

EUROPE

AND THE

ALBANIAN

QUESTION

P. N. Pipinelis

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Δημόσια Κεντρική Βιβλιοθήκη Κόνιτσας

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Although written during the last phases of World War II, this reference book is nonetheless pertinent today. Mr. Pipinelis has carefully outlined the geographic, ethnographic and diplomatic aspects of the Albanian problem which had its beginnings at the end of the first Balkan War (1913).

The true diplomatic scenery surrounding the creation of the artificial state of Albania is not well known to the student of Balkan history due to a scarcity of English language reference books on the subject. Those books which do exist are either antiquated or expressions of Albanian nationalist views and are, for the most part, compilations of research by Albanian-American scholars.

For this reason this second edition of the well known book by P. Pipinelis is needed, and the addition of a detailed index and a set of six maps will aid the reader's understanding.

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ΔΗΜΟΣΙΑ ΒΙΒΛΙΟΘΗΚΗ
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ΤΑΞΙΝ. ΑΡΙΘΜ.

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• ΣΥΛΛΟΓΗ •
ΕΥΑΓΓΕΛΟΥ ΠΡΙΩΝΗ
ΑΦΕΡΑ ΑΠΟ ΤΟ ΣΥΛΛΟΓΟ
ΚΑΣΤΑΝΙΑΝΗΣ ΠΟΤΟΛΙΟΥ

BY
P. PIPINELIS

SECOND EDITION



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Δημόσια Κεντρική Βιβλιοθήκη Κόνιτσας

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Δημόσια Κεντρική Βιβλιοθήκη Κόνιτσας



+++ Boundary claimed by Greece 1913



INTRODUCTION

In the dramatic events enacted in the Balkans a leading part was played by Albania. It was in that country that there began on Good Friday 1939 the politico-strategic pincer-movement within which the whole Balkan Peninsula was destined two years later to lose its independence and to be handed over to the crushing tyranny of the aggressors. It was from Albania that the Italian dictator let loose his insolent offensive against Greece, on the 28th October 1940.

The strategic and political bridgehead that Italy had established many years earlier on the eastern littoral of the Adriatic thus fulfilled the aims that had dictated its creation. The Axis Powers knew that from their bases in the uplands of Albania they would be able without much difficulty to sever Yugoslavia's communications towards the South, and, by occupying Salonica, to deal a mortal blow at Greece; by tradition and by the natural inter-working of circumstances the firm friend of Great Britain in the Eastern Mediterranean.

There is no need to elaborate the point that Italy's aggressive policy was aimed in that direction. A glance at the map shows that that was the route of conquest towards the East at which the nationalists of Rome were continually striving with so much deliberation and fanaticism. Moreover, was it not the historic route, invariably followed in earlier centuries by so many others as they advanced to the conquest of the East?

However, the Axis's operations against the Balkans, as indeed all its operations in the present war, had to go through two clearly defined stages, the one paving the way for the other: a) political neutralization or conquest of the requisite strategic bases from which the actual military operations might be launched with greater security, and b) military action. The former stage prepared, and was a necessary condition of, the latter stage. Thus, the policy of political neutralization and domination of Albania made it possible for the Italian armies to be in the heart of the Balkans even before war had broken out. They had no need to undertake hazardous and costly operations for the invasion of the inhospitable shores of the Eastern Adriatic. Nor did they need to transport their war material and supplies through sea-lanes over which the supremacy

of British sea-power cast its shadow. At the moment when the offensive had to be launched the Italian army was already stationed close to the Greek or Yugoslav frontiers, with its forces already grouped under peaceful conditions; its aerodromes were equipped and the roads ready to receive its military transports. Only a signal was needed for the invading army to be set in motion in the midst of peace, or, at most, "a frontier incident", such as the one that the Fascist leaders demanded of the Military Command in Albania on the eve of Italy's aggression against Greece.

The Axis Powers were in fact well aware of the importance of terrain and of geographical conditions generally in the application of their policy of conquest, as was proved by their whole course of action before and during the war. They were well aware of the consequences to the comprehensive time-table of their operations that would result from a protracted resistance offered at a strong geographical point. They were acquainted too with the extremely difficult problems that must arise, in a war against an enemy possessing the mastery of the sea, from the fact that their military transports would be effected across wide intervening stretches of water, and would therefore be exposed to great hazards. Finally, they were aware of the facilities that are afforded—and conversely of the difficulties that are created—if the aerodromes of a country are available to one or other of the adversaries.

It was for these reasons that the Axis Powers always required the way to be prepared, through diplomatic and economic action, at those very points where the natures of the terrain presented serious difficulties that might make necessary the employment of larger forces than was desirable or practicable, and thereby entail loss of time and consequent strengthening of the enemy, together with other disadvantages. All the interdependent operations, political and military, undertaken by the Axis, from the re-occupation of the Rhineland in 1936 down to the seizure of Prague and the occupation of Rumania, Bulgaria, etc., virtually constitute a single politico-strategic plan, deliberately conceived with a view to neutralizing the difficulties of the terrain and preparing the most favourable conditions for the decisive blow against the principal adversaries.

The very fact of these endeavours on the part of the Axis in itself exposes the fallacy of the theory, which has of late received much support, that the importance of terrain and geographical features has very greatly declined as the result of the

most recent technical developments, and will disappear completely when the new organization of Europe becomes a reality.

Technical developments, however, make new modes of action available no less for defence than for attack, while terrain remains a constant factor (other things being equal) for the one side as for the other. Consequently, it may involve a greater military effort and larger forces of men, and because of its nature a longer period of time may have to be expended. The factors of time and effort necessarily exert a vital influence upon the wider plan of campaign.

Thus, at the present time no-one surely can doubt that, for example, Russia's occupation of the Baltic countries or of a relatively small belt of Finnish territory in Karelia, or the Germans' loss of two whole months in Greece and Yugoslavia greatly affected the Russian campaign. Particularly in the case of small countries, whose resistance mainly depends upon the aid given to them by the Great Powers, a defence prolonged for a few weeks, or even days, can be of vital significance. It is only if collective peace were to be fully secured by means of an international organization that the significance of terrain, in relation to defence, would be reduced to a minimum. Such security, however, is not yet available.

The Axis Powers were, of course, well aware of these considerations. In the case of Albania, therefore, the political neutralization of the country was held to be an indispensable preliminary if their aggressive design against the Balkans was to be accomplished under the most favourable conditions possible.

Political neutralization was achieved only after long labours, and as a consequence of the special conditions prevailing in that country. As early as the year 1926 a form of protectorate had reserved to Italy complete freedom of action. In the diplomatic sphere the rest of Europe was being estranged from Albania, and Italian influence soon succeeded in establishing at Tirana a kind of enclosed political camp, within which Italy might without hindrance prepare her plans. From that moment the Balkans virtually ceased to belong to the Balkan peoples. The invader had secured a bridgehead in the heart of the Balkan family, and this fact created a gulf between its various members.

How was this made possible? How did Italy contrive to acquire a political monopoly in Albania, and how was she able to exercise that monopoly for more than 10 years without serious complications arising within the country? How was it that for so long Europe accepted or tolerated the maintenance of this

bridge-head, which in itself revealed the aims that had dictated its establishment?

These questions, summarizing as they do the whole of the Albanian problem, must of necessity be answered, if solution of this problem at the end of the present war is to be founded on the sole basis capable of assuring a measure of permanence: past experience.

The Albanian drama during this war has consisted in a combination of two principal factors: 1) Albania's geographical position, and 2) the internal conditions under which the Albanian nation came into being and acted from the time of the Balkan wars onwards. An endeavour will be made to analyse from these two angles the events that have affected Albania.

It is, of course, beyond dispute that geography has stamped the mark of disaster or tragedy upon the careers of many peoples. Among these must certainly be counted the Albanian people, from the moment when great world Powers began to arise to the West of the Balkans - Powers whose political radius was clearly intended to embrace the East.

Nevertheless geography cannot explain everything. Account must be taken also of conditions peculiar to each people: political, social and cultural conditions determining its position in the world and as if directing its destiny. In Albania the latter factor, as will be noted, played a significant part, and it was precisely the one that the Italian invader exploited, in order to attain his purposes with greater ease and security.

In full cognizance of the country's internal conditions Italian diplomacy worked systematically and indeed diabolically to intensify internal antagonisms and to aggravate economic and racial difficulties, so that it might the more easily gain domination over the country.

Viewed in this light, the Albanian problem is seen to be a much wider one; it can no longer be examined within the narrow limits of a purely military offensive undertaken against a small and unarmed state. Its true significance cannot, however, be grasped unless the whole question be considered in both its aspects simultaneously: the geographic and diplomatic aspect no less than the political and internal one.

EUROPE AND THE ALBANIAN QUESTION

When, in 1912, the victories won by the Balkan States against Turkey had brought the Balkan question to the fore-front, no one in Europe was ignorant of the special complications surrounding the Albanian problem.

The idea that it was possible for Albania to be a self-contained State, and for this State to live in independence, was one that was not seriously entertained by anybody. As early as November, 1912, the British Minister at Belgrade, Mr. Ralph Paget, was reporting to his Government: "All the information which I have been able to glean is to the effect that the Northern Albanians are an unruly, turbulent lot. The Southern Albanians are quieter, but all are considered unfit for self-government An autonomous Albania—which, I gather from the Austrian Minister, his Government have some idea of placing under Turkish suzerainty—is likely to be a source of trouble in the future, owing to Austrian and Italian intrigue." (1)

"How Austria and Italy could ever have believed in the possibility of creating such a State and setting up a working government there, I have never been able to understand. I was staying lately in a country-house in Austrian Silesia, the Larish's, where the German Emperor had paid a visit last September. I heard he had spoken openly there to all he met about Albania, saying the triumph claimed by Austria in getting the State of Albania accepted by the Powers would be short-lived, that Austrian policy in the Adriatic was foolishness; and that the wise thing to have done would have been to let Serbia spread to the seacoast and make herself responsible for keeping the Albanians in order.

This would have relieved Austria of an impossible task; it would have given reasonable satisfaction to Serbian aspirations; and it would have given Serbia so much to do at home that she would become a harmless neighbour with whom it would have been easy to live in peace." (2)

That these remarks of the Emperor William were not inspired merely by one of his habitual caprices is proved by the

¹*British Documents*, IX, II, No. 257

²B. D. X, p. 90

German diplomatic documents, in which we see him repeatedly intervening in opposition to Austrian designs in Albania.³ On the 7th November, 1912, he telegraphs to his Foreign Minister, von Kiderlen-Waechter, expressing disapproval of Austria's attitude towards the Albanian question. The dangers that Austria discerns in the advance of the Serbs to Durazzo are, he says, imaginary. At all events, he himself does not intend to apply the 'casus foederis' to Durazzo and Albania. The 'casus foederis' covers each ally's own possessions, not its claims. Two days later, on the 9th November, the Emperor sends a telegram of similar tenor to his Chancellor, Bethmann—Hollweg, and concludes by proposing an autonomous Albania under a Serbian prince.

The idea of an independent Albania was not even deemed worthy of discussion.

Hilmi Pasha, the famous Inspector-General of Macedonia and later Foreign Minister, who was then Turkish Ambassador at Vienna, doubtless knew more about all these developments. In conversation with his British colleague, de Bunsen, he explained in detail that for at any rate many years to come Albania will be wholly incapable of existing on her own resources. Hilmi estimated the country's annual revenues at 5-10 million francs. and, as will be seen, this figure was substantially correct. On the other hand, in view of the condition of the country, some 10,000 gendarmes were required for the maintenance of order, and their upkeep would entail an expenditure of at least Seven millions francs. What then would remain for the Prince of Wied's civil list and for the administrative expenses of the country?

"Austria-Hungary and Italy must make up their minds to find some 12 or 15 millions of francs a year to make good the deficit." (4)

Austria-Hungary had no occasion to find any money for this purpose. In time, however, Italy came to learn how accurate were Hilmi's estimates, while Albania, no less than the rest of Europe, was not slow to appreciate the political and diplomatic significance of the economic reality which Hilmi had outlined. At all events, the facts of the matter were from that time not unknown. There was, indeed, a strange and very eloquent coincidence in the figures of the estimated revenues. Von Tchirsky, the German Ambassador at Vienna, speaking at about

³*German Diplomatic Documents*, (1871--1914). Vol. IV, pp. 120-1.

⁴B. D. X, p. 201.

this time to de-Bunsen, told him that, according to his calculations, 15 millions francs would be required annually for the government of the country, and that he did not believe that in the first years Albania could produce more than one-third of this sum.⁵

The British Government was not unaware of this situation. In an important report, dated the 31st December, 1913, and submitted by Sir E. Crowe, who was then serving in the Foreign Office, to Sir Edward Grey the Albanian problem is stated in unequivocal terms for the consideration of the British Government. The necessity of continuous economic support for Albania, due to her inability to live on her own resources, at any rate at the beginning, figures as the basis of the report. At the beginning of the report, the question is raised whether it is to Great Britain's advantage to undertake heavy financial commitments for the preservation of the independence of a country in which she has no direct interest. In addition, if Great Britain takes an active interest in Albania, she cannot do so except with a view to the latter's independence. Consequently, in giving her support to the independence of Albania, a support which will entail financial sacrifice, Great Britain is in danger of coming into conflict with Austria and Italy, and doubtless also with Germany, who in this matter will wish to help her allies; whereas, by abandoning Albania to her fate she would indirectly be promoting friction between Austria and Italy, who would inevitably come into conflict in Albania.

In presenting the question in this downright manner Sir E. Crowe did not himself provide an answer to the dilemma. The phrasing, however, of his report makes it appear that he inclined in favour of abandoning Albania. Sir Edward Grey was obviously referring to such a meaning when he noted in the margin of the report; "My own inclination is in accord with Sir E. Crowe's minute, and I would come to that decision and act upon it at once, if Russia and France had not to be considered."⁶

Moreover, Sir Arthur Nicolson, writing at about the same period to Sir C. Harding, appears to regret the decision on Albanian independence which Great Britain had been compelled to adopt on account of Austria: "It is true that we have agreed to the institution of an Albanian State, but I do not think that this somewhat artificial creation will have a very long life. Albania never has been a nation, and there are too many diverse

⁵B.D. Vol. X. p. 84.

⁶B. D. X, p. 85.

and antagonistic elements within it to afford hope that it will be possible to establish a stable state. There is little doubt that before long it will break to pieces and Austria and Italy will then take steps for establishing their respective spheres of influence or even go so far as to annex those portions which they may think necessary.”⁷

The Russian Government's view was not dissimilar, as appears from a reply given by M. Sazonoff, then Minister for Foreign Affairs, to the British Charge d' Affairs (November, 1913):

“....it was impossible to take this newly created state seriously, or to imagine that it would be feasible to make a regularly constituted state out of a collection of uncivilized tribesmen.”⁸

For this reason the Russian Government perceived from the first moment that Austrian policy aimed at the formation of such a State precisely in order to facilitate its subordination to the biddings of Austria and Italy. Hence, even when the Russian Government realised that, in the face of Austrian insistence, the annexation of Northern Albania to Serbia and of Southern Albania to Greece was impossible, it endeavoured to ensure that at any rate the Sultan's authority should be preserved. In a report submitted by the Russian Government to the British Government we find it stated unequivocally that “le futur prince, pour affermir sa position devra nécessairement s'assurer d'un appui ailleurs qu'en Albanie, un appui que le Cabinet de Vienne sera tout disposé a lui accorder”, and further “C'est en s'inspirant de toutes ces considérations que le Gouvernement Impérial croit devoir se prononcer en faveur d'une Albanie neutre, franchement autonome, confiée a l'administration d'un Vali Turc et placée sous le contrôle international européen.”⁹

An even better interpretation of Russian policy in the matter was given by Iswolsky, at that time Russian Ambassador in Paris: “As regards the future of Albania,” he remarked to the British Ambassador, “I am entirely in favour of our leaving Austria to try the adventure of an ‘independent’ or ‘autonomous’ Albania. Not for one moment do I believe that it is possible to group those wild and lawless mountaineers in an autonomous state. Who will be able to govern them? who would be able to bring them to heel? Constant anxiety will arise. Never-

⁷B. D. X, p. 50.

⁸B. D. X, p. 59.

⁹B. D. IX 2, p. 562.

theless, let us try the experiment. Let us leave Austria for a further twenty or thirty years to carry on her machinations through her consuls or the local Catholic priests in Albania. It will be a spectacle for Europe and also an open wound. One thing is certain, it will lead to friction between Italy and Austria in the Adriatic, and that is a result for which Russia will feel no regrets." A few months later, the Italian Foreign Minister, the Marquis di San Giuliano, in the face of the chaos to which the situation in Albania had been reduced, suggested to the Russian Government the dispatch of detachments of international troops; he received a reply from Krupenski the Russian Ambassador in Rome, to the effect that it was not considered desirable that Russian troops should bolster up a state to the creation of which Russia had assented in London only for the sake of peace, and in spite of her view that it was a compulsory error (*erzwungener Irrtum*), which, even if it finally proved otherwise, would merely result in the establishment of a new Moslem State under the suzerainty of Turkey. Approximately similar views were expressed at that time by Monsieur Sazonoff to M. Psychas, Greek Minister at St. Petersburg.

Moreover, this view of the Albanian question was so generally accepted that even the famous Bulgarian nationalist, Rizoff, a former Minister at Berlin, writes, in the introduction to his well-known work on the ethnological, historical and political frontiers of the Bulgarians, that the part of Albania lying south of the river Scumbi together with Valona must be given to Greece, and Northern Albania with Durazzo to Serbia.

But the most authoritative testimony to the failure of Albania to have a self-contained national existence comes from the Ballplatz itself, where, as is well-known, the idea of Albania's independence was first conceived. This is what Freiherr von Mussulin, who directed the Kultus-Politische Abteilung of the Austrian Foreign Ministry from 1910-16, and who by reason of his special qualifications had most to do with the Albanian question, wrote about Albania in his book dealing with the events of that period, "Das Haus am Ballplatz".

"With a complete disinterestedness the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy maintained throughout the whole area of Catholic Albania a network of Churches and schools; it trained school teachers, built schools and repaired and founded churches. In conformity with the very nature of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, our cultural activities in Albania had as their sole objective to foster and exalt the spirit of Albanian nationalism.

We could not seek to impose any influence, whether German, Slav or Hungarian. Our only purpose was to raise the cultural and material level of the Albanian nation and to train it in self-administration and independence. The practical English made fun of our hobby. If we did have any political objective, for which we expended so much effort and so much money, it consisted in preventing any other foreign power from establishing herself in Albania and thus becoming mistress of the Albanian littoral. We wished to strengthen the national spirit of the Albanians and to render them capable of offering successful resistance to a possible foreign invasion Today (1924) it has become obvious that we were mistaken in our estimate of the Albanian people's capacity for development, and of the possibility that this people would, in the near future, create a national life of its own, transcending the opposition of North and South. The purpose at which we aimed could not be accomplished either by means of civilizing influences or by means of political counsels or material subsidies; it could be accomplished only by the establishment of a real protectorate. We failed, however, to decide in good time to take such a step, and at the period with which we are now dealing it was too late."¹⁰

¹⁰*Das Haus am Ballplatz*, p. 148.

THE GENESIS OF ALBANIA OF 1913

These views concerning Albania, with which we find the whole of Europe in agreement, with the exception of certain official circles in Italy and Austria, did not, however, succeed in foiling the wider military and political interests of these two powers in the Adriatic. Occupation of the Albanian littoral as far as the Ionian Sea by third parties, as, for example, Greece and Serbia, would involve the risk that the matter of the outlet from the Adriatic might be disputed, particularly if the latter two small powers were at some time to join hands with some great naval power. On the other hand, the creation of an anaemic Albanian rule, politically delicate and economically unsound, would render her virtually subordinate to her two great sponsors and thereby would abet their schemes for penetrating into the Balkans. Italy, in particular, had an additional ground for interest: that she did not wish to see Austria extending her dominion as far as Valona, since this would render Italy's position in the Adriatic still more insecure in relation to her own ally.

Political expediency thus begat an artificial creation — Albanian independence.

In 1897 Austria had succeeded in obtaining Russia's agreement to the independence of Albania, and by 1902, in a secret pact with Italy, had reserved to herself and to her ally of the time priority rights in Albania; she had repeatedly become the champion of Albanian aspirations, on one occasion proposing to Bulgaria the dismemberment of Macedonia and a division of the spoils between Bulgaria and independent Albania (1911),¹¹ on another suggesting the creation of a great independent Albania.¹² From the very first moment of the collapse of the Ottoman Empire in Europe she laid a clear demand before Europe for the formation of an independent Albania State.

When the Serbian armies were approaching the shores of the Adriatic, Austria-Hungary was concentrating troops against Serbia and threatening war in the event of Serbian aspirations being satisfied. Later, when the Conference of Ambassadors in London (March 1913) was discussing the frontiers of the newly-

¹¹B. D. IX I, pp. 492, 503.

¹²*id.*, IX I, p. 530.

created state, the Austrian Ambassador in London intimated to Sir Edward Grey that he would withdraw from the conference unless it were stipulated that the decisions taken in London by the Great Powers, were not subject to discussion on the part of the countries interested. Indeed, Pribram asserts that Count Berchtold would not even assent to the holding of the Conference of Ambassadors in London for the solution of Balkan questions, before he had made it clear that Austria would not agree to any discussion on the issue of the establishment of the Serbs on the Adriatic. ⁽¹³⁾ When the Montenegrins with Serbian assistance, undertook an attack against Scutari, the Austro-Hungarian Government addressed an ultimatum to King Nicholas, threatening to impose "international law" by measures of force. Later again (May 1913), Italy, anticipating the subsequent imperial triumphs of Mussolini's era, informed the Greek Government that she could not permit the occupation of both banks of the Straits of Corfu and that she was prepared to go to war to thwart such an eventuality. ⁽¹⁴⁾

At that time Russia was just beginning to carry out her programme of re-armament.

The Entente Cordiale had only just emerged from the heavy trial of the Bosnian crisis, followed by that of Morocco, which had all but led to its dissolution, and Great Britain who, as has been noted, did not claim large interests in Albania, was not disposed to force matters to a head. At an early moment the Russian Government intimated to the Serbian Government that, though it looked with favour upon the latter's claims in connection with an outlet to the Adriatic, it was not prepared to go to war on that account. On the other hand, Germany ranged herself on the side of Austria and supported the latter's endeavours to foil Serbia's aims in the Adriatic. ⁽¹⁵⁾ Thus Austrian policy contrived to attain its objective. The "open wound", of which Iswolsky spoke, had moved to the very heart of the Balkans. Speaking on the 12th August, 1913, in the House of Commons, on the question of Albanian independence, Sir Edward Grey appeared to be conscious of the need to defend the diplomatic creation in which he had participated for the purpose of avoiding war. He gave the following summary of events: He was, he said, well aware that when all the details were made known they would be subjected to much criticism

¹³A. Pribram, *Austrian Foreign Policy 1908-18*, p. 42.

¹⁴B. D. IX II, p. 791.

¹⁵B. D. IX II, p. 114.

on the part of persons acquainted with the actual situation on the spot. They should, however, bear in mind that at the time they were reaching this compromise settlement their principal concern had been to secure solidarity among the Great Powers themselves. If the agreement in regard to Albania had succeeded in this, then it had accomplished a task of the utmost importance to the interests of peace in Europe.

When, twenty-five years later, the complications surrounding the Albanian question, which Sir Edward Grey had sought to avert, began to loom on the horizon, the "Times" (2nd December 1927) reverted to the question of the genesis of Albania and interpreted the events of those days in the following manner: "Every one knows that Albania happens to be an independent state today, simply because the Powers did not quite know what to do about it when the Turkish Empire broke up."

For reasons, however, that have already been specified, the Conference of Ambassadors in London to whom the Great Powers had entrusted the settlement of questions arising from the Balkan War, made the following public declaration at the meeting of the 20 December, 1912:

"The Ambassadors have recommended to their Governments, and the latter have in principle accepted, the granting of Albanian Autonomy, together with a simultaneous decision guaranteeing to Serbia a commercial outlet to the Adriatic."

The "autonomy" which at that moment the members of the Ambassadors' Conference had in view possessed none of the distinguishing features of true independence. As appears in the German Documents, it was a question of an autonomy "sous la souveraineté du Sultan avec nombre limité de troupes ottomanes dont le chiffre serait à établir ultérieurement." In time, however, as a consequence of constant Austro-Italian pressure, the suzerainty of the Sultan was forgotten, and independence was accepted.

Thereafter discussion was confined to the questions of frontiers and organization of the internal administration of the country, which are dealt with in another part of this study.

Nevertheless, the settling of the question in this manner produced a direct, if incidental complication, in that it still further strained the relations of Serbia and Bulgaria at that period, and led to the second Balkan War with its incalculable consequences to the future of the Balkans. When the Serbo-Bulgarian treaty of February 1912 was signed, the two allied

states had stipulated, as the basis of their alliance, that, on the one hand, Serbia should recognize Bulgaria's rights to all territories to the east of the Rhodope range and R. Struma, while, on the other hand, Bulgaria should recognize Serbia's rights to all territories west and north of the Shar range. (Article 2 of the secret agreement annexed to the Treaty of Alliance). Between the Shar range and a line extending north-west, which was defined in detail, lay the so-called "disputed area", in respect of which the arbitration of the Tsar was to be invoked. These agreements left to Serbia the whole area up to the Adriatic, with its precious outlet to the sea, which of old had been envisaged in the unswerving trend of Serbian policy. It was therefore very natural that, when the intervention of the Great Powers compelled Serbia to abandon Northern Albania and the outlet to the sea, she should regard her treaty with Bulgaria as thenceforward involving injustice to herself, and that she should seek to have it revised in the light of the new circumstances. This was the principal argument put forward by Serbia in refusing to give up the districts which she had occupied in Macedonia beyond the limits appointed in the Treaty.

Thus, perhaps unconsciously, Austrian policy, by its insistence in the matter of the Albanian question, overthrew the whole edifice of the Balkan Alliance, to the building of which long efforts had been devoted. In addition, it gave rise to a bitter dispute between Serbia and Bulgaria over the question of Central Macedonia, a dispute which, if nothing else, proved the immediate cause of the Second Balkan War and of all the ills that succeeded it.

THE ALBANIAN NATIONAL MOVEMENT DOWN TO THE BALKAN WARS.

It is perhaps necessary at this point to explain the reasons why serious misgivings were felt during those years in regard to Albanian independence. In truth it is a matter of surprise that, at a time when the principle of nationalities had come into force throughout Europe, and when the successful campaign undertaken by the four small Balkan countries for the liberation of their brothers, was earning the sympathetic admiration of the greater part of Europe and the New World (seeming, as it were, the apotheosis of the principle of self-determination of the peoples) so much scepticism should have prevailed in regard to Albania. A facile explanation is often proffered, to the effect that this was due to the selfish attitude of Albania's neighbours and to her own lack of powerful friends. Such an explanation dispels at most only a small part of one's surprise, for in point of fact Albania did possess at the time powerful "friends": Austria and Italy. Moreover, the psychological circumstances of the period, with the crumbling of the Ottoman Empire in Europe setting up an irresistible tide of support for every enslaved people, could not but ensure the greatest sympathy on the part of public opinion for any such people, however small it might be.

This did not, however, occur in Albania's case, and, if it is sought to discover why Albanian nationalism was not regarded seriously at that time, it is necessary to turn to the past and to follow its genesis in the previous decades, that is, from the period when the Albanian movement for independence began to show the first signs of life.

The movement had indeed attracted the attention of international public opinion some decades earlier; it presented certain very distinctive features.

"This is the Albanian movement which, though known to exist as far back as the Congress of Berlin, had made little apparent progress up to the end of 1907 when it was still heard of only in connection with a few obscure newspapers, published in Bucharest, Sofia or elsewhere, and one or two shady adventurers,

who endeavoured to persuade the world that they were at the head of it."

This passage concerning the Albanian nation is taken from the 1908 issue of the official annual report on the affairs of the Ottoman Empire compiled by the British Embassy at Constantinople. The report is signed by the Ambassador, Sir G. Lowther,¹⁶ and provides interesting information regarding the "national" activities of the leaders of the Albanian movement on the eve of the Balkan Wars.

It recognizes the fact that many of these leaders endeavoured to make use of the schools for the furthering of their views. As a general rule, however, their activities took the form rather of local tribal risings, with a considerable admixture of brigandage. For example, we may cite the romantic career of Tchertchi Topouli, a schoolmaster of Monastir; accompanied by a group of pupils, who had been beguiled by his promptings, he withdrew to the mountains, and there began to oppress the inhabitants of the neighbouring villages. His activities continued until the beginning of 1909 when, in order to obtain an amnesty from the Turkish authorities, he denounced the members of his band, twenty of whom were arrested. Or we may cite the case of Dino Emini, who, in the mountains of Delvino and Argyrokastro, was waging war against the educational work of the Greeks; on the 10th May of the same year, 1909, he extended his sphere of action as far as Santi Quaranta, whence he presently absconded with the sum of £1,200. In the northern districts educational activities appear to be tinged with more idealism. Bands of nationalists attack the Catholics and Djakova and other points. From various parts of the country the Albanian patriots next converge upon Prizrend. The inhabitants are seized with panic and five fresh Turkish regiments have to be despatched in haste to impose order.

Sir G. Lowther's report mentions a series of incidents of a similar kind. Considered as a whole, they give an exact picture of the "national" Albanian movement during the year 1909, that is, barely three years before the establishment of Albania as an independent State.

All this evidence leads one unhesitatingly to the conclusion that at that time the movement could be summed up as consisting of local risings directed against various kinds of oppression on the part of the Turkish authorities (taxation, disarming of

¹⁶B. D. V, pp. 290 *et seq.*

the population, etc.) as also of clashes with the other subject nationalities, and principally the Greek element.

In fact, the Albanian movement had not yet assumed any of the wider characteristics that are the mark of a truly national consciousness.

It was concerned with claims relating exclusively to questions of livelihood and education, and beneath these claims one could only dimly discern the recalcitrant disposition of the Albanian character towards authority of any kind, but above all towards the Christians. Naturally, Turkish rule was most akin to the Albanians by reason of the ties of religion. On the other hand, the Turkish Administration gladly exploited the Albanian movement in order to divert attention from the Greek or, more generally, the Christian movement, which sprang from truly national tendencies and, enjoying the support of the Great Powers, was on that account far more to be feared. In consequence, it was the policy of the Porte to foment the Albanian movement whenever it had need of activities, but to smite it ruthlessly, as being merely a rising of bandits, when the need had passed.

Sir Charles Norton Elliot, who was well versed in the affairs of European Turkey at the end of the last century, and who had occasion to acquaint himself with the position on the spot, gives the following summary of his observations:

“ from the first some of the tribes and clans endeavoured to secure an advantage over the others by siding with the invaders. Indeed their present quasi-independent position is less the result of their own valour than of Turkish policy.”

Further on he writes: “The Albanians are always ready to fight for any cause or no cause. They might be a source of great weakness to the Turks in time of disaster but they show no sign of combining and detaching themselves from the Turkish Empire as an independent state, like Greece, Rumania, Serbia and Bulgaria.”¹⁷

In addition, we may quote the testimony of M. de Jessen, correspondent of the “Morning Post” and “Temps”, who visited Albania shortly after the proclamation of her independence:

“Actually one finds no feeling of community of interests nor any tendency towards securing better conditions for the benefit of the whole race. Strictly speaking, there exist neither written language nor historical traditions, nor any popular literature common to the various religious groups. The only

¹⁷Sir Charles N. E. Elliot, “*Turkey in Europe*”, p. 409.

civilizations to be found are: The Turkish civilization for the higher classes of Moslems, the Greek civilization for the Orthodox and, perhaps, the Latin civilization for the Catholics. . . . From my varied and widespread observations (in Albania) there emerges one general and overriding impression: it is not true that there is an Albanian people which aspires to autonomy or independence. I would go further and declare that there is no such thing as an Albanian people. Of course, there is an Albanian race, but everything which goes to make up a nationality is wanting." M. de Jessen gives a most graphic account of the replies which he received in conversation with various Albanians. When there was a question of nominating the Christian Prince of Wied to the throne of Albania they declared that this was impossible. . . . "the Patisach will not permit it." Likewise, the recall of the Serbian armies from Durazzo. . . . was due to the Patisach. "Of all the blunders committed by the great powers in recent years none will have such grievous consequences as the decision taken in regard to Albania." Such is the inference which M. de Jessen draws.

The accuracy of de Jessen's observations could be perceived even long after establishment of Albania as an independent state. On the 4th September, 1926, the "Times" commented on the political situation in Albania in the following terms:

"One of Ahmed Bey's most disquieting difficulties lies in the comparative absence of a truly national conception. Himself a good Albanian, devoted to the idea of Albanian independence, he looks in vain to find the same ideal among all sections of the population. He can count upon his faithful mountaineers. He can rely upon the Orthodox Christians in the South, who give him their cheerful support. . . . But the passion for Albanian independence is much weaker among the wealthy beys living in the middle of Albania and round Valona. These men go in constant fear that their large estates may be confiscated, as has been done with large estates in all other Balkan countries. Consequently, they are inclined to nourish pro-Italian sentiments. . . . Similarly, pro-Italian sentiments are felt by the Roman Catholics in the Scutari area."

Thus we can discern one unchanging fact throughout the last decades—both before and after the proclamation of Albania's independence: the Albanian movement was not distinguished by any single national characteristic, its activities being limited to the support of purely local claims connected with

questions of livelihood. The occasional insurrectionary movements were, as a general rule, fostered by the Sublime Porte.

For example, when, following the Treaty of Berlin, the districts of Gusinje, Plava and Kouschi were due to be assigned to Montenegro and Serbia, it was the Sublime Porte which incited the Albanians to insurrection, through the agency of Hussein Pasha, Vali of Scutari. It was precisely at that period that, through the initiative of Hussein Pasha, the famous "union of Prizrend" was created, which, according to the Albanians, marks the beginning of their national awakening. The union had three declared objects:

1) *to maintain the sovereignty of the Sultan and to thwart any cession of territories to a foreign power,*

2) *to unify the three vilayets of Scutari, Kossovo and Jannina under a single Turkish Governor-General, assisted by an elected advisory body of Albanians, and*

3) *to organize a militia under Turkish officers.*¹⁹

It is a matter of history that, following the naval display staged by the Great Powers' fleets and the acceptance by Turkey of the former's decisions, the Turkish army drove the Albanians from Dulcigno, handed over the town to the Montenegrins and dissolved the "Union of Prizrend", of which Turkey no longer stood in need.

A year later; however, the Porte again required its services and thus, at the suggestion of the Turks,²⁰ the Union is re-established for the purpose of combatting Greek claims to Jannina and Southern Epirus. On the attainment of this purpose the Albanian movement once again expires, to be revived only after an interval of nineteen years, in 1899, when various Albanian notables forgather at Ipek, in order to assume the protection of Islam against the nationalist tendencies of the Christian nationalities. The Union of Ipek is thereupon created: its object is similar to that of the earlier Union, to protect the sovereignty of the Sultan. In 1903, when discussions were being held regarding the application of the Russo-Austrian plan for reforms in Macedonia—as is well known, the plan provided for the despatch of a Turkish Governor General to Macedonia, the reorganization of the gendarmerie under foreign officers and the appointment of Christian gendarmes in number proportionate to the

¹⁹*Peace Handbooks* (issued by the Historical Section of the Foreign Office Vol. III.

²⁰*Peace Handbooks* (issued by the Historical Section of the Foreign Office Vol. III, p. 40.

(Christian) population- the Albanian movement comes to life again and demonstrates in favour of preserving the status quo (with its attendant evils) and the Sultan's sovereignty.²¹ Three thousand Albanians take part in a revolt at Kossovo; the Russian Consul at Mitrovista is murdered. The Sultan sends a mission of conciliation to the Albanians to persuade them that their interests are not threatened by the innovations, and to explain that employment of Christian subjects in the Turkish services is a practice of ancient standing. Nevertheless, the introduction of the reforms is again postponed.

The Turkish revolution of 1908 inevitably had an important influence on the Albanian movement. At the beginning the Committee of "Union and Progress" manages to secure the assistance of the chieftains of the Albanian tribes, who hope by collaborating with the Turkish revolutionaries to obtain local privileges. In fact, in the first enthusiasm of the revolution Turks and Albanians are seen to be fraternizing. The latter take advantage of the situation, in order to give some impetus to education and, above all, in order to . . . adopt some common language permitting of intercourse among themselves. For, as is well known, until then various local dialects were current in Albania, and these tended to widen the divisions between the different tribes, while, owing to the total absence of any cultural movement whatever, no commonly accepted alphabet existed, nor any vocabulary suitable to the expression of complex meanings. Hence Bismarck's famous reply to Abdul Bey Frassari, an Albanian representative who visited Berlin for the purpose of supporting Albanian interests during the conference: "But you haven't even got an alphabet or a written language. How do you expect to create a State?"²² The deficiency still persists, even in present times, foreign words, mostly Italian, being adopted to meet the circumstances of each case. According to D. Evangelides, who based his investigations upon G. Meyer's etymological dictionary, of 5,100 Albanian words 1,420 are derived from modern Latin Languages, 1,180 are Turkish, 840 modern Greek, 540 Slavonic, while 400 belong to the prehistoric languages of the Balkans. As the Finn, M. Sederholm (who was deputed by the League of Nations to study the Albanian question in 1922-3) relates in his well-known report, which may be regarded as anything but hostile to the Albanians, it is only

²¹ cf. *Memorandum* by M. Maxwell respecting the disturbances in Macedonia and proposed measures of reform. B. D. Vol. V, p. 57.

²²S. Stavrou, *Etudes sur l' Albanie* (Paris), p. 70.

in recent years that the Albanian language has created a word for "nation". Previously, either the Turkish word "milet" or the Greek word "ethnos" was employed.

During the first months of the Turkish revolution a meeting of fifty Albanian notables was held at Monastir for the purpose of finding a suitable alphabet. They decided to adopt the so-called alphabet of Constantinople, the basis of which was the Italian alphabet with certain additions.²³ Almost simultaneously an Albanian school was established at Elbasan, while two older foundations, which had been dissolved, were re-established.

This, however, marks the limit of the Albanians' national aspirations during that period—a period during which all the subject nationalities of the Balkans were availing themselves of the promises which a new and liberal Turkey held out to them and were endeavouring as far as possible to secure autonomy. The memoranda, the declarations, the reports issued by the various Albanian committees of the time refer, without exception, to such questions as the right to carry arms, local conscription, for Albanians, compensation for demolished houses, and similar matters. Not one of them refers to national autonomy, even when the occasional Albanian revolts are gaining the day and the Sultan's tottering authority seems to be drawing to its end. The friends of Albania were unable to offer a better explanation of the fact than that . . . it occurred deliberately, so that the Albanian people might be prepared for the claiming of its independence. In this connection Mr. Swire observes that independence was not at the time being sought. What was being sought was freedom to prepare for independence at some future date.²⁴

In any case, the fact remained that, in spite of the revolutionary yearnings of the rising of 1908, the Albanian movement continued to be limited to its earlier aims, viz., the right to carry arms, to perform military service locally, to teach the Albanian language, etc. In May 1909 certain tribes in the north of the country refuse to pay their taxes and declared a revolt under the notorious bandit, Iza Voletin. In August of the same year, another bandit, in the Djakova district, Hassan Slakou, who for long had been in dispute with the authorities, dissolves the judicial tribunals of the district, expels the police and proclaims that the district will in future be administered on the basis of the Moslem religious law. In 1910 there occurs an

²³cf. the aforementioned report of *Sir G. Lowther*, in *B. D. V.*, p. 292.

²⁴*G. Swire, The Rise of a Kingdom*, p. 107.

insurrection, due to a similar cause among the north-eastern tribes of Kossovo.²⁵ There is unrest among the southern tribes, which does not, however, reach the point of insurrection. Among the latter discontent is rife because the new Turkish regime seeks to impose the use of Arabic script for the Albanian language—which is in any case an impossibility.

In 1911 a full revolution breaks out among the Malissori, who later are joined by the Mirdites, a Catholic tribe in the north. The revolution is the work of Montenegro, who aims, prematurely, at creating disturbances in Turkey. A Montenegrin general, Yano Voukotitch, directs the revolutionaries' operations; their supplies of arms come from Montenegro. Yet, as is confirmed by Mr. Swire, the Albanian leaders were opposed to the revolution, and in every possible way demonstrated their loyalty to the Sultan, who was due to visit Kossovo at that time. Nevertheless, when the revolution began to collapse, they addressed an appeal to the Sultan setting forth their demands. The following were the principal ones: compensation for the victims of oppression during the disarming of the population in the previous year, the appointment of officials possessing a knowledge of Albanian, the teaching of Albanian and Turkish in the state schools, the right to perform military service locally, the exclusive employment of Albanians in the gendarmerie, recognition of the existence of an Albanian nationality and language, etc., etc., etc.²⁶ Fearing that Austria was prompting the revolution as a cloak for intervention, the Sublime Porte eventually agrees to the mediation of King Nicholas of Montenegro (August 1911) and grants a number of privileges to the Malissori, viz., conscripts from Malissia to perform their military service locally, certain officials to be chosen from the ranks of the Malissori, schools in which the Albanian language will be taught to be opened in seven districts, the sheep-tax to be reduced; finally, having regard to the fact that firearms, pistols and Yataghans "were of old the faithful and inseparable companions of the Malissori" the Imperial Government will permit the carrying of arms "except in the towns and bazaars, being confident that they will be employed only against wild beasts and the enemies of the Empire"!

A few months later (February 1912), Montenegro, already preparing for the impending clash with Turkey, stirs up a fresh

²⁵*Peace Handbooks*, Vol. III, p. 44.

²⁶*Peace Handbooks*, Vol. III, p. 96.

insurrection among the Malissori. This time the movement assumes still larger proportions. The Turkish Government, which by now was in a state of almost complete disintegration and was already at war with Italy, began to feel disquiet at the attitude of its Balkan neighbours; in consequence, it was compelled to yield to the demands put forward by the Albanians. Through the medium of the Catholic archbishop of Scutari it grants all the promises required of it, and dissolves the Chamber at Constantinople as a preliminary to new elections.

Once again the Albanian demands had to do with the longed-for right to bear arms, compensation for the destruction of the Albanian villages, local conscription, etc. Now, however, there was an additional demand: for the appointment of a Turkish Pasha over the four Albanian vilayets.

The Porte accepted the majority of these conditions, but objected to the bearing of arms. Whereupon the famous Iza Boletin entered Skoplje at the head of 20,000 irregulars, without encountering resistance of any kind. The other Albanian chieftains, such as Hassan Pristina, had every reason to feel anxiety at the triumph of Boletin's followers and hastened to urge the Sultan to take drastic military action.²⁷ But the moment was that of the Sultan's greatest weakness, and he preferred to give way on the question of bearing arms. Boletin was pacified and, abandoning Skoplje and other national claims, returned to his own district.²⁸

Thus for the moment the discontent of the Albanians was allayed; the more easily since the Christian peoples of the Balkans were then in the throes of their awakening, and the situation constrained the Albanians to decisions of the gravest order. What ought they to do? Ought they to range themselves on the side of the Balkan peoples who were seeking liberation from a foreign yoke, and thereby share in the common freedom, or ought they to struggle for the preservation of the status quo, and collaborate with the other Moslem rulers against the Christian peoples?

After some momentary hesitations the Albanian notables from various parts of the country who had met at Koritsa and Elbasan decided in favour of preserving the Ottoman Empire.

The idea of independence had not, as yet, gained a firm enough hold upon their consciousness that every danger could be disregarded in making a hazardous leap into the unknown,

²⁷*G. Swire, o.c., p. 123.*

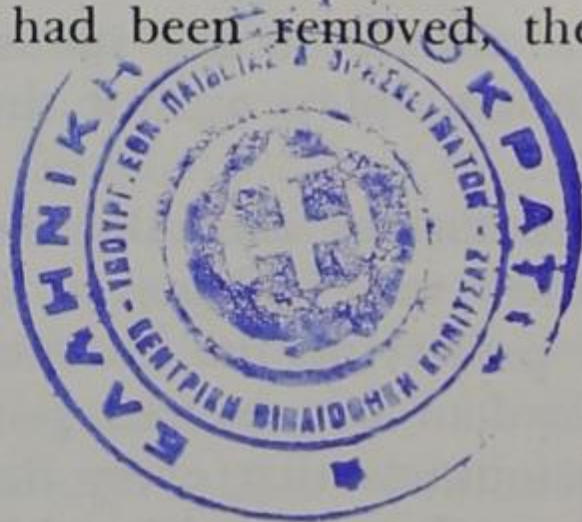
²⁸*G. Swire, o. c., p. 123.*

such as the four small Balkan states were at that very moment attempting. Thus we see the Albanians fighting under Essat Pasha Toptane against Montenegro, other Albanians fighting in Southern Epirus against the Greeks, while their national leader, Ismail Kemal Bey, is, until the last moment, in friendly negotiation with the Grand Vizier, Kiamil Pasha, regarding his entry into the Government.²⁹

The decision was, of course, influenced by the attitude of suspicion which from all time Moslem Albania had shown towards Christian Greek or Serb. It is not, however, of importance in this connection to ascertain what was the Albanian justification in abstaining from the 1912 struggle of liberation. What is important is the fact itself that at this critical moment, when the Albanians might have had the opportunity to claim their freedom and perhaps to negotiate for assistance from the other Balkan States, we see them, loyal subjects of the Sultan, fighting for the preservation of his sovereignty.

Ismail Kemal, who was at that time in Trieste, was summoned to a meeting by the Crown Prince Danilo of Montenegro for the purpose of finding some means of common action; he rejected such action because, as he wrote, he found it "premature". Likewise, Swire confirms that the Albanian chieftains were well aware in 1912 that their country was not ready, and would not be ready for a further 20 years, for autonomy, and still less so for independence. Consequently, they sought, not independence, but freedom to prepare for independence.³⁰

The study of Albania, undertaken by the Historical Section of the Foreign Office, gives the best possible summary of the condition of Albania at that time. It observes at one point that the Albanians were prone to rebel against the oppressive measures of a Pasha or the imposition of a tax, but that, once the oppression had been removed, they remained as loyal subjects as ever.



²⁹see "Quarterly Review" Vol. 228, p. 154. "Albania and the Albanians".

³⁰Swire, o.c., p. 113.

SOCIAL AND RACIAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE ALBANIAN PEOPLE

All these facts present a complete picture of the internal weakness of the Albanian movement, from the moment when it first began to be heard of in European circles. The weakness betrayed a certain shallowness in regard to national feeling—a shallowness that is attributable to countless social and historical causes not admitting of explanation.

In the first place Albania lacked any kind of social or political unity. The divergence in historical development, as between the inhabitants to the north and those to the south of the River Scoumbi, had long before divided the country into two large and separate parts. The ethnologist, von Hahn, who was a friend of the Albanians, mentions in his famous work "Albanesische Studien" (p. 39) that the emissaries sent by Ali Pasha of Yannina to Mustapha Pasha of Scutari were obliged to bring with them interpreters, if they themselves were not familiar with the language of the Ghegs of the North.

The Ghegs are grouped together in autonomous tribes under a hereditary chieftain (Bairactari) and inhabit the mountainous northern section of the country, where the inaccessible nature of the ground sets up an additional barrier to intercourse. The Malissori, who comprise the principal racial tribe of Northern Albania, are divided into no less than seven clans, each of which is autonomous and possesses its own local history. Conversely, in the plainlands that lie towards the littoral, the population has of old been settled in large holdings belonging to land-owning Beys, who were often of Turkish extraction and usually exercised even greater power than the official authorities. The inhabitants are, moreover, divided spiritually, as a result of difference of religion. In the mountains there is a mixed population of Catholics and Moslems, with the exception of Mirdites, where the Catholics form almost the entire community. In the plainlands the inhabitants are in the main Moslems, with small minorities of Orthodox of Serb descent.

South of the river Scoumbi the grouping of the population in clans ceased at an early date for the reason that Turkish rule was there enforced with greater severity. There remained only the division of the inhabitants into groups of families—"Pharas"—particularly in the mountain districts, where intercourse between

the various groups was forbidden. Apart from this, the population between Tepeleni and the river Aous (Voiousa) comprises principally a clan of the Tosks, as a remote racial survival. South of the Aous, and as far as Delvino, is the territory of the Liaps, while between the rivers Palva and Mavropotamos lies that of the Tsams, *i.e.* the Albanian minority which came under Greek rule. To these must be added the Vlachs, differing radically from the Albanians and inhabiting the northern slopes of Pindus, or leading nomadic lives as shepherds in the valley of Mouzakia. The most westerly point of all, is the Greek district of Chimara, lying against the Acroceraunian mountains; untouched by alien influence, it has preserved through the centuries an independent national character.

The racial and local differences were still further intensified by the difference in historical development. In northern Albania Slav rule was imposed in a more lasting form than in other parts of the country, whereas along the sea coast, as far as Durazzo, the Normans and later the House of Anjou established a firmer hold than elsewhere. Conversely, in the south of the country, Byzantium extended its rule almost uninterruptedly from the eleventh to the fifteenth centuries, through the medium of the Despotate of Epirus.

Later, when Turkish rule had finally been established, and had assumed its customary administrative form, *i.e.* of local Pashas, we find the dynasty of Mahmut Bussat in power at Scutari, while in the south we find Ali Pasha Tepelenli exercising an authority which gradually grew into a veritable hegemony. After protracted struggles the Sublime Porte brings both these local hegemonies under subjection, but from the year 1865 onwards sanctions the geographical and racial separation of Albania, by dividing the country into three Vilayets: Scutari, Yannina and Kossovo.

Thus a jumble of local and racial distinctions, combined with a varying historical development, was at work for centuries, dividing the Albanian clans from one another.

"Albania presents nothing but oppositions, wrote Sir Charles Elliot in 1900. "North against South, tribe against tribe, bey against bey. Even family ties seem to be somewhat weak, for since European influence has diminished the African slave-trade, Albanians have taken to selling their female children to supply the want of negroes."³¹

He adds that it is not surprising that unity does not exist

³¹*o.c.*, p. 403.

between the various clans in the North and the beys in the South.

No urban class came into being. In the cultural sphere, no original literature grew up; at best, a few translations circulated. Popular poetry was non-existent, and even folk-songs were few in number, and then not of Albanian origin.

It is therefore not strange that even on the eve of the Balkan wars the Albanians had not attained to a comprehensive national consciousness, and that when at last (on Austria's proposal, and ostensibly in reply to a request from Ismail Kemal's provisional Government at Valona) they were given independence, territory and a foreign ruler they did not know what to do with the gift.³²

Time indeed was needed for the Albanians themselves to become accustomed to the idea of their independence. They seemed as though dazed by the sudden wealth which Europe had bestowed upon them, they did not know how to employ it; from the moment of the first difficulties, that is, from the moment when the Prince of Wied had been enthroned, and foreign organizers were endeavouring to create some form of makeshift administration, we find instinctive reaction on the part of the Moslems, to whom these measures appeared oppressive.

In May 1914 a widespread revolutionary movement breaks out in central Albania; it is marked by tendencies towards Pan-Islamism and support for the Sultan. Between the Rivers Scoumbi and Mati the whole district is up in arms . . . its banner the Turkish crescent.

The International Commission, which at that time constituted the provisional administration under the Prince of Wied, leaves Durazzo for Tirana for the purpose of negotiating with the insurgents. The Commission is welcomed there by vast armed crowds shouting: "Long live the Sultan". Nevertheless, the Commission comes into contact with the insurgents and listens to their demands, which amount to nothing less than the nomination of a Moslem Prince to the throne of Albania, the inclusion of a Turkish representative in the International Commission and a return to Turkish policy. The Emperor Nicholas II, who is kept informed of these developments by a representative on the Commission, notes in the margin of the telegram: "Delightful country . . . !" ³³

The Albanian diplomat, S. Stavrou, refers to this development in his aforementioned work. He points out that immediately after the formation of the first Albanian Government at

³²see *Peace Handbooks, Albania*, p. 58.

³³*Red Documents*, Vol. I, 3. Telegram No. 112, 15 5 44.

Valona, under the leadership of Ismail Kemal Bey, Essat Pasha, the tool of the Italians and the principal instigator of the revolutionary movement, disagreed with his colleagues on this very question of Turkish policy; he insisted that the Turkish language should continue to be employed in Albania and that Government officials should be familiar with it. The majority of the people supported him in this matter and, in consequence, he finally resigned and established his own Government at Durazzo.

This lack of a national consciousness clearly defined and comprehensive in character, explains the facile way in which those who were from time to time directing the fortunes of the youthful state did not hesitate to barter away the nation's independence in a manner which would be entirely incomprehensible in countries where national sentiments have a real significance.

In April 1913, Essat Pasha, who was later to play the foremost part in Albanian affairs, and was then military Governor of Scutari, which was being besieged by the Montenegrins, reaches an agreement with King Nicholas of Montenegro; the latter recognizes him as Prince of Albania under the suzerainty of the Sultan, and allows him to escape with his whole army to central Albania. In return, Essat recognizes Montenegro's sovereignty over Scutari and the whole district as far as the River Drin and accepts the sum of 10,000 sterling.³⁴ It is confirmed by Haskins and Lord, the official American historians of the Conference, that the Albanians asked for an American protectorate over their country.³⁵ As this was not granted, the Durazzo Government of Turchan Pasha in August 1919 signed the Treaty of Rome, which assigned to an Italian High Commissioner the exercise of all real power in the country. Without the High Commissioner's approval no Governmental Act would be valid. Simultaneously, Valona with its hinterland was ceded to Italy.

Three years later, in 1922, another Albanian Government signs a Treaty of Mutual Assistance with the then Dictator of Turkey, Kemal Pasha. The treaty stipulates that, under certain conditions, a Moslem would be nominated as Prince of Albania, and that 90% of the members of the Albanian Parliament would be Moslems. A special clause provides that the commerce of the country should pass into the hands of the latter. In 1926 there follows the Tirana agreement, which in turn is succeeded by the Italo-Albanian Alliance of 1927. As will be noted later,

³⁴B. D. XIII, p. 734.

³⁵*Some Problems of the Peace Conference*, (Cambridge, 1920), p. 281.

these instruments laid the basis of the country's political, economic and military enslavement to Italy.

The Albanian people accepted all these developments; it gave not the slightest sign of any perturbation such as would inevitably have ensued in any other country of Europe.

When the Italian forces finally crossed the Adriatic and, in two days' time dissolved the "independent" State of Albania, not only was no serious resistance opposed but the adjustment of the Albanian people to the new situation proved immediate and automatic.

The "Times" of the 16th August, 1939, observed that the loss of their national independence was a serious matter that concerned equally the Catholics of the North, the Moslems of the central regions, and the Orthodox of the South, but that so far the people appeared to be living in contentment, satisfied with the subsidies and promises that were forthcoming. It noted that when Count Ciano had arrived at Tirana in the previous April he had stood on his balcony scattering bank-notes to an enthusiastic crowd, and added that a Government in the form of a lenient guardianship might assist the development of the Albanians, and prove to be to the real advantage of the people. For it could not be asserted that the brief period of liberty under the Prince of Wied, or the longer period that had followed had enhanced the importance of this state of one million inhabitants.

Thus in Albania the country's independence—the most precious possession of any nation whose national consciousness is well developed—was on offer, without undue difficulty, according as the needs of the moment dictated.

The more lenient of the critics seek to attribute this—as also the general conditions then prevailing in Albania—to retarded development, and to interpret them as the youthful escapades of a people that has only just come of age. Indeed, one often hears references to Greece's past which endeavour to compare the Albanian situation of 1913-14 with that prevailing in Greece during the first years of the latter's independence (1830). Such a comparison, however, connotes a total ignorance of conditions in Greece during that period. Apart from other differences, Greece possessed in those years a widespread urban class, established in the largest European centres. This class provided her with a constant source of diplomatists, intellectuals, cabinet ministers and, in general, the personnel required for the machinery of administration. In addition, Greece possessed great commercial wealth, a considerable mercantile fleet and,

above all, the prodigious capital with which her history furnished her-literature, philology, poetry, traditions, all the things that constitute the fundamental credentials of nationality. With this tremendous moral background, Greece of 1824-33 could with impunity regard as purely youthful escapades the revolutions of 1824-26, the insurrections of Colettis's followers and the conspiracies of Colocotronis. Conversely, Albania of 1913, lacking this economic and cultural background, endeavoured with her available resources to create a unified national life by bringing under her rule lawless tribes possessing a purely local outlook, and by instilling an "Albanian" patriotism in "intellectuals" who either served the interests of the Sublime Porte or abetted Italian and Austrian propaganda.

This explains the failure of the movement for Albanian national independence both prior to, and during the Balkan wars. It may perhaps justify it to a certain extent, but in any case it affords an explanation both of the movements' failure in the past and of events subsequent to the establishment of Albania as an independent State. It may be that these special weaknesses of the situation in Albania are held to be grounds for sympathy with the Albanian people. But a political survey of the social and national conditions of the country cannot overlook the gravity of these shortcomings that have been outlined above, in respect of the past, as of the future. In the last analysis, a people's right to independence is not merely an abstract right, derived from international law, but one that it acquires through its struggles and its cultural and civilizing values. If it fails to give proof at all times of its existence as a people, either by waging hard struggles or by civilizing works, it must constantly run the risk of seeing its rights to an independent life disputed. That is what swiftly befell Albania in 1913.

THE EUROPEAN WAR AND THE CREATION OF ALBANIA OF 1920-21

Even before Albanian "independence" had awakened to consciousness The European war had broken out and the question again came to the forefront. During the few months of independent existence of the youthful Albanian kingdom total anarchy had prevailed. After a stay of a few months at Durazzo the new ruler, Prince William of Wied, was expelled as the result of a revolution. His departure was followed by a series of risings and disorders, which tended still further to bring the whole Albanian problem to the renewed attention of European diplomacy.

The Great Powers in the West and Russia, released by the outbreak of the war of 1914 from any obligation to consider Austria's desires, were not slow to realise that, instead of aiming at Albanian independence in a frail and impracticable form, they had every reason to utilize the Albanian territories for the purpose of bringing about the reconciliation and collaboration of the Balkan peoples. With the disappearance of Austrian opposition the Albanian question reverted to the point at which the Balkan Alliance of 1912 had left it.

About the beginning of November, 1914, Sir Edward Grey, intimated to France and Russia that, in his view, the moment had come for the Allies to take the initiative in securing Bulgaria's participation in the war against Turkey. According to the plan which Sir Edward submitted to his two Allied colleagues, Bulgaria would be offered territorial compensation in Thrace and the 1912 Treaty line (*i.e.* the cession to her of the "undisputed zone" in Macedonia). The transference of the territories in question would, however, come into effect only if, after the war, Serbia acquired Bosnia and Herzegovina, an outlet to the Adriatic, and, to a certain extent, contiguity of her frontier with that of Greece. Thus the Albanian question, in its cardinal points, again became an issue, the greater part of the country passing into Serbia's hands. Both Sazonoff and M. Delcassé accepted the proposal after making certain observations of secondary importance.³⁶

³⁶*Red Documents*, Vol. II, 7.1. Telegrams nos 94, 123, 388.
Vol. 6.11 Telegrams nos 527, 566.

In the meanwhile negotiations had taken place with Italy touching her entry into the war, and the offer to Bulgaria was thereby beset with complications. Among other conditions, Italy demanded the creation of a small independent Moslem state around Durazzo. The Valona area, *i.e.* as far as the River Aous (Voiousa) to the North and East, and as far as Chimara to the South, together with the island of Saseno, would pass under the sovereignty of Italy. Subject to these conditions, Italy had no objection to the cession of Northern Albania to Serbia and of Southern Albania to Greece, it being tacitly understood that the littoral from Cattaro to the Aous would be neutralized. These facts clearly emerge from the official Russian telegrams of the period, which were published in 1917 by the Soviet Government.³⁷

The Italian conditions complicated matters. The establishment of a small Moslem state in Central Albania would diminish the area of contiguity of frontiers between Greece and Serbia, in Albanian territory, and such contiguity was held to be of primary importance to both countries, seeing that the whole of the old Greco-Serb frontier of 1913 as far as Lake Ochrida would be transformed into a Greco-Bulgarian frontier by the cession to Bulgaria of the 1912 line.

M. Sazonoff, in particular, insisted upon the necessity of fixing the longest possible common frontier between Greece and Serbia from Lake Ochrida, to extend, if possible, as far as the sea. Moreover, he was opposed to the condition that the Albanian littoral would be neutralized. In the meanwhile, however, Italy was exploiting the position of advantage which she held in relation to the Allies, by continually putting forward new demands *e.g.* that the acquisition by Greece and Serbia of territories in Albania should be made contingent upon Italy's obtaining the Trentino and Istria, that Italy should have the right to represent the "independent" Moslem State of Central Albania in its relations with foreign states, etc., etc. Finally it was found possible to reach a compromise, which was embodied in articles 6 and 7 of the treaty signed on the 13th April 1915 between Italy and the Triple Entente. Here is the text of the two articles:

"Art. 6. Italy shall receive full sovereignty over Valona the island of Saseno and surrounding territory of sufficient extent to assure defence of these points (from the Voyoussa to the

³⁷*Red Documents*, Vol. II. 711 Telegram no 348, Vol. II. 6. 11. Telegram no 64

north and east approximately to the northern boundary of the district of Chimara on the south).

“Art. 7. Should Italy obtain the Trentino and Istria, in accordance with the provision of art. 4, together with Dalmatia and the Adriatic islands within the limits, specified in (art. 5), and in the bay of Valona (art. 6), and if the central portion of Albania is reserved for the establishment of a small autonomous neutralized State, *Italy shall not oppose the division of northern and southern Albania between Montenegro, Serbia and Greece*, should France, Great Britain and Russia so desire. The coast from the southern boundary of the Italian territory of Valona up Cape Stylos shall be neutralized.

Italy shall be charged with the representation of the State of Albania in its relations with Foreign Powers.

Italy agrees, moreover, to leave sufficient territory in any event to the east of Albania to ensure the existence of a frontier line between Greece and Serbia to the west of Lake Ochrida”.

In this way the four Powers of the *Entente* brought to a close the unsuccessful experiment of an independent Albania. The “small Moslem State” of Durazzo would form virtually a part of the Kingdom of Italy, so that the solution reached was none other than the dismemberment of the country between Italy, Serbia and Greece. The need to secure Italy’s participation in the war compelled the Allies to allow her to establish herself on a section of the Albanian littoral, small in area, it is true, but from which she would find it easier to forward her Balkan aims. This concession to the needs of the moment did not modify in any respect the actual apportionment of Albanian territories; it was, however, destined unfortunately to give Italy the right to establish herself on a small strip of the littoral, from which in time was to emerge a claim to exercise a protectorate over the whole of Albania. Furthermore, from that moment Italy undertook, for her own purposes alone, the policy in Albania which hitherto she had pursued in concert with Austria.

So long as the operations of war continued Italy gave ever clearer proof of her policy in Albania. At that time complete internal dissension prevailed in Greece; Serbia had been occupied by the Austrian and German armies, and as a result the ground was clear for the prosecution of Italian aims. In June 1917 Italy proclaims the “independence” of Albania under Italian protectorate, and at the Peace Conference demands the Protectorate, or, in the new phraseology, the mandate over Albania.

Nevertheless, in dealing with the question the peace conference linked it with the Adriatic question. Thereby complications arose, and the Albanian question was attended by many vicissitudes, varying with the solutions proposed from time to time in the matter of Fiume and Dalmatia. Italy, however, sought unceasingly to obtain international recognition of her protectorate over Albania.

To achieve her purpose, she seemed for one moment prepared to accept sacrifices in regard to the Albanian frontiers. In its desire to facilitate a solution of the Adriatic question the Nitti Government strove to remove the difficulties existing between Italy and Greece. M. Venizelos too was actuated by a similar motive in seeking to find a solution. The result was the signature of the famous Tittoni-Venizelos agreement (29th July, 1919), under which Italy, for the one part, recognized the cession of Northern Epirus to Greece (article 2), while Greece, for the other, "undertook the obligation to lend her support before the peace conference to Italy's claims to a mandate over the remainder of Albania, to sovereignty over Valona and a strategic hinterland" (article 3).

In December, 1919, the British, French and American representatives submitted, in a report dated the 9th December a comprehensive plan for a solution of the Adriatic question under which Albania would be recognized in principle as an independent state. Her frontiers would be substantially those of 1913, with certain modifications in favour of Greece towards the south. Inasmuch, however, as "the State of Albania will require, to the extent indicated in paragraph 4 of article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations, 'the administrative advice and assistance' of one of the great powers, for that reason, the Governments of the United States, Great Britain and France are anxious to entrust to Italy a mandate over the State of Albania, under the conditions implied in the Covenant of the League of Nations". A commission comprising a representative of Italy, a representative of Albania and a representative of the League of Nations was to draw up the conditions attaching to the mandate, as also "the organic law of the future State of Albania", Valona and the hinterland indispensable to its security would be ceded to Italy in full sovereignty.

In a note dated the 3rd January 1920, Italy agreed to these proposals in regard to Albania with certain reservations as to the frontiers of the country. The plan, however, as a whole, was not accepted on account of differences of views regarding the

remaining Adriatic problems. Thereupon the President of the Conference, Monsieur Clemenceau, with the British Government's agreement, put forward a fresh proposal. With a view to obtaining Yugoslavia's assent on the other points of the Adriatic dispute, it was proposed to assign to her a large part of Northern Albania, to form under Yugoslav sovereignty an autonomous province enjoying a special regime. In other respects the new proposal (14th January 1920) confirmed the Italian mandate over the rest of Albania and left southern Albania in Greece's hands.³⁸

On learning the contents of the Franco-British proposal however, President Wilson who for reasons well known had left the Conference and was at that time in the United States, telegraphed to Paris to protest against France's and Britain's action in undertaking the direct solution of the question without consulting the United States (telegram from the Hon. Robert Lansing, 20th January 1920). Shortly afterwards (13th February 1920) President Wilson examined the proposed solution and rejected a great number of its points. More particularly in regard to the Albanian question, the President of the United States observed that, whereas the tripartite proposal of the 9th December "maintained in large measure the unity of the Albanian State" the bipartite proposal of the 14th January amounted to no less than the partitioning of the country between Italy, Greece and Yugoslavia.

On behalf of the French and British Governments M. Millerand and Mr. Lloyd George replied at length to these observations, and explained the reason why their proposed solution was best adapted to the situation and, as far as was possible, took into account every aspect of this intricate problem. In particular, referring to the Albanian question this important document, dated the 17th February, 1920, stated: "The French and British Governments thought that there was force in this contention and their proposal in regard to Albania was designed to enable Yugoslavia, inasmuch as Albania was unable to undertake the work for itself, to develop under international guarantee a railway and port serving the southern part of its territory. Inasmuch as the Albanian people have never been able to establish a settled Government for themselves, and as the northern part of the population is overwhelmingly Christian and the southern part similarly Mahammedan, they thought it best to entrust the responsibility for government and development

³⁸See correspondence relating to the Adriatic question (cmd. 596, 1920).

of these two parts to Yugoslavia and Italy respectively. They have, however, agreed that the whole of Albania should be brought under the mandatory system, and they believe that this will make it possible eventually to satisfy the aspirations of the Albanian people for unity and self-government.”³⁹

The negotiations were not destined to produce any result, and are therefore important only in showing how European diplomacy envisaged the question at the time. The Dalmatian question was divorced in the course of time from the Albanian question, and the Italian Government devoted itself to solving the former on its own initiative. Nevertheless, the negotiations throw light upon the views that then prevailed in regard to Albania and Albanian nationalism in the British, French, and to a certain extent, the American Government. Every discussion at the Peace Conference in Paris concerning Albania turned on the question whether the country would, in its entirety, form an Italian protectorate, or whether one part would be assigned to Yugoslavia and Greece and the other again pass under Italian protection.

At the very period which witnessed the apotheosis of the principle of self-determination of peoples the European conscience considered that the Albanian people was not of those which should enjoy unreservedly the benefits of freedom. As was wittily remarked at the time by a Yugoslav diplomatist: “L’Albanie n’est pas un Etat mais une question internationale”.

Even in the United States, where opinion was known to be insistently in favour of the independence of peoples, the possibility of a return to the Albanian State of 1913 was excluded, as being unjustifiable. We give below the section relating to Albania of the well-known American report (“Outline of a tentative report”), which was compiled by a committee of experts for the guidance of the American delegation to the Peace Conference.” In fact the project of a united Albania appears impracticable. The weakness of national feeling among the people, the disruptive forces which spring from backward political institutions, the difficulties of communications, the intrigues of neighbouring states — all these are obstacles which can be faced only under the protection of a great Power like England or the United States, then only by a Power sufficiently imbued with the missionary spirit to be willing to spend its efforts unselfishly.

“Therefore we suggest that in Northern Albania a compact

³⁹Correspondence relating to the Adriatic Question.

group of Albanians might be segregated, united with their own kin in South-eastern Montenegro and Western Serbia and placed under the supervision of Yugoslavia, as the mandatory of the League of Nations, but with the explicit right of appeal to the League in case of oppression.

“This would open to the Albanian mountaineers the markets, the grain fields and the winter pastures on which they have relied in the past; it would give to Yugoslavia the use of water-ways etc

“The central block of Albanian territory presents a most difficult problem. It should probably be granted nominal independence under some disinterested Power as mandatory of the League of Nations”

How valid were the reservations in regard to Albania, which were dictated by an actual condition obvious to everyone, was seen about a year later, when Albanian independence having at last become recognized the country was about to be admitted to the League of Nations.

Great Britain and France strongly opposed such a step. At the meeting of the League Assembly on the 17th December 1920, the British representative explained his objections up to that date and urged that the Albanian State, as being newly - formed should undergo a further trial period before being admitted to the League of Nations. After many postponements Albania was finally admitted to the League the view having prevailed that this would be expedient for the cause of peace, principally on account of the critical situation of the frontier question in relation to Yugoslavia.

Referring to the admission of Albania to the League of Nations the “Times” of the 9th June, 1924, described the event in the following terms:

“Albania was, for certain definite reasons, somewhat prematurely elected a member of the League of Nations. Her membership will avail her best if it can produce the services of an administrative adviser who understands the plain business of constructing roads and then of organizing a police force to guard persons desiring to use the roads on their lawful occasions”!!! On the 10th December 1926, the same newspaper wrote in a leading article:

“The independence that it (Albania) has recently enjoyed corresponds, not to its extent or its population or to the degree of social development it has already attained, but to the desire of all the Powers that this region, ethnologically distinct from

its neighbours, should be politically distinct, and above all neutral."

Nevertheless, Italy, who was at that moment (1920) passing through a political crisis of great severity, began to take stock of the difficulties raised by her Albanian policy, and to ask herself, whether it was not preferable to bring to an end the military occupation of Albania and to confine herself to keeping at a distance from the shores of that country any third Power, while reserving to herself only a general initiative in the Albanian question. The Italian forces in Albania, decimated by malaria, were in a terrible condition. In Italy the communist opposition had at that time —summer 1920— assumed tremendous proportions. Communications were paralysed; the railwaymen declined to transport material, while the socialist party was conducting a strenuous campaign for the evacuation of Albania. The situation was such that the then Minister of War, General Bonini, telegraphed to the Commander in Chief in Albania reporting that Italy's internal situation did not permit the despatch of troops to Albania.⁴⁰

The federation of stevedores refused to load material for Albania, and the Government was powerless to impose its will. Hence, under the pressure of Italian public opinion and of the political situation, Signor Giolitti, who shortly before had taken over the administration, was compelled to recall a great part of the Italian armies in Albania. On the 24th June, 1920, he spoke in the Italian Parliament about Albanian independence and relinquishment of the mandate by Italy. Less than two months later, on the 2nd August, 1920, the first Italo-Albanian treaty of Tirana was signed. Under this treaty Albanian independence was recognized and Italy gave up Valona, keeping for herself only the island of Saseno.

For internal political reasons Italy could no longer seek to govern Albania directly; thenceforward she limited herself to securing full diplomatic initiative in the Albanian question, while recognizing the independence of the country. In this way she prevented any other party from establishing itself on the further shores of the Adriatic, but reserved to herself any further action when circumstances should allow of it. Inasmuch as she could do nothing further to extend her penetration in Albania, Italy was suddenly transformed into a champion of Albanian independence, thus endeavouring to secure the exclusion from Albania of any third party and the recognition of her own

⁴⁰Swire, *o.c.*, p. 321.

prior rights. If the situation improved, she would be able, in different guise, to undertake a policy of penetration. Such was the meaning of the new trend of Italian policy in Albania from the summer of 1920 onwards.

The outcome of this policy was the recognition of Albanian independence, the denunciation of the Tittoni-Venizelos agreement and the declaration made by the Conference of Ambassadors on the 9th November, 1921, by means of which Italy succeeded finally in having assigned to her rights of priority in Albania. Italy was henceforth transformed into a champion of Albanian independence, and at every opportunity endeavoured to support the latter's interests. The very country which, as has already been noted, had repeatedly assented to the dismemberment of Albania, and which had claimed the mandate at the Peace Conference now denounced the Tittoni-Venizelos agreement, furiously combatted the Greek claims to Northern Epirus and supported Albania's admission to the League of Nations, while simultaneously it wrested from the other Great Powers recognition of her rights of priority in Albania. In another part of this study there is a detailed account of the course of these Italian efforts, by means of which the frontiers of 1913 were finally secured to Albania.

In any event, as a result of long efforts and negotiations this policy resulted in the famous declaration made by the Conference of Ambassadors on the 9th November 1921, which reads as follows:

"Great Britain, France, Italy and Japan recognize that the independence of Albania and the integrity and inviolability of her frontiers, as laid down in their decision of the 9th November, 1921, are matters of international interest.

1. If at any time Albania is unable to ensure her territorial integrity, she shall be free to submit a request to the Council of the League of Nations for the despatch of external assistance.

2. The Governments of Great Britain, France, Italy and Japan have decided that in such an event they shall instruct their representatives on the Council of the League of Nations to recommend that the restoration of Albania's territorial boundaries be entrusted to Italy.

3. In the event of a threat being made to the integrity or independence of Albania, whether territorially or economically, as a result of foreign aggression or any other circumstance, and in the event of Albania's not availing herself of the right envisaged in article 1, the said Governments shall raise the matter before

the Council of the League of Nations. If the Council decides that intervention is necessary, the said Governments shall issue instructions to their representatives in accordance with the provisions of article 2.

4. If the Council of the League of Nations decides by a majority of votes that intervention is not expedient, the said Governments shall re-examine the question, in accordance with the principle proclaimed in the preamble to the present Declaration, viz., that any modification of Albania's frontiers constitutes a peril to the strategic security of Italy."⁴¹

Couched in the delicate phrasing of the League of Nations this Declaration signified that Italy made certain the initiative in the Albanian question without direct intervention, whether military or administrative. Thus, Italy of the pre-fascist era reserved the future for herself, and in the present employed diplomatic means to exclude anyone else from Albania. The fact that she now appeared as the champion of the independence of a "small and heroic" people, she who but a short while before was demanding a protectorate and the dismemberment of the country, was of course not destined in any way to hamper further Italian penetration in Albania; for it was known, in Italy better than anywhere else, what this independence would mean in actual fact and to what lengths it might go. In truth, Italy could await with impunity the moment when her internal difficulties would pass away and she might reveal more openly a tendency towards expansion. For she knew well that under the diplomatic style of "independence" it was impossible for a strong national existence to be developed; she knew that under the compulsion of events "independent" Albania would require her guardianship. Up to that moment the policy of "independence" had succeeded at any rate in excluding any third party from the State of Albania.

⁴¹Translated from the French.

THE SOUTHERN FRONTIER OF ALBANIA

The creation of an independent Albanian State in these circumstances automatically raised the question of its boundaries, and, as a corollary, the wider question of its relations with neighbouring States.

In this respect the matter was one of especial difficulty. At the time the new map of the Balkans was being drawn in 1912, it was natural that the four Balkan countries which had waged a victorious struggle against Turkey (not only without any assistance from the Albanians but in the face of opposition from many of their troops who were serving under the orders of the Turks) should view with displeasure Albania's action in taking advantage of the collapse of the Ottoman Empire.

In Epirus Albanians had opposed the Greek army. To the North Albanians had fought the Serbs and Montenegrins. They were reckoned at the time to be the best soldiers in the Empire's service.

The Balkan States, on the other hand, had in the first weeks of the war claimed the right to deal with matters pertaining to the new frontiers solely on their own initiative. Conversely, in the early months of 1913 European diplomacy proposed its own mediation, and expressly demanded that the right of deciding in regard to Albania be reserved to itself. The efforts extended by Austrian and Italian policy, to which reference has been made, were already bearing fruit.

Nevertheless, the four allies were insistent that they themselves should remain the arbiters in the matter of the Albanian frontiers at issue. In the face of the Great Powers' objections they requested that at least they should be informed in advance of the decision regarding Albania's frontiers. In this way they would reserve the right not to accept the Great Power's mediation, should the proposed frontiers be unsatisfactory to them.

The request was, however, not granted, the Great Powers asserting that it would require a certain amount of time to determine the whole extent of the Albanian frontiers definitively.⁴²

The Conference of Ambassadors of the Great Powers in London had already taken up the question of Albania's frontiers

⁴² B. D. Vol. IX, II, page 660.

and were confronted by an Italian proposal that the southern boundary should be so drawn as to leave the whole of Northern Epirus in Albania's possession.

The Greek Government was naturally disquieted, and took steps to make it clear that it was not prepared to relinquish its rights as a pioneer in the settlement of the Albanian Question. The Foreign Minister, M. Coromilas, telegraphed to the Greek delegate in London, M. Scouloudis, as follows: "The proposed reply of the Great Powers creates a difficult situation, inasmuch as the Powers would reserve to themselves an exclusive right of decision in the matter of the islands and Albania. We accepted mediation. The claim made by the Great Powers' Conference, that it should be free to decide on these questions in the absence of the Balkan countries, transforms mediation into compulsory arbitration, and that is something no-one asked for".

Thereupon the Greek Minister in London, M. Gennadios, saw the British Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs and discussed the matter with him in this light, though without result. It was explained to M. Gennadios that no other arrangement was possible, since Turkey and Bulgaria had of their own accord suggested to the Great Powers that the latter should prepare a draft treaty of peace and submit it to the belligerents. Moreover Greece's position (so ran the argument) would not actually be altered, since, even if it had been intended to take a decision regarding Albania before the signing of the peace treaty, Greece would still have had to contend with the opposition of certain Great Powers, and at the same time it would have tended to prolong the war—an occurrence that would create an impression unfavourable to Greece. M. Gennadios replied that the Greek Government would find it heartening if the British Government were at least to promise its assistance in the negotiations over Albania. To this the British diplomatist remarked: "Athens knows that already".

A few days later Sir Edward Grey renewed this assurance in more explicit terms. M. Gennadios reported to his Government, as follows:

"The Powers are irrevocably determined to reserve to themselves the solution of the question of the Islands and the Albanian frontier. We can rely on the fact that the Powers that are well-disposed to us will see to it that our claims are examined fully and equitably. If, on the other hand, we persist in a temporising

policy we shall forfeit the sympathy of those who are now favourably inclined.”⁴³

When M. Gennadios objected that unfortunately Italy had already threatened Greece with war over the question of Albania, Sir Edward Grey interposed that “it is not Italy alone who will decide on the fate of the territories in question”.

In the face of the Great Powers’ insistence, the four allies were finally compelled to waive their demand that the frontiers of Albania should be fixed either by themselves or jointly by themselves and the Great Powers, and that this should be done in advance of the mediation for peace.

On the 21st April 1913 the four Allied Governments addressed a note to the Great Powers stating that “they accept this (offer of) mediation, but reserve the right in the course of negotiations to discuss with the Great Powers the questions relating to the Islands and to the definitive delimitation of the frontiers of Thrace and the whole of Albania.”⁴⁴

The Conference of Ambassadors considered the Allies’ note at its meeting of the 23rd April, and deemed it expedient to revert to the question in a further communication elucidating the nature of the mediation proposed for Albania (and the Islands): “In regard to the reservations, as to the Islands and the delimitation of Albania’s frontiers contained in the Allies’ reply, the Powers desire to point out once more that these questions come within their own exclusive competence.”⁴⁵

The Allies’ further note of the 28th April referred in the following terms to the decision of the Great Powers to reserve to themselves the solution of the Albanian question: “. . . . nevertheless the Allied Governments cannot believe that it is intended in the proposed mediation to withhold permission for them to discuss questions affecting their vital interests and arising from the victorious war of liberation that they have undertaken. In any event the difference between the two points of view should not be allowed to hold up the negotiations for peace and, in their desire to accede to the Great Powers’ requests, the Allied Governments declare that they are prepared to cease hostilities. They propose London as the meeting-place of the Conference.”

Thus, through the medium of their own diplomatic instrument, the Conference of Ambassadors, the Great Powers sought to arrange for all decisions relating to Albania to be

⁴³Translated from the French.

⁴⁴B. D. Vol. IX, II, p. 706, translated from the French.

⁴⁵*idem* p. 710, translated from the French.

taken by themselves alone whereas the four Allies accepted the 'Great Powers' intervention on the understanding that they (the Allies) would participate as equals in the relevant discussions. This reservation did not meet with the unqualified approval of the Great Powers. Its validity, however, was unquestionable, at any rate in so far as the Allies were concerned.

In particular, Greece's decision in the matter was based, among other considerations, upon the encouraging assurances given by the British Government. These were renewed in even stronger terms after Greece's assent to the Treaty of Peace with Turkey. In a conversation with Monsieur Gennadios on 30th May, 1913, Sir Edward Grey said: "You will recall that, in reply to your remarks as to the situation in which your Government would find itself if (it signed the Treaty) without making any reservations, I told you that those who signed would gain Great Britain's good will in fullest measure. Now that the Treaty has been signed, you may tell Monsieur Venizelos that in case of need, he has my authority to make such use as he may desire of this assurance."⁴⁶

Simultaneously, however, and with a view to the complete safeguarding of its rights, the Greek Government made the following declaration upon the signing of the Peace Treaty:

"The plenipotentiaries of Greece appointed to undertake the negotiations of peace have the honour to declare in the name of their Government that, in compliance with the Great Powers' unanimous desire that the conclusion of peace be not delayed, they are prepared to sign the preliminaries of peace with Turkey, within the terms of the draft Treaty drawn up, and communicated to the belligerents by the Great Powers and that in signing these preliminaries Greece considers herself entitled to hope that in the course of their mediation the Great Powers will not refuse to listen to her views on questions arising from the war that affect her vital interests, and that they will take into account the wishes of the liberated populations."⁴⁷

Such were the diplomatic conditions attaching to the signature of the provision in the Treaty of London relating to Albania (article 3), according to which "His Majesty the Emperor of the Ottomans and their Majesties the Allied Sovereigns declare that they entrust to His Majesty the Emperor of Germany, His Majesty the Emperor of Austria etc., His Excellency the President

⁴⁶*French Diplomatic Documents*, Vol. II, No. 308. 31st May 1913.

of the French Republic, His Majesty the King of Great Britain etc., His Majesty the King of Italy, and His Majesty the Emperor of All the Russias the task of determining the frontiers of Albania and the remaining questions concerning Albania”.

* * *

The encouraging assurances so liberally given to Greece were not, however, destined to lead to any concrete result.

In the first months of the war the conference of Ambassadors in London had begun to discuss the question of Albania's frontiers. In December 1912 the Russian Government proposed that Albania's frontier should be delimited on a line running from Chimara to Ochrida, thence, northwards parallel to the Black Drin river, the town of Dibra being left in Albanian territory, and thence along the course of the White Drin river as far as the River Royana and the Adriatic.⁴⁸

Italy, on the other hand, proposed a line running from L. Ochrida through the area dividing the R. Devol from the R. Haliakmon, thence to the west of Castoria and to the southwest of Grevena, thence to Chani Kalabaki, thence through the valley of the River Kalamas to the village of Glyky and to the mouth of the river of that name, leaving Paramythia and Margarita in Albanian territory.⁴⁹

On being informed of these proposals the Greek Government hastened to lodge a protest, in which it emphasized that “such a project would be tantamount to an act of veritable spoliation in favour of the new State of Albania. It would constitute a deed without precedent in history—the restoring of a Christian population of more than 250,000 souls to Moslem domination; it would be to deliver the great majority—and, in point of fact, the elite—of the population of Epirus into the hands of the inveterate enemy, the oppressors who, only the day before, took advantage of the Turkish army's resistance at Janina to burn and pillage the Christian villages, and to massacre the inhabitants.”

Italy, however, adhered tenaciously to her proposal. Her arguments were not at that time of an ethnographic order, though they were destined subsequently to assume that form. It was a question purely and simply of strategic reasons. Signor de Martino, the Director General of the Italian Foreign Ministry explained these reasons in detail to Sir Rennell Rodd, the

⁴⁸See *Beckendorff's memorandum to Sir E. Grey*, 11th December, 1912, in B. D. IX, II page 279.

⁴⁹B. D. Vol. IX II, page 605.

British Ambassador at Rome: Italy regarded the Straits of Corfu in precisely the same light as the question of Valona. She feared that they might serve as an assembling base for a hostile fleet. Sir Rennell Rodd observed that Albania was to be neutralized, and that consequently Greece could very well be required, for her part, to neutralize the Straits of Corfu. To this Signor de Martino remarked still more explicitly that Italy was concerned not with the question of the fortification and defence of the Straits, but with the possibility of naval units' assembling and refilling in the Straits, a possibility that would be the greater if Greece also held the coast-line opposite Corfu.⁵⁰

Moreover, the Italian Government declared unequivocally to the Greek Charge d' Affaires at Rome that Italy was prepared to go to war over this question.⁵¹

Nevertheless, Greece continued to oppose the Great Powers' projects, receiving a certain measure of support from the French and British Governments. Monsieur Venizelos's proposal for a plebiscite was rejected. Monsieur Gennadios had submitted it, under instructions from his Government to Sir Edward Grey on the 4th April, 1913, through the French Ambassador, Monsieur Cambon. Sir Edward approved the proposal and brought it to the notice of the Conference of Ambassadors. The Italian representative stated that he had no instructions in the matter, adding, however, confidentially that he considered it unacceptable.

Thereupon, Monsieur Venizelos proposed that a commission of inquiry should be sent to investigate and report upon the national consciousness of the inhabitants.

"In view of the fact that our proposal for a plebiscite has now been rejected, I venture to request Sir Edward Grey to insist that an international commission should investigate the question on the spot, in order that the delimitation of the boundaries may be based upon the ethnological situation as actually existing."⁵²

Monsieur Gennadios saw Sir Edward Grey and stated the views of the Greek Government at length, stressing the need for a commission of inquiry. The Foreign Secretary replied that, in the first place, the Italians rejected the proposal on the ground that such a commission would be pointless in a country under military occupation. He added, however (in a wider survey of the matter) that the friends of Greece were striving to dissuade Italy from an extreme course, and had, in fact, obtained some

⁵⁰Telegram from *Sir Rennell Rodd*, No. 96, 23 April 1913.

⁵¹Telegram from *Sir Francis Elliot*, No. 72, 15 May, 1913.

⁵²Telegram from *Monsieur E. Venizelos*, No. 1324, 19th June, 1913.

small rectifications of the boundary line (from the R. Kalamas to Cape Stylos), but that it was natural that a great Power, such as Italy, was concerned to safeguard its strategic interests. Consequently, Greece should be prepared to make sacrifices. He summarized his views in the following remarks to Monsieur Gennadios: "I recommend you to be ready to make concessions. This matter must be brought to a close. We cannot allow it to drag on; in two or three weeks' time a decision must be reached. If you are offered all but two or three of the Islands, in return for certain concessions in Epirus, and you withhold your assent, public opinion will hold you to blame. That is my opinion."⁵³

The view that Sir Edward Grey expressed in regard to offers to be made to Greece in respect of the Aegean Islands, in return for her acquiescence in the Albanian settlement, was not a fortuitous one. The British diplomatic documents show that it resulted from a conversation with the Italian Ambassador in London, held on the 19th May, 1913, in the course of which the latter had stated that the question of the Aegean Islands was near to its solution, and that "Italy would give up to Greece the islands that she occupied to facilitate a settlement of the Southern Albanian frontier. But Italy must remain firm about three conditions: (1) that the Greek frontier must not be north of the point that he had last indicated to me, 2) that the whole of the Corfu canal must be neutralized, and 3) that the small island of Saseno near the bay of Valona must go to Albania. Italy could not, owing to her obligations to Turkey, make this proposal about the islands herself, but it might be made by a third party. It was a great sacrifice on the part of Italy, for, as I might have seen by the mornings' papers, there was still fighting in Cyrenaica, and a considerable number of Turkish troops were still there; to agree to give up the island while this was the case was a sacrifice."⁵⁴

With a view to succeeding in her purpose, the sundering of Northern Epirus and the Dodecanese—is also embodied in Northern Epirus and the Dodecanese—Italy thus accepted to leave to Greece not only the islands in the Aegean which the latter had occupied, and in respect of which the Great Powers were then mediating, but those which she herself had occupied and had hitherto resolutely declined to give up: The islands of the Dodecanese.

⁵³Telegram from the French.

⁵⁴B. D. Vol. IX, II, page 799, *Memorandum from Sir E. Grey to Sir Rennell Rodd*, 19th May, 1913.

The Italian Government's declaration—a declaration of vital importance, of course, in any appraisal of the questions of Northern Epirus and the Dodecanese—is also embodied in another telegram from Sir Edward Grey to the British Ambassador in Paris, in which he acquaints the French Government with Italy's views in the matter.⁵⁵ Moreover, it is to be found in the Foreign Office minutes of the meeting of the 30th May, 1913, of the Ambassadors' Conference. In these the Italian Ambassador is reported as saying that "if as a part of the settlement the Powers decided that the islands occupied by Italy were to go to Greece, Italy would be prepared to agree. Indeed the Ambassador said that should the islands go to Greece, conditions of neutralization and the arrangement of details to soothe the amour-propre of Turkey should be taken into consideration."⁵⁶

At the close of the sitting Sir Edward Grey summarized the views expressed, and made the following observations: "A sketch of settlement has emerged, under which if THALIA and STYLOS and KORITZA were kept for Albania, all the Aegean Islands except Tenedos and Imbros, which could be left to Turkey and Thasos, which was to go to Bulgaria, should go to Greece under conditions of neutralization, and with what might be arranged to satisfy the "amour-propre" of Turkey."⁵⁷

Finally, it appears from a telegram of the 17th June, 1913, from Sir Francis Elliot, the British Minister at Athens that the Italian Government addressed a note of similar tenor to the Greek Government, which contained, however, a proposal that Astypalia be excepted from the settlement, since Italy desired to retain that island.

* * *

Upon *these* conditions Greece signed the Treaty of London on the 30th May, 1913. That is to say, in entrusting to the Great Powers the settlement of Albania's fate (under article 3 of the Treaty) Greece took into account: 1) that concessions on her part in the matter of the Epirus boundary secured recognition of her sovereignty not only over the Aegean islands occupied by the Greek army, but also over the Dodecanese, and 2) that the British Government was assuring her, through the Foreign Office, of its support in the matter.

All the relevant proposals were made at the same time as

⁵⁵B. D. Vol. IX II, page 805.

⁵⁶B. D. Vol. IX II, page 825.

⁵⁷B. D. Vol. IX II, page 825.

appears from a great number of telegrams dealing with the settlement of events.

There can be no doubt that all these aspects of the question were well known to the Greek Government, and that they influenced its decision to sign the Treaty of London. Naturally, it had endeavoured to obtain a definitive settlement of the question of the Aegean Islands and the Dodecanese before it signed the Treaty.

The British Government, however, was disquieted by the risk of complications and sought to hasten the signing of the Treaty. Finally, Sir Edward Grey told the Allied delegates: "You must either sign or leave."⁵⁸

Moreover, Bulgaria was threatening to conclude a separate peace with Turkey.

As a result of this situation the Greek Government was compelled to sign the Treaty, and to rest content with the assurance that the questions of the Dodecanese and Epirus would be linked together. That is to say, its assent to the Treaty had been secured before these good intentions had taken shape in concrete provisions of the Treaty of London or other binding agreement. The promises given to Greece, however, clearly formed the background against which the decision in regard to signing the peace treaty was taken; and, if their legal validity, in so far as Greece was concerned was not absolute, they did at any rate impose certain clearly defined moral obligations upon the Great Powers, inasmuch as the hope of seeing a favourable solution of the Dodecanese question contributed in very great measure to the removal of Greece's reservations in the matter of Northern Epirus.

With the signing of the Treaty, however, the situation underwent a radical change. It is difficult to elucidate whether this change should be attributed solely to the conclusion of the peace treaty, but at any rate it is the fact that the change occurred; and it seems probable that the ensuing elimination of fears of wider complications, such as were implicit in a continuance of a state of war, somewhat weakened resistance on the part of the Triple Entente Powers to Italian demands, while conversely it stimulated those demands.

At a subsequent meeting of the Conference of Ambassadors (14th July, 1913) the Italian Ambassador observed that "the multitude of territories that Greece was now acquiring made a

⁵⁸*German Diplomatic Documents* (1817-1914), Vol. IV., page 779. Telegram from von Kulman.

certain difference to the question of the islands". On the 28th July he informed Sir Edward Grey privately that the Italian Government withdrew its assent to the cession of the Dodecanese to Greece in return for the sacrifice of Northern Epirus. Invoking the Treaty of Ouchy once more, Italy now maintained that she was under an obligation to hand over the Dodecanese to Turkey, so soon as the Turkish armies should have evacuated Cyrenaica. The Italian view was that, to facilitate Greece's acceptance of the Albanian boundary settlement, it would suffice if the Aegean Islands under *Greek occupation* were definitively ceded to her.⁵⁹ This fresh Italian proposal came up for discussion at the meeting of the Conference of Ambassadors held on the 5th August. The Italian Ambassador submitted it in detail, stressing the point that "when Turkey had fulfilled her obligations" Italy would forthwith hand back the Dodecanese. He added, however, the following noteworthy remark: "It goes without saying that, when the restoration of the islands to Turkey has taken place, the Italian Government will take part jointly with the other Great Powers in the decisions which will eventually be discussed and adopted in regard to the final fate of the aforementioned islands, such decisions being linked with the comprehensive settlement of all outstanding questions and due account being taken of Europe's general interest in the territorial integrity and security of Asiatic Turkey."⁶⁰

Thus, while Italy revoked her assent to the cession of the Dodecanese to Greece—against the latter's relinquishment of Northern Epirus—she none the less accepted that the Dodecanese should be restored to Turkey, and that thereafter its fate should be finally determined by all the Great Powers jointly.

Though this combination altered the situation considerably, it did at least comprise an essential and concrete recompense for the sacrifice of Northern Epirus: this was that Italy would relinquish the Dodecanese, and that its fate would not be settled unilaterally—as between Italy and Turkey—but jointly by all the Great Powers.

The terms of the solution were finally formulated by Sir Edward Grey himself. At a meeting held on the 11th August, 1913, he said: "When, in conformity with the first part of the Italian declaration of the 5th August, full effect has been given to article 4 of the Treaty of Lausanne by the two contracting parties, the six Great Powers will come to a decision as to the

⁵⁹ Sir Edward Grey to Sir Rennell Rodd, 28th July, 1913.

⁶⁰B. D. Vol. IX II, page 954, Translated from the French.

assigning of the Dodecanese, and such decision will be taken by joint agreement between them.⁶¹

This text is included in the minutes of the Conference's meeting of 11th August 1913, at which the question of Albania's frontiers was discussed. Appended to the minutes is a footnote to the effect that the French and Italian Ambassadors communicated their Governments' assent to Sir Edward Grey's proposal on the 12th August.

It was *within this general framework that simultaneously* the specific decision concerning Albania's southern frontier was taken at the meetings of the Conference held on the 8th and 11th August, 1913. The decision was communicated to the Greek Government on the 8th September, 1913. Conversely, the decision reached at the same time in regard to the Dodecanese, which could be regarded as th tacit recompense for the sacrifice that Greece was called to make, does not appear to have been officially communicated to that Government. In so far, however, as the Great Powers were concerned, the two parts of their decision were unquestionably correlated, and non-fulfilment of their decision in regard to the Dodecanese would undoubtedly require them to *reconsider their decision* concerning the delimitation of Albania's southern frontier.

Such were the conditions under which the decision respecting Albania's southern frontier was taken on the 8th August, in fulfilment of the relevant terms of the Treaty of London.

As is well known, this decision provided for the delimitation of the frontier to be undertaken on the spot by an international commission. The commission, would determine the ethnological character of the disputed area on the basis of the languages spoken by the population. Its investigations would extend to the territories lying between the line proposed by the Greek Government and that proposed the Austrian Government (article 1.) Article 2 stipulated that in any event the littoral as far as Ftelia, the island of Sasseno, the district of Koritza and the area north of the Greek line would be ceded to Albania. Article 5 prescribed the following basis for the Commission's work:

"The demarcation of the frontier shall be effected on an ethnographic and geographical basis. In regard to the ethnographic findings, the mother tongue of the population is to be ascertained, that is to say, the language spoken in the family

⁶¹B. D. Vol. IX II, pages 1066-8.

circle. The commission, shall not take account of any attempts at a plebiscite or of other political manifestations”.

As soon as the decision had been communicated to it the Greek Government addressed a reply to the Great Powers in which the hope was expressed that the frontier Commission would be inspired in its investigation by the views put forward by Monsieur Venizelos in his memorandum to the Conference. More particularly in regard to the basis of the ethnographic inquiry laid down for the Commission, by the Great Powers' decision, the Greek Government stressed the point that language was not a reliable criterion of the national character of the inhabitants, and that national consciousness should properly serve as the basis.

The Greek proposal for a plebiscite, which would have afforded the most equitable solution of the question, was rejected, as has been noted, by the Great Powers. In view of this fact the holding of any other inquiry into the ethnological character of Northern Epirus (above all, one based on language) presents insuperable difficulties. Such an inquiry would inevitably receive the stamp of the political conditions in which Europe found itself at that moment. To ascertain the ethnological character of a population solely through the medium of the language spoken by, is patently and largely an arbitrary method, seeing that it often happens that populations ethnologically distinct employ the same language, while conversely populations ethnologically related speak different languages. If this be true in general, it is so to a still greater extent in the case of regions inhabited by populations that are, as a general rule, bi-lingual, and in which, during centuries of historical development, the arbitrary transference of alien populations or the deportation of indigenous inhabitants has occurred repeatedly, and has produced idioms and usages of language that bear no relation whatever to the exact ethnological composition of the population.

It was not long before proof of these circumstances, and of the fact that the work of the Commission was bound to end in failure, was forthcoming. It began by touring various villages of Epirus and interrogating the inhabitants. At once there arose the difficulty that within a single family some members spoke Albanian others by preference Greek. As a general rule, the older generations spoke Albanian, the younger Greek. The Austrian and Italian representatives on the Commission demanded that only the evidence of the older inhabitants should be accepted, the remaining members of a family being disregarded.

The other representatives, however, were opposed to this course. Complete dissension prevailed in the Commission and, in consequence, it ceased examining the inhabitants on the spot.⁶² Thus, during the 58 days of the Commission's sojourn in Northern Epirus altogether 14 persons were examined, the majority being old women.

These facts were confirmed also by one of the persons who accompanied the Boundary Commission — Colonel Murray. In a lecture given at Morely Hall on the 7th January, 1914 he stated that after the first contacts with the inhabitants the investigation of their national feelings was suspended, and the Commission spent weeks in Erseka and Leskovik, awaiting the decision of the Powers. He added the following significant observations: "Naturally, I am not seeking to make fun of the members of the Commission, since it was not their fault, but the fault of the Powers, that they were placed in so comic a situation. Their instructions were to tour the district and ascertain whether the inhabitants were Greeks or Albanians. At the same time, however, they were forbidden to receive any reports or committees, or to investigate anything beyond the language of the inhabitants; and since, as everyone knows, the Epirotes speak an Albanian dialect in their homes and Greek out of doors, the members' investigations proved fruitless. What added to the absurdity of the situation was the fact that two members of the Commission were unable to speak either Greek or Albanian."⁶³

In the meanwhile, the Greek population began to feel disquieted, and an atmosphere of great tension prevailed. In view of the situation and of the practical impossibility of applying the test of language, the Commission sought some other solution. At the beginning of November Colonel Doughty Wylie, the Chairman of the Commission telegraphed to the Foreign Office stating that "in view of difficulties which confront the Commission in applying Language test and in drawing just conclusions from each test, the instructions based on decision of Ambassadors' Conference should be modified to meet the actual situation. He recommends that the Commission be authorized to visit the whole country under discussion, studying not only what they can of nationality, but also the economic, strategic and geographical features."⁶⁴

⁶²Report of Captain B. Melas Greek liaison officer attached to the Commission, 30th November, 1913.

⁶³Translated from the Greek translation of the English text.

⁶⁴B. D. Vol. X, page 63.

‡Translated from the Greek translation of Sir E. Grey's words.

The British Government judged the recommendation to be a reasonable one, and submitted it to the other Governments concerned. Yet this recommendation, which was made by reason of the Commission's inability to continue an investigation based on the test of language, far from leading to a revision of the terms of reference and to an inquiry into the national feelings of the population, was destined unfortunately to aggravate the evil, and to impel the representation of the Great Powers to take a decision founded on the purely political needs of the moment—a decision that disregarded even the test of language.

Following the acceptance of his suggestion that the test of language should be discarded, the Chairman of the Commission proposed an arbitrary line that left virtually the whole of Northern Epirus to Albania! !

This line was destined (at any rate in so far as its salient features were concerned) to be the one finally assigned by the Protocol of Florence. If the test of language had been taken as the basis of delimitation, the districts of Chimara, Pogoni and Argyrokastro, at the very least, would have had to go to Greece, for in these districts Greek is, by general admission, the language of the vast majority. Thus it may be seen that the Commission's powerlessness to enforce a decision that was fundamentally inapplicable had as its sole result that a still greater injustice was done to Greece.

The Greek Government protested vigorously against this course of action. In his reply, however, to the Greek Minister Sir Edward Grey observed that Greece "must accept any decision whatever of the Great Powers." "I added," writes Sir Edward, "that if five years ago the Greeks had been told that they would get what they had now obtained and occupied, including such important things as Salonica it would have seemed almost incredible As the Minister continued to press the question of Albania, saying that it was the interests of Italy and Austria that were being considered, I observed that even Great Powers must be allowed sometimes to have interests as well as the smaller Powers."⁶⁵

Monsieur Gennadios also approached the Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, from whom he received the friendly counsel: "As a sincere friend I advise you not to raise difficulties."⁶⁶

Greece protested strongly against his violation of her rights. In a conversation with the Austrian Minister in Athens King

⁶⁵B. D. Vol. X, page 70.

⁶⁶Translated from the French.

Constantine pointed out that the Epirotes were prepared to resist to the bitter end, and that if Monsieur Venizelos showed any tendency to give way in the matter he would be dismissed from office. Furthermore, if matters came to a head, he would abdicate his throne and place himself at the head of the Northern Epirus struggle.⁶⁷

Europe, however, was no longer in the mood to listen to Greece. The Italians were pressing for an immediate decision, and for the fixing of a time-limit for the Greek forces' evacuation of Epirus. Russia was indifferent to Albania's southern boundary, and left the initiative on the matter to Austria and Italy. France accepted Colonel Wylie's proposal, subject to certain minor modifications. Thereupon Great Britain dropped the whole question of Northern Epirus; "The good-will of Great Britain," which as has been noted⁶⁸, Sir Edward Grey had promised before the signing of the peace with Turkey, was not available beyond this point. Her diplomatic position, in general did not permit her at that moment to take further steps. In any case Monsieur Gennadios, affirmed that the attitude of the British Chairman of the Commission was attributable to instructions from the British Government itself to the effect that he should fall in with the Italian point of view.

The most important fact, however, was that under the Treaty of London Greece had recognized the right of the Great Powers to undertake the delimitation of Albania's boundaries. In view therefore of this act of authorization both the decision of the 8th August regarding the despatch of a Commission of inquiry and the subsequent findings of that Commission were diplomatically binding upon Greece. However unjust those findings might be, Greece had indirectly recognized the Commission's right to decide in the matter of the frontiers.

Monsieur Venizelos judged that in these circumstances nothing further could be done, except to endeavour to link the question of Epirus with that of the Aegean islands (Chios, Mytilene, etc.), which has also been considered by the Conference, so that at any rate the islands under Greek occupation should be saved. In a conversation with Sir Francis Elliot, Monsieur Venizelos tentatively proposed a solution whereby these islands would be ceded to Greece and the Dodecanese restored to Turkey subject to the cession of Northern Epirus to Albania.⁶⁹

⁶⁷B. D. Vol. X, page 74, Report from Sir F. Elliot, 10th December, 1913.

⁶⁸See page 72.

⁶⁹B. D. Vol. X, page 73.

Sir Edward Grey accepted this solution (at which, as has been noted, the Conference of Ambassadors had already arrived on principle), and recommended it to the other Powers concerned. After a certain number of modifications, it was finally accepted and embodied, first, in the Protocol of Florence (17th December, 1913) defining the new boundary line, and, secondly, in the Great Powers' Note of the 13th February, 1914, addressed to the Greek Government and stating that it had been decided to assign the Aegean islands to Greece, subject to the condition that the Greek forces withdrew, not later than the 31st March, 1914, from the line delimited in the Protocol.

The Greek Government replied to this Note on the 21st February signifying that in principle it accepted the decision. Thus, Greece assented to the Great Powers' decision in regard to Albania's southern frontier on the strength of the London decision of the 8th August, 1913. She made, however, two essential reservations:

- a) That "adequate and positive guarantees" for the Greek populations of Albania should be given, and
- b) that a number of villages in the valley of Argyrokastró should be ceded to Greece against payment of 2½ million francs.

Curiously, however, neither the Great Powers' note nor the Greek Government's reply makes reference to the cession of the Dodecanese to Turkey.

Italy and the other Powers had already begun to forget the inter-relation of the three questions (Northern Epirus, Islands, Dodecanese) or, at any rate, were reluctant to make Greece a contracting party to an undertaking of this kind imposed upon Italy.

In a further note on the 24th April, 1914, the Powers announced that instructions had been issued to the international commission of control in Albania with a view to ensuring "absolute equality" between the inhabitants of the country; they added that they would exert all their influence for the maintenance of this equality in practice. They agreed to the minor rectification of the frontier, "an arrangement having been reached between various Powers and the Greek Government."

An agreement covering these matters had, in fact, been concluded in the course of a visit made to Rome by Monsieur Venizelos, and the Austrian and Italian Legations in Athens expressly declared in a note dated the 8th March, 1914 that they accepted this agreement.⁷⁰

⁷⁰B. D. Vol. X, page 108.

Nevertheless, the flagrant act of injustice committed against the Greek population of Northern Epirus, and sanctioned by these decisions, could not but lead to the consequence, that in fact, did ensue: armed resistance on the part of the Northern Epirotes.

The resulting occurrence were not vain. As is well known, the heroic resistance of the inhabitants was followed by negotiations in Corfu between the President of the Provisional Government, Monsieur Ch. Zographos, and the representatives of the International Commission for Albania. The negotiations ended in the signing of the Corfu Agreement of May 17th

The Agreement provided for special locally-elected councils (article 2), the recruitment of local inhabitants for the gendarmerie (article 5), the prohibition of the garrisoning of military forces in the area (article 6), the teaching of the Greek language in the schools (article 8), etc. Above all, however, the fulfilment of these provisions was expressly guaranteed by the Great Powers (article 13), while the direct application of the provisions and the supervision of the two provinces of Northern Epirus were entrusted to the International Commission of Control for Albania. The Commission's approval would be required for the appointment of the administrators and higher officials in the area (article 1).

The International Commission submitted the agreement to the Albanian Government and the Great Powers on the 17th May, 1914. The former signified its acceptance on the 25th June, 1914. The relevant telegram which it addressed, under the signature of Monsieur A. Krall, Chairman of the Control Commission, to Monsieur Ch. Zographos, President of the Autonomous State of Northern Epirus, reads as follows: "His Highness the Prince of Albania and his Government have unconditionally accepted the Corfu Agreement in its entirety, and have accorded to the International Commission of Control full liberty to settle the questions of Chimara and of the administrative sub-division of the area when it shall have completed its investigations on the spot. As regards our other declarations, which are attached to the text of the Corfu Agreement, these have already been considered and appropriate effect has been given to them under articles 1 and 5 of the said agreement. Under these conditions the definitive settlement of the question comes within the exclusive competence of the Great Powers, represented by the International Commission of Control. As soon as we receive a definite reply from you, we shall commu-

nicate to you officially the decision of the Great Powers, and notify you of the date of my own arrival at Santi Quaranta.

signed A. KRALL"

Furthemore, on the 1st July, 1914, the Great Powers informed the Greek Government in writing that "the Governments of Germany, Austria-Hungary, France, Italy and Russia have approved the agreement reached at Corfu by the International Commission of Control and the delegates of Epirus, in regard to the constitution of Epirus".

Thus, under the guarantee of the Great Powers a kind of 'corpus seperatum' was set up for Northern Epirus. The southern section of Albania secured a special autonomous regime, that aimed at the preservation of the national consciousness of the inhabitants, and from an international point of view, regime was protected by the Corfu Agreement and by the Great Powers' approval thereof.

NORTHERN EPIRUS AND ITS NATIONAL CHARACTER

The resistance shown by the inhabitants of Northern Epirus to the Great Powers' decision that they should be incorporated in Albania in itself affords practical testimony as to the nationality to which they belong.

The idea of nationality would essentially have very little meaning if it did not signify something for which a people is determined to fight and to sacrifice itself. However powerful the political influence that Greece may be held to exert in that region, it would surely be difficult to assume that that influence could suffice to rouse a whole people in opposition to Europe, and that it would succeed for so long a period in maintaining the stimulus to national feelings, were it not that the people in question cherished a great and sincere desire to be incorporated in Greece. Moreover, the whole Europe is acquainted with the cultural and civilizing work of the Epirotes in the various centers of the old and new worlds, no less than with their uncompromising opposition to the Moslem State of Albania of 1921. It cannot therefore be disputed that this is a problem of great importance, and one that calls for a solution.

It is true that the tempestuous history of recent, and indeed of earlier centuries has created a certain amount of confusion in the ethnological composition of the populations in Southern

Albania. On many occasions Greek Epirotes advanced far to the North, into territories that today form the purely Moslem districts of Albania. At other times, and under other conditions, Albanian settlers penetrated as far South as the Peloponnese. These movements of population over the centuries have greatly obscured the question, and it is not surprising that countless volumes have been written in support of one or other aspect of the problem.

Considered in the light of scientific historical investigation the question cannot, of course, be solved easily. Two points alone appear to be indisputable; both are of vital importance: a) the fact of the intensive and widespread attempt at the Albanization of Northern Epirus towards the end of the eighteenth, and the beginning of the nineteenth, centuries.

Overwhelming evidence on this point is to be found in the well-known writings of Pouqueville, Leake, Eton, Perraiivos, etc. Equally significant in this connection is the evidence contained in an article by V. H. Caillard that appeared in the "Fortnightly Review". Mr. Caillard had accompanied the Commission sent to Epirus in 1885 by Mr. Gladstone for the purpose of ascertaining its ethnological character. His testimony is therefore particularly valuable.

The various Pashas of Jannina made repeated attempts to settle Albanian populations in the region, with a view to giving it an Albanian character. This fact in itself contains an indication of the true character of the region, and at the same time explains the existence of substantial Moslem minorities.

b) The fact that from earliest times the area lying between the Acroceraunian Mountains and Thessaly was regarded as a part of Epirus.

Strabo defines the northern boundary of Epirus as being the Egnatian Way:

"From the city of Apollonia the Egnatian Way on its southern side delimits Epirus, the coasts of which are washed by the Adriatic Sea as far as the Ambracian Gulf. From that point eastward the districts extending to the Aegean Sea belong to Greece, while to the south lies the Peloponnesus".

In another passage he writes:

"The Egnatian Way starts at Apollonia, a city on the Adrias seabord belonging to the Macedonian tribe of the Talauntii which lies near to Dyrrachium".

And again:

"From the Ceraunian Mountains and the land of the Chaones

the voyage eastward is one thousand three hundred stadia, as far as the mouth of the Ambracian Gulf, which marks the boundary of Epirus”.

“The oracle of Dodona is in the land of the Thesprotians. The poets have called Dodona “*Thesprotian Dodona*.” It lies at the base of Mount Tomarus.”

Dionysius Periegetes writes as follow about the land of the Illyrians to the north of Epirus:

“The Egnatian Way winds its course for a very great distance round the Illyrian land, as far as the precipitous range called the Ceraunian Mountains”.

Interpreting this passage, his annotator, Eustathius, writes:

“The limit of the Illyrian country is marked by the precipitous Ceraunian Mountains, so named because thunderbolts⁷¹ are a frequent occurrence there. Nearby is situated the first city of Modern Epirus, once known as Epidamnus and now as Dyrrachium, its name testifying to the barrenness of the land, which is dysrachion.”⁷²

Among more recent geographers, that is to say, among those of the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries, there appears to be unanimous acceptance of the view that the country to the south of the Ceraunian Mountains was called Epirus.

In his important monograph on Epirus,⁷³ Cassavettis mentions various maps of the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries which mark the country below the Ceraunian Mountains as a part of Epirus, e.g., the maps of Philip Sea (1690-1701), de Wit (1680), Dancherus (1650), Randolph (1650), Blan (1650), etc.

Likewise, Kiepert sets the boundary of Epirus to the north of Valona.⁷⁴

In fact, so deep-rooted was the conception of Northern Epirus as forming a geographical part of Epirus that when the Albanian nationalistic movement started towards the end of the 19th century the very pioneers of the movement recognized the Aous (Vioussa) River and the Acroceraunian Mountains as the natural boundaries of Epirus. There is plentiful evidence on this point, and reference need be made here only to the written testimony of Ismail Kemal, the founder of modern Albania. In an agreement concuded on the 22nd January, 1907, with the then Prime Minister of Greece, Monsieur G. Theotokis, Ismail Kemal

⁷¹in Greek ‘keraunos’.

⁷²“arid” “unproductive”.

⁷³“The Question of Northern Epirus at the Peace Conference”.

⁷⁴*Ibid*, page 72.

himself specified as the boundary line between Greece and Albania, a line running from west of Monastir to a point above Corfu on the Adriatic coast.

“The boundary-line between Albania and Epirus and Greek Macedonia shall be understood to be a line running from a point west of the town of Monastir to a point on the seaboard to the north of Corfu and its adjacent islands. This line shall be drawn in such a manner that the lands lying on either side of it, being separated by natural frontiers shall correspond with the national aspirations of either race, through the annexation to Greece on the one hand, of districts in which a majority of the inhabitants is, by language and national sentiment, Greek, and to Albania, on the other of districts in which the majority is, by the same standards, Albanian”.

The text of this agreement, in the handwriting of Ismail Kemal, exists in the archives of the Foreign Ministry at Athens, and a photostat copy at the Greek Embassy in London.

Thus a purely objective study of the matter establishes two facts in regard *to the whole* of Northern Epirus:

a) that geographically the region belonged from earliest times to Greece, and b) that the Greek element was ruthlessly uprooted on repeated occasions.

These two facts clearly emerge from surviving historical sources, and at any rate warrant the view that at various times foreign elements penetrated into Northern Epirus, with the result that today the region appears to be somewhat divided ethnologically. Consequently if an investigation of the ethnological situation in Northern Epirus were to be expanded into an historical survey of the question throughout the centuries, the Greek character of the region would appear indisputable. Today as a result of all the events of recent centuries, there is, of course, a certain alteration in the statistical aspect of the question. The basic fact, however, can never be altered: The indigenous element of Northern Epirus was the Greek element, and any alterations that it suffered were due to conquests, to the policy of Islamization, and, in general, to methods of force.

Such processes cannot, of course, have any determining influence at a moment when it is proposed to do away with a whole past that is identified with brute force. The question is one of principle, a fundamental question that cannot be disregarded; arbitrary rule in the past has perhaps somewhat altered the position, but cannot surely create thereby any rights in its

own favour. For that would be a mere travesty of the rights of nationalities.

But, apart from these considerations, when the question of Northern Epirus was again raised at the Peace Conference in 1919, the ethnological situation in that area continued to manifest the supremacy of the Greek element.

All the ethnological changes of previous centuries had failed to bring about any radical transformation, and the Greek population still maintained its ancient preponderance.

The memorandum submitted to the Conference by Monsieur Venizelos was based upon Greek statistical data, which, with very few variations tally with those compiled by the Turkish authorities, the figures are as follows:

District of	Greeks.	Moslems.
" " Argyrokaastro	20,016	21,424
" " Chimara	6,188	4,460
" " Delvino	17,295	4,645
" " Leskovouni	6,455	3,993
" " Tepeleni	6,093	7,707
" " Premeti	10,825	12,251
" " Pogoni	5,185
" " Koritza	35,738	36,010
" " Kolonia	12,089	11,925
" " Starovo	325	8,262
	<hr/>	<hr/>
TOTAL	120,209	110,677

This table defines as Greeks all Orthodox Christians whether Greek-speaking or Albanian-speaking, in conformity with the view that, in the Balkans, religion was the factor finally determining nationality.

Subsequently, at the meeting of the Committee for Greek Affairs held on the 24th February, 1919, Monsieur Venizelos submitted a fresh table, in accordance with which he left to Albania certain districts in the valleys of Tepeleni, Premeti, Pogoni and Koritza, lying for the most part to the north of the Aous (Vioussa) River and inhabited by Albanian majorities. These districts comprised a total of 28,016 Moslems and a small number of Greeks, with the result that a total of 112,385 Greeks against a total of 82,360 Albanian Moslems would be included within the new boundary of Northern Epirus.

The number of Greek - speaking Orthodox Christians amounted to a far smaller total, viz. 47,889, according to the

statistics of the Provisional Government of Monsieur Zographos, and 35-40,000 according to those of Monsieur Sederholm.

These figures are more or less confirmed by the report compiled by the League of Nations' representative, Monsieur S. Sederholm, who investigated the question on the spot in the year 1922. According to this report, the number of Orthodox Christians in the whole of Northern Epirus amounts to 112,329. Conversely, the number of Albanian Moslems is estimated at 113,845. The estimate of the Greek population is based on the statistics of the Provisional Government (deduction being made of the inhabitants of the Pogoni district that was subsequently annexed to Greece), and that of the Moslem population on Albanian statistics. If the number of inhabitants of the districts which Monsieur Venizelos left to Albania, in accordance with his second memorandum to the Peace Conference, be subtracted, the Orthodox Christians are seen to form the majority. If, however,—added Monsieur Sederholm—instead of these districts, other districts containing Orthodox majorities were subtracted there would be a considerable preponderance of Moslems.⁷⁵

Consequently, it may be stated in conclusion that in the area which Monsieur Venizelos claimed in 1919-20 the Orthodox Christians formed a majority: 112,000 Greeks against 80,000 Moslems.

There remains the question whether all the Orthodox Christians may be regarded as Greeks, or whether only the Greek-speaking members of the Orthodox population constitute the Greek element in Northern Epirus. It is, of course, a point that has been vigorously contested in various quarters.

Dr. Temperley, the official historian of the Peace Conference, writes:

“The question of a nationality is, however, a particularly difficult one. No one doubts that Mussulman Albanians are anti-Greek, but it is often doubtful how far Orthodox Albanians are really nationalist Albanians. The test of language affords no clue. Many inhabitants of this area are bi-lingual, and the fact that nearly all the schools in this area are Greek does not necessarily mean that persons who know Greek are Grecophil. On the whole the balance of evidence suggests that the majority of the Argyrokastro area might favour the Greeks, and those of the Koritza area the Albanians.”⁷⁶

⁷⁵See *Monsieur Sederholm's* report 19th December, 1922, 1st February, 1923 page 7.

⁷⁶*History of the Peace Conference of Paris*, Vol. IV. page 343.

On the other hand, Monsieur Sederholm, in a report submitted to the League of Nations after his investigations in the winter of 1922-23, states:

“The inference to be drawn is that the Grecophil sentiments of the majority of the Orthodox population in Southern Albania cannot be defined as Greek nationalism. The most fervent Philhellenes, and even some of them who settled in Greece and fought for her, often retain a powerful feeling for Albania, though they prefer to call it “Northern Epirus” rather than “Southern Albania”, and are proud to belong to the race of the Shkyipetars.”⁷⁷

Conversely, Messrs. Haskins and Lord, the official historians of the Peace Conference on the American side, appear to incline more favourably to the Greek view in regard to the ethnological situation in Northern Epirus. They point out⁷⁸ that nothing is harder than to ascertain the feelings of a population among which a genuinely free choice has been a thing unknown, and propaganda and oppression are the commonest features, and among which a weapon has until now been the principal means of deciding any question. They add that, in any case, investigation of the evidence on either side appears on the whole to favour the Greeks; that nearly all the schools of the disputed region are Greek, that the preponderance of the Grecophil element in its cultural and economic life cannot be questioned, and that the manifestation of pro-Greek feelings was intense, particularly in Koritza. In their view perhaps the most significant testimony was the revolt of the Northern Epirotes in the year 1913, when Europe sought to bring them under the Albanian yoke.

Weighty evidence favouring the Greek point of view is also afforded by the Resolution of the United States' Senate demanding the cession of the whole of Northern Epirus to Greece. The resolution has value of course, only as an expression of the Senate's wishes. The American Government persisted in with-holding its assent to the cession of anything except Chimara and the valley of Argyrokastro.

In addition, mention may be made of the important evidence contained in the report compiled for the Peace Conference of 1919 by a group of distinguished American experts, who recommended that Northern Epirus should be given to Greece. The relevant section of the report⁷⁹ reads as follows:

⁷⁷Translated from the French.

⁷⁸*Some problems of the Peace Conference*, page 279.

⁷⁹Outline of a tentative report, *Document* 246. page 249.

"2) It is recommended that on the northwest the frontier of Greece be established as shown on map 18.

The extension of the Greek frontier into Southern Albania is based upon ethnic considerations. About Koritza there is a strong native Moslem (Albanian) element, but exclusion of this portion would be economically injurious, and would block the Greeks from the only good road uniting the northern territories, and running from Kastoria to Jannina. "Only on the basis of a united Albania (which we do not recommend) should southern Albania be withheld from Greece. Southern Albania's strong Hellenic inclinations and culture, and the success with which Greece has in the past assimilated Albanian elements, indicate that this territory should be ceded to Greece with full sovereignty.

"The area in question is estimated to include 2,400 square miles and about 250,000 inhabitants, of whom approximately one-half are Christian".

As far as Pogoni and Argyrokastro are concerned, unexpected testimony comes from the pen of the well-known pro-Albanian ethnologist Von Hahn. In his celebrated work on Albania he writes: "The country is noted for the beauty of the women. I found here many true Greek types. Two heads that I noticed gave me the impression that they belonged to living statues. And in the Greek villages of Dropoli and Argyrokastro I was at times struck by the Greek profiles and features."⁸⁰

Likewise, Leake writes: "All the inhabitants of Pogoniani are Greek, except those of Vostina."⁸¹ Philippson adds: "The district of Pogoniani stretches like a narrow ribbon from the Aous to Politsani in the North, as far as Longovista in the South, the Kalamas River in the East, and the Drin River in the West. This narrow district is entirely Greek and Orthodox."⁸²

The same considerations unquestionably apply in the case of Chimara also. In this district the Greek character is even more evident, as Demetrius Evangelides has testified in his splendid work on Northern Epirus (1913). Whereas in the rest of Epirus there are, as is well known, many Slav and other non-Greek place-names, survivals of foreign occupations through the centuries, in the district of Chimara Greek names preponderate from one end to the other Perithori, Krotiri, Paga, Gonia, Kastaneos, Andrechora, Vissa etc.

⁸⁰*Albanesische Studien*, page 51.

⁸¹*Travels in Northern Greece*, Vol. IV, page 101.

⁸²*Thessalien and Epirus*, page 213.

The following passage is to be found in a work on Albania written by the Austrian Karl Patsch, and referred to by Evangelides: "The anchorage of Aghios Andreas and the seaboard to a distance of one hour's journeying to the south belong to the Doukates. Then begins the region inhabited by Greeks—Palioussa, Drymades, Vouno, Chimara. Some Albanians are to be found among them in two villages."⁸³

Yet these various partial aspects of the problem ignore that which is its very core and essence. In a region that has witnessed so many movements of population through the centuries, and in which the methods of force have so frequently been applied, it is only natural that there should exist isolated pockets of different nationalities, just as it is natural that the national character of the region should alter according to the political authority prevailing at any given time.

Unfortunately, as happens in many other parts of the Balkans, the human factor represented by the inhabitants, is usually of a transitory and unstable character. It constitutes, so to speak, the mobile or mutable part of history, whereas the fundamental part consists of other factors: geography, nature, the spirit of the inhabitants, above all, the living past of countless centuries. These factors create permanent and ineffaceable marks on a country, such as make the momentary conquests of this group or that group appear as intolerable acts of duress. Above all, they are the factors that influence any assessment of the ethnological character of a region, since they leave traces with neither methods of violence nor the artificial reinforcement of alien elements can alter.

In this respect also, Northern Epirus has acquired decisive and inalienable rights as a purely Greek corner of land. Its geographical and natural features, the lines of its landscapes, the appearance of its inhabitants, the conditions of life, all these things wear a Greek aspect. As one journeys from the sullen regions of central Albania towards the gentler and more gracious lands of Northern Epirus, as one meets the inhabitants and comes into contact with their daily life, that is altogether more civilized and urbane, one can no longer doubt that one has entered purely Greek lands.

Viewed in this light, the figures submitted by Monsieur Venizelos to the Peace Conference of 1919 acquire overwhelming weight.

⁸³*Das Sandjak Berat in Albanien.*

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE QUESTION OF NORTHERN EPIRUS FROM THE PEACE CONFERENCE OF 1919 UNTIL 1926

At the Peace Conference a full statement of Greece's rights was made by Monsieur Venizelos, both orally and in written memoranda. At a meeting of the Greek affairs committee held on the 24th February, 1919, he gave a detailed explanation showing how it came about that in the Balkans religion ultimately prevailed over all other ethnological elements, and proved the determining factor of nationality. He cited the case of Greeks in the island of Crete who, having been converted to Islam, have become the most fanatical of Turks, though their language and customs continued to be Greek; he referred also to the case of converted Albanians, who regarded themselves as Turks, and in conclusion pointed out that the Albanian Christians had for centuries been imbued with Greek culture through the medium of religion and regarded themselves as Greeks, precisely as did the Albanians in Greece.

Monsieur Venizelos invoked the Turkish statistics relating to the population of Northern Epirus, and demonstrated that these tallied, as a whole, with the Greek statistics (112,000 Greeks and 82,000 Albanians). He admitted frankly, however, that the question of the relevant figures was essentially a secondary one. Even the Albanians did not dispute them to any significant extent. What the latter did assert was that the persons included as Greeks in the Greek statistics were in fact Albanians in their national consciousness. The question therefore was one of indisputably Greek.

After the Committee had considered all the views submitted to it, it laid before the Supreme Allied Council a report on the southern boundary of Albania (1st March, 1919).

This report did not suggest any concrete solution. The members had found it impossible to reach an agreement, and the committee therefore confined itself to a statement of the views held by the various delegations, British, French, American and Italian. The first two delegations proposed a line differing only slightly from the one claimed by Monsieur Venizelos. From

Chimara it ran a little more to the south of Tepeleni, and thence, passing to the north of Premeti, it turned in a northerly direction as far as Lake Ochrida leaving MOSHOPOLIS to Albania. According to the explanations given by these two delegations, neither language nor religion could be taken into account in Northern Epirus. Therein lies the reason why the line fixed by the Protocol of Florence (of 1913) was not accepted by the population.

The delegations in question judged the matter from the political standpoint and took into consideration all that Monsieur Venizelos had said concerning the sentiments of the population. They finally recommended that Northern Epirus up to the line mentioned, should be ceded to Greece.

The American delegation based its recommendations upon the view that the district to the south-west of the Aous was for the most part Greek, and that to the south-east of the river for the most part Albanian. It therefore proposed a boundary line running from Chimara as far as the Aous, to a point south of Klisura, and thence to Politsani and the 1913 line. That is to say, the valley of the Drin, together with Chimara, should go to Greece, the district of Koritza - Premeti to Albania.

The Italian delegation suggested the line fixed by the Protocol of Florence.

Thus no solution had been found by the time the question was raised before the Supreme Council.

Monsieur Venizelos took energetic steps to eliminate resistance (of various kinds) to Greece's claims. Above all, he sought to neutralize Italian opposition, and was successful in this a few months later, when the agreement of the 29th July, 1919, known as the "Tittoni - Venizelos Agreement" was signed.

Under this agreement (articles 1 and 2) Italy undertook to lend support at the Peace Conference to Greece's claims in regard to Eastern and Western Thrace and Northern Epirus. In addition, she assigned to Greece sovereignty over the Dodecanese, with the exception of the island of Rhodes. For her part Greece renounced in favour of Italy a given part of her claims in Asia Minor, subject to the satisfaction of her claims to Thrace and Northern Epirus. At the end of the agreement, however, an express provision was inserted (article 7), to the effect that Italy would regain full freedom of action in regard to the remaining points of the agreement should her aspirations in Asia Minor not be fulfilled.

Unfortunately notwithstanding this agreement, the question of the Northern Epirus frontier was linked in the course of events with the whole Adriatic question, and its solution was thus deferred throughout the year 1919, while various projects and counter-projects at intervals occupied the attention of the Conference.

It was not until January, 1920, that the question came up for solution. On the 1st of that month a meeting was held in the office of Monsieur Pichon, the French Foreign Minister, and was attended by MM. Clemenceau, Venizelos and Nitti.

Addressing Monsieur Venizelos Monsieur Clemenceau said: "Would you care to state your claims against Albania? We hope to reach immediate agreement, and it is for that reason that we have invited you here".

Monsieur Venizelos replied that in his view there would no longer be any great difficulty in reaching agreement; a modification of the line proposed by himself, which would leave certain villages to Albania, was under discussion. The suggested modification would approximately coincide with the Franco - British line of the 1st March, 1919.

Monsieur Clemenceau then asked Signor Nitti whether he wished to make any observations.

Nitti: The question is somewhat complicated. We must look at the frontier as it is now drawn.

Venizelos: For my part, I accept the line agreed upon with Signor Tittoni.

Clemenceau: Have you come to an agreement with Signor Tittoni?

Venizelos: Yes, Monsieur le President.

Clemenceau: Does Signor Nitti know the agreement?

Nitti: Yes, but certain conditions have to be supplemented.

Venizelos: There is agreement on every point that concerns us.

Clemenceau: Then we are agreed.⁸⁴

It proved impossible, however, to solve the Adriatic question during the summer of 1920, and Italy availed herself of what she deemed a detrimental change in the situation, in order to denounce the Tittoni-Venizelos Agreement. The confused state of her internal political affairs during the year 1920 did not permit of her undertaking any military adventures, and this fact was the essential reason for the reversal of Italian policy. In addition the fact that her claims in the northern Adriatic were not satisfied (principally on account of American opposition)

⁸⁴See text in "*Documents Officiels Concernant Epire du Nord*", pages 103-4.

afforded a convenient pretext for her change of attitude.

By a note addressed to the Greek Government on the 22nd July, 1920. Italy revoked her obligations under the Titoni—Venizelos Agreement. Naturally this development transformed the situation radically; the principal contestant was again entering an appearance, and, in pursuit of his notorious designs of conquest in Albania, was destined to persevere to the end in support of the Albanian view.

For reasons mainly of an internal character, Italy was compelled, as we have seen above, in the summer of 1920 to recast her policy towards Albania. Thenceforward she turned her attention to upholding Albanian independence and Albanian claims. The outcome was the evacuation of Valona and the Tirana Agreement of August 1920. From that moment it was patent that Italian policy would systematically oppose Greece's claims in Northern Epirus. Apart from anything else, this made it impossible for the Supreme Council to reach a unanimous decision in Greece's favour.

In his *Memoirs*⁸⁵ Signor Giolitti, who was at the time Prime Minister of Italy, gives a lengthy explanation of his Government's attitude. He recounts in detail the critical internal conditions of the country during the summer of 1920, when he took office the strikes, the dislocation of the public services caused by Socialist propaganda, the disruption of communications, and the weakening of the army in Albania through the spread of malaria. He ends by explaining the decision to which he was driven by all these factors: to evacuate Albania, and to "confine himself to protecting her diplomatically against the violations of other countries."⁸⁶

Signor Giolitti goes on to say that he had an opportunity to express his views in the matter to the other heads of the Allied Governments.⁸⁷ To a question put to him by the French Prime Minister, Monsieur Millerand, in September 1920, he replied that "Italy has already renounced all her territorial rights (in Albania), as also any kind of mandate or protectorate over the country, but she will continue to champion Albanian Independence within the limits stipulated by the London Conference. Albania's territory must remain free from any violation on the part of Serbs or Greeks." When Monsieur Berthelot, Secretary General of the French Foreign Ministry,

⁸⁵"*Memoirs of my Life*", by Giolitti, pages 418 et seq.

⁸⁶Translated from the Greek translation.

⁸⁷*o.c.* page 423

asked me whether the Tittoni-Venizelos Agreement (concluded by the Nitti administration) did not constitute an obstacle to Albanian independence and territorial integrity, I replied that on taking office I had denounced the Agreement which was, therefore, on longer binding, whatever Athens thought about it. To this Monsieur Berthelot exclaimed: 'Politis sera desespéré quand il le saura'...!⁸⁸

Since that time, Italy consistently undertook the support of Albania, both at Geneva (during the discussions on her candidature for membership of the League of Nations) and before the Ambassadors' Conference, which was called upon, as successor to the Supreme Council of the Peace Conference, to deal with the question of the Albanian frontiers during the summer of 1921.

Nevertheless, a decision in regard to the frontiers of Albania was not reached by the Supreme Council during the year 1920. In fact, it was deferred for many months. A number of events occurred in the meanwhile to divert Europe's attention to other aspects of the Albanian question (revolt of the Merdites, incursion of the Yugoslav army, etc.). As a result, it was not until the summer of 1921 that the question was again brought forward, this time before the Ambassadors' Conference.

On learning of the impending meeting, the Greek Government, through its representative in London, requested permission to attend the discussions of the Conference on the Albanian question 'in an advisory capacity, or alternatively, to send a delegation to expound its views in the matter. A similar request was made by the Yugoslav Government, but without success, and neither Greece nor Yugoslavia, as the Powers principally concerned, took part in the settlement of the question. For that reason, when a decision (in regard to the request) was reached by the Ambassadors' Conference, Yugoslavia lodged a formal protest through her London Legation, declaring that "she cannot accept a decision affecting the Albanian frontiers in which she has had no part."⁸⁹

Nevertheless, the Ambassadors' Conference met in Paris, and on the 9th November, 1921, reached the well known decision concerning Albania, according to which "the Conference, taking into account that the southern frontier of Albania was fixed on the spot by the boundary commission, which drew up the

⁸⁸Translated from the Greek translation.

⁸⁹Telegram from Monsieur *A. Rangabe*, Greek Minister in London, 9th October, 1921.

Protocol of Florence of the 17th December, 1913", confirmed this frontier line, and recommended the appointment of a commission of four members for the delimitation of Albania's northern and eastern frontiers which had not been delimited by the International Commission in 1913.

Thus, without troubling to offer any further explanations, without even giving a hearing to Greece and Yugoslavia, as interested parties, the Conference at a stroke wrote off all the events of the intervening years since 1914, and reverted to the decisions of the London Conference of 1913. As has been noted, not only was the spirit of those decisions not observed but it is questionable whether the letter was observed, either in regard to the linking of the two questions—Northern Epirus and Dodecanese—or in regard to the manner in which the 1913 commission of inquiry carried out its investigations in Northern Epirus.

As a sequel to this decision, the Conference gave orders for the setting up of a Boundary Commission.⁹⁰

The Commission went to Albania, and drew the Greco-Albanian frontier-line on the basis of the Protocols of London and Florence (1913).

The results of the Commission's work were recorded in a new Protocol, signed at Florence on the 27th January, 1925, and containing attached maps showing the exact frontier-line.

The signatories were the French, British and Italian representatives, and a declaration made by the Greek representative on the Commission, Colonel Avramides, was attached to the Protocol. The declaration reads as follows:

"The Greek representative considers that a declaration in regard to the question at issue is superfluous, seeing that the Greek Government duly notified the Conference of Ambassadors of its objections, which were, however, not taken into account, and that thereafter the Greek Government submitted to the decisions of the Conference."⁹¹

On the 30th July, 1926, a further Protocol, definitively confirming the new frontier-line, was drawn up by the Ambassadors' Conference. It bore the signatures of MM. Cambon, Crowe, Ishii, Avezana, and was counter-signed, on behalf of Greece, by Monsieur Carapanos, as also by a representative of Yugoslavia and Albania.

The signing of the Protocol marked the end of a stage in the development of the Northern Epirus question.

⁹⁰Decisions of 1st February, 10th November, 1922.

⁹¹Translated from the French.

THE POLICY AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS OF ALBANIA FROM 1921 TO 1939

In the meanwhile, the "open wound" which Austrian policy had succeeded in inflicting in the heart of the Balkans was not slow to manifest itself as a chronic source of disorders and perils: at first, anarchy—continuing up to 1925—subsequently, Italian protectorate, as the inevitable sequel. These two developments form in substance a complete summary of the short-lived era of Albanian independence.

The fact that Albania did not possess the material and moral resources indispensable to the formation of her own national life led her inevitably to protracted internal storms; inevitably too these storms led to the conquest of the country by a neighbouring Great Power, which with this very object in view had worked so strenuously for Albanian "independence".

A series of risings, assassinations, separatist Governments, treaties that bartered away the country's independence, persecutions of Christians etc., such is virtually the whole setting of Albanian policy from the proclamation of independence until, with Italy's complicity, Zog is finally forced upon the country: (1920-1926) Revolution in 1920 against the Government of Durazzo; Revolution of the Merdites in 1921, and demand for secession; Appearance at Tirana of Ahmet Zog at the head of thousands of armed followers for the purpose of taking over the Regency by Akif Pasha Elbasani and the latter's flight (December, 1921); Revolution of Bairam Tsouri and Hamid Toptani against Zog in 1922; Hamid Toptani occupies Durazzo and advances against Tirana; His accomplice Bairam Tsouri, suddenly goes over to the Government; Yet another revolutionary defeats the Government troops, and reaches the gates of Tirana. Thereupon the British Minister hastens to him and persuades him to go home. Zog then attacks Durazzo and restores his own rule. The following year a fresh revolution is instigated by Bairam Tsouri (January 1923). There follow "elections" for the constituent assembly, the withdrawal of Zog from the Government and his replacement by his prospective father-in-law, Sefket Verlatsi, and later by Vrionis. Revolution against him, flight from the country of Zog together with the two Moslem Regents and

assumption of the Premiership by Fan Noli, Bishop of Durazzo. Incursion in the following year by Ahmed Zog from Yugoslavia at the head of a few fugitive followers, and of some groups of White Russians and Yugoslavs.⁹² G. Swire, who is Albania's British apologist, gives in detail the composition of the body which carried out the national rising. He states that he has derived figures *from an unquestionable British source*.⁹³

1000 volunteers belonging to the regular Yugoslav Army.

1000 reservists from Krushevo, Tetovo, Costivar, (Yugoslavs.)

500 Malissori from Matim who had followed Zog in his flight.

800 men of Wrangel's corps and

16 officers of the regular Yugoslav Army.

Thus the Government of Fan Noli collapsed like a pack of cards, and its members fled abroad. From that moment Zog was enabled to impose the popular will, that had been manifested in this manner. He did not flinch before any measure likely to consolidate his rule.

His exercise of power proved harsh and inexorable. A whole series of political opponents was compelled to flee to Greece, Italy, Yugoslavia, Vienna, etc. Others met a different fate; the adjustment of their views to the new order of things was incompassed by more positive methods; for example Bairam Tsouri was trapped and killed on the spot, Zia Divra was arrested and "on attempting to escape" suffered the consequences which notoriously attend such circumstances. On the 2nd March, 1925, Gourakouki, the principal leader of the opposition is assassinated at Bari. Later comes the turn of Tsena Bey; Zog's brother-in-law and a powerful figure in Albanian affairs; of the famous Hassan Pristina, a former leader of the Kossovo.

To this unending tale of political oppression should be added the ruthless war of extermination which Zog declared against a whole section of the country, the Orthodox Christians. His return to power in 1924 had been facilitated primarily by the Orthodox of the South; he had concluded formal agreements with them and promised that their rights would be fully respected. Nevertheless, the moment his position was secured he joined hands with the great Moslem landowners, who are paramount in Central Albania, and ruthlessly turned against the Orthodox.

⁹²See '*Albania's Road to Freedom*' by Vandeleur Robinson; page 49.

⁹³G. Swire '*The Rise of a Kingdom*', page 107.

Regarded politically, Zog's calculation was perhaps a correct one for in Albania (a state which is organized along feudal lines, and has a population as to two-thirds Moslem) the Moslem beys form a class that is economically all powerful. This very fact, however, betrays yet another internal weakness of the State, inasmuch as it exposes a large section of the population to the tyrannous oppression of the Moslem majority. The investigation conducted by the League of Nations representative, Monsieur Sederholm (1922-23) who cannot be thought to be biased against the Albanians, deals at length with this particular point; in his report he refers in detail to all the instances of oppression and unfair discrimination to which the Orthodox element was at the time subjected. M. Sederholm states that the districts of Korytsa and Argyrokastro were contributing the most of the country's revenues, but of these only a small fraction was allocated directly to the needs of Southern Albania, the greater part being earmarked for the expenses of the central administration at Tirana, for the upkeep of the army required for suppressing revolutionary movements etc., The inhabitants of Southern Albania had hoped that they would obtain an influence in the affairs of the country commensurate with their level of culture and the economic importance of their districts. The former Turkish officials of Argyrokastro were employed in considerable numbers at Tirana and elsewhere in Albania, but the Christians of the South had proportionately less influence in State affairs than the Moslem and Catholics. Furthermore, M. Sederholm describes 'how the electoral districts of the Orthodox were intermingled with the Moslem districts, in order that the latter might hold a majority; how the Albanian Government chose recanting Orthodox Christians for employment in official posts, with a view to disguising the true state of affairs etc., etc. In conclusion, he states that among the Christian element the impression prevailed that the new order of things was merely a continuation of the old.

When Zog's position had been consolidated, the oppression of the Christians began to be organized with Italian help in a systematic and comprehensive manner. One after the other the schools belonging to the minority were closing, with the result that finally all education was at a standstill. The Orthodox Church was being dissolved (1929), by the arbitrary imposition of a synod of unscrupulous priests, (Vissarion etc.) who were in the service of Zog. The community elections were being

transformed into arbitrary processes tending to impose the Albanian element in every district.

Ultimately, the situation reached such a point that Greece was compelled to appeal to the League of Nations, which, after a protracted investigation, pronounced in favour of Greece (1934), and compelled Albania to restore the rights of the minority.

In any case, as a result of this campaign of extermination directed against the Orthodox, a campaign accompanied by the wholesale "liquidation" of Zog's opponents and similar measures of appeasement, "order" was fully restored in Albania. A powerful military force was formed, and with its assistance the elections invariably produced results acceptable to the Government. Thus Albania acquired a semblance of organized administration.

Naturally, the internal powerlessness of the country to set up a permanent administration persisted. Yet its facade, showed a measure of progress, and many credulous travellers or persons having an interest of any kind in the country's fortunes began to indulge the hope that, in truth, a substantial change had come about in the character of the Albanian people, and that it would be possible to establish an independent State of Albania.

Very soon, however, it became obvious that it was beyond the power of the Albanian people to muster the personnel required for the administration of the country and, in particular, for imposing order in the army.

The organization of the machinery of state called for the discovery of a minimum of trained administrative staffs capable of directing the indispensable services. Such staffs, however, could be counted on the fingers of one hand, particularly since the Christian element of the south, which had attained an immeasurably higher culture, had been ousted in favour of the Moslem beys and agas. Moslem Albania, a country of mountain warriors and herdsmen, with an entirely insignificant urban class, for the most part of foreign extraction, could not easily create an administrative body of this kind.

Above all, the organizing of the machinery of state postulated financial resources which the Albanian people neither possessed nor ever could acquire. Within a short time, therefore, it was seen that the establishment of an administration capable of controlling the various dissident elements, and of ensuring a minimum of decent social conditions could be achieved only with the continuous assistance of a Power interested for political reasons in sharing Albania's administrative burdens, that is to say, through Albania's eventual submission to the Power in

question. Hilimi Pasha's calculations, to which reference has already been made, were to prove almost mathematically exact. The upkeep of the military forces assembled by Zog, principally for the preservation of order within the country (at a moment when there was not the remotest question of international complications e.g. in 1931), called for an expenditure of 14.7 million gold francs, or 46.9% of the country's total revenue of 31.3 million. This ratio, which fluctuated only slightly from year to year, is perhaps a somewhat exaggerated one, for it may be that much money was unjustifiably wasted in grants to friends and in financing the contractors. Yet, viewed as a whole this expenditure was vitally necessary⁹⁴ since without it, it was quite impossible for the armed bands of the Malissori and the other tribes to be kept in submission; until recently their members were to be seen picturesquely carrying their revolvers and yataghans in the streets of the towns and in the countryside.

Without these military forces, order could not prevail in Albania, and an ever latent anarchy would return as a permanent condition. As it was, it took the form of yearly risings and revolutions that had to be suppressed by force. With these forces, however, the country year by year sank deeper into bankruptcy. It could not find any financiers or foreign countries prepared to risk their capital in the extremely precarious Albanian enterprise; in this way it exposed itself increasingly to exploitation by the only Power which, for political reasons, was prepared to offer its assistance, and the inevitable corollary of assistance: Italian protectorate.

Such was the dilemma around which the history of Albanian independence was unfolded.

In the absence of adequate statistics it is not easy to assess with precision the economic potentiality of Albania. Statistics relating to national revenue have virtually never been compiled. In consequence, the only pointer to the economic development of the country is its external trade, which may be regarded as the most comprehensive, if approximate, index of the country's economy. Home production has shown only very slight changes from the beginning of the century.

A study of the economic condition of Albania (L'Albanica

⁹⁴The following passage occurs in a report submitted to the Council of the League of Nations by Monsieur Hunger, who in 1924 organized Albania's Finances:

"The army, as now existing, is not of the slightest value as a weapon against an external enemy. . . . It may be of some use only in the event of disturbances, if the gendarmerie is unable to impose order'.

(*Journal Officiel*, January 1924. Extract translated from the French).

Economica) published by the Chamber of Commerce of Bari, estimated her foreign trade in the war 1883-84 at 12 million gold francs, a total which it held to be lower than the actual one owing to the wide prevalence of smuggling under Turkish rule. For the year 1898 the same publication estimated her foreign trade at 45 million gold francs, but in this case the whole of the Jannina district was included. On the other hand, according to Gibert⁹⁵ the total export trade of the country in 1902 amounted to 20 million gold francs.

According to the official reports of the Austrian Consuls in Albania⁹⁶ the data in which undoubtedly afford more reliable information, Albania's exports in 1913 amounted to a total of 4,363,653 crowns, and imports to a total of 18,468,561 crowns. In 1914 the first year of Albanian independence within the country's new boundaries, imports amounted to 12,126,666 gold francs and exports to 9,068,840 gold francs. In 1937, the last year for which statistics of Albania's foreign trade are available, imports amounted to 18.9 million gold francs, and exports to 10.2 million gold francs.

If one takes into account the fall in the exchange-value of money, the divergencies in the above statistics in respect of the territories concerned and, finally, the fact that they are only approximately accurate, the foreign trade of Albania is seen to fluctuate over a period of no less than thirty-five years around the sum of 20-25 million gold francs. Transition from the primitive economy existing under Turkish rule to latter-day economic organization and the abrupt development of economic life from the beginning of the 20th century onwards did not suffice to raise Albania's economic conditions above an exceptionally low and stationary level. This, of course, cannot be attributed solely to the inner stresses that mark the history of this country. The natural circumstances in which production is carried on have an oppressive influence upon any possible development. Albania possesses an exceptionally small proportion of a cultivable land in relation to her total area, viz. 11.2%. In Greece the proportion is 15.7% in Yugoslavia 30.1%, in Rumania 47.3%, in Bulgaria 35%. The yield of the land is relatively even lower, partly on account of the poor quality of the soil, but most of all on account of the inefficiency of the agricultural labourers. The conformation of the land follows, for the greater part of the country's extent mountain ranges that

⁹⁵ Les pays d' Albanie et leur histoire.

⁹⁶ Berichte der K.U.K. Konsularaemter in Scutari, Durazzo und Valona.

stretch from North to South, and renders communication with the interior a matter of exceptional difficulty and expense. 36% of the total area is woodland, covering principally the northern part of the country. Exploitation and transport of the timber are, however, so costly because of the nature of the ground and the lack of communications that a great part of the country's requirements in timber is imported from abroad.⁹⁷ The tobacco plantations are of poor quality and cannot provide a source of exports of any importance. The possibilities of developing the cultivable areas and exploiting the country's mining wealth are limited. Above all, however, they would necessitate the undertaking of public works at an expenditure utterly disproportionate to any possible yields.⁹⁸ It is, therefore, possible in theory to increase by degrees the national revenue of the country, up to a certain point; but the limitations of space, the natural poverty of the soil and the political conditions permit development of the national wealth through the country's own resources only within very narrow limits. For that reason expenditure for the maintenance of the independent State of Albania must remain at a very low level. To exceed that level would merely be to bleed the country gradually of its resources, and sooner or later would entail economic bankruptcy with its accompanying consequences. Yet the needs of the Albanian State in the matter of essential organization alone (as has been noted, it must make special provision for the maintenance of public order) cannot be met with less than a given minimum of expenditure.

M. Hunger, indicated in his reports to the Albanian Government that only a budget in the neighbourhood of 15 million gold francs would correspond with the actual capacity of the country's economy.⁹⁹

"Generally speaking", he added, "an increase in taxation is not possible, since the majority of the population is exceptionally poor and frugal, and is already heavily taxed."¹⁰⁰

⁹⁷ *South Eastern Europe*, a political and economic survey. (The Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1939, page 153).

⁹⁸ In the 1941 edition of "*South Eastern Europe*" it is explained that an increase in the yield of the Land in the Balkan countries is theoretically feasible through the employment of new capital. But it is added that it is improbable that large-scale irrigation works would be economically profitable if the resultant produce did not continue to command the high prices then being paid by Germany.

⁹⁹ Second report, 8th November, 1923 (*Journal Officiel, Janvier 1924*).

¹⁰⁰ The extracts from M. Hunger's report have been translated from the French.

Conversely, the 1924 budget amounted to 18.3 million gold francs. For that reason he proposed to the Government that, apart from a slight increase in the scale of income-tax, drastic measures of economy should be adopted and the number of officials reduced to the point where the general expenditure for salaries would show a 20% decrease; in addition he proposed the abolition of the army to take effect from the date when the gendarmerie should have been organized in some degree. In the absence of such radical measures M. Hunger could not foresee the possibility of a remedy. "The economic condition of Albania is parlous, and a collapse is to be feared, if these drastic measures are not adopted The only possible remedy is to be found in substantial new economies, and, if these be not effected at the beginning of 1924, we may anticipate the total breakdown of the economic system of the country in the course of that year".

M. Hunger considered that it was neither possible nor desirable to arrange for loans before order had been restored to the finances and some increase had been brought about in national revenues, to enable them to support the fresh burdens.

In reply to these bold recommendations, the Albanian Government, under Pantelis Vangelis, informed M. Hunger on the 29th February, 1924, that, since his contract had been terminated, he was free to leave Albania!! Recommendations for the adoption of such measure could not but be wholly disregarded by a Government acquainted with the true situation of the Country.

It thus happened that Albania's national budget continued regularly to exceed the sum of 15 millions, which M. Hunger had set as the limit of economic resistance. In 1931 the budget reached the figure of 31 millions and in each subsequent year remained at around this figure. Military expenditure accounted for the following percentage of the total budge in the given years:

Year	1925-6	-	36.4%	Year	1928-9	-	48%
"	1926-7	-	41.3%	"	1929-30	-	47.7%
"	1927-8	-	38.4%	"	1930-31	-	46.9%

These amounts do not, of course, include expenditure for the maintenance of the gendarmerie. If the latter be added to the purely military expenditure incurred virtually for the preservation of public order, the total amount is far greater.

It may be seen, therefore, that from the time of its formation as an independent State the country found itself in a state of

chronic bankruptcy, the budgetary deficit steadily fluctuating around the figure of 3 million gold francs, while the general yield of the nation's finances showed not the slightest advance.

It has already been observed that this fact could not surprise anyone familiar with Albanian affairs least of all Italy. On the contrary, it was precisely what Italian policy needed in order to promote its aims and bring matters to the fated political conclusion: Protectorate.

In the meanwhile, after the first difficulties of the Fascist regime, Italy had regained her equilibrium. She had developed her military forces, and was now in a position to display her panoply of war and to exercise the rights of diplomatic priority which she had reserved for herself in 1921. From this moment (1925) she began systematically to achieve the ulterior aims of her policy, and to gather the fruits of Albanian independence. The prize fell to her without effort on her part.

Immediately after his establishment in power (end of 1924), Zog found himself in pressing need of money. At first he turned to Yugoslavia, who had given especial support to his restoration. Yugoslavia, however, had no money available. Thereupon he applied to the League of Nations; it was impossible, however, for the League to recommend a loan which was not justifiable on financial grounds. He was compelled to turn to Italy, the only great Power which had political interests in Albania, and which gladly awaited this moment. Immediately the Banka Combetare e Shqipnis was established mainly with the support of the Credito Italiano. In the following year the former bank sets up the Societa per lo Sviluppo Economico dell' Albania (Svea), which offers to the State a loan of 50 million gold francs for the development of the country's economic resources. The loan bears interest at 13% and simultaneously there are assigned to the Company various concessions - forests and mines - as state monopolies. Side by side with this, Mussolini's special envoy, Baron Aloisi, arrives in Tirana and submits the following demands to Zog: a) recognition of Italian protection, in accordance with the 1921 treaty, b) withdrawal of the British Mission which was organizing the gendarmerie, and c) control of the country's finances. Difficult negotiations ensue: Zog is threatened both by economic bankruptcy and by a revolution which had broken out in Scutari, most opportunely, (November, 1926), and is compelled to sign the well-known Treaty of Tirana (27th November, 1926).

The principal clause of this treaty laid it down that "Al-

bania and Italy recognize that any disturbance tending to alter the political legal and territorial status of Albania conflicts with their common political interests (article 1).

Article II provided that "for the safeguarding of these interests the High Contracting Powers undertake to afford to each other mutual assistance and cordial collaboration."¹⁰² In addition an undertaking was given that neither of the contracting Powers would conclude a political or military treaty with any third party, if such treaty conflicted with the interests of the other Power.

In this manner Italy acquired the right to "collaborate" with Albania for the maintenance not only of the territorial and legal, but also of the political regime, that is to say, she acquired rights of participation in the exercise of the internal sovereignty of the State. It is true that shortly after the signing of the agreement Baron Aloisi, in a letter addressed to the Albanian Foreign Minister under date 5th December, 1926, endeavoured to clarify the meaning of this clause by declaring that the granting of assistance for the "preservation of common interests" was understood to be conditional upon Albania's demanding such assistance. Nevertheless, it remained a fact that, in so far as it was recognized that the political situation in Albania was a matter of vital interest to Italy, the latter automatically acquired diplomatic justification for protecting this interest at any given time by intervening in the day to day affairs of the Albanian State. The patently deliberate elasticity and obscurity of the text could not fail in practice to prove advantageous to the more powerful of the contracting Powers.

By an exchange of notes which took place a few months later (26th April, 1927), Italy and Albania undertook not to enter into negotiations for the interpretation of the Treaty of Tirana with any Power whatever without the full assent of the other signatory.

Thus by the Treaty of Tirana and subsequent agreements Albania forfeited a great part of the independence.

At the time serious observers, with few exceptions, had not doubted that such would be the result. Amid the disturbance which the signing of the Treaty of Tirana had caused throughout Europe, the "Times" which till then had maintained an extremely cautious attitude, observed in a leading article that it seemed very probable that a treaty that granted Italy wide jurisdiction for the safeguarding of Albania's integrity and for the suppression

¹⁰² Translated from the Greek.

of internal disorders, and which stipulated that neither of the two States would enter into agreements or treaties detrimental to the unspecified interests of the other, did in effect grant Italy privileges in Albania that were hardly distinguishable from those of a protectorate.

On another occasion —19th March 1927— the "Times" wrote in a leading article: "Up till then (Treaty of Tirana) the recurrent changes of government in Albania through insurrection had only local effects. The Tirana treaty by pledging Italy to support Zog's Government against 'any perturbation whatsoever directed against the political legal and territorial status quo' established a sort of Italian protectorate over the country and made Albanian insurrections to a considerable extent an international issue".

On the 19th March, 1927, Mr. Wickham Steed, writing in the "Times", described the treaty in the following words: "This treaty recognizes the right of Italy to support the present Albanian Government against any political, juridical and territorial perturbation of any kind—an arrangement that would appear to warrant Italian intervention even against an effort on the part of Albanians in Albania to change their own government".

On the 4th December, 1926, the Paris correspondent of the "Daily Telegraph" wrote that the terms of the treaty concluded between Italy and Albania and the comments appearing in the Italian press created the impression in Paris that the treaty was virtually equivalent to an alliance affording Italy something akin to a protectorate.

As was inevitable, the European Press was almost unanimous in making similar comment upon the treaty. That the views then expressed found almost universal acceptance was shown when Albania sent representatives to the first Balkan Conference at Athens in 1930. The objection was made in many quarters that the Treaty of Tirana created a virtual protectorate in Albania. S.Stavrou, the Albanian representative, was compelled to challenge this point of view and to endeavour to show that Albania was in fact an independent country.¹⁰³

The matter did not however end with the Treaty of Tirana of 1926. In the following year, by the Treaty of Alliance with Italy, a new step was taken towards Albania's subordination to Italian guardianship. By this Treaty each of the contracting Powers, undertook among other obligations, that of defending

¹⁰³ See Kerner & Howard: *The Balkan Conference and the Balkan Entente*, 1930-5, page 34.

the interests and advantages of the other Power (les intérêts et les avantages de l'autre), with the same zeal which it shows in defending its own interests and advantages'!!

Italy was not slow to show such zeal. Albania's chronic bankruptcy afforded the most suitable opportunity.

Deficits were accumulating and Italian policy gladly contributed to his result. The funding instalments for the service of the loan of 50 million francs, which had been granted in 1925, were due to begin on the 15th June, 1926. On the 27th June, 1926, an agreement was signed between Italy and Albania prescribing the details of the loan service. This agreement provided that the total nominal amount of the loan should be fixed at 70.5 millions, in place of the 50 millions actually paid up. The difference was covered by the price of issue, and, above all, by the exceptionally high costs of issue. In addition, the agreement fixed the funding instalments at an annual sum of 6,474,000 gold francs; in the following year a fresh agreement reduced this figure to 5,636,850.

These amounts were to absorb approximately one fourth of the country's estimated expenditure, of which, as has been noted, more than 40% was indispensably required for maintaining public order. In other words, it was obvious from the very beginning that nothing could be assigned to the service of the loan, and that the arrears would accumulate indefinitely the more so since, apart from this loan of 50 millions, Albania was burdened with other loan obligations (*e.g.* loan to the Prince of Wied, a part of the old Ottoman Debt, and certain internal loans of fluctuating amounts).

In fact, one year later (26th February, 1928) the group which had advanced the 50 million francs made a new agreement with the Albanian Government, according a moratorium up to 1932. From the latter year onwards the annual funding instalments was to amount to 6,303,516 gold francs.

In the meanwhile, the accumulations of interest were matched by accumulations of budgetary deficits. Even without the service of the external loan it was impossible for current State expenditure to be met out of ordinary revenue. By 1931 a further deferment of payments having become impossible a fresh appeal was made to Italy. The latter willingly advanced 100 million gold francs —July, 1931— payable by instalments, and repayable in annual amounts of 10 million francs, the first amount to be repaid when the estimated revenues should have reached 50 million gold francs!!! Italy paid the first instalment

of the 100 million francs. A few months later (November, 1931) the Treaty of Tirana was coming to the end of its term, and fell due for renewal. Zog deemed it an astute move to utilize the treaty time-limit as a bargaining counter, and interposed difficulties. Immediately Italy declined to pay further instalments of the loan. In the following year —1932— in which, as has been noted, the 1928 moratorium was ending, the instalments of the 1926 loan which were in arrears fell due for payment. In January 1933 the unpaid instalments of this loan amounted to 8 million francs, while simultaneously Italy continued to withhold the uncompleted portion of the 1931 loan. Matters had come to an impasse. It was precisely what the situation which Italy desired, so that, like a 'deus ex machina', she might step forward and proffer the longed-for solution. She proposed to resume payment of the instalments of the 1931 loan, and to continue the suspension of service of the 1926 loan. In return for these facilities, however, she demanded an Italo-Albanian customs-union, sugar and telegraph monopolies, the teaching of the Italian language in Albanian schools, the settlement of Italian colonists in Albania, etc.

Long and laborious negotiations ensued. Zog found himself in a quandary. If he yielded to these demands on the part of the Italians, the last shadow of independence would be dissipated. If he did not yield, economic and political chaos would engulf him. For the moment the discussions assumed an ugly aspect and Italy went so far as to stage a naval demonstration before Durazzo, in June 1934. Eventually, however, grim necessity won the day. Mussolini made a magnanimous gesture, calculated, as he well knew, to touch every Albanian's heart. In February 1935 he placed at the disposal of the Albanian Government, in the form of a spontaneous offer, the sum of 3 million gold francs. Forthwith Albania reciprocated. When, a few months later, Italy was in danger, by reason of her Abyssinian entanglement of being involved in a conflict with the League of Nations, the Albanian Government courageously ranged itself by her side. Shortly afterwards (19th March, 1936) agreement was reached in the matter of the economic disputes, an agreement based, once again, on the combined method of loans and satisfaction of the greater part of Italy's demands. Albania received a fresh loan of 10 million lirettas for the re-organization of her agriculture. In addition she received a loan of 3 million lirettas for the establishment of a tobacco monopoly

and a further loan for harbour works at Durazzo¹⁰⁴ The revenue from Albanian petrol was assigned to the service of the first of these loans, the revenue from the monopoly to the second. In addition, the technical and financial administration of the monopoly was reserved to Italy. By another agreement of the same date repayments on account of the 1931 loan of 100 million were suspended, and by yet another agreement a new loan was made, of 9 millions, from which the 3 millions of Mussolini's "spontaneous offer" fell to be deducted!!!

These are the facts which were officially made known in connection with the agreement of the 19th March, 1936. Generally, however, the impression prevailed at that time, that apart from the obligations officially recorded in the texts, Zog had assumed secret obligations of which there was no positive evidence. Thus the "Times" correspondent at Vienna telegraphed to his newspaper that, according to his information, the agreement in question envisaged the exclusive employment of Italian educational mission (this was confirmed a little later by the withdrawal from Albania of the only non-Italian organizer of the gendarmerie, General Percy), the reinforcement of the Valona forts, a purely Italian control of the harbour administration at Durazzo etc.

In this way from year to year the "common interest" and the "common advantages", which the agreements of the years 1926 and 1927 undertook to safeguard, were assuming, under the pressure of financial weakness and political difficulties, a constantly greater and deeper significance. The steadily accumulating deficits and the swelling volume of the loans were being added to the heavy charges for the maintenance of an armed force, and they enhanced the other political difficulties that arose from political and tribal dissensions. To leave everything in Italy's hands was a natural sequel. Macartney and Cremona state that the Italians finally found it cheaper to purchase political advantages with uneconomic loans, since they were well aware that less cost was involved in subsidising a nominally independent Albania than in forcibly holding and administering an unruly and perhaps xenophobe nation.¹⁰⁵

Any foreigners, whether diplomatists or not, who happened to live in Albania during those years cannot fail to recall the general impression which prevailed, that Albania had virtually lost her independence.

¹⁰⁴ Macartney & Cremona; *Italy's Foreign and Colonial Policy*, page 116.

¹⁰⁵ *Macartney and Cremona, o.c.*, page 115.

The country's communications were almost exclusively in the hands of the Italian Lloyd Company. By the year 1926, air communications had come under the control of an Italian company, Ala Littoria. On the 1st September, 1935 —at a moment of tension in Italo-Albanian relations —Zog issued a royal decree making the teaching of Italian compulsory in Albanian schools. Likewise, 80% of the students who were sent abroad were in future to go to Italy. The country was flooded with Italian organizers, counsellors, etc. Among them the sole exception was the British General Percy, who, though admirably suited to the task, was assailed from every quarter, and reduced to absolute inactivity. The "Times" correspondent at Tirana, writing in the issue of the 1st October, 1928, about the foreign missions in Albania, referred to the solitary exception of General Percy and added these words" but Italy figures in most of the other departments of the administration. There are Italian experts in finance, physical training, agriculture and civil engineering, not to mention the business men who hold the first place in the commerce of the country".

When, in October 1935, Albania took sides with Italy in the latter's attack upon Abyssinia, Mr. G. Boyle, a well-known friend of Albania, seeking to justify her attitude, wrote in the "Times": "In fairness let it be recorded that no other course than the course she has followed was open to her. 45% of her exports go to Italy, and her only regular day-to-day means of communication with the outside world is through Italy, by sea, by air and by telegraph".

Thus on every side Albania was confined within the Italian strait-jacket; in the event she lost even the very slight margin of technical independence which her agreements with Italy left to her. Nothing expresses the situation more eloquently than the comments with which the "Times" referred to the occupation of Albania by the Italians on Good Friday, 1939. Under the title "The Next Step", it wrote among other things, in a leading article: "The mere control of Albania would not for its own sake repay so violent an action. The country was already an Italian protectorate, and could have no policy at home or abroad that was not acceptable in Rome. Clearly something more than a protectorate was necessary to the Duce's aims".

In 1941 the Royal Institute of International Affairs published a study on Albania, in which it summarized the political and economic development of the country from the year 1926 onwards. The following is an extract: " Two considerations governed

Albanian policy: the need to obtain foreign loans for economic and administrative development and the maintenance of independence. The first of these aims was secured in great measure at the expense of the second for the country was from 1926 to 1939 virtually an Italian dependency. The maintenance of her nominal independence until 1939 was probably due to the importance on strategic grounds attached to it by Yugoslavia and Greece, and other non-Balkan Powers”.

Between economic support, indispensably required for the maintenance of the country, and the preservation of national independence the choice was, unfortunately, not a free one. The immediate requirements for the maintenance of the country overshadowed all others. Albania had first to live, and secondly to be independent. Thus of necessity she turned to the proffered financial assistance.

But, as events have demonstrated on all occasions and at all periods one-sided financial support of such magnitude leads inevitably to national bondage.

* * *

Such was the end of the experiment in Albanian independence.

The outcome could not cause surprise to those who in 1913 had first concerned themselves with the question, in full cognizance of the history and qualifications of the Albanian people. For, as has been observed in the present study, the failure of Albanian independence from the year 1926 onwards is attributable, not to fortuitous circumstances, but to the general conditions of the country, social economic and political, which throughout the period since the foundation of the State of Albania have governed its fortunes.

However, the experiment was made. Will Europe of tomorrow be able to profit from the lessons of that experiment?

Such is the question that inevitably arises.

The matter is not one of merely local or limited importance, nor does it in essence concern Albania alone. For the grievous Albania adventure has brought suffering to all the Balkan countries. All have been the losers by it, and principally the Albanian people itself; even the foreign invader has been engulfed in the general ruin.

Greece and Yugoslavia were overwhelmed by attacks coordinated and launched from Albania, Bulgaria, Hungary and Germany. Yet Albania who voluntarily accepted bondage, found no consolation in the status of satellite, which was of her

own choosing. Even Imperial Italy was destined to sustain her first crushing defeats in the ravines of the Albanian mountain-ranges.

All the nations have lost by the experiment in Albanian independence, and that fact alone surely suffices to convince everyone that, if the Albanian problem is to be solved in the near future in a manner consonant with the interests of the Balkan countries, the basis of that solution must be a different one.

Her integration within the political and economic system of the Balkan countries —of one, or more, or even all of them— has already been proved inevitable. After all that has happened no-one can any longer place reliance on the political, economic or social qualifications of the Albanian State, or on the peaceable intentions or change of heart of the great aggressor Powers of Europe. To do so would connote undue confidence in the ability of human beings to profit from the bitter lessons of experience.

To preserve so slender and frail a structure as the State of Albania in a world of growing interpenetration would quickly and inevitably result in the alignment of that State with one or other of the larger economic and political groups surrounding that State. It is indispensable, therefore, that what would otherwise once again be brought about in Italy's favour, should be settled in favour of the Balkans. This would be advantageous to all parties. For Albania, in particular, the removal of the customs barriers by which she is to-day separated from great urban centres such as Jannina, Salonika and Skoplje, with which she was economically linked under Ottoman rule, will inevitably bring immediate relief Far larger markets will at once lie open to her agricultural produce. For Greece, on the other hand, (whose urban class has reached an unduly high state of development in relation to the country's economic potentialities). Albania would be admirably suited to the exercise of the talents and industry of her intellectuals and professional men. For the Balkans as a whole, it would mean the disappearance of the breach through which, during the centuries, so many invasions from the West have been effected.

Naturally, this integration, if it is to be of value, must be a full one, involving the complete identification of Albania's policy—external, economic and military—with that of her neighbours. Conversely, the internal affairs of the State of Albania would—it goes without saying—remain in the hands of the Albanians. The details of such a scheme would naturally

have to be worked out, but there would be no fundamental difficulty in attaining a solution satisfactory to all.

History affords very many examples of such arrangements between states —arrangements that have proved of great advantage both to the parties directly concerned and to the world in general; and if the example of Austria and Hungary after the union may still be held to be a controversial one, it cannot at any rate be said of the nations of the British Commonwealth that their confederation did not bring advantage to all. Nor, for that matter, can it be argued that the federation of Czechs, Slovaks and even Sudetenlanders was not developing harmoniously until the moment when Hitlerism intervened for the purpose of enforcing its aggressive designs.

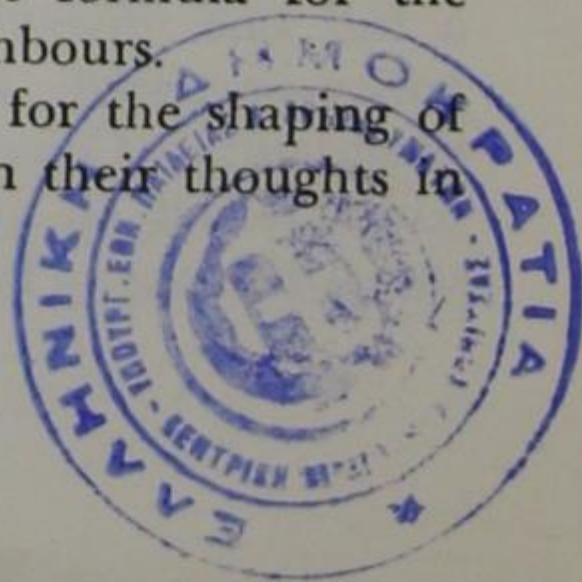
After all their sufferings in the present war, therefore, it seems likely that the political leaders of the various Balkan countries will realise the necessity of trying a new political experiment with Albania on the above-mentioned lines. In any case, events unfortunately leave them no choice in the matter.

Independently of such considerations, however, the modification of Albania's southern boundary in a manner securing to Greek Epirus unity with Greece, appears to be the logical sequel to the events of the present war in the Balkans.

In the light of Italy's aggression in October 1940 —an aggression launched by way of Albania— no-one surely would condemn Greece's desire to obtain a stronger frontier to the north-west, and thereby to resolve in her own favour a great national problem, which has been discussed at length in earlier chapters: the problem of Northern Epirus.

The full integration of Albania with her neighbours, and especially with Greece, would, however, serve to rid this question of the asperity that attaches to it. The frontiers between the two countries would no longer be of decisive importance, since it would then be a question not of two distinct states but of a single, widespread political group; and this would not be the least of the advantages that such a solution would afford. Unity in political and economic organization, coupled with complete liberty in local affairs as also in the ethnological and administrative spheres, is assuredly the best formula for the progress of the Albanian people and its neighbours.

It is to be hoped that those responsible for the shaping of the new era of peace in the Balkans will turn their thoughts in this direction.



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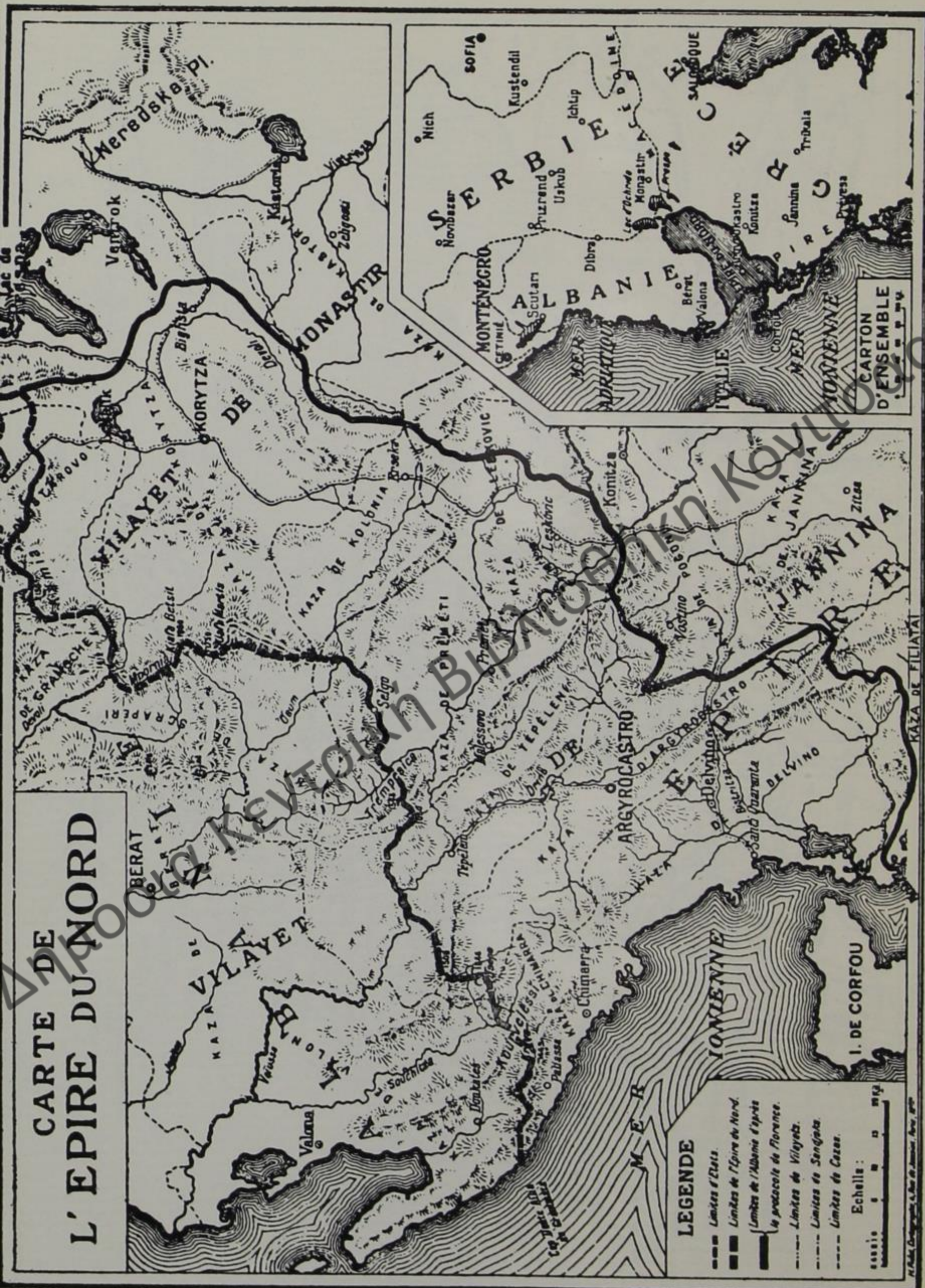
ALBANIA AND NORTHERN EPIRUS: General feature map.



EPIROS, THESSALY,
& MACEDONIA

0 10 20 40 60 80 100
ENGLISH MILES

MAP OF THE DESPOTATE OF EPIROS: From D.M.Nicol: " The Despotate of Epiros", Oxford 1957.

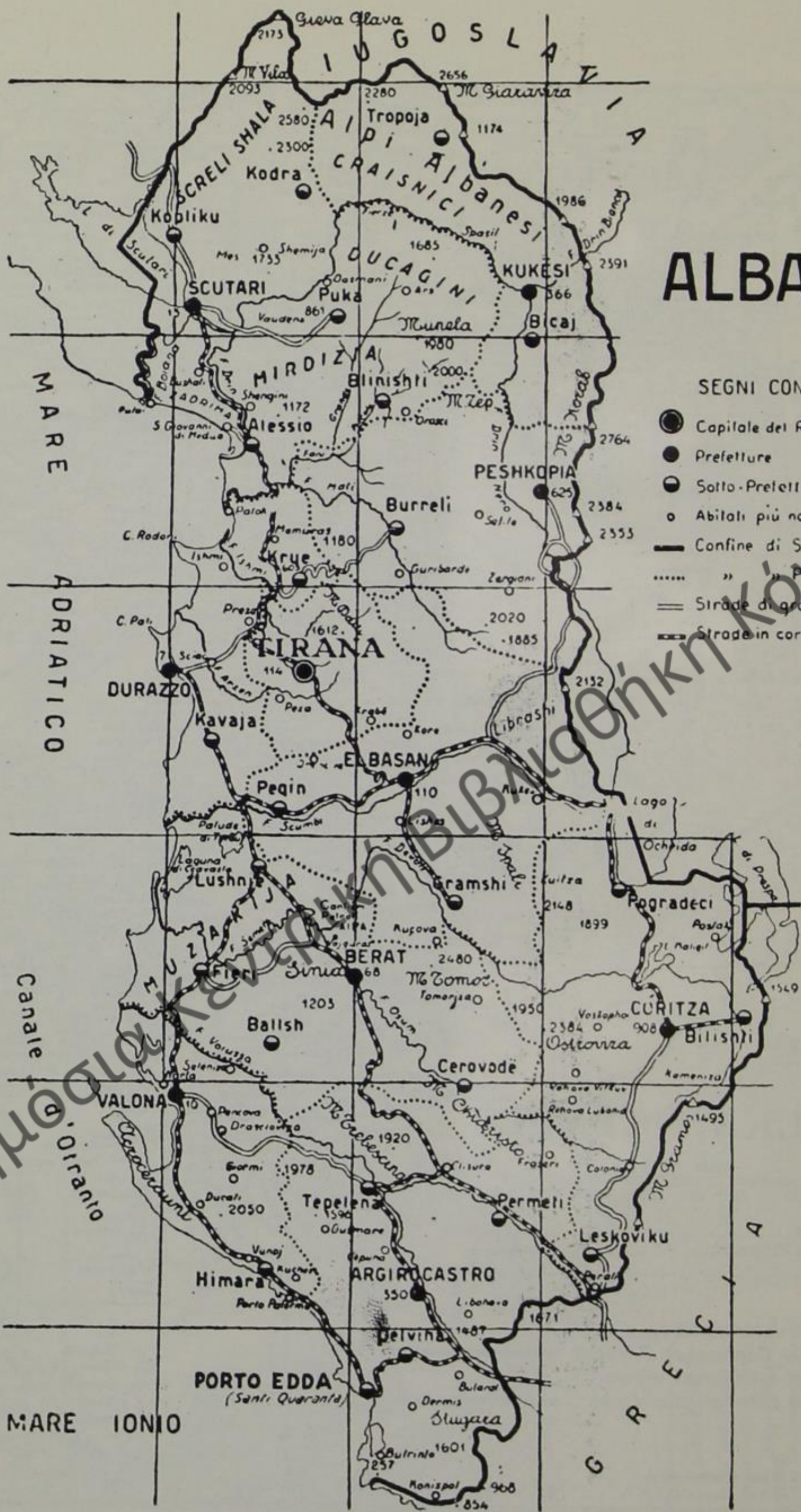


MAP OF NORTHERN EPIRUS: From "Memorandum on Northern Epirus" presented to the Paris Peace Conference (1919) by the former Provisional Government of Northern Epirus.



MAP OF THE BALKAN STATES (1916): Published by C.S. Hammond and Co., in New York. Northern Epirus is included along the Ethnographic Line of Greece.

ALBANIA



MAP OF ALBANIA (1939): From "Almanacco Italiano" 1940, p.192.

RESOLUTION

RESOLUTION adopted by the delegates to the panepirotic Federation of America 13th National Convention held at the Biltmore Hotel, New York City, N. Y., July 8, 1963

We, the Delegates of the Panepirotic Federation of America Convention held at the Biltmore Hotel, New York, N.Y., on July 3 to 8, 1963 consisting of Greek Americans, citizens of U.S.A. and descendants of Northern Epirus (now Southern Albania) being assembled for the purpose of conducting the business of our convention and evaluating the timely events and political uncertainty of Albania, provoked by the disruption of Russian-Albanian relations, and the status of the Greek Minority in Albania inhabitants of the region known as the Northern Epirus (Southern Albania) resolve:

WHEREAS, the Hellenicity of Northern Epirus has been recognized and declared (1) by the United States Senate in 1920, (2) by the Venizelos-Tittoni Agreement in 1919, (3) by the First World War Peace Conference in Paris in 1920, (4) by the United States Senate again in 1946, (5) by the Second World War Peace Conference in Paris in 1946, (6) by the Council of Foreign Ministers, where the case is still pending;

AND WHEREAS, the Atlantic Charter guaranteed the freedom of all nations and the right of self-determination of all people;

AND WHEREAS, Northern Epirus is now under Enver Hoxha's yoke, which is a cancer and a plight upon the idea of European civilization;

AND WHEREAS, the Greek population of Northern Epirus has for the past 18 years been subjected to immeasurable punishment, agony, and suppression without cause, discrimination and inhuman suffering by the brutal leaders of the Albanian dictatorship with the obvious objective to exterminate the Hellenic population of Northern Epirus;

AND WHEREAS, THE civilized nations of the world should take cognizance of these facts and the democratic leaders of the world should recognize the reality that Greece as a civilized nation has the right to demand their support for the restoration of the fundamental human rights on the enslaved North Epirotans;

AND WHEREAS, Greece has had no other territorial or colonial aspiration on foreign territories except for the undisputable and for centuries Greek populated territory of Northern Epirus;

AND WHEREAS, the Albanian State as being aligned with Communist China, is now involved in a mortal dispute with the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia on fundamental ideological questions, resulting in great unrest, anxiety and uncertainty, a situation which can only contribute further the question of Albania itself continuing as an independent nation, and thus further imperilling the problem of Northern Epirus;

NOW THEREFORE, We, the Delegates of this 13th Panepirotic Federation Convention, Unanimously adopt the following resolution:

RESOLVED THAT: in view of changing conditions in Albania, the leaders of the Democratic Governments of the World, as well as all the other leaders of the governments interested, be advised on the necessity to consider the solution of the problem of Northern Epirus, as a fundamental precondition of the establishment of normal peaceful conditions in the Balkans, for the benefit of the Northern Epirotans, as well as to the benefit of Greece and Albania (whose existence would be secured only in a friendly understanding with Greece and Yugoslavia)

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: that the only solution of the problem of Northern Epirus is its union with Greece, where it rightfully and justly belongs in accordance with the national aspirations and the desires of its people preserved through the centuries and constantly manifested and expressed.

Respectfully submitted,

CHRISTOPHOROS LAZAKIS
Convention Secretary

Rev. ALCIBIADES KALYVAS
Convention Chairman

oooooooo

Δημόσια Κεντρική Βιβλιοθήκη Κόνιτσας

Δημόσια Κεντρική Βιβλιοθήκη Κόνιτσας

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In one of his conversations with Milovan Djilas, Stalin expressed curiosity about Albania.

"What is really going on over there? What kind of people are they?"

Albania has been always a question in the mind of European statesmen and diplomats. The small and artificial state created on paper in 1913 by the diplomats of the Central Powers and Italy remained as a "problem child" in European politics from its creation up to our days.

In 1940 the Albanian "forces" supported the Italian attack against Greece. In 1943 after the surrender of fascist Italy to the Allies, Albania remained a faithful ally of Hitler's Germany up to its fall. In 1944 "The People's Party of Albania" took control and the Liliput troublemaker became one of the satellites of Soviet Russia. But not for long... today Albania is the ally of Communist China and the Generalissimo Enver Hoxha proclaimed to the world that Nikita Khrushchev "betrayed the communist idea"!

A career diplomat, and an authority on Modern European History, Mr. P. Pipinelis (now Prime Minister of Greece) produced a documented and scholarly book on EUROPE AND THE ALBANIAN QUESTION. The Albanian problem is examined in it from its origins up to 1939, a crucial point in the artificial existence of Albania.

All the scattered elements of diplomatic history have been assembled into a scholarly and exciting narrative. The book by Mr. Pipinelis is a concise and penetrating account of the biggest problems in the history of the Southern Balkan States.