal with the writing of letters in three languages. So more or less they would play the role of secretaries.

This was the way to better express the inner material and spiritual world, historical continuity, political history, being as a people and a nation on its own with territory, language, symbols of the past with strong foundations and a hopeful future...

The defense concerning the existence of this place would be done with historical arguments, such as ethnographic maps, or physico-political ones, which would be published in this book. At the end of the proposals, Ismail Qemali emphasized that the preparation of a Memorandum was carefully prepared by the united Albanians. It aimed to disclose the demands and rights of this nation to the Peace Conference. ("Albania", newspaper, Worcester Mass., USA, January 16, 1919) Unification among Albanians was what our country needed most, in these moments. Ismail Qemali's call for unification was a strong bell that had to be heard among Albanians, given the difficult situation of the nation and its people. In his constant correspondence, it was pointed out that at all costs the division and contradictions that were noticed in the relations among the Albanians, which "makes me poisoned", had to be overcome. So it upset him, it saddened him. However, as he himself states full of optimism, in the face of the great danger in which Albania was, he had faith and hope that the Albanians would unite, and together they would face the situation. This unification had to be done among the Albanians of America as well "All Albanians should be united in this national war, including the delegates of" Vatra "as well as those of "Political Party".

6. The efforts of the National Political Party in the US and the Peace Conference

The Political Party organized extensive activities during 1918-1919. This party and its President Sevasti Dako, in order to raise awareness of the situation in which Albania was on the eve of the last world conflict, addressed a prayer to the President of the United States, Woodrow Wilson and the ambassadors of England, France and Italy in Washington. Through prayers he was asked to take appropriate measures to stop the Greek terror on the Albanian population in Chameria.⁶ In September 1918, the idea of creating a regiment of volunteers from the Albanians of America, was born to this political force to go to Albania and fight alongside their brothers in defense of the integrity and territorial integrity⁷ of the Albanian state.

In October 1918, the Party, sent two of its members, Kristo Dako and Nuredin bey Vlora, as representatives to the International Assembly of Captive Nations held at Independence Hall, Philadelphia, October, 23 – 26, 1918. The Albanian delegates in their discussions presented to the Assembly the demands of the Albanians and rejected the claims of the opponents of Albania and the Albanian nation.

October 26, at the Independence Hall, Declaration of the Common Goals of the Nations of Central Eastern Europe was signed by the Twelve Representatives of the Abducted Nationalities. On behalf of the Albanians of Kosovo and Chameria, the Declaration was signed by Kristo Dako. This is one of the most important activities of the National Political Party, for the sensitization of American and world political and diplomatic circles for the Albanian problem. The National Political Party did a lot in this regard. Its efforts were well known and appreciated by Ismail Qemali. So he immediately joined the Party, whose work he had full trust and confidence.

7. The efforts and Vision of Ismail Qemali for the future of Albania and Albanians

Ismail Qemali cooperation with the National Party intensified in November 1918. During that time he was in Barcelona, Spain. A report of Ismail Qemali sent to the Commission of the National Political Party, on November 7, 1918, informed them of the kind reception given to them by the American Ambassador to Spain, as well as the interest that the latter had shown in the Albanian issue. He also informed that he had conveyed to the American President Willson honors and gratitude of Albanians to him and the American nation. Based on the echo of the "Declaration of Common Goals of the Free and Common European Nations", the judgment of the Father of the Nation conveyed to the National Political Party was based on President Willson's 14 points.

⁶Chameria was part of the Albanian territory, the province in the South of Albania before the decisions of the Conference of Ambassadors of London. It succeeded from the Albanian territory with the decisions taken in this conference, being annexed to Greece. This was about the Greek displacements and colonization of this area that was accompanied by massacres against this population, as well as with violent evictions from her homes and territory.

⁷By this term was meant the international powers, including the neighboring countries with our country, which aimed at the partition of Albania in the context of establishing peace in the Balkans, and seeing our country as spoils of war against its winners.

Ismail Qemali conceived and propagated the proposal for US President W. Wilson to be proclaimed Apostle of Peace ("Albania,, newspaper, Worcester Mass., USA, November 7, 1918) and of the freedom of the Peoples. Even his statement and call was for the Albanians a new testament of salvation. As a sign of joy and hope, Ismail Qemali said that: "Today the empire of force has disappeared and the generation of international justice has been born. Our imperative task today is to work tirelessly to lay the foundations of our political rights and to seal them with the seal of the Peace Conference."(Ibid) ("Albania,, newspaper, Worcester Mass., USA, 7 years of III 1918)

He was convinced that the Government of The US would kindly look at the demands of a nation suffering and victimized by the time and policies of the Balkan-European powers. He was filled with hope when he saw President Willson's program. It was clear that even the eleventh point of this program definitively solved the Balkan problem. The Father of the Nation naturally asked the question whether there could be a fair and final solution to the question of The Balkans without giving way territories and resolving the Albanian issue? Regarding this point and the future of the country, he said: "The whole Balkan, or rather the Illyrian whole, which has always been inhabited by indigenous peoples whose roots are represented by our race and one of the branches is represented by the Hellenic tribes, which was later invaded (conquered) by foreign peoples and so on became the common ground of all these nations, whose rights are recognized today. But when the rights of these young people coming from one vent to another are recognized, how can the rights of the oldest nation in the Balkans, which has held its place for so many years, not be recognized?" ("Albania,, newspaper, Worcester Mass., USA, November 7, 1918)

Resolving the Balkan issue, establishing peace in it through the sacrifice of a people in its territories was described by Ismail Qemali as monstrous and unjust.

This personality had the full conviction that our issue - that is, the Albanian case could only be solved by America. This belief was emphasized in his words that: "It is our duty to present this truth and this right before those who have the duty to share justice among nations ... that the most preferred field for our cause is America." (Ibid) Even in encouraging such support he drew the attention of the leaders of the Political Party to "... try to enlighten the official circles and the people of the United States of America we wanted to distinguish the true friends of our country.,, ("Albania", newspaper, Worcester Mass., USA, November 7, 1918)

In his expressed and shared judgment with the leaders of the National Political Party, two issues were immediate. The first issue is the identification of Albania on the frontiers of the London Conference of Ambassadors, which could only be resolved with the support of the US Government. At this point it was in line with the National Political Party, as one of the main points of its program was the creation of an ethnic Albania. (Duka, V. Albanians in the course of the twentieth century, (2001), p.118) The second issue which could be realized with the help of other countries, one of which, according to him, was Italy because "... from its history, from its geographical position and from the racial proximity it has. It is the right place to be interested more than others in the existence and independence of Albania. A strong and united Albania would be a guarantee for Italy, the expected balance of the Balkans and the Adriatic (Gazeta Albania, Worcester Mass., USA, November 7, 1918) Relying our hopes on Italy, without the wise old man of Vlora, in addition to the above reasons and the hope that the Ambassador of Italy, an old friend of his but also of Albania, based on the course of events at that time had shown his sympathy for our country. It was also hoped that by the end of the First World War, Ismail Qemali and the Albanians' trust in the Entente's sympathy would become a reality. ("Albania,, newspaper Worcester Mass., USA, November 17, 1918) The National Political Party used Ismail Qemali's call for all patriots and asked all its members to respond to the situation for the salvation of the Homeland, all to hear the voice of the Elder of Albania.

In a second letter sent to the Chairman of the National Political Party, Sevasti Qiriazhi (Dako) on November 17, 1918, he informed about the strict censorship that existed at that time, which had significantly affected the communication between the parties. In the last call to the Albanians before going to Rome, Ismail Qemali's vision and full conviction was revealed once again that at the Peace Conference, all Albanians should be led **by a chairman** and necessarily provide a common opinion to protect their rights. In this regard, he stated that: "... I am of the opinion that this is the mission of all the Delegates of Albania to be under one president and to have three secretaries (for Albanian, English and French)." ("Albania", newspaper, Worcester Mass., USA, November 17, 1918)

Through correspondence with Ms. Qiriazhi he expressed full confidence in the United States, but at the same time stressed that our task is to maintain the balance between the great powers. His vision was to do what was possible given that "failure to react to protect our rights will be death forever" (Albania, newspaper, Worcester Mass. USA, January 16, 1919) so he condemned them the fact that "It was necessary in every way to win Kosovo, Manastiri⁸ and Ioannina⁹ together with Chameria. I require all patriots not to sleep and not to spare anything for the salvation of Albania from the hands of the enemies..." (Ibid) Ismail Qemali was of the idea that without the complete territorial integrity of Albania, the Balkans would never be peaceful and in peace. (Xoxe, K., Ismail Qemali, (1983), pp. 395-396) The National Political Party was of the same conviction, which in its political platform promised to "... try in every way to escape from the greed of the neighbors not only the areas within the border separated from the London Conference,¹⁰ but also the areas that were unjustly separated from the body of Albania and given to Montenegro, Serbia and Greece .." (Mita, R., Kordha, H., (2011), p.27-28) The aim and purpose of the Party was patriotic, objective and realistic. At that time and in those circumstances, when the chauvinist circles taking advantage of the difficult moments that Albania was going through and the Albanians tried more than ever to realize further fragmentation, The "National Political Party" was committed to try in every way to save not only the Independent Albanian State, but also to the Albanian territories that the Conference of Ambassadors in London in 1912 - 1913 had unjustly separated from Albania and given Montenegro, Serbia and Greece. So, the cooperation between them aimed not only at saving Albania, but also at securing the territorial integrity of Albania, which meant correcting the historical injustices that had been done to Albanian lands and the Albanian population.

Regarding the Albanian regime based on its vision it was said that it was for a country and for a people such as the Albanian people with a democratic federal regime "... With the help of all patriots and well-wishers of humanity, to see without death the beloved, free Albania, and pleased to have in her bosom all the boys who have abducted the savages¹¹ of the South and the North."¹²

The situation in Albania had evolved. On November 25, 1918, the Congress of Durrës was organized in Albania, which formed the government of Turhan pasha Përmet, and appointed a delegation to participate in the Peace Conference in Paris.¹³ The presentation of the Albanian State as a state, with a government and representation in the peace event, was carried out by a victorious power of the First World War and directly interested in Albania, i.e Italy. This new situation was rightly viewed with concern by the Elder of Vlora, about whom he said: "The whole Albania fell into the hands of Italy. The time has come and gone to raise the voice and demand the rights of Albania." In the call addressed to the Chairman of the National Political Party with the conviction of a seasoned politician, he said that it was exactly the moment that the sons of Albania should raise their voice and realize the dream of generations, ethnic Albania. The elder (old man) of Albania stated that: "Today is the last day for Albania, may we be resurrected or die..., he expressed that he was very eager to be near this party for the signing of a full agreement with him and with all the patriots of America". Financial impossibilities, but also efforts to reach an agreement with the Italian Government forced him to go to Rome, after receiving clues from Italian political circles and hoping to reach an agreement with all Albanians in Albania.

⁸ The Albanian province unjustly separated from the Conference of Ambassadors in London, joining the Serbo – Croatian - Slovenian Kingdom, which later took the name Yugoslavia.

⁹ Albanian area separated from it by the London Conference of Ambassadors and annexed to Greece.

¹⁰It is about the Conference of Ambassadors of 1912 - 1913, which, as it is known, "committed a great injustice to the detriment of the Albanian Nation, disregarded the fundamental rights and interests of the new Albanian State, within whose borders only half of the Albanian lands and less than half of the population of Albanian nationality were included. More than half of the Albanians remained outside the borders of the Albanian State. Most passed under Serbia, the rest under Montenegro and Greece", (Academy of Sciences of Albania, *Albanian Encyclopedic Dictionary*, (2008), Volume II, Tirana, page 1242

¹¹ This was about the neighboring countries of Albania, the Serbo – Croatian - Slovenian Kingdom in the North and Greece in the South.

¹² The letter was written by Barcelona on November 29, 1918

¹³The end of the First World War was finalized with the Paris Peace Conference, which was held with the initiation and mediation of the winners of the war.

During the course of its work, the peace forum not only highlighted the issues raised for discussion, but also highlighted the charter of efforts of some states to become stronger at the expense of smaller, defenseless, unrepresented nations. One of these nations was Albania, which came to this peace forum with an official delegation selected, issued, and legitimized by the decisions of the Congress of Durrës of December 25, 1918, as well as with five other delegations representing the Albanians of diaspora.

In his opinion, Ismail Qemali spoke about the organization and unification of all Albanian delegates, which would be led by a Chairman." ("Albania" newspaper, Worcester Mass., USA, November 17, 1918) His opinion was not unfoundedly judged by the climate that existed in the international arena on the eve of the Paris Peace Conference. Ismail Qemali judged that in the Peace Conference the country should be represented with ladies and gentlemen "imbued with knowledge" and national feeling, as a need and necessity to carry out propaganda on the Albanian issue. He asked the Albanians of America for financial, spiritual support and representation in the conference that would determine the fate of Albania, and he humbly asked them to work wholeheartedly for this help which the homeland would never forget." The reaction of the representatives of the Political Party to the call of Ismail Qemali was immediate. In the Albanian American press the newspaper "Albania"¹⁴ the article "Day of Existence or Death" Political Party Commission, addressed all Albanians in America to listen carefully to the call of "The Elder of Albania, that Elder called Ismail Qemal...that well-known diplomat in diplomatic circles, who even today, despite his old age, is trying to save his girlfriend Albania ...So listen, Albanians, that it comes from a burning heart, that is ready to sacrifice (hero) on the altar of the Homeland, just to see Albania free and happy!" ("Albania", newspaper, Worcester Mass., USA, January 16, 1919) Salvation of Albania, Ismail Qemali saw it in the Albanian people, in the Albanians inside and outside Albaniato "opinga" (vegjelia) which was and would be the god of its country, not to "Bejlerët" and "Arhondët. The calls of the Political Party Commission addressed to the Albanians of America emphasized: "Who will be the Albanian, who will remain deaf with the call of the homeland that he is making through the Elder? Who can be the Albanian who, on the day of the last judgment, for the existence or death of Albania, will remain disobedient before the patriotic duty? Who will be the one to see Albania at the hour of death and not extend his hand for its salvation? "Never!"... Courage and patriotism appear today, therefore, run for office an hour ago for the existence and happiness of the homeland." ("Albania", newspaper, Worcester Mass., USA, January 16, 1919)

As soon as the Paris Peace Conference began on January 18, 1919, the Party appointed its delegate,¹⁵ among others, to that international forum, Ismail Qemali, but his death on January 24, 1919, did not make it possible for him to be represented at that peace conference.

8. Evaluation of the National Political Party for Ismail Qemali

The assessment for this important figure in the History of Albania, on behalf of the Political Party was given by Haxhi Murati, its chairman, who not only expressed the regret of the Albanians of America for the quick and sudden departure from life of this politician symbol, but also expressed what he felt in the soul. His death would serve the Albanians to realize what this personality had in the soul and heart of ethnic Albania. In his speech among others Haxhi Murati stated that: "...The old man died doing his duty towards the homeland... The party honored the old man because he was good and worked for Albania, but he also honored the party because I understand that it had clear patriotic members and loyal and stable men." (Ibid) And one of the reasons why the Political Party had to live was that "Ismail Qemali, as he said gave his soul for Albania, gave his soul leaving as a legacy to strengthen the Political Party, in which the national program is summarized, therefore it must live and progress..." ("Albania" newspaper, Worcester Mass. USA, February 6, 1919)

¹⁴ The newspaper "Albania" in the first issue on the right side of the title announced worldwide that: "Albania", official body of the "National and Political Party", stands for the sacred purpose Salvation of Albania, while on the left side of the title (below it) he wrote: Top to bottom for Albania. The newspaper became a powerful tool for popularizing the activity of individual branches and the whole Party. Through the newspaper, the Party carried out extensive political and propaganda activities not only with its members, but also for keeping alive and activating the National Movement in the occupied Albanian territories. This press body, among other things, also reflected the developments of the Peace Conference in Paris, in which the "National Political Party" sent its representatives to defend the Albanian national cause. (Taken from Mita, R., Kordha, H., (2011), Elbasan, p.46)

¹⁵ Delegates to the Conference as representatives of the Political Party were Parashqevi Qiriazi and Mihal Gramenon, while its second Assembly was held from 7 to 12 March 1919, also appointed Hasan Prishtina, Aqif pasha Elbasani, Nikola Ivanaj, Pandeli Calen, Halil pasha Gjirokastren, Fuat bej Dibrën, Ahmet bej Matin, Mihal Shahinin, Louis Bonatin, Midatin, Kasnecin, Pecin, Faikun, Ali bej Këlcyrën, Ismail bej Vrioni, Eqerem bej Vlora, Hetem Qemali, Pandeli Evangjelin, Nexhip Dragen and Filip heard Carles Craine and Aubrey Herbert who were elected honorary delegates.

Conclusion

The efforts initiated by the close cooperation between one of the well-known personalities with outstanding contributions in the History of State Formation in Albania, Ismail Qemali and the Albanians of America included in the ranks of the National Political Party, were successfully finalized. Despite the fact that he could not live and participate in the peace event, in Paris in 1919, the Albanians representing this political force worthily represented their political force, Albania and the Albanians. They best put in place the will of the wise old man, Ismail Qemali. Representatives of the National Political Party, at the Peace Conference in Paris presented the Albanian issue and defended the rights of an ethnic nation in its lands, to preserve territorial integrity, political integrity, national independence.

On the other hand, the Party connected and lobbied for the Albanian national cause with European and American personalities such as: "American diplomat, researcher and philanthropist Charles Crane Richard (Crane Charles Richar) who was a close supporter of the Albanian patriots and the Albanian National Movement "(Academy of Sciences of Albania, Albanian Encyclopedic Dictionary, (2008), Vol. II, Tirana, p. 1343); "Herbert Obrej English political personality, popularizer and defender of the Albanian cause in the international arena, who tried to stand by the Albanians in difficult moments for their national cause" (Albanian Academy of Sciences, Albanian Encyclopedic Dictionary, (2008), Vol. II, Tirana, p. 909); etc. These personalities had visited Albania, become its friends and knew the Albanian cause. The Political Party at that time used them to the benefit of the Albanian national problem, entrusting its representation in international forums. (Academy of Sciences of Albania, Albanian Encyclopedic Dictionary, (2008), Vol. I, Tirana, p. 46)

A dignified representation at the Peace Conference was also made by Parashqevi Qiriazi, (Chairwoman of the National Political Party), who despite being the only female diplomat (Encyclopedic Dictionary of Albanian Women, (2009), Shkodër, p. 484) among many male diplomats, defended with heart and with great devotion the rights of a nation, with which historical periods and the international factor were not shown right, the Albanian nation, the homeland of origin.

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