

Discussions for minorities, the Cham issue to the League of Nations

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League of Nations as part of the Tractate of Versailles, ending the First World War, fixing issues stemming from here. With this tractate was destroyed empires and new states were formed, narrowed margins of several kingdoms and expanded the boundaries of some other countries, then we can say that transformed all maps of Europe. As a result of this configuration had many problems open the door to conflicts between nations, which supports conflicts on the principle of nationality and the right to self-determination. Powers to prevent and avoid any risk, namely to ensure religious minorities and all necessary rights created several international agreements that were called Minority Treaties¹. The question that was born with the right who will observe whether these Treaties will be enforced or not. This issue was charged with the League of Nations, which took responsibility to protect the rights of minorities.

One of the principles of the League of Nations Tractate was respect for minorities, but that it was not a condition for admission to the link. Albanian government signed the treaty still not accepted in connection with the good intention that he wanted to keep all the rights and freedoms of religious and linguistic minorities to its own territory².

On October 2, 1921, the Albanian representative made a statement to the League of Nations on the protection of minority rights in Albania³. This statement contains eight articles where all is dedicated to minority. In article 5 of this statement clearly all Albanian preoccupation party and the desire to respect all the rights of minorities. It states that "every citizen who is part of the Albanian minority in terms of race, religion, language will have all those rights and assurances same like Albanian citizens. These will have a particular right to hold consecutive, govern and control, charitable, religious or social, school and other buildings, having the right to freely use their own language and acting in their religion⁴.

¹ Dhimitër Berati, *Qëllimi dhe organizimi i Lidhjes së Kombeve*, Mosonjtorja, Tiranë 1931, p.15

² Arkivi i Ministrisë i Punëve të Jashtme (AMPJ), viti 1920, dosja 74, p.31. League of Nation. Protection of minorities in certain states Seeking admission to the League of Nation, 15 December 1920.

³ APMJ, viti 1921, dosja 87, p. 176

⁴ AMPJ, viti 1921, dosja 87, p. 178

Since the Albanian state was fully committed to respecting minority of League of Nations has verified with its envoys, as it constantly went complaints from associations of Epirus. On the other hand, the Greek government on a host complaints always raised the protection problems of minorities in Albania with Secretariat of League of Nations as a problem that should have the attention of the League⁵. The problem that the Albanian government will face in the Greek League of Nations, the latter in the role of mediator, is the Cham problem.

The problem of Cham issue has been consistently one of the problem that Albanian state governments has engaged to tried to solve it as fair. How much did they would discuss this issue below, but we must not forget the fact that not everything depended on the hand of Albanian state. There are many factor, but the most important policy that they do not affect the right solution to the problem Cham.

On 1913 London Conference gave Greece the Cham province and Serbs and Montenegrins in Kosovo province⁶. The two province were above compactly resided in excess of one million Albanian detached from their motherland reluctantly⁷. Despite hops that the Albanians feed the Versailles Peace Conference, the conference brought no change in the status of Albanian population, which had remained outside.

In the autumn-winter 1922 the situation of Albanian people are increasingly dramatized. Had stared the process of freezing the assets, movable and immovable, the freezing of civil rights as Greek nationals, placing the beginning of Greek refugees from Asia Minor to their homes and property⁸. The situation even more difficult, because even at this time there was signed a diplomatic agreement with Greece, that the Albanian state was not yet a diplomatic presence in Greece⁹. On February, 28, 1923 arrived in Athens as Minister Plenipotentiary Mithat Frasherri what facilitated the Albanian government in defense of the issue¹⁰.

After the loss suffered by the Greek side in the war with Turkey, Asia Minor, under the monitoring of the Great Powers and the League of Nations Treaty of Lausanne was signed on

⁵ AMPJ, viti 1921, dosja 41, p. 245 (1 July 1921)

⁶ AMPJ, viti 1920, dosja 34, p.74

⁷ AMPJ, viti 1920, dosja 34, p. 75

⁸ Studime Historike, Viti LXI (XLIV Tiranë 2007 (1-2), *Fatmira Rama, Problemi Cam në Lidhjen e Kombeve*, p. 110

⁹ Ibid, p. 110

¹⁰ Ibid, p. 110

January 30, 1923¹¹. It was decided to establish a committee of the League of Nations to pursue the implementation of the exchange along with several subcommittees¹².

Recognizing the danger that threatened the population Cham but especially its elder began to put in motion. They informed the Albanian government through several government projects. Albanian population displacement and colonization of their lands by Greek refugees. Indeed this colonization began. Greek refugees from Turkey were settled in village of Folorina, Kastoria, Filat, Igoumenitsa (only in Muslim villages and not orthodox)¹³.

Seeing as events on the ground walking Albanian government cried as near Great Power of Nation at. At the request of the government of Albania , Albanian Muslim population issues of Albanian lands in Greece was discussed at the Conference of Lausanne. At its meeting of 19 January 1923 were submitted convincing arguments for the Albanian origin of this population. In a statement he made Greece's representative at the Conference of Lausanne, said that Albanians residing in Greece as Greek nationals are excluding from the exchange of Greek-Turkish populations¹⁴. To put into action on the exchange of populations convention formed a mixed commission, which were also delegates to the League of Nations. Among other tasks this committee was to ensure exclusion of Albanian element of exchange. But although the Greek government had formally committed the Albanian element of these means did not keep them. Greek authorities propaganda became a strict tight Albanian citizens successfully migrate to Anatolia¹⁵. Seeing the Greek government insincerity issue you field the Society of Nation Council which reconfirmed the Albanian element in the decision to engage in no way should be sent to Turkey and gave instructions in this sense mixed committee¹⁶. After news of Cham and coming after private letters from different parts of Greek authorities understood that attempted genocide or any direct or indirect migration into Anatolia Cham¹⁷.

From private letter from Iannina we know that most of the Cham people taking place in an incredible economic crush and a violation of civil and human rights, they were forced to migrate to Anatolia though the day was expected Mix commission that would deal with issue¹⁸. In the statement of 19 January 1923between the Greek and Turkish delegates clearly stated that

¹¹ *Historia e Popullit Shqiptar III*, Akademia e Shkencave e Shqipërisë, Toena, Tiranë 2007, p.500

¹² Ibid, p. 500

¹³ AMPJ, viti 1924, dosja 80, p. 56. Athens on May 30, 1924

¹⁴ AMPJ, viti 1924, dosja 80, p.75. Affaris Minister Sulejman Delvina, Tirane on July 21, 1924.

¹⁵ AMPJ, viti 1924, dosja 80, p.76

¹⁶ AMPJ, viti 1924 dosja 80, p. 77

¹⁷ AMPJ, viti 1924, dosja 80, p. 78

¹⁸ AMPJ, viti 1924, dosja 80 f.71 ,” On behalf of the Chams “ M. Deliu. (newspaper article)

Albanian minorities of Greece and Turkey delegates clearly stated that Albanian minorities of Greece and Turkey, “legally and factually were excluded from the exchange of populations”¹⁹. This statement, formulated in this way, as in previous discussions of the Greek delegate, Cham Albanian in Folorina, Kastoria and other Albanian territories in Greece and the Albanian population including Christians, immigrants in Turkey²⁰.

Statement of January 19, 1923 did not put a specific provision in the agreement linked to the exchange of populations, even in the Treaty of Lausanne, was not mentioned either Albanian party or Albanian element in Greece or Turkey. They speak simply to exchange Greek-Turkish populations. But the important thing is that the process was marked in the Conference-verbal, thus playing a role of its official statement. She has been known officially President of Albanian delegation at the Lausanne Conference and Mehdi Frasherri Albanian government Secretary General of the League of Nations²¹.

Despite the statement of 19 January 1923, in practice the reality showed that Muslim Albanian population is therefore treated as interchangeable Turkish, even in severe discriminatory situation. The Albanian government took the matter to the Deputy Secretary General of the League and in July 1923 on this issue were held with some members of the section and political minorities²². As a result of mastication became Secretariat at the Greek in Geneva and attention you removed Mr. E. Venizellos who was the head delegate of Greece at the Lausanne Conference.

The Mixed Commission established by the League of Nations and recognized by the Greek government would have full power exchange Greco-Turkish populations. It would consist of a Greek representative, a Turkish and three neutral members of the League of Nations led by General De-Lara. Depending such two subcommittees were established in Epirus and Macedonia with impartial members and delegates Turkish and Greek. They had no Albanian representative if quality of the translator²³. League of Nations itself, although he had the right to appoint three neutral members had no direct power over the mixed committee or direct responsibility for the execution of the exchange of populations convention. The Government understands that total and

¹⁹ Studime Historike, *Fatmira Rama, Problemi Cam në Lidhjen e Kombeve.*, f.114

²⁰ Ibid, p. 114

²¹ Ibid, p.114

²² Ibid, p.115

²³ Ibid, p. 116

direct involvement of the League of Nations would be made only after the Treaty of Lausanne ratification by the Great Powers and the Minorities by the respective parties²⁴.

In 1923 the situation was like this: 1) the Greek official statement as of 19 January and in 1923 was correctly articulated its position not official exchange Albanian Muslim element in Greece. But it excluded the Albanian state its commitment the Cham issue stating that Albania was a Contracting Party to the matter that she had no right to meddle in affairs of the exchange.

2) At the same time the Greek side especially towards the end of 1923, revised its tactics in trying to reduce the Cham issue in the Muslim Albanians, Albanian nationals. For this a special note, stating that he knew, that Albanian origin who was uncontested, and mixed committee and two subcommittees his, in Epirus and Macedonia will take into account the origin, of the Albanians will know, only those who were born themselves or their free Albania.

3) This attitude was in complete contradiction to the statement of January 1923, which should apply Mixed Commission and its two subcommittees to protect the population. They created a situation in their absurd and too heavy for Muslim Albanian population in the genocide of other Albanian territories, that there were native, who listed as Albanian citizen, and even in folders in the Albania or Greece²⁵. In years 1923, 1924, until spring 1926, the Cham Muslim Albanians the Konica, Ioannia, etc, were subjected to more large-scale exchange and persecution in all directions. Lists were developed to predict the Albanian Muslim Exchange, which house the assets you risk the benefit of Greek refugees. Cham population protested in all organs of the Greek state. Although Greek authorities presented these as temporary measures in many cases they took final shape.

In August and September 1924, the Government again raised the issue of the League of Nations Cham. She asked that the issue be treated with caution origin of the Mixed Commission and criticized this forum for bias, though the exchange had accepted a large part of the Albanian Muslim population. In the 30th session of the League of Nations on September 29, 1924 attended by the mayor of the Albanian government Fan Noli, fruits appeared Albanian intervention. Uploaded a reporter to collect relevant data, Mr. De Leone, and according to its proposals in December of that year, he formed a new committee of the League of Nations mandates a Turkish representatives and three members from neutral countries²⁶. This committee independent of the Mixed Commission, had full powers to take to protect Muslims in Greece, He would gather

²⁴ *Historia e Popullit Shqiptar III*, p. 502

²⁵ Fatmira Rama, *Problemi Cham ne Lidhjen e Kombeve*, p. 117

²⁶ *Historia e Popullit Shqiptar*, p.504

concrete data, mainly in Muslim villages in the genocide, in Konica in Ioannina , Preveza, etc. Nearby two subcommittees were charged appropriate where there were Albanian experts to serve as consultants and translators.

In June 1925 the Commission undertook a tour Epirus mainly in cities Igumenicca Ioannina and Konica demanding that the Cham villagers stood beside him. Investigations were not complete in some cases, the committee was present at the expulsion of many Albanian. However, this new commission mandatory, despite the claims of some impersonal attitudes worked for a deeper understanding of reality. In the summer of 1925 a new danger appeared before the Albanian , Turkish and Greek sides when in July of that year, received the 5000 exchange other Muslim Albanians Epirus. As a result of the rejection of this agreement by the Mix and that of Mandates, it was not implemented²⁷.

On December 10, 1925 the Albanian government delegate, Mehdi Frasheri in a session of the Council of Nations made a detailed presentation of the shocking plight of Albanians in the genocide, Konica, Follotina, Kastoria etc..Expressing dissatisfaction mixed committee, he presented the following: removal of prohibited eight hundred of these villages, an end to the general exchange of Albanians in Greece; up a Greek-Albanian commission , headed by a foreign representative impartial, in order to confiscated prized possessions of the Albanians²⁸.

The League of Nations Council addressed this issue on the basis of respect for minorities. He took the decision to withdraw the attention Greek Government and the Commission to protect the population mix of Cham. On 9 March 1926, the Commission mandatory in a final report to the League of Nations, unlike previous statements, stating that according to surveys conducted in the country, they considered the Albanian population in general Cham Albanian descent and therefore.

There was at this time still unresolved issue of restitution of Muslim Albanians, Greek nationals, declared after 1926 and their compensation²⁹. Albanian Government supported by innumerable complaints Cham population and economic migrants from the Albanian state the real issue raised in the League of Nations³⁰. She urged the Council to establish a commission League impartial verification of real Albanians. League Council recommended as the best tool in the development of negotiations between the parties to reach a solution, which was not easy.

²⁷ *Historia e Popullit Shqiptar III*, p. 504

²⁸ *Ibid*, p.505

²⁹ AMPJ, Viti 1928, dosja 40, p. 274, 275, 276 (6 qershor 1928)

³⁰ APMJ, viti 1928, dosja 40, p. 328 (10 qeshor 1928)

In early 1931 the first steps were thrown to the Greek government for a real solution to the issue of Albanian³¹ and Greek government in 1935 adopted a law on compensation for property expropriated by residents in Greece Albanian Nationality or origin, residing in Greece or in other countries, except Turkey.

Conclusion.

As seen from above it is clear that the Cham issue has been the focus of Albanian diplomacy that time. She did present this problem as near Great Power but especially at the League of Nations which stepped in with its tools for solving this problem. League of Nations in international to support minorities recognized by the Cham issue repeatedly drawn attention to the Greek government, the latter in turn officially recognize this problem despite speculation occurred in numerous ground. League of Nations assumed the role of mediator between the two parties where the issue can desing the form of a triangle, where the link will be the culmination of the third and two more will belong to Albania and Greece. League of Nations followed a generally positive politics of the issue. There was an allocation of actions between the Albanian government and the Council of Nations on the issue where connection is.

³¹ AMPJ, viti 1923, dosja 50, p. 101