

Party System and Cleavages in pre-Communist Albania

The kaleidoscope of the German and Greek diplomacy

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

A.A.	Auswärtiges Amt
A.A.B.	Auswärtiges Amt Berlin
B.D.	Balkan Department
B.dSS.	Büro des Staatssekretärs
B.K.	Balli Kombetar
BK	Bashkimi Kombetar (National Union)
BKSh	Balli Kompetar e Shqiperise
C.D.A.	Central Department Archive
CPA	Communist Party of Albania
CUP	Committee of Union and Progress
D.B.R	Deutsche Botschaft Rom.
D.P.	Department of Press
FPA	Fascist Party of Albania
G.M.F.A.	Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs
H.D.A.G.M.F.A.	Historical and Diplomatic Archive of the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs
KCK	<i>Komiteti i Clirimit te Kosoves</i> (Kosova Liberation Committee)
KCN	<i>Komiteti Nacional e Clirimit</i> (Committee of National Liberation)
KONARE	<i>Komiteti Nacional e Revolucionar</i> (National Revolutionary Committee)
Mf.	Microfiche
NF	National Front
NLF	National Liberation Front
NLM	National Liberation Movement (<i>Levizje Nacional Clirimtar</i>)
P.A.A.A.	Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes
P.D.	Policy Department
PFSH	<i>Partia Fashist e Shqiperise</i> (Fashist Party of Albania)

PKS	<i>Partija Kommuniste Shqiptare</i> (Albanian Communist Party)
PKSh	<i>Partia Komuniste e Shqiperise</i> (Communist Party of Albania)
PP	<i>Partia Popullore</i> (Popular Party)
PPer	<i>Partia Perparimtare</i> (Progressive Party)
PND	<i>Partia Nacionale Demokratike</i> (National Democratic Party)
PRD	<i>Partia Radikale Demokratike</i> (Radical Democratic Party)
R.N.	Register Number
SVEA	<i>Societa per lo Svilippo Economico dell' Albania</i>

NOTE ON SPELLING AND PLACE NAMES

Many Albanian names and place-names have various spellings. I have used the Albanian spelling whenever available. While I prefer the forms Zogu (before his proclamation to King) and Zog (after his proclamation to King) to Zogolli¹ and Bey instead of Bej. I also prefer the form Esad every time I refer to Esad Pasha Toptani, even when I quote.²

With regard to Albanian place-names, I have kept the indefinite forms used in the country itself, Durres, Shkoder, Vlore, etc. An exception had been made in the case of the capital. The more familiar form Tirana is used throughout. While I use the form Kosova instead of Kosovo because this region –predominantly Albanian-inhabited region of the former Yugoslavia- known as Kosovo-Metohije by the Serbs is known as Kosova by the Albanians.

¹ Within the framework of his effort to depart from the oriental ideology Ahmed Zogu started a harmless war against the Arabic names. So 1922 Ahmed shrugged off his Turkish name form Zogolli and demanded to be called Zogu. Later, 1928, when he became King, his Arabic forename Ahmed disappeared and the “u” from the end of his name as well (E. Ashmead Bartlett, C.B.E., Special Commissioner, in: Daily Telegraph, 16.10.1928) and he became known as King Zog I.

² There is a variety concerning the spelling of this name. Some prefer the form “Essad,” some others “Esat” or “Essat.”

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The object of enquiry

I started working my Phd with the aim to approach the political life of Albania during the “transformation years” (democratisation phase), namely after the end of the communist period (1991). The aim of my research at that time was mainly to give answers to a set of questions: “what kind of cleavages exist in Albania after 1991(if any) and how and to which extent do they affect the political life of the country during the process of democratisation? Which are the parties that were formed immediately after the end of the communist period? And which is the relation between the existing cleavages and the party system in contemporary Albania?”

But after six or seven months of research I realised that my notes were full of questions regarding the “past” of the period I intended to investigate (the post-communist period or the transformation phase). The effort to refer to the “continuity” of cleavages, which seemed to exist in the post-communist period came upon the deficiency of information regarding the existence or absence of cleavages during the pre-communist period. There was no scientific work devoted to this matter and the references regarding the “past” were scarce and insufficient.

So my research changed its “time orientation”. I considered it necessary to fill in the information gap concerning the pre-communist period, in order to be able later to approach, through the same lens (cleavages and party system), the political life of contemporary Albania.

I had to draw the framework of my work once again.

The geographical framework was more or less already defined and remained the same; the country of Albania. The time-framework should move backwards; 1912 (the year of the proclamation of Albania as an independent state) –1944 (the beginning of the communist period). This time-framework seemed to provoke problems regarding the geographical framework, as in order to refer to a country we have to be aware of its frontiers. But, even though Ing. Carl Ig. Hoffer, (the Finance Representative of middle-Europe in Albania) refers in his diplomatic report that: “*Today [1922] ([after the end of the Conference of Ambassadors -9. November 1921- [determining the frontiers of Albania]) Albania occupies an area of about 30.000 qkm with approximately 1.000.000 population*”³ (“*so big as Württemberg of Belgium*”⁴), in 1923 J.J. Sederholm expresses his concern for the relations between Albania and Greece as “... *the long delay which has occurred regarding the final decision concerning the delimitation of the boundaries between Greek Macedonia and the former Ottoman Kaza of Koritza attributed to Albania, has caused much uneasiness in the province of Koritza, especially in those portions of the former Kaza of Koritza which are still occupied by Greek troops to some extent in disregard of the decisions of the Conference of Ambassadors. [...] Moreover, there was a danger that the present unsettled state of affairs may lead to an increase of the tension between Greece and Albania. I therefore ventured to recommend [...] that the Council of the League should request the Conference of Ambassadors to hasten the final delimitation*”.⁵

³ P.A.A.A, Ing. Carl Ig. Hoffer, Mitteleuropäische Wirtschaftsvertretung in Albanien, Orientierung über Albanien als Siedlungsland, R.72405, Bd.1, KW Albanien, 18 Nov. 1922, S.4.

⁴ P.A.A.A, Kampner Robert; Rotta Nikolaus, Albaniens Staatverfassung, in: Koellreutter Piloty (ed.), Jahrbuch des Öffentlichen Rechts, Bd. XIV, 1926, Tübingen: Mohr J.C.B. von, R.72468, Bd.1., S.486.

⁵ Official Reports of the League of Nations Commission of Inquiry, Report dated: 19.12.22 – 1.2.23, in: Official Journal of the League of Nations, May 23, pp.491, 492, (Report: J.J. Sederholm).

This “*area of about 30.000 qkm*”, as well as “*the approximately 1.000.000*” population were divided into two. The river of Shkumbi divided the country into two parts and the population into two communities. In the north, where the almost impenetrable mountains provided a retreat from invaders and carriers of civilisation, lived the belligerent Ghegs, descendants of early Illyrians. In the lower lands of the south lived the Tosks, of Epirotic origin. Subject for centuries to the mellowing touch of Byzantine culture, the Tosks lost their primitive temper. They have always formed the more industrious section of the population, while the Ghegs preferred to spend their time shining their guns, chatting with their fellows about their soldierly prowess, and displaying their flair for artistic dress.

Archival as well as secondary sources agree that “*Die Bewohner des albanischen Hochlandes haben eine den schottischen Clans und irischen Grafschaften ähnliche Stammes-und-Gauverfassung, welche Jahrhunderte zurück-reicht*”⁶ “*Die Ghegen bildeten eine Stammesgemeinschaft, die sich mit dem schottischen Clansystem vor 1845 vergleichen läßt.*” (Seton-Watson, 1956, p.129).

In the North there was no organisation (in the sociological sense of the word) without a clan basis (Lange, 1973, pp.30-31). The historical events (invasions, wars, movements of the populations), had not injured the social organisation of these communities. The tribe (the basis of the social organisation in the north) was a group of individuals who descended on patrilineal lines from the same ancestor and could be localised to the territory. The structure of the *fis*⁷ was based on the extended family, the greater

⁶ P.A.A.A., Kampner Robert; Rotta Nikolaus, *Albaniens Staatverfassung*, in: Koellreutter Piloty (ed.), *Jahrbuch des Öffentlichen Rechts*, Bd. XIV, 1926, Tübingen: Mohr J.C.B. von, R.72468, Bd.1., S.486.

⁷ The term *fis*, which is the equivalent of the roman *gens*, designates a group of individuals of the same blood in the male line (Ivanova, 1960, p.119).

patriarchal family. The mountaineers kept on organizing their life according to the *Kanun Lek Dukagjinit*⁸, the individuals who were part of the family did not have a civil, juridical and social personality, but through the head of the family, who was the equivalent of the *pater familias*. The patriarchy was in force in the family, and the father had full power over all members of the family. “*The administration of every tribe was taking place by the head of it (krüe), every district was administrated by the „advice of the older men“ who were under the leadership of a Chef, Kaptan or Beg*”⁹

The social organization of the north made it difficult for the Ghegs to accept a central government and to allow themselves to be governed by it. When the Tosks could establish a western administrative system (1920), the Ghegs, the Malissori and the Mirdita maintained the tribal organisation.

South of Shkumbi, clan organisation was almost non-existent and people were more receptive to new ideas. So, even though during the Princes' league it was in Northern Albania and Kosova region where the most activity was to be registered, it was, later, in Southern Albania where the radical demands were put into words. The geography of the region dictated its history. The North was mountainous and impenetrable. The South had fertile grounds suitable for settling and “dealing” (one should not forget the product of feudalism; the continuous “cold” and “warm” conflicts between the great landowners and the landless peasants).

⁸ P.A.A.A, Kampner Robert; Rotta Nikolaus, Albaniens Staatverfassung, in: Koellreutter Piloty (ed.), Jahrbuch des Öffentlichen Rechts, Bd. XIV, 1926, Tübingen: Mohr J.C.B. von, R.72468, Bd.1.

⁹ P.A.A.A, Ing. Carl Ig. Hoffer, Mitteleuropäische Wirtschaftsvertretung in Albanien, Orientierung über Albanien als Siedlungsland, R.72405, Bd.1, KW Albanien, 18 Nov. 1922, S.4.

According to the Albanian historians Pollo and Puto (Pollo and Puto, 1981, pp.34-35) the origins of the Albanian feudalism are to be found in the first half of the ninth century (the establishment of the Byzantine power) when “*most of the present Albania was incorporated into the theme of Dyrrachium, and that of Nikopolis, while the former province of Dardania was partly incorporated into the theme of Thessalonica; the remaining territories lay outside Byzantine control. But the Byzantine domination was temporary. In 851, the Bulgarians began to penetrate these territories -especially the theme of Nicopolis and Dyrrachium. The invasion was not only military. Bulgarian soldiers, peasants in their own state, followed by their families settled beside the indigenous population in the central and southern regions. That accelerated the development of feudal relations. The number of peasants deprived of their lands grew rapidly, provoking an increase in the numbers of men working as tenants (mortites) and daily workers (mistotes) on the lands of the rich landowners (dynates). The feudal relations did not reach certain mountain regions which were unaffected by this process, even in the following centuries. Since then the feudal structure was accompanied by peasant revolts*” (Pollo and Puto, 1981, pp.34-35).

When the Turks overran the peninsula, Albania was the only Balkan country with this system. In dealing with the Albanian feudal system, the Turks adopted a policy of *laissez-faire*, so long as that system did not threaten the rest of the empire; the Beys, on their side, showed an appropriate measure of tractability. They accepted Islam and in return were allowed to keep arms and by organising their peasants into little bands, they were able to run Albania very much as they pleased (Federal Writers’ Project, 1975, p.18-19).

In 1912 (Albanian independence) almost half the arable land belonged to the *latifundia* (*tchifliks*) of the feudal families, e.g. the Vrionis, Toptanis, Verlakis and Vloras, owned more than ten thousand hectares each (Frasheri, 1964, p. 180), even while a capitalist economy was beginning to emerge. The problem of the unequal land possession remained unsolved until 1944, always constituting the apple of discord.

The Ottoman policy left behind it (after the deconstruction of the Ottoman Empire) apart from feudalism, also an interesting “religious map”. *“From the about 1.000.000 Albanians, the half are Muslims, 300.000 are Catholics and 200.000 are Greek-Orthodox. Especially the highlanders are Catholics, the population of the middle-Albania is Muslim and in the south Albania are mainly Greek-Orthodox to be found [...] There are no Jews in Albania”*.¹⁰ If the Bektashi in the south numbering something like two hundred thousand are regarded as of a different confession, as some of them claim they ought to be, then Sunnites would not possess any absolute majority (Sederholm, Final Report, May, 1923, p. 507).

Being the social picture as such, there is a series of questions interwoven with the previously formed problematic concerning cleavages (see the first paragraph of the Introduction). Could the geographical division of the country (north/south), which, as has

¹⁰ P.A.A.A, Ing. Carl Ig. Hoffer, Mitteleuropäische Wirtschaftsvertretung in Albanien, Orientierung über Albanien als Siedlungsland, R.72405, Bd.1, KW Albanien, 18 Nov. 1922, S.5-6.

The divergence of the arithmetical data concerning the numbers of the supporters of each religion in Albania at that time, is very small. See also: P.A.A.A., Report from the Albanian Minister for Foreign Affairs, R. 72406, 7 July, 1922. The numbers given there are similar; 574.000 Muslims and 234.000 Orthodox. / J.J. Sederholm, gives almost the same analogies: *“...Now with regard to religion, Islam and Christianity were the accepted religions. The arithmetical data of the religious map of Albania show that the Albanian population was almost 820, 000 as a whole, 520, 000 were Muslims, 200, 000 Christian Orthodox, and 70, 000 Catholics”* (Sederholm, Final Report, May, 1923, p. 507) / *“The Albanian population is around 800.000 (550.000 Muslims, 165.000 Christian Orthodox, 85.000 Catholics)”* (P.A.A.A, Kampner Robert; Rotta Nikolaus, Albanien Staatverfassung, in: Koellreutter Piloty (ed.), Jahrbuch des Öffentlichen Rechts, Bd. XIV, 1926, Tübingen: Mohr J.C.B. von, R.72468, Bd.1., S.486)

already been mentioned, was closely connected with a social one (Ghegs / Tosks), be able to form a cleavage (probably a territorial)? Could the feudal system, which divided the population into great landowners and landless peasants in the south, act as the basis of a cleavage with competitive sides (feudal / anti-feudal cleavage)? Have the religious differences lead to the formation of a “religious cleavage”? Which would be the nature of these cleavages (if any)? Which would be their deepness? And in which way do they affect the political life (formation and split of political parties and organizations) of the country in the pre-communist period?

But the above-presented social framework as well as the problematic deriving from it would remain incomplete, if there was no special reference to the country’s “peculiarities”. By the term “country’s peculiarities” we refer to special interests, which cut across the various interests which (could/ had) built up the social cleavages in Albania. They are, so to speak, “interests” of an almost national scale (independence desire), “special interests” closely connected with the region (irredentism), or even “social phenomena” like the one of “personalities”, whose importance in the political life of Albania, during the years of its formation as a state, was great and decisive.

As far as the “personalities” in Albania are concerned, it should be noted that at the beginning of the twentieth century, the whole of Albania was dominated by about a dozen prominent families, most of who derived their names from the towns where they had their seats of authority. In Southern Albania there were the Beys of Valona, who, although they owned little land, enjoyed enormous influence, since nearly all members of the family held important offices in the empire. Also in Southern Albania lived the family of Kelsura, reputedly the cruelest Beys since Ali Pasha Tepeleni. The Beys of Vriani had immense holdings in the Muzekia valley, potential granary of Albania. Frasheri was the name of another powerful family, most of whose members unfortunately bore little resemblance to the literary brothers of that name. The Beys of Quafezezi, Kolonia, Deshnica, and Polena had most of their holdings outside the frontiers of Albania proper, although they also owned land in the towns from which they derived their titles. Central

Albania was controlled by four families, those represented by Shevket Verlaci, Akif Pasha, Dervish Bey, and the Toptani family. In the extreme North was the great Bushati house, and the family of Prenk Bib Doda, leader of the Roman Catholic tribes. The Mati district was controlled by Djemal Pasha, father of King Zog. All these personalities or heads of families, as well as others who came up during the struggle for national independence possessed the power to provoke mass mobilization and turn the route of Albania's political life as they wished. So their role as political actors should not be underestimated and questions with regard to their influence on Albanian politics (formation of political organizations or movements, formation and split of political parties, mass mobilization instigators, etc.) should not be simply ignored.

History provides us with the interpretation tools needed to approach the other two "country's peculiarities" (independence desire and irredentism). It also explains their dynamism and effectiveness as "political actors" during the years of the state's formation.

The past of Albania is woven from the past of all nations, which played an important role in southern Europe and especially in the Balkan region (Gauls, Romans, Goths, Illyrians, Byzantines, Venedigs, Serbs, Ottomans...). The victory of the Young Turks (1908) and the Balkan wars brought up the question of an autonomous Albania and sharpened the Great Powers' appetite for expansion (either geographical or influential).

"Trivial in size, insignificant in industry, unknown in the world of art and letters, impotent in military force, Albania is only a pawn on the European chessboard [...] But it frequently happens that an insignificant pawn becomes the deciding factor in the game." [...] It was Albania which created the situation resulting in the Balkan war. Again it was the inability of the Balkan allies and the great powers backing them, to agree over the division of Albania which precipitated the second Balkan war between Bulgaria and her allies [...] The fact is that Albania, by reason of her highly strategic position, has an importance out of all proportion to her size and population. She holds the key to the gate of the Adriatic, a 600-mile waterway thrusting itself up into the very

centre of Europe. Not only is this matter of the highest political and commercial importance to bordering and adjacent states, but remoter nations like Germany, Poland and Russia. Behind that gate is the pressure of from 150,000,000 to 200,000,000 people. [...] Albania because of her helplessness, her half-developed state, her strategic location, offers a shining mark [...] A stab at this exposed nerve sends quivering pain and fear at once to half a dozen and more political centers of Europe."¹¹

Such being the situation, the Albanians kept on struggling to gain their "independence" even after the proclamation of Albania as an independent state (20 December 1912) and the end of the "official discussion" concerning its borders.

Kampner R. and Rotta N. commented upon the Albanian Constitution of 1925 and wrote: *"The newborn Albanian state has extraordinary favourably developed. It will also keep on developing as long as it will not become the apple of discord between Italy and Yugoslavia or between England and Russia, as it had happened before when it was the apple of discord between Venice and the Sultan, or between Italy and the Austro-Hungary."*¹² Unfortunately, the route of the Albanian history after 1925 (the year of Kampner and Rotta's writings) confirms the fears of the writers. Albania remained a "shining mark" and the Albanians' "independence desire" transmuted into a strong "political actor." So when the German Ambassador Hey carries word by word, through his report to the Foreign Ministry in Berlin, the saying of the Albanian Foreign Minister *"We, the Albanians, love first of all our independence, (the) general and (the)*

¹¹ P.A.A.A., New Englander Helping Albania to Build Up Natural Resources in: The Springfield Union, Springfield mass: Sunday, October 23, 1927, R.72445, Bd.1

¹² P.A.A.A., Kampner Robert; Rotta Nikolaus, Albaniens Staatverfassung, in: Koellreutter Piloty (ed.), Jahrbuch des Öffentlichen Rechts, Bd. XIV, 1926, Tübingen: Mohr J.C.B. von, R.72468, Bd.1. p.486.

individual”¹³ goes on by saying “...*this was my first direct impression of the country’s political life*”.¹⁴

Irredentism has also its “historical reason” and its prolongation to the present. The Albanian question was at the centre of the Ambassadors’ Conference (opened in London on December the 17th 1912). Three of the powers had a direct interest: Austria-Hungary, Italy and Russia (each its own interests). When it became obvious that the Balkan allies were determined to share out Albania among themselves, the problem became more complicated. “*The conflict between older and more recent designs on Albania had moved to the arena of great-power politics*” (Pollo and Puto, 1981, p.150). The Conference of Ambassadors “solved the problem” by recognizing Albania’s independence and proclaiming it a Sovereign hereditary principality, whose neutrality was guaranteed by the Great Powers, by setting up the state’s administration under the supervision of an international authority (this tactic was already known. Greece, Rumania and Bulgaria had experienced the intervention of the Great Powers in their internal organization as new states) and by determining its frontiers in such a way that Albanian territory would serve as a reward for the Balkan allies’ victory over Turkey. The Albanians had to pay a high price for their independence. Over half of the Albanian people in the north and in the south were outside its frontiers. In the south, the region of Cameria was given to Greece, while Kosova, one of the richest regions in the Balkans and one of the most active centres of the Albanian national movement, was cut from the mother country. The amputation of

¹³ P.A.A.A., Hey, Geburtstagsfeier König Ahmet Zogu I. und Eröffnung des albanischen Parlaments, R.72446, Bd.1, Abschrift II Alb.216, No 1018, 15 Okt. 1929.

¹⁴ P.A.A.A., Hey, Geburtstagsfeier König Ahmet Zogu I. und Eröffnung des albanischen Parlaments, R.72446, Bd.1, Abschrift II Alb.216, No 1018, 15 Okt. 1929.

The fact that the German Ambassador concluded such information in one of his first reports to “his basis”, bears an extra weight as “the independence desire” proved to be one of the exploitation elements for a “peaceful occupation” in the hands of the Germans when they occupied Albania 1943.

the country did not satisfy the appetite of the neighbours who did not abandon their imperialistic plans.

So a blend of local patriotism and dreams of regaining Kosova could be considered a motive for power in the northern part of the country. The Kosova groups represented pure regional interests and had totally different priorities (regaining of Kosova) from those of the central and the southern Beys, who aimed at the establishment of a viable Albanian state. What is more, later, in 1925, the Malissori and Mirdita do not seem to obey to the central government, thus inducing Zogu to send mercenaries into Shkoder to prevent a rebellion. While in 1926, the Dukagjini uprising found fertile ground in the northern part of the country, emerging as the hard traditional clan structure of the society, leaving no margin for integration into the central state. The Gheg leader of the rebellion argued that Albania should be organised as a Federal State, of which the North, the Central and the South would be components.

1.2 The framework of analysis

The title has already revealed the framework of analysis within which the writer intends to move and the text is going to develop. The terms “party system” and “cleavages”, as parts of the title, lay the foundations for the theoretical basis of this work. But as every term is amenable to changes with regard to its meaning, it would be useful to make a special reference to the connotation of the terms referred above (cleavage, party system).

Definitions of cleavage

Cleavage is a difficult concept. There is no single coherent definition of what cleavages are and there is a fervent debate on what the necessary and sufficient conditions are, or what a useful typology of cleavages would look like.

Allardt argues that the concept can be used when analysing the impact of social stratification on institutions and behaviour or the impact of political institutions on social structure and change (Allardt, 1964). *Social cleavages* are commonly defined in terms of social attitudes and behaviours, and are seen as reflecting traditional divisions of social stratification. *Political cleavages* are usually defined in terms of political attitudes and behaviours.

Regarding the political cleavages, some authors argue that the key factors for their existence are political attitudes and behaviours. These scholars refer to political polarisation, in which certain groups support certain policies or parties, while other groups support opposing policies or parties. These groups may not be social groups. What counts in this case is that there are divisions that are given political form.

Rose and Urwin argue that, as empirical analysis has shown, class is one of the most powerful basis of political cleavage (Rose and Urwin, 1970).

For Schmitt cleavages are no longer based either on class or on social groups, but rather on values or ideologies, resulting in the fact that the translation of social divisions into political oppositions has weakened. He also makes clear that his observations refer to the recent past – his work was published in 1987.

Marcel's statement is similar to the one above arguing that the new political divisions do not originate in social inequalities but in ideological and value-based differences (Merkel, 1988, 582).

With regard to social cleavages, the debate revolves mainly around two axes: a) conflict and b) organization as necessary preconditions for the existence of a cleavage, while under vivid discussion is also the matter of the acceptance of principal types of cleavages as necessary for the definition of a cleavage.

For some authors (Lipset, Rokkan, Gallagher, Laver and Mair) both the elements of conflict and organization are essential in the definition of cleavage. For them a cleavage is not merely a division within society that might or might not lead to a conflict; it is a conflict within society that is organized. So for Lipset and Rokkan cleavages are major social divisions for the development of which the Reformation, the Counter-Reformation, the various national revolutions and the industrial revolution were critical junctures (Lipset / Rokkan, 1967). While Michael Gallagher, Michael Laver and Peter Mair offer the following definition: *“First, a cleavage involves a social division that separates people who can be distinguished from one another in terms of key social characteristics such as occupation, status, religion or ethnicity [...]. Second, the groups involved in the division must be conscious of their collective identity – as workers or employers, for example – and be willing to act on this basis [...]. Third, a cleavage must be expressed in organisational terms. This is typically achieved as a result of the activities of a trade union, a church, a political party, or some other organisation that gives formal*

institutional expression to the interests of those on one side of the division” (Challagher/Laver/Mair, 1992, pp.91f.).

Douglas Rae and Michael Taylor, in regard to the structural dimension, argue that neither conflict nor organization are necessary conditions for the existence of a cleavage. In their work, *“The Analysis of Political Cleavages”* (Rae and Taylor, 1970), offer a definition which does not include the organizational aspect: *“Cleavages are the criteria which divide the members of a community or sub-community into groups, and the relevant cleavages are those which divide groups with important political differences at specific times and places.”* (Rae and Taylor, 1970, p.1)

Jan-Eric Lane and Svante Ersson (Lane and Ersson, 1994), agree with Rae and Taylor that conflict and organization are not essential elements in their definition of cleavage, but they see the possibility of a conflict as a necessary condition for the emergence of a cleavage. *“A cleavage is a division on the basis of some criteria among individuals, groups or organisations among whom conflict may arise. The concept of cleavage is thus not identical with the concept of conflict; cleavages may lead to conflict, but cleavage need not always be attended by conflict. A division of individuals, groups or organisations constitutes a cleavage if there is some probability of a conflict”* (Lane and Ersson, 1994, p.53).

As far as the matter of acceptance of principle types of cleavages as necessary for the definition of a cleavage is concerned, Douglas Rae and Michael Taylor (Rae and Taylor, 1970) suggest that there are three principal types of cleavages: (1) ascriptive, or “trait” cleavages, such as race or caste; (2) attitudinal, or “opinion” cleavages, such as ideology or preference; and (3) behavioural, or “act” cleavage, manifested by such activities as voting or joining organisations.

On the other hand, Bartolini and Mair see these three types simply as different aspects of cleavage (not as mutually exclusive classes of different cleavages) and they suggest that *“the term cleavage” should be restricted to the indication of a dividing line in a polity which refers to and combines all three aspects and [...] alternative terms should be adopted when referring to objective social distinctions or to ideological, political and organisational divisions per se*” (Bartolini and Mair, 1990, p.216).

Lawson, Römmele and Karasimeonov give the following definition: *“Cleavages are long-term structural conflicts that give rise to opposing positions that competing political organisations represent”* (Lawson / Römmele and Karasimeonov, 1999, p.7). They do not presume that all social divisions produce cleavages, or that all cleavages are social, or that those that do exist are represented by parties rather than by other forms of organisation. They do not take for granted that parties that claim they are representing important existing divisions in society are in fact doing so. Their definition forces them to consider both social and political elements; it allows them to see the ways they interact – and the ways they sometimes do not.

Being the theoretical framework (which refers to cleavages) as such, a series of questions arise with regard to Albanian political life. Do cleavages exist in pre-Communist Albania? If yes, then what kind of cleavages are they, political or social? Which is their route and behaviour? To which extent do they affect the political life of the country? And last but not least, how do the empirical findings of this research affect the “meaning” of the term “cleavage”?

Definitions of Party System

The term “party system” has been defined in many ways. To the question: “what are the main criteria used to define a political party system?” the French political scientist Maurice Duverger offers a classic definition. He argues that a party system is “a

particular relationship amongst all characteristics like party numbers, respective sizes, alliances, geographical localization and political distribution” (Duverger, 1954, p. 203).

The main aspect of Duverger’s definition is the number and the size of parties; he also views the relation between the type of the party system (two-party system or multiparty system) and the type of the electoral law system as very close. To be more specific, he sees the type of party system as a result of the type of the electoral law system. So if the electoral system is a majority one, then the stronger political parties are favoured, a fact which could lead to a two-party system. On the other hand, if we are dealing with a proportional representation system, then the small parties also gain the opportunity to be represented in the Parliament thus making the creation of a multiparty system possible.

Douglas W. Rae proposes the notion of *“not merely a collection of parties but the system of competition between parties and/or the matrix of competitive relationships between parties”* (Rae, 1971,p.47-48). Two elements are common between the two definitions, the number of parties and the competitive relationship between the parties. If there is one hegemonic party, the system can be referred to as a “dominant” party system.

The definition, which Giovanni Sartori gives is similar to the previous two. He is paying special attention to the role of pluralism in Western democracies and he relates pluralistic diversity in a society to the structure and characteristics of party systems. He uses the term “party pluralism” or “multiparty system” to denote the existence of more than one party with the underlying connotation that parties, in the plural form, are the product of pluralism (Sartori, 1976, p.13-18). Thus, multiple political parties are a main criterion for a liberal democratic party system.

Jean Blondel provides a different definition. According to him the term “party system” *“implies a system both with respect to the internal structure of parties that are concerned with the formulation and the implementation of policies and to their interrelationship”* (Blondel, 1978, p.76). So parties become crucial political actors, which link voter’s

demands and the implementation of policies. Parties need the internal capacity to formulate policies, distinguishable from those that other parties formulate. Consequently, the main criteria of a party system are, according to Blondel's definition, the internal capacity of parties and the mutual relationship in the formation and implementation of policies.

But to analyze which political parties and party systems exist in a political system, we have to find out how many parties there are and what kind of party system properties exist. With regard to identification of the properties of different parties, Klaus von Beyme argues that two indicators of party system properties can be used to measure the character of a party system: 1) the number of relevant parties with more than two per cent of the vote (two-party systems, moderate pluralism, polarized pluralism and one hegemonic party in polarized pluralism and 2) ideological /left –right distance (Communists, Socialists, Liberals, Conservatives, Bonapartists or supporters of royal dictatorship) (Bayme von, 1985, pp. 255-264).

Lane's and Errson's proposal of indicators is similar to Beyme's. They suggest a set of indicators: number of parties, ideological distance between parties, realignments behind the parties and lines of cleavages in the party system (Lane and Errson, 1994).

But how can we measure the placement and ideological foundations of the political parties in a given party system?

There can be various categories among which one can differentiate between political parties: Conservative, Liberals, Social Democratic, Communist, Green, ethnic or religious parties (Lane and Errson, 1994, pp.97-105). Of course it is difficult to classify a party in a party system. Lipset suggests two different categories of party groupings: left, liberal and progressive, on the one hand, and their antipodes, right, conservative and reactionary, on the other. He argues that these two groupings have been defined on the basis of many different issues such as "*political democracy versus monarchy, the free*

market system versus traditional economic restrictions, secularism versus clericalism, agrarian reform versus landlordism and urban exploitation of the countryside, social reform versus laissez-faire and socialism versus capitalism” (Lipset, 1981, p.233).

For this study Duverger’s proposition concerning the number and size of parties as well as the “conservative-progressive” party dimension from Beyme’s two dimensions based on a left-right scale and Lipset’s historical two groupings of political parties will be adopted.

Definitions of Political Parties

But just like the presupposition for dealing with questions concerning the party-system problematic, so is the existence of political parties.

The term “party” derived from the old French word *partir* (to divide). Hence political parties are made of individuals who have organised themselves into groups for the purpose of representing the diversified and usually divisive values of political ideologies. Generally, in competitive systems, parties operate to aggregate various societal interests into an array of policy proposals. Parties are also motivated by the common goal of seeking to control the establishment and operation of governmental institutions and thus to participate directly in the decision-making process. Apart from that, parties tend to exhibit a wide array of rationales, orientations, organisational structures, and behavioural styles (McHale, 1983, p.3).

The term “mass party” is defined by Sartori (Sartori, 1990) as following: “[...] *the mass party is not merely a party having masses of people behind it, a mass-based party. A mass following accounts for the success of the party, not for its nature. The mass party is a solid and very real (not evanescent) party, qualified by at least the following two traits: 1) the development of a stable and extensive (even if merely skeletal) organization*

throughout the country, and 2) the fact that it presents itself to the electorate as an abstract entity (ideologically or programmatically qualified) that allows stable identifications." (Sartori, 1990, pp.75-76)

Petropoulos searching on "Greek Politics and Statecraft in the Kingdom of Greece 1833-1843" (Petropoulos, 1997) refers to "...*family factions, personal factions or even parties*". Concerning the term "party", Petropoulos argues, that they appeared to have a kind of ideology concerning its position (even obscure) towards national matters, foreign policy or the form of the regime. The main traits of the parties could be the existence of supporters in a national climax and their common ideology (Petropoulos, 1997, p.77).

He also argues (with regard to family factions and personal factions) that "*In a district every co-operation – alliance – of families (with socially equal elements), each of them having its own dependent groups or clients, could be put under the protection of one family which possessed power because of its wealth, its prestige or the temporary occupation of an important public position. For such an alliance, the members of which could be coming from a specific area or a wide district, [he uses] the term faction*"¹⁵ (Petropoulos, 1997, p.76). "*The personal factions [on the other hand] owed their cohesion to the attachment to a person not to a family [...]*"¹⁶ (Petropoulos, 1997, p.108). But one should not forget that a "family faction" was based on a strong leader (a personality) and that a "personal faction," which had been created by a strong personality, could use the family resources as much as it would be possible (Petropoulos, 1997, p.78).

So, were there any political organizations, which fulfilled the presuppositions to be called political parties in Albania between 1912-1944? What kind of parties were they, family factions, personal factions, mass parties? Under which circumstances did they form or split? Which is the relation between them and the existing cleavages (if any)?

¹⁵ Translated by the author of this text.

¹⁶ Translated by the author of this text.

1.3 The order of exposition

This work consists of seven chapters which focus on three issues: a) the socio-economic conditions (system of landownership, ethnic/religious heterogeneity, underdeveloped traditional (mainly agrarian) social class structure) and the cleavages which result from these, b) the peculiarities (personalities, independence desire, irridenta feelings) and c) the political organisations and parties as well as the party systems. The work follows a chronological line as well, beginning from 1912 (the year of the proclamation of Albania as an independent state) and ending in 1944 (the end of the German occupation).

Chapter 1 is the Introduction; a brief presentation of the “object of inquiry” and the theoretical framework within which the research is placed. The Introduction first presents the country (Albania); it refers to its special geography which functioned as a precondition for the evolution of different social structure models in the north and the south; it presents briefly and without any comments the religious map of the country and refers to the “peculiarities” of the country. The second part of the Introduction presents briefly the problematic concerning the terms which are going to be used in this work and which bear (or represent) theoretical constructions useful as border lines and interpretation elements for this research.

Chapter 2 deals with the “Emergence of a quasi – independent state, 1912-1918”. It discusses the economic and social conditions prevailing in Albania when its people were struggling to consolidate their frontiers and the Great powers tried to satisfy their expansionist appetites. It also traces the formation of cleavages based on ideological differences and observes the route and behaviour of the “older”, whose roots were to be found in the Ottoman Empire (religious, territorial, feudal).

Chapter 3 refers to the period 1918-1924, the years of “Restricted independence, authoritarian rule and the abortive democratic revolution”. It constitutes an effort to register the divisions over which the cleavages are built, act and provoke the formation

and split of political organisations and political parties. As the German and Greek diplomatic documents reveal the role of the political actors (personalities) and provide a “magnetic tomography” of the political life of Albania, this chapter, seeing through the diplomacy lenses, registers the foundation of the first political parties, the succession of different party systems (Republic, Monarchy) and the effort of the Albanian people to establish a democratic state.

Chapter 4, “Authoritarian rule restored and radical-communist opposition, 1925-1938”, deals with the years after the restoration of the authoritarian rule (1925). This period, also known as the “Zogist period”, is full of diversities and divisions (cleavages), which do not find expression. So the chapter, even though it refers to the “hidden” cleavages, it reveals the existence and follows the action of a number of alliances and political organisations, which acted outside the country, thus laying the foundation for the communist movement (party).

Compared with the previous, Chapters 5 (“War, foreign occupation and people’s resistance, I Italian occupation, 1939-1943”) and 6 (“War, foreign occupation and people’s resistance, II German occupation, 1943-1944”) have been worked out in a different way. Since the country was under occupation (between 1939-1944), one could no longer refer to a political or party system; at the same time the immediate presence first of the Italians and later of the Germans dictated different ways for the expression of interests. One could talk of a “dormant volcano” of differences and cleavages during the previous period (1925-1938), which now, thanks to the favourable circumstances, became active; but in which way? Two questions arise: a) were the existing cleavages and country’s peculiarities¹⁷ exploited by the conquerors in order to achieve a “peaceful

¹⁷ By the term “country’s peculiarities” we refer to special interests that cut across the various interests, which had built up the social cleavages in Albania. They are, so to speak, “interests” of an almost national scale – irredentism, need for independence – or even “Albanian social phenomena” like the one of “personalities”, whose importance in the Albanian society and political life was great and decisive.

occupation?” If yes, then, how far and in which way; if not, then, what consequences were to be suffered? and b) could one argue that, during the period 1939-1944, the repressed cleavages found expression in the formation of the various resistance groups? Moreover, is it enough to look through the “cleavages prism” in order to interpret and understand, on the one hand, the formation of the political parties during this period and, on the other, the formation of the various resistance groups?

Chapter 7, under the title “General Conclusions”, presents in two parts the results of this research. The first part, “Empirical findings”, concerns the answers to the questions about the cleavages, the political parties and the political systems in Albania between 1912-1944; while the second, “Generalizations: a theoretical reprise”, comments on the empirical finding with regard to the theoretical problematic which was laid out in the first Chapter (“the framework of analysis”).

Bibliography Report

The title of the work reveals the researcher’s intention to approach the political life of Albania mainly through the lens of the German and Greek diplomacy. Consequently, the sources of the presented information, observations and thoughts are (to a great extent) the archival (published and unpublished) documents of the German and Greek Foreign Ministries, which focus on different aspects of Albania’s politics, as the interests of the two countries (Germany and Greece) regarding Albania were different.

From the Historical and Diplomatic Archive of the Greek Foreign Ministry (H.D.A.G.M.F.A.) I have used unpublished documents from the years 1921, 1924, 1925, 1928 and 1935 as well as published documents from the years 1922-1923, 1928, 1935. During my visit at the Historical and Diplomatic Archive of the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs I actually had the opportunity to work with documents dating not only from the above listed years. Apart from the documents of 1926 and those concerning the

years 1912-1920, which were not available because their digital recording was in progress at that time, I was allowed to see the documents from the years 1921-1941.

The majority of the Greek published as well as unpublished Archive Documents deal mainly with: a) boundaries determination, as concerns the documents of the years 1912-1913¹⁸, b) Greek Minorities [the “North Epirus Problem” – namely the economic, social, religious, and educational progress of the Greek “minority” in Albania] as concerns the documents between 1912-1940¹⁹ and c) the foundation of the Athens Bank in Albania (Years: 1923-1927).

The documents from the Political Archive of the Auswärtiges Amt in Berlin (P.A.A.A.) which have been used in this work date from the years 1912, 1914, 1921-1930, 1933, 1935-1937, 1939, 1941-1943 and they are mainly a) reports dealing with the political situation of the country (Elections, Political groups, Parties etc.), b) Analytical presentation of Curriculum Vitae belonging to great and minor Albanian personalities, c) Observations about the financial situation of the country; while the documents from the years 1943 and 1944 present a very rich correspondence between Tirana and Berlin concerning the Albanian gold and “its fate”. I have used more documents coming from the Political Archive of the German Foreign Ministry than from the Historical Archive of the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs, because the subject of the German Documents was closer to my interests and this work.

Schmidt-Neke (Schmidt-Neke, 1987), who has also used much material coming from the Political Archive of the German Foreign Ministry, was a precious source. But if someone

¹⁸ Balkan Wars 1912-1913

¹⁹ One should also keep in mind that on the 2nd of October 1921 Albania became a member of the League of Nations and Fan Noli – the Albanian representative – recognized, in this speech, the Greek population of South Albania as an ethnical and linguistic minority.

wants to consult the documents themselves, she/he will find out that the “code system – numbering” of the files and documents has in the meanwhile changed. It has become simpler, following a “serial numbering”.

Apart from documents coming from German or Greek diplomatic archives, I have also consulted the Official Reports of the League of Nations Commission of Inquiry, which are valuable for providing interesting information about domestic developments during the period 1922-1923.

And last but not least, the absence of Statistical Data should be registered. It is a fact that the presentation of the ethnic, religious as well as the “class” structure in this work, would be better supported if statistics were available, but unfortunately the statistical data are scarce and unsatisfactory. When they are given, they offer no accurate numbers.

Apart from the archival sources a number of secondary sources have supported this research. General histories of Albania (written by Albanian and western historians); biographies (the four volumes of the “Biographisches Lexikon zur Geschichte Südosteuropas”²⁰ as well as Bernd Jürgen Fischer’s scientific biography of Zogu (Fischer, 1984) based mainly on British and US documents, proved very useful); memoirs; studies on the Albanian economy (the Albanians Iljaz Fista and Veniamin Toci provide useful materials about Albania’s economic situation between 1921-1931, (Fista and Toci, 1977), while Prof. Calmes’ (Luxemburg) Report on the economic and financial situation in Albania 1922 provides in brief useful information about communication, agriculture, industry, trade, monetary system, credit and public finances (Calmés, 1922). The German Hans- Joachim Pernack after referring to the internal and external influence factors, focuses on the Albanian economic policy and its results during the years before and after the Second World War (Pernack, 1972). Lampe J. and Jackson M. (Lampe and Jackson, 1982) as well as Kaser M.C. and Radice (Kaser and Radice) give us the

²⁰ Bernath, Mathias & Nehring, Karl (Hrsg.), 1974 Band I / 1976 Band II/ 1979 Band III / 1981 Band IV Biographisches Lexikon zur Geschichte Südosteuropas, Oldenbourg, München.

opportunity to draw the frame of the economic history of Eastern Europe (1550-1050 and 1919-1975 respectively); ethnography; and last but not least, studies on theoretical problems concerning cleavages (Allardt, 1964; Rose and Urwin, 1970; Merkel, 1988; Lipset / Rokkan, 1967; Challenger/Laver/Mair, 1992; Rae and Taylor, 1970; Lane and Ersson, 1994; Bartolini and Mair, 1990; Lawson / Römmele and Karasimeonov, 1999), political parties (McHale, 1983; Sartori, 1990; Petropoulos, 1997) and party systems (Duverger, 1954; Rae, 1971; Sartori, 1976; Blondel, 1978; Bayme von, 1985; Lane and Errson, 1994; Lipset: 1981).

CHAPTER 2

EMERGENCE OF A QUASI- INDEPENDENT STATE 1912-1918

2.1 Socio-economic conditions and the roots of cleavages

The conflicts of this period are strong but they lack in organisation and “official” representation. No party-formation could be registered during this period, no groups for the promotion of the different interests had made their appearance yet; but it goes without saying that, within this timeframe one could find the roots of cleavages which would also be observed later. The way in which they express themselves seems sometimes to be similar to a battle between two “parties” with the permanent presence of an arbitrator (great powers) whose presence and interference is decisive. On the one side gather the anti-Esadists/ nationalists/ Albanian Patriots/ anti-Feudalists/ peasants/ Muslims, while on the other are the “troops” of the Esadists/ anti-nationalists forces of the right/ Turkophiles/ Feudalists/ landowners to be seen. And above all stand the great powers which dictate: if, when, who and how long.

This phase begins 1912 when the Albanian national movement received its just reward in Albania’s accession to independence. In October of the same year the first Balkan war broke out. In November 1912 the first Albanian National Assembly opened attended by delegates from all the provinces,²¹ which took the historic decision to proclaim Albania’s independence (Faksimile in: Kristo Frasheri, 1979, p.243). Its members also decided to form a provisional national government (Ismail Qemali, 1982, Nr.200, p.230) with

²¹ The Albanian National Assembly which opened on the 28th November 1912 in Vlore attended by delegates from all the southern and middle Albanian regions. The delegates of the Northern part of Albania met a few days later, as they were prohibited because of the war against Serbia and Montenegro (Schmidt- Neke, 1987, p.24).

Qemal²² as president (Ismail Qemali, 1982, Nr.226, p.251), which would rule the country until the constitutional regime of the new state was finally established.

On 30 May 1913 in the peace treaty made with the Balkan allies,²³ Turkey renounced all its rights in Albania. In July the last Turkish troops left Albanian soil.²⁴ This meant that central Albanian was also ruled by Qemal's government, which at last became a government on a national scale. But just as the Vlore government seemed to have taken the reins guiding an independent Albania, new influences arose which undermined its very foundations. The destructive factors came both from inside and from outside giving rise to one of the strongest conflicts of this phase.

The country's economic and social situation was extremely serious. In the first few years of its independence, Albania was the most backward country in Europe. The new government expropriated 175 estates owned by the Sultan or by the Ottoman State, totalling 56,287 ha, mostly in the more fertile coastal regions. In these areas besides the state, religious institutions and private landowners had substantial holdings too (Fishta and Toci, 1977, No.3, p.79). So Albania was also almost exclusively agricultural, since over 90 per cent of the population were farmers or, to a lesser extent, animal-breeders. Moreover, this was conducted on a primitive level and yields were very small with a

²² His full name was Vlora, Ismail Qemal (Kemal) Bey (1844-1919). Biographical data given in: Kaleshi, H., Vlora..., in: Bernath / Nehring, 1981, Vol.IV, pp.430-433.

²³ On the 30th of May 1913 during the London Ambassadors' Conference the delegates of Germany, Austria-Hungary, Italy, French, Great Britain and Russia signed the preliminaries of peace and took on the responsibility to arrange the future of Albania (Aspern, 1915, p.168, 170).

²⁴ On the 29 July 1913 Albania was declared independent and according to the first Constitution „*Albanien hat keinlei völkerrechtliche Bindungen an die Türkei*” (Giannini, 1940, p.195f.).

miserably low productivity.²⁵ The country was unable to live on what it produced and was therefore forced to import cereals, in particular maize. The poverty of the farmlands and the resultant penury were all the more acute as the most fertile lands of Albania had been taken away.²⁶

And there was still great social injustice. The feudal system dominated the country areas. In the mountain areas of the interior a divided economy in which individual peasants

²⁵ Grain yields were between 4 and 6 centners per hectare in the peasant plots on the highlands, although about 6-10 centners per hectare in the big estates of the lowlands (Fishta and Toci, 1977, No.2, p.101).

²⁶ Concerning its frontiers, Albanians had to pay a high price for their independence. The major decisions concerning Albania were made by a Conference of Ambassadors held under the presidency of the British foreign secretary, Sir Edward Grey, which opened in London in December 1912. At this conference Austria-Hungary and Italy were strong supporters of the establishment of an Albanian state with ethnic boundaries. Russia stood behind the demands of Serbia and Montenegro, who wished to extend their territories as far as possible at the Albanian expense. Great Britain and Germany were neutral (Jelavich, 1983, p.101). In the final settlement, the Conference awarded the Balkan allies large areas of Albanian-claimed territory, regardless of its ethnic composition. So the frontiers of the new state encompassed only half of the lands inhabited by Albanians-about 28,000 square kilometres, with a population of about 800,000 (Frasheri, 1964, p.183). Over half of the Albanian people in the north and in the south were outside its frontiers. Kosova, one of the richest regions in the Balkans and one of the most active centres of the Albanian national movement, was cut off from the mother country -a major part of northern and western Albania went to Serbia and Montenegro. In the south, the region of Cameria went to Greece, while a small Greek minority was included within the Albanian frontiers. The Albanian state reduced to the central regions together with the town of Shkoder and its surrounding territory (Vickers, 1995, p.70).

worked for themselves still predominated. The towns, too, reflected a medieval society. None of them could boast the least modern industry. The townspeople consisted mainly of artisans working with their hands. Only here and there in the cities were a few private enterprises with machinery which processed agricultural raw materials, but the amount of their production was insignificant in comparison with the produce of the craftsmen. The condition of the network of roads was likewise execrable; the transportation of persons and of goods was generally done by horses and carts.

Besides this the Albanians suffered from a lack of a national culture, as a result of the obscurantist policies of Instabul, who had always shown intolerance towards Albania. More than 90 per cent of the population was illiterate (Fresheri, 1960, p.181).

This was, therefore, essential that the provisional government should make some radical changes. It began to outline its programme in the second half of 1913. Basically it accepted its middle-class members' plan to model Albanian society on the Western European countries. Although it is an exaggeration to say that this meant the total destruction of the previous system of landownership, it is nevertheless undeniable that the democrats of Vlore stepped up the fight against feudal ownership. In October 1913 Qemal himself declared in a speech that the government was making sure that "no Albanian should remain landless." The government intended to take immediate action to put a number of lands that had been usurped by feudal lords in the hands of the state. In feudal and reactionary circles discontent developed into anxiety. Was agrarian reform about to take place? The feudal princes began to complain to the consults of the great powers at Vlore of the provisional government leader's "spirit of adventure."

The strong wish of the landless peasants to go against the feudal system, the intention of the Vlore government to stand by them and support a change and the fears of the feudal families of their future and status in the case of an agrarian reform, were a fertile ground

for Esad Pasha Toptani²⁷ to fulfil his personal ambitions. The landowners' fears gave rise to a separatist movement opposing Vlore central authority and Esad Pasha Toptani was once again the instigator. The rebel Minister of the Interior²⁸ remained with the government for less than a month. At the beginning of August he left for Durres gathering all the anti-nationalist and reactionary elements around him. In October he set up the so-called Senate of central Albania, a separatist government which intended to replace the Vlore administration. The country was, therefore, confused by small local power politics and the process of consolidating a single national government was held up.

External factors also played a vital part in determining events and providing the already existing conflicts and divisions. The "high-ranking arbitrator" instead of serving to neutralise these splits in the Albanian government only increased them. The great powers (which, through The Ambassadors Conference in 1914 had come to a contradictory diplomatic manoeuvre decision, recognising Albania's independence on the one hand and limiting the sovereignty of the new state on the other, by a year-long international control that was quite incompatible with its independence status) did not now recognise Qemal's government as the central government of Albania. The real centre of power in Albania, therefore, turned out to be the six great powers' Commission of Control. The Albanian Constituency of April 1914, especially the paragraphs §1-§4 and the §11 show clearly that Albania was a protectorate of the six great powers and on no occasion a really

²⁷ Biographical data is given in: Bartl, P, Toptani, Esad Pascha, albanischer Politiker, in: Bernath/ Nehring, 1981, Band IV, pp. 340-342.

²⁸ A reshuffle of the Vlora government took place on the 5th July 1913 according to which Libohova, who was until then the Minister of Interior, took over the Foreign Ministry, leaving the Ministry of Interior free for Esad Pasha Toptani. Through this decision he hoped Vlora that he could prevent the Muslim, pro-Turk feudal lords of the Middle part Albania's to oppose his government. Wish which did not fulfilled (Schmidt-Neke, 1987, p. 30).

independent country.²⁹ The national government found itself saddled with a sort of “xenocracy”³⁰ and of course unable to do anything against the landownership system and the social injustice. The game was over even before it starts.

Moreover, the great powers, after much wheeling and dealing behind the scenes, came to an agreement as to who should be the prince of Albania and why.³¹ Their choice fell on

²⁹ „ (§1) Albanien wurde zum konstitutionellen, souveränen und erblichen Fürstentum unter der Garantie der sechs Großmächte erklärt.

(§2) Seine Grenzen galten als unantastbar; allerdings waren sie noch durch die Großmächte festzulegen.

(§3) Die Großmächte garantierten auch die Neutralität Albaniens; immerhin hatte es das Recht zu einer eigenen Landesverteidigung. Serbien sollte einen Handelshafen an der Adria erhalten, der durch eine Eisenbahn mit dem Königreich verbunden werden sollte.

(§4) Albanien mußte die von der Türkei bis 1912 eingegangenen Verträge erfüllen, soweit es von ihnen betroffen war. Änderungen waren den Großmächten vorbehalten.

(§11) Der Thronfolger vertrat den Fürsten bei längerer Verhinderung; falls is keinen Thronfolger gab oder er nicht volljährig war sollten der Ministerpräsident oder das Kabinett mit Zustimmung der Großmächte die Regentschaft wahrnehmen“ (Schmidt-Neke, 1987, pp.36-37).

³⁰ The period of power of the International Control Commission is characterised as “xenocracy“ in the Albanian historiography (Pollo and Puto, 1974, p.181).

³¹ The German Kanzler (Herr von Bethmann Hollweg) had already (1912) laid weight on the fact that Albania should get a King, who should also be Christian. “[...] without a Christian King, Albania could become nothing more than a Turkish province. And in such a case, one could not rule out the possibility that the Catholic north would be gravitated towards Montenegro while the Orthodox south towards Greece, leaving a non-viable Islamic rest in the middle of the country. Consequently, is the appointment of a Christian King necessary for the country not to come apart?” (P.A.A.A., Tschirschky – Kaiserlich Deutsche Botschaft, Wien- an (illegible), 18.12.1912, Nr.438, R.13384.)

the German Prince William of Wied.³² The Albanian patriots welcomed the arrival of the prince, for the Albanian territories would be achieved, that the long suffering of the unfortunate people would come to an end, that peace and order, which had been disrupted by foreign provocations, would be established, that Albania would start an existence of civilisation and of prosperity (Frasheri, 1964, p. 190). But he was in no way suited to carry through a struggle for the fundamental rights of the Albanian nation.

He only accepted the throne of Albania when the six powers had promised him 75 million francs³³ and when he had made sure that the lion's share of the new state's budget should be for the "Prince's list." William formed his "permanent government." Its composition left no doubts as to the social and political basis of his regime. The president (75 years old Tuhuran Pasha Permeti) was the former Turkish ambassador to St. Petersburg (Schmidt-Neke, 1987, p.35) and Albanian only in origin (Kaleshi, 1979, pp.425-427). Its members were mainly men who had kept well clear of the Albanian national movement or who had even opposed it. To assess the nature and political direction of the new government, it is enough to say that its leading figure was Esad Pasha Toptani, who held

³² Biographical data is given in : Bartl, P., Wied, Wilhelm Friedrich Heinrich Prinz zu, in: Bernath /Nehring, 1981, Band IV, pp.463-466.

³³ In his manuscript he set out the reasons for this demand by writing : " [...] erklärte ich mich Anfang Dezember 1913 zur Thronannahme unter gewissen Bedingungen bereit. Von diesen waren die wichtigsten: [...] und die Garantie einer Anleihe von 75 Millionen Franken durch die Großmächte, welche die Mittel zu den notwendigsten öffentlichen Arbeiten und Einrichtungen des neuen Staates gewähren sollte. [...] Womit sollten die nötigsten Verwaltungs-, Steuer- und Zollbeamten bezahlt werden, auch die neue zu organisierende Gendarmerie und die Anfänge einer kleinen Wehrmacht? Woher die Mittel zu den notwendigsten Straßen- und Wegebauten zur Hebung von Industrie, Handel und Landwirtschaft genommen werden?" (Wilhelm Fürst von Albanien, 1917, p.15)

two key posts, Minister of War and Minister of the Interior.³⁴ The picture would not be complete without the presence of the international Commission, which did not abandon its supervisory functions even after the investiture of the government.

The fact that, a little bit later, the prince suffered his first setbacks it was not only in foreign policy but it was on his personality,³⁵ on the domestic front that his government was a total disaster.

„Dieses Kabinett war eine offenkundige Totgeburt: Als Premierminister eines Fürsten, der mit den Problemen des Landes kaum vertraut war, amtierte ein Greis, der die letzten 60 Jahre fast ausschließlich im Ausland verbracht hatte und keinerlei innenpolitische Erfahrung besaß. Ihn drängte Toptani an die Wand, den der Fürst an sich zu binden

³⁴ The Cabinet which was formed on the 17th March 1914 was (Puto, 1978, p.580f ; Kaser, 1981, p.3):

Prime Minister:	Turhan Pasha Permeti
Minister of Foreign Affairs:	Turhan Pasha Permeti
<u>Minister of the Interior:</u>	<u>Esad Pasha Toptani</u>
<u>Minister of War:</u>	<u>Esad Pasha Toptani</u>
Minister of Justice and Religion:	Myfit Bey Libohova
Minister of Finance:	Dr. Gaqi Adhamidhi
Minister of Education and Health:	Dr. Mihal Turtulli
Minister of Commerce and Agriculture:	Aziz Pasha Vrioni
Minister of Public Works:	Prenek Bib Doda Pasha
Minister of Post and Telecommunications:	Hassan Bey Prishtina

³⁵ Flotow puts it well when, by referring to the King, writes: „[...] man hat indessen beiderseits den Eindruck gehabt, daß die Persönlichkeit des Fürsten nicht ausreichend stark sei für die schweirigen Verhältnisse [...]“ (P.A.A.A., Flotow –Rom- an Seiner Exzellenz dem Reichskanzler Herrn von Bethmann Hollweg, 20.04.1914, Nr. 117, A.7912.)

glaubte, indem er ihm die beiden Schlüsselressorts auslieferte und auch andere Ministerien in die Hände von Esads Anhängern legte. Die Feudalherren waren völlig überrepräsentiert. Die Einbeziehung des Mirditenkapedans war eine Geste der Integration, jedoch wie im Falle Esads ungeeignet, die Sonderrolle der Mirditen zu beenden oder die bisherigen Regionalpotentaten zur Loyalität zu bewegen. Katholiken und Bürgertum waren schwach bzw. gar nicht vertreten, was ihre Begeisterung gegenüber dem neuen Landesherrn abgekühlt haben dürfte“ (Schmidt-Neke, 1987, p.36).

Apart from that, the most of the Ministers were “*unable for the post they occupied.*” Nadolny provides more details concerning the theme in his Report. “[...] *Dr. Turtuli, the Minister of Education and Health, made it quite clear [a few days ago] that he could work neither with Turhan Pasha nor with Esad Pasha. As Bib Doda had not accepted the post of the Minister of Public Works, it remained unoccupied. As Dr. Adhamidhi would prefer to serve as Ambassador in Rome, is unwilling to invest energy and work in his Ministry. [And] Turhan Pasha is an old man and nur Figurant für Esad Pascha [...]”³⁶*

Once again the dissatisfaction with the feudal system was strong, while the element of nationalism was not absent. The peasant masses were profoundly dissatisfied, particularly in central Albania. Here exploitation of the peasants by great landowners was at its most cruel, and the arrival of the prince with his entourage of murderous beys and pashas only made things worse. But the peasants, although they were the largest social group, were not able to work out a practical political programme. Nor had any leaders emerged from their numbers, who would be able to turn them into a united political force, capable of furthering the cause of Albania’s independence. On the contrary, these rural people of the central regions, victims of ignorance and pawns of Islamic fanaticism, were easy prey for the reactionaries both at home and abroad. They were swung backwards and forwards on the axis of political life. At times they acted progressively, hoping to destroy the

³⁶ P.A.A.A., Nadolny –Durazzo- an Seiner Exzellenz dem Reichskanzler Herrn von Bethmann Hollweg, Berlin, 21.04.1914, Nr.40, R.4281.

foundations of feudal ownership; but at other times they took on a role that clashed totally with their own interests, even serving as a reserve force for the most retrograde elements, those who wished to link the future of their country with that of the Sublime Porte.³⁷ The peasant masses therefore provided particularly fertile ground for the propaganda of the Young Turks,³⁸ who took advantage of their religious susceptibility and repeated continually that the Wied regime was nothing but an instrument of oppression wielded by European Christians against Albanian Muslims, and Wied himself was nothing more than a supporter of landowning *beys* (Frasheri, 1964, p.192) and “a sworn foe of Islam” (Durham, 1920, p.213). The map of “Great Albania,” which the Young Turk propagandists used very cleverly also had an important psychological influence on them. On the other hand it was promised them that the town of Dibra, which had been given to Serbs, should be restored to Albania, if they expelled Wied, while the Russian Vice-Consul at Valona went so far as to tell folk that the Great Powers would be very angry if they fought on Wied’s side (Durham, 1920, p. 213).

The dissatisfaction with the “non-national” regime, the feudal system and the need to maintain their national identity (whatever they believed that meant) found expression in a

³⁷ The central office of Ottoman Government

³⁸ From the time of the reign of Abdul Aziz in the 1860’s critics of the Ottoman dynasty fled abroad, where they continued their defiance (Stavrianos, 1963, p.525). Their number increased markedly during the decades of Abdul Hamid’s autocracy (1877-1908) when many intellectuals and politicians had been forced to emigrate owing to the repressive measures of his reign. Living in centres such as Paris, London, Geneva, Bucharest, and Egypt, which was under British administration, they remained in touch with each other, they held meetings and they published newspapers. At the end of the century the opposition groups joined together to form the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP), a party that was commonly referred to as the Young Turks (Jelavich, 1983, p.82). April 1909 the Young Turks gathered their forces in Macedonia, marched upon the capital, capture it and compelled Abdul Hamid to abdicate on April 27. (Stavrianos, 1963, p.528).

revolt against the Wied regime, which erupted in mid-May.³⁹ When Nadolny asked the rebels the reasons of their rebellion, diverse answers came forward. He writes in his Report: “[...] *Some argue that they go against the great landlords, the Beys, and above all against the government’s Pasha; some others say that they revolt against Esad Pasha; while others argue that the aim of this revolt is to protect Islam, which is, for the time being, in danger [...]* The truth is that, Esad Pasha would have promised the people that they would soon enjoy civil rights, tax-liberation and above all that they would soon get a Muslim King. But these goods were never delivered [...]”⁴⁰ One of the reasons for this revolt has also to be found in 1913 when the Velona Government founded the “National Bank of Albania“ and promised big concessions to the Austrian and Italian capital through the “Wiener Bankverein” and the “Banca Commerciale d’Italia.” The government gave the foreign capital the right to operate using the agrarian real estate. This caused quite a stir among the villages for fear that the foreign capital, which was linked to the “National Bank of Albania“ on the one hand, and the great poverty of the citizens on the other, could result in buying of their land by the foreigners (Kaleshi, 1976, p.131).

Armed bands of villagers, driven by national, social and religious motives attacked a detachment of government forces, which was marching south to confront the Vorio-Epirote threat. Paradoxically it was agents in the pay of Esad who gave the signal for the rebellion. This was not, however, surprising. Although he held a high post in the prince’s government, Esad was not the man to abandon his former plan to become sovereign of Albania himself one day.⁴¹ The enterprise ended with his dismissal from government and his forced departure from the region.⁴²

³⁹ See: P.A.A.A: (Telegramm) Nadolny –Durazzo- an A.A., 18.05.1914, Nr.22, R.4282.

⁴⁰ P.A.A.A., Nadolny –Durazzo- an Seiner Exzellenz dem Reichskanzler Herrn von Bethmann Hollweg, 18.05.1914, Nr.58, R.4282.

⁴¹ It is difficult to estimate this revolt. The Prince (Wied) being of the conviction that Toptani was behind this rebellion found the opportunity to remove him from office and to

After the flight of Toptani, many Albanian patriots believed they had won a definitive victory over the anti-nationalist forces of the right. For them he had been the main cause, if not the only cause, of all the ills suffered by the new state at the dawn of its independence. For this reason, they immediately allied themselves with the Durres government and offered their services against the rebels. It showed that they had only grasped one superficial aspect of the rebel movement, the religious fanaticism of the peasant masses,⁴³ while the social basis of the problem escaped them completely. Esad's departure did not in fact solve anything and peasant unrest only increased. In June-July 1914 there was a violent eruption of discontent among the country people, who, within a few weeks, not only besieged Durres but took over central Albania. They even succeeded in setting up a sort of revolutionary government to administer all the regions that had

exile him (Wied, 1917, p.18f.). Bey Vlora believed that Toptani had lost his control over the peasant masses; so this revolt was not only against Wied but also against his Minister Esad Pasha Toptani (Vlora, 1973, p. 65). Enver Hoxha through his interpretation gives one more dimension to the middle Albanian peasants' revolt. He points out the fact that it was a national one as well. On the one hand it was a villager's rebellion against the authority of the "foreigner" Prince (ausländischer Herrscher) and of the Six Great Powers and on the other it was a revolt against the feudal system and the Feudals, who Wied's regime supported (Hoxha, in: Vepra 23, pp.128-175).

⁴² By the night of May 19th 1914, Esad Pasha was to be found as an internee on an Austrian ship (See: P.A.A.A., [Telegramm] Nadolny –Durazzo- an A.A., 19.05.1914, Nr.28, R.4282). While on May 20. 1914, Esad Pasha, thanks to the Italian expedition, left Albania for Italy, on a tropedo-boat, on the stipulation that he would not return (See: P.A.A.A., [Telegramm] Nadolny –Durazzo- an A.A., 20.05.1914, Nr.24, R.4282).

⁴³ Ottoman agents further convinced the peasants that Wied was anti-Muslim (Vickers, 1995, p.85).

fallen into their hands. On 3 September 1914, six months after his arrival, the Prince of Wied left Albania, never to return.⁴⁴

In spite of this, the movement had in no way acquired a more precise or identifiable policy. The most eminent and progressive representatives of Albanian nationalism kept well clear of it, or even joined the opposition, and it was left to the Esadists and Turkophiles to take turns at filling the political void. However, the rebellion against the Wied regime remains a lost opportunity when seen from the point of view of the establishment of a national and social Albanian state, for the patriotic circles were incapable of thinking in social terms, while the peasant masses were still politically quite unaware.

“After Wied had gone, Albania reverted to its pre-war state of political dissension and chaos. There was no united opposition to foreign interventions. Northern Albania continued to rely on local self-government, with each clan uniting under its own chief; whilst southern Albania continued to suffer raids from Greek “Epirot” bands. Throughout the duration of the war Albania found herself in a condition of political anarchy, as supporter of the various rebel groups fought among themselves for political influence” (Vickers, 1995, pp.86-97).

In 1914 the First World War broke out, during which the same old scenario had been also played. Once more, this time with the help of Serbia,⁴⁵ Esad returns to Albania, (October 3rd 1914)⁴⁶ filled with ambitions to regenerate old passions; once again the peasant masses striving for justice; once again the great powers dictate their will. Anti-feudalism,

⁴⁴ *“The King and the Queen as well as Turhan Pasha left today -at 7am.- Durazzo to Venice on an Italian yacht [...]”* (P.A.A.A., [Telegramm] Lucius –Durazzo- an A.A., 08.09.1914, Nr.109, R.4289).

⁴⁵ See: P.A.A.A., (Telegramm) Flotow –Rom- an A.A., 03.10.1914, Nr.447, R.4289.

⁴⁶ See: P.A.A.A., (Telegramm) Knothe –Durazzo- an A.A., 04.10.1914, Nr.116, R.4289.

anti-Esadism, and nationalism would be the connotations of the divisions and conflicts in Albania once again. During the First World War every little sign of a wish for independence in Albania and every attempt to get organised and progress was crushed by force. The war imposed its history on the country; a history of misery, violence and bloodshed.

Albania had always been the butt of the Adriatic and Balkan states' key political interests and dreams of hegemony and to these in the new situation purely military considerations were added. The number of parties interested in the fate of the country had increased considerably. Austria-Hungary, Italy, the neighbouring states, for whom the war meant another opportunity to satisfy their expansionist appetites, put in their claims again.⁴⁷ An entirely new factor that had played no part before the war, was the interest shown by France,⁴⁸ while the Serbian government, being unable to send troops at the time, chose another way of interfering. It called upon "a former friendship" –with Esad Pasha.

Esad's return to Albania was a double challenge: a challenge to the nations and a challenge to the peasant masses. His return produced no other result than to inflame once again the former fury of the anti-feudal uprising. The rebel movement quickly revived in central Albania, and was soon on the increase. Once again, it lacked definition. The peasant masses continued to be its only social basis, while utterly diverse groups joined

⁴⁷ At the end of October 1914 Italy with the approval of the Great Powers occupied Vlora and the island of Sazan, and with regular armies Greece occupied the districts of southern Albania that were under the control of the "Vorio-Epirotic" bands (Frasheri, 1964, p.196). In January 1916 Austro-Hungarian armies marched into Albania from the north. Within a few weeks they captured the whole of north and central Albania.

⁴⁸ In the autumn 1916 the French armies coming from Salonica, occupied the Korce region and created a common border with the Italian armies at Kolonje (Frasheri, 1964, p.199). The occupation of Albania by Austro-Hungarian, Italian and French armies lasted till the end of the war.

the cause. Representatives of the Young Turks, especially after Turkey's entry into the war in November on the side of the central powers, ordered all Muslims to join the "holy war" against the enemies of the Sublime Porte.

Nevertheless, the movement did manage to resist many temptations and concentrate its efforts largely on the struggle against Esadist domination, thus becoming more anti-feudal than in the preceding period. Its main new characteristic was the emergence of leaders from people of humble origin. The rebels chose one of their numbers, Haxhi Qamili,⁴⁹ a villager from the Tirana area (Sharre), to be their chief. They set out on the one hand to burn a number of houses belonging to feudal families and confiscate their *tchifliks*, and on the other to give help to the poor, the orphans and the sick. This was to some extent a reflection of Qamili's own egalitarian conception of society. An initiate of the Muslim sect *Melami* which preached the suppression of all private property, Qamili quoted lines from the Koran to support the principle that any property exceeding personal needs should be given either to the rebellion or the poor.

The rebels achieved rapid success in their struggle against Esadist power and their leaders organised a gathering of an assembly in Tirana.

In spite of opposition and uncertainty the anti-Esadist power that now reigned throughout Albania, kept control until June 1915, and only gave way when a foreign power (Serbia) intervened and decided to come to Esad's aid. Esad was finally released from his Durrës lair and unleashed a wave of terror over the peasants, particularly in his own fief of Tirana. This external intervention ended a rebellion with vague, unsettled political objectives, but which did, nevertheless, have both a popular and social basis.

⁴⁹ Biographical data is given in: Kaleshi, 1976, in: Bernath & Nehring, Band II, pp.131-133.

Almost five years later, in a speech given in the Parliament by the Minister of Interior (in the Government Iljaz Bey Vrioni from 19.11.1920 until 01.07.1921) Mehdi Frasheri concerning the discharge of Esadists from prison and published in “Posta e Korces” on July 2nd 1921,⁵⁰ two reasons are proffered in brief (one internal, the other external) which occasioned “Esadism.” So, on the one hand “[...] *it was the lack of means of transport and communication among the different geographical parts of the country, the lack of education and the lack of common national consciousness which were responsible for the fact that Albanians coming from different parts of the country were thinking and acting differently. And exactly the difference in the way of thinking was the cause that totally different personalities, being important on a national plane in one way or the other, were coming from different parts of the country. So from the Tosks came Abdul Bey Frasheri⁵¹ as well as Avni Rustemi, a quiet and peaceful student who had never before used a gun and who driven by his patriotic ideology, jeopardised his life and killed Esad Pasha in Paris. While from the middle part of the country came Esad Pasha Toptani. The people of middle Albania are good and quiet but without education a fact which strengthens their devotion to religion. And exactly of this “weakness” took the clever, dynamic and*

⁵⁰ H.D.A.G.M.F.A., C.D.A, Posta e Korces, 02.07.1921 nr.16 [translated newspaper article, attached to Ierotheos –Koritsa- to G.M.F.A., R.N.: 8496, 26.07.1921, File: 9/ sub-File: 5/ part:1.]

⁵¹ Abdul Frasheri carries the characterisation of “national leader” in the Albanian history. He was the one who established in Istambul (1877) the “Committee for the Defence of the Rights of the Albanian People” with the aim of gaining the Albanians a relative national autonomy within the Ottoman Empire. A year later, he organised several Committees in South Albania in order to support the “Ligue of Prinzen.” While in 1879 he made it clear to the leader of the Turkish Delegation for the determination of the Albanian borders that “the Albanians would never recognise the Greek administration in the region of Epirus.” He kept on struggling for the autonomy of Albania until his death (Kaleshi, 1974, Vol. 1, pp.535-537).

ambitious Esad advantage and by acting in flattering terms towards their religious feelings achieved his purposes.”

At the end of 1916 Albania was divided into three Zones: the Austro-Hungarian whose southern boundaries extended down to Vjose and Orhid; the French which was spread miles round Korce; and the Italian which occupied the south part of the country with Vlore as its centre (Schmid-Neke, 1987, p.43).

The will of the Albanian people to organise and govern themselves as well as their nationalism was now stronger than ever and when France gave them the opportunity, they manifested both in great volume. On December 10th 1916 France and a delegation of Albanian representatives from Korce signed a protocol. Its terms were that the town and surrounding area were to be granted the status of an “autonomous province,” ruled by Albanian administrators under the protection of the French military authorities. An administrative council consisting of 14 members was elected, ensuring a stable government. A police force was organised and put at its disposal. Albanian became the official language and Albanian schools opened to replace the Greek ones. The Albanian national flag was flown everywhere, and the tricolore hardly features.⁵²

The occupation of Albania lasted till the end of the war and Albania became a battlefield of the armies of the belligerent powers. For a long period in the Fier district fierce fighting took place between the Austro-Hungarian and the Italian armies, and in the Pogradec district between the Austro-Hungarian and the French armies. At the end of the First World War, Albania was left floundering amid chaos and frightful poverty. These occupations and wars brought great human and material loss to the country. Nearly 70 000 persons (Fraseri, 1964, p.201) died in Albania during the First World War due to

⁵² In February 1918 the protocol of 1916 was formally repealed, and the region of Korce lost its status of an autonomous province to become a simple territory under the French occupation.

fighting, epidemics and famine. The economy, which had been poor in the past, declined still further.

2.2. Conclusions

Between 1912 (the year of the Albanian independence) and 1918 the Albanians struggled to crystallize their country's frontiers, to establish an independent country, to form a national government and to build a national identity. The main obstacle to this effort was the fact that the Great powers (Britain, Italy, Yugoslavia, Russia, Austria-Hungary, France, Serbia) played with Albania as they pleased with the intention to satisfy their expansionist appetites. The fact that they masterfully limited the country's sovereignty⁵³ immediately after its recognition as an independent state, was a clear message to the Albanians that they would not be left alone.

The matter provoked ideological divisions and political juxtapositions over the matter of national independence: with or without protection and from whom. These divisions created an environment appropriate for the rise of a "new" cleavage: the ideological cleavage, which formed its basis on differences over the matter of national independence. Two main currents of opinion were formed. On the one hand, there was the new generation of Albanian nationalists, which was struggling for an Albania that would govern itself, quite independent from foreign powers. On the other, there were other groups which advocated the old kind of nationalism; politicians and official diplomats who considered the "help" and "protection" of some foreign power as a vital condition for any viable Albanian state. But these groups were divided as regards the choice of a "benevolent" power; some preferred Italy, others the United States.

⁵³ They did not recognize the Albanian national government (Qemal's government 1913), they decided who should be the Albanian prince (the German Prince William of Wied), they divided the country into zones of influence (in the end of 1916 Albania was divided into three zones: the Austro-Hungarian, the French and the Italian) etc.

The outcome of the Paris Conference discredited the pro-Italian groups totally, and produced a wave of indignation in public opinion, leading to the denouncement of the Italian policy by the clubs and associations throughout the country, as the main source of danger threatening Albania's future. Even the delegation in Paris split into two factions, one of which openly adopted an anti-Italian stance.

During the same period, apart from the newborn ideological cleavage, the continuity of older cleavages (feudal/anti-feudal, religious), whose roots are to be found in the Ottoman Empire, may also be registered.

In 1912 (the year of Albanian independence, which was followed by the formation of a provisional government) almost half the arable land belonged to the *tchifliks* (*latifundia*) of the feudal families, e.g. the Vrionis, Toptanis, Verlakis and Vloras, who owned more than ten thousand hectares each (Frasheri, 1964, p.180). So, when the government began to outline its programme in the second half of 1913, it knew that in order to model the Albanian society on the Western European countries, it had to destroy the landownership system. A number of lands that had been usurped by feudal lords were to come in the hands of the state. The perspective of an agrarian reform immediately provoked discontent on the side of the feudal princes and strengthened the wish of the landless peasants to go against the feudal system.

The divergence over the agrarian reform had political consequences. The process of consolidating a single national government was held up. The feudal/anti-feudal conflict, or to be more specific the fears of the feudal families for their future and status in case of an agrarian reform, was a fertile ground for the formation of a separatist movement and a separatist government which intended to replace the Vlore administration.

The cleavage became even deeper during the Wied regime. The over representation of the great landowners (Schmidt-Neke, 1987, p.36) in the Wied administration, the promises

given by the Valona government that the foreign capital (“Wiener Bankverein” and the “Banca Commerciale d’Italia.”) would have the right to operate using the agrarian real estate (which raised fears regarding “loss” of land bought by the foreigners) (Kaleshi, 1976, p.131) and the cruel exploitation of the peasant masses by the great landowners were the main causes that the cleavage resulted in a conflict more than once between 1914-1918 (we refer to the revolt against the Wied regime⁵⁴ and especially against Esad Pasha -May 1914-, the violent eruption in June-July 1914 and the rebellion of October 1914 under the leadership of Haxhi Qamili).

But even though feudalism had been called into question between 1912-1918, it still maintained its power. The great landowners managed to keep their land and privileges, while the peasant masses and the landless people of the rural areas, deprived of collective identity, expressed their dissatisfaction through revolts that did not result in a change. The rebellions and violent eruptions were a lost opportunity when seen from the point of view of the establishment of a national and social Albanian state.

The religious cleavage is also one of the “old” cleavages registered in the years 1912-1918. Its roots also go back to the Ottoman Empire, when the Ottomans had achieved a “peaceful” appearance in the Albanian territory through the exchange of islamization for privileges. That caused the creation of a net of social consequences of the religious preference, which also formed the strong social basis of the religious cleavage in Albania.

⁵⁴ Among the causes of the revolt are also: a) the dissatisfaction with the “non-national” regime and the need to maintain their national identity, b) the fact that some wished through this revolt to link the future of Albania with that of Turkey and c) the fact that for others this revolt was a strategic movement to protect Islam and get rid of the Christian Kind. (About the variety of reasons which lead to the revolt see: Frasheri, K., 1964, *The History of Albania (A Brief Survey)*, p.192; Durham, M.E, 1920, “The Story of Essad Pasha,” p.213; P.A.A.A: (Telegramm) Nadolny –Durazzo- an A.A., 18.05.1914, Nr.22, R.4282; Kaleshi, 1976, p.131).

So when the Ottoman Empire was no more “in power” and Albania became a quasi independent state, the six Great Powers and the remainder of the Ottoman Empire/Turkey, being aware of the fact that the religious cleavage was deprived of any divisions over dogma and that it was closely connected to the scheme “social privileges and deprivation of”, realized that they had found a useful instrument in order to unite the country, each into its own influence sphere.

The social aspect of the religious geography of the country shows on the one hand Muslim landowners, who were the first to be islamized and received as a reward for their “wise decision” numerous privileges. They enjoyed (in contrast to the remaining Christian population) financial privileges, they had the opportunity to study in the Sublime Porte and later, by having all the qualifications needed, they occupied administrative posts etc. In order to keep their privileges they would be willing to protect Islam and turn to Turkey and against the other Christians, who were seeking for a chance to change the status quo and were consequently providing the Christian Great Powers the opportunity to interfere in Albanian politics. At the same time the landless followers of Islam consisted a mass which could be mobilized in favor of one (Turkey) or the other (Great powers) depending on the effectiveness of their tactics and policy.

CHAPTER 3

RESTRICTED INDEPENDENCE, AUTHORITARIAN RULE AND THE ABORTIVE DEMOCRATIC REVOLUTION, 1918-1924

3.1. Socio-economic conditions and Cleavages

The continuing occupation of Albanian territory by foreign troops, combined with new plans to dismember their country, inspired Albanians both at home and abroad. A vast movement developed, which because of the extent of the masses' participation and the results they achieved, resulted in the final accession of the Albanian people to a national independence. Compared to before the war, the axis of political life had shifted significantly towards the lower classes, the position of the great feudal families having been weakened by their dealings with foreign powers and their treachery to the national cause; this was a vitally important change.

As a result, the leadership of the movement fell more and more into the hands of ordinary people. This is the best way to describe the local bourgeoisie, who were neither great capitalists nor industrial or financial magnates. It was made up of varying social groups: first, the modest manufacturers, owners of small workshops, that still used artisan methods of production, yet were on the verge of becoming capitalist concerns. Then there were the merchants running mostly small or middle-sized businesses. Although the intellectuals were the least numerous, they were the most progressive and had at times the best perception of the interests of the middle classes and of the national cause. A separate category consisted of groups of émigrés, who had supported the country's cause for a long time, and who became involved in unprecedented activity after the war and were a significant factor in the balance of political forces at the heart of the Albanian national movement. But the mainspring of the movement remained the peasant masses, which had always been caught up in the cause of independence. It was within this framework that events in Albania happened once Europe was at peace again.

In 1920 the Albanian government (Delvina government) had extremely serious problems to deal with. While the political forces of the country, which had been united when facing threats from outside at the time of the Lushnje Congress were now divided as to how these problems should be tackled; and the “good” old cleavages (peasants against right wing landowners and supporters of the feudal system; radicals against conservatives; supporters of a Republican Albania versus supporters of feudalism) were once more revived. Although the Government was anxious to establish a uniform and Western system administration, it was aware that this could not be accomplished overnight, especially while neighbouring States sought every opportunity to foment discontent.

In the country were but two classes, namely, those who owned land and claimed semi-feudal rights and those who did not. The landowners had always held the principal ruling posts in central and southern Albania, but many of them were steeped in the antiquated Oriental Conservatism, which had allowed the Turkish Empire to drift to ruin. These men now expected that they would continue to enjoy precedence over plain ability. Any immediate attempt to overrule their claims would have given rise to endless jealousy, of which Albania’s neighbours would have taken advantage. It was therefore impossible to consider merit alone in nominating officials, and this caused some dissatisfaction among the Liberals.

As the majority of the landowning class were Muslims, and as the majority of the trained and experienced administrators and officials at the disposal of the Government were Muslim Albanians too, who had obtained their training and experience in the service of Turkey, the majority of the administrative posts were consequently filled by Muslims. The religious, as distinct from the social, aspect was a matter of indifference to the Albanians themselves (Swire, 1971, p.314 / Stavrianos, 1963, p.716) but it gave their foes an opportunity to misrepresent Albania as a Muslim State which would be for ever subject to the influence of Constantinople, and to propagate among the Christians a fear that Muslims would always, as they had done under Turkish rule, receive precedence.

In Southern Albania, among the more progressive Tosks, the French and Italians had established a Western administrative system which, when they withdrew, the Albanian Government retained, replacing French and Italian officials with Albanian Prefects and sub-Prefects. This system was extended, as the opportunity occurred, into central Albania, where the semi-feudal system of administration still remained intact. In northern Albania, Skutari and its neighbourhood (where the French had established a similar administrative system to that at Korce) was the only part directly controlled by the Government. The Malissori, including the Mirdita, were nominally answerable to the Government, but the old tribal organisation endured. As when Albania was under Turkish rule, the Church was the principal link between Tirana, through Skutari, and the tribesmen; and in most cases administrative communications were addressed to the priests for circulation among their parishioners (Swire, 1971, p.315).

Apart from that, progress in every direction was slow, since the requirements of the country were far beyond its financial resources, and could not be otherwise while foreign occupation, propaganda, or intrigue, prevented foreign capital from developing its natural resources; but progress was none the less sure in every direction in which much expenditure was not necessary. In one respect Albania had an advantage over her neighbours. Prof. Calmés, who was in Albania at that time, as a member of the Financial Committee of the League of Nations writes in his report: *“Unlike so many of the new States which were created at the end of the World War, and unlike the old European States with a history of a thousand years behind them, Albania has the great advantage of having no external debt, and, one might almost say, no national debt”*⁵⁵ (Calmés, 1922, p.22). From the economic point of view, the situation of Albania (1918-1922) leaves much to be desired. For, although Albania started financially with nothing on the debit

⁵⁵ Austria-Hungary and Italy appear to have recovered by taxation during the war the amounts advanced upon the credit they had accorded to Prince William's Government.

side of balance, there was also nothing on the credit side.⁵⁶ On the contrary, the ignorance of the population and the absence of schools,⁵⁷ roads and public works, in general constituted an economic debit (Calmés, 1922, p.29). Had the Bank of Issue been granted therefore, adequate protection by the Powers against hostile machinations, Albania would have been able to organise her administration and develop resources. But a prosperous Albania her neighbours did not desire (Swire, 1971, p.315).

When Zogu became Prime Minister (in other words, with the arrival of the Muslim Zogu's government), especially at the end of December 1922, immediately after the Council's session, when Zogu took further steps towards dictatorship (he made himself head of the new government, while still retaining the key post of Minister of the Interior), there was much discontent among the Christian population, principally of southern Albania.

The causes of this discontent were manifold. First of all, "Southern Albania," being the most prosperous and developed part of the country suffered very much from the economic depression of that time. The population in Southern Albania paid the largest share of the taxes; yet it received little in return because most of the national revenue was spent in Tirana on the army and bureaucracy (Stavrianos, 1958, p.719).

Secondly, as the greater part of the officials of the former Turkish regime especially the judges, gendarmes, etc., still retained their places, the Christians complained that they

⁵⁶ Much information about the financial situation of Albania during this period is given in: Lampe, John and Jackson, 1982, p.388; / Pernack, Hans-Joachim, 1972, pp.77-80 / Spigler, 1986, pp117-118.

⁵⁷ Between 1912 and 1920 is the period, which would be regarded as the foundation era of the Albania school system, for total of 475 elementary schools were established (Hauner, 1985, pp.102-103). A number, of course, which justifies Professor Calmés report of an "absence of schools."

could not be assured of impartial justice in disputes with Muslims. In some cases the Muslims resisted the law, believing they stood above it, while in others Christian officials proceeded too firmly against Muslims (Swire, 1971, p.408).

Especially in questions concerning the ownership of land, there was a lack of justice. Many Beys frequently attempted to take advantage of the undeveloped character of the legislation to extend their ownership of land, by oppression or arbitrary measures, to property hitherto held in common by communities. In many cases, the land they already possessed had been obtained by similar measures during Turkish domination. Especially in those of central Albania, the sense of nationality was weak and patriotism completely overshadowed by interest (Swire, 1971, p.408).

Apart from the above, the Christian population complained that the subdivision of electoral districts was very unfavourable to them. The suffrage was indirect and by majority. For example the 6,000 Christians of the Chimara region (which formerly belonged to the province of Gjirokaster) were included in the prefecture of Valona, where there were 28,000 Muslims, against only 13,000 Christians; in the province of Korce, almost entirely Muslim in population, there was a great Muslim majority (72,000 against 48,000 Christians) (Sederholm, Report dated 19.12.1922-1.2.1923, p.498). If the majority of the Christians could be united into separate electoral districts or if some system of proportional representation were established they would then be able to elect their own representatives, while according to this electoral system they were at the mercy of the Muslim majorities. But “[...] *not every societal cleavage finds expression in the party system*” (McHale, 1983, p.6). In this case the electoral arrangements acted to inhibit the organisation of political differences within the given society. And this is not unusual, as the electoral system had (and has) often been viewed as a key element in the struggle for control of the state and its decision-making apparatus.

One of the principal causes of the resentments against the Muslim landowners and the precedence given to former Ottoman officials, who frequently took advantage of their

position for personal ends, came also from the fact that the Christians did not accept any kind of “Muslim superiority.” The Muslims said : “*we Muslims are in a majority, and we therefore naturally keep the upper hand,*” while the Christians replied: “*[...we] might be willing to submit to a majority government but not to a majority domination [...]*” (Vickers, 1995, p.108, note:17). The Orthodox Christians expected that within an independent Albania they would enjoy equal rights with their Muslim compatriots. So the continuance in authority of the landowning Beys and ex-officials of the Turkish service, who in many cases continued to regard themselves as belonging to a superior class to their Christian compatriots, aroused among the latter unpleasant memories of the past and a fear that the old order of things would continue.

Sederholm makes obvious in his final report to the League of Nations in May 1923 this historical background of the increasing sense of self-assurance and the feeling of superiority from the *Muslim side*. He touches on the roots of a *mixed* cleavage (religious and “classes” cleavage)⁵⁸ in the History and writes: “*However, as I have pointed out in my report on the conditions in the south, there is now [May 1923] a more marked divergence between Christians and Mohammedans in Southern Albania than there was a year ago [...]* The important events in the Near East have cast their shadow over Albania. A great number, probably the majority of Mohammedan officers and officials in Albania have formerly been in Turkish service. Most of them have received their earlier instruction in the Turkish language and read Turkish newspapers where the victories of modern Turkey are celebrated. It is no wonder that this wave of rising self-consciousness has to some extent stirred the feelings of the Albania Mohammendans, while on the other hand it has caused serious misgivings to their Christian compatriots [...] and these feelings constitute in themselves a danger [...]

The question is not mainly one of religion [...]The real point at issue is more one of class feeling, the Mohammendan land-owning and official class having inherited from the past

⁵⁸ In this case the term “classes cleavage” bears the meaning of the privileged and under-privileged cleavage.

a sense of superiority over the Christians which the latter resent and expected to see disappear in an independent Albania (Sederholm, Final Report, May 1923, p. 507).

And even though he seems to understand the reasons which worked out the basis of this religious – “class” cleavage, he regards them, up to a point, as groundless, pointing out that each side had *virtues* necessary for the viability of the country. “*The Christians of Albania would not be satisfied with a system by which they would be regarded as tolerated minorities living under the sway of a majority with different aims. It is true that the Christians are numerically in a decided inferiority, being less than 30% of the whole population but by their thrift and wealth, as well as by their culture, they are hardly less important to the country than the Mohammedan majority. It even seems a somewhat moot point whether there is in Albania any confession, which predominates over the other. If the Bektashi of the south, who number something like two hundred thousand, are regarded as a different confession, as some of them claim that they ought to be, then the Sunnites would not possess any absolute majority.*

As regards relations with foreign countries, the Christians of Albania must inevitably play a very important role. The country’s geographical trend is westward, and as it develops economically and culturally, its connection with the West will be more and more intimate. The immediate neighbours in the South and East are nations professing the Christian faith, though a small proportion are Muslims (Sederholm, Final Report, May 1923, p. 507).

Sederholm sees a harmful religious and “classes” cleavage and underlines that: “*Albania [as] one of the smallest countries in Europe has an absolute need of the collaboration of all her citizens*” (Sederholm, Final Report, May 1923, p.507), while Swire interpretes the discontent among the Christian population within the frame of an ideological cleavage which could be called “tempo” cleavage. “[...] *this [discontent] was the result, not of an inclination for Greek rule or of religious animosity, but of an impatience for social and agrarian reforms.*” argues Swire (Swire, 1971, p.407).

Not only the Orthodox Albanians but the returned émigrés from the United States as well, were disappointed at their expectations for a quick change. *“As their dream of a national homeland seemed about to be realised [about 1919-20], many American Albanians withdrew their savings from local banks and took passage to Albania [...]. In the years from 1919 to 1925 between 20, 000 and 30, 000 Albanians returned to the Old Country [...] but the glowing dreams of the returned Albanians were soon to be dissipated. [...] Through the efforts and sacrifices of American Albanian workingmen and peasants in the homeland, Albania had been made free; but many an old patriot found himself querying, “Free from what and for whom? Free for the landowning beys!”* (Federal Writers’ Project, 1975, pp.65-67).

But as Swire argues: *“This transition stage, from the old to the new, must take time- at least a generation; with every other resurrected new-born State unfettered from an alien yoke, whether in the Balkans or elsewhere, it has taken time. In the meantime one implores both the Albanians themselves and their foreign critics to learn patience and forbearance”* (Swire, 1971, p.409).

In August 1923 Zogu’s government finally gave in to public opinion and put forward a plan to organise elections for a Constituent Assembly before the National Council. The reasons for the general dissatisfaction were clearly formulated on the statement, which was made by the delegates of the opposition, during the Parliament session on September 29th 1923. *“The first reason for the opposition’s “resistance” against the government had to be found in the fact that, even though the government should respect the principle that “the citizens themselves should rule” the country, it approaches Oligarchy; it identifies the “state” with itself and moves towards a Dictatorship [...].”*⁵⁹ There were also accusations of a corrupted policy. According to the opposition the government had

⁵⁹ P.A.A.A., Kardorff -Tirana- an A.A.B., 15.12.1923, Nr. 42, Anlage 1, Bahri Omari, Erklärung der Oppositionsabgeordneten in der Parlamentssitzung vom 29. September d.J., R. 72407.

published budgets with fantastic numbers, the Ministries of Education and Public Works existed only as names being totally inactive and non-productive; while generally it could be observed that there was “*ein derartiger Widerspruch zwischen Rede und Handlungsweise [...]*.”⁶⁰

Zogu was well aware of the urgent need for drastic reforms in every direction. As a preliminary step the title of “Bey” was abolished by decision of the Albanian Parliament (within the same month); and the expulsion by landlords from their property of tenants who continue to fulfil their normal obligations, no matter of what race, religion, or sentiments they might be, was declared illegal.

But Zogu and his followers committed terrible crimes, which set in motion the great events of the spring of 1924, which resulted in a “democratic revolution”⁶¹ –as it is usually referred to in bibliographies

Of course there was a variety of reasons which constituted the basis of this revolution, animosity against Zogu himself, fight for the capital city, the assassination of Avni Rustemi, the Italian interests and Yugoslavia’s neutral position etc.⁶² But the June Revolution was mainly the immediate consequence of the social conflicts. As it is noted in: Mbi Levizjen Kombetare dhe Demokratike Shqiptare ne vitet 1918-1924, Tirana, 1966, p. 3: “*The June Revolution, the growth and the evolution of the revolutionary – democratic movement between June and December 1924, constitutes the first and the*

⁶⁰ See: P.A.A.A., Kardorff -Tirana- an A.A.B., 15.12.1923, Nr. 42, Anlage 1, Bahri Omari, Erklärung der Oppositionsabgeordneten in der Parlamentssitzung vom 29. September d.J., R. 72407.

⁶¹ The chronicle of the Revolution is very well given by Kardorff, the German Ambassador in Albania, in his Report. See: P.A.A.A., Kardorff –Tirana- an A.A.B., 21.06.1924, Nr.287, R. 72437.

⁶² See: P.A.A.A., Kardorff –Tirana- an A.A.B., 20.06.1924, Nr.286, R. 72437.

most important attempt of the Albanian people to eliminate Landlords' economical and political power [Herrschaft] in favour of a democratic and progressive Albania" ⁶³ (Lange, 1973, pp.40-41).

At this point, it is very interesting to register that the later "Rilindja" (authors refer to the "Vegjeli"⁶⁴ hate against the landowners as "classes hate" –"urrejtje Kalasore"), which inevitably leads to the thought that the "Vegjeli" had class consciousness. This point of view can be regarded as true as far as it concerns the people in the south, but it can not refer to the people of the northern part of Albania, who were organised round the family or clan, and knew no big landownership. Consequently, one could argue -as Lange does (Lange, 1973, pp.41-42)- that the June Revolution was a social revolution, whose fate and success were related to the fate and success of a future land-reform.

The June Revolution could also be characterised as the "first social Revolution" in the country. Among the opposition were to be found Muslims, Catholics as well as Orthodox rebels, while Ghegs from North Albania and Tosks from the southern part of the country had left their differences in origin aside to fight against the Feudals, with the aim of

⁶³ Translated in English by the author of this text.

⁶⁴ Even though the word "Vegjeli" is used in the Bibliography as a synonym for "proletariat," it primarily connotes with all lower social classes in general; while in south Albania it is used for the "mixture" (typical for this part of the country) of the urban proletarians and the poor countrymen, who constituted the natural reservoir for the formation of the social-revolutionary power. Such a class was not to be found in the North, firstly, because there was not such a type of landownership in the region and secondly because the tribal and clan structure of the Northerners was intact, providing no fertile ground for a social-revolutionary ideology to be grown. But, South of Shkumbi, where the clan structure had lost its importance and cohesion -as a result of the socio-economical circumstances of the region-, social tensions were promoted and found their way out through the social-revolutionary movement.

achieving the establishment of a social agrarian constitution [sozial Agrarverfassung]. But apart from this, we should also take into account one more aspect; the fact that this revolution took place without any kind of foreign interference. A fact which shows up the pure national character of this movement (Rathjens, 1925, p.169).

It should be also made clear that this revolution, which rightly bears the characterisations: “democratic” and “social,” was in no way an “Albanian Double of fascism” Its orientation against the old elite and its profession of loyalty to the peasant political and social emancipation is not compatible with the mobilisation of the masses towards an anti-emancipation politic, which was the feature of Fascism.⁶⁵

In early June the right-wing leaders fled from Albania with the remains of their forces, and took refuge in Yugoslavia, Italy and Greece. Zogu settled in Belgrade where he was treated as an ally⁶⁶ and held in reserve, awaiting further developments in the Albanian situation.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ About this debate see also: Vlora, 1973, pp.190 /197; P.A.A.A., Kardorff –Tirana- an A.A.B., 21.06.1924, Nr.287, R.72437 and Schmidt-Neke, 1987, pp.128-131. The two former represented the point of view that behind the June Revolution were “Bolshevik” tendencies to be found. Especially the characterisation “Bolshevik” was attributed to the “Bashkimi”- Union- organisation, which had been formed by Rustemi, was for Albania’s political, cultural and social modernisation, and had played an important role in this revolution. However, Schmidt-Neke gives numerous arguments against this thesis.

⁶⁶ Yugoslavia interpreted the June Revolution as a clever Italian movement for a pliable and philo-Italian government to come to power. Eisenlohr, the German Ambassador in Belgrad, writes in his Report, with regard to the Yugoslavian attitude towards the events which were taking place in Albania: “[...] in the case that the revolution proved to be successful, [a fact which would be simultaneously regarded as an Italian success] Yugoslavia would have no other choice but to provoke a “counter-uprising,” by offering Yugoslavian money and Yugoslavian army, in order to bring things in their previous

On the 16th June the democratic revolutionary government⁶⁸ was formed with Fan Noli as Prime Minister and it was to remain in power until the end of December 1924. The new Cabinet was pure “*anti-Bey*” and its tendency would be considered a strong reaction to the “*Feudal Verlaci’s Cabinet*.”⁶⁹ That was also the only element, common among the

order” (See: P.A.A.A., Eisenlohr –Belgrad- an A.A.B., 10.06.1924, Nr.1200/24, R. 72407). Within this framework should also be interpreted the fact that Zogu took refuge in Belgrade, where he was being treated as an ally.

⁶⁷ “[...] Zogu’s defection to Yugoslavia did not mean that his chapter in the History of Albania was at the end, the last word had yet to be written” (P.A.A.A., Kardorff –Tirana- an A.A.B., 20.06.1924, Nr.286, R.72437).

⁶⁸ The construction of the democratic government on 16th June 1924 was as following:

Prime Minister: Fan Noli

Minister of Foreign Affairs: Sulejman Bey Delvina

Minister of Interior: Rexhep Shala (leader of the rebels of the North part of the country)

Minister of War: Kasem Qafezezi (leader of the rebels of the South part of the country)

Minister of Justice: Stavro Vinjau

Minister of Finance: Luigj Gurakuqi

Minister of Public Affairs & Agriculture: Qazim Koculi

Minister of Education (temporarily): Stavro Vinjau (suggested: Bajram Curri)

Minister without Portfolio: Xhemal Bey Bushati (H.D.A.G.M.F.A., C.D.A, Panurias – Legation Hellénique, Durazzo- to G.M.F.A., R.N.: 749, 18.06.1924, File: A/5 18.)

Fan Noli’s detailed Curriculum Vitae as well as short Curriculum Vitae concerning the personalities, acts and, up to this point, carrier of: S.Bey Delvina, R. Shala, K. Qafezezi, S. Vinjau, L. Gurakuqi and B. Curri are to be found in : P.A.A.A., Kardorff –Tirana- an A.A.B., 18.06.1924, Nr.284, Tirana 1/3.

⁶⁹ See: P.A.A.A., Kardorff –Tirana- an A.A.B., 18.06.1924, Nr.284, Tirana 1/3.

Ministers, who more or less represented different ideologies.⁷⁰ Although it lasted such a short time, it marked a very important step forwards in the country's history. After three days the Prime Minister announced the programme of the government, which could be briefly summarised into two points: eradication of the feudal system and the definite establishment of democracy in Albania.⁷¹ In more detail the 20 points governmental programme was for liberation of the population, economic emancipation of the peasants, establishment of the enforcement of the law, real independence for the courts of justice, radical reform of obsolete legislation, change in the system of taxation, simplification of the state bureaucracy, reorganisation of the budget, reorganisation of administration, of education, of the health system, friendly terms with other countries and so on.⁷²

⁷⁰ See: Ibid.

The members of this government represented the North and the South; Islam, Catholicism and Orthodoxy, while with regard to the State's form, half of them were for the Republic and half for the Monarchy. And as Kardorff formulates it „[...] all these elements were] *in Aufrufe Fan Noli's hübsch in einem Gott vereint* [...]“ But for how long?

⁷¹ At this point, I agree with Lange (Lange, 1973, p.43) that both these terms (“eradication of feudal system” and “democracy”) can be considered identical in the Western sense. The present official Albanian Historiography gives to the term “democracy” an exclusively social meaning, while in the political western terminology the term “democracy” is the opposite of the term “dictatorship.”

So through this prism, the aim of the “Democratic Revolution” was the creation of a state with social justice- *Staat der sozialen Gerechtigkeit*. This argument is supported by what it is written in the newspaper “Drita” during this time: “*the eradication of Feudalism constitutes an indispensable presupposition for the creation of Albania as a social state*” (Lange, 1973, p.43, Note 70).

⁷² See: H.D.A.G.M.F.A., C.D.A, Saltaferas –Belgrade- to G.M.F.A., R.N.: 1076, 24.06.1924, File: A/5 18; and P.A.A.A, Kardorff –Tirana- an A.A.B., 19.06.1924, Nr.285, Anlage, Fan Noli, Das Regierungsprogramm, [Tirana, den 19.Juni 1924], Tirana 1/3.

Noli government started its activity with a series of encouraging measures. At once, it decreed democratic liberties, guaranteeing to the citizens and peasants freedom of speech, of the press, of assembly and of organisation; at its prosecution, the tribunal passed in absentia the sentence of death and the confiscation of their property on the most notorious leaders of the creation who had fled the country; the Ministry of Agriculture started studying the enactment of agrarian reform in favour of the peasants.

The measures it took to set up agrarian reform justified great hopes for its future plans in this area. It was easy to discern the first signs of a vast movement by the poor peasant masses, which could result, by means of a simple *fait accomli*, in the elimination of the great *tchifliks* and a more just division of land. These signs of the peasants' entry into the arena of active social struggle were received with enthusiasm by the radicals; but they also caused the first difficulties encountered by the revolutionary government. Just when Noli's arrival in power had roused the animosity of the landed aristocracy, the fact that he did not hit them hard enough cost him the alienation of the peasant masse -he recognised this himself (Pollo and Puto, 1981, p.193).

However, this revolutionary activity, the cabinet of Noli since its first days was encumbered by serious internal and external difficulties. After the triumph of the 10th of June, the forces that took part in the revolution ran into divergences and split into forces for and against social and political reforms. On the one side were standing the radicals Noli, Curri, Gurakuqi, and Vinjau while on the other Delvina, Shala, and Qafezezi, who could not completely adopt the "westernised" radical views of the former. This is understandable if we take into account that totally different masses took part in the revolution, which were motivated, up to a point, towards the overthrow of the personal, dictatorial power of Ahmed Zogu. More specifically, high military officers, supported by conservative elements and with the approval, in part reticent and in part openly declared, of some of the members of the government, began to exert pressure on the government as

a whole and on the prime minister, to postpone or cancel the execution of radical social, economic and political reforms.

We should also not underestimate the phenomenon of local patriotism, which surfaced immediately after the revolution. So, while in the south the motives for the revolution were clear, in the north –in some cases- the desire and effort to gain autonomy through the revolution strengthened. Bajram Curri was totally disappointed with the outcome of the revolution as his wish was not the change of the political situation in Albania but the outbreak of a war against Serbia for the liberation of the Kossova region.⁷³ Moreover, the Albanians of the Shkoder region were now deeply dissatisfied with the decision taken concerning the theme of the capital city of Albania, as they wanted their town to take precedence over the “Muslim” cities of central Albania⁷⁴ (instead of Tirana). This placed Gurakuqi in an awkward position as he should break away from the government if he wished to be in his compatriots’ good graces.⁷⁵

The territorial cleavage between North and South, or, to be more explicit, between Ghegs and Tosks was also responsible for the seeds of dissension sown among the members of the Council of Ministers. Panurias registers: *“Gurakuqi, Shala and Bushati have established their own “party” and act as they wish, usually against the will of the other Ministers. Shala appoints and releases public servants arbitrarily. While all the persons who have been appointed by him to administrative positions are well-known for their [...] anti-Tosks feelings. Moreover in the regions of Shkoder, Puka, Allesion, Kroian, Siakion and Durres the administration is exclusively on the hands of Ghegs. The Gheg Governor of the Durres region released the custom inspector, the municipal doctor as well as the*

⁷³ See: H.D.A.G.M.F.A., C.D.A, Panurias, Légation Hellénique –Durazzo- to G.M.F.A., R.N.: 867, 07.07.1924, File: A/5 2.

⁷⁴ See: Politisches Archiv Iib, Albanien, Politik 3, Band 1, Ber. Kardoff 20.6.1924.

⁷⁵ See: H.D.A.G.M.F.A., C.D.A, Panurias, Légation Hellénique –Durazzo- to G.M.F.A., R.N.: 867, 07.07.1924, File: A/5 2.

first secretary of the Municipality because they were Tosks and appointed Ghegs to the same positions, while he insists –without good reason- that the Tosk financial director and the Tosk director of the telegraph office should also be released in order be Ghegs appointed to their positions [...]. Mustafa Kroia, Hassan Pristina and Zia Dibra also co-operated with them –Gurakuqi, Shala and Bushati- and do whatever possible to paralyze government's plans. So they ordered the peasants to give up working for the construction of the road Durres-Tirana [...]" ⁷⁶ On the other hand the Tosk deputies appeared as a group to the Council of Ministers and demanded that elections should be held as soon as possible, by making at the same time clear that the country was in a state of chaos. Meanwhile, the Minister of War, Kasem Qafezezi, stated catigorically that the army, apart from the Catholic officers, as well as the gendarmerie was ready to support a military junta, if the situation remained the same.⁷⁷ The meeting of the commanding gendarmerie officers in Durres on the 15th September 1924 lent credit to the sayings of the War Minister. Akif Premetis (the General Gendarmerie Commander) Major Ibraim Diakova, as well as the Commanders of the Durres prefecture (Tirana, Durres, Kavia, Kroia, Siakion) met in order to "organise the overthrow of the two ardent supporters of the Catholic clergy, namely the Ministers Gurakuqi and Shala." ⁷⁸

Apart from that, the religious cleavage also showed its face clearly through the dissatisfaction of the Muslim population of the Northern, the Middle as well as the Southern parts of Albania, which found it difficult to accept a Christian, and even more a Bishop, as head of the government.⁷⁹ Further, this is not to underestimate the fact that Fan Noli was deprived of "a clique of followers" (his power had no "family –clan- or even

⁷⁶ H.D.A.G.M.F.A., C.D.A, Panurias, Légation Hellénique –Durazzo- to G.M.F.A., R.N.: 1301, 14.09.1924, File: A/5 20.

⁷⁷ See: Ibid.

⁷⁸ See: Ibid.

⁷⁹ See: Ibid.

regional basis”) like the one that supported Ahmed Zogu, Elez Jusuf or Bajram Curri, a fact that lead to his characterisation as “foreigner.”⁸⁰

Moreover, it was also the Christian Orthodox who, after the revolution, were either dissatisfied or filled with concern. The inhabitants of the Gjirokaster region were sentenced immediately after the revolution to pay 6, 000 napoleons to the state because they had not helped the rebels. They were determined not to pay. On the other hand it was in the region of Saranta where a strict correspondence control was exercised because of the stay of many politicians, officers as well as the ex-Prime Minister Vrioni⁸¹ in the city. The outgrowth of these events was that the Orthodox Christians who had either participated in or helped the revolution in one way or the other, because they were for a democratic policy against Beys, were now disappointed with the outcome of the revolution and filled with concern.⁸²

⁸⁰ See: Ibid.

⁸¹ The Vrioni government had been established on the 27th May 1924 and remained in power until the 10th June 1924. The construction of this government was as following:

Prime Minister & Minister of Foreign Affairs: Iljaz Bey Vrioni

Minister of Interior: Abdurrahman Dibra

Minister of War: Mustafa Aranatasi

Minister of Justice: Benedikt Blinishti

Minister of Finance: Myfit Bey Libohova

Minister of Public Affairs: Kostaq Kotta

Minister of Education: Dr. Fahri (H.D.A.G.M.F.A., C.D.A.,

Panurias, Légation Hellénique –Durazzo- to G.M.F.A., R.N.: 655, 01.06.1924, File:

A/5 3.)

⁸² See: H.D.A.G.M.F.A., C.D.A, Kontos –Kerkira- to G.M.F.A., R.N.: 5089, 23.06.1924, File: A/5 3.

On the other hand, on the international scene there did not exist favourable conditions for a revolutionary movement. The situation at the time was very unfavourable for the establishment of a radical government in such a small country as Albania, for the governments in the neighbouring states were mostly of the extreme right, fact which gave little hope of a benevolent attitude on their part. Apart from that, there did not exist any inducement for the Great Powers to give their support to this government that refused to grant concessions and privileges to foreign capital and that caused damage more especially to the interests of the Italian fascist government and of its rival, the Yugoslav reactionary government (Fraseri, 1964, p. 228).

Swire gives more reasons for the western Power's refusal to recognise the new government and puts the blame on its acts. The government's decision to constitute a political court to dispose of political opponents, the sentence of death upon Ahmed Zogu, Shevket Verlaci, Iljas Vrioni and others passed by this court, as well as the decision to confiscate and nationalise their properties⁸³ was an "unstatesmanlike act" giving the impression that this "democratic government" was more autocratic and short-sighted than those before. And he goes one step further to write: "*In the circumstances no western Power could be expected to recognise it, and Great Britain naturally did not do so*"⁸⁴ ('Swire, 1971, pp.436-437). Germany had to deal with another problematic, concerning the recognition of the new government. According to the German Ambassador, Noli's government was not the result of Parliamentary elections, and as long as the "formal

⁸³ See: H.D.A.G.M.F.A., C.D.A, Panurias, Légation Hellénique –Durazzo- to G.M.F.A., R.N.: 1727, 13.12.1924, File: A/5.

⁸⁴ England had two more reasons for a negative position towards the new regime. On the one hand, the British Ambassador was on friendly terms with Ahmed Zogu; while on the other, the fact Iljaz Vrioni, the Prime Minister [May 27. 1924 – June 10. 1924], had signed the Petroleum preliminary contract with England should not be underestimated (See: P.A.A.A., Kardorff –Tirana- an A.A.B., 22.06.1924, Nr.288, R. 72437).

requirements” were not fulfilled, Germany could not proceed to its recognition.⁸⁵ For propaganda purposes nothing was speculated upon by these powers more than the initiative taken by the government of Noli to establish normal diplomatic relations between Albania and the Soviet Union.

The fact that none of the Great Powers recognised the government of Noli was indisputably a great drawback for his cabinet, and an encouraging factor for the malcontents within the country and the fugitives abroad. So the government’s action was slowed up and as a result it gradually lost prestige.

By November the Noli government was showing obvious signs of submission to pressure from abroad. Using the watch-word “no pretext for action saps the reaction,” it shelved its reforms. Instead it turned all its attention to preparing for the elections for the new Constituent Assembly,⁸⁶ which was to provide the revolutionary government with “legal basis.”⁸⁷ Although the elections were to take place in March 1925, the Noli government announced that the 20th December would be the date for the first round and the 20th January for the second.⁸⁸ This determination of the election dates gave the opportunity to the different groups within the government to express their ideological differences once more and be organised. On the one hand, Noli and the supporters of the reform (who had

⁸⁵ See: Ibid.

⁸⁶ Details with regard to the holding of the elections are to be found in : P.A.A.A., Kardorff- Tirana- an A.A.B, 20.11.1924, Anlage zu Bericht Nr.470, S.Peci/ F. Noli/ Shala/ Vinjau, II. Dekret über die Parlamentswahlen, Tirana 1/3.

⁸⁷ Initially, Noli had refused to legitimise his revolution through general elections. However, by November the Noli government was preparing for elections to the Constituent Assembly, in response to international pressure to give his revolutionary regime some legal status.

⁸⁸ See: H.D.A.G.M.F.A., C.D.A, Petichakis to G.M.F.A., R.N.: 1803, 03.12.1924, File: A/5.

lost a lot of their power in the government and were aware of it) were for earlier election dates, as they supposed that the earlier the elections could take place the greater was the chance to win ; while on the other the moderates, whose aim (Zogu's expulsion) had already been achieved through the revolution, were against earlier election dates, because if Noli won,⁸⁹ that would be against their private interests and because they were afraid that this decision (for earlier election dates) would lead to one more revolution as it had in Bulgaria.

3.2. Political groups and Parties

Being the socio-economic conditions as described above, was the time ripe for the appearance of the first political parties and the formation of a numerous political organizations inside and outside the country. The idea that a political organisation was essential in order to deal with the gravity of the situation was gaining ground. But not all the authors are of the same opinion concerning the meaning of the term "political parties" in this period. On the one hand, Pollo and Puto maintain that these first parties were political parties "*in the modern sense of the term*" (Pollo and Puto, 1981, p. 172), while Frasheri, referring to them, writes: "[...] *two main political currents polarised themselves and [...] crystallised themselves into two parties, in reality, into two parliamentary political groups [...]*" (Frasheri, 1964, p.216); Fischer argues that: "*They could not be considered political parties in the Western sense, however, since both presented identical vague programs supporting reform, education and the material development of the country. Initially they could not even be told apart by the type of member, being that elements of all facets of Albanian life could be found in both. Support for one or the other was based once again on personalities*"⁹⁰ (Fischer, 1984, p.27); and Schmidt-Neke points out that: "[...] *Hier wurde ein zentraler Begriff westeuropäischer politischer*

⁸⁹ The foreign observers hardly gave the Noli government a chance to win the elections (See: P.A.A.A, Kardorff –Tirana- an A.A.B., 9.12.1924, R.72437).

⁹⁰ See: P.A.A.A., Lage in Albanien, Pressebericht vom 04.04.1921, R.72406.

Kultur übernommen, bedeutete in Albanien aber nicht mehr als politische Tendenz, keinesfalls aber eine feste Organisation mit eingeschriebenen Mitgliedern und gewählten Organen“ (Schmidt- Neke, 1987, p.63), and he goes a step further to say: „[...] Wenn man an Parteien Mindestanforderungen hinsichtlich programmatischer und organisatorischer Substanz stellt, hat es in Albanien vor dem II Weltkrieg keine Parteien, sondern allenfalls Ansätze gegeben [...]“ (Schmidt-Neke, 1993, pp.38-39) The author should be also counted among the later group of authors ,namely, to those opposed Pollo and Puto.

After the Summer of 1919, a whole network of clubs and societies⁹¹ grew up in the main towns and a new kind of leader emerged from their ranks, younger, more energetic, and sometimes inspired by a determined revolutionary spirit.

This portrait of political life would be incomplete without a mention of the Albanian political organisations in other countries of Europe, and even across the Atlantic. The American ones, the Panalbanian Vatra Federation⁹² and the National Political Party,⁹³

⁹¹ Some of them, for example the Patriotic Societies “Federata Aedheu” and “Bashkimi” presented a much greater similarity to political parties in the modern sense of the term, than the political parties Popular and Progressive (Schmidt-Neke, 1993, p.39).

⁹² 1911 Kristo Floki , a new editor of *Dielli* (Sun) –a weekly newspaper which the Albanian immigrant’s society of Besa-Besen had begun to published in February 1909- sponsored an earnest campaign for the consolidation of the American national movement in America. Many Albanian fraternal orders, some made up of kinsfolk and some of fellow townsmen, had sprung up; Floki asked that they be organised into one federation, with headquarters in Boston. The new society was to devote itself to strengthening the spirit of nationalism so that it would weather the great trials through which Albania was passing. In April 1912, months of negotiation were ended with the establishment of the Pan-Albanian Federation of America, called Vatra (Hearth). *Dielli* was adopted as its official organ. Branches, designated by numbers, with Boston known as number one,

were exceptionally active. The number of Albanian émigrés in the USA had increased considerably during the war years with the arrival of thousands of young people. From them emerged several important leaders⁹⁴ who were completely devoted to the cause of their country, among them Fan Noli.⁹⁵

All these organisations and associations, whether they were great or small, at home or abroad, and in spite of slight differences in their aims, agreed on one essential point: that an assembly must be called to elect a national government as soon as possible. One of the most urgent tasks was to show clearly that any new attempt like the pre-war one to impose a regime on the Albanian state from outside was incompatible with the wishes of its people.

spread throughout New England, while Boston headquarters of Vatra came to be regarded by all Albanians as one of the most important centres of their national movement (Federal Writers' Project, 1975, pp.48-49).

⁹³ In 1918 Christo Dako, having abandoned hope of capturing Vatra, formed a parallel organisation at Worcester, the "Albanian National Party". The "Political Party," as it became known among the Albanians, was an open pressure group similar in conception to Vatra. Mrs. Dako was made president. The party published a journal of its own. Its chief agent was Ismail Qemal Bay, Albania's first president in the provisional government of 1912 (Federal Writers' Project, 1975, p.60).

⁹⁴ Faik Bey Konica (biographical data is given in: Kaleshi, 1976, pp.450-453), Christo Floki, Christo A. Dako ect.

⁹⁵ April 1906 he arrived in America having a Greek passport (Kaleshi, 1979, Band III, p.335) and by 1908 he had established as the leader of the Albanians in America. His prestige was all the more curious because he had been born outside of Albania –Ibrik Tepe south of Edirne (Kaleshi, 1979, Band III, p.334)- and lacked the normal ties of the family and the village which make for a successful political figure in the Albanian Community (Federal Writers' Project, 1975, p. 46).

The increasing harshness of the Italian military regime, combined with the course the Paris Conference was taking,⁹⁶ made the situation inside Albania highly inflammatory and led the country into an acute political crisis. The elements, if a confrontation between different political forces in Albania already existed, diverged not only over how Albania should be governed internally, but even more over its international position. There were two main currents of opinion. First, there was the new generation of Albanian nationalists who was struggling for an Albania that governed itself, quite independent of foreign powers. Other groups advocated the old kind of nationalism; politicians and official diplomats considered the “help” and “protection” of some foreign power a vital condition of any viable Albanian state. But these groups were also divided as to the choice of a “benevolent” power: some preferred Italy, others the United States.

The outcome of the Paris Conference discredited the pro-Italian groups totally, and produced a wave of indignation in public opinion. Rome’s policies in Albania became the object of more and more violent attacks. Clubs and associations throughout the country, as well as the organisations in the Albanian colonies, denounced Italian policy as the main source of danger threatening Albania’s future. Even the delegation in Paris split into two factions, one of which openly adopted an anti-Italian stance.

In November 1919 the anniversary of the proclamation of independence, a violent demonstration against the Italians took place at Vlore, the main base of the Italian occupying forces, making the position of the Durres government even more precarious.

⁹⁶ This phase was crucial in Albania’s history. There was no assurance that the Allied Powers would support the Albanian claims, or ignore the secret Pact of London of 1915, by which most Albanian territory was to be portioned out among Italy, Greece, Serbia, and Montenegro. Would the pressure of Albanian patriots amid the swarming nationality groups which besieged the conference at Paris be sufficient to safeguard Albania’s existence?

The more advanced thinkers then ordered an immediate assembly of a new congress. Everywhere the idea was greeted with enthusiasm. The tide of popular feeling soon swept away obstacles set up by the Italians and by the authorities in Durres, and the Congress met in Lushnje on 21 January 1920. The Congress of Lushnje was an important turning point in the evolution of the Albanian situation after the war and a brilliant manifestation of the great political awakening of the people in 1920. It sent a strong protest to the president of the Paris Conference, expressing the wish of the Albanian people to live independently and rejecting all plans to place Albania under the mandate or protectorate of some foreign power. It also stated clearly that the Albanian people were determined to take up arms if necessary to defend the integrity of its territories.

The greatest achievement of the Congress of Lushnje, was in giving the country a truly national government. It laid down the broad lines of a new national constitution, specifying the basis of the state's institutions and their functions, without any interference from abroad. The statutes of 1913-1914, which were dictated by the conference of peace in 1913 and placed Albania under the humiliating control of the imperialist Great Powers, were, therefore, overruled.

The great victory at Vlore had considerable political repercussions. The opinion now prevailed in the country that this success was a guarantee against all attempts to reassess the questions of Albania's independence and frontiers. This feeling led to profound changes in the balance of political forces within the country. If the threat of dismemberment was averted, the main effort could now be concentrated on the internal problems, which were just as urgent.

The most acute of these was the establishment of the state, which had never been completed. A whole series of questions had still to be resolved by the deputies assembled

at Lushnje, particularly that of what form the regime would take: “monarchy or republic?” The former of the two alternatives was out of question.⁹⁷

The assembly jumped into a compromise. Albania should not be proclaimed a monarchy, as it had been decided at the conference of peace in 1913, neither a republic, as was desired by the majority of the delegates. But before the time would be ripe for such a decision to be made (the assurance of the country’s integrity, the elimination of foreign influence and the convention of the Constituent Assembly should be considered necessary preconditions) and as Albania was still nominally a Principality, at the head of the State was to stand a Council of Regency (which fulfilled the functions of the Prince)

⁹⁷ “*The return of Prince William, certainly at that critical stage, was precluded, [even though the Catholic Albanians were not totally negative towards a possible return (see: P.A.A.A., Pressebericht vom 04.04.1921, R.72406)] firstly by the artificial antipathy which propaganda had aroused among the victorious Powers and their allies against the German races (especially German royalty), on which side the Prince had fought; secondly, by the effect which unjustifiable Entente propaganda had had upon his reputation among some sections of the Albanian people; thirdly, by the fact that, as in 1914, he would have come powerless axis of unlimited intrigue which would have rent the country; fourthly, by the mutual hostility which had arisen between the Prince and Italy (in consequence of Italy’s attitude and policy in 1914) and the Prince’s resolute attitude with regard to the absolute independence of Albania (he had protested against General Ferrero’s proclamation as an infringement of it); and lastly, a court was at that stage an expense which Albania was in no position to bear. (Should the present King die, the return of Prince William would not seem to be precluded; and in view of the fact that he possesses the inestimable advantage of being beholden to no Power, is a European Prince (now) speaking the Albanian language, and has (now) an intimate knowledge of Albanian affairs, his restoration in those circumstances, and under the auspices of the League of Nations, might prove of inestimable advantage both to Albania and to the cause of European peace)*” (Swire, J., 1971, p.312).

composed of four members, each representing the four religious divisions of the country.⁹⁸ These four men organised the executive branches of the government and had, among other things, the right to call a new government, if there was a cabinet crisis (Schwanke, 1963, p.4, footnote 7). The legislative power was exercised by a National Council (Parliament) or 37 deputies. The Statute also contained other dispositions relating to various administrative institutions of the new Albanian state, their prerogatives and their duties. On February 11th 1920, the high state organs (Delvina Government, Council of Regency) left the town of Lushnje and established themselves in Tirana – which was chosen as the capital.⁹⁹

At the beginning of October 1920 a group of democrats (members of the National Council) denounced the injustices and abuses committed by landowners and some others in forcing peasants to pay exorbitant rents and asked the government to intervene. The most progressive members judged this to be a good moment to demand the setting up of a Constituent Assembly. Delvina's government decided to conform to the will of the people, causing angry protest from the right wing. This led to an immediate rift in the centre of the coalition and the resignation of the government in mid-November (on the 14th). The National Council (Parliament), set up at Lushnje, also declared itself dissolved (December 20th 1920).

⁹⁸ Akif Pasha Elbasani : Bektashi Muslim

Monsignor Louis Bumchi : Roman Catholic

Dr. Michael Tourtoulis : Orthodox Christian and

Abdi Bey Toptani: Sunni Muslim (in no way connected with the intrigues of Esad Pasha (Swire, 1971, p.313)

⁹⁹ There were difficulties concerning the choice of a capital. Some favoured Skutari, others Korce, and others Durres. But the first two were too close to the frontier, and subject to any disturbances which their neighbours might create, while Durres could be commanded by the Italian fleet. Tirana, a town in the interior, was therefore selected (Swire, 1971, p.313).

The newly formed government, presided over by I. Vrioni on November 19th 1920, decided to organise elections not for a Constituent Assembly, as the previous government had decided, but for a new National Council. In the meanwhile, two political parties, representative of the main divisions of this period in Albania, made their appearance; the Popular Party and the Progressive Party.

The *Partia Popullore: PP* (Popular Party) was formed in 1921 among the deputies of the first indirectly elected parliament. The emergence of the PP as well as that of the ideological counterpart, the *Partia Perparimtare: PPer* (Progressive Party), followed the formation of a Regency Council and a unity government at the Congress of Lushnje. The *PP* became known almost immediately as the party of reform and social progress. It was constituted of democratic elements together with some liberal *beys*, who demanded that a democratic constitution, based on bourgeois principles of Western Europe, be introduced in Albania. The *PP* did not have a permanent organisation or long-lasting internal cohesiveness. It was essentially a personality-centred political aggregate influenced by the progressive ideology of its top leaders, and initially it was dominated by Western-educated intellectuals. The nominal leader of the PP was the Harvard-educated Bishop Fan S. Noli of Durres, who was selected by the American Albanians in 1920, when they were allowed to elect one of their number to the national assembly. Noli returned to Albania with many of his countrymen, who were particularly influential in this “party” and imbued it with their radical philosophy.

Another leader of the *PP* at this time was Ahmet Zogu (a Gheg chieftain with considerable local following), who had an entirely different family, education, experience background and outlook from Bishop Noli. He was a ruthless *Realpolitiker* in contrast to the idealistic and rather impractical bishop (Stavrianos, 1958, p.718). Zogu’s single-

minded pursuit of power, together with his undoubted ability, enabled him to realise his ambitions and to rule Albania during most of the inter-war period.¹⁰⁰

Xhafer Ypi, and Eshref Frasheri were also two of the main persons within this political party. The *PP* dominated the political life of the country for three years, 1921-1924. Specifically, two issues eroded party effectiveness: an Ideological cleavage between émigré and domestic leaders concerning the pace of reforms and their divergent views about “law and order.” Domestic leaders such as Zogu and Ypi favoured a gradual approach to modernisation, while Noli espoused more radical and somewhat unrealistic methods (unrealistic given Albania’s stage of development). A Territorial cleavage has also to be taken into consideration concerning the erosion of the party. The party also included Kosova chieftains (Bajram Curri, Hassan Pristina etc.) who hoped that by direct or indirect association with the chain of intrigue, continually being carried out against Yugoslavs (1921 as well) they might succeed in regaining Kosova at an early date, while the central and southern Beys gave priority to other things.

The *PPer* was the ideological counterpart of the *PP* led by Shevket Verlaci¹⁰¹ of central Albania (the largest landowner of the country, who later became Zogu’s father-in-law). Further, it emerged in 1921, after Albania had secured its independence, as a loosely organised coalition of southern landowners and northern conservatives. Contrary to its name, however, the *PPer* opposed all major reforms promoted by the Popularists (especially land reform) and instead sought to defend the economic and social privileges of the major landowners, who dominated the Progressives from their inception, and

¹⁰⁰ In 1925, as will be described below, Zogu was elected president by a controlled parliament, and he commenced an authoritarian rule, which mixed important reform with strong-handed tactics. Three Years later he was proclaimed King Zog I of Albania -a post he held until his departure, forced by the Italian occupation army in April 1939.

¹⁰¹ The nominal party leader, Mehdi Frasheri was a respected intellectual; but actual power rested with Verlaci.

wished to preserve as much as possible of the older order bequeathed by the Turks (Stavrianos, 1958, p. 717).

On 21st April 1921 the first elections, to be held in Albania were eventually completed. They had started at the end of January and apart from the fact that they were badly prepared it was also because of the strong criticism that was exercised against the election-law, which aroused territorial interests, set off *regional initiatives* and resulted in such a delay. The south Albanians demanded an autonomous administration and a regional Parliament seated in Korce; while the north an autonomous administration, a fact which delayed the end of the elections in the Shkoder region until May 23. In the end, the local politicians realised that a particularism could be of no use for Albania and abandoned their plans (Schmidt-Neke, 1987, p.74).

The first representatives were elected according to the electoral system of the constitution of 1914. This system consisted of a general, equal, secret but indirect male vote in two stages. Women were (actively and passively) debarred from voting and being voted for at the elections. A Member of Parliament was to be indirectly elected for every 12, 000 inhabitants; every 5, 000 voters,¹⁰² over 20 years old, elected a delegate, who was no younger than 25 years old and the delegates elected the 78 Members of Parliament, who ought to be at least 30 years old (Schwanke, 1963, p.4 Footnote 9 / Nohlen, 1969, p.59). Apart from the Council and the Parliament there was a Minister's Cabinet of Specialists (Kabinett von Fachministern) under a Prime Minister. With the course of time, the Council was losing its political importance, while the Prime Minister gained more and

¹⁰² At this point there is a difference concerning the number of voters. So while Nohlen writes: „[...] *Alle Männer im Alter von über 20 Jahren wählten in den Kommunen die Wahlmänner, einen auf je 500 Wähler, wobei die relative Mehrheit der Stimmen entschied [...]*“ (Nohlen, 1969, p.59), write Kempner and Rotta: „[...] *je 5000 über 20 Jahre alte Wähler wählten einen Delegierten, [...] die Delegierten ihrerseits die mindestens 30jährigen Abgeordneten [...]*“ (Kempner and Rotta, 1926, p. 486)

more of it (Kempner and Rotta, 1926, p.486). Voting was also to be limited by various restrictive electoral censuses based on property, which were certain to ensure a majority for the reactionary forces in the new Council.

The elections of April 1921 gave each of the two main political streams (*PP* and *PPer*) an almost equal number of seats in the new Parliament, reflecting a basic equilibrium of political forces. This explains the harshness of the political struggle between the two main factions and the governmental instability this caused.

During the first three weeks of December five cabinets were formed, one after the other.¹⁰³ The fourth was installed by a coup d'état led by Kosovars. Away from the north, there was a widespread opposition to what by now had become an entirely Gheg-Dominant government. Apart from protests in the southern towns, the central beys were angered by such northern dominance (Vickers, 1995, p.105). Within days of Pristina being appointed prime minister, Zogu marched on Tirana, and Pristina was forced to flee north with his supporters.

So one more government (a fifth Cabinet) was formed with Xhafer Bey Ypi as Prime Minister (24.12.1921). As Zogu personally kept the portfolio of the ministry of interior, came the Zoguist clique into power -despite his being Minister of the Interior, the Cabinet was entirely under his influence. As minister of interior, Zogu took a series of measures in order to strengthen his personal power. First of all he secured the support of the

¹⁰³ 1) 6th December 1921: Qazim Koculi (Prime Minister)

2) 7th December 1921: Hassan Bey Pristina (Prime Minister)

3) 12th December 1921: Idhomene Kosturi (Prime Minister)

4) Coup d'état: led by Aqif Pasha, Hassan Pristina, Bajram Curri. Hassan Pristina was appointed Prime Minister, and Barjam Curri War minister.

5) 24th December 1921: Xhafer Bey Ypi (Prime Minister) / Ahmet Bey Zogu (Minister of Interior) / Fan Noli (Foreign Minister) (Schmidt-Neke, 1987, pp.93, 95, 97).

Catholics (northern tribes) by honoured tradition of “peace money.”¹⁰⁴ The Chieftains of the major northern tribes were given the rank of colonel in the army and paid on a regular basis. Each month large groups of armed highlanders would descend upon the capital to collect their gold.¹⁰⁵ The tribal leaders also swore allegiance took to Zogu personally, rather than to the country (such a concept was basically still foreign to them). Zogu was recognised as an over –chieftain and they subsequently looked to him personally for their “peace money” (Fischer, 1984, p.35). Secondly, on the pretext of establishing order and internal tranquillity, he began to disarm the population, directing his zeal against the population hostile to him,¹⁰⁶ without hesitating to persecute personalities of the opposition, including anti-Zoguist ministers and deputies.

A violent campaign was immediately launched against the abuses and authoritarianism of the Zoguist government. When in February 1922 it decided to dissolve the National

¹⁰⁴ “Peace money” was a method used first by the Ottoman Government (Vickers, 1995, p.105), and later by Austria, Serbia and Montenegro in order to influence the clans and keep them in good humour (Fischer, 1984, p.35). These payments appeared in the budget as Army Allowances since technically at least, the chiefs were being paid to maintain a certain number of irregular troops in reserve at the disposal of the government, but in reality they were being paid to refrain from staging an uprising against the government; it was called “peace money” (Vickers, 1995, p.105-106).

¹⁰⁵ This is written with the strict sense of the word as Albania possessed no national system of metal coinage or paper money. The unit adopted for public accounts was the gold franc.

¹⁰⁶ The Kosova chieftains were so determined to move against Zogu that they were perfectly willing to do so on their own, without the support of the remaining northern tribes. Zogu was, of course, aware of this and he initiated steps, which he hoped would forestall the inevitable attack. He also reasoned that the best way to do this was simply to disarm them and he launched a program to disarm the population in general (Fischer, 1984, p.35).

Council, the opposition responded with the call for a meeting of the Constituent Assembly, an idea which had become increasingly popular. Many people now considered it quite justifiable to resort to extraparliamentary methods. The members of the Kosova group believed that the moment had come to meet force with violence, and initiated the armed rebellion of March 1922, in which they formed the main attack force. The rebel movement began in the extreme north and north-east and even got as far as the capital; but it was badly organised and it took government forces only a few days to quell it.

A strong opposition was formed against the Zoguist clique, inside and outside the parliament. Fan Noli (Foreign Minister) resigned from the cabinet, while at this very point the *PP* split. 20 Members of the Parliament were gathered around Noli and Gurakuqi¹⁰⁷ and established the “Democratic Party.” The reformers who left the *PP* and organised the opposition bloc, attracted many disparate groups that were against Zogu for one reason or another. The roots for the split of this party can already be found in the year 1921. The problem was Kosova. Zogu and many of the southern leaders believed that Albania should first establish itself as a viable state before pursuing irredentism, and many of the Orthodox southern leaders also feared the massive influx of Muslims. The Kosovars within this group, Barjam Curri and Hassan Pristina took exception to this position. Before long, the central and southern beys, together with the Orthodox leaders, had alienated the influential Kosova Committee group within the *PP* –a fact which put extreme pressure on the Vrioni administration, which eventually collapsed (Vickers, 1995, p. 104 / Fischer, 1984, pp.29-30).

Noli was the leader of the Party and the Orthodox Christians from the south were the most articulate element in it. These people were becoming increasingly disillusioned because independence had failed to materialise their aspirations. They still did not have

¹⁰⁷ See: P.A.A.A., (Illegible Signature) –Rom- an A.A.B., 30.10.1922, J.Nr. I/4890, R.72406.

the role in government that they felt they deserved,¹⁰⁸ while the estates of the Muslim beys were still intact despite the talk of agrarian reform.

The electoral campaign (1923) took place in an atmosphere of feverish excitement and extreme animosity. Both the previous parties (*PP* and *PPer*) split. This led to the formation of local voters' groups, whose characteristic was their orientation towards persons more than their inclination to a common programme. Only generally could one refer to basic orientation differences.¹⁰⁹ Although the opposition was divided into numerous different organizations (unable to form a political party), although it lacked cohesion and had certain differences in views it became obvious that it was united in its opposition to feudalism and in its support for a republican Albania with a democratic

¹⁰⁸ The Albanian Orthodox community in the south had believed they would automatically enjoy equal rights with the Muslims now that Albania had gained its independence (Vickers, 1995, p.108).

¹⁰⁹ a. The liberals wanted the four members of the Regency to be elected through general elections the supporters of the Popular party argued that they should be elected for four years and through the Parliament.

b. The liberals wished an extensive land-reform; while a great number of Popular Party's supporters were either Muslim Beys or great landowners, with no such intention.

c. While the liberals wanted to transfer the government from Tirana to Skutari (Ora e Maleve) or Valona, the Popular Party's Beys insisted that Tirana should remain Albania's capital city.

d. Moreover, the liberals argued that it should be allowed the return of the Albanian emigrants (See: P.A.A.A., Referat II b., Balkan -u. Orientlekrorat, Berlin, 12.12.1923, R.72406 / P.A.A.A., Kardorff -Tirana- an A.A.B., 15.01.1924, Beilage zu Bericht Nr.67, Programm der Poppulorepartei, Programm der Demokratischen Gruppe, Programm der Gruppe Ora e Maleve, Tirana 1/3. & P.A.A.A., Kardorff -Tirana- an A.A.B., 15.12.1923, Anlage 4, Erklärung des Ministerpräsidenten, Zogu, Tirana 16-XI-1923, Nr.42, R. 72407 [within this *Anlage* are the main points of the "Zogu Party" to be found]).

regime as opposed to the Zoguist dictatorship. The most important of those organisations were:

The Opposition Groups:

- the “Ora e Maleve” in Shkoder,
- the Organisation “Xhoka” Tirana,
- the Liberal Party in Korce and Permet,
- the Democratic Group in Gjirokaster,
- the National Group in Vlore,
- the National Democratic Group in Berat and
- the Group “As i Pashes as i Beut” “Neither the Pashas nor the Beys” in Elbasan.¹¹⁰

Those groups close to Zogu:

- The Zogu “Party” in the districts Durres and Diber
- The Popular “Party” Evangjelis in Korce
- The Group around Verlaci in Elbasan
- The Vrioni Group in Berat
- The Group around Petro Harito in Gjirokaster, which was supported by Myfit Bey Libohova¹¹¹

Apart from that, one should refer to Akif Pasha, (living in Vienna since his expulsion) and Hassan Bey Pristina (living in Rome), who would be regarded as the leaders of the

¹¹⁰ This group remained, after the elections, with no representatives within the Parliament. Its members had written out a 15 point political programme, which did not manage to persuade the voters (See: P.A.A.A., Kardorff –Tirana- an A.A.B., 15.01.1924, Nr.67, Tirana 1/3). Also left without a representative in Parliament were the Organisation “Xhoka” Tirana and the National Democratic Group in Berat.

¹¹¹ See: P.A.A.A., Kardorff –Tirana- an A.A.B., 15.01.1924, Anlage zu Bericht Nr.66, R.72407.

“Albanian Monarchist Party.” The aim of the Party was the return of the previous Dynasty, even if not Wied himself, then his son. While there were rumours that Maria, the Queen of Rumania, was interested in the Albanian throne, for her second child, and King Boris of Bulgaria as well. But all these “monarchist actions and plans” did not find fertile ground in Albania.¹¹²

As popular pressure became more and more uncontrollable, the government had no hesitation in resorting to intimidation and terror, including political murders, mainly of voters with radical ideas.

The final results of the elections, which came out at the end of December, only confirmed the crisis situation dominating the whole country. According to the report of the Political Archives of Foreign Affairs in Germany, the results of the elections were, more or less, as following:

- The “Zogu Party” in the districts Durres and Diber	(about 22 seats)
- The “Popular Party Evangjelis” in Korce	(11 seats)
- The Group around Verlaci in Elbasan	(10 seats)
- The Vrioni Group in Berat	(14 seats)
- The Group around Petro Harito in Gjirokaster, which was supported by Libohova	(7 seats)

About 64 Seats	

And the Opposition:

- The “Ora e Maleve” around Curakuqi in Shkoder	(12 seats)
- The Noli’s Liberals in Korce	(4 seats)
- The Democrats around Kelcyra in Gjirokaster	(8 seats)

¹¹² See: P.A.A.A., Referat IIb., Balkan –u. Orientlektorat, Berlin, 12.12.1923, R.72406.

- Vlores Representatives with Koculi and Koleka (about 3 seats)
- Representatives of the district Kosova with Rustemi (5 seats)

About 32 Seats¹¹³

But these results were only arithmetical. In fact out of the 95 seats in the Constituent Assembly, the government won only 40 (Nohlen, 1969, p.60). Among the 64 “Zogu’s Delegates” were also the 24 representatives of the conservative landowners –Vrioni and Verlaci Groups-, who, even though they had voted for Zogu, knew that he was not a good deputy for their interests. Using his connection with Shevket Verlaci (father-in-law to be), Zogu was eventually able to attract most of the Beys, a political accomplishment of some magnitude considering that the Beys were anything but unified. Since the defeat of the various Vrioni governments, the Beys had been unable to construct a defensive, let alone a positive, organisation. By 1923 they had reached such a point of disintegration that many were willing to support Zogu in the hopes of holding onto their privileges. Few had any illusions about Zogu and those who eventually came to support him did so reluctantly and with a good deal of mistrust. Nevertheless, the adherents of Vrioni, the supporters of Verlaci and a loose collection of Beys known as the Berat Group, finally convinced many of the reticent Beys that Zogu was their last hope (Vlora, Band II, p.167).

Thirty-five Seats went to the opposition and the rest to “independents.” Consequently, although the support of Beys gave Zogu a composite majority, he had not managed to

¹¹³ See: P.A.A.A., Kardorff –Tirana- an A.A.B., 15.01.1924, Anlage zu Bericht Nr.66, R.72407. / With regard to the names of the members of the National Assembly see: P.A.A.A., “Fletorja Zyrtare, Hane 31 Dhetuer 1923, Anlage zu Nr.63 II, R. 72407. /Of whom 32 were Muslims, 5 Catholics and 14 Orthodox (See: P.A.A.A., Kardorff –Tirana- an A.A.B., 09.01. 1924, Nr. 63, Tirana 1/3).

change the balance of political forces fundamentally to his advantage and he was unable to form a viable government.

At the opening of the Constituent Assembly on 2 February 1924 the government did not offer its resignation. This was interpreted as a challenge to public opinion. At the end of February Zogu just escaped an attempt on his life,¹¹⁴ resulting in a number of significant political developments, including the crystallization of two distinct groups in the Assembly. On the one hand, the opposition Party, whose nucleus was Fan Noli and other exponents of Westernization through democratic means, was now joined by all personalities and factions opposed to Zogu. This group included Bishop Noli's co-religionists, former Progressives offended at not being represented in the government, army officers, conservative Sunni and liberal Bektashi Muslims, as well as many Roman Catholics (Skendi, 1954, p.8). On the other hand, Zogu tried to use this assassination attempt against him as a pretext for a second coup d'état with the object of finally establishing a dictatorship. He had the Assembly building surrounded by the units of police who were still loyal to him, and concentrated bands of mercenaries in Tirana. But he found himself up against fervent resistance, even among the ranks of the armed forces. The mercenaries were disarmed and driven out of the capital and Zogu was forced at last to give up the government but not his plans.

So at the beginning of March came a compromise worked out chiefly by Zogu. A new government was formed. All the key posts in the new administrations, including that of Prime Minister, went to great landowners.¹¹⁵ The Regents were persuaded to appoint

¹¹⁴ Kardorff gives details concerning the events, which took place, on the day of the assassination's attempt, in the Parliament building (P.A.A.A., Kardorff –Tirana- an A.A.B., 24.02.1924, Nr.102, R. 72407).

¹¹⁵ Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior: Shevket Bey Verlaci, the greatest landowner in the middle Albania, who was also regarded as the richest man in the

Verlaci (Zogu's father-in-law) as Prime Minister, while Zogu agreed to support him by his presence in Parliament and by his council when needed (Fischer, 1984, p.59). The new government was unstable from the very beginning,¹¹⁶ and Verlaci had difficulties filling the cabinet positions.¹¹⁷ The weakness of the government and its inability to deal with rapidly deteriorating conditions did little to increase its general popularity. Discontent both in the south, where the agrarian reforms still remained a dead letter and in the north, where irredentism and the failure of the government to make progress

country. His land in the regions of Elbasan, Shkumini and Devolli were regarded as the most fertile in Albania.

Minister of Foreign Affairs: Iljas Bey Vrioni, one of the most powerful and influential greatlandowners in South Albania.

Minister of Justice: Mufid Bey Libohova, the most known great landowners' representative, who is also regarded to be very intelligent.

Minister of War: Mustafa Aranitasi, who was regarded to be an "instrument" in the hands of the former Turkish officer's "Clique," which was quiet influential in Albania.

Minister of Public Works: Kastaq Kotta, who was the only non-Muslim in the Cabinet—until the occupation of the Ministries of Finance and Education, Luigj Gurakuqi, who occupied later the Ministry of Finance was Christian Catholic (See: P.A.A.A., Kardorff –Tirana- an A.A.B., 04.03.1924, Nr.112, R. 72407).

¹¹⁶ See: Ibid.

Kardorff writes in his Report the very next day of the Cabinet's formation: „[...] *ob dem neuen Kabinett eine lange Lebensdauer vorausgesagt werden kann [...]. Manche, mit denen ich darüber sprach, meinen: Nein.*“

¹¹⁷ See: Ibid. Until the first Parliament's session, on March 3rd 1924, two of the Ministries (that of Finance and of Education) were still unoccupied.

The names of the new Ministers –Luigj Gurakuqi, Finance Minister and Fahriu, Education Minister- were first given by Kardorff in his Report of 23.04.1924 (P.A.A.A., Kardorff –Tirana- an A.A.B., 23.04.1924, Nr.199, R. 72407).

towards improvement of conditions among the famine stricken population, became even more serious. The opposition blamed the government for these conditions and successfully recruited adherents to their cause. Both camps knew it and were already preparing for the decisive confrontation. In May, Zogu had already recruited three ages of reserve officers coming from the Elbassan, Shkoder, Durrës, Berat and Mati regions as well as exclusively Muslim Ghegs volunteers.¹¹⁸ These soldiers were paid three months loan in advance by taking 20 gold coins worth twenty-franks each; money which was coming partly from abroad,¹¹⁹ partly from the Albanian public purse and party from Sefket Verlaci. Both men (Zogu as well as Verlaci) were willing to fight in every possible way in order to keep their leading roles, because to lose their status would automatically lead to the loss of their movable and immovable property as well as their life. They had not forgotten that they themselves had sentenced to death two years ago others who had served Albania in leading positions.¹²⁰ It was now obvious that the situation had reached

¹¹⁸ See: H.D.A.G.M.F.A., C.D.A, Avramidis –Greek Representative in D.E.K.A.S, Koritsa- [Memorandum attached to Panurias to G.M.F.A., 11.06.1924, File: A/5 2.] R.N. 715, 22.05.1924, File: A/5 2.

¹¹⁹ “According to the point of view of Petsi –the viceroy, who is in Korce - as well as of the Metropolit of Korce, Serbia takes advantage of the irregular internal situation in Albania and plays its game by encouraging on the one hand the rebels under the leadership of Bajram Curri while on the other offers its financial assistance to Ahmed Zogu. So Serbia achieves its aim, namely the maintenance of the internal irregular situation in Albania, a fact which could provide Serbia the opportunity to invade Albania” (H.D.A.G.M.F.A., C.D.A, Avramidis –Greek Representative in D.E.K.A.S, Koritsa- [Memorandum attached to Panurias to G.M.F.A., 11.06.1924, File: A/5 2.] R.N. 715, 22.05.1924, File: A/5 2.).

¹²⁰ See: H.D.A.G.M.F.A., C.D.A, Ierotheos –Koritsa- to Avramidis (President of the Committee for the definition of the boundaries between Greece and Albania), R.N. unknown, 22.05.1924, File: A/5 2.

a crisis.¹²¹ This crisis was followed by eruption of the June Revolution (which has been already mentioned above) and the formation of the Noli government, which organized elections at the end of 1924 and the beginning of 1925.

In the face of the coming elections the different political groups formed “parties” and they proceeded even to the distribution of leaflets wherein they presented their political programmes. The split within the government led to the division of the “Democratic Party” (the former opposition) into two new Organisations. On 2nd October, the militaries and the moderates formed the *Partia Nacionale Demokratike: PND* (National-Democratic Party). This party was supported within the government by Delvina, Qafezezi and Peci, while the officers: Tazati, Ahmed Lipenitsa, Sevkert Kortsas, Bajram Fefzi, Riza Diakova etc. as well as the politicians: Razim Bapameto, Bahri Omari, Ali Klisoura, Ali Bega, Retzep Gela, etc. had been gathered around the party’s three pillars.¹²² The *PND* was willing to support a land reform but only as far as this concerned the redistribution of state property and had nothing to do with expropriation. Apart from that it was for a general compulsory military service and for an indirect electoral system.¹²³ “*The organisation of the party was similar to the one of the Neoturkish Committee, as a series*

¹²¹ See: Ibid. In expectation –and fear- of the events to come forced the British Ambassador forced his interpreter to help his family move from Tirana to Korce in May 1924.

¹²² See: H.D.A.G.M.F.A., C.D.A, Kokotakis, Légation Hellénique –Durazzo- to G.M.F.A., R.N.: 1491, 13.10.1924, File: A/5, 20. / Concerning the names of the members of the *PND* see also: P.A.A.A., Sh. I Amerikes, 01.November 1924, Über die politischen Parteien, Tirana 4/1.

¹²³ See: P.A.A.A., Programm der National-Demokratischen Partei, Tirana 4/1. The Party’s programme was constituted of XIII parts referring to: I. Aims and Principles, II. Social Policy, III. Administration, IV. Justice, V. Educational Policy, VI. Financial Policy, VII. Finance, VIII. Agricultural Policy, IX. Hygiene, X. Army, XI. Foreign Policy, XII. Elections, XIII. Regime.

of political clubs had been established in various towns in Albania and lectures were being held throughout the country [...]" ¹²⁴ Within this climate, Bahri Omari (the party's Political Secretary) laid emphasis on the fact that the Albanians should enrol themselves as members of the political clubs of the National Democratic Party in order to support not only the party itself but moreover a new political conception according to which political life should be based on and controlled by political parties and their political programmes instead of personalities, which can easily be proved to be opportunist. ¹²⁵

Contrary to this group was the *Partia Radikale Cemokratike: PRD* (Radical Democratic Party). The lever of power within this party was Shala and around him had been gathered Mustafa Krujia (the Prefect of Shkoder), Xhemal Bushati (the Minister without Portfolio), Riza Dani (the Prefect of Durres), Hussein Musketa (the Major of Durres), Haki Tefik and Gurakuqi (the leader of the Catholics of the Shkoder region) and of course the entire Catholic clergy. ¹²⁶ The Party's position was totally opposed to the *PND* concerning military service and the electoral system. The members of this group argued that it would be better to come to an arithmetical reduction of the armed forces for financial reasons and they were for a direct electoral system. ¹²⁷

Foreign observers as well as Albanian Commentators register that once more the politic in Albania was dictated by the personalities within the parties and not by the political

¹²⁴ See: H.D.A.G.M.F.A., C.D.A, Kokotakis, Légation Hellénique –Durazzo- to G.M.F.A., R.N.: 1491, 13.10.1924, File: A/5, 20.

¹²⁵ See: Ibid. [Attached] Propaganda Sheet of the National Democratic Party.

¹²⁶ H.D.A.G.M.F.A., C.D.A, Kokotakis, Légation Hellénique –Durazzo- to G.M.F.A., R.N.: 1491, 13.10.1924, File: A/5, 20. / Concerning the names of the Radical-democrats, see also: P.A.A.A., Sh. I Amerikes, 01.November 1924, Über die politischen Parteien, Tirana 4/1.

¹²⁷ See: P.A.A.A., Programm der Radikal-Demokratischen Partei, Tirana 4/1. The Party's programme was constituted of 33Art.

programmes of these parties. And this is more or less true. Even though each of the political parties had drawn up a programme, the party's strength depended on the personalities who belonged to it.¹²⁸ Moreover, if only these two parties had come down to the election's arena (the elections did not take place, as will see later), a number of the county's political elements would have simply been left out. They were many who, for different reasons, wished to support neither the National nor the Radical Democratic Party. These people could have established a third political Party with the leitmotif of being "Independent," or they would have formed a number of separate groups still *"cooking each his own soup."*¹²⁹

And as the Albanian politic was now turning round these two poles, the Albanian population, in this pre-election phase, had to make the decision which one of these two parties deserved its support and vote. The Vice-President of the National Assembly, Paftali -a known nationalist- preferred to keep a neutral position. In the region of Avlon three small parties fought in the political arena. The first around the Minister of Public Affairs (Qazim Koculi), the second around Ekrem Vlora and the third around the Prefect Seit Kemal. From these three parties, the first seemed inclined towards *PND*. Bairam Tsuris attitude towards the two political parties was until October circumspect. Being the situation such it was expected that the *PND* would gain the majority of the votes in the regions: Korce, Gjirokaster, Elbasan and Durres; while the Shkoder region should vote for the *PRD*. The Berat region was the "seat" of Beys and the voters in the region of Avlon were still in doubt about whether they should support the *PND* or the *PRD*; showing more sympathy towards the first one. Both parties struggled to win Zogu's supporters under the condition that Zogu himself would remain definitely out of the

¹²⁸ See: P.A.A.A., Kardorff -Tirana- an A.A.B., 07.12.1924, Nr.508, R. 72437.

¹²⁹ See: Ibid.

party. While Noli's accession to the one party or the other would be of decisive significance.¹³⁰

3.3. Conclusions

Even after 1918 the Albanians kept on struggling for the establishment of an independent state with a national government. Within this framework and given the expansionist appetites of the Great Powers, which were still vivid, the ideological cleavage revolved around three axes (the first two existed during the period 1912-1918 as well). Divisions over the matter of national independence with or without foreign support and from whom, divisions over the type of regime appropriate for Albania (Monarchy or Republic) and divisions over the pace of the reforms (the returned émigrés, the Christians and the landless wished a quick change as opposed to the Muslims, the great landowners and the domestic leaders who did not appear as impatient as the former).

The territorial cleavage found its expression in the major difficulties, which the country faced in order to form a generally accepted (by Tosks and Ghegs) central government. The Northerners relying on tribal organization remained unshakeable in the "principle" of "local patriotism" and autonomous administration. At the same time, irredentism, expressed by the Kosova chieftains through a series of political manoeuvres, obstructed the formation of a central government as well.

Now with regard to the behaviour and profile of the religious cleavage during the years of "the restricted independence, the authoritarian rule and the abortive democratic revolution" we have to point out that the ill disposition between Christians and Muslims (to which both the unpublished documents and the secondary sources refer) was not

¹³⁰ See: H.D.A.G.M.F.A., C.D.A, Kokotakis, Légation Hellénique –Durazzo- to G.M.F.A., R.N.: 1491, 13.10.1924, File: A/5, 20.

based on dogmatic differences or fanaticism (as the term religious cleavage co-notates), but on the social consequences of the religious preference. The Muslims' feelings of superiority, stemming from their participation in the country's administration (as it was happening since the Albanian territory became part of the Ottoman Empire), caused misgivings to the Christians who still remained deprived of administrative duties.

But the most interesting cleavage to "follow" during this phase of the Albanian political life was the feudal – anti/feudal. The animosity between the peasants and the great landowners was intense and it kept on deteriorating, as the matter of the "agrarian reform" remained a dead letter. As a consequence, the cleavage led to a conflict. I refer to the June Revolution, which, even though there are different approaches with regard to its causes, nobody denies that it was the immediate consequence of deep social differences. Through the "cleavages theory" lens, the June Revolution represents a cleavages "mainstreaming phenomenon"; it is the result of a previous polarization. This Revolution was not the conflict between those who owned land and those who did not. It was the result of a larger scale diversity of interests between those who "had" and those who "did not have", regardless of their religious preference, their territorial interests or their ideological and political stand.

For the first time the diversities concerning feudalism became part of the parties' political agenda; a "border line" between political organizations, which still remained mainly oriented towards persons more than towards a common programme. We have already referred to the problematic concerning the nature of the political parties in Albania (see pp.18, 19) and this research agrees with the point of view of the bibliography. The political parties in Albania (between 1918-1924) were mainly personality-centred political aggregates influenced by the ideology of their top leaders, rather than representing an ideology. But even in this case, political programmes had been drawn up, revealing ideological divisions over the matters, which have been already mentioned, with the "agrarian reform" being always the bone of contention.

It goes without saying that the “country’s peculiarities” (personalities, irredenta, independence) ran across the existing cleavages provoking action and reaction and played a major role in the formation of the political parties and their split. The German diplomacy as well as the Greek one seemed to be aware of these parameters. The diplomatic documents offer detailed biographical data of the country’s political personalities (who appeared during this period to take up the role of parties’ or political organisations’ leader), and accurate comments concerning the irredenta feelings and the independence wishes of the Albanian people, which were hidden behind the political decision-making.

CHAPTER 4

AUTHORITARIAN RULE RESTORED AND RADICAL-COMMUNIST OPPOSITION, 1925-1938

4.1. Socio-economic conditions and Cleavages

The main target of the Albanian politics during these years was, towards foreigners, to gain its integrity; while through its interior politics was looking for contact with Western Europe. It was maybe a weakness the fact that Albania was not ready to find out a political idea in order to smooth out its way through this transitional post-war phase. After the first World War Albania and Turkey were, more or less, in the same position. They had, first of all, to depart from the oriental way of thinking, acting and living. This process came along with what it was called “liberal” politics. But in Albania reached this liberal period a deadlock and the term “liberalism” lost its significance and weight.

The ideology of this period complies with the political tradition of Feudalism and its supporters (Ahmed Zogu was one of them) which was based on the Young Turks’ liberalism; a background which was until the end never been disowned. The interior politics during the period when Zogu was in Power offered not a hopeful picture. The landowners’ class, which during the Turkish occupation possessed the most important offices, still dictated the social climate and remained insensible and indifferent to “Vegjeli” misery and interests. The Beys thought of the state in terms of the interests of their own caste (Lange, 1973, p.48).

In Europe as in the Balkans, revolutionary movements were on the way out. Public opinion was at the mercy of illusions about universal rapprochement and a peaceful future, which would flourish within the framework of a traditional society. The spectre of

Communism was raised everywhere in order to keep “legal” governments safe from any revolutionary ideas. The restoration of Zogu’s regime in Albania resulted from this combination of factors and circumstances, and it brought with it a kind of stability.

Following his victory, Zogu’s first concern was to save appearances. He was anxious to counterbalance the unfavourable impression made on public opinion by foreign intervention, so he set himself up as the champion of constitutional law and order. At the beginning he re-established Vrioni’s government, which had been overthrown by the June revolution¹³¹ and then in early January 1925 he masterfully organised a transference of power, still within the terms of “constitutional legality.” He got rid of Vrioni and formed a new government, which was in effect a directorate consisting of three members: Zogu was in charge, while Libohova and Kotta –an emissary of the dictator, a person without personality (Fraseri, 1964, p.230)- who had led the counter-revolution in the south, assumed a vast number of offices and ministries.¹³²

While continuing to follow certain formal procedures, Zogu also decided to take a number of coercive measures in order to wipe out any trace of opposition and to abolish all democratic freedom. By concentrating almost the entire power in his own hands, Zogu continued the military operations in order to extirpate everywhere the democratic spirit

¹³¹ After Noli’s Government, before Zogu’s troops escaped, had come into power once again the same government, which was in power before Noli’s (Kaser, 1981, p.14).

¹³² (6.1.1925-1.2.1925)

Prime Minister:	Ahmed Zogu
Minister of Foreign Affairs:	<u>Myfit Bey Libohova</u>
Minister of Interior:	Ahmed Zogu
Minister of Justice:	<u>Myfit Bey Libohova</u>
Minister of Public Works:	<u>Kostaq Kotta</u>

The Ministries of War and Education were abolished, while Ahmed Zogu –as States President- took over War-Minister’s work (Kaser, 1981, p.14).

and to show the teeth of his dictatorial authority. His first decision was to establish a state of siege throughout the land. He divided it for several months into a number of military zones, commanded by tribal *bayraktars* (chieftains) devoid of all principles of civilised life with unlimited powers, whose only rule of conduct was based on despotism and brutality. Their mercenary bands proclaimed martial law. Under the pretext of disarming the population that had helped the revolution, the martial law continued for a long time. The disarming action of the population of the prefectures of Skutari, Kosova and Dibra, was aiming as well to demonstrate the power of the President to the insubordinate mountain-tribes.¹³³ The punitive operations lasted several months consecutively. An atmosphere of terror was created by mass-arrests and a succession of condemnations, pronounced by hurriedly established tribunals. In villages and cities bands of mercenaries ransacked and looted the homes of those who had nothing to do with the events. One of the particular concerns of the mercenary commandants was the depredation of the population by means of fines and bribes. A great number of public servants was also dismissed, partly because they were Zogu's opponents and partly because a lot of jobs in public sector ceased to exist, as a result of the country's bad financial situation.¹³⁴ Political organisations and cultural associations with radical teachings were dissolved, while numerous laws were introduced, that led eventually to total suppression of press freedom and the violation of private correspondence (Fraseri, 1964, pp. 230-231).

After a few weeks, Zogu had secured absolute power. He then decided to embark on the much discussed problem of what form his regime should take. He decided against the election of a new Constituent Assembly. Instead, still invoking the pretext of "continuity," he simply recalled the remains of the assembly elected at the end of 1923¹³⁵

¹³³ See: P.A.A.A, Kardorff –Tirana- an A.A.B, 21.11.1925, Nr.526, R.72437.

¹³⁴ See: H.D.A.G.M.F.A., C.D.A, Panourias –Légation Hellénique Durazzo- to G.M.F.A., R.N.:82, 15.01.1925, File: Γ 62/4.

¹³⁵ (1.2.1925 –28.9.1925)

Prime Minister: Ahmed Zogu

to meet in Tirana. The dictator made this same assembly vote¹³⁶ in the plan to proclaim an “Albania Republic,” he became President of that republic and a “republican Statute” (or new Constitution) was finally approved.

Full of democratic phraseology, the Constitution, which was approved definitively on March 2nd 1925 (Fraseri, 1964, p.231) and published in the official gazette of the Albanian Republic Nr.8 of March 7th 1925¹³⁷ (Kampner and Rotta, 1926, p.486),

Minister of Foreign Affairs: Myfit Bey Libohova

Minister of Interior: Kostaq Kotta

Minister of Justice: Petro Poga

Minister of Public Works: Kostaq Kotta

Minister of Finance: Myfit Bey Libohova

The Ministry of Education was abolished; A department of Education was established within the Ministry of Justice (H.D.A.G.M.F.A., C.D.A., Panourias –Durrës- to G.M.F.A., R.N.: 160, 03.02.1925, File Γ 62/4).

¹³⁶ From the 62 Members who were present, 60 voted for a “Republic” and two did not hand over their vote. The Catholic deputies, who were opposed Zogu because of the latter’s attitude towards the clergy of Skutari, did not appear. It was mainly the Muslim Deputies who supported Zogu’s plan (See: P.A.A.A., Karforff –Tirana- an A.A.B., 24.01.1925, Nr. 32, R.72437).

¹³⁷ Albanian Constitution of 7 March 1925

1. Structure of the State

Part A: General Arrangements Art. 1-9

Part B: Legislative Art. 10-68

Part C: Executive Art. 69-97

Part D: Justice Art. 98-107

2. Various Rules Art. 108-123

3. Citizen’s Rights Art. 124-139

4. Final Arrangements Art. 140-142

proclaimed Albania as a republic, responsible to the will of the people (Art.1). But behind the democratic phraseology lay hidden the dictatorial rule of Zogu and the power of the landholding Beys, the reactionary tribal chieftains and the conservative bourgeoisie.

According to the Statute Zogu's dictatorship was to take the form of a presidential system. Its most significant clause was that giving absolute power to the President.¹³⁸ That meant that he controlled not only the supreme office of head of state, but also the offices of head of executive power and head of the armed forces. It is true that the President was elected for a period of seven years, not directly by the people, but by a Parliament not necessarily synonymous with the system. Nevertheless, Parliament was subject to the full weight of presidential authority. It consisted of a Senate and a House of Commons and had legislative power. The Senate would be consisted of 18 Members Art.49 (12 Muslims, 4 Christian Orthodox and 2 Catholics).¹³⁹ Twelve of them would be elected direct by the voters while the President had the almost monarchic prerogative of appointing a third of the members of the Senate, as well as the right to veto acts passed by the Commons, which effectively gave him total power. As for the citizen's rights, the Statute presented a satisfactory list of them, but introduced every possible electoral census (above all that of property) which drastically reduced the number of people with political rights.

The background of the political situation, or in other words, the socio-political situation and the kind of interests or conflicts existed in Albania that period, seeking for a clever

(Jahrbuch des Öffentlichen Rechts der Gegenwart, Band XIV, 1926, pp.487-494)

¹³⁸ Busch-Zantner attributes the prerogatives enjoyed by the President to the fact that the Albanian Constitution of 1925 had patterned itself upon the United States' Constitution, which had acted as model, and which gave the American President a lot of privileges (Busch-Zantner, 1939, p.95-96).

¹³⁹ See: H.D.A.G.M.F.A., C.D.A., Panourias –Légation Hellénique Durazzo- to G.M.F.A., R.N.: 362, 03.03.1925, File: Γ 62/4.

political dealing with is well prescribed in the memorial of Mr. Tasis to Mr. Rafail (Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs) April 1925.

Mr. Tasis gives, first of all, the arithmetical data of the religious map of the country, offering us in such a way the picture of the basis of the religious cleavage. He writes: “[...] *The Albanian population is up to 820, 000 as a whole, 520, 000 are Muslims, 200, 000 Christian Orthodox and 70, 000 Catholics. One hundred and thirty thousand Christian Orthodox dwell in the prefecture of Korce, Gjirokaster, while 70, 000 dwell in the prefecture of Berat, Elbasan and Durres. The prefecture of Skoder is almost exclusively inhabited by Catholics. The Majority of Muslims lives interspersed in the whole Albania and only a small minority –40, 000- in the prefecture of Skoder and 70, 000 in the regions Korce and Gjirokaster.*”¹⁴⁰

One could probably expect that each of these religious communities was united, having not only a common faith but also a common ideology and political standpoint. But this was not the case. Even among the members of each of these “religious communities” were different interests to be registered. *“The Orthodox are divided into two groups -the last ten years. The ones, who are for the union of North Epirus (Prefecture Korce and Gjirokaster) with Greece and the others, who are against the partition of Albania and [...] are also convinced that they could co-exist with the Muslims under the condition that a decentralised administration [...] should take place.*

But now [–1925–] the former appear more compromising [...] they would be satisfied if the Protocol of Korfu¹⁴¹ would come into power; while the later, having already made an effort to co-exist with their Muslims compatriots the last ten years, are now convinced

¹⁴⁰ H.D.A.G.M.F.A., C.D.A., Memorial, Tasis to Mr Rafail –Director of the Policy Department of the G.M.F.A.,- R.N.:5075, 01.04.1925, File: Γ 62 η.

¹⁴¹ According to the Protocol of Korfu (May 17, 1914) Albania should gain autonomy and the Albanians should respect the “education [school] and religious prerogatives” of the Greek minority of the North Epirus (Christopoulos / Batsias, 1978, Vol.XV, p.87-88).

that such a co-existence is impossible as the Muslims continue to have feelings for Turkey and against the Christians [...] Consequently reached both, the previously ambivalent Orthodox groups, a deadlock and decided to leave aside their extreme point of views and co-operate. All agreed on one point; North Epirus should gain its autonomy according to the Protocol of Korfu. And they expressed their wish and desire by establishing in Gjirokaster—during the last pre-election period- a new political party the “Christian Union.” So the Orthodox inhabitants of the Korce and Gjirokaster region set a common target and built up a common electoral front.

The Catholics on the other hand, who also wished to gain the autonomy of the prefecture Shkoder and they had even attempted to achieve their goal in 1921- the Mirdita¹⁴² and Shala revolt- [...] now co-operate with the Orthodox, within the parliament as well as out of it, against the domination of the Muslims over the Christians and their intolerance.

¹⁴² The largest of the Catholic tribes was the Mirdita, which was actually composed of three smaller clans (Shala, Shosi and Mirdita). These tribes were always suspicious of the Tirana administration and as Lane reports “*These tribes do not understand that the new government – Vrioni government- in Tirana is an all Albanian government. They do not think as a nation; they think as tribes. They think that the government is a Tirana government, trying to destroy their liberty [...]*” (Lane, 1922, p.62). On the other hand the Tirana regime, never penetrating the northern highlands, was unaware of the internal intrigues within the Mirdita. So it encouraged Gjon Marka Gjoni to participate in the administration. A fact which shows clearly how out of touch the Tirana government was with the northern clans, just it was with the mountainous and remote regions of the south like Himara and the villages around Delvina (Vickers, 1995, p. 103). But for Gjoni it was more important to have high status within the Mirdita than to gain any post offered to him by the Tirana administration in April 1921. With the help of the Yugoslavs, Gjoni tried to stir the clansmen against the Vrioni government accusing it of being Muslim, with “Young Turk” tendencies, and of intending to interfere with the religious liberty of the Catholic Mirdita. The rebellion was short-lived.

*Apart from that, the Orthodox and the Catholics map out a course of political co-operation and decided to establish a Pan-Christian Union named "Viribus Unitis."*¹⁴³

The picture of the Muslim Albanian world appeared divided with a less co-operative inclination. Within this framework there were other parameters, a territorial as well as an ideological cleavage to be observed and taken into consideration.

*"As concerning the Muslims, [writes Mr.Tasis] they are divided into two great arithmetical tribes the Ghegs and the Tosks. Ghegs are called the ones who inhabit the region in the northern of the river Skubi while Tosks are the inhabitants of the region in the southern of Skubi. These two tribes are ill disposed towards each other. And this is understandable if we take into consideration the fact that they speak different dialects, their manners and customs are different and above all they do not belong to the same Islamic sect. The former –Ghegs- are Sunni while the latter –Tosks-are Bektashi."*¹⁴⁴ *There are also historical reasons for the creation of this animosity between Ghegs and Tosks. Turkey had used –utilised- the ones against the others in order to put down the numerous*

¹⁴³ H.D.A.G.M.F.A., C.D.A., Memorial, Tasis to Mr Rafail –Director of the Policy Department of the G.M.F.A.- R.N.:5075, 01.04.1925, File: Γ 62 η.

¹⁴⁴ "Amongst the Ottoman Turks and Europe the most characteristic order was [...] that of the Bektashis. This [...] was fully established at the end of the fifteenth century, was a peculiar syncretism apparently connected on the one side with esoteric Shi'ism and on the other with a good deal of popular Christianity and Gnosticism. The Bektashis went much farther than other orders in regarding the outer ceremonies of Islam as unimportant and negligible; and in their rituals there were some remarkable analogies to those of Christianity. The Bektashi order acquired enormous prestige through its association with the Ottoman janissaries, but since their suppression in 1826 it has been gradually declining and [...] serves only in Albania" (Gibb, 1989, pp.108-109).

rebellions which had taken place as the Albanians tried to gain their liberation from the Turkish yoke."¹⁴⁵

But the spectrum of differences between Ghegs and Tosks was much wider and deeper. It is here that the territorial cleavage appears to run across an ideological one as the Muslims seem to be not only "*tribally divided*" but also ideologically.

"Apart from that, there is also a difference concerning their ideology; the Tosks are liberal while the Ghegs are conservatives. This difference between them is real and basic and not an intellectual's invention [...]. The Muslims are not only tribally divided, they are also divided into two groups concerning their political views. The one section supports Feudalism while the other is for Democracy. On the one hand Beys'- supporters of Feudalism- political programme has as aim first the establishment of an oligarchical regime in the name of Democracy, and an electoral system according to which "tenuous" –property- will be indispensable precondition in order someone to have the right "to elect and be elected;" which would mean that the armed landless people would automatically lose the right of being elected. And Second the maintenance of the prevalent agrarian system, which perpetuates the financial yoke of 60, 000 landless countrymen –among whom 40, 000 are Orthodox."¹⁴⁶

But it is complicated if not impossible for someone to draw clear lines among the cleavages. And it is more difficult to distinguish which (and if one or more of them) is hidden behind localism and the rejection of the acceptance of a central government in Albania.

"[...] The Catholics do not recognise the new regime and they are on the defensive as they have already got rid of the local administration and they have replaced it by catholic personnel. The government being unable to work its will on the Malissori and Mirdita

¹⁴⁵ H.D.A.G.M.F.A., C.D.A., Memorial, Tasis to Mr Rafail –Director of the Policy Department of the G.M.F.A.- R.N.:5075, 01.04.1925, File: Γ 62 η.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

*confined itself to sending 800 mercenaries in Shkoder in order to prevent that the town comes to rebellions' hands [...] Apart from that, the Gheg- Muslims of the Kosova region, who are also supporters of the Democratic party, not recognising the Zogu regime and under the leadership of Bajram Curri are on the defensive as well. The government seems to face difficulties to bring the situation under control."*¹⁴⁷

But Zogu's attitude towards any kind of conflicting interests was simply suppression. More than his wishes, the way of his handling maintained or even better activated a series of good old cleavages and provoked an opposition he managed to render harmless basically thanks to his "terror policy." The first victims of such a "terror policy" were the "democratic elements," representatives of which were assassinated by government's agents; on March 2nd 1925 in the streets of Bari in Italy Luigj Gurakuqi¹⁴⁸ and four weeks later, on April 2nd 1925 in an encounter in Dragobi Bajram Curri,¹⁴⁹ one of the most popular leaders of the progressive movement of liberation (Frasheri, 1964, p.232).

The following events show off how Zogu's way of acting led to the economic surrender of the country to foreigners (Italy) and brought back once again the "national question," as well as a palette of old cleavages (territorial, social and religious) which found their expression in a opposition movement, whose role was restricted and its power limited.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ About the assassination of Luigj Gurakuqi see: P.A.A.A, Kardorff –Tirana- an A.A.B., 06.03.1925, Nr.112, Tirana 1/3.

-He was one of the most controversial politicians in Albania. Kardorff characterised him as "*biegsamer Opportunist aus Skutari*" (Schmidt-Neke, 1987, p.144), while his biographer Tako (Tako, 1980, p.412) as well as Frasheri (Frasheri, 1964, p. 232) as "*one of the most illustrious leaders*" of the Albanian nationalist-democratic movement.

¹⁴⁹ See: P.A.A.A, Kardorff –Tirana- an A.A.B., 02.04.1925, Nr.181, Tirana 1/3.

By establishing a monarchy, he intended to reinforce and perpetuate dictatorship. He also wished to dispel any illusion that his mandate as President of the republic might one day run out. He also knew that he should turn to foreign assistance in order to fulfil his wish and make Albania economically viable. The policy he adopted with the Great Powers was that of the "open door" in economic as well as political spheres. As a result of this policy, one could argue that the years 1925-1928 represent in the history of Albania the years of assault and of capture, on the part of international imperialist capital, of the most important levels of the economy of this backward country. The preferred domain of concessions demanded by foreign capitalist companies was the exploitation of mines.¹⁵⁰ Capitalists likewise grabbed concessions in agricultural and industry. While Zogu handed to Yugoslavia a slice of Albanian territory –St. Naum– which injured the political boundaries of Albania won through the Albanian patriot's numerous and strenuous struggles.¹⁵¹

¹⁵⁰ Two British Companies took in concession 220, 000 hectares of land for prospecting purposes. The U.S.A. Standard Oil Company of New York took in concession 80, 000 hectares of land for prospecting for petroleum and various minerals. The Italian capitalist corporations AIPA, SIMSA, SIEMA received the right to exploit the underground riches of Albania. And a Yugoslav company received in concession the exploitation of copper in the zone of Puka (Frasheri, 1964, p.233).

¹⁵¹ The Conference of Ambassadors in Paris on the League of Nations' instruction in 1921 had set the final Albano-Yugoslav boundary. Belgrade had protested against this solution, demanding the inclusion, within the confines of Yugoslavia, of Vermosh and St. Naum. In spite of the Yugoslav demands, the Conference of Ambassadors in September 1923 confirmed its former decision. After further demands by Belgrade, in May 1924, the Conference of Ambassadors re-allotted Vermosh to Albania and shelved the question of St. Naum for later reconsideration. The question was brought before the League of Nations for discussion in September 1924. It was then that Fan Noli accompanied by Barjam Curri and Luigj Gerakuqi gave a brilliant speech in defence of the Albanian

But, on the one hand, Yugoslavia did not possess enough material means in order to be able to promote economically Albania, while on the other Zogu's distrust of Belgrade was strengthened by the Yugoslav readiness to intervene in Albanian politics to bring Zogu himself back to power (Cassels, 1970, p.246). So the choice was rather clear. Italy was the only country solid enough and with enough strategic interests to be willing to underwrite and support the chaotic Albanian economy; and it was not a threat for the Albanian boundaries.

Italy promised the dictator of Tirana more substantial financial and political aid than Yugoslavia. Mussolini promised, among others, that he would also suspend the support Rome gave to Albanian political exiles, irreconcilable rivals of Zogu and he (Zogu) commissioned the Libohova brothers (Myfit, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Finance, and Eqrem, the Albanian Minister in Rome) to negotiate for Albania. So on 15 March 1925 Myfit Bey Libohova and a group of Italian financiers, representing the biggest Italian banks, signed a convention to found the National Bank of Albania.¹⁵² This was a real death-knell for any further Albanian economic independence. The Albanian National Bank had its headquarters in Rome (!) The new Bank had the exclusive power to issue currency and acted as the treasury for the Albanian government, which meant that

question, contributed to the positive resolution which the League of Nations took leaving St.Naum within the boundaries of Albania (Fraseri, 1964, p.234).

¹⁵² The economic convention of Albania was so unfavourable to Albania that Fischer writes trying to interpret it: "[...] Zogu was initially hesitant but also eventually approved the convention. Myfit had been sure to remove the most damaging passages of the text and the President, being something of an economic novice, was unable to tell the difference. Zogu's approval can also be at least partially blamed on his fear of a negative Italian reaction if he refused. The President, in addition, suffered from illness and over work during the final stages of the negotiations. Had he been able to fully appreciate the terms of the agreement, he would certainly have rejected it" (Fischer, 1984, p.90).

Albanian gold reserves were transferred to Rome. And even though Albania was to control 51 percent of the initial capital (12.5 million gold francs) had to settle for about 20 percent as the Albanians were unwilling and unable to subscribe to the bank. So three fourth of the shares (with the right to vote) went to the hands of Italians, while the rest of the shares were divided between Yugoslavia (10 percent of the share capital), Switzerland (Basler Commercial Bank, 10 percent as well) and Belgium (Banque Belge pour l'Etranger, 5 percent) (Gross, 1933, p.538).

At the same time Zogu signed a contract with another group of financiers, called Societa per lo Svilippo Economico dell'Albania (SVEA). The loan Albania took was for 50 million gold francs, repayable in yearly instalments with a reimbursement term of forty years at a yearly interest rate of 7.5 percent. This loan was for the construction of roads, bridges, harbour-docks and public buildings. So by the end of the thirties, 275 Km of road had been constructed with another 1500 Km ready to be used, - 100 bridges and almost all the public buildings in Tirana were built (Pernack, 1972, p.78), but very little had been done to bring about any real improvement in farming, Albania's principal source of national income. And as Logoreci writes: *"These and other similar capital investments seemed designed to serve Mussolini's strategic purposes rather than Albania's economic development"* (Logoreci, 1977, p.58).

These two conventions marked the beginning of the unrestrained penetration of Italian capital into Albania and led to the speedy economic and political submission of the Albanian state to the Italian one, while they produced a strong negative reaction in Belgrade. Yugoslavia was now aware that Zogu would not be their puppet, and therefore, came to the conclusion that the best solution to their problem was to come to some direct agreement with Italy, which, however, refused the Yugoslavian proposal of dividing Albania (Cassels, 1970, p.320).

Mussolini was now ready for a political agreement, as was Zogu. So on November 27th 1926 they signed the Tirana Treaty, according to which Mussolini promised to defend for

five years not only the territorial integrity of Albania, but also its “legal and political *status quo*.” The “Italo-Albanian Pact of Friendship and Security” or as it is otherwise called, “The First Pact of Tirana,” was a victory for Mussolini who attached Zogu to Rome “[...] as a hanged man is attached to the noose” (Frasheri, 1964, p. 239). A year later, on November 22nd 1927, Mussolini signed with Zogu the “Second Pact of Tirana,” called the “Pact of Defensive Alliance,” for a period of twenty years. According to the clauses of the pact the two parties undertook to protect each other from any threat or assault from abroad, putting their resources at each other’s disposal.

But the complete political submission of Zogist Albania to fascist Italy, through the two Pacts of Tirana, could not but provoke different reactions from the side of landowners. The most important levers of the Albanian economy had fallen into the hands of Italian capitalist concerns, the expenses for the armaments and military equipment of Albania were defrayed by the government of Rome, Italian fascist instructor-officers were placed at the head of the Albanian army and the important naval base of Vlora was open to the Italian navy. “Independent” Albania in this manner entered under the protectorate of Italy. And the “Albanian national question” was brought once again onto the agenda. Some landowners (“Zogu supporters”), the Libohova brothers, many of the Vloras as well as Shevket bey Verlaci were for this philo-Italian policy, while Vrionis, Jusuf Bey Dibra (Esad Pasha’s ex-minister of War) and Ceno Bey Kryeziu were against it. And as concerns Zogu’s strategy, this was such as to enable him to prevent any personalities’ continuity in key posts, as that would lead to the creation of unwished-for power-centres around the President.

First of all he managed to remove one of the most dangerous personalities hampering his plans, namely Myfit bey Libohova. He had helped Zogu come to power but the latter was aware of the fact that Myfit was a qualified man with political influence on the Tosk-Muslims and could constitute a threat at any time. The incorporation of the National Bank of Albania and the manner in which it was executed caused a political scandal in Albania and provided Zogu a brilliant opportunity to eliminate “[...] one of his closest but most

pretentious collaborators, with whom he was no longer obliged to share the power that had been won by them conjointly” (Fraseri, 1964, p.236). The government was accused of corruption and of new treason and Zogu, in order to evade being compromised by this scandal, laid the whole burden of the responsibility on the Minister of Finance, Myfit Bey Libohova. The special commission that was entrusted by the parliament to investigate and conduct a hearing against the minister of finance suspended activity as soon as it became apparent that the threads of corruption led into the presidential palace. The thoroughly discredited Minister of Finance was obliged to retire from the government and political life. As the rest of the Libohova family constituted no threat for Zogu, Ajet Bey Libohova appears later as State President and Eqrem Bey Libohova as Minister of Foreign Affairs (Schmidt-Neke, 1987, p.182). A lot of other politicians also had to change their political posts -because of the economic scandal- and they were often moved from one position to the other –Parliament, Government, Diplomatic service.¹⁵³

He also managed to keep, one more of his open enemies, Shevket Bey Verlaci (the “Ras von Elbasan”)¹⁵⁴ confined to his house surrounded by his bodyguards (after an assassination attempt against him –December 1927); while Dino and Iliaz Bey Vroni left Albania (Schmidt-Neke, 1987, p.187) and Ceno Bey Kryeziu, was killed on October 14th 1927 in Prague.

Zogu left no room for an organised opposition within the country, namely political parties¹⁵⁵ and he also did very little to bridge the good old cleavages -territorial, social,

¹⁵³ Eshref Bey Fraseri was the only one that, till then, never to have occupied an important political position.

¹⁵⁴ The Italians had given him this name because of his unassailable power over his people in the region of Elbasan (Zamboni, 1970, p.210).

¹⁵⁵ During this third period (1925-1938) –especially after Zogu became King- the decline of the *PPer* is to be noted as well. It did not of course vanish into thin air. Several of its founders assumed leadership positions during the 1930s. Fraseri became prime minister

and religious. He was aware of the fact that the country needed a strong central government but he did not intend to achieve his goal by changing the Albanian status quo. His regime was a product of the civil war and he had never had the intention to legitimise it. His power was relied, on the one hand, on a small and not homogenous social elite; traditional landowners, highlanders of the provinces of Mati and Diber, merchants and some mercenary army leaders,¹⁵⁶ while on the other on powerful countries like Yugoslavia (which had helped him to come into power) and of course Italy (which helped him to remain in power).

And of course, he did not intend to solve any social problems or to give answers to questions raised by the June Revolution of 1924. On the contrary, he decided to bargain within the framework of the unsolved social problems in order to achieve his aim, namely to set up a central government with himself as the only leader, in such a way as to prevent any open opposition against him from the side of the conservative landowners of central and south Albania. He knew that he needed, if not the support of Beys, at least their neutrality, but on no occasion their animosity. Moreover, many of them were men of wide administrative and diplomatic experience gained in the service of the Ottoman state.

under Zogu in 1935, and Verlaci was appointed to that post by the Italian occupation authority in 1939.

¹⁵⁶ Zogu's instinct was to place the ultimate security of his administration in the hands of the tough highlanders of north and north-eastern Albania, particularly of the provinces of Mati and Dibra, who had helped him to return to power. Having started his career as a young tribal leader under the Turks and other foreign rulers, he was reluctant to depend entirely on the army or the police even when these had become fairly efficient instruments of executive power. Consequently, many of the clan chieftains were appointed reserve army officers, armed and paid by the government, who helped themselves ready to answer their master's call in time of crisis. They were, in effect, mercenaries pledged to defend the regime against domestic or external threats (Logoreci, 1977, pp. 56-57).

But the economic power and the political influence they wielded in their own districts made them uneasy and difficult partners. His problem was how best to deprive these men of the power they had exercised for many generations whilst making use of their administrative expertise. At this very point he decided "to play." Zogu's vague promise to introduce agrarian reforms was to hang like a permanent threat over the landowners, thus ensuring their loyalty and good political behaviour. A sort of compromise was finally reached by allowing the beys to retain their estates in return for giving up their political ambitions. Many of them served as cabinet ministers or held well-paid posts as government officials, diplomats and courtiers during the 1920s and 1930s but even though they had a good deal of influence in these positions and ample opportunities of enriching themselves, they had little real power (Logoreci, 1977, pp.56-57).

One could argue that, on the one hand, through his political manoeuvres and on the other by exercising violent authority, Zogu wanted to make all differences and cleavages vanish into thin air, and he was successful up to a point. But even if we could not talk of a long lasting or important rebellion within this third period (1925-1939), one could not deny the fact that they (cleavages) intruded themselves from time to time on Zogu's central government.

Such a case was the Dukagjini rebellion on November 20th 1926. Until then there was a strong wish for an outbreak against the Zogu regime and some efforts had been made for one to be organised but with no success. According to a confidential letter sent by the General Administrator of Epirus to the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs on February 4th 1925, there were five *adartika somata* (rebel groups) in Albania that winter. He writes: "[...] a few days ago arrived at Chimara a Noli supporter lieutenant coming from Italy and following by 15 men. So the rebel groups are now five. 1) 50 men under the leadership of Tsevdet Gioleka, 2) 20 men under the leadership of Hassan Pitsari, 3) 30 men under the leadership of Mero Liamezi, 4) 50 men under the leadership of Hassan Lepenitsa and 5) the newly coming group." And he goes on "The supporters of Noli hope that Fain Konitsa, the rich President of Vatra in America, will support them by providing

any kind of help as well as by sending volunteers in Spring in order to go successfully against Zogu."¹⁵⁷

So nobody was taken by surprise when the Dukagjini uprising broke out. The North provided a fertile ground for the territorial as well as the religious cleavage to be shown off even to some degree. The north part of the country was in the worst situation in comparison with the rest of the country. On the one hand, there was an absolute lack of social institutions (schools, hospitals etc.) and on the other, the hard traditional clan structure of the society left no margin for integration into the central state. Dom Lorenc Caka (the leader of the rebellion) represented federalism and he argued that Albania should be reorganised as a Federal State of which the North, the Centre and the South would be the components and Shkoder should be the capital city of the Gheg-Catholic part of this state (Robinson, 1941, p.53).

The government, with the help of the army of the Diber and Mati region, needed a few days in order to bring the whole situation under control. But the conflict succeeded to dig up the good old religious cleavage as well. On the winners side, only Muslims were to be found. The President was Muslim, the Minister of Interiors was Muslim and the soldiers (of the Diber and Mati) who undertook the task of putting down the rebellion were Muslims as well. On the losers side stand only Christian Catholics; miners who had received the order to revolt by their priests and the leaders of their clan (Schmidt-Neke, 1987, p.196). Apart from that, what made the things even worse was the fact that a series of brutal events took place. Even some priests were executed¹⁵⁸ and that prompted the Catholics to raise their voice and ask for treatment equal to the Muslims.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁷ H.D.A.G.M.F.A., C.D.A., General Administrator of Epirous to G.M.F.A., R.N.:2026, 04.02.1925, File: Γ 62 /4.

¹⁵⁸ See: P.A.A.A., Kardorff –Tirana- an A.A.B., 27.02.1927, Nr.263, R.72438.

¹⁵⁹ See: P.A.A.A., Kardorff –Tirana- an A.A.B., 23.03.1927, R.72438.

The aims of the rebellion were somewhat confused. Probably all sorts of motives contributed: the chance of a good fight, the annoyance at the recent attempt to suppress brigandage, the threat of Musa Yuka to disarm the tribesmen etc. But the political and social discontentment could be considered the main cause of this rebellion (as well as of others less spectacular)¹⁶⁰ while one could not ignore the fact that the foreign powers, being aware of the situation in Albania as well as of the existing interests and cleavages there, made use of them by playing an instigators role (at least in the case of the Dukagjini rebellion). Schmidt-Neke registers well the problematic concerning this theme. There is actually a multiplicity of views. Some -Swire, Olshausen- argue that behind it stood Yugoslavia –whose aim was to reduce the Italian influence on Albania.¹⁶¹ Against this thesis come Robinson (Robinson, 1941, p.52) and the voice of Belgrade saying that Italy was the instigating power.¹⁶² While Zamboni, Belegu and Schmidt-Neke assume that both Yugoslavia as well as Italy had reasons to provoke such an uprising (Schmidt-Neke, 1987, pp. 196-197).

¹⁶⁰ Between 1925 and 1927 there was a conflict between 100 peasant families and landowners in the region of Gjirokastra; Protests in the regions of Pogradec and Vlore; Conflict between peasants and the Juka brothers in the region of Shkoder; 1927 and 1928 fuelled dissatisfaction among the peasant families as they grumbled at the high taxation, especially in the north part of the country.

¹⁶¹ See: P.A.A.A , Dr. Olshausen –Belgrad- an A.A.B., 29.11.1926, Nr.1722/26, R.72437.

¹⁶² Belgrade openly put the blame on Italy for the Dukagjini revolt. In “Politika” of 1-9-1928, it is written that this rebellion was nothing more than a part of the Italian plan to gain greater influence on Albania; “[...] the revolt of November 1926 was engineered as a pretext for the Tirana Treaty which was a guarantee for the Zogu regime and an excuse for the Italian armed intervention in Albania [...]” (H.D.A.G.M.F.A., C.D.A., D.P. Thessaloniki (Tiranski “Politika” Belgrade 1-9-28) to the D.P. of the G.M.F.A., R.N.:3867, 04.09.1928, File: 3.2. A Πολιτική Α/4.)

4.2. Political groups and Parties

But, as there was no room for a good organised opposition in the country, the centre of activity against the regime moved outside the country, reflecting the oppressed wishes and interests, which were almost impossible to be expressed inside the country. Neither the leaders of the democratic revolution nor any other political exiles abandoned the struggle when they left Albania. In his report of May 12, 1926, Kardorff refers to 400 political emigrants, who even though they were living in different places and represented different political views (*"Von Monarchisten angefangen bis zu Kommunisten"*) their *"enmity with Zogu"* was strong enough to keep them together.¹⁶³ When Ahmed Zogu came back to Albania on December 24th 1924 the "heads" of the June Revolution fled the country. Sejfulla Maleshova, Noli's secretary, Llazar Fundo and Tajar Zavalani went to Moscow (Lange, 1973, p.46), while others went to Paris and Vienna. The most important of all the anti-Zoguist groups of émigrés was in Vienna,¹⁶⁴ moreover, it was the only one to form a strong organisation. At the end of March 1925 its leaders, with the support of the Communist Balkan Federation, called a special conference in the Austrian capital, which led to the formation of a *Komiteti Nacional Revolucionar* (KONARE) (National Revolutionary Committee) presided over by Fan Noli. Members of this organisation were also Koculi, Vinjau, Kruja, Mborja and Tromara (Schmidt-Neke, 1987, p.188).

¹⁶³ See: P.A.A.A., Kardorff –Tirana- an A.A.B., 12.05.1926, Nr.527, R.72437.

¹⁶⁴ Busch-Zantner writes that, the variety of the regime opponents who lived in the Austrian capital is indicated by an event, which took part in Vienna 1931. After the assassination attempt against Zogu, the Vienna police arrested 20 émigrés and made a thorough interrogation. During this interrogation it came out that 12 of them were politically active and they represented eight different factions, which co-operated partially. These democrats used to gather in four coffee houses in Vienna and they were of every nuance; Catholics, Orthodox, Muslims, Kosova people belonging to Hassan Bey Pristinas group etc. (Busch-Zantner, 1939, p.91).

According to the programme of this political alliance, which was published on May 5th, the goals to be achieved were:

- a. Albania's liberation of Zogu's dictatorship, of Feudalism and imperialism
- b. Establishment of a "real republican system"
- c. Agrarian reform and
- d. Ethnic borders (Schmidt- Neke, 1987, p.188)

KONARE never succeeded in establishing regular contacts inside Albania itself. Its efforts concentrated on what it called the "new Albanian question" (the result of fascist Italy's rapine policies and Zogu's increasing enslavement). And it was, of course, against the always growing Italian influence on Albania. This was also the political line of the KONARE weekly newspaper *Liria Kombetare* (National Liberation) which was being published in Geneva from 1925 until 1935 (Körner, 1982, p.414).

In April 1927 the Kosova irredentists left the KONARE and established a new organisation called *Komitete i Clirimit te Kosoves* (KCK) (Kosova Liberation Committee) under the leadership of Bedri Pejani. It was on this occasion that KONARE reorganised under the name *Komiteti Nacional i Clirimit* (KCN) (Committee of National Liberation) Both these organisations undertook the task of fighting for similar aims, namely for a democratic Republic without feudalism and capitalism; for a Republic which would be based on the work of its citizens, the young people and the intellectuals (Schmidt-Neke, 1987, p.189). From then on, the KCN became more and more radical as many of its members now (Halim Xhelo, Riza Cerova, Llazar Fundo and Sejfullah Maleshova) represented a communist ideology. For the first time the Albanian opposition came across leftist and even communist ideas, out of which a movement was to grow which had a profound influence on the country's evolution during the next two decades.

The first great question to discuss, during the early months of its existence, was what position the anti-Zogist movement should adopt in its foreign policy. It was in these circumstances that a strong new current of opinion emerged for the first time, declaring that it was in favour of turning to the USSR and international Communism for support.

This was not dictated by despair, nor perhaps by political opportunism, but has to be considered as a response to the new conceptions of foreign policy that belonged to the socialist revolution.

In November 1927 there was a further manifestation of the rapprochement between Albanian exiles and the USSR when Fan Noli visited Moscow in his capacity as president of the Committee of National Liberation in order to take part in the Congress of the Friends of the Soviet Union (Pollo and Puto, 1981, p. 214). But Fan Noli was soon to retire from political life –1930/1932; the leadership of the organisation was taken over by younger men with communist ideals and KCN actually became an Albanian section of the Communist Balkan Alliance.

Fan Noli returned to Boston from Europe in 1930 and succeeded in rousing once again the dormant nationalist spirit of Albanians there.¹⁶⁵ He even achieved to launch a newspaper “*Republika*,”¹⁶⁶ in opposition to “*Dielli*” the organ of the Vatra. What “*Republika*” demanded was more or less the thesis of the previous KONARE. Its points were: “1) *A republic and not a monarchy; because it has been proven that a republic in the broad and general form outlined by the congress of Lushnja is better fitted for*

¹⁶⁵ As the Members of the Federal Writers’ Project register “*the infant Albanian government [...] was to face its pressing foreign problems with little opposition from émigrés in America. While it jockeyed with the English and Italian companies for the most advantageous disposal of its oil resources, the voice of Vatra was quieted.*” (Federal Writers’ Project, 1975, pp.76-77) and it goes on: “*The Massachusetts Albanians could not share Konitza’s optimism –in September 1928, when Zogu proclaimed himself Zog I, king of the Albanians, “Dielli” wished him godspeed. But they had become so apathetic towards homeland politics that they failed to organise a single mass protest against the establishment of the monarchy*” (Federal Writers’ Project, 1975, p79).

¹⁶⁶ A weekly newspaper, published in Boston USA from 1930-1933 (Körner, 1982, p.430).

Albanian needs than a monarchy with a German King (like Wied) or a mountain Sultan (like Ahmed Zog); because a republic with its high council would cost Albania less than 250, 000 gold francs, whereas the monarchy under Sultan Zog costs Albania some three millions in salary and some fifteen millions for the army that protects him. 2) A working people's government and not a government of the nobles. The nobles have been, and are today, the cause of all the country's miseries; yesterday and today these gentry have kept and are still keeping the people in darkness, slavery, and poverty –yesterday under the domination of Turkey, today under the yoke of Italy, because that is what their interests demand. In order that the people may be enlightened, freed, and enriched, they must take governmental power into their own hands and with it, the land, the plantations, and the wealth of the country. 3) Independence and not a protectorate. Albania is for the Albanians and for Italians. We want to be masters of our own land and not colonial slaves of Italy as the Arabs are in Tripoli. We want the land of Albania to belong to its people; we will not have it snatched away to be colonised by the Italians. For the Albanian people, national independence means life, Italian protectorate, death” (Federal Writers' Project, 1975, pp.79-80). Fan Noli was actually out of political life 1932 and even though his former followers in America did continue to exist one could not talk of an important opposition from the side of the Albanian-Americans.

The year 1927 split KONARE not only into KCN and KCK. There was also another group of its members, which was against the leftist tendency of the organisation as well as against anti-imperialism and antifascism. Its position was pure philo-Italian. This group established the *Grup politik independent refugjatesh shqiptare* (Independent Political Group of the Albanian Refugees)¹⁶⁷ Hassan Bey Pristina was the leader and *Ora e Shqipnise* (The Albanian Spirit) the organisation's newspaper, which was published once or twice a month in Vienna (Körner, 1982, p.421).

¹⁶⁷ „Da diese Organisation zeitweilig im italienischen Zadar saß, wurde sie als „Grupi i Xares“ bekannt“ (Schmidt- Neke, 1987, p.191).

Bashkimi Kombetar (BK) (National Union), was one more organisation which was established in 1925 by some conservative Albanians led by Sotir Peci, Angeli Suma, Ali Klissura and Djemal Bushati¹⁶⁸ (representing the four religious divisions). They issued a violent manifesto denouncing Zogu as a traitor (Swire, 1971, p.456) not because of his social and international orientation but because they wanted a modern Albania without any change concerning its social situation. Their main aim was Zogu's downfall and the obstruction of an Italian protectorate.¹⁶⁹ They were also totally against any communist ideology and tendency and they were supported by French and Yugoslavia. Members of this organisation were also the ex-ministers Delvina, Shala and Vllamasi, as well as the ex-deputies Omari, Kelcyra, Ethem Bey Vlora (one of Ismail Qemal's sons) (Schmidt-Neke, 1987, p.190). The assassination attempt against Zogu in 1931 had shown that the effectiveness of this organisation should not be underestimated. On February 20th 1931 the South-Slavian government struck a note of warning against Tirana and Vienna that the King of Albania would probably be the victim of an assassination attempt. The same night, as King Zog left the Opera house in Vienna, there was an attack against him. The assassins were two Albanians, Ndok Gjeloši and Aziz Cami. Gjeloši was Christian coming from an old-established Skutari family, he was educated in a Jesuit cloister and was fanatically against the Muslim Zogu-government. Behind him in Vienna it was to be found Qiazim Mulletti and Samu Angjelin, the two leaders of BK (an organisation with close political as well as financial ties to South Slavia) (Busch-Zantner, 1939, pp.118-121). During the year 1935 the KCN tried to co-operate with BK and the result of this effort was that while BK survived, KCN split up.

As already mentioned, as soon as the June Revolution had been defeated, a group of young militants from the National Revolutionary Committee, ex-members of the Bashkimi organisation, went to the Soviet Union and stayed there for some time. When they left, a few years later, they had the firm intention of founding an Albanian

¹⁶⁸ See: P.A.A.A., Konsul v.Druffel –z.Zt. Berlin- an A.A.B., 17.06.1927, R.72438.

¹⁶⁹ See: Ibid.

Communist Party. They began by forming a communist faction in the heart of the Committee of National Liberation, then, in 1930, some of them returned to Albania, where the situation had already developed in a direction favourable to the propagation of left-wing ideas. A working class was evolving as a result of new capitalist enterprises, particularly of foreign companies. Ruined craftsmen and peasant were joining the workers at an ever-increasing rate.

So the first communist movement made its appearance in Albania as the first revolutionary political organisation of the new Albanian working class. In 1929 Ali Kelmendis and Konstantin Boshnjaku made a first effort to establish an illegal communist party; while the first communist group *Puna* (Labour) met in Korce the same year. Within a few years other communist groups were formed in Tirana *Zjarri* (Fire) Elbasan *Rinia* (Youth), as well as in Shkoder, Gjirokaster, etc. (Lange, 1973, p.47). But they were still only tiny organisations, consisting of petit bourgeois and intellectuals from poor backgrounds. They were not equal to the primordial task of any communist movement, that of integrating their ideals with the working-class movement. Besides, their actions lacked co-ordination and a common direction and bore the mark of wide ideological differences; they limited themselves to propaganda of communist ideas on purely theoretical levels, and remained almost completely divorced from real problems not only concerning the emancipation of the workers, but even in the case of the struggle against the regime.

Even though the communist movement and the communist cells and groups which came into existence between 1928-1929 were not able to combine into a single organisation and consequently were in no way a threat for Zogu's regime, they did manage in the pre-war period to lay effective foundations for a movement that was to prove a vital factor in the country's fate in years to come. And apart from that, the communist movement draws attention to one more part of the gamut of the ideological agitation of that period.

But Zogu wished no opposition and his position towards the expression of any kind of interests and differences was clear. "With a carrot and stick" policy, he strengthened his position while weakening his opponents. Inside the country he adopted a terror policy (arrests, imprisonments and death sentences) against any kind of opposition. Meanwhile, through his amnesty policy, opposition outside the country became harmless. Swire gives a good description by writing: *"During August 1927 the President and Cabinet paid state visits to Durrës and Skutari. During his visit to the latter town, Zogu granted an amnesty in favour of seventy persons under sentence for participation in the revolt in the previous November (Dukagjin rebellion), which created a very favourable impression. In the same month Colonel Kassem Qafezezi, who had been a refugee since the eviction of Monsignor Noli, returned to Albania, having been granted a special pardon, together with three hundred other political prisoners and refugees. –Many of them were members of KCN and BK (Schmidt-Neke, 1987, p.193)- The list of these persons [...] included the names of MM. Sotir Petsi, Sulejman Delvino, Redjeb Mitrovitza, and Dr. Michal Tourtoulis [...]"*¹⁷⁰ (Swire, 1971, pp.502-503). Some of the refugees who returned to Albania, thanks to Zogu's amnesty policy, and who had not kept a leading role in the opposition enjoyed the opportunity to make a career as politicians later.

The way towards the monarchy was now free and in June 1928, it was also "legally" opened up in June 1928 by the decision of the joint session of the two Houses of Parliament for a general revision of the Republic's Constitution. It led to the dissolution of the Legislative Assembly and new elections for a Constituent Assembly. As might be expected, the elections were hurriedly organised in mid-August and strictly supervised by government forces. As the news that the new Assembly would proceed to the proclamation of the President to Monarch, had already spread among the voters, only one word could be enough to describe the reactions of the simple Albanian citizens in general,

¹⁷⁰ 1926 Michal Turtulis had been condemned by the Political Court to 101 years imprisonment (See: P.A.A.A., Kardorff –Tirana- an A.A.B., 20.11.1927, Nr.1167, R.72438.).

concerning the regime change: indifference.¹⁷¹ Skarpas reports on two groups of citizens, especially in the south of the country, whose reaction proved the truth of the comment.¹⁷² On the one hand the Orthodox showed no interest in the future of Albania. The Greek population of the “North Epirus,” wished and hoped for the annexation of their region to Greece, was now concerned, as they interpreted the change of the regime as a further step towards the stabilisation of the Albanian State, which contradicted their secret desires. So they decided to abstain from voting. As a result, only 3 per cent of the population, in the Korce Prefecture, voted during these elections.¹⁷³

And on the other it was the Muslims the majority of whom (in the south of the country) was not favourably disposed towards Zogu¹⁷⁴ and as such they had no reason to show enthusiasm. However, Zogu’s “terror policy” had left no margin for an open reaction of dissatisfaction. One could not ignore the fact that voters as well as electors were being invited by the Authorities to sign a declaration according to which by taking part to these

¹⁷¹ The truth of the fact is also supported by the reports of the “The Nation and the Athenaeum” where it is written “[...] *what difference it makes* –the declaration of Zogu to King- *even in Albania is a difference of form rather than of fact* [...]” (H.D.A.G.M.F.A., C.D.A., The Nation and the Athenaeum, 08.09.1928, File: 3.2. Πολιτική A/4) and the report of Mr. Kaklamanos who cited what the correspondent of “Times” in Albania comments upon the regime’s change: “*the country makes no difference between the two types of State* [...]” (H.D.A.G.M.F.A., C.D.A., Kaklamanos - London- to G.M.F.A., 14.12.1928, R.N.: 3157, File: 3.2. A Πολιτική A/4).

¹⁷² See: H.D.G.M.F.A., C.D.A., Skarpas –Agioi Saranta- to Greek Embassy in Tirana, 08.09.1928, R.N.:739, File: 3.2. A Πολιτική A/4.

¹⁷³ See: H.D.A.G.M.F.A., C.D.A., Tsormpatzis –Greek Consulate in Corce- to the G.M.F.A., R.N. 308, 28.8.1928, File: 3.2. A Πολιτική A/4.

¹⁷⁴ See: Ibid.

elections they simultaneously accepted the President's conversion to King; no-one dared not to sign.¹⁷⁵ So, from their side, the only "safe" way of reacting was "indifference."

Apart from that, by means of bribery, Zogu had managed to bring the press to a position favourable towards him and his plans. The Greek Consul in Korce, in a confidential letter to the G.M.F.A., mentions that the director of the "Telegraph," a newspaper published in Tirana, received 200 gold coins of 20franks each, to change the policy of his paper and to lay emphasis on the need for the regime change.¹⁷⁶

These elections produced a still more docile Assembly, at the first meeting of which on 1 September, Albania was proclaimed a monarchy¹⁷⁷ and Zogu "King of the Albanians"¹⁷⁸ under the name of King Zog I.¹⁷⁹ The new royal government was appointed immediately, presided over by Zog's right-hand man, Kotta.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁵ See: Ibid.

¹⁷⁶ See: Ibid.

¹⁷⁷ Kardorff refers to this „*Rein in die Republik, 'raus aus der Republik*“ game, as „*Ahmet's persönlichen Nutzen dienenden Wechseln*“ One should not forget that it was in 1925 that the regime's transformation from Monarchy to Republic had taken place, while 1928 the regime changed once again from Republic to Monarchy (See: P.A.A.A., Kardorff –Tirana- an A.A.B., 23.01.1929, Nr.1104/28, R.72402).

¹⁷⁸ Especially the Serbian government showed a great discontent and concern as the new King had received the title "King of the Albanians" and not "King of Albania" (Kontis, 1997, Vol. III, p. 382).

¹⁷⁹ The story of the name-choice by the new king is well illustrated in the following texts: "[...] *The President of the Constituent Assembly has invited Ahmed Zogu to rule under the title of SKANDERBEG the THIRD. The name was that by which the national hero of Albania, George Kastrioti, was famed first among the Turk, by whom he was taken as a youthful hostage, and afterwards in the history of the Near East. His exploits are still proverbial among the Balkan people: he was the one soldier of his age who*

Even though all had realised that the fact itself could not bring any deep change in the situation in Albania -the German Consul in Athens puts it very well when he writes in his Report: “[...] *ob dort das Republikanische-Diktatoriale oder das Monarchische-Regime*

outmanoeuvred and defeated Sultan Mohamed II., the conqueror of Constantinople, and even the later exploits of Ali Pasha of Janina have not obscured his glory among his own people. The choice by a Moslem King of the name of the Catholic warrior whom all the sects and tribes of Albania, Moslems and Christians, Ghegs and Tosks, unflinchingly followed and obeyed would have a special significance. Political disunion has been the curse of Albania since SKANDERBEG'S death, and with rare exceptions the political vision of most Albanian chiefs has been limited to the independence of a mountain range or the ambitions of a faction. [...] The name of SKANDERBEG is –would be- a reminder of the necessity of national union and the friends of Albania would find it of good augury [...]” (H.D.A.G.M.F.A., C.D.A., The Times, August 29, 1928, File: 3.2. A Πολιτική A/4). But “[...]Even SKANDERBEG, who did succeed in imposing unity to meet the Turkish invasion, was never King of Albania, and his unworthy son, John, presumably the “SKANDERBEG II.” of the Press, sold his only kingdom, the tiny principality of Kroia, to the Venetians. It is from this SKANDERBEG that a title was suggested for the new king because of the known fondness of both for Italian gold, but Ahmed saw the trap and preferred a family name to inviting comparison with two SKANDERBERGS” (H.D.A.G.M.F.A., C.D.A., The Nation and the Athenaeum, 8 September 1928, File: 3.2. A Πολιτική A/4).

¹⁸⁰ Prime Minister: Kostaq Kotta

Minister of Foreign Affairs: Iljaz Bey Vrioni

Minister of Interior: Kostaq Kotta

Minister of Justice: Hyqmet Delvina

Minister of Finance: Milto Tutulani

Minister of Public Works: Salih Vuciterni

Minister of Education: Xhafer Ypi

Minister of Agricultural and Forestry: Musa Juka (Kaser, 1981, p.17).

*herrscht, an den tatsächlichen innen- und außenpolitischen Verhältnissen nichts ändern wird,”*¹⁸¹ caused a variety of reactions to Albania's regime change on the part of foreigners who had once again been given the opportunity “to use” the Albanian cleavages, in one way or the other –either by repressing their dynamism or by revitalise it,- in order to promote their own interests.

It was mainly the fact that no other country apart from Italy and England¹⁸² had been informed in relation to regime change plans in Albania that provoked the reaction of the press which offered a variety of pro –and contra arguments with regard to the Monarchy and the Monarch himself, as well as interpretations concerning the scenaria as to how the new regime came into power and with what the consequences would be. So Belgrade, on the one hand, regarded Italy as an instigator for the Monarchy, as such a regime change would be helpful to Italy in order to achieve its goals. The newspaper “Politika” – Belgrade, 01-09-1928- writes: *“The fact that Albania is proclaimed Kingdom [...] is not an accidental incident and of course not a surprising one. [...] after the ratification of the Treaties and Banks, the Italian Ambassador Baron Aloizi Pompeo was sent to Albania. His mission was to organise, in the best way, the operation and exploitation of the contracts in all respects and especially military and financial. He came to Albania in February 1926 and after his research he ascertained that: The only guarantee for Italy would be Zogu and a group of state employees; the majority of Albanians were against Italy, because of its exploitation policy, as well as against Zogu, because of his philo-Italian policy.*

Afterwards, Baron Aloizi went back to Rome and made the following proposals:

Before the beginning of the Treaties' exploitation, it was necessary that the Italian influence on Albania should be strengthened through the strengthening of Zogu's position. He also recommended the revision of the Constitution by an Assembly which

¹⁸¹ P.A.A.A, (illegible signature) –Athen- an A.A.B., 03.09.1928, II B A, R.72438.

¹⁸² See: P.A.A.A, Busse –Tirana- an A.A.B., 29.09.1928, Nr.842, R.72438.

would be constituted by representatives who would be a real guarantee for the unfailing fulfilment of the contracts. [...] A “clear-up action,” concerning all the “elements” which would be dangerous for the new regime as well as for the interests of Italy, should also be taken place. And a large amount of money should be invested in propaganda in order to persuade Albanians to join Ahmed Zogu.

Both parts accepted this programme. Only one point had to be discussed. Ahmed Zogu wanted to be proclaimed King, through the revision of the Constitution, for fear that his personal role would be limited in the future comparing to the present Constitution according to which he is the President, the Prime Minister and the Minister of War – in one word “everything.” [...] The proposal was accepted and both parts went on to the implementation of a plan.

Dukagjini rebellion, [...] armament of the country and re-organisation of the army, [...] the civil courts sent the “opponents” to prisons or condemned them to death, [...] while the secret terror organisation “Dera Barl” cleared-up everything that was against Zogu and the Italian interests [...]”¹⁸³

“The Times”(28 August 1928) on the other hand, offer a variety of arguments in favour of the Albanian Monarchy and claimed that it was a wise decision deriving from the will of the people and was absolutely needed, given the situation in Albania. “The Times” argued that “[...] An Albanian King chosen by the representatives of the people, who will certainly rule while he reigns, likely to be less amenable to foreign pressure than the temporary President of a very young Republic. [...] There is much to be said for the view that a Monarchy, as constitutional a character as local conditions permit, is more suited to Albanian needs than a Republic. In primitive and turbulent countries the temporary tenure of Presidential office is more alluring –and more profitable- to the political adventurer than the lifelong responsibilities of kingship; [...] In the particular case of

¹⁸³ H.D.A.G.M.F.A., C.D.A., D.P. Thessaloniki (Tiranski “Politika” Belgrade 1-9-28) to the D.P. of the G.M.F.A., R.N.:3867, 04.09.1928, File: 3.2. A Πολιτική Α/4.

Albania the services rendered to his country by the President should enhance his prestige as King.”

And it goes on reciting the personal qualifications and achievements of the new King by writing : *“In spite of conspiracies and attempts at rebellion he had governed a mountain people lacking the tradition of ordered rule for three years without any important defection among his friends and followers [...]. He had succeeded in disarming the majority of his subjects who once deemed it indecent to walk weaponless abroad, and in suppressing armed brigandage, a proffession which the Gheg hillsmen formerly admired as much as reprobated fraud and theft. In spite of these achievements he is at least as popular as any hard-handed reformer of a primitive society can hope to be. His courage and determination inspire a salutary respect [...] his picturesque career suggests that he will meet both domestic and foreign enemies as well as the difficulties that confront the ruler of a poor and primitive Stat with the resolution of his race.”*¹⁸⁴

As an answer to this encomium of the Albanian Monarchy and Zog himself comes the article of “The Nation and the Athenaeum” a couple of weeks later (08.09.1928) which offers a totally different aspect, while simultaneously illustrates the nature of the cleavages of that time. *“[...] the step –the change to Monarchy- has come too late. [...] The Albanians have had full opportunity to realise in peace the consequences of Ahmed’s acceptance of the Italian loan. They have seen the Italians rapidly occupy their country and control everything in it that is worth controlling. They see themselves condemned to sit in impotence and watch the process go on until a day will come when an Albanian Government will tire of formal independence and accept the reality of an Italian colony.*

[...] However profitable Ahmed may find Italian support, the form it takes does not commend itself to the other Albanian chiefs who do not share immediately in its profits. Underneath the acquisitiveness that distinguishes the leaders of the Conservative Party,

¹⁸⁴ H.D.A.G.M.F.A., C.D.A., The Times, August 29, 1928, File: 3.2. Α Πολιτική Α/4.

*there is a sturdy desire for independence inherited from the yesterday when they were brigands and backed up by a long-tradition. It is an independence that is at once national and personal. They dislike foreign overlords and they dislike kings. [...] Now Albania has both overlord and king.” So they ask: “Who is this Ahmed that he should reign over us? Did we not know his father and his grandfather who never aspired to kinship? [...]”*¹⁸⁵

It was the strong Muslim families who received the declaration of Ahmed Bey as King badly. It were the Albanian Beys who used to enjoy their feudal rights and be a kind of “small King” in their region. “Now they were not only called to accept the institution of hereditary ruler, but even more to submit themselves to his authority, like docile subjects. A sure indication of their mentality is the following fact: when Ahmed Zogu was still President most of the Beys called him “Ahmed Bey Mati” –the name of the region he was came from- instead of “Mr. President” when they talked with him.”¹⁸⁶

But “during the Presidential months Ahmed turned from a feudal baron into tyrant to other barons, and the motive of the transformation was the usual one –fear. He has betrayed everyone it turn. [...] He is distrusted by the Christians because he is a Moslem and by the Moslems because he bows humbly to a Christian Power. The peaceful and the trading and the intelligentsia hate him because he is a robber chief, and the robber chiefs hate him because, in spite of his overthrow of the reforming Fan Noli, he may have to turn reformer in his turn unless the Italians reform the whole country overnight. The Serbs do not trust him...and the Italians trust him so little that up in Vienna they retain in their service his personal enemy, Hassan Bey Pristina, who can take his place the moment Italy finds it more convenient to get rid of him. Greedy and ambitious, he has

¹⁸⁵ H.D.A.G.M.F.A., C.D.A., The Nation and the Athenaeum, 8 September 1928, File: 3.2. A Πολιτική Α/4.

¹⁸⁶ H.D.A.G.M.F.A., C.D.A., Skarpas –Agioli Saranda- to Greek Embassy in Tirana, 08.09.1928, R.N.: 739, File: 3.2. A Πολιτική Α/4.

*had no other motive in his short career save the acquisition of money and power. Never was his need for both greater [...].”*¹⁸⁷

The assembly then passed the Kingdom’s Statute¹⁸⁸ (01.12.1928) the main aim of which was to give the regime every appearance of a constitutional monarchy. Legislative power

¹⁸⁷ H.D.A.G.M.F.A., C.D.A., The Nation and the Athenaeum, 8 September 1928, File: 3.2. Α Πολιτική Α/4.

¹⁸⁸ Albanian Constitution of 1 December 1928:

I.	General Arrangements	Art.1-6
II.	State’s Authority	Art.7-14
	a. Legislative.....	Art.15-49
	b. Executive	
	section A. The King.....	Art.50-98
	section B. The Ministers.....	Art.99-117
	c. Justice	
	section A. Courts.....	Art.118-134
	section B. Highest State Court.....	Art.135-140
III.	Public Finance	
	a. Finance.....	Art.141-152
	b. Finance Court.....	Art.153-159
IV.	Council of State.....	Art.160-168
V.	National Defence.....	Art.169-170
	section A. National Army	Art.171-188
	section B. Police.....	Art.189-190
VI.	Citizen’s Rights.....	Art.191-213
VII.	Various Arrangements.....	Art.214-223
VIII.	Revision of the Constitution.....	Art.224-229
IX.	Transitional Arrangements.....	Art.230-231
X.	Final Arrangements.....	Art.232-234

remained in the hands of Parliament, which consisted only of the Lower House now, as the Senate had been abolished. However, no law was valid without the king's approval. The appointment of ministers and important government officials, the investiture and deposition of the government even the dissolution of Parliament were all royal prerogatives. In law and in fact Parliament's status was drastically reduced, its role being no more than that of a simple ornament in Zogu's autocracy.¹⁸⁹ Between 1929 and 1932, the foundations of a new public and private legal system were laid, and civil, penal and commercial codes set down, all of which were based on the principles of European law.

"The structure of the regime was during the Monarchy similar to the one previously" (Busch-Zantner, 1939, p.114). But one could now see more clearly which were the elements on which Zog based his power. Landlords, the continuation of personalities and patriarchy were the three pillars of the Monarchy as well. Schmidt-Neke formulates it very well when he talks of a *"Personalities' roundabout"* (*"Personenkarussell"*) of the social elite within the government, which maintained the continuity and provided Zog a feeling of safety, which he needed (Schmidt-Neke, 1993, p.44 & Schmidt-Neke, 1993, p.44, Footnote: 50). On his list of supporters were the same names of the great landlords to be found as previously: Vrioni Bey, Vlora Bey, Frasheri Bey etc. While the patriarchal structure of the Royal Court is revealed by the names of Zef Serreqi, who was the aid-de-camp of the President and later of the King, and his confidential adviser in matters of

(Albanie, Constitution du 1er décembre 1928, in: Annuaire de l'Institut International de Droit Public, 1930, pp.353-386).

¹⁸⁹ Above all, it is the Art. 83 of the Constitution which showed to what extent that was true. According to it, the King had the power and the right to conclude international contracts without being obliged to account to Parliament. Even the announcement –that such a treaty had been signed- was left at the disposal of the King. (Albanie, Constitution du 1er décembre 1928, Art. 83). [About the power and the rights which enjoyed Zogu as King –according to the Constitution of 1st December 1928- see also: Schwanke, 1963, pp.6-7 & Busch-Zantner, 1939, p.110]

military, policy and non-policy;¹⁹⁰ Abdurrahman Mati, the King's educator and advisor – the man who carried through matters which could not be put on record (Busch-Zantner, 1939, p.115); Abdurrahman Dibra and Musa Juka whose corruption was decisive for the future of the regime;¹⁹¹ and of course Sadije, King Zog's mother, who according to the oriental tradition maintained "*oriental discipline*" within the big family.

The first years of Monarchy are characterised by the introduction of "*many badly needed reforms, as Zog attempted to live up to his carefully cultivated image of a progressive Western ruler*" (Fischer, 1984, p.168), and to create a national consciousness among his fellow countrymen, as this could be a prerequisite to modernism.¹⁹² But there was not even the slightest intention to bridge any cleavages, while even the smallest effort to reduce their deepness was not registered. Even during this "Reforms phase," Zog adopted the same policy of ignorance and indifference towards the variety of citizens' interests and conflicts.

¹⁹⁰ Zef Serreqi's wife came from Graz and he was the cause that German was the language of Diplomacy in Albania. [Apart from Turkish and Italian, Zog also spoke German] (Busch-Zantner, 1939, p.114).

¹⁹¹ "[...] *the behaviour of the Minister of Interiors (Government Pandeli Vangeli 6.3.1930-22.10.1935) –Musa Juka- namely the abuse of his authority, and the fact that he and his "dependants" –the people around him- were totally corrupted, had rendered the government antipathetic. On the other hand, King Zog's tolerance towards them made him jointly responsible for this situation and undermined his authority*" (H.D.A.G.M.F.A., C.D.A., Skeferis –Légation Hellénique en Albanie, Tirana- to G.M.F.A., [A' P.D., B.D.], 23.10.1935, R.N.: 2315, File: A/4/2.). There is no doubt that these, among other reasons, led to the construction of a new government in 1935.

¹⁹² See: P.A.A.A., Rede des Königs bei Parlamentseröffnung am 15. October 1929, Tirana 4/1.

The Zogist “policy of indifference” could be also noticed in almost all fields and in every step as concerned the reforms themselves. Reforms in education, administration, religion, the army, as well as the economy (a land reform scheme was proposed in 1920) “*proved more impressive on paper than in practice*” (Stavrianos, 1963, p. 723).

His first effort was the creation of a national identity which automatically meant the exclusion of any national or religious difference in Albania, by using the method of “dwindling” and “effacement” towards the “minorities.” In the field of education the King launched a reform programme aiming at nationalising the schools. This was Zog’s policy of gradual abolition of the non-Albanian speaking schools. An effort which failed totally, firstly because of the lack of money and secondly because it was seen as an anti-Christian measure and produced a severe reaction¹⁹³ – “*Zog also managed to alienate both the Catholics and the Orthodox, as the majority of schools that were closed in 1933 were church-run*” (Vickers, 1995, p.133).

The rest of the reform programmes had to face a more or less similar future. They remained a dead letter; and above all the very promising “Land Reform Scheme.” In April 1930 the Scheme was made law, according to which: the estate owner was permitted to keep forty hectares for himself and five hectares of cultivated land as well as ten hectares of pasture land for his wife and each child. One-third of the remainder was to be sold to the tenants who were to pay twenty fold francs per hectare in ten annual instalments to the Agricultural Bank, which was to be created for this purpose. The estate owners could keep the other two-thirds for fifteen years if it was modernised, otherwise it too was subject to sale to the tenants under the same conditions. If the owner leased this

¹⁹³ The educational reform was especially harmful to the Greek-speaking villages in the south. The Greek minority leaders took their case to the League of Nation while Greece to the International Court of Justice –the Hague Tribunal- (Kontis, 1997, Vol. IV, p.225-226) the decision of which (06.04.1935) was in its favour. The Graecophone schools were opened again (Antonopoulos, 1995, p.25).

land he was required to share with the tenants the cost of irrigation and other development. The owners were to be paid in shares of the State Agricultural Bank (International Rundschau der Arbeit, 1930, pp.885-888).

Unfortunately one could not even dare to see this “land reform scheme” as an effort for the bridging of the social cleavage (Busch-Zantner, 1935/36, pp.106-109). On the one hand, the financial background on which such an effort should be based in order to be successful, was totally absent, while on the other, the great landowners were decided not to allow such a reform as that would lead to the loss of land, as well as, to the change of the type of the lease contracts between the landowners and the peasants in favour of the latter, who would be gradually liberated of their total dependence on the great landowners.¹⁹⁴ And of course, there was no intention of achieving such an aim. So, even though, a “Land Register Plan” was constructed in 1928 (Busch-Zantner, 1935/36, p.92), Gross reports in 1933 (Gross, 1933, p.522) as well as Busch-Zantner in 1935/36 (Busch-Zantner, 1935/36, p.92) the lack of such a “Land Register” in Albania. The Agricultural Bank, which was to be established with capital of five million gold Franks¹⁹⁵ (International Rundschau der Arbeit, 1930, pp.887) to handle the transactions was also not set up until 1937 (Fisher, 1984, p.174). And above all, the postponement of implementing the agrarian reform law led to the fact that the whole project fell into oblivion. So in 1938 only 4, 700 hectares of private estate and 3, 400 hectares of lands belonging to the state were affected. Compared to the total of 103, 000 hectares of private property and 60, 640 hectares of state land, the land to which the agrarian reform was applied was insignificant. Of course, after that Zog’s intention was obvious. He intended neither to solve the agrarian problem nor to put an end to feudalism but to reduce the power of Beys in order to make his position safer.¹⁹⁶ But he failed to achieve this aim as

¹⁹⁴ See: P.A.A.A, Hey –Tirana- an A.A.B., 05.04.1930, Nr. 300, R.88610.

¹⁹⁵ See: Ibid. Hey offers details about the collection of the capital stock for the establishment of the Agricultural Bank of Albania.

¹⁹⁶ See: P.A.A.A, Kardorff –Tirana- an A.A.B., 20.01.1929, Nr. 27, R.88610.

well. On the contrary the Beys turned to Italy, which with their help rendered Albania an Italian protectorate.

In its methods of tackling the country's great problems, which needed immediate solution, the regime proved itself to be totally negligent and lacking in care for the public welfare. The economic situation went from bad to worse. Kardorff refers to "[...] *in weiten Teilen hungernden Bevölkerung* [...]" (starving population) in his Report concerning Albania's economic situation and the country's budget for the financial year 1928/29; while from the 28, 185, 900 gold Francs –the year's balance– 13 million had been used for the needs of the Army and the Gendarmerie.¹⁹⁷ One should not underestimate the fact that the "corruption phenomenon" was at the time even more intensive and especially "the Army and Gendarmerie money" provided an ideal framework within which a series of acts of corruption had occurred. The King himself as well as people from his royal Court had managed to augment their personal bank accounts by taking money for the financing of phantom Gendarmerie Corps.¹⁹⁸

In June 1931 a new agreement was signed in Rome: Albania was granted a loan of 100 million gold francs, to be paid at the rate of 10 million a year (Busch-Zantner, 1939, p.111). In 1933 public investment ceased, leading to an immediate increase in unemployment. Within the framework of austerity measures there was a series of dismissals. Meanwhile, because of the short of money, the government could no longer pay state employees their monthly salaries, and many of them had to wait up to ten months for payment.¹⁹⁹ The economic crisis, which had laid hold of the whole world since 1929 reached its culmination in Albania in 1934. The catastrophic fall in purchasing power was expressed in the extraordinary fall in prices and above all, the lowering of agricultural prices brought want and misery to the rural areas. The peasants as well as the

¹⁹⁷ See: P.A.A.A., Kardorff –Tirana– an A.A.B., 23.01.1929, Nr.1104/28, R.72407.

¹⁹⁸ See: P.A.A.A., Kardorff –Tirana– an A.A.B., 05.12.1928, Nr.1108, R.72438.

¹⁹⁹ See: P.A.A.A., Luckwald –Tirana– an A.A.B., 06.12.1933, Nr.1069, R.72439.

labourers could not avoid falling into poverty and misery. The state continued to remain short of money. Even though the general economic situation in 1935 was even worse than in 1934, the government took no serious measures. *"In the financial year 1934-35, too, the state budget continued to maintain its previous anti-popular character"* (Fraseri, 1964, p.250). No change was introduced in the fiscal system for the alleviation of the burden of the peasantry. And as Luckwald puts it *"[...] There is nobody in the country who is satisfied with the government; nobody apart from the few parasites in the King's milieu."*²⁰⁰

The dynamism of the cleavage volcano remained still, in general, dormant, even though the social dissatisfaction, due to the circumstantial forces, was constantly growing. Only from time to time was a violent explosion to be registered against the King's "Clique,"²⁰¹ but even in these cases the Zogist fist proved to be stronger. The general misery and above all the capitulation of the Zogu government to Italy, gave still greater impetus to the popular opposition. The situation continued to deteriorate until a rebellion, the most important in the history of the country under Zogist domination, broke out in August 1935 in Fieri. It was instigated by a "secret organisation," which rallied various forces²⁰²

²⁰⁰ See: Ibid.

²⁰¹ The "Conspiracy" of Valona in 1932, the rebellion of the tribe of Muharrem Bajraktari in December 1934 as well as the Fieri revolt, were movements not against the King himself but against his clique (P.A.A.A., Deutsche Gesandtschaft (illegible signature) – Tirana- an A.A.B., 19.08.1935, JNr.456/35, R.72439).

²⁰² The "secret organisation" had been created by military men and civilians with bourgeois-democratic tendencies. These men had also participated in the June Revolution and now had undertaken the task of organising the armed revolt without recourse to foreigners. The communists, even though they were informed of the preparations, decided not to engage themselves as an organisation but to support individually the anti-Zogist movement (Fraseri, 1964, p.251). Apart from that, the leaders of the "secret organisation" within their effort to expand the insurrectional front, accepted the

to a single common aim: to destroy this regime, which, by both its internal and its foreign policy, was leading the country along the road to disaster. The plan was that the armed revolt should break out in various points of the country simultaneously on August 15th 1935. However, the whole operation started one day earlier at Fieri and it should have quickly spread to other centres, particularly in the north, until it reached the capital. The rebels seized Fieri without difficulty but they were held in check at Lushnja by government forces, until they were routed by a great reinforcement from Tirana. Ill-prepared, limited to a small circle of intellectuals and anti-Zogist officers, lacking the support of the masses, the Fieri movement never really went much beyond being a plot. It was a hurried and risky action and it failed.

However, it did unsettle the regime by attacking its prestige and even its basis; for the first time since he had become a dictator, Zog found himself forced to make certain concessions to public opinion. The most important of these was undoubtedly the dismissal of Evangjeli's²⁰³ government in October 1935, and the establishment of a new administration²⁰⁴ consisting of young intellectuals led by Frashëri.²⁰⁵

collaboration of anti-Zogist landlords –Beys- “*whose participation weakened, not strengthened, the democratic character of the movement*” (Frashëri, 1964, p.252).

²⁰³ Luckwald –the German Consul in Tirana in 1933 had noted in his Report January 16th 1933 (a few days after the formation of the Pandeli Evangjeli Cabinet): “*Evangjeli is a benevolent old man without his own will, who could be merely considered the King’s straw man. With regard to the personalities of his Cabinet, they fulfil only the wish of the King [...] the Cabinet is unable to inspire confidence [...]*” (P.A.A.A, Luckwald –Tirana-an A.A.B., 16.01.1933, Nr.27, R.72439).

²⁰⁴ Prime Minister: Mehdi Frashëri
 Minister of Foreign Affairs: Fuat Aslani
 Minister of Interior: Eqrem Toto
 Minister of Justice: Mehdi Frashëri
 Minister of Finance: Roc Gera

There were two main points in the so-called “liberal” government’s programme. On the one hand, it immediately set about introducing the reforms that the king was supposed to wish for, but which previous “conservative” governments had failed to carry out. And on the other, it promoted the reintroduction of certain freedoms, which had been laid down in the Kingdom’s Statute (freedom of thought, of speech and of the press),²⁰⁶ excluding criticisms of the king himself, the form of the regime, and foreign policy. Apart from that, the Prime Minister declared, in the parliamentary speech at the end of October, that he was going to remould the state’s administration, by giving due respect to his officers’ responsibility and experience, and that he would immediately take radical measures to improve the country’s economy (Pollo and Puto, 1981, p.209).

Undoubtedly, the liberalisation which followed helped to revive political and social consciousness. Both in the capital and in the provinces newspapers were founded by men remarkable for their radical spirit and courage. They openly criticised their society based on the exploitation of the working masses as well as their country’s dependence on foreign powers. They reproached the regime for its total indifference to serious social

Minister of Public Works:	Ndoe Naraci
Minister of Education:	Nush Bushati
Minister of National Economy:	Dimitri Beratti

(H.D.A.G.M.F.A., C.D.A., Skeferis –Légation Hellénique en Albanie, Tirana- to G.M.F.A., [A’ P.D., B.D.], 23.10.1935, R.N.: 2315, File: A/4/2.)

²⁰⁵ Ibid. The Greek Ambassador to Albania wrote about the new Prime Minister: “[...] *he is a nationalist, man of moderate opinion, and reconcilable, who, six months ago was considered to be a philo-Italian. The “Diana” magazine had published an article written by him, where he argued that Albania should organise a strong army and it should also co-operate with a “Great power” in order to be able to protect itself from the various enemies, which constitute a threat even for its existence.*”

²⁰⁶ See: P.A.A.A., Luckwald –Tirana- an A.A.B., 31.10.1935, JNr. 621/35, R.72439.

problems such as salaries, which were more than four months in arrears (Kontis, 1997, Vol.IV, p.264), the growing unemployment and the heartrending misery of the landless peasants.

In this political atmosphere unrest among the workers revived. The year 1935 also marked a vital stage in the evolution of the communist movement in Albania, for it now came out of its isolation and began to take action on several fronts and in various directions. The most significant feature of the Albanian communist movement during this period was the fact that communist groups inside the country became actively involved in the struggle against the regime, and they established links with the workers' organisations. This was also a determining factor in the growth and consolidation of the trade union movement.

New syndicates were created, especially in the mining areas handed over to Italian companies. In 1934 an important worker's association was founded in Korce at the instigation of the local communist group, and in the rather more favourable atmosphere created by the accession of Frasheri's "liberal" government, worker's organisations were set up in almost all the main industrial centres. After the creation in Korce (1934) of the professional association of workmen under the name *Puna* (labour), the workers of Kucova (great mining centre) also created their professional association under the same name, for the protection of their economic interests and of their national dignity in the face of ruthless exploitation and colonial discrimination practised on them by the Italian capitalist concern AIPA, which had a concession to the petroleum basin there. Following their example, labourers of various mining centres demanded from the government permission to form professional associations as well.

The presence of the communists, particularly of those in the Korce group, also had repercussions in the ideological struggle, which re-emerged during the Zogist regime's short period of "liberalisation." To the official ideology of traditionalism and its variant (no less reactionary) "Neo-Albanism," a whole new generation of intellectuals opposed

the healthy doctrine of the radical reform of Albanian society, which would have the dual purpose of basing the life of the country on a democratic foundation and of organising a realistic defence against the serious and imminent threat from fascist Italy.

Here and there strikes broke out, demanding obvious social reforms. On February 11th 1936 the petroleum workers, as a protest against the dismissal by the AIPA concern of various leaders of their professional association Puna, announced a general strike. On 19th February, the shoemakers of Korce closed their shops in protest against the authorisation granted by the government for the opening of a modern shoe factory in the city. Their demand, animated by the danger of economic ruin and, on the other hand, influenced by the petty-bourgeois illusions that the process of industrialisation could be hindered in the interest small artisan production, was not supported by the other masses of the population (Frasheri, 1964, p.254). On February 21st 1936, together with the shoemakers, all the workers of Korce organised a peaceful demonstration, protesting against unemployment, against the distress. A few hours later, together with the labourers, students of the city, too, burst into a second demonstration against the violence of the government and against the arrest of innocent labourers (Frasheri, 1964, p.155). *The "liberal government"* crushed the strikes and the demonstrations held during the weeks that followed by the force of gendarmerie.

In foreign policy, the Mehdi Frasheri government followed the way of complete capitulation to Italy. Tirana and Rome signed a series of economic agreements for new credits from Italy and of course further concession from Albania.²⁰⁷

²⁰⁷ On the 14th November 1935 the Greek Ambassador –Skeferis- in Albania informs the Greek Foreign Ministry of an arrangement between Italy and Albania according to which the later should receive a credit of 1, 500,000 Gold Francs (Kontis, 1997, p.255). On 19th March 1936 signed the Albanian government and Italy 12 economic agreements for a "closer co-operation" (Bartl, 1981, p.497-501). On the 11th April 1936 the Greek Major-General –Fessopoulos- reports one more economical arrangement, namely a new Italian

However, in the end the “liberal” experiment was shown up to be a mere delaying tactic. Zog had not expected to have to cope with the germs of a general reawakening of the anti-Zogist opposition. He therefore lost no time in returning to his normal strong-arm policy of brutal oppression, as soon as he had used the liberal government to get his concessions to Rome’s policy of penetration accepted. As soon as the process of “reconciliation” with Rome was completed, Zog’s regime had to organise the election of a new Parliament, as the second Legislative Assembly’s term of office would be over at the end of April. Under “normal” circumstances this would merely have been a matter of routine. But Zog was facing a worrying increase in the opposition to his regime and saw this as a good opportunity to get rid of the liberal government, which no longer served the political aims of Zog, who wished to return “*to his previous policy of the mailed fist.*” His hand was strengthened by Rome, which did not like the turn events were taking in Albania. So he had no difficulty in arranging the down fall of M. Frasheri’s government on the eve of the elections. At the beginning of November, Parliament was called at the King’s command to an emergency session, where it passed a vote of no confidence in the Frasheri government (November 7th 1936), a new government was then formed (on the 9th) led by Kotta,²⁰⁸ the ideal representative of the reactionary right wing, with Musa Juka as Minister of the Interior.²⁰⁹

credit of 40,000,000 Gold Francs to Albania; from which 20 millions would be used for the construction of Durres harbour, 12 millions for the construction of roads and 8 millions for the needs of the Agrarian Bank. The report goes on to comment: “*Italy by providing these credits to Albania aims at the financial enslavement of the later; moreover, Italy by having a finger in every economical decision, concerning the handling of the money, is intended to the construction of public works which would be useful to future Italian military operations in the region*” (Kontis, 1997, p.263).

²⁰⁸ 09.11.1936

Prime Minister/ Minister of Agriculture and

Minister of Work:

Koco Kotta

The Kotta government was most implacable of all against the Communist movement, which kept growing in Albania. Bourgeois-democratic elements all the while were slowing down the fight against the landlord-bourgeois regime of Zog, all the while further narrowing down their revolutionary programme for social and political reforms. The main blows were now limited to the person of Zog. Devoid of a clear and attractive platform, the regime enjoyed no longer the trust of the masses of the population. On the contrary, the Communists, by including in their programme the most serious problems that caused anxiety to the country and being willing to fight against the danger of the occupation of the country by fascist Italy, the colonial yoke created by the Zogist regime, the fascist ideology that threatened the country, the capitalist exploitation of labourers and the landlord exploitation of the peasantry; to cut a long story short by being determined to fight for real democracy they succeeded in winning for their side the sympathy of the masses of the Albanian people.

Apart from that the Communists had in their hands the strong weapon of revolutionary organisation. The Communists carefully used all available legal and illegal means for penetrating into workers' circle. In Korce the communist group had grown and

Minister of Foreign Affairs:	Eqrem Libohova
Minister of Interior:	Musa Juka
Minister of Justice:	Thoma Orolloga
Minister of Finance:	Kol Thasi
Minister of Education:	Faik Dibra

(P.A.A.A., Merfela –Tirana- an A.A.B., 09.11.1936, Nr.905, Tirana 4/1.)

²⁰⁹ The atmosphere was laden with suspicion that the elections of 1937 would be held in a climate of fear and terror, as the name of the corrupted Musa Juka appeared in the new government. The fact that he, as Minister of the Interiors, would be responsible for the holding of the elections could simply not be overlooked (Kontis, 1997, Vol. IV, p.294).

strengthened, and its influence spread to all the workers' as well as students' circles of the city. In Shkoder in 1938 another communist group was formed and was very successful in its political activity. Throughout the country, underground communist cells were formed, bound either to the group of Korce or to that of Shkoder. Within Tirana the communist movement was growing likewise with astounding speed. Undoubtedly this movement also had its deficiencies. However, that did not hinder the Marxist movement from expanding and the Zogist clique from having its hands full on account of the revolutionary spirit that was spreading throughout the country, while the authorities were unable to detect the communist organisation and to thwart its development.

In the meantime the elections of January 1937 took part uneventfully.²¹⁰ They endorsed the composition of the previous Parliament²¹¹ and, therefore, the existence of the government. The regime lost no time in returning to its previous intolerant and violent methods. It took a whole series of repressive measures in order "*to establish exemplary*

²¹⁰ The elections had been held "in peace" as the independent candidates had been got out of the way and even the most harmless of Zog's opponents were gagged and tied hand and foot. Even though the government list got the unanimous vote, the fact that the two brothers of the Prime Minister, who were candidates, got two and six votes respectively, proves that the election results did not represent voters' free will (Kondis, 1997, Vol. IV, pp.330-331). Pannwitz pointed out in his Report the fact that, the participation of the Albanians in the elections was very small –there were regions where only 10% of the potential voters voted; while the confidentiality of the elections was an Utopia as 80-95% of the population was illiterate (See: P.A.A.A., Pannwitz –Tirana- an A.A.B., 11.02.1937, Nr.92/37, Tirana 4/1), facts which also show off that these elections were an easy game for the King to play and win.

²¹¹ The new Parliament consisted of 58 deputies. 48 were members of the previous parliament and 16 were new. But the names of all of them were to be found in the government's ballot (See: P.A.A.A., Pannwitz –Tirana- an A.A.B., 11.02.1937, Nr.92/37, Tirana 4/1).

order and discipline throughout the country” and *“to stamp out any attempts to undermine national unity”* (Pollo and Puto, 1981, p.211). And for Zog the term “national unity” had a special meaning. For him a nation can be united not because it manages to go through any kind of conflicts and cleavages without coming apart. His philosophy, which was made visible through his policy, was that a nation can be united when there is no margin left for the variety of interests –especially the ones against the rulers’ policy- to be expressed. In his inaugural speech at the opening session of the parliament on February 10th 1937, the King formulated his thoughts very cleverly by saying: “[...]in Albania there existed no political parties and they will not exist, because all must work together [...].”²¹²

As a result, workers’ associations were forbidden, the press was rigorously censored and even required to promote friendship with fascist Italy and a great number of persons were persecuted, arrested and gaoled for alleged communist ideas.²¹³ So even though one could not refer to a “Communist danger,” little should not be made of the fact that in spite the persecution, the Communist movement continued growing under great difficulty, increasing the number of its militants and the circle of its sympathisers among the masses of labourers, and peasants as well as the large numbers of intellectuals who had studied in other countries (especially in Paris) and who after their coming back expected to find

²¹² Ibid.

²¹³ Until 06.09.1937 two laws had come into operation against Communism. The “*law decreeing the prohibition of the publication, import and keeping of injurious books and pamphlets,*” published in the Official Gazette Nr.28 on April 22 1937 and the law concerning “*any kind of offence against Albania’s social and economic status quo as well as the prohibition of recruitment from the side of foreign countries,*” published in the Official Gazette Nr.32 on April 30 1937 (See: P.A.A.A., Pannwitz –Tirana- an A.A.B., 06.09.1937, Nr.700, Tirana 4/6).

their country in a better situation than the existing one and who were persuaded that a regime change would be necessary in order to fulfil their expectations.²¹⁴

4.3. Conclusions

The restoration of the authoritarian rule in 1925 was mainly the result of the dissension among the members of the Council of Ministers in the “democratic” Noli government, whose (the dissension’s) root was the territorial cleavage; namely the difficulty of Ghegs to put aside their special interests, to cooperate with Tosks and to accept them as part of a central government. Even Zogu (even after the establishment of the monarchy) found it difficult to “control” the territorial cleavage, which kept on manifesting the deepness of the diversities concerning territorial interests.

With regard to the religious cleavage and its route over this period (1925-1938) one could conclude that common religious faith does not self-evidently imply common ideology. Common religious faith does not presuppose the existence of common interests, ideology and political behaviour. Archive documents (we have also referred to them in the previous pages – the memorandum of Mr. Tasis and Mr. Rafail from the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs) break such a norm by offering a detailed picture of the political situation in Albania at that time. By doing so, these documents strengthen the argument that the social aspect of the religious cleavage was more important than religious differences. Apart from that, the social aspect of the religious cleavage was responsible for the multiplicity of the registered controversy axes (Christians vs Muslims; Gheg Muslims vs Tosk Muslims; Tosk feudal Muslim vs Tosk landless peasant Muslims).

The ideological divisions revolve around two axes. Divisions over the matter of national independence: with or without protection and from whom (pro and anti-Italians) and divisions over the “type of the regime” appropriate for Albania (republic or monarchy).

²¹⁴ See: P.A.A.A., Pannwitz –Tirana- an A.A.B., 05.05.1937, Nr.361, Tirana 4/6.

The same problematic had been also registered in the years that the Albanians struggled for the establishment and formation of an independent state (1912-1918).

With regard to political parties and organisations one can conclude that between 1925-1938 Zogu's monarchist views, according to which "national unity" presupposes the suppression of any kind of difference and diversity, dictated the prohibition of the formation of political parties. Consequently there are no political parties to be registered, except for a number of political alliances / organisations (mainly having their basis outside the country) having a common element: their opposition to Zogu and monarchy. So even though KONARE became more and more radical encompassing leftist and even communist ideas and BK represented the interests of the conservative Albanians who were against any communist ideology, they both aimed at the downfall of Zogu and the prevention of an Italian protectorate. Even after the split of KONARE and the formation of the KCK, the KCN and the "Independent Political Group of the Albanian Refugees", the new rallies and the old "pieces" maintained their anti-Zogu character. The causes of the split were to be found elsewhere: to the irredenta feelings of the Kosova members of KONARE (formation of KCK) and to the division over the leftist tendencies of KCN (the remaining part of KONARE) which provoked the formation of the "Independent Political Group of the Albanian Refugees", the members of which were totally opposed to any leftist ideology.

But the most important finding of the research, concerning this period, is that a communist fraction had been formed in the heart of KCN and that a number of tiny organisations, professional associations and workers' organisations made their appearance throughout Albania. These, even though they were unable to combine into a single organisation or political party, laid the foundation for the communist movement and (later) party.

CHAPTER 5

WAR, FOREIGN OCCUPATION AND PEOPLE'S RESISTANCE,

I. ITALIAN OCCUPATION, 1939-1943

Compared with those previous, this chapter has to be worked out in a different way and that because, being the circumstances during this fourth period (1939-1944) totally different; they dictate a different treatment. The country was under occupation and that is a new factor, which has to be taken into consideration. One could no longer talk of a political system, neither of democracy nor of monarchy. The immediate presence first of the Italians and later of the Germans dictated other ways for the expression of interests. One could talk of a “domrant volcano” of differences and cleavages during the previous period (1925-1938) which now, thanks to the favourable circumstances, became active; but in which way? Two questions arise: 1) were the existing cleavages and country's peculiarities being exploited by the conquerors in order to achieve a “peaceful occupation?” If yes, then, how far and in which way; if not, then, what consequences were to be suffered? and 2) could one argue that, during the period 1939-1944, the repressed cleavages found expression in the formation of the various resistance groups? Or even, is it enough to look through the “cleavages prism” in order to interpret and understand, on the one hand, the formation of the political parties during this period and, on the other, the formation of the various resistance groups?

But apart from the problematic above, a “general” observation can also be registered. World War II created new divisions, confronting the pro-Fascist (pro-Italian / pro German) and Anti-Nationalist forces with the opposition and the radical Fatherland front supported by the Communists. What is remarkable during this period is, that the Communist Party broadened the field of its activities including the nation's struggle for independence. It was under its influence that the bourgeois middle classes began to support the liberation movement.

5.1. Question 1.: Exploitation of peculiarities

On 6th April, Mussolini rejected Zogu's final proposal for a military treaty between Italy and Albania, adding that the only representative to the Albanian king that he would authorise from now on was General Guzzoni, the commander-in-chief of the Italian troops charged with the occupation of Albania.

The Rome ultimatum expired at midnight on 6th April, and an army of 23,000 men,²¹⁵ supported by several units of marines and a large air force, disembarked on the Albanian coast on 7th April 1939. No serious preparations had been made for an opposition, and no leadership was offered. Many of the northern tribes did not lift a hand against the Italians, and the Mirdita actually disarmed Zog's retreating troops. When it came to the test, the rulers of Albania abandoned their country to its fate. Zog and his followers fled hurriedly and took refuge in Greece. With the King gone, the fighters abandoned their positions, took the flight and returned to their native towns or villages (Kontis, 1997, p.336), so any kind of resistance was quickly broken. Within a few days Italian troops had overrun every bit of Albanian land and on 10th April they reached the frontiers of Yugoslavia and Greece. Once more Albania's independence was brutally cut short after just two decades of troubled existence.

Once they had established themselves in Albania, the first task accomplished by the Italians was to find collaborators in order to proceed to the legalisation of their seizure of the country and the selection of a leader with the fascist seal. They had not worked out a special plan and they did not try to attract specific personalities, whose co-operation with the conqueror could work positively upon the feelings and attitude of more Albanians

²¹⁵ P.A.A.A., B.dSS., Rintelen Mackensen für Oberkommando Heer, 07.April 1939, Albanien, Band 1, Mf. Nr. 19, R.N.:129, S.026.

towards them. They simply tried to find people willing to help them build a political-bureaucratic bridge between the conquerors and the Albanian people. As Neuwirth puts it: „Eine detaillierte Untersuchung des persönlichen Werdeganges der bekanntesten Kollaborateure zeigt, daß es keinen eindeutig zuordenbaren politischen Typus gibt, der für die Zusammenarbeit mit den Italienern prädestiniert war. Vielmehr kamen viele albanische Persönlichkeiten in den vier Jahren der italienischen Besatzung aufgrund der unterschiedlichen Motivationen in kollaborationistische Versuchungen [...]“ (Neuwirth, 1996, p.33).

The Albanian collaborators chose some, in advance, from among the local dignitaries and proceeded to the legalisation of Albania's Italian seizure. With their help, and with a list drawn up by the fascist authorities, a so-called "Constituent Assembly" was quickly fabricated. Its body consisted of 159 deputies, 68 large landowners, 25 tribal leaders, and 46 business people, as well as clerics from all denominations, a few intellectuals, officials, and officers; most of them distinguished only by the level of their servility toward the Italians (Fischer, 1999, p.36). On 12th April 1939, in the presence of the Count of Ciano, this body passed the plans which had been vetoed in Rome, "[...] abolished the regime and abrogated the Constitution, installed a puppet government presided over by the great landowner, Verlaci,²¹⁶ proclaimed the union between Albania and Italy through

²¹⁶ The only name, which did not appear after 1924 is that of Shevket Bey Verlaci. Zogu, after his return in 1925, broke off his engagement with Verlaci's daughter. This was, according to the Albanian customs, an affront to the bride's family dignity and pride and led, according to Kanun of Lek Dukagjini, to a vendetta. It is true that, there were more than one attempt against his life by both sides. Sevkert Verlaci himself was nearly killed in such an attempt. After that event, he withdrew in his *Konak* in Elbasan where he was under the protection of his armed bodyguards. His name appears in politics once again in 1939 (Busch-Zantner, 1939, pp.91-92).

*new contracts and decided to give the crown to the Italian King (Victor Emmanuel III) [...]”*²¹⁷

The final act was played in Rome on 16th April 1939 at the Quirinale Palace: a delegation from the so-called assembly offered the “Skanderbeg crown” to Victor Emmanuel III, who saw the title of King of Albania added to his existing titles King of Italy and Emperor of Ethiopia. During this period, the Albanian state was transformed into a miniature version of the Italian Fascist state, with a mixture of Albanian personalities chosen at random and foreigners at the helm of state. A lieutenant-general represented the Italian king and the fiction of a constitutional monarchy was maintained.

On June the 2nd 1939, the “Statute of the Albanian Fascist Party” was published in Tirana; and according to which, as Kampner puts it: “*The King was the sovereign of Albania, II Duce shaped its fate –these were the principles of the constitutional law*” (Kampner, 1941, p.431). By virtue of the “fundamental statute” of the kingdom of Albania, Victor Emmanuel III, supreme ruler of the state of Albania, had been invested with legislative and executive powers.²¹⁸ He appointed the former Italian Minister at Tirana, Jacomoni, as Lieutenant-General in Albania. The Albanian Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Albanian diplomatic representatives in Italy and other countries, and even the foreign diplomats in Tirana were withdrawn as being incompatible with the monarchy. A fascist Corporate Supreme Council was instituted by way of a Parliament. The Albanian army found themselves incorporated into the Italian army. The fascists were careful to leave the former military administration as it was, but did not fail to nominate Albanians, as well as a large number of Italian advisers, to important posts. And by taking these steps the Italians partly achieved their aim, namely to legalise their seizure of the country.

²¹⁷ P.A.A.A., B.dSS., Pannwitz an D.N.B. Vertreter Dr. Horn, Tirana, 12. April 1939, Albanien, Band 1, Mf. Nr. 19, R.N.:25, S.040.

²¹⁸ About the rights of the King one can see: Kampner, 1941, pp.431-432 as well as Hadri, 1968, p.18.

Their next target should have been to make the occupation's basis as stable as they could. The next card to play was that of the irredentist feelings of the Albanians. Because of the lack of a fully developed nationalism among the Albanian people, there was a quite strong irredentist sentiment, which both the conquerors tried to exploit but not to the same degree or with such a success. The Italians, already from the beginning of the war, started feeding the Albanian dream of a "Great Albania" and kept it alive through "spontaneous demonstrations" (Fischer, 1994, p.370). *"The outbreak of the Second World War had brought about, for what proved to be the last time, a brief union of Kosova with Albania during the years 1941 to 1943. In an effort to rally the Albanian people to her cause, Italy had promised the Albanians their national unity. The German-Italian agreement in Vienna of 1941 stipulated the formation of a "Greater Albania," to include the large Albanian-inhabited areas of Yugoslavia and, to a lesser extent, Greece. Italian -ruled Albania was given control of the Kosova region, together with those Macedonian and Montenegrin lands inhabited by Albanians"* (Vickers, 1995, p.144). The Italians wished to exploit Albanian irredentist sentiment by insisting that the unification of all the Albanian-inhabited lands was conditional upon an Axis victory. But the result of this was that the most enthusiastic support for the Italian regime, came from Kosova. Within Albania itself, however, there was considerable hostility towards the Italians as, as Fischer argues, on the one hand the Albanians knew that Kosova's inclusion in Albania was the result of Yugoslavia's destruction by the Germans, while on the other *"sicherlich fühlten sich viele Albaner zu ihren Mit-Volksangehörigen in Kosova hingezogen, doch muß man bezweifeln, daß Irredentismus ein allgemeines Volksempfinden war. Zog hatte ihn während seiner Regierungszeit als unrelistisch einzuschränken versucht. Und nach der italienischen Invasion kamen viele Albaner zu der Ansicht, daß revisionistische Bestrebungen sich einfach lächerlich ausnahmen, wenn sie doch unfähig waren, ihr vorheriges kleines und unabhängiges Land zu erhalten"* (Fischer, 1994, p.371). The Italian policy proved once more to be ineffectual.

5.2. *Question 1.: Exploitation of cleavages*

The religious cleavage could consist a field providing exploitation possibilities for the Italians. There were, as we have already seen, three (or even, four) religious directions in Albania –Catholic, Orthodox and Muslim (Sunni and Bektashi)- each being potentially able to be mobilised for or against the Italians, depending on their policy. And as expected, the Albanian Catholics could be a good point to start; having the same faith as the Italians, they were more willing than the others to co-operate (Eberhart /Kaser, 1995, pp. 25-26), thus making things easier for the Italians. The tribe of Dukagjini as well as the Mirdita were satisfied that the “Muslim” Zog government was no longer in power and set their hopes for a better future on the Italians. And up to a point their “wishes” had been fulfilled. *“The north did not experience as heavy an Italian presence and because they favoured the Catholics in any event, conditions were perhaps less severe. But this only meant that the complaints against the Italians were of a different nature”* (Fischer, 1999, p.95)

While the Italians seemed to have favoured a specific group because of its religious belief, (one could argue, that in the religious cleavage they had made a stand for one of the cleavage's sides), their policy proved to be spontaneous and imprudent within the framework of the religious cleavages, as they had taken into account that the religious cleavage was not independent but run along the territorial one.

To be more specific, they needed to remember that the Dukagjini as well as the Mirdita were not only Catholics, they were also northerners and as such they had special problems to face. The norhteners found it difficult to protect themselves from raids mounted by armed Montenegrins, as, because of the Italian policy of weapons confiscation, they had been obliged to give up their weapons. The Albanians also complained that the Italian carabinieri did nothing. So what the Italians built –or could have built- with the one hand they destroyed with the other.

Almost the same scenario runs in the case of the Italian policy towards the Orthodox – probably the next easier part in the cleavage to cultivate a positive attitude towards them, as being “relatives in religion.” But as concerning the Orthodox, they were, on the one hand, concerned about the favour being shown to the Catholics and on the other, as the Greek vice-Consul in Gjirokaster –Chimarios- reports, “[...] *they were deeply disappointed because the Muslims still enjoyed the prerogatives they had during Zog's reign, kept on occupying, almost exclusively, the positions in public service, and kept close contacts with the Italian administration. While the Christians, even though they constituted the majority of the population in the south prefectures, were obliged to keep out of public life. People's discontent was gathering head as their hopes, that their position would be improved now that Albania was occupied by a Christian nation, were belied*” (Kontis, 1997, p.352). The Commanding Officer of Gjirokaster, De Fuccia, had promised that both the Christians and the Muslims would be treated in the same way (Kontis, 1997, p.340), but he had broken his word.

Moreover, the Italians ignored the ethnical aspect of this part of the population. The Greek minority in the south (which also happened to be Orthodox) was even more alienated and ill disposed towards the Italians as they tried, through every possible way,²¹⁹ to oblige it not to come in touch with Greece. The situation deteriorated as in

²¹⁹ As the Greek Vice-Consul in Saranta –Bensis- refers to his report to the Greek Foreign Ministry on July 22nd 1939 : “[...] *the Italian Consul Representative mostly denies an exit visa to those who wish to visit Greece for reasons of health, recommending to visit Italy for the same reasons; he tries in every possible way to oblige them to use the Italian ships instead of the Greek ones, in the case that they travel to Greece; and he did not mostly accept applications for the supply of exchange to those who wish either to travel to Greece or to support their relatives especially their children who study there, by sending money. In the case of a positive answer, the exchange can not be above \$30 [...]*” (Kontis, 1997, p.348). The Vice-Consul in Avlona-Tsagris- also registers a week later –July 28th 1939- that in “his region” all the members of the Greek minority who

1940 Albanian instead of Greek was the language of instruction in their schools (Fischer, 1999, p.96). What should not be underestimated is that the Tosks in general (Christians and Muslims) had since independence been dominated by the Ghegs of the North and during Zog's reign had felt embittered being put aside; a situation maintained by the Italians.

At this point one could expect that the remaining part within this religious cleavage, namely the Muslims, would enjoy the outcomes of the Italian policy, being in some way favoured in comparison to the others, so that they could come to support or even to be neutral towards the conqueror. But the Italians did not exercise a clever policy with regard to the 70 per cent of the country's population which was Muslim. The change of the Albanian flag was their first step on the wrong course of action; a step of decisive meaning. The Italians took the old flag, a black double eagle on a red field, and added a *fascis* on either side, looking as if they were about to crush the old symbol. To make matters worse, the Italians topped the eagle off with the crown of Savoy, which itself is topped by a cross! Muslims were even more outraged when Italian curfew restrictions began to interfere with the traditional fast of Ramadan.

The Italians had a similar attitude and policy towards the good old cleavage between feudals, landowners or ruling class and peasants. The outcome of their imprudent policy towards both sides was that, those willing to collaborate were, in the end alienated, while the others, whose position, at the beginning, was neutral, were in the course of time deeply dissatisfied. To be more specific, among the representatives of the ruling class, there were many who rallied round the occupying party and completely supported its politics; a number of industrialists and businessmen became partners in Italian firms to further their lucrative economic activity. Others, disturbed by events, merely waited to see what would happen. However, on the one hand, there was the Italian economic

occupied a public service position had been substituted either by Italians or Albanians (Kontis, 1997, p.350).

policy, which was a pure failure, while on the other, was the behaviour of the Italians towards these important segment of the Albanian society that alienated them.

As far as concerns the Italian policy and the economically preveleged members of the Albanian society (whose attitude towards the Italians was at the beginning positive) the story goes as following. On 22nd April 1939 proclaimed the customs union and after that industry and home crafts, already weak, were almost ruined. Merchants complained of the restrictions of currency control and the system of obligatory import and export permits and were dissatisfied with the fact that the Albanian currency was pegged to the lira. Albanian businessmen of all types complained that they were being elbowed out as they could not obtain approval for any new entrprise unless it had an Italo-Albanian character (Fischer, 1999, p.96). Apart from that, they (the collaborators in general) complained that the Italians did not understand or trust them, that the Italians hoped to disenfranchise them in their own state. They complained that they were being shut out of all major decisions, that the Italians were involving themselves in every facet of Albanian administration, even in those areas where they had demonstrated nothing but incompetence, and they complained that the Italians often acted disgracefully, and that public safety had declined since Zog's days (Fischer, 1999, p.96). From all evidence, even though none of these forces shows itself capable of conducting the anti-fascist resistance, by the middle of 1941, the Italians had lost any chance of a "true collaboration."

But it was not only the collaborators (and collaborators-to-be) who became alienated, it was also the simple Albanian people (moreover the peasants and poor) who, driven to despair as the country's economy was seriously damaged²²⁰ through the faulty Italian

²²⁰ The fact that the National Bank of Albania produced at the end of 1939 26,316,000 francs, at the end of 1940 80,178,000 francs and the end of 1941 108,417,000 francs in comparison with "monetary production" prior the Italian occupation of 11,131,000 francs at the end of 1937 and 10,526,000 francs at the end of 1938 reveals that, apart from the

policy, were awoken and realised that they had nothing to expect from the Italians. There was shortages and price rises. And outwardly beneficent Italian measures for local economic reconstruction, including the reclamation of land and the mortgage and loan facilities for farmers, were perceived by the Albanians as a mere preparation for extensive Italian colonisation. Moreover, the methods employed by the banks in granting agricultural loans and arranging mortgages seemed to Albanians to be designed mainly to acquire the best lands and the best olive trees for eventual distribution to Italian settlers, who, thanks to the constitution, were now able to own land in Albania (Kontis, 1997, p.355). As concerns the various business and infrastructure projects, for the Albanians these were nothing more than pompous attempts at propaganda victories aimed at enriching Italian companies, exploiting Albanians, and paving the way for more Italian workers and colonists (Fischer, 1999, p.95). One could not even dare to dream of an agrarian reform in any shape or form.

5.3. Question 2.: Expression of peculiarities and cleavages

One of the questions formulated at the beginning of this chapter was if and how far the cleavages theory could be a useful tool for the interpretation and understanding of the formation of the resistance groups and the political parties in Albania between 1939-1943. So this part of the work consists an effort to observe and register the findings of such a research and to make some comments concerning them as well.

5.3.1. Fascist Party

By means of intimidation and extortion, various political and cultural organisations were established, whose tasks were, on the one hand, to root out any trace of Albanian

Bank's "monetary abundance policy," the country was also facing great inflation (Frasheri, 1964, p.269).

nationalist sentiments and to promote the fascist ideology and the assimilation policy; while, on the other, by organising a Fascist Party in an occupied area, this achieved political and intellectual control and educated the citizens by their fellow citizens without burdening the administration of the ruling state too much. The party members thus became either consciously or uncounsciously parts of the governmental body (Kampner, 1941, p.433). The first step in this direction was to form a local ruling class who would work closely with Rome; while Giano arranged it in such a way that the Albanians themselves asked Mussolini to help them form a Fascist Party. So the *Partia Fashismit e Shqiperise: PFSh* (Fascist Party of Albania), the country's sole political party, for the moment, patterned after its Italian counterpart²²¹ was directly controlled from Rome,²²² established in June 1939 but not presented with an organised directorate and a central council until March 1940 (Fischer, 1999, p.45). The party members (all officials were required to be members of the *PFSh*) swore an oath of allegiance to Il Duce, "*the founder of the Italian Empire and of the New Albania.*" They swore "*to obey him and to serve the cause of the Fascist Revolution with all their strength and if necessary with their blood*" (Kampner, 1941, p.432). Il Duce gave his orders and directions through the Secretary of the Albanian Fascist Party. The latter was an Albanian who had been appointed by the Governor General with the consent of the Secretary of the Italian Fascist Party. Thus the political centre of gravity, i.e., the administration of foreign affairs, of military and police forces, the financial and economic policy, and the final supervision of the citizens by the

²²¹ The resemblance of the Albanian Fascist Party to the Italian original was obvious: fascist black militia- shirt, dopolavoro-organisation (leisure-time activities organisation of Italian Fascism), establishment of numerous fascist youth-organisations and introduction of the fascist salutation –instead of the Zogist one (Fischer, 1994, p.369).

²²² Although the Party's Secretary General was an Albanian and the Party's members were only Albanians, it was Giovanni Giro (Mussolini's close friend) the General inspector, who had the power in his hands. Apart from that the Albanian Fascist Party could only modify its own statutes with prior agreement with the parent party (Fischer, 1999, p. 45).

Party lay in the hands of the Italian central authorities in Rome (Kampner, 1941, pp.432-433).

But the Fascist Party of Albania found no “real” support in Albania and it would also be incongruous to try to unearth any kind of mass interest finding expression in the formation of this Party. In the same way, any effort to regard the cleavages as the motive power for its formation would be groundless and fruitless as well. It was some of the wealthy landowning beys who, being as deeply suspicious of the Communists’ plans for social and agrarian reform as they had been of Noli’s and Zog’s, were inclined to be more sympathetic to the Italians, and later to the Germans. But the country failed to produce ideological partners for the fascists as did Romania and Croatia and, as life was made difficult for those who were reluctant to join the Party, the party was made up of many people who joined for personal gain rather than any sense of doctrinal conviction. Fischer puts it well when he writes: “[...] *Accustomed to the system of graft and corruption that prebailed under the Turkish Empire and under Zog, many Albanians, not known for mastery of Western ideas of political morality, regarded the Fascist Party as just another chance for the Italians to get rake-off. Philosophically accepting the occupation of their country, many collaborated without any recognition of the ideological betrayal involved*” (Fischer, 1999, p.46). So even though Fascism had little support in Albania, the Albanian Fascist Party played a political role by providing coerced “mass” support for the cabinets of Ypi, a former Zogu supporter, and later Verlaci.

5.3.2. First Resistance Groups

The settling in of the fascist occupation indisputably gave a severe psychological shock to most of the population. The loss of their freedom and independence deeply hurt their national sentiments. But it is beyond doubt that the Italian policy strengthened the negative feelings of the Albanian people against the conquerors and instigated the resistance. Showing no regard for either the religious peculiarities or the territorial differences, ignoring the interests of both the ruling class (businessmen, merchants,

landowners) and peasants and simply making an "Italian policy" was a mistake with consequences. If they had taken into account the peculiarities of the country and they simply closed their eyes and made their policy they would have probably avoided making some mistakes, which also contributed to the creation of general hostility towards the occupation and which, in consequence, produced an atmosphere favourable to the rise of the anti-fascist movement towards national liberation.

At first, resistance against the invader was of an almost spontaneous character: workers' strikes against the foreign contractors, refusal by employees and workers, despite administrative pressure, to conform to the *PFSH*; refusal to give the Roman salute; sabotage against the teaching of fascist culture and the Italian language in the schools, protests from peasants against the land survey, etc. The idea of the need to fight to recover liberty and national independence inspired new, wider sections of society. They took on a task of historic significance (the organisation of a large-scale resistance movement and the creation of an organised force which would control the movement).

Even though several guerrilla bands were reported to be in operation, until the end of 1941, the resistance was not important. The band leaders were primarily Gheg tribal chieftains from the north who could not and would not leave their areas for extended periods. In most cases they also defended their areas as jealously against one another as they did against the Italians and their Albanian puppets. Even the assassination effort against King Victor Emanuel III on 17th May 1941 „*blieb die isolierte Aktion eines einzelnen*“ (Schmidt-Neke, 1993, p.51). And there were no particular political structures in Albania as in other countries, which could smooth out the way for the resistance movements to build up.

The first groups started centered around band leaders such as Abaz Kupi, Muharrem Bajraktari, Myslim Peza, Bey Kryeziu. And if one takes into consideration the fact that Abaz Kupi was a Zogist while the rest were Zog's opponents (Bajraktari and Peza left Albania in 1925 after Zog's return to power), one could jump to the conclusion that the

cleavage between the philo-royalists and the anti-royalists found its expression, now that the circumstances were favourable (the “Zog period” had reached its end since 1939) in the formation of these resistance groups, with the prospective that after the liberation Zog would be leader of the country or not. However, to try to interpret the formation of these resistance groups with the help of the cleavages-model would be groundless. Of course, it is beyond all doubt that Abaz Kupi was a royalist. He was a former officer of the gendarmerie under King Zog, who had joined the King in exile and returned to Albania two years later. As a highly experienced guerrilla fighter and a loyal supporter of Zog, his position and line of action were fairly clear right from the beginning. But there is no clear dividing line between the pro and anti-Zogists. Albanians who were anti-Zogist used to work together and keep contact with people who, either were Zogists, or whose political friends were supporters of the ex-King. Such a case was Muharrem Bajraktari, who cultivated his contacts with many Zogists (Schmidt-Neke, 1987, p.329).

In this early group of resistance leaders was the Muslim Bektashi cleric, Baba Mustafa Martaneshi, also to be included. He is known as Baba Faja,²²³ abbot of Martanesh, he operated in the vicinity of Elbasan and was able to gain followers by exploiting the existing religious cleavage between the Muslim and the Christian Albanian population. He emphasized the anti-Islamic nature of fascist Italy and the dangers that Italian imperialism posed for coreligionists in Turkey and Egypt. And this is the only “mini” case in the category of the first resistance groups, where the cleavages theory could provide its assistance in the interpretation and understanding process.

²²³ He was placed on the Italian most-wanted list for his public anti-Fascist pronouncements and isolated military activities (Costa, 1976, p.59).

5.3.3 Communist movement / Communist party

What about the strongest Albanian resistance group? Would in this case the “cleavages theory” help us to understand and interpret the creation, intensity and effectiveness of the Communist Movement –and later Party?

History

The most important *group*, in *Korce* favoured the organisation of a national liberation movement embodying all strata of society who wanted to fight the invaders. However, the leaders of the *Shkoder group* had a different opinion. Adapting their old ideas to the new situation, they maintained that Albania under the Italian occupation was well on the way to becoming a capitalist country, and that consequently, the working class thus created must form the necessary basis for the socialist revolution. So the communist groups, who had taken on the task of launching the resistance movement, continued to act in an isolated manner. In the current situation, a Communist Party constitution was becoming a necessity but it was seriously hindered by the ideological,²²⁴ tactical and organisational differences separating their leaders. This confusion of ideologies was accentuated by the appearance in 1940 of two new groups: the “*Youth movement*” and the *Zjarri (Fire)*²²⁵ with Trotskyist and Anarchist tendencies. Apart from that, the *Zjarri* group also suggested that the best hope in Albania's case would be to work with the Italian-fascist regime in order to undermine it from within (Hibbert, 1991, p.15). So even though, during the course of the resistance, the militants in each group established solid

²²⁴ „Niergends war der Widerspruch zwischen Marx' Theorie und Lenins Praxis so deutlich wie in Albanien, einem fast rein agrarischen Land, in dem Kommunisten die Avantgarde einer sich gerade erst herausbildenden Arbeitsklasse zu sein hatten und gar deren Herrschaft durchsetzen sollten“ (Schmidt-Neke, 1993, pp.51-52).

²²⁵ This factional influence arrived from Greece in the person of Andrea Zisi, who led this movement and claimed to be the chairman of an Albanian Communist Party (Hibbert, 1991, p.13).

foundations for common action, which pushed the differences into the background and brought together the working classes into one communist party, the *Zjarri* group did not conform.

The unification of the communist had brought unexpected results because these demonstrations had produced a great impression on public opinion. The ground had been prepared for the formation of the Communist Party. The *Partia Komuniste e Shqiperise: PKSh* (Communist Party of Albania) was founded in Tirana on November the 8th 1941,²²⁶ with the assistance of two emissaries of Josip Tito, leader of the Yugoslav partisans, and under the sponsorship of the Comintern (Third Communist International). Albanian Party historians attribute the party's formation to the "correct leadership" of its first and, up to now, only secretary-general, Enver Hoxha. Members representing self-proclaimed party cells from Korce, Shkoder, Tirana, participated in the founding congress of the *PKSh*. What brought them together were Germany's attack against the Soviet Union²²⁷ and the

²²⁶ The Albanian as well as the Yugoslavian authors, even though they do not agree concerning the dates of the begin and the end of the meeting (the Yugoslavs talk of a meeting held between the 4th and 8th November, while the Albanians report that the meeting was held from 8th to 14th of November), they do agree that the date of the foundation of the Communist Party of Albania was the 8th November (Tönnies, 1980, p.441). However, the disagreement is not only between the Yugoslavs and Albanians, but among the Albanian Historians as well. So while Pollo and Puto refer to "an extraordinary meeting of the communist groups which was held in secret from 8th to 14th November [...]" (Pollo and Puto, 1981, p.230), Frasheri registers "an extraordinary convention of communist groups met [...] in the first week of November" (Frasheri, 1964, p.278).

²²⁷ As Pfeiffer reports: "Immediately after our [troops] invaded the Soviet Union, a leaflet propaganda began in Tirana as well as in other cities [...] against the German and Italian Imperialism [...] The leaflets were thrown over the garden doors or through the entrance-door slots, in a great number of houses and public buildings [...] These [the

instructions sent by the Comintern to its national sections to prepare “against the fatherland of Socialism.” By March 1942 membership of the Communist Party of Albania stood at just 200 (Schmidt-Neke, 1993, p.52) but this number kept on growing.

“Although the [National Liberation Front] NLF partisans may have been equipped and financed by the British they were ideologically and politically guided by the Yugoslavs, who resolved their weaknesses and shortcomings, emphasised the importance of organising the peasantry and, most crucially, curtailed their factional divisions. This does not necessarily mean that without the guidance of the Yugoslavs there would have been no Albanian Communist Party. Hitler’s offensive against the Soviet Union caused great indignation amongst Albania’s Communists and given more time, the Albanians would probably have solved their ideological and administrative problems eventually to form the [Communist Party of Albania] CPA [(PKSh)] themselves and so begin the struggle against Fascism. However, the fact remains that after the Nazi attack on the Soviet Union neither the Comintern nor Tito could sit around waiting for Albanian factionalism to end. The Yugoslavs therefore greatly accelerated the process of organising and uniting the [Communist Party of Albania] CPA” (Vickers, 1995, p.160).

A meeting held in Tirana from 8th to 14th November decided upon the fundamental principles of the Communist Party of Albania; while the Central Committee undertook the task to build up the communist ideology of the party. Consequently it had: a) to clear the literature of the “communist” groups which had formed the Communist Party of Albania, from its anti-Marxist, Troskist and Anarchist elements; b) to publish the “History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union” in the Albanian language and c) to

leaflets] were either printed or typed with a typewriter. The first carried a blue round stamp with a hammer and a sickle under the printed initials “P.K.S.” (Partija Kommuniste Shqiptare –Albanian Communist Party); while the others carried only the signature “Patrija Kommuniste e Shqipnis” (Communist Party of Albania)” (P.A.A.A, Pfeiffer –Tirana- an D.B.R., 02.10.1941, Nr.986, Tirana 4/6).

distribute it as well as a number works by Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, W.I. Lenin and J.W. Stalin (History of the Party of Labour of Albania, 1971, p.99f). But the main point of its political programme was the struggle “*for the national independence of the Albanian people and for a democratic government of the people in a Fascist-free-Albania*” (Tönnies, 1980, p.445). General armed insurrection was envisaged on the basis that all sections of society would join in the fight, that the Albanian Communist Party would collaborate with every other anti-fascist party which might eventually be formed and, finally, that a national liberation army should be established (Pollo and Puto, 1981, p.230-231). By early 1942, its partisan units were active in the south, and by August the party had started publishing its newspaper “*Zeri i Populit*” (the Voice of People) (Körner, 1982, p.453).

Ideological cleavage

The construction of the Communist movement in Albania was not based on the secession of the left wing from the Social-democracy, as happened in the rest of Europe, because such a “Social-democracy” did not exist in Albania. The Albanian communist movement was deprived of such an ideological basis. In support of the fact that the Communist ideology did not constituted the basis of the Communist resistance movement come, among others, Pfeiffer’s reports to the German Embassy in Rome in 1941. He argues, referring to the problematic of who could be the author of the propaganda leaflets which had been distributed by the Communists after the German invasion in Russia, that it would be impossible that these leaflets were written by Albanians because on the one hand, “das geistige Proletariat”²²⁸ deprived of a Bolshevistic ideology could be

²²⁸ Pfeiffer by using the term “geistiges Proletariat,” in this case refers to the unemployed dismissed civil servants and the former students (See: P.A.A.A., Pfeiffer –Tirana- an D.B.R., 02.10.1941, Nr.986, Tirana, 4/6).

characterised more as “Anarchistic”²²⁹ than as “Bolshevist;” while on the other, the workers, to whom the leaflets were addressed, were illiterate, not only unable to write such a text but even to understand its meaning if someone were to read it to them.²³⁰ Apart from that, referring to the arrests following the distribution of leaflets, he writes that even though the people who had been arrested was accused of Communist ideology, “[...] *Kommunistische Ideen marxistisch-bolschewistischer Prägung werden ihnen im Allgemeinen wohl fremd sein.*”²³¹

Schliep also confirms, almost a year later (March 1942) that: “[...] *Mit marxistischen Gedankengängen und wirklichen Bolschewismus haben sie* [the groups of young people in the cities which are organised in the form of Communist cells] *nichts zu tun, obwohl sie sich kommunistisch gebärden und kommunistische Schlagwörter gebrauchen.*”²³² And he refers to hardly a handful of people, who belong to the Intelligentsia, “work on” the theory of Communism and could be considered real supporters of Boshevism.²³³

While the numbers given by Fischer show that even later, when the Communist movement was in its active phase, the ideology of its members was not the basis and motive of action. “*The number of communists among the rank and file of the National Liberation Front, of course, was rather difficult to determine. One of the best informed British liaison officers suggested that 10% were “Stalinist communists” prepared to use force to remove any obstacle which might stand in their way and were utterly loyal to the*

²²⁹ The term “Anarchisten” is often used by the German Consuls to characterise the ones who claim to be Communists, in order to emphasise that these people were deprived of a Communist ideology. See: P.A.A.A., Pfeiffer –Tirana- an D.B.R., 02.10.1941, Nr.986, Tirana, 4/6; P.A.A.A., Schliep –Tirana- an D.B.R., 23.03.1942, Nr.385, Tirana, 4/6.

²³⁰ See: P.A.A.A., Pfeiffer –Tirana- an D.B.R., 02.10.1941, Nr.986, Tirana, 4/6.

²³¹ Ibid.

²³² P.A.A.A., Schliep –Tirana- an D.B.R., 23.03.1942, Nr.385, Tirana, 4/6.

²³³ See: Ibid.

party and willing to obey its orders blindly. 15% were half conscious of the aims and organisation of the party. But the remaining 75% although calling themselves communists, had little idea of the aims or organisation of the party and believed they were fighting for an independent, democratic popular Albania” (Fischer, 1991, p.31).

Traditional work-capital cleavage

The workers, though few, possessed a certain experience acquired in their struggle against capitalist exploitation and fascist slavery. After the occupation, the worker movement gained in strength, and took on a marked anti-fascist character. The communists found among the workers a very favourable field for propagating their struggle against Fascism.

But the Communist theory of classes had no relevance to the make-up of the Albanian Communist Party. The traditional work-capital cleavage on which such a movement could be based was simply absent here. One need only remember that in 1939 only 4 per cent of the national economy could be considered industrial. And as Pfeiffer writes, commending on the text of the Communist propaganda leaflets: *“Auch das Wort “Arbeiterinnen” in der ersten Anrede ist fehl am Platz, da Berufsarbeiterinnen in Albanien nicht vorhanden sind.”*²³⁴

So its basis was a variety of local and regional circles and groups, which described themselves as Communist. Among the Tosks there was an embryonic “proletariat” which helped to provide a Communist rank and file.

²³⁴ P.A.A.A., Pfeiffer –Tirana- an D.B.R., 02.10.1941, Nr.986, Tirana, 4/6.

Haves and Have-nots Cleavage (Practical Aspect)

The social basis of Communism in Albania was to be found in the landless peasants of the south and the disaffected, European-trained intellectuals in the cities. The peasants had long been ready for revolt: they lacked land and, in addition, the owners of the estates they tilled were Muslims, whereas they were Christian Orthodox (Stavrianos, 1963, p.796). Party's rapid growth, which was registered by the summer 1942, showed that Hoxha's attempt to deemphasize the social revolution was beginning to pay off. Many of the landless peasants in the south, responded to the basic slogans of resistance to the foreigners and traitors as well as land to those who till it. These simple slogans addressed the crucial issues in Albania: the national problem and the land problem (Fischer, 1999, p.128).

What impressed the masses and stirred them the most was the self-sacrifice of the militant communists in their unequal fight against the enemy. By 16th September 1942 these successes had made it possible to convene a Conference of National Liberation at Peza not far from Tirana, which communists and various groups of nationalists attended. The decisions, which were made and the events which took place during and after the Conference could be very well interpreted and understood if one takes Stavrianos' thesis into consideration. His "haves" and "have-nots" theory runs parallel to our effort to interpret or even find the cause of the events during this historical period within the framework of the cleavages model. Stavrianos talks of the desire "[...] of some to resist in order to expel the enemy and restore the pre-war status quo, and others in order to expel the enemy and create a new post-war political struggle. Those who had supported the pre-war dynasties and regimes wished to restore them after the occupation, while those who had opposed them now seized the opportunity to work enthusiastically for a new post-war society. This division naturally had an economic basis. In general, the "haves" wanted resistance and the old status quo, while the "have-nots" wanted resistance and social revolution [...]" (Stavrianos, 1963, p.763). But is it not this

concern, about the country's route after the war, one more dimension of the good old feudal-peasant cleavage, which between 1939-1944 proved to have a dominant role?

Territorial Cleavage and its Relation to the theoretical and practical Aspect of the "haves and have-nots" Cleavage

Indisputably *"the partisans were essentially a Tosk movement"* (Amery, 1948, p.55). This consent on the one hand demonstrates the territorial cleavage in the basis of the Communist movement while on the other raises the question of why this cleavage, which found (among others) its expression in such a movement, had such a dynamism. The answer is to be found in its close relation with the "haves and have-nots" cleavage. These two run parallel feeding the engine of the movement with extra power.

"[...] vor allem die Bauern im Süden so etwas wie Klassenbewußtsein entwickelt hatten. Der Grund dafür ist, daß 73.304 Bauernfamilien –oder 52,5 Prozent der Bevölkerung-, die keinen eigenen Boden besaßen, hauptsächlich im toskischen Süden zu finden waren- wie auch die Erfahrungen von 1924 gezeigt hatten- die besten Voraussetzungen für die Entstehung und die Tätigkeit einer schlagkräftigen revolutionären Gruppe gegeben" (Lange, 1973, p.57). The Communists' promise for "social revolution" after the end of the war, for the Tosks had a material aspect, was something tangible and concrete. *"In Südalbanien, wo der Großgrundbesitz vorherrschte, bedeutete "soziale Revolution" in erster Linie Aufteilung desselben [...]"* (Lange, 1973, p.55, Footnote 88).

Since independence the Tosks had been dominated by the Ghegs of the north, having a minimal role in pre-war society. And that leads us to say that apart from their material interests, it was moreover the feeling of the unfair "pushing aside" (theoretical aspect of the haves and have-nots cleavage) that made them willing to fight at all cost, less likely to be affected by reprisals (Fischer, 1991, p.31). What is interesting to mention here is that the Albanians as a whole were conscious of both the territorial and the haves and have-

nots cleavage and the fact that the Ghegs had had the upper hand for long time. Abaz Kupa said to an English liaison officer: "You know we Ghegs have exploited Albania for generations. Perhaps it is only right that the Tosks should have their turn" (Amery, 1948, 324). And as Lange writes, "Es ist [...] interessant, daß Abaz Kupa implizit von einer Verschiedenheit Ghegen-Tosken ausgeht" (Lange, 1973, p.55, Footnote 88).

Young People and Women among the Communist. Generations Conflict and "haves and have-nots" Cleavage (theoretical Aspect)

A particularly important role was played at that time by the young students, who were essentially from middle-class (Fischer, 1999, p.125) or lower-middle-class backgrounds. Disappointed by their hopes of Zog and his capitulation policy, they had turned against the regime. Because of their age and energy, they wanted revolutionary action. They felt the need for an ideal of progress. The conservative and reactionary ideals of the milieu in which they were born and the political lethargy reigning there no longer satisfied them. More than any other class, they were shattered by the loss of their country's independence. Communism gave them the ideal for which they were searching. Workers' strikes and the anti-fascist activity on the part of the masses gave them the lead. With an overwhelming majority, they rallied round the cause of the resistance and formed the first detachments of communist youth. It was also under their influence that the bourgeois middle classes began to support the liberation movement (Pollo and Puto, 1981, pp.226-227).

As for the young intellectuals, they never numbered more than two or three thousand, but they constituted the mainstay of the Communist apparatus ("*das geistige Proletariat*")²³⁵ and provided the leadership necessary for the organisation of the peasants. These young people were peculiarly susceptible to revolutionary ideas because they had no roots in

²³⁵ See: P.A.A.A., Pannwitz –Tirana- an A.A.B., 03.02.1939, Nr.82, Tirana 4/6.

landed property or among the tribes, and could find no satisfaction for their aspirations within the narrow limits of independent Albania. At one time ambitious young Albanians had gone to Constantinople and found a career in Ottoman imperial bureaucracy. Now this outlet was closed and none other had taken its place. Under such circumstances, educated young men in other countries had turned to fascism. But in Albania this was the creed of the foreign overlord, so the young men turned instead to communism (Stavrianos, 1963, p.796).

To interpret this phenomenon we have to agree with Schmidt-Neke and Prifti who refer to a “generations conflict.” A conflict between the traditional élite, led by the old venerable patriots like Mehdi Bey Frasheri and the young, socially non-homogenous generation, which did not believe in the “meaningless Occident” but which was oriented towards a Soviet model, which seemed to provide the possibility of building a state compatible with the needs of the 20th century (Schmidt-Neke, 1993, p.56 & Prifti, 1978, pp.20-21).

But it should not be ignored how closely related this “generations conflict” is with the “haves and have-nots” cleavage theory which seems to provide a good interpretative framework even when it loses its material (practical) basis, as in this case. Now the “have-nots” were not deprived of money or land but of rights. And this category was wider than the materially-“have-nots” one. The Communist Party (and of course its leader, Enver Hoxha) was the first to realise, mobilise and exploit a “*quasi bislang ungenütztes politisches und soziologisches Proletariat*” (Lange, 1973, p.63). „[das] vor dem Nationalen Befreiungskrieg keine Rolle in der albanischen Politik gespielt [hatte]“ (Lange, 1973, p.63).

So, in June 1941 Mussolini, recognising the strength and the threat of these classes which were gathered around Communism, made an effort to hit or even better to split the Communist movement. “[He] agreed with Jacamoni that more autonomy was required,

and that not only the beys but other classes must be won over" (Wiskemann, 1954, p.675).

In view of these circumstances, the occupying forces found themselves obliged to change their tactics. The Italians were dissatisfied with the performance of the Tosk Shevket Verlaci and his government of landlords and reactionary politicians. The basic idea was, without eliminating the beys, to broaden the Albanian government by including new elements closer to the intellectual classes and the people. So they replaced him by the Gheg chief Mustafa Kruja,²³⁶ who had begun to intrigue against the Tosk lord long ago (Wiskemann, 1954, p.675), and whose cabinet included now more of a cross section of Albanian society than had Verlaci's. He was allowed a little more freedom of action than his predecessor and adopted a policy, combining demagoguery with the use of force. He was authorised to raise an independent Albanian army, which was to operate alongside Italy's armed forces. Kruja's administration was also permitted to set free a large number of anti-fascists who had been interned earlier on. He tried to split the anti-fascist nationalists from the communists in order to isolate and dismember the Albanian Communist Party. But instead of improving, the internal situation rapidly deteriorated under Kruja's leadership; the guerilla forces swelled.

Newspapers like "Kushtrimi i Lirise" (The war-cry for freedom) (1942-1944) and "Gruaja Shqiptare" (The Albanian Woman) (1943) were established to serve as organs of the anti-fascist Albanian young people and the Albanian anti-fascist women's union

²³⁶ Mustafa Kruja was the vivid proof of how flexible the Albanians were concerning their political thesis and philosophy, which used to change according to their personal interests and their private profits. He had struggled, while he was in exile, for the social revolution and against imperialism, while later gave preference to the fascist-imperialist ideology (Bartl, 1976, pp.511-513).

respectively, with the aim of mobilising these two social categories.²³⁷ How effective this propaganda method was is doubtful, if we take into consideration Körner's report that "*Es passiert manchmal, daß die Genossen nicht einmal das studieren, was ihnen in die Hand fällt, wie ein Buch, eine Proklamation etc [...]*" (Körner, 1982, p.173, footnote 52).

But by talking of the emancipation of the women who were oppressed either by Fascism and Traditionalism or the relation between Feudalism and the Bourgeoisie, by calling the women of all social classes and categories to fight against Fascism, not only for national liberation but for their personal social liberation as well (Lange, 1973, pp.62/63); as well as by promising the young people of the country, who as the statistic reveals were extraordinarily young,²³⁸ a political role after the end of the war, Hoxha managed to create a wide and stable basis for the Communist Party of Albania; as basis the "ingredients" of which were determined to gain after the end of the war what they "did not have" before it.

And of course, all authors who either written or worked on Albanian history in one way or another, accept the importance of the participation of young people²³⁹ and women in the Communism as a decisive factor for its dynamism as a political party as well as for its effectiveness as a resistance group, let alone the outcome of the civil war. Amery first of all realises very early the importance of this factor for the outcome of the war and writes: "*The recruiting of children for war or revolution will be variously admired or deplored; the fact remains that the enthusiasm and devotion of such boys –and there were many of them in the ranks of the Partisans- were of no small account in deciding the success of*

²³⁷ For more information concerning these newspapers and their role see: Körner, 1982, pp. 164-166; p.453 and p.457.

²³⁸ Lange reports that 40 per cent of the Albanian population was under 18 years old (Lange, 1973, p.62).

²³⁹ See: Logoreci, 1977, p.73; Fischer, 1991, p.31; Pollo and Puto, 1981, p.226; Frasheri, 1964, 296; etc.

the Albanian revolution” (Amery, 1948, p.223). Peters also argues that “*What determined the outcome of the Civil War was the ability of the [National Liberation Movement] NLM to enlist large elements of (the urban and rural) population, especially the youth of all classes, in the partisan formations and in the local people's councils*” (Peters, 1975, p.285). And Vickers later recognises that the “*very youthful membership [of the Communists] was a distinct advantage compared to that of the nationalist groups*” (Vickers, 1995, p.160). What should not be underestimated is that thousands of young women as well were being recruited by the Communists (Frasheri, 1964, p.296). As Vickers estimates, of the 70, 000 partisan fighters 6,000 were women, whereas the nationalists rarely recruited females, so leaving a valuable source of assistance untapped (Vickers, 1995, p.160).

Seeing through the “cleavages-model prism” one could register a variety of interests which found their expression in the Communist resistance movement. And this could be the answer to the question “why was the communist resistance movement so strong and effective?” There was a series of cleavages –religious, territorial as well as the good old feudal-peasant cleavage- whose dynamic produced such a resistance movement. There were the interests of different social groups, which run into the same river converting it into a rapid stream.

5.3.4. Balli Kombetar

Without any political party, the nationalists had either individually, or in groups, given their allegiance to the Albanian Communist Party. The Conference of Peza formed the “*Levizje Nacional Clirimtar*” (National Liberation Movement) or National Liberation Front. Under the guidance of a general council, a temporary instrument of government, its aim was to gather together all anti-fascist Albanians without any distinction as to class, political conviction, region of origin or religion. The aim was to thwart the plans of the occupying forces to win the country over to the fascist bloc and to set Albania firmly at

the heart of the coalition of antifascist countries. Not only the discussion of the question concerning the political character of the Albanian regime after the end of the war,²⁴⁰ but moreover, the facts a) that slogans like “land for those who till it” (Fischer, 1999, p.131) were used in order to mobilise the peasants masses which until then remained suspicious (Kasneci, 1966, p. 25) and b) that National Liberation Councils were to be created throughout the country, demonstrate the intensity of the “haves and have-nots cleavage.” These Councils were summoned to play an important role with regard to organising the popular front and to be politically instrumental in the future state, because they were to replace the fascist authority when it was overthrown in order to eliminate in this manner the re-establishment of the former bourgeois-landlords’ authority. *“The Conference of Peza thus decided to merge, in time and in space, the two historic processes in a common revolution: the national-liberation struggle to secure the independence of the country, and the popular revolution”* (Frasheri, 1964, p.287).

The fact that the Albanian Communist Party had become the leader in the fight for national liberty and the recognition of this fact by the great powers of the anti-fascist coalition ensured the total play expression of the “haves and have-nots” clavage. The

²⁴⁰ The delicate question of which regime would be established in Albania after the war was raised openly at the conference of Peza (September 16th 1942) Even though there was an atmosphere of co-operation and tolerance to be registered during the Conference, the importance of the theme for each of the “interested parties” should not be underestimated.

The idea that a “democratic republic” should be proclaimed was dismissed by the Communists as inappropriate for the moment (Vickers, 1995, p.148) (or as a sign of willingness to tolerate and co-operate with the other groups); while Kupa even though he was unhappy with the term *partisan*, the use of the red star, and some of the political decisions ultimately gave in on these points and agreed to make Zog’s return dependent on the popular will. In exchange Hoxha mitigated some of the strident language associated with social reform (Fischer, 1999, p. 130).

ruling classes as much as the classes which had materially sustained them started warring. Now their representatives realised more and more that it was no longer a matter of a movement like those in the past, but a liberation movement which was both national and social and, led as it was by the Albanian Communist Party, threatened their domination. As they were naturally concerned to protect the vested interests and privileges of the landowning beys, together with their social, economic and political positions, they were not slow to react.

They formed their own nationalistic resistance movement entitled *Balli Kombetar e Shqiperise: BKSh* (National Front of Albania), a political organisation totally opposed to the return of Zog,²⁴¹ which regrouped various political elements which were mildly liberal, republican –supported the programme of agrarian reform– and strongly nationalist, united by anti-communism. The position taken by the *BKSh* was not different from the one taken by all the anti-Communist resistance groups in Europa. The immediate strategy to be employed against the enemy made the intentions of both the communist and the anti-communist movements even clearer. “*The “haves” tended to be more passive because they had more to lose and were more vulnerable to reprisals. Accordingly, they wished to limit resistance primarily to organisation and preparation, and opposed a large-scale armed uprising until it could be coordinated with an Allied invasion from the outside*” (Stavrianos, 1964, p.763). According to them, armed combat against a powerful enemy (this was their principal argument) risked ending in total destruction of the Albanian people, whose fate in the end was to be decided by the great powers. They, therefore, decided to keep their forces intact to face the future enemies – Yugoslavia and Greece. The Englishman, J. Amery, who knew them closely, wrote that their desire to fight was heavily undermined by their desire to enjoy the wealth they possessed (Amery, 1948, p.58).

²⁴¹ Among its leaders were such men as Midhat Frasheri and Ali Klissura, who had been prominent opponents of King Zog.

However, the *BKSh* did not remain inactive. It chose Mit'hat Frasheri (a well known politician and publicist, son of Abdyl Frasheri) as leader, established a Central Committee for the conduct of affairs and adopted the same form of organisation as the Albanian Communist Party – armed detachments, councils, etc. Moreover the priorities of this group were laid down in two programmes.²⁴² And it is more than obvious that in its demagogic aims it even borrowed one of the points of the Albanian Communists Party's main programme – the formation of an Albania “*without exploiters or exploited*” (Pollo and Puto, 1981, p.23). But the main aim of the National Front remained “*to protect Albanians from sacrifices and protect the social, economic and political position of its leadership*” (Fischer, 1991, p.24).

As the *BKSh* spread into many regions and it progressively took into its ranks groups of the ruling class who had remained indifferent until then, the cleavage between ruling class –landlords and peasants was becoming apparent. Two political lines (diametrically opposed – those of the National Liberation Front and the National Front) competed against each other. The cleavage was close to turn from a deep division into a conflict. The country was threatened by a new split which was bound to bring in its train the danger of the outbreak of a civil war.

The “haves” went far enough in order to maintain, after the war, what they possessed before it. The fact that a *BKSh* sympathiser, namely Maliq Bey Bushati, on February 13th 1943, took over the presidency of the Tirana government,²⁴³ and became the executor of

²⁴² The two programmes of the *BKSh*, namely the “Eight Points” and the “Decalogue” are given in: Kuhmel, 1981, Dokument Nr.19, p.570.

²⁴³ The governments during the Italian occupation (April 12th 1939–September 13th 1943) were as following: Government Shevket Verlaci (12.04.1939-03.12.1941); Government Mustafa Kruja (03.12.1941-19.01.1943); Government Eqrem Libohova (19.01.1943-13.02.1943); Government Maliq Bushati (13.02.1943-13.05.1943); and Government Eqrem Libohova (13.05.1943-13.09.1943) (Kaser, 1981, pp.22-25).

the new policy of Rome (of the so-called “concessions” to the Albanians), shows how difficult it was for the Balli Kombetars to choose the right strategy in order to achieve their double aim; on the one hand to get rid of the occupiers, while on the other to minimise the possibility that after the liberation the Communists would be the ones to take over and govern the country and its future.

5.4. Conclusions

With regard to the first of the questions, formulated at the beginning of this chapter (exploitation of the country's peculiarities and the existing cleavages – in this case – by the Italians), one could argue that the Italians proved unable to exploit either the country's peculiarities or the existing cleavages.

They underestimated the “personality” aspect in their effort to find collaborators and to “secure their quislings” and they did not make the slightest effort to mobilise the one or the other group of people. They simply welcomed everyone who was willing to cooperate. After having achieved their first aim, namely legalizing their seizure of the country, they tried to make the basis of their occupation as stable as they could. At this phase they made an effort to utilize the Albanian dream of a “Great Albania”. But once again their approach proved to be “spontaneous”. They did not take into consideration the fact that after the Italian occupation, the Albanians had abandoned any revisionist ambitions (Fischer, 1994, p.371). As Omari puts it “*The Italian effort to bring Kosova region into Albania had been interpreted [by the Albanians] as an act of pure colonialist annexation*” (Omari, 1986, p.50)

They also acted spontaneously and imprudently as far as any attempt to exploit the existing “cleavages” was concerned. They made an effort to exploit each of the cleavages separately, without taking into account the other, which also “run” parallel. So in the case of the religious cleavage, even though they had a good point to start (a part of the

population was Christians with a potential positive attitude towards the Christian occupants) they did not manage to use it to their advantage. They ignored the problems and needs of the Catholic Ghegs, who wished to keep arms in order to protect their land from raids mounted by Montenegrins (territorial cleavage); they did not take into consideration the expectations of both Orthodox and Catholics not to be kept out of public life (social aspect of the religious cleavage); they did not consider the ethnic aspect of the Orthodox Tosks who wished to retain the Greek language (territorial cleavage) and they disrespected the Muslim tradition.

Similarly, any attempt to exploit the feudal/anti-feudal cleavage proved fruitless. Through their imprudent policy both landowners and landless were dissatisfied and alienated. The landowners had been left out of any decisions, the merchants had to deal with a series of restrictions of currency control and the system of obligatory import and export permits, while the landless realised in a short time that through the agricultural loans and the arranging mortgages the best lands could end in the hands of the Italians.

With regard to the second question (the implementation of cleavages theory in the interpretation process for the understanding of the basis and reasons of the formation of political parties and opposition movements during this period) the research came up with the following conclusions.

The cleavages theory could assist the interpretation and understanding of the formation of the various resistance groups and political parties in a restricted way. (under two restrictions) The first "restriction" derives from the fact that, as already mentioned, not only the cleavages but other factors – the so-called "country's peculiarities" – played their role as well and should be taken into consideration in such an effort. And even then things would not be so clear. There is no clear line between the cleavages and the country's peculiarities. Even to distinguish the cleavages would be difficult, if not impossible; it is not easy for someone to find the border lines. Moreover, one ought not to forget that parallel to these two parameters – cleavages and peculiarities – runs a third

one, namely the deep desire of many Albanians to fulfil pure personal interests. And this desire had provoked the mobilisation and collaboration of some with one or the other side of a cleavage on the one hand, or with the occupiers on the other.

The second "restriction" is related to the fact that the cleavages theory cannot in any case be of much help. So, even though it is a useful tool for the interpretation and understanding process of the formation and basis of the Communist movement and the Balli Kompetar, one cannot say the same in the case of some of the first resistance groups or the Fascist Party of Albania. Especially the latter – the Fascist Party of Albania – was not the result of any kind of social conflicts and cleavages and did not represent in any way the interests of any social group in the country. So it would be ineffective to try to interpret the formation of such a party either through the cleavage theory or the "country's peculiarities." The "Fascist party of Albania" was a "plant" imported direct from Italy in a country where the soil was poor and inappropriate for such a "plant" to grow roots.

It would also be groundless to interpret the formation of the first resistance groups with the help of the cleavages theory. Many of them were just groups of people who intended to protect their own land (area) not only from the Italians but from others as well (Ghegs). On the other hand groups formed by Abaz Kupi, Muharrem Bajraktari, Myslim Peza and Bey Kryeziu, even though they were distinct with regard to their pro-royalist or anti-royalist position, their divisions were not about the political system or the kind of the regime after the liberation but about Zog himself and his role in the post-war Albanian administration.

Now, as regards the formation of the Communist movement and later of the Communist Party an approach through the prism of cleavages theory reveals that the existing cleavages, "acting" within the historical conditions of the period 1939-1944, affected its route and dynamism. The research concludes that the formation of the Communist Party was not based on the secession of the left wing from the Social-democracy (deprivation

of ideological basis), and the theory of classes has no implementation in the effort to analyze the making-up of the Albanian Communist Party. "Responsible" for the formation and dynamism of the party was the "haves / have-nots" cleavage (the term in this case includes all the other cleavages). With the term "haves" we refer to all these people who possessed either land or privileges before the occupation and who wished to restore the pre-war status quo after its end; while the term "have nots" denotes those who were deprived of land, money, rights, privileges and dreams (to the last groups belonged especially young people and young intellectuals who did not even dare to dream of a better future in the case that the pre-war situation was re-established after Albania's liberation) and who were ready to fight not only with the aim to liberate their country, but to build a new post-war state.

Product of the "have / have nots" cleavage and the antipode of the Communist Party and of the sum of interests which it represented, was *Balli Kompetar* (National Front). This nationalistic resistance movement was a political organization intending to protect the interests, the privileges and the economic and political positions of the great landowners.

CHAPTER 6

WAR, FOREIGN OCCUPATION AND POPULAR RESISTANCE, II. GERMAN OCCUPATION, 1943-1944

6.1. *Question 1.: Exploitation of peculiarities*

The capitulation of Italy on 8th September 1943 and the immediate occupation of Albania by Hitler's troops brought about a new military/political relationship in the country.

The Germans consolidated their positions in the main towns and at the centre points in the communications network; devoted their energies into forming political combinations which would hopefully ensure their own peace; encourage the Albanians to kill each other and exploited the existing cleavages, especially the one between Communists and Anti-Communists and unlike the Italians exploited the "country's peculiarities" as well. First and foremost, they took into consideration the fact that the role of the personalities was very important in Albania. As Neubacher²⁴⁴ argues, what was important was: "[...] *Männer mit Namen, die im Lande Achtung genossen. Parteien zählten nicht in diesem Lande*" (Neubacher, 1956, p.109). Second, they were aware of the deep need of the Albanian people for independence, and, last but not least, they did not lose the opportunity to take advantage of Albanian's irredentist feelings.

²⁴⁴ Herman Neubacher was active as a "flying diplomat" (between 1940-1945) in the South-East region. From the end of August 1943 he took over as "German Foreign Office's special agent in the South-East" namely Serbia, Montenegro, Albania and Greece.

Personalities

Neubacher's initial assignment was to find the most respected personalities in the "land of Skipetars" (Neubacher, 1957, p.111). The Germans succeeded in drwing to their side a number of personalities; the most important of them were: Lef Nosi, from a well-to-do Elbasaner family, a prominent member of the BK, one of the leading figures in the liberation movement for the achievement of Albania's independence in 1912; Anton Arapi, an outstanding Catholic leader; and Mehdi Bey Frasheri, a person who had played an important role not only for the achievement of the Albanian independence but who had served as Prime Minister in Zog's short liberal phase (1936) as well.

And as Firsher puts it *"in order to keep personalities of such a quality at it, the Germans developed a government structure, which allowed the Albanians to exercise a considerable authority"* (Fischer, 1994, p.373). There were two groups which made the effort (at the beginning separately) to form a National Committee which could take over as a provisional government: the first under Ibrahim Bey Bicaku from Elbasan (Old Albania) and the other under Dschafar Deva from the region of Kosova. These two groups decided on the 14th September 1943 to form one National Committee of 22 people who carried names enjoying respect within the country. Even the formation of the permanent government under the Kosovar Rexhep Mitrovica (05.11.1943-21.07.1944) was a German effort to show to the Albanian people that the personalities whom they respected (most of them had credentials as nationalists) had collaborated; should they not do the same?

By giving the curriculum vitae of the Cabinet's members a look-over, one could be quite impressed by the fact that the Germans were painstaking in the choice of the Albanian personalities. The Minister President, Rexhep Mitrovica, a Muslim comming from Mitrowitza, had taken part in the declaration of independence at Vlora in 1912. He had also become a leader of the anti-Zog exile group in Paris. He had joined the Balli Kombetar in 1942 and was arrested by the Italians in 1943. As Scheiger puts it, by

choosing him as Prime Minister the Germans had achieved a double aim. On the one hand, they had found a Prime Minister who, because of his “national” way of thinking and acting, was a man of great respect in Albania, while on the other, his close “attachment” to Kosova, provided a guarantee that the interests of this Albanian region would not be ignored.²⁴⁵ The Minister of Interior, Deva, was a Muslim from Mitrowitza, had studied in Austria and was considered an Albanian nationalist commanding respect, especially in the Kossova region.²⁴⁶ The Minister of Justice, Rrok Kolaj, a Catholic from Skutari, had studied at the Graz University, and, as a nationalist, was also respectable.²⁴⁷ The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mehmet Konica, a Muslim from South Albania, had taken part as Albanian Delegate in the Paris Peace Conference 1919/1920, had served as Minister of Foreign Affairs in 1920, was sent as Ambassador to London in 1925, and in 1939, left Albania with King Zog. As Scheiger registers: “[...] er vergügt über gute Beziehungen im Ausland, besitzt in Albanien als alter nationaler Politiker weitverbreiteten Rug.”²⁴⁸ His Undersecretary, Vehbi Frasheri was also a Muslim coming from South Albania, who had studied in Austria. He was the son of Mehdi Frasheri (member of the Regerncy) who also enjoyed respect within Albania, as a member of the well-known Frasheri family, which had played an important role in the political life of Albania.²⁴⁹ The Minister of Finance, Sokrat Dodbida was Orthodox, coming from Elbasan (middle Albania), Lef Nosi’s (member of the Regency) nephew, who had studied in Viena.²⁵⁰ The Minister of Political Economy, Ago Agaj, was Muslim from the Valona region, who had studied in Austria and had served as Prefect in Mitrowitza 1941. He was well-known patriot, who had suffered persecution because of his strong national

²⁴⁵ See: P.A.A.A., B.dSS., [Telegramm] Scheiger an A.A.B., 09.11.1943, Albanien, Band 1, Mf. Nr. 21, R.N.:9 vom 9.11., S.252.

²⁴⁶ See: Ibid., S.253.

²⁴⁷ See: Ibid.

²⁴⁸ Ibid.

²⁴⁹ See: Ibid., S. 254 & 255.

²⁵⁰ See: Ibid., S.253 & 254.

feelings.²⁵¹ The Minister of Labour, Musa Gjylbegu, was a Muslim from a well-known family from Scutari. He had studied in Austria and maintained close relations with Scutari and the mountain regions of North Albania.²⁵² The Minister of Education, Dr. Eqrem Cabey, was Muslim coming from Gjirokaster (South Albania). He had studied linguistics in Austria and, since 1939, had been held by the Italians in Rome. Because of his patriotic feelings and his education was also a respectable personality within Albania.²⁵³

The Germans had managed to attract some significant people although the group was predominantly from Kosova or northern Albania while most of them had some connection with the Germans. The government did include many national groups, including pre-war influential politicians, both pro- and anti- Zog, representatives of the Catholic clergy, representatives of the Gheg tribes in the north, some individuals with Balli Kombetar connections, and Kosovar nationalists. It is beyond doubt that the Germans had succeeded, during a critical period, in attracting a group of people that included many who had known pro-Allied and democratic sentiments and who had rejected with scorn the chance to collaborate with the Italians²⁵⁴ (Fischer, 1999, p. 174).

The formation of the following governments (Fiqri Dine [21.07.1944-29.09.1944] and Ibrahim Bicaku [29.09.1944-27.10.1944]) should not be regarded as the result of a “personalities orientated German policy.” As far as the Bicaku government is concerned,

²⁵¹ See: Ibid, S.254.

²⁵² See: Ibid.

²⁵³ See: Ibid.

²⁵⁴ Even the Allies had acknowledged this German success. Peter Kemp, a British liaison officer in Albania, writes in his memoirs: “*it is a measure of their success that when they set up a puppet government, they were able to induce Albanians of high principles and distinction to serve*” (Kühmel, 1981, p.206).

the only comment which could be made is that the “game was already over” and “*its worth was only a statistical one*” (Neuwirth, 1996, p.186).

Irredentism

The Germans kept on feeding the Idea of the “Great Albania” and secured their backs by promising to arm the Kosovars (who were anyway without motivation to resist either the Italian or the German armies) so that they could fight the Serbs (Vickers, 1995, p.147). Moreover, the refusal of the Communists to support the return of Kosova to Albania made it difficult for the Ballists and Zogists to cooperate with the *NLF* in the resistance movement.²⁵⁵ But Germany managed to ensure the benevolent “neutrality” of many Ballists, and won the assistance of a considerable number of Ghegs through their support for the inclusion of Kosova in Albania.

The story goes as following. After the destruction of Yugoslavia in 1941, Albania was enlarged by the addition of part of Montenegro and Kosova, regions, which contained a significant Albanian population and had been the object of a strong Albanian irredentism. These regions nearly doubled the size of Albania’s population and provided Albania with large badly needed agricultural areas (Fischer, 1991, p.29). The Italians had tried to use the addition of these lands to encourage popular sympathy for Rome but had bungled the benefits as a result of arrogant and repressive policies. Now, by means of propaganda, the Germans emphasized that Italy had little to do with the creation of a Greater Albania. Italy’s role was dismissed as a simple act of colonialist annexation, the culmination of the long-lasting Italian policy of controlling their “Fifth shore” (Omari, 1986, p.50). With the collapse of Italy these territories became important again in the popular mind, as the Germans quickly emphasized the German role in their recovery. They also supported the creation of the Second League of Prinzen whose goal would be the protection of Greater

²⁵⁵ Neither could the Allies guarantee that Kosova would be a part of Albania after the war.

Albania, so creating the impression that only now, with the coming of the Germans, Kosova's real union with Albania could be achieved (in reality they managed to enlarge Albania only slightly). The Germans did not fail, as well, to bring to the attention of the Albanians that the Allies had been carefully silent on Kosova (indicated their intention to hand it back to the Yugoslavs) and had failed to recognise any Albanian government or committee in exile, leaving the entire question of the existence of an Albanian state in the postwar world unresolved. And some Albanians demonstrated enthusiasm for the Germans. The first to lend the Germans unequivocal support, to no one's surprise, came from the new territories of Kosova and Cameria. Many Albanian leaders on Cameria were quick to cooperate with the Germans, since their hopes of becoming part of the enlarged Albania were as dependent on Germany as were the hopes of the Kosovars. These hopes were, as well, never realised.

Independence desire

The Germans being also aware of the Albanian history and the long-drawn-out struggle of the Albanian people to gain their national independence exploited their wish and with the help of the National Committee they played the card of the "independent Albania." They said they had come to help the Albanians to throw off the Italian yoke and without injuring the susceptibility of the Albanians, who did not believe in the victory of the Axis, the Nazis declared the "relative Neutrality" and "relative Sovereignty" of Albania. Albania should consider the German Armed Forces as guest. The Albanian government should be against any agents' activities, which could threaten the "peace" of the country. And in the case that Germany's opponents (the Allies) managed to invade Albania the Albanian government should take a neutral position (Neubacher, 1956, p.113). Germany recognised the Sovereignty of the Albanian government with the restriction that Sovereignty would be lost were that government to support Germany's opponents. So as well was the "Sovereignty" Albania's regarding the safety of the German troops, a relative one (Neubacher, 1956, p. 113).

And by October they were in a position to enjoy the fruits of their policy. They had a) managed to attract prominent Albanians in order to form an independent government; b) the National Constituent Assembly with Nosi as president passed a series of decrees that altered Albania's Constitution established by the Italians. It did reaffirm the decrees of 1st September 1928, which had declared Albania to be a royal dictatorship; a move calculated to attract Abaz Kupa and clearly leaving the road open for the possible return of Zog and c) the decision was made by the Assembly that during the war Albania should be governed by a 4-man Council of Regency (patterned after the one which had existed between 1920-1924) with one representative from each of Albania's four major religious communities; this was a clever movement in order not only to attract even more personalities but to provoke the sympathy of every side of the religious cleavage.

6.2. Exploitation of Cleavages

Religious Cleavage

The Germans also attempted to smooth out the religious cleavage to their advantage through the formation of the Council of Regency which was consisting of four, one representative from each of Albania's four major religious communities –as written above. Nosi was chosen as the Orthodox representative. The Sunni Muslims would be represented by Fuat Bey Dibra (a landowner from new Albania) who, like Nosi, had a long and distinguished record.²⁵⁶ The Albanian Catholics would be represented by the prior of the Franciscans in Shkoder, Father Anton Arapi, who maintained connections

²⁵⁶ In 1920, he was as Albanian representative in Paris and even though he had served in the collaborationist cabinet of Mustafa Kruja, was something of a catch for the Germans as in November 1942 he had been elected to the central committee of the Balli Kombetar (Schmidt-Neke, 1987, p.333).

with both the Kossovars and the National Liberation Front.²⁵⁷ The Bektashi Muslims were represented by Mehdi Frasheri, who agreed to head the Council of Regency, and who was the greatest prize for the Germans.

Communist – Anti Communist Cleavage / Collaboration tendencies and Exploitation

Here, the deep cleavage between the “haves and have-nots” (material/practical [great landlords - landless peasants] and theoretical [privileged – underprivileged] aspects, as well as to the territorial one [Ghegs – Tosks]), refers to what we call Communist - Anti Communist cleavage. This cleavage was the one that provoked collaboration tendencies (at least from the side of the nationalist resistance groups) and constituted a good exploitation basis from the conqueror’s side. The Germans soon realised their urgent need to mobilise “[...] *die nationale Kräfte*” against the Communists, in order to keep the country under control, which would be impossible to achieve by military means as, since the end of October 1943, there were only two German divisions in Albania. Under these circumstances, the cleavage between the Communists and the Anti-Communists proved ideal for exploitation. The Germans had nothing more to do than to aggravate the tension between the two parts and to give groundless hopes to one of them.

Even though it is a complicated task to find the boundary lines between the collaboration tendencies and the exploitation strategy, the cleavages theory seems to be a suitable instrument for the recovery of the logic that produced the “collaboration phenomenon” and the governments Mitrovica and Dine, which should simultaneously be seen as an act of “cleavages exploitation” on the part of the conquerors.

²⁵⁷ He did not accept because as a Catholic monk did not want to confront confirming a death sentence.

Collaboration tendencies as Exploitation basis

The Communists had promised social revolution, which implied the lost of privileges and the reorganisation of the Albanian society. In the face of such a development there were many who regarded collaboration as the only “way out.” Those who show collaboration tendencies²⁵⁸ were, on the one hand the “haves” and on the other the Ghegs. The latter, in one way or the other belonged to the “haves” (materially or by enjoying privileges) or they wished no change with regard to the social construction of their life. So the collaboration tendencies run along two lines; a) the haves and have nots cleavage and b) the territorial cleavage. The collaboration tendencies worked also as a basis for the Germans to exercise their “cleavages exploitation” policy. It was more or less a gift of which, as expected, they make use.

a) Haves and Have- nots Cleavage

The main aim of the “haves”, as presented above, was to maintain at the end of the war what they had before it, or in other words their aim was not to jeopardise losing their “goods” either during or after the war. Within this perspective they had decided to follow a moderate policy and way of acting against the conqueror, namely “wait than fight.” But in the course of time “[...] the so-called “national” groups were discovering to their cost that it was much more difficult to maintain guerrilla armies by waiting than by fighting. This development serves to explain a phenomenon which otherwise seems inexplicable, namely, the collaboration of sincerely patriotic citizens with quislings and with occupationists. The more the “have-nots” assumed the leadership of the resistance struggles, the more likely it became that the post-war regimes would be of a

²⁵⁸ In the case of Albania, resistance against the Italians did not automatically mean resistance against Fascism. So, seeing things from this point of view, it was not new that an Italian opponent was later a German collaborationist.

revolutionary and Communist-dominated character. This prospect drove many members of the “nationalist” organizations to choose collaboration as the lesser of two evils. This may appear extreme and unwarranted at first glance, but it becomes perfectly understandable upon further consideration” (Stavrianos, 1963, p.763).

The main obstacle in the way of both the Balli Kombetar members as well as the Zogists were the Communists, who during the civil war had left them almost powerless. The Balli Kombetar, soon after the show down with the Communists, found itself in dire trouble. *“Lacking the single-mindedness, the aggressiveness and the draconian discipline of the communist partisans, its military structure began to disintegrate and the discipline of its units to break down”* (Logoreci, 1977, p.78).

Within this climate they²⁵⁹ turned to the Germans, seeing in their act a clever manoeuvre to strengthen their position and achieve their aim. This support for the Germans cannot be explained as an ideological shift. The organization had no illusions about a German victory, and much of it never disavowed its support for a democratic regime built on broad social and economic reform. The move was a calculated, tactical one (Fischer, 1999, p.191). They hoped that their general attitude would encourage the Germans to supply them with weapons for the last and the most decisive fight against the partisans (Fischer, 1992, pp.228-229).

The Germans attached themselves to the traditional elite, the large landowners and beys, those people who were natural enemies of the Communists and who had something in common with the Germans themselves, both linguistically and culturally. And they made

²⁵⁹ Of course it should be improper to condemn all the members of Balli Kombetar as quislings. There were many who denounced collaboration and whenever a Balli Kombetar member collaborated, the organisation would either deny that the offending party was even affiliated with the Balli Kombetar or denounce them openly, but keep contact with them clandestinely (Fischer, 1999, p.191).

a weak effort to mobilise the materially “have-nots” for their (Germans’) benefit. The Mitrovica government made a start in the matter of land reform, one of Albania’s most pressing needs; but the result was nothing more than a token gesture. Mitrovica announced that the state land would be sold to twenty-five hundred “proletarian farmers” at prices they would be able to afford. While little of this land was actually distributed, the move certainly encouraged many landless rural labourers to think twice about joining the resistance, for fear of missing even the slightest chance of becoming one of the fortunate twenty-five hundred (Fischer, 1999, p.176). So the Germans, even though they proved to be more clever than their predecessors, by tying themselves at least to one of the groups of the Albanian society, rather than taking decisions spontaneously, as the Italians had done and alienating the “haves” and the “have nots;” it has to be registered that this group was “[...] *the narrow European- educated elite who had no ties to the common Albanian [...]*” (Fischer, 1999, p. 176). They simply failed in their effort to weaken one of the strongest Communist slogans: “land for those who till it.”

b) Territorial Cleavage

Both the exploitation of the irredentist feeling of many Albanians as well as the reaffirmation of the decree of the 1st September 1928, constituted manoeuvres to win the Albanians of the North part of the country –and in this way touched successfully upon the territorial cleavage. The collaborationist Dine government (21.07.1944-29.09.1944)²⁶⁰ could be also seen, on the one hand, as a product of the Communist – Anti Communism cleavage and on the other as the last German attempt to exploit cleavages (especially the territorial cleavage) in Albania.

²⁶⁰ As Firscher argues: „[...] *even though Schliep referred to this government as a „moderately-Zogist“ government, [...] Dine’s Zogism was perhaps more a unifying theory to serve the existing social order in Albania than a deliberate attempt to bring back Zog himself*“ (Fischer, 1999, p.214).

A deep desire not to allow the Communist Tosks to take the rule of the country after the end of the war and to bring the new order in the Albanian status quo, was also hidden behind the collaboration tendencies of the Ghegs.

At first, indifference towards the conqueror was registered. *“The Ghegs were stirred by no deep economic or social discontents. [...] they were sustained in their enjoyment of its licence by cheap and plentiful supplies of bread from the granaries of the Kosova. [So] [...] the ordinary tribesmen remained supremely indifferent to the invaders, whom he seldom saw. Consequently the tribes had therefore favoured a policy of neutrality [...]”* (Amery, 1948, p.163)

But apart from being indifferent and neutral, the structure of their society made it difficult to organise themselves and channel their energy in one direction only. Major Julian Amery, a British Liaison, referring to the efforts made by the Allies to mobilise the Ghegs against the foreign enemy, gives quite a clear picture of their peculiarities *“Among the Ghegs power lay in the armed might and resources of the tribes, and to a much smaller extent, in the wealth of the merchants and the landowners of the plain. The strength of the tribes was sapped by their disunity and was never channelled into any higher unit of organisation than the tribe itself. Nevertheless, geographical barriers tended to separated the tribes into distinct regional groups; and, within one or more such groups, they were sometimes brought together by a man pre-eminent among them by his personal ability, family tradition, or wealth. Such a leader enjoyed influence rather than authority”*²⁶¹ (Amery, 1948, p.161).

²⁶¹ “[...] Our reconnaissance [British] had shown us that there were [...] five such confederacies among the Gheg, led respectively by Abaz Kupi, Gjon Marko Gjoni, Ceno Kryeziu, Muharrem Bairaktar, and Fiqri Dine. [...] Fiqri Dine’s power was harder to assess, but it was said that there were six thousand rifles in Dibra, and though it was unlikely that more than three thousand could ever be brought into action, the bulk of

“But these powerful men were divided among themselves by ancient feuds,²⁶² personal jealousies, and their varying attachment to the Allied or to the German cause. Hitherto these divisions had paralysed their strength [...]” (Amery, 1948, p.162).

They started waking up and looking for some kind of solution when it was more than clear that the Germans were not undefeated, which meant that one day they would be out of Albania.

”[...] The prospect of a German surrender or withdrawal sharply stimulated their predatory appetites; their Chiefs [...] made ready for the day when they might fall upon the stricken Germans to strip them of their power, their weapons and their wealth” (Amery, 1948, p.163). Even though they had started to wish and organise themselves for a revolt *“Left to themselves, the Ghegs would have bided their time until their leaders had discovered that the Germans could be attacked and plundered with impunity. The revolt would thus in all probability have been delayed until the eve of a German retreat, or until the Allied forces had landed in Albania [...]”* (Amery, 1948, p.163).

But *“[...] The growth [...] of the National Liberation Front introduced a new and disturbing factor into their calculations”* (Amery, 1948, p.163). The fact that *“the Partisan leaders had already proclaimed themselves the future rulers of Albania and*

these might follow Fiqri if he fought in alliance with Abaz Kupa or Muharrem Bairaktar“ (Amery, 1948, p.162).

²⁶² Amery referring to the meetings with Abaz Kupa, reports of the difficulties he [Abaz Kupa] faced in persuading the other Ghegs to put aside blood feuds and unify their strength. Because every time a clan was won to his cause their blood enemies would side automatically with his rivals, he undertook the labour of reconciling the contending parties and achieving and securing a *besa* -a general truce among them (Amery, 1948, pp.112-113).

made little secret that, as Communists and as Tosks, they had no room in their scheme of things for the tribal lairds of the North” (Amery, 1948, p.163) accelerated the flow of the events.

Now they realised they could not wait any longer. They had to “[re]act.” *“The Gheg leaders were not afraid of the growth of a Partisan movement in North Albania; for the conservatism of the tribes, Catholic influence, and the Slav associations of Communism made the mountaineers predominantly hostile to the N.L.F. Nor indeed were they alarmed by the warlike qualities of the Partisans, for they considered themselves a match for Tosk troops of any kind. They knew, however, that the N.L.F. had, for some time been receiving military supplies from the British and would thus be well equipped with mortars and automatic weapons. They were convinced, moreover, that, if Hoxha should fail to conquer the North by his own efforts, he could always count on the help of Tito, and, in the last instance, of Soviet Russia itself.*

The knowledge that their rivals enjoyed foreign support admonished the Ghegs of their own isolation, and they rightly concluded that their only hope of escaping destruction lay in securing foreign backing for themselves. Seeing that the Partisans were inspired by the Russians and armed by the British, the first reaction of many among them had been to turn to the Germans for help. This, indeed, was the policy pursued by Marko Joni and by Fiqri Dine, who sought, though somewhat half-heartedly, to crush the N.L.F. with levies equipped and supported by the Germans. Neither of these leaders any longer believed in a German victory, but they hoped to use the German army to suppress the social revolution before the Allies came [...]” (Amery, 1948, pp.163-164).

As Neubacher reports, Fiqri Dine had made it clear from the very beginning that he would take over the government only on the condition that the Germans would promise to provide two mountain divisions with equipment (tanks). And he goes on to write: *“Even today I think that this demand emanated from Abaz Kupa, who being in close contact with English Liaison Officers was well-advised, how could the German arsenal*

come to the hands of the Nationalist and Zogist before the German retreat, which would not delay to take place, fact which would enable them to fight the red partisans [...]" (Neubacher, 1956, p.118).

Of course, other factors smoothed out as well the way to collaboration. Zogists' attitude towards the Germans was not as negative as towards the Italians, who had driven their King ignominiously out of the country; the Germans established a Regency in place of Zog; re-established the Zogist Constitution and the last but not least they expected that the Germans would soon leave Albania. And they regarded the fact that they would be in the government when the Germans went as a big opportunity to remain in power after the end of the war as well. Of course they realised a few months later that all their expectations were nothing more than wishful thinking. Fiqri Dine resigned and turned to the Allies (Neuwirth, 1996, p.136).

6.3. Question2: Expression of peculiarities and cleavages

6.3.1 Resistance groups

Now with regard to the second question formulated at the beginning of this chapter (did the cleavages find their expression in the formation of the various resistance groups in the period 1939-1944 ? Is it enough to look through the prism of "cleavages theory" in order to interpret and understand the formation of political parties and resistance groups?) one could argue that, even though the conflict line which stood out and dictated action and reaction was the Communist – Anti-Communist one, one or the other of the "prop-cleavages", which in the storm of the war had been incorporated into the "big" one, showed a more intensive and dynamic face.

Legality

The break within the ranks of the NLM and the creation of the Legality is also to be seen and interpreted within the framework of the Communist – Anti-Communist cleavage. Moreover, it was its “privileged –under-privileged” dimension that carried most of the weight supported of course by the territorial one.

With regard to the story itself, it goes as following: Abaz Kupa was the architect of the alliance policy with the Balli Kombetar, and at Mukai, had entered into formal obligations towards them on behalf of the NLM. So interpreted Hoxha's change of front²⁶³ as a personal betrayal and came increasingly to suspect that his Communist colleagues meant to attack him, just as they had attacked the Ballists, unless he submitted to full Communist control. And it was not only Kupa but also many highlanders (northern chieftains), who favoured the return of the King as well and were resentful of the southern Tosks, who were predominant in the NLM and would leave no room free for tribal lairds of the North to act after the end of the war. Gheg leaders felt they would have few opportunities for influence and, therefore, little future in an NLM-dominated post-war Albania (Vickers, 1995, p.151). So having failed to persuade Hoxha to put an end to the civil war, Kupa and his supporters broke from the National Liberation Movement, whose leaders they could not trust and already feared, and formed the pro-Zogist nationalist movement, called Legality.²⁶⁴ But the historical data report mainly of what took place and only up to a point. Why?

²⁶³ Hoxha had refused to ratify the Mukai agreement and in October 1943, issued a directive to all Partisan units to attack and destroy the forces of Balli Kombetar. That was the beginning of the Civil War.

²⁶⁴ This name reminded Albanians of the return of Ahmed Zog to power in December 1924, when he overthrew the liberal Noli – government and called the occasion the Triumph of Legality (Hibbert, 1991, p.58).

One should look carefully in the kaleidoscope of events in order to understand and interpret. And in this case such an effort reveals the importance of a cleavage's dimension. Kupa was supported by Tirana, Kruja and Mati regions. The support coming from Tirana and Kruja found their reasons, respectively, to the facts that Zog had chosen Tirana as capital city, defending its claims against the rival cities of Skutari and Valona, and Kruja was the birthplace of Abaz Kupa. But the way to find why Mati stood behind Kupa goes through another path, which leads us to the thesis that the main source of the Party was the "privileged –under privileged" cleavage. *"Mati was rich and populated, the region where the tribal system of the mountains mingled with the feudalism of the coastal plain. The land and flocks were still owned and worked in common by the different clans; but their chiefs were already known as Beys; and the wealthier among them employed hired labour and rented out some of their fields to poorer families. The men of Mati were reputed devout Moslems and, as is often the way of the pious, they lived well; renowned for their lavish hospitality and comfortably appointed houses. They had prospered especially under the monarchy; for King Zog was a man of Mati and his first care had been for the people of his valley. Many, though they could not read nor write, had been given appointments in the civil service; and, following the tradition of the Turks, Zog had conferred reserve commissions on most of the Beys. This was not indeed to compel them to military service, but to bind them more closely to his cause by the payment of an honourable and regular pension. The valley had benefited, moreover, from an ambitious programme of public works; a road and several bridges had been built; and Burrel had been made the model provincial capital of Albania. The grateful memory of these past benefits and a just pride in their king's achievements in a broader field were fortified by the lapse in the payment of pensions which had followed his expulsion"* (Amery, 1948, pp. 105-106). So the men of Mati were staunchly for King Zog, whose return would, after the war, guarantee them what they had before it.

The Legality programme was set down in the newspaper *Atdheu* (the Fatherland), which accompanied the movement (in Albania) from October 1943 until August 1944 (Körner, 1982, p.458). Among others, the programme was a call for Albania's liberation, the

establishment of ethnic boundaries, the implementation of social reforms, such as agrarian reform and a social insurance system, which would bring a touch of quality to Albanian life and above all the return of Zog under a democratic kingdom (See: Fischer, 1999, p. 193 and Kühmel, 1981, p.259). Even though it would be groundless to argue that Zogists' withdrawal from the NLM had to do with any "philo-royal–anti-royal" cleavage, it should not be neglected that this movement also represented the interests of the Monarchists. And as Kühmel puts it, the re-enthronement of Zog, who was now wiser, as Kupa argued, was exactly what differentiated the Zogists' political project from that of the Ballists (Kühmel, 1981, p.259). Exactly this point was put aside in September / October 1944 when both the Ballists and the Zogists, having in view their common aim, namely to preserve their pre-war privileges after its end, and realising that to achieve such an aim they should triumph over their common enemy, signed an agreement for the coordination of the Nationalists against the Communists.

6.3.2. The Civil War

The Communist Anti Communist cleavage, the main cleavage of the period 1939-1944, lead to the civil war; the conflict between the partisans and the anti-communists (Balli Kombetar, Kupa and many other Gheg chieftains). This statement can be used as an interpretation-tool in our effort to understand the nature and especially the outcome of the civil war in Albania.

The nature of the war has already been described in previous chapters regarding the formation of the Communist movement as well as the formation of the Balli Kombetar, the policy of Abaz Kupa and the philosophy of the Gheg chieftains. However, with respect to the outcome of the war, some further points need to be made.

Nobody would deny that a series of external factors such as the Anglo-American-Soviet alliance, the refusal of the Anglo-Americans to recognise an Albanian government in

exile (a fact that enabled the Communists, after the collapse and destruction of the nationalist groups, to fill the power vacuum in a country left with no cohesive political institutions) and the material assistance that the British and Americans extended to the NLM did affect the events in Albania.²⁶⁵ But an important detail should not be ignored. The Soviet Red Army took no part in the liberation of Albania. There was a domestic driving force (internal factors), which provoked events.

One could argue that the old cleavages played a decisive role not only in the formation of the different resistance groups but even dictated the future Albania. Vickers offers a variety of reasons for the “partisans victory,” but the most effective of all was the one concerning the deep need of the Albanian people (especially the majority of peasants) to overthrow the old social and economical model. They wanted land, they had made their wish clear earlier (the June Revolution of 1924), they had been given the assurance (during the Zogist period) that a land reform would take place and until the outbreak of the war they had seen all their hopes falling apart. And as, during the occupation years, there was no native “Herr” to oppress them they found the opportunity to build a strong ideology, which acted as motivated force, and organise themselves. The Communists

²⁶⁵ The meaning and practical consequences of the alliance with Russia, as they concern Albania are well set out by Amery in his “chronicle of events.” To Kupa’s demands for inclusion of Albania among the United Nations, recognition of King Zog, self-determination for the Kosova, and military support for the nationalists, the “British policy” answered: “[...] as on previous occasions, that if we had never ceased to recognise King Zog no problem would arise. We could not, however, recognise him now without causing serious concern to the Partisans, who were actively fighting the Germans. It was perhaps true that the Partisans reflected Russian rather than British interests; but in our eyes, the Zogists could only maintain their claim to be our friends if they resumed the fight against the common enemy. Our alliance with Russia was the foundation of our policy, and we should therefore take no step which we could not openly justify before our Soviet allies“ (Amery, 1948, p.119).

managed “to take advantage of the profound contradiction in Albanian society between the old hierarchy of power and privilege, and an impoverished peasantry” (Vickers, 1995, pp.160-161). They promised land reform in the post war transformation of the country and they won the support of the majority of the landless peasantry.

“The partisans’ superior organisation and discipline, the conviction of their ideology, and their resolve to win even at the cost of the vicious Axis reprisals, underpinned their determination not only to liberate Albania but to seize power after their victory. The NF – (BKSh)- and Legaliteti did not have, in any case, the same ruthless determination to take power” (Vickers, 1995, p.160). The BK originally attracted both the vast majority of the villagers and the large landowners. However, exactly because they had the support of such volunteers, the the BK made *“its leaders more inclined than the communists to weigh the usefulness of a particular military operation against the harm that enemy reprisals might do to their families and villages of their followers”* (Logoreci, 1977, p.73). And of course they were afraid of reprisals, which would lead to the confiscation of their estates.

The “have-nots,” having nothing to lose and everything to gain preached and practised all-out resistance against the enemy. This gave them an important advantage over their more cautious and conservative rivals. The Anti-Communists among them Abaz Kupa and other Gheg chieftains who *“[...] constituted the ruling class of the existing society, felt that they could only pursue military operations as long as they could insure adequate protection for their society from enemy reprisals.”*²⁶⁶ *Failure to insure this protection would have led to the rejection of these leaders by their own society”* (Fischer, 1991, p.34).

²⁶⁶ Amery reports: *“[...] But we saw that they would not easily be moved to fight. The fear of reprisals had become an obsession with them [...]”* (Amery, 1948, p.115).

So they won the war and on October 1944, the second meeting of the National Council was held in Berat. Here the Anti-Fascist Liberation Council was converted into the Provisional government of Albania. It was headed by Enver Hoxha as prime minister and minister of defence, and 11 governmental departments were set up. Those Zogists and Ballists who could not manage to escape would be left to the mercy of the partisans. As a result Abas Kupa and his officers were forced to flee Albania in a boat from the Mati coast. On the 17th November Tirana was liberated and Hoxha's government entered the capital. Shkoder fell on 29th November, and so all Albania was freed from Axis forces.

6.4. Conclusions

The exploitation of the country's peculiarities and existing cleavages was for the Germans part of their strategy for a peaceful occupation. They did not act either spontaneously, or imprudently, like the Italians. They had carefully prepared their intervention by collecting detailed information about the economic, social, and political profile of the country. With regard to the country's peculiarities (personalities, independence, irredentism) their approach proved fruitful. A number of significant Albanians (pre-war influential politicians of great respect, representatives of all religious orientations, northerners and southerners) helped them to build government structures (Rexhep Mitrovitsa / Fiqri Dine / Ibrahim Bicaku) which gave the Albanians the impression of having succeeded in achieving an independent Albania; a fact which was supported by the declaration of Albania's "relative Neutrality" and the "relative Sovereignty" by the occupants. Being also aware of the irredenta feelings of many Albanians, the Germans managed to win the support of those who dreamed of a Great Albania by emphasizing the German role in the recovery of Kosova in Albania and the creation of a Second League of Prizren.

With regard to the aspect of the cleavages exploitation as a tactical approach for a peaceful occupation, the moves of the Germans were calculated and tactically correct. They possessed useful information (the diplomatic documents prove the truth of the

saying) and they managed to utilize the Communist / anti-Communist cleavage at the most by favoring (as expected) the anti-Communist side. Cleavages like the territorial, the feudal/anti-feudal etc., which had been assimilated into the mainstream (Communist / Anti-Communist), provided a number of opportunities to start with. So the Mitrovica government attracted members of the Balli Kombetar, all kind of traditional elite and large landowners with the aim to weaken the Communists by adopting the slogan “land for those who till it.” While the Dine government was a successful effort to bring Ghegs with different interests (nationalists and Zogists) and aims together and to unite them under the common aim of not allowing the Communist Tosks to take the rule of the country in the post-war phase. The Germans’ strategy “divide and rule” found a fertile ground in a country where many cleavages existed.

CHAPTER 7

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

7.1. Empirical findings

A series of questions have been formulated at the beginning of this work as well as during the course of research; questions regarding cleavages and questions regarding political parties and party systems. One of the main questions formulated at the beginning of this work (belonging to the first axis of the problematic) was whether the cleavages theory could be used as an interpretation model for the understanding of the political picture of Albania prior to 1944 and if yes, then what would be the outcome of a research which would move within such a theoretical framework? Which cleavages could be registered in the country and which would be their role in the route of the political life of Albania? Moreover, were there any peculiarities to be observed, which could also affect the route of the country's political life in one way or the other? What about the political parties and the party system of Albania between 1912-1944?

The end of this research leads us (concerning the questions about the cleavages) to the conclusion that, if we use the cleavages theory as an analytical framework, then there is a number of cleavages to be observed and registered. Within the time framework of this work, the "Albanian" cleavages appear to go through two phases. The first phase started in 1912 and ended with the appearance of the Communist Movement (1927). This was simultaneously the starting point of the second phase that lasted until 1944 (the end of the Second World War).

During the first phase, even though it would be difficult to draw border lines among the cleavages, they were quite distinguishable one from another and as such could be mentioned by different names: territorial, religious, ideological, feudal/anti- feudal. They ran almost parallel, maintaining their "identity" even in cases such as the June Revolution when their route converged. (The June Revolution was a kind of catalyst for the variety

of interests which each of the cleavages represented. The Albanian people had gathered together, leaving aside their differences, and had acted as a nation).

The second phase, on the other hand, has only one cleavage to show: the communists /anti-communists. This statement does not automatically lead to the conclusion that a bright new cleavage made its appearance suddenly and unexpectedly in the country, while all the old ones magically disappeared into thin air. What could be really observed was a mainstreaming phenomenon: the “good old” cleavages had run into a mainstream. Within the “mainstream” of the communist / anti-communist cleavage there were all kinds of competitive interests to be found. The borderlines among the variety of cleavages were, in this case, not always clear.

Since the communist/anti-communist cleavage was mainly of the have/have-nots type, we argue that both its aspects (the theoretical and the practical) connote the existence of all the others. The theoretical aspect refers to the privileged/under-privileged cleavage. On the one side there were those who enjoyed positions in the administration because of their territorial origin or because of their religious preference and on the other there were those who were deprived of them for the same reasons. The practical aspect refers to the good old feudal/anti-feudal cleavage; the fight of the landowners to maintain their material goods and the privileges enjoyed because of them and the struggle of the landless to gain land and privileges.

Speaking of the phase when each cleavage was “autonomous” (namely the first), one could refer to territorial, religious, ideological and feudal/anti-feudal cleavages.

The territorial cleavage having the causes of its existence in the Ottoman Empire (when the Ottomans, being aware of the differences between Tosks and Ghegs, utilised them by cultivating the animosity between them, in order to put down the numerous rebellions which had taken place as the Albanians tried to gain their liberation from the Turkish yoke) ran through the Albanian history, from the independence of the country until the

end of the second World War, provoking political behaviour, dictating political action and becoming deeper and deeper.

The cleavage was hidden behind the formation of political parties and some of the political organisations²⁶⁷, and was responsible for dissension among the members of the Council (in 1924, when the Tosks accused persons appointed to administrative position of showing anti-Tosk feelings and complained that the administration was exclusively in the hands of Ghegs), while there were also times of convergence (the case of the June Revolution as well as the case of the proclamation of Zogu as King, which both Ghegs and Tosks saw with great displeasure).

The opinions are divided on the question of the existence of a religious cleavage. Especially referring to the period 1918-1924, there were those, like Swire (Swire, 1971), who saw no religious animosity between the Muslims and the Christians but only an impatience from the side of the Christian population for social and agrarian reform; and others, such as Prof. J.J. Sederholm, who talked of a religious cleavage with mainly historical and social causes. It is true that mainly historical and social causes had created a feeling of superiority among the Muslims as well as strong anti-Muslim feelings, which undoubtedly still existed within a great portion of the Christian population of Southern Albania and were mainly to be described as feelings against every real or supposed remnant of the old Turkish regime of oppression (Sederholm, Report 19.12.22 – 1.2.23, p.501).

Even though one of the difficulties in Albania was the diversity of aims and interests which existed between the elements of its population which were separated by differences of religion, several signs seemed to indicate that Muslims and Christians were

²⁶⁷ “[...] Die Fraktionsfronten wurden zudem noch von dem Gegensatz zwischen Nord- und Südalbanern –Ghegen und Tosken- durchzogen, der auf die unterschiedliche Sozialstruktur der Gebiete zurückzuführen war.”(Nohlen, 1969, p.60)

ready to forget the discords, which had formerly existed and to unite their efforts in order to develop an indigenous Albanian culture. But for such an achievement to take place it was important for them to exercise a “clever”, neutral policy towards all the Albanians, regardless of their faith.

But as the political power and administration was mainly in the hands of Muslims (there is a historical explanation for this) it usually favoured the Muslims, who occupied administrative posts and enjoyed privileges, while the Christian Albanian population complained that it could not be assured of impartial justice in disputes with Muslims, and that the subdivision of the electoral districts was very unfavourable to them; hence they were willing to accept any kind of “Muslim superiority.” The Muslim side was also reluctant to make any kind of concessions and found it also impossible to accept a Christian as head of the government, when in 1924 Fan Noli took over the governing of the country.

The religious cleavage was based mainly on the social consequences of the religious preference and was never so deep as to lead to a conflict. Even the Dukagjini uprising (1926), which appeared as the result of the escalation of difference between Muslim and Christians, was not only the consequence of religious juxtapositions.

In the course of the cleavage there were also times when its sides converged. In 1928 the discontent towards the king, Zog, who was distrusted by the Christians because he was a Muslim and by the Muslims because he bowed humbly to a Christian Power (Italy), brought both Muslims and Christians to the same side. The Italians’ ineffectual effort to exploit the cleavage (1939-1943) had a similar result. The Italian policy towards both the Christians and the Muslims was such that pushed them (even though there was no intention to do so) to the same side. The German effort to exploit the cleavage was successful and simultaneously this was the last time in the pre-communist history of the country that the sides of the religious cleavage converged. The Germans wanted the competitive parts to be on the same side and in their favour and they managed to do it.

They smoothed out the religious cleavage through the formation of the Council of Regency consisting of four representatives, one from each of the four religious communities (Sunni, Bektashi, Orthodox, Catholics).

Among the cleavages, which found their roots immediately after the proclamation of Albania as an independent state, there was the ideological one. The diversities on which the ideological cleavages were built were mainly over three matters. Independence with or without protection and from whom? Which regime was appropriate for Albania, Republic or Monarchy? And which should be the pace of the reforms? Should the changes come slowly as the conservative wished or quickly as the radicals dreamed of?

The cleavage lost the “reason of being” during the period 1939-1944 when the answer to the question “Albania, foreigners’ protectorate or not?” was not any more the apple of discord, the core of the “Albanian national question.” The country was “officially” under foreign occupation, first Italian and then German, and so there was no room left for discussion or disagreement; the country should gain its independence, in other words it should be liberated.

The dynamism of the feudal/anti-feudal cleavage in the formation of the political life in Albania (often it has been used as a “policy making instrument”) and its continuity are indisputable until the end of the pre-communist period. It is a dynamic long-living cleavage, the palette of which shows a variety of levels of influence.

A careful observation of the behaviour and intensity of this cleavage makes obvious a “fluctuation phenomenon.” In the history of the cleavage “flood and ebb-tide” phases can be observed. Sometimes the cleavage moves without reaching conflict (ebb-tide phase), whereas some other times it manifests its dynamism through rebellions, uprisings even a revolution or a civil war (flood phase). That the cleavage, during the “ebb-tide phases”, remains quiet does not automatically mean that it remains passive as well. It is simply expressed in other ways. During these phases, it is the motivating force provoking mass

mobilisations, formation of movements and organisations, split of parties and it constitutes either the core of political programmes or a useful and multifunctional instrument in the policy making process. During the “flood phases” the feudal/anti-feudal cleavage, pure or combined with national and religious motives, presented violent eruptions. (“Anti-Esadism”, besides being an opposition against a personality, was also an opposition to a system -feudalism; while the June Revolution (1924) was the picture of a cleavage reaching conflict after gathering on both its sides a variety of contradictory interests).

A second phase in the route and behaviour of the cleavages in Albania has already been mentioned. Its main characteristic was the mainstreaming phenomenon, which resulted in the presence of only one cleavage. All kinds of diversities (territorial, feudal/anti-feudal, religious, ideological) were to be found on the sides of the main and only cleavage of this phase, the communist/anti-communist.

Indisputably, the feudal/anti-feudal cleavage was the most important and powerful element of the communist/anti-communist cleavage (the social basis of Communism in Albania was to be found in the landless peasants of the south). The Party’s rapid growth, which was registered by the summer of 1942, demonstrated that Hoxha’s attempt to emphasize the social revolution was beginning to pay off. Many of the landless peasants in the south, responded to the basic slogans of resistance to the foreigners and traitors and owners of land to those who till it. The Communists’ promise for “social revolution” after the end of the war had a material aspect for the Tosks, it was something tangible and concrete. *“In Südalbanien, wo der Großgrundbesitz vorherrschte, bedeutete “soziale Revolution” in erster Linie Aufteilung desselben [...]”* (Lange, 1973, p.55, Footnote 88).

On the other hand, the ruling class started warring. Their representatives soon realised that it was no longer a matter of a movement like those in the past, but a liberation movement, both national and social, led by the Albanian Communist Party, which threatened their domination; a fact which led to the organisational expression of their

interests through the formation of the nationalistic resistance movement entitled *Balli Kombetar* (National Front). And as the *BK* spread into many regions and progressively took into its ranks groups of the ruling class who had remained indifferent until then, the cleavage between landlords and peasants acquired a clear face. Two political lines diametrically opposed, the National Liberation Front and the National Front, competed against each other. The cleavage had become very deep and was now ready to turn from a deep division into a conflict. The country was about to face now the outbreak of a civil war.

However, even though the feudal/anti-feudal cleavage played a decisive role in the existence and intensity of the communist/anti-communist one, it would be incorrect to identify the communist/anti-communist with the feudal/anti-feudal cleavage. The Communists managed to take advantage of the profound contradiction in Albanian society between the old hierarchy of power and privilege and an impoverished peasantry, not only because they won the support of the majority of the landless peasantry but also because they managed to gather into their ranks all the Albanians who “did not have” not only any material goods but any privileges either.

It was the Tosks, who as such, have always been pushed aside in comparison to the Ghegs (territorial cleavage). The territorial cleavage with all its aspects found its complete representation in the Communist Movement, especially between 1941-1944. In this case the term “territorial cleavage” has a collective sense, encompassing the differences between Ghegs and Tosks on various levels. It is now that, by referring to a territorial cleavage, we are simultaneously referring to the desire of the Southerners for “social revolution” (land reform, acquisition of privileges) and the wish of the Northerners to maintain the Albanian status quo, whatever that meant. It was more due to the feeling of the unfair “pushing aside” that Tosks fought at all cost in order to gain at last the upper hand. As for what appeared to be their collaboration, this was the Ghegs’ ineffectual manoeuvre to hinder the Communists to achieve their own aim.

It was the Christians who always complained about injustice (religious cleavage). Even during the period 1939-1944, when the conflict between the communists and anti-communists was at its highest and one could argue that the religious cleavage found as well a fertile ground for expression and contributed to the strengthening of the tension of the communist/anti-communist cleavage, religious cleavage played a secondary and not a leading role.

And it was the young, intellectuals, women and all those who in one way or the other represented a liberal ideology that gathered on the one side of the communist/anti-communist cleavage with the aim to fight and even to lose their life in order to change the balance of the long-existing Albanian status-quo.

But cleavages were not the only important parameter in the formation of political life in Albania. It was also the peculiarities (independence desire, irridenta feelings and personalities) that cut across the cleavages provoking, or even dictating, political behaviour and political decisions.

The desire for independence was an integral part of political activity in Albania. Since 1912 (the proclamation of Albania as an independent state) the Albanians struggled to maintain independence, to achieve both nominal and true independence. Based on this desire the ideological cleavage was formed (1912-1924) concerning the way through which Albania could remain independent (the problematic about foreign protection). The fact that “independence desire” was something more than the subject of an ideological cleavage in Albania was proved during the German occupation, when the conquerors managed to exploit this “country’s peculiarity”. The Germans, being aware of the long-drawn-out struggle of the Albanian people to gain their national independence, exploited local wishes and played the “independent Albania” card by declaring the “relative neutrality” and the “relative sovereignty” of the country, in the hope of earning sympathy among the occupied.

Politics in Albania was a “personalities game”. Each part of the country’s political life presented its “own” personalities.

The most formidable beys at the beginning of the twentieth century (1912) were Ismail Qemal Bey, Esad Pasha Toptani, and Prenk Bib Doda.²⁶⁸ Each of them had a large following, and in their own section each was an autocrat whose prestige reached even beyond the borders of Albania. One story, apocryphal but to the point, is told about an incident that occurred in 1914, when the German Prince William of Wied arrived in Albania to begin his six month rule in the recently created kingdom. The Prince of Wied, according to the tale, approached Prenk Bib Doda and anxiously inquired about conditions in Albania. Doda cynically replied, “Your Highness, if you expect to succeed in my country, you must bring with you three bullets, one for Ismail Qemal Bey, one for Esad Pasha Toptani and one for me.”(Federal Writers Project, 1975, pp.19-21)

These personalities also had the ability to mobilise masses and dictate political behaviour. As Esad Pasha Toptani set his personal ambitions to become the country’s one and only leader, he threaded his way through by using and even exploiting the political, economic and international circumstances. He first became minister in the Qemal government and when he realised the tendency of the government to proceed to an agrarian reform (which was against his personal interests) within a month he had gathered all the anti-nationalist and reactionary elements around him and set up the so-called Senate of central Albania. He reappeared in the Wied government having two posts (Minister of War and Minister of the Interior) and in one way or the other, he was behind the revolt against William of Wied as well. The possibility of Wied’s expulsion would have been perfectly in harmony with his personal plans.

Later (1918-1924), the major personalities were Fan Noli and Ahmed Zogu, while Xhafer Ypi, Eshref Frasheri, Bajram Curri, Hassan Pristina, Sevkert Verlaci, Vrioni, Rustemi etc.

²⁶⁸ Biographical data is given in: Lange, K., 1974, pp.416-417.

exercised their influence upon different groups of people and supported the former respectively. The political parties of this period are the most obvious proof that politics rested with personalities. They (the parties) had no clear programme and not a specific type of member within their ranks. As concerns their members, they were anything but homogenous. The *PP* hosted radicals, idealists, moderates, Kosova chieftains, liberal Beys and peasants, people who were in favour of a quick and dynamic change and others who preferred a slow one but it mainly hosted two (contradictory personalities), Fan Noli (the radical, and idealist) and Ahmed Zogu (the moderate and one of the most important Beys in the northern part of the country); a fact which led to its split.

The establishment of the Democratic Party was based on the same philosophy. It was a “personality-based” and a “personality-opposed” party; a party organised around Fan Noli and opposed to Ahmed Zogu with a motley crowd of supporters (Christian Orthodox, former Progressives, liberal émigrés, army officers, conservative Sunni, liberal Bektashi Muslims, Roman Catholics and peasants).

The phase prior to the elections of December 1923 showed clearly the personality-centred character of Albanian politics as well. The split of the previous political parties (Popular and Progressive) was not followed by the establishment of new ones. On the contrary, a formation of numerous local voters’ groups can be observed, with no inclination to a common programme and orientated towards strong figures, unable to coalesce and build a party. The elections result was nothing more than the factual presentation of this. On the one hand there was a strong polarisation around the two leading personalities of Fan Noli and Ahmed Zogu. On the other Zogu’s elections “win” was feigned. The Beys had gathered around Zogu not because his political programme represented their beliefs or was even close to their interests, but because Zogu had made an intelligent move by marrying the daughter of Sevkert Verlaci. Consequently many Beys, even though reluctantly, followed Verlaci and voted for Zogu.

Between 1925-1938 Albanian politics was a personalities game once again, with the peculiarity that it revolved mainly around one personality, that of Zogu, a fact which gives us the right to name the period “the Zogist period”. Zogu was aware of the differences, interests and cleavages, which existed in the country, and he had decided either to exercise a “policy of ignorance” towards them or to keep the situation under control through a terror policy. In Albania there was a “*soziale Konturerbare bzw. Klassenbasis*” – Landlords beys and landless peasants – on which a party-competition could be based. And there were “*konkurriende soziale Ineressse*” (*Gegensätze*) *die zum Ausdruck gebracht werden konnten*” through this competition (Heinelt, 1996). But the Monarchy left no room for the establishment and organisation of parties that could represent such interests.

Zogu’s policy was personality-orientated. For him, this “peculiarity” was a multifunctional tool and as such he used it to achieve a variety of aims. Being aware of the fact that personalities counted more than politics in Albania and that the concept of “central government” was foreign to the northern part of the country (he himself was Gheg) he exercised a clever policy, which led the tribal chieftains to take an oath to him personally, to recognize him as an over-chieftain and in such a way to show respect as if they had consciously recognised the central government.

On the other hand, depending on the case, he followed either a strategy which enabled him to prevent any personality’s continuity (Myfit Bey Libohova, Shefket Bey Verlaci etc.) in key posts, a fact which could lead to the creation of unwished power-centres around the President resulting in his personal weakening; or he supported a personality’s continuity strategy (Vrioni, Vlora, Frasheri, Kotta, etc.) – “*Personenkarussell*” of the social elite within the government – which gave him a feeling of safety, which he needed (Schmidt-Neke, 1993, p.44 & Schmidt-Neke, 1993, p.44, Footnote: 50).

The picture was not much different concerning the opposition. Even though it was not deprived of an ideology to be based on, it was undoubtedly more of an opposition to a

personality, an “Anti-Zogist” opposition, in the literal sense of the term, rather than to an ideology. But no matter what kind of ideology these opposition groups represented and regardless of the fact that often the ideology of the one appears to contradict the ideology of the other, or even to agree up to a point with Zogu, a common element was strong enough to keep them together: “*the enmity against Zogu.*”

Even the negative reaction of many of the Beys – who until then had supported Zogu – after his proclamation to King emanated not from their opposition to the form of the regime itself. It was a personality-oriented opposition, an opposition to Zogu, who by becoming “The King” was threatening the position of the others [Beys] who used to be a kind of “small” king in their region.

The “official” recognition of this “Albanian peculiarity” (the significance of the personalities as political actors) has to be registered during the fourth period (1938-1944). This “peculiarity” became an object of exploitation by the conquerors, especially the Germans who, being aware of the fact that their policy could not be exercised on the level of political parties, as there were no political parties in Albania, realized the importance of a clever “personalities policy” and through it managed to find the right collaborators in order to proceed to the legalization of the seizure of the country.

One of the research targets of this work has also been to approach and observe the political parties, which formed and acted from the proclamation of the country as an independent state until the beginning of the communist period. Thus, as this work is reaching its final chapters, it would be the appropriate place here to put on paper some last thoughts (observations) in relation to them. The problematic concerning the matter of the characterisation of the political organisations as political parties has already been mentioned (at the beginning of this work). We have agreed that the parties in Albania were not “*political parties in the modern sense of the term.*” To put it in other words, it would be groundless to call the parties of this period “mass parties.” “[...] *the mass party*

is not merely a party having masses of people behind it, a mass-based party. A mass following accounts for the success of the party, not for its nature. The mass party is a solid and very real (not evanescent) party, qualified by at least the following two traits: 1) the development of a stable and extensive (even if merely skeletal) organization throughout the country, and 2) the fact that it presents itself to the electorate as an abstract entity (ideologically or programmatically qualified) that allows stable identifications." (Sartori, 1990, pp.75-76) In our case these traits are not to be found.

So to the question: "what is the nature of the parties of this period?" the theoretical model, which seems to be appropriate for drawing out answers is Petropoulos'. As has already been mentioned in chapter 1, in his effort to understand the nature of the political parties in Greece (1833-1843), Petropoulos uses the terms "family factions, personal factions, or parties,"²⁶⁹ which proved to be useful in our case as well.

What seems to be closer to the Albanian case is what Petropoulos calls "family factions," "personal factions" or even "parties." He argues that "*In a district every co-operation – alliance – of families (with socially equal elements), each of them having its own dependent groups or clients, could be put under the protection of one family which possessed power because of its wealth, its prestige or the temporary occupation of an important public position. For such an alliance, the members of which could be coming from a specific area or a wide district, [he uses] the term faction*"²⁷⁰ (Petropoulos, 1997, p.76).

²⁶⁹ A "party," (Petropoulos argues) appeared to have a kind of ideology concerning its position (even obscure) towards national matters, foreign policy or the form of the regime. The main traits of the parties could be the existence of supporters in a national climax and their common ideology (Petropoulos, 1997, p.77).

²⁷⁰ Translated by the author of this text.

*“The personal factions [on the other hand] owed their cohesion to the attachment to a person not to a family [...]”*²⁷¹ (Petropoulos, 1997, p.108). But one should not forget that a “family faction” was based on a strong leader (personality) or that a “personal faction,” which had been created by a strong personality, could use the family resources as much as it would be possible (Petropoulos, 1997, p.78).

The political parties in Albania (mainly between 1918-1924) appear to have some of the characteristics of each of the categories above. Of course the strong families, especially those of the feudals (Verlaci, Vrioni, etc.), could pull the strings of policy as well as the strong personalities could do, some of them having behind them a powerful family like Zog and some others not, like Noli. Especially after the split of both the *PP* and the *PPer*, the formation of a series of local voter groups was dictated not by the inclination to a common programme but by the orientation towards persons (Ahmet Bey, Pandeli Evangjeli, Shefqet Bey, Vrioni, Petro Harito, Myfid Bey Libohova, Noli, Avni Rustem, etc.).²⁷² But even though the party’s strength depended on personalities (having or not behind them a strong family) it should not be ignored that in many cases political programmes had been drawn up as well. And it is beyond any doubt that even in these cases the parties remained personality-centred political aggregates influenced by the ideology of their top leaders more than being represented by an ideology.

However, it would be incorrect to use the term “factions” instead of the term “party”, because that would mean that we simply do not take into consideration the existence of political programmes. The term “party” and not the term “faction” (either family faction or personality faction) would be more appropriate. And as a party was based on a faction or on a combination of factions and the formations of the one kind could be easily

²⁷¹ Translated by the author of this text.

²⁷² See: P.A.A.A.Kardorff –Tirana- an A.A.B., 16.01.1924, Anlage zu Bericht Nr.66, R.72407.

transformed into formations of the other, a fact which made a clear distinction between parties and factions difficult (Petropoulos, 1997, p.77) -in our case as well.²⁷³

Even though the political parties in Albania were short lived (with the exception of the Communist Party), their mobilisation capabilities should not be overseen. Each of them had the ability to mobilise masses (even for a short time) while there were also cases that polarization had been provoked. The elections of 1921 had shown equilibrium of political forces between *PP* and *PPer* and a polarization of the Albanian voters who were divided into two, those who supported the old status quo (*PPer*) and those who wished to promote reform (*PP*). Within the framework of the communist/anti-communist cleavage appeared the parties with the greatest mass mobilization ability. On the one hand, the Communist movement and later party attracted and inspired a great majority of the Albanian population (workers, peasants, bourgeois middle classes, intellectuals, young people, women etc.) while the *National Front* (1939-1944) (a nationalistic party grouping various different elements united by anti-Communism) managed to take into its ranks groups of the ruling class, who had remained indifferent until and during the Italian occupation and provoked them to participate in the struggle for national independence.

The formation of the *PFSH* (Fascist Party of Albania) was not the result of the canalisation of interests of one part of the Albanian population. It did not represent the pro-fascist inclination of a part of Albanians. Its foundation had been dictated from abroad (Rome) with the aim to promote the fascist ideology and to form a local ruling class who would work closely with Italy. This party intended to mobilise the masses in favour of fascism but what it did provoke was an “anti-mobilisation” (an almost spontaneous resistance against the Fascists).

²⁷³ Petropoulos refers to the case of Greece in the years between 1821-1827 (Petropoulos, 1997, pp.66-117).

With regard to questions about the party system(s) in Albania, we fully adopt Schmidt-Neke's statement: *"Hinzu kommt, daß sich kein echtes Parteiensystem (außer kurzfristigen Ansätzen zu parlamentarischer Fraktionsbildung 1920-1924) herausbildete, das als Projektionsfläche der politisch-sozialen Auseinandersetzungen hätte dienen können"* (Schmidt-Neke, 1987, p.8). This comment allows us to talk of an "elementary" party system in Albania, referring to these *"kurzfristige Ansätze"* of the formation of the parliamentary fractions 1920-1924.

To go one step further and taking the previous into consideration, we argue that what happened in Albania (we refer to the years between 1920-1924)²⁷⁴ concerning the number of the "political parties" and their representation in the Parliament, finds a good interpretation model in Duverger's theory; even though as has already been mentioned we could not talk of mass-parties in our case.

The type of the electoral system in Albania between 1920-1924 was a majority one, a fact which allows us to give an understandable answer to the question why the players in the political game were always two and even to dare to refer to an elementary "two-party system." The duality, *PP*, *PPer*, could well constitute a "two-party system" *"with the characteristic opposition between Conservatives and Liberals"* (Duverger, 1990, p.285). If, as Duverger puts it, *"in general the Conservatives found their support chiefly amongst the aristocracy and the peasantry [...and] from the point of doctrines [they] preached the virtues of authority, tradition and submission to the established order [...]"* (Duverger, 1990, p.285), then the *PPer*, contrary to its name, if we replace the terms "aristocracy" and "peasantry" by the terms "southern landowners" and "northern conservatives" respectively and if we take into consideration its opposition to major reforms, could be

²⁷⁴ The comments refer to this period because a precondition for the existence of a party system is the existence of political parties. Before 1920 there were no political parties in Albania while after 1924 the country was under the Zogist Monarchy which left no room for political parties. Immediately after the occupation years began (1938-1944).

considered the Conservative Party in this two-party system. On the other hand within the dualism Conservatives – Liberals, the *PP* would very well represent the latter. Duverger writes: “*the Liberals found their support amongst the trading, industrial and intellectual middle classes in the towns while [...] being individualist and rationalist claimed descent from [...] the ideas of liberty and equality [...].*” And in Albania, even though there were no trading and industrial classes, it was the liberal beys and the western-educated intellectuals who constituted the basis of the party; a party which was willing to struggle for reform and social progress.

However, two points need to be made clear: a) The role of the personalities in Albania was very important. That means that the slightest move of these personalities to any direction would be followed by voters mobilization in favour of or against a party and b) the co-existence of Zogu and Noli within the Popular Party could be interpreted as a co-existence of *a duality of tendencies* – and one should not forget its dynamism

7.2 Generalizations: A theoretical reprise

It has already been mentioned (Chapter 1, “The framework of analysis”) that an enthusiastic debate has taken place with regard to the meaning of the term “cleavage”. So, since there is not only one theoretical way to go, a question is promptly raised. Which of the theoretical models discussed above finds in the case of Albania its realisation?

If we accept Allardt’s statement about cleavages (Allardt, 1964) (he makes a distinction between social and political cleavages, the former based on social attitudes and behaviours, the later defined in terms of political attitudes and behaviours), then should we rethink about the kind of cleavages we met in this research, social or political?

Some authors consider as key factors, in determining when cleavages exist, political attitudes and behaviours. These scholars talk about patterns of political polarisation;

certain groups support certain policies or parties, while other groups support opposing policies or parties. The groups in question may or may not be social groups; what is important is that there are divisions that acquire political form.

Rose and Urwin argue that, as empirical analysis has shown, class is one of the most powerful bases of political cleavage (Rose and Urwin, 1970). But in the case of Albania such a basis was absent. Even the formation of the Communist movement and later party, was not based on the expected social divisions (capital/work).

On the other hand, Schmitt's observation (Schmitt, 1987) that political cleavages are no longer based on class, offers us a slice of hope that we could probably find there a suitable model for our case. But he continues by arguing that: cleavages are not based on social groups either, but rather on values or ideologies, resulting in the fact that the translation of social divisions into political oppositions has weakened. This is right, but irrelevant to our case.

Merkel's statement is similar to the one above. He argues that the new political divisions originate not in social inequalities but in ideological and value-based differences (Merkel, 1988, 582). In Albania the differences that produced cleavages, even in the case of the ideological cleavage, originated more from social inequalities than from deep well-constructed ideological juxtapositions referring to political ideologies. Even if there was an inclination to radical or conservative ideologies, the cleavages in Albania were not a pure product of such differences. The basis of the cleavages, which have been registered, is social groups (those who "had" and those who "did not have") representing different (sometime contradictory) interests.

So if we consider either class-consciousness, or the existence of ideological or value-based differences as preconditions for the existence of political cleavages, then we jump to the conclusion that the cleavages in Albania were not political.

The cleavages in Albania were based on social differences and as such could be characterized as social. But this is not sufficient for the definition of the term “cleavage” *per se*. For the purposes, it would be useful to examine first whether the two elements, namely a) conflict and b) organization (around which there is a vivid debate concerning them as a necessary precondition for the existence of cleavage), were to be found in our case, when we refer to a set of differences or juxtapositions as “a cleavage” and second, if the acceptance of principal types of cleavages is necessary for the definition of a cleavage in our case. How and to which extent do the empirical findings of this research alter the meaning of the term?

Our definition falls somewhere in the middle and it is mixed. We agree with Michael Gallagher, Michael Laver and Peter Mair (Challagher, Laver, Mair, 1992) that: first, a cleavage involves a social division that separates people who can be distinguished from one another in terms of key social characteristics such as religion, ethnicity, property... and second that the groups involved in the division must be conscious of their collective identity (such as Ghegs or Tosks; landowners or landless peasants; privileged or non-privileged) and be willing to act on this basis.

We also agree with Jan-Eric Lane and Svante Ersson (Lane and Ersson, 1994), who lay stress on the possibility of conflict. We consider the concept of cleavage not identical with the concept of conflict; cleavages may lead to conflict, but cleavage need not always be followed by conflict. A division of groups or organisations constitutes a cleavage if there is some probability of a conflict. In the case of Albania such a precondition seems to be always fulfilled. Even in the case of the religious cleavage, which did not reach conflict acting on its own, one cannot oversee the fact that in combination with other kinds of cleavage (territorial, ideological, feudal/anti-feudal ect.) it did reach conflict.

Now with regard to the organisational aspect of a cleavage we agree with Rae, Taylor, (Rae and Taylor, 1970) Lane and Ersson (Lane and Ersson, 1994) who argue that it is not a necessary condition for the existence of a cleavage. A cleavage may be expressed in

organisational terms (the case of communist/ anti-communist cleavage) but need not always imply that the interests of those on one side of the division are given formal institutional expression through political parties or other organisations. The deepness of a cleavage could be considered an important criterion for its expression in organisational terms. But in Albania the border lines between the cleavages (in the majority of the cases) were not distinguishable. The Albanian cleavages do not constitute an exception with regard to the norm “before the conflict we have some form of organisation”. The findings of this research seems to agree with Lawson, Römmele and Karasimeonov (Lawson, Römmele and Karasimeonov, 1999) who do not take for granted that parties that say they are representing important existing divisions in society are in fact doing so (*PP* and *PPer*).

Without underestimating the role of the “country’s peculiarities” (independence desire, irredenta feelings, personalities) for the interpretation and understanding of the politics in Albania in the pre-communist period, undoubtedly, the observation of the cleavages (the problematic around their route, their behaviour, the consequences of their existence) is of decisive importance. There are actually two possible ways of observing the cleavages in Albania. The one is to consider that, from 1912 until 1944, there was only one cleavage in the country, the “have and have-nots” which, through the Communist Movement, at the beginning, and the Communist Party later, found its expression in organisational terms. Within this framework all the cleavages (the territorial, the religious, the ideological and the feudal/anti-feudal) that can be observed, named and registered in Albania since its independence, should be regarded as different aspects of “the one”. But such a viewpoint, on the one hand, would lay perhaps excessive weight on the fact that from a specific “moment” onwards all the cleavages followed a common route; while on the other, their influence on Albanian political life would be underestimated and their identity would be harmed. But we consider that in Albania more than one cleavages existed and acted, which before “the decisive meeting” with the Communist/anti-Communist followed different routes, which from time to time did converge.

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English Abstract

This dissertation deals with cleavages and parties in pre-communist Albania (1912-1944). It's a research of the political past of Albania through the kaleidoscope, mainly of the German and Greek, diplomatic sources with the effort to detect the causes of the formation and development of parties in Albania.

The main assumption is –that given the “special” social picture of the country and its unique place in the international chessboard– the circumstances would be favorable for the existence of cleavages. The study focuses on socio-economic conditions, the ethnic and religious heterogeneity and the traditional (mainly agrarian) social class structure as well as on the country's peculiarities (movement for independence, irredenta feelings) and their influence on the political life of the country.

By applying the cleavages theory as an analytical framework of analysis, this study shows that a variety of cleavages can be observed in Albania, which can also explain the formation and development of parties in this country. However, Petropoulos'(1997) model concerning the nature of political parties provides the most appropriate approach (for the case) to explain the Albanian party system between 1912 and 1944.

Deutsche Zusammenfassung

Diese Dissertation beschäftigt sich mit Cleavages und der Herausbildung und Entwicklung von Parteien in Albanien zwischen 1912 und 1944, wobei schwerpunktmäßig auf Berichte der deutschen und griechischen Botschaften in Albanien zurückgegriffen wird.

Diese Studie zielt darauf ab, die Herausbildung und Entwicklung von Parteien in Albanien vor dem Hintergrund sozialökonomischer Umstände, der ethnischen und religiösen Heterogenität und traditionellen sozialen Klassenstrukturen sowie besonderer politischer Bedingungen (Irredentismus und Unabhängigkeitsbewegung) zu erforschen.

Die Studie greift dabei auf der Cleavagetheorie zurück und zeigt, dass zwar eine Reihe von Cleavages in Albanien im Untersuchungszeitraum existierten und diese auch die politische Entwicklung Albaniens bedingt haben. Eine hinlängliche Erklärung der Herausbildung und Entwicklung von Parteien ist mit ihnen jedoch nicht möglich. Vielmehr hat sich das von Petropoulos (1997) entwickelte Model für die Erklärung als geeigneter erwiesen

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