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The Role of the Enquiry Commission in the Decision-making at the League of Nations Regarding the Albanian Issue

DEONA ÇALI

Introduction

The situation in Albania steadily worsened in 1919 since the Paris Peace Conference (1919) did not give the Albanian issue a resolution. Italy was still determined to keep Vlorë and the mandate over Albania. This determination gave the possibility to Greece and Yugoslavia to raise claims regarding Albania and the reports that Italy was ready to accept these claims, along with the failure of the Albanian delegation to the Peace Conference to achieve recognition of the legitimate demands of Albania, rose anger in the country. At this time in the north agitation had started against the Italians, while the interim government press reported Venizelos-Tittoni Agreement which committed both parties, Greeks and Italians, to of Durrës had been inclined to cooperate with them (on the basis of the declaration of General Ferrero), thus the people lost the confidence¹. During the celebration of the Independence Day of Albania in Vlorë, on November 28th, 1919, there were incidents which increased popular anger. During this time, the Greek support the each other's Peace Conference claims, news that raised discontent in the country². Albanians frustrated by the fluctuations of European diplomacy to resolve their problems, decided to revive their political lives by collecting Lushnjë Congress. On January 28th, 1920 in Lushnjë was convened a National Congress headed by Sulejman Delvina whose purpose was “full Independence and the protection of the homeland”³. In this way with the presentation of the program, the Congress declared in front of all civilized humanity that Albania had only one request: “we are looking for justice and that should be given to us”⁴.

At the opening of the Congress there was expressed the wish that the Albanians could live in friendly the common will of the Albanian nation and

¹ Joseph Swire, *Shqipëria ngritja e një mbretërie*, Dituria, Tiranë, 2005, p. 253.

² Arkivi Qendror i Shtetit (State Central Archive) (AQSH), F. 251, V. 1919, D. 37, fl. 1.

³ AQSH, Bisedimet e Këshillit Kombëtar, V. 1920, Tiranë, 2012, fl. 10.

⁴ *Ibidem*.

change its policy towards the Albanian issue, harmony with their neighbors. Regarding Italy, in the opening it was hoped that the latter would take into account renouncing previous policies and defending the independence of Albania. In the opening, gratefulness was expressed toward President Wilson⁵.

The Albanian government after the Congress of Lushnja and Vlora War focused on reasserting that the decisions of 1913 had the purpose of recognizing the independence and borders. Thus facing the pressure in both North and South, Albanians were aware that they had a defense at this moment. The League of Nations represented for Albania the only body where its problems would be recognized internationally.

Albania was admitted in the League of Nations on 17 December 1920⁶. It became a member of the League with the condition that the admission would not affect at all the next decision of the Conference of Ambassadors in relation with its borders⁷. The activity for admission began with Sulejman's Delvina cabinet. Few days before the admission, respectively on 10 December, Delvina's cabinet was replaced by Vrioni's one⁸. Despite the fact that the government representatives were invited to take part in the main bodies of the League of Nations, the government was not recognized. The governments which had voted in favor of Albanian membership in the League decided not to recognize or establish normal diplomatic relations with it. In the beginning of March 1921 Vrioni's cabinet wrote to the Prime Ministers of Power members of the Conference of Ambassadors, respectively Great Britain, France, Italy and Japan requesting to establish diplomatic relations with them, but however, that was an unsuccessful act⁹. The cabinet made efforts in April and May 1921 for the achievement of friendship agreements with Greece and Yugoslavia, but those efforts were also without result¹⁰.

Even after the admission of Albania in the League, the Serbian and Greek troops continued to keep the Albanian territories under occupation. In a tense situation with its neighbors, Vrioni's cabinet, based on the right given by article 15 of the League of Nations, addressed to the Secretary-General of the League an appeal to invite Greeks and Serbs to retire from the territories unjustly occupied by them¹¹. In the memorandum sent to the League for this situation, on 3^d March 1921, the Albanian government requested to this body an investigation, arbitration and confirmation of the borders that were appointed to

⁵ *Ibidem*.

⁶ Deona Çali (Kalaja), "The Admission of Albania in the League of Nations", *Journal of Liberty and International Affairs*, vol. 3, no. 1, 2016, pp. 55-68. URN: <http://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:0168-ssoar-457012>.

⁷ Joseph Swire, *Shqipëria ngritja...*cit., p. 273.

⁸ AQSH, Bisedimet e Këshillit Kombëtar, 1921.

⁹ *Ibidem*.

¹⁰ *Ibidem*, fl. 143.

¹¹ Mit'hat Frashëri, *Fati i Shqipërisë*, Skëndo, Tiranë, 1999, p. 153.

Albania in 1913¹². In the same time it made an appeal for diplomatic recognition from the Great Powers underlining the fact that delays on recognition and accreditation of Ministers, not only made it almost impossible for Albania to make progress on all directions but would also be responsible for the unsatisfactory relations with its neighbors. The Secretary-General of the League in its answer invited the interested states to send their delegates in Geneva in June aiming the discussion of the mentioned issues¹³. On 25th June 1921, in the glass room of the League building, the Council of the League of Nations gathered. Only the members of the Council and Secretary-General of the League took part, as well as Archbishop Fan Noli, the President of Albanian delegation. The Greek delegation was represented by M. Aleksandropolis and Frangulis while the Yugoslavian with M. Jovanovitch. In the room were present more than 100 persons¹⁴.

Before the Council of the League, Noli presented the situation of the relations of Albania with neighboring countries, speaking for the continuous boundary problems with them. As a consequence of unrealized efforts for peaceful agreements with them, he addressed the League's Council following the natural way, given to all members, requesting its intervention as an arbiter given that the foreign political situation of Albania was so delicate that the smallest boundary incident could cause a painful conflict. Noli did not forget mentioning the fact that the occupation of territories in the north had caused disorders in the political and economical life of the new Albanian state¹⁵. He also noted the constant danger caused by the presence of Greek troops in the Albanian territory, giving a full panorama of the situation in which the Albanian government was, due to foreign troops presence in all its territory. Regarding the issue of religion and treatment of minorities, Noli seeing a defamation excess against the Albanian administration in the south of Albania, through the delegation, he undertook the necessary steps sending to the League of Nations a memorandum on the condition of Christians in the southern Albania¹⁶. Alongside the arguments of religious tolerance in the country¹⁷ Noli declared in the Assembly of the League of Nations that Albania wanted to arrange the necessary agreements with its neighbors for a mutual development¹⁸. The Greek and Serbian representatives responded to the Albanian defense. It was a comprehensive debate on the issue of borders. In front of the Council of the

¹² *Idem*, *Elita Shqiptare*, Plejad, Tiranë, 2008, p. 403.

¹³ Joseph Swire, *Shqipëria ngritja...*cit., pp. 277-278.

¹⁴ *Ibidem*.

¹⁵ Arben Puto, *Çështja shqiptare në aktet ndërkombëtare pas Luftës I Botërore: përmbledhje dokumentesh me një vështrim historik*, Albin, Tiranë, 2001, pp. 292-293.

¹⁶ AQSH, F. 251, V. 1921, D. 41/1, fl. 447.

¹⁷ Arben Puto, *Çështja shqiptare në aktet...*cit., pp. 292-295.

¹⁸ *Ibidem*.

League of Nations neither Yugoslavia nor Greece accepted to recognize the competence of the League to interfere in the issue of the borders of Albania, while it remained under scrutiny in the Conference of Ambassadors. Albania was obliged to follow the recommendation included in the resolution although it was the only one who was of the opinion that it should be the League and not the Conference of Ambassadors the one who should solve the issues under discussion. It was against this decision and made known the fact that it reserved the right to protest against this decision. The Albanian delegation could do nothing in front of the Council except for expressing its dissatisfaction and refute all accusations against it¹⁹.

The Conference of Ambassadors analyzed the Albanian issue from June until the beginning of November 1921. The competence of the Conference of Ambassadors were defended by Greece and Yugoslavia. In July the new cabinet of Iliaz Vrioni was formed²⁰. Vrioni listed as a main issue the Albanian borders, aiming at the protection of boundaries of 1913's in order to prevent the concession of any single piece of Albanian territory²¹. In the context of foreign policy, Vrioni's aim was to establish friendly relations with all powers especially with the neighbors²². On 29th April 1921 the Assembly received an appeal from Albania against the Kingdom of Serbs-Croats-Slovenes in which it was declared that Serbian troops had violated its borders and were engaged in acts of war on its territory. Before taking into consideration this appeal, the Assembly had similar accusations from the Kingdom of Serbs-Croats-Slovenes against Albanian clans and individuals. The Assembly was aware of similar declarations regarding the serious problems in the south of Albania, in the so called North Epirus. In this time the Albanian borders were not determined yet from the Conference of Ambassadors but the Assembly assessed that the issue was almost solved. In these conditions it recommended Albania to accept the decision of the Conference of Ambassadors and requested the Council to appoint a commission of three members which would go immediately to Albania. The members of the Commission would have as a task to present a report regarding the implementation of decisions of the Conference of Ambassadors and also had the duty to observe occurrences that could happen in the borders of Albania²³. The Commission of Enquiry was appointed by the Council on 6 October 1921; it consisted of the following members:

1. Commandant Jens Christian Meinich;
2. Colonel Charles Schaefer;

¹⁹ AQSH, F. 14, V. 1913-1921, D. 209, fl. 103.

²⁰ AQSH, Bisedimet e Këshillit Kombëtar, V. 1921, fl. 163.

²¹ *Ibidem*.

²² AQSH, Bisedime Parlamentare, V. 1921, fl. 163-164.

²³ AQSH, F. 251, V. 1922, D. 64, fl. 169.

3. M. Rolf Thesleff (who was substituted immediately for health reasons by Professor Sederholm)
4. M.H. de Portales in the position of Secretary²⁴.

The Commission of Enquiry in Albania

The Conference of Ambassadors addressed the Albanian problem from June until early November of 1921. Vrioni's government, despite the fact it didn't recognize its competences, followed the recommendation contained in the resolution adopted by the Council, while its neighbors didn't do the same thing²⁵. During this time, the situation was aggravated in the north of Albania. According to the information published in the press of that time, the situation was very worrying. It was written that the Serbian forces were advancing in Albania, while in Belgrade, the newspapers wrote that the Serbian forces had invaded Arras and were approaching Tirana. In such circumstances, the British government assessed that the situation was so serious that it justified the meeting of the Council in an extraordinary session. According to Article 11 of The Covenant, "It is also declared to be the friendly right of each Member of the League to bring to the attention of the Assembly or of the Council any circumstance whatsoever affecting international relations which threatens to disturb international peace or the good understanding between nations upon which peace depends"²⁶, the British government said.

Consequently, the British Prime Minister asked the Secretary-General Mr. Drummond, to immediately call the Council "to study the situation and to take the necessary measures, according to Article 16, in case that the Serbs-Croats-Slovenes government refused or delayed to execute its obligations as defined by the agreement". The Council met on November 16th, to publicly hear the interested parties²⁷.

In this time, the representative of Great Britain, Mr. Fisher, reminded the Council the appeal that Albanians had addressed to the League of Nations on 29th April 1921, to protest against "the acts of war committed by Serbs in the border area and since that time, the situation was exacerbated". Mr. Fisher drew the attention related to the actions of Marka Gjoni, during the summer of 1921²⁸. The Conference decided to create a buffer zone which remained unoccupied from Albanian and Serbs-Croats-Slovenes forces. It assured the

²⁴ *Ibidem*.

²⁵ Dhimitër Berati, *Qëllimet dhe organizimi i Lidhjes së Kombeve: botuar prej sekretarijs së Lidhjes së Kombeve*, Mbrothësia e Kristo Luarasi, Tiranë, 1931, p. 18.

²⁶ AQSH, F. 251, V. 1922, D. 64, fl. 169.

²⁷ *Ibidem*.

²⁸ *Ibidem*.

interested governments that its appointment didn't harm at all the definitive borders that would be delimited on land. The Delimitation Commission was also created for this reason²⁹. On November 10th, 1921, the Secretary-General of the League of Nations, Mr. Drummond, gave instructions to the Commission according to the recommendations of Assembly and Council. The Commission shouldn't start the enquiry inside the borders of Albania until the Conference of Ambassadors had taken its decision. It had to address to the Secretary-General periodic reports for its work and even covering events that could happen³⁰.

On November 19th, the Enquiry Commission arrived in Durrës and went to Tirana where it was welcomed with great enthusiasm. It was greatly surprised by the high moral authority and the prestige that League of Nations had in Albania³¹. The Commission stayed a few days in Tirana in order to have an idea of the political situation in the country, by meeting the Prime Minister Evangjeli and other personalities. On November 27th, they left Tirana and went in Shkoder. They wanted to make an investigation for the latest events that had happened in Mirdita, so that they could verify the information according to which the Serbian forces were in the Albanian territory, in Tarabosh³². With the arrival of the Commission, the headmen and population of the surrounding villages were gathered to welcome the League of Nations representatives. The members of the Commission had the chance to meet with 4 of 5 headmen of Mirdita and invited them to speak unreservedly about their complaints, while they expressed their satisfaction to be citizens of an independent Albania and punished the policy of Marka Gjoni. In this way, the Commission in its report concluded that it was clear that the possibility of an independent government with Marka Gjoni, even in Mirdita or in Prizren could not be considered³³. The Commission concluded that the population of Mirdita which was around 18.000 people had only 3 people that were literate and Marka Gjoni was not one of them³⁴. The Commission was of the opinion that while the insurgency of Mirdita should not be underestimated, it would have no chance to be repeated, if the outside influences didn't interfere and if the government of Tirana would continue the policy of conciliation. On December 11th, the members of the Commission went through Lura in the Serbian borders and passed Drini near Arras, where the main combats happened that summer. They rode the delimitation area until Dibra. After observing the area, the Commission declared that the Yugoslav forces had emptied it in accordance with the decision of the Conference of Ambassadors and were withdrawn on 9th and 10th December in Dibra. Regarding the political situation in the country, the Commission had difficulties especially related to the absence of press in order

²⁹ AQSH, F. 251, V. 1922, D. 64.

³⁰ AQSH, F. 251, V. 1922, D. 64.

³¹ *Ibidem*.

³² *Ibidem*.

³³ Arben Puto, *Çështja shqiptare në aktet...cit.*, pp. 310-311.

³⁴ AQSH, F. 251, V. 1922, D. 64.

to know better the public opinion. It reported the political changes in Tirana from Evangjeli cabinet to Prishtina cabinet. In the end of December, the Enquiry Commission went in the Korça region. The situation was alarming even in the south. It informed that, that October there had been a gathering of troops and Greek gangs in the border. The attitude of Great Powers, Britain and Italy against the Yugoslav attack, deterred the Greeks to make another request for "North Epirus". Even in the south, the commissioners were welcomed with enthusiasm; they visited the Monastery of Saint Naum. The Commission visited also the 26 Albanian villages that Greeks held occupied. They declared in their report that "the Albanian and Greek advanced border posts were everywhere in a friendly relation and expressed appreciation for the welcome of the Greek military authorities"³⁵.

After visiting the 26 villages occupied by the Greeks, the Commission proposed the establishment of a Commission of Experts based on notifications that could take in Istanbul and in the country to make a correct appointment of Korça's *kaza*. Meanwhile it would be useful to have appointed a neutral area as registered in the Protocol of Firenze, similar with that existing in the Yugoslav border. This area could include the territories occupied by the Greeks. The commission also reviewed the internal situation in Korça after taking instructions to find ways to avoid future disturbances in the border and judged that there was an element there that could be the seed of future complications. It was noticed that population in Korça was totally Albanian with a negligible number of Greek subjects³⁶. The Enquiry Commission mentioned the fact that in the area existed a philo-Greek minority made of traders interested in the maintenance of good relations with Greece and also some orthodox conservative elements, a relic of time when Albania was under Turkish occupation and when Turkish Christians viewed Greece as a place where they as Christians would never be considered as inferior beings. These people fed from Greek propaganda, were afraid that the proposition to create an Albanian autocephalous church would cause a separation from the Istanbul Patriarch. These changes of opinions were also a cause of tension, ascertained the Commission, a tension not dangerous in itself if it didn't have external interventions. On January 9th, the Commission reported that it was informed from non-Albanian resources that 80.000 Yugoslav forces were gathered at the border, ready for every situation, but that the Albanian forces, under the command of Ali Riza Pasha Kolinja, were instructed from the government to fall back without war, if Yugoslavs would advance³⁷. The precursory reports of Enquiry Commission were sent to the Council in January, 1922. The Commission had made some suggestions for the realization of their mission's purpose. These suggestions were accepted by the Council on January 12th, 1922. The Commission made its general report on April 19th, 1922. The report made a

³⁵ Joseph Swire, *Shqipëria ngritja...*cit., pp. 303-304.

³⁶ Arben Puto, *Çështja shqiptare në aktet...*cit., p. 328.

³⁷ Joseph Swire, *Shqipëria ngritja...*cit., pp. 304-305.

detailed overview of its work, as it presented an interesting *exposé* of the political, social and economic situation of Albania. It was certain that from the Albanian part and that of Serbia there was good will to respect the area of delimitation. When a violation has occurred as a result of errors and negligence, it has been immediately corrected by the Commission request. When the Commission met in Shkodra the Delimitation Commission, they agreed that it would solve all the problems related to this area³⁸. During his visit in Korça in January 1922, the Commission made a study of the Albanian-Greek border situation, it ascertained that there existed a genuine uncertainty regarding the border defined by the Conference of Ambassadors. As a result, the Commission proposed the creation in this border, of a neutral area, similar with that created with the Serbs-Croats-Slovenes state. This proposition was approved from the Conference of Ambassadors. The Commission noticed the total absence in Korça of the Greek citizens. It reported that a part of the population (less than a third of them) was against the actual regime. In their general report of May 12th, 1922, the commissioners of the League of Nations wrote:

“Definitely there is an Albanian problem and it is a problem that will continue for a long time to have the attention of Europe...there is still the argument that Albanians are not organically a nation, that they will be always unable to exist as an independent modern state and that it is sure that sooner or later the place will be separated between its neighbors. This argument constituted in itself a serious threat for the independence of the country. The Commission after a comprehensive study of the Albanian case, concluded that an Albanian nation not only exists, but its existence is a necessity”³⁹.

Despite differences among the Gegë and Toskë language, commissioners noticed that it wasn't nothing else but dialect differences and that Albanians seemed to them united in mores, old traditions as well as a common language⁴⁰. In their analysis regarding the religious divisions, the impetus to Albanian nationalism, which was spread in all classes of population. Regarding commissioners noticed that differently from other countries where religious divisions brought a certain influence in the internal politics, this influence was very rare in Albania. The sufferings, that Albanians had been through and confronted together during the Balkan wars and the World War, had given a new the political events that happened in Albania since the Second Assembly; the Commission on its report mentioned especially the overthrow of Pandeli Evangjeli government in December of the year 1912 from Hasan Prishtina. It reported to the League that Prishtina's politics was hostile against Serbia. He was substituted by Ahmet Zogu whose influence was predominant at

³⁸ *Ibidem*.

³⁹ Joseph Swire, *Shqipëria ngritja...cit.*, p. 308.

⁴⁰ AQSH, F. 251, V. 1922, D. 64.

the time. Regarding this last one, the Commission reported to the League, that he did not have an irredentist inclination against the Serbia-Croat-Slovene state.

Zogu had the goodwill to establish friendly relations between the two countries. Regarding the support of his figure in the country, the Commission of Enquiry assessed:

“Some leaders of clans tried time after time to overthrow Ahmet Zogu but their attempts were suppressed, not always without shedding of blood. Every effort made had as its goal to modify the composition of the government, as well as rumors spread that one or the other side had support from outside. It is difficult to assemble proofs with the scarce means founded in the country. Except this, when we speak of instability and lack of security which will be present until it will be recognized by Great Powers, we can't be surprised by the fact that everyone aims to defend its interests obstructing with all means those of his opponents. Furthermore, it is clear that foreign influence has a tendency to be reduced until Albania creates a more stable equilibrium. Actually recently have been made friendly declarations from both sides. The Serbian-Croatian-Slovene state has recognized *de jure* the Albanian state also has sent its representatives in Tirana”⁴¹.

Regarding the Greek-Albanian relations the commissioners thought that these relations would remain difficult as long as Greece would refuse the recognition of borders set by the Commission of Enquiry valued that the bigger part of the population of this region was in favor Conference of Ambassadors and would continue to contradict the Albanian rights on the “North Epirus”. The of the actual government and was playing an important role in the Albanian national movement. It reported to the League that the Albanian government has opened and was subsidizing Greek schools for the Greek-Speaking minority. The Commission drew the attention of the League's Council regarding the difficulties that remained unsolved regarding the border with Greece. The Conference of Ambassadors, with the advice of the Commission of Enquiry had created in the border a neutral area in the beginning of April and had requested from the Commission of Delimitation to take the responsibility for this area. Analyzing the political situation in the country, the appointment of that kind of regime, the Commission with the consent of the Albanian government suggested the appointment of a monitoring body in the country. This suggestion was supported by the argument that during its stay in Tirana, the Commission had helped the government in overcoming serious internal problems without using methods which could antagonize the public opinion but by setting a better political stability⁴². Zogu's cabinet during this time asked help from the League of Nations also requested the appointment of technical consultants, for proposals of necessary reforms and for a better governance and economic

⁴¹ *Ibidem*.

⁴² AQSH, F. 251, V. 1922, D. 64.

development of the country. Concerning the work of the latter the Enquiry Commission reported that the Albanian government had the objective to make all the necessary efforts on the way towards quietude and reformation. He proposed the disarmament of the entire population, the development of public education, the mandatory monogamy and the replacement of judicial Ottoman system with a new modern one. To fulfill these objectives the government asked for advice and help because in Albania there were a short number of individuals which had the necessary technical knowledge on administration to make the achievement of policies. Furthermore the Commission reported that financial resources of the country were extremely limited and help from foreign capital was necessary to develop the economic resources⁴³. Sederholm submitted a detailed report of its activity for the period from 19 December 1922 to 1 February 1923. His report began with the enquiry that he had made in the Albanian south. On 26th December he visited Leskovik while in Korça he arrived on 27th December. During this period Sederholm reported to the League that he had the chance to be informed for the position of minorities and public opinion in the country. Regarding the relations of Albania with Greece during this period, Sederholm reported that according to information taken, the Greek government continued not to recognize as a region of Albania the province of Korça and Gjirokastra. According to what he reported to the League of Nations, people who travelled to Greece had their Albanian passport taken and in some occasions were given a Greek passport. He noted that after the signing of the Declaration of Minorities, the communities that belonged to religious, racial or linguistic minorities preserved the indisputable right to have schools and teachers in their language, and the government after the signing of this agreement did not have the right to refuse the hiring of others teachers. In this time Sederholm gave notice also to the Prime Minister and Minister of Education of Tirana for the compliance of Declaration of Minorities in the future. Regarding the matter of schools of minorities, he reported to the League's Council that according to information taken by the government, in Himara there were three Greek schools with eight teachers each and 318 pupils. According to the information, he couldn't check the three teachers of the Greek schools which gave lessons in Albanian language. While regarding this issue he reported that the headmen of Gjirokastra province did not have complaints regarding schools while the representatives of a village near the Greek border declared that villages wanted to learn lessons in Greek language because they were in contact with the Greek-speaking population⁴⁴.

Moreover the Greek government called under its flag young Greeks between 19 to 23 years old from the Albanian south and residents in Greece.

⁴³ *Ibidem*.

⁴⁴ AQSH, F. 251, V. 1922, D. 64.

Many of these young people belonged to philo-Greek families of Korça and Gjirokastra. However, the parents of these young boys sent me appeals, writes Sederholm in his report, to address an appeal to the League of Nations in their name, for which Sederholm had notified the League of Nations. Nevertheless, Sederholm reported that he was informed about the fact that Greek government recruited only those persons whom couldn't prove their Albanian citizenship. He pointed out that delays in the delimitation of borders from the Conference of Ambassadors had brought many misunderstandings in Korça province and especially in Korça's kaza which was occupied majorly by Greek troops regardless of the decision of the Conference of Ambassadors⁴⁵.

The Final Report of the Commission of Enquiry in Albania

On April 1923 the Commission of Enquiry submitted to the Council of the League of Nations its final report. Regarding the international condition of Albania, the Commission reported, that its previous reports had signaled, that thanks to the League of Nations intervention the foreign relations of Albania were improved. It declared that since its departure to Albania, only a small number of issues that could have brought restrictions, were still pending among Albania and its neighbors. Albania has reinstated diplomatic relations with bordering countries as with many other countries. Its borders were delimited except on some small sectors where division was about to begin. The delimitation work was ready to begin. The official representatives of neighboring countries declared publicly their purpose and wished to keep official relations with the new state and guaranteed that they would respect its independence and integrity. In its final report the Commission notified the opinion formulated the previous year according to which, Albania would refrain as much as possible from active foreign politics. With a Commission instruction, Albania would enjoy complete neutrality, in a way that it would be devoted entirely to its constitutional, economic and social development⁴⁶. The Commission took into consideration the internal situation of Albania, concluding that the internal situation with the external one are closely connected. Disorders inside the country brought inevitable consequences on the relations with its neighbors. He noted that measures had been taken in order to improve the internal situation. The population was disarmed. In many areas where robbery was seen as a mean of existence, currently the population was

⁴⁵ R1655/41/28635/9835, Le journal officiel de la SDN, Albanie-Rapport de la Commission d'Enquête sur ses travaux du 19 Decembre 1922 jusqu'au 1 Fevrier 1923.

⁴⁶ Société des Nations, Rapport à la quatrième Assemblée sur l'oeuvre du Conseil, sur le travail du Secretariat et sur les mesures prises pour executer les décisions de l'Assemblée, p. 27.

devoted to agriculture and other peaceful activities. The Commission reported for the League's Council that central government exercised an uncontested authority on all its territory. It could call for recruits in the army and collect taxes in the remote areas. The uprising of 1923 was easily suppressed by it. There were small chances for similar uprisings headed by feudal and adventurers guided by politicians. Zogu cabinet had extraordinary competencies and a big number of important persons which were still in exile. In autumn the Constitutional Assembly would be gathered to discuss the approval of an element which would help the raising of a strong government leaving to provinces a certain level of autonomy in the local governance. The actual government sought to use the foreign consultants' services in different fields or where reforms were necessary. It decided to appoint foreign consultants to reform the judicial system, education, the police, public work, hygiene and maybe on other services⁴⁷.

The delegate of the Commission of Enquiry in Albania, M. Sederholm, in the report addressed to the League of Nations wrote that as regards the Albanian government, the Greek minority in Albania was treated in the same way as the Albanian opening the same number of schools that are in other regions of Albania. He appreciated the conduct of the Albanian state towards the Greek element as "fair". Meanwhile, with the Albanian population in Greece happened the opposite⁴⁸.

On 3^d February 1923, the Council of the League decided that it wasn't any more necessary the sojourn of the Enquiry Commission in Albania. The representative of Albania shared the same opinion with the Council expressing gratitude to the latter for all the services that the Commission had provided during these years in the country. In this period the Council assessed the appointment of a financial adviser in Albania⁴⁹.

Conclusion

The activity of the Commission of Enquiry had a special importance. It was an important international organism, which analyzed the situation in the country on three main directions, the political, economic and social one. It analyzed and gave recommendations that were addressed to the Council of the League of Nations. Because of its recommendations the League of Nations took

⁴⁷ Société des Nations, Rapport a la quatrième Assemblée sur l' oeuvre du Conseil, sur le travail du Secretariat et sur les mesures prises pour executer les décisions de l'Assemblée, p. 27.

⁴⁸ "Përmendorja e Zotit Sederholm dhe Shqiptarët", *Gazeta Shqiptari i Amerikës*, Korçës, 18 Gusht 1923, p. 4.

⁴⁹ Société des Nations, Rapport à la quatrième Assemblée...cit., p. 28.

very important decisions for Albania and its attitude toward the Albanian issue. The Commission of Enquiry report presented entirely the situation of Albania with its neighbors. It proposed also that the League of Nations help Albania for choosing the specialist for different administrative services which by being in the position of technical advisers would work for the development of necessary reforms⁵⁰. The Commission through its enquiry arrived at the conclusion that: Albania was a nation which had all the potential for economic, social and political pretended development; the approach of Albania toward its neighbors was tolerant enough as to Greek and Yugoslav minorities in Albania were conceded equal rights with nationals, while the same treatment was not reserved by the neighbors to its minority in their territory; neighboring countries had to obligatorily recognize and execute the decisions of the Conference of Ambassadors of 1913.

⁵⁰ “Përmendorja e Zotit Sederholm dhe Shqiptarët”, cit.