

THE TRANSITION OF ALBANIA FROM REPUBLIC TO MONARCHY

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Abstract

The transition of Albania from Republic to Monarchy has been one of the most important point in the history of Albania and its people. That moment influenced in many historic events in the life of Albanians. The National Assembly on January of 1925 proclaimed Albania a republic and elected Zog President for a seven years period. On Saturday, the 1st September this amendments were approved by the Assembly, and Ahmet Zog proclaimed “Zog I, King of the Albanians”. The new king to be Ahmet Zogu was the person that decided for the new system in Albania. The aim of this article is to make a chronological description of that important moment for Albania and bring some new facts from sources of that time.

Keywords: State, deputies, change, system, republic, monarchy

Introduction

The starting point of the procedural path for the transition of the Albanian state toward monarchy was marked by the message of the date 1 June 1928 that Zogu as the President of the Republic, send to the legislative (both departments: Senate and the Chamber of the Deputies). Based on the articles 79 and 141 of the Charter Statute, Zogu asked them to discuss and review the Status which, according to him, had many deficiencies. One of the deficiencies was that it did not provide the function of some of the main institutions such as the Premier and the State Council. This fact was also expressed by the press of that time. For example the newspaper “Dielli” of 26 June 1928 wrote about Zogu’s idea of discussing about the changes they had to make in the status such as the addition of the article 141 which obliged the Assembly meet and review the Statute. On 7th of June 1928, both Chambers concluded that Albania had had a lot of developments from 1924-1925, so the Statute couldn’t be the same.

During that period of time, about five years, Albania had developments that had to be reflected in the legislation and for this reason the two chambers approved the schedule of the article 141 with this content:

”The general review of the Statute is the Constitutional Assembly’s right. When the Statute needs to be reviewed, according to this article procedure, both chambers are not effective and, according to the article 47 of the Status, new election should be done.” In this meeting, they also decided to make a general review of the Statute and, immediately, put it on the practice. After that meeting the chambers not any more effective.

After that moment, the general situation was interesting and it was reflected in the daily press too. The newspaper ”Dielli” placed an important space on its pages. It stressed the fact that for that decision the deputies had reflected a strange discipline, demonstrated special obediences for the state interests, and decided that the parliament should be dissolved.

The most important argument of this courageous proposal was the fact that the state is the substance and the state form should be changed according to the time and the needs of the people that it represents. The substitution of the state form is done for the state consolidation and progression. A better life for the people is defined through the election of the state form.

Faik Konica’ stance

Another important voice in this debate is Faik Konica, a minister of that period. We can find his opinion about this change in the descriptions that the press of the time has done for the meetings and contacts that he had with Albanians living in the U.S.A. In these discussions he used to confront with a lot of questions about what was happening to the Albanian state form and the way how he answered them, expresses clearly his personal viewpoint as well.

Faik Konica believed that the political movement for the change of the state form in Albania was in line with the wish of the Albanians for two strong reasons:

- **first**, the premises for the cultivation of the political machinations among statesmen, whose increase had tired the population, could be reduced.
- **second**, the risk emerging from the Bolshevik propaganda could be avoided. That is why the press quoted: “A part of Albanians, I repeat, not because of principles which lead them, but because of envy could be against the monarchy” (Konica,F. 1928) As a democrat Faik Konica accepted and understood that the monarchy could not be the preference of all Albanians, a part of which naturally could be in favour of the Republic. But trying to have somehow impact for the quiet and peaceful implementation of the substitution in case of its approval, he says that “I am sure that these good Albanians for the sake of the tranquility and the national unity, will obey to the substitution”. (ibid)

On 28 August 1928 the second meeting of the Constitutional Assembly was held. After the approve of the committee's report for the verification of the "deputies credentials", the Assembly chose the headship, compound as following:

- Vice chairman, Pandeli Evangheli
- Vice chairman, Ferid Vokopola
- Secretary, Angjel Sereqi
- Proctor, Fiqiri Rusi.

These events, which were not only in Tirana but in other cities too, were accompanied by popular enthusiastic demonstrations supporting the monarchy and the Head of State. In the meantime, petitions from all the prefectures of Albania arrived in the Assembly supporting monarchy and the candidate to the throne, Ahmet Zogu. The press wrote: "Today, people in Tirana repeated their manifestations which started at 18:00 and finished late at night"(Dielli, 1928).

The Monarchy and the stability

In this atmosphere the Foreign Affairs Minister Iljaz Vrioni, assured the diplomatic corp that the monarchy would be a factor for the stability and peace not only in Albania but also in all Balcan countries. Whereas concerning an opinion which existed in Tirana at that time, that the diplomatic corp would leave in the moment that President Zog would proclaim himself a King, the Minister of Justice soon denied it. A positive atmosphere accompanied this process even in the pages of the world press.

The newspaper of the time "Boston Herald", in an article titled "The new Scanderbeg", wrote that "it is possible that a strong monarchical form government, might be better than every other form for the Albanians. But if Ahmet Zogu is obliged to be supported by Italy to be in throne, then he will be in throne as long as that support is effective" (ibid).

On 29 August 1928 the Assembly of Albania charged a committee to do the necessary constitutional changes to make possible the change of the regime from Republic to Monarchy by voting. At 12 o'clock of 1 September 1928 the Constitutional Assembly approved unanimously the report of the committee that changed the state form to the constitutional kingdom with a parliament and with the right to inheritance. This government, according to the Albanians of America, would make it possible for Albania to consolidate its moral force and to create a stabilized state. Instead the committee that was charged with the Statute changes, making all the necessary interpretations, proposed "to give to Ahmet Zogu the historical crown of Skenderbeu with the title **First Zogu – King of Albanians.**"(Dielli, 1928)

On the other hand, the Constitutional Assembly approved the articles and decided to send a committe to Zogu to ask him to obey the constitutional

willpower. The same day Zogu answered to the committee and declared that “he would accept the crown” as it was the Albanian people’s wish.

At 17:00 Zogu appeared before Assembly for the common vow: “Me, the King of Albanians, in the moment I am ascending to the Throne of the Albanian Kingdom and taking over the Royal Power, I vow in front of God to keep safe the national unit, state independence and the territorial integrity. I also will take care of the Statute and I will act exactly according to the Statute and to the law, having in mind the welfare of my people”. (Duka, V.2007, p.462)

To institutionalize the Monarchy, the Statute provided that the Royal Throne belonged to the oldest boy of the King and the heritage would continue in generations in direct line, male to male. When the heir died or lost the right of the heritage, the throne was inherited by his oldest boy. If there was not a heir for the Royal Throne, according to the articles 51, 52 the king had the right to choose another male as his heir to the throne, but in this case he had to have the approval of the Parliament.

When the king didn’t exercise this right and the heritage remained vacant, the heir was selected by the Parliament. According to the article 53 he chose by himself the heir of the Throne and in the case of the King’s death or demission, the Parliament had the right to have a meeting by initiative within 10 days to take the vow of the new King. Until this royal constitutional vow become real “it could be acted by the Ministry Council, under its responsibility”.(Kingdom Statute, Part2) But even when the Throne remained vacant, without a heir till to a solution, the Royal Institution was acted by the Ministry Council.

King Zog and his new vision

Realizing the parliament importance on approving the law, Zogu cared a lot that his communication with this institution should be done through a simple and understandable language, especially when it came to formulating the decree-laws, as the one that would regulate religious communities in Albania, as far as he stated, "... to the base that our state free does not want in any way to interfere in the consciousness of its nationals, one of the matters that gives credit to our Orthodox Albanians, is the creation and stabilization of the Albanian Autocephalous Orthodox Church." (Albania, 1929)

Zogu was visionary on the idea of exploiting and adapting adjustment in function of Albanian geographical position for the development and civilization with its rapidity when saying that "our geographical State occurrence forces us that Albania as soon as possible transforms to the ranks of civilized states"(Dielli, 1929) The analysis that he made to this opening process and adaptation was interesting. Zogu noted that, due to invasions by various invaders in years, the country had inherited a large cultural

backwardness. Opening to the civilized world would put culture and tradition in front of a large pressure and imminent which would have its positive consequences but even negative ones.

Thus, together with more positive elements of the civilized world, much addiction like laziness or ineptitude could be present. Preparing the state to afford this invasion, Zogu hastened to initiate protective measures for the state administration, as it was the creation of a special commission which would control and inspect all state administration in order to cut down, once for all the favoritism and incapability. Zog and his Government used to pay special attention to the Albanian students who had been graduated in the West. He tried to prepare special programs to employ them after they had come back home so that make them use their knowledge in the service of their homeland. This would create a Western mentality in Albanian state administration.

Also, the Art.162 attributed the King to nominate the Council of State through double candidates selected by a special commission consisting of the Prime Minister, the President of Parliament and Minister of Justice.

At the same time, he had the right to nominate and dismiss the President of the institution. In datas and documents of the time we have found that this description was arranged "... according to the Law on the organization of the State Council approved by Parliament and promulgated by his Majesty- The King According to the note No.21 / II dated March 28, 1929 to Ministry of the Royal Court. (AMPJ, 1929)

Under this law, Council members should enjoy civil and political rights and were not convicted of any crime or forgery, fraud, abuse of confidence or offenses against good customs, had reached the age of 30 years but not over 60 years old. Council consisted of three sections: the judiciary, administration, finance and national economy. According to Article 5 of the Law on the Organization and Council Function, he was entitled to the explanation of provisions that might be dark and he would review in order to " verdictly district on decisions given by the Administrative Section of the Council of State and given appellately data over the decisions of the Administrative Councils of prefectures and all those given from these decisions appellately on Administrative Councils of Sub-prefecture.

To settle tance and obligatory each attribute conflict between different Ministries, owes to show the opinion within two weeks on any matter that shall be referred by Council of Ministers or by any Ministry, especially.

Mandatory, the Council of State referred to every Draft-Law or regulation, or draft- concession agreement. He, when preparing or reviewing,

handed them accompanied by an explanatory report - opinion accompanying his appearance in Parliament.

In addition, under Article 7, the Council of State was obliged to inform the proposed executive powers and legislative for the cancellation or partial changes or general laws and regulations which did not adopt the habits of the country, or conflicted with other laws in force. So, he had to control the alignment and compliance of all sides of the various legislation and regulations in force. Obviously, the decisions of this institution have consultative power. The law determined: "General Meetings are headed and chaired by the Chairman of the State, or in his absence by the deputy elderly. In this meeting are participating all members of the Council, and assisted tu Secretary General without the right to vote. " (File,1929)

By analyzing the 22-nd articles that make up the Law on Organization of the Council of State, flaring a harmonious organization and a combination of them in the context of a hierarchical control through dependence on King. But once the law harmonizes internal reports of this institution, located in the function of governing and legislative institutions, through legal enforcement of attributes and timeliness. Institution Council controller was built under the Royal Charter, Chapter II therefore, consisting of seven items. Among these items the art.157 draws attention that defines the right of the King to appoint the Chairman and members of this Council between the double candidatures chosen by the Special Committee, consisting of Prime Minister , the Head of Parliament and Minister of Finance. It is determined that, at the same time, the councildepending on Parliament, that controlled the correctness of their duty and, when violations were observed parliamentary decision were sent in the Supreme Court.In art. 5 of the Law "On the organization and functioning of the Council controller" the attributes are defined as:

- Preventive control on the spendings consumption
- Observation on the states employees incomes that had in use money or material and on the loans of the contable agents.
- Reconciliation of the budget
- Judgement on the accounts that are obligated to use money or materials or valued objects of the state.
- Judgement on the administrative responsibility of the state officer

In this institution were allowed to work those who were equipped with a diploma of higher studies or case-law of the administrative law or commercial. The nomination was effective for seven years and during this time they were independent and assured. The realization of defined functions for them require continuous information from ministers specifically to verify whether there was a violation of legality and for all of these were forced to communicate with the King and the Prime Minister

every three months and inform them about different problems. The Board of the Council had to inform the Parliament about the budget and present the list of the things it was used for by giving a detail explanation.. Decisions given by the Board of Council Controller pursuant to law, were communicated to the respective ministries, who were obliged to “put them into force”.(Dielli,1928)

This was a concentrated overview in the procedure of crossing Albania Monarchy even in the main institutions that regulate the functioning and regulation in hierarchical reports. But, of course, each of them represents a separate object that would be interesting to dwell for a detailed analysis in the future.

Conclusion

Zog entered in the political sphere when Noli was in power. Noli defended pro western ideas meanwhile Zog defended the big landowners interests. So a harsh fight started between Zog and Noli. Noli’s government lasted only six months and Zog came in power in December 1924.

His role was fundamental for providing his country with a modern Constitution, pro western State Organization and a laic state. Through Monarchy he reformed Judiciary, adapting the Civil Code in Albania. With the reform in Judiciary he wanted to be a part of Western Europe, because Albania had been under the Turkish invasion for about 500 years

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