

SOME DATA ON THE DISPLACEMENT OF ALBANIANS FROM KOSOVO TO ALBANIA IN 1929



History

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Abstract

The paper deals with the issue of the displacement of some Albanian families from Kosovo to Albania in 1929. Here are also noted the factors that affected displacement such as confiscation of property, violence, arrests and killings. In a brief overview, some moments of regional circumstances have been observed and highlighted and their reflection in relation to Kosovo.

Violent displacement of Albanians, the cleansing of Kosovo and other areas by the Albanian population and the placement of Slavic settlers remained among the key issues of Yugoslav politics. After 1918, when the First World War ended and the Kingdom of Serbo-Croat-Slovene was formed, the displacements were restored to the agenda. Nikola Pasić, Serbia's prime minister in the first decades of the twentieth century stated that the solution of the issue of Albanians could be easily accomplished during 20-25 years through their assimilation "both in cultural and national view".¹ In the view of the idea of displacement of Albanians, so-called disarmament actions were organized, accompanied by violence, arrests, imprisonment, internment, burning of houses, confiscation of property, murder and many massacres.² Migration was an important element of the expropriation policy (justified as social, agrarian reform) by significantly reducing the number of Albanian population. The ultimate goal was the denationalization and the Slavization of Albanian territories, the change of ethnic structure of Albanian cities.³

The failure of the Dukagjini uprising, the signing of the Italian-Albanian Friendship and Security Pact (1926), and the murder of Ceno Bey Kryeziu, almost marked the failure of Yugoslavia's policy in Albania.⁴

¹ *Historia e Popullit Shqiptar, vëllimi i III*, Akademia e Shkencave e Shqipërisë, Toena, Tiranë, 2007, f. 483.

² Zamir Shtylla, *Aspekte të politikës së shpërnguljes me dhunë të shqiptarëve nga Kosova në vitet 1936-1941*, në: *Shpërnguljet e shqiptarëve gjatë shekujve*, libri, I, Shoqata për kthimin e shqiptarëve të shpërngulur nga Kosova, Prishtinë, 1992, f. 185.

³ Marenglen Verli, *Shqipëria dhe Kosova historia e një aspirate*, vëllimi I, Botimpex, Tiranë, 2007, f. 50; Zamir Shtylla, *Aspekte të politikës së shpërnguljes me dhunë të shqiptarëve nga Kosova...*, vep. e cit.

⁴ Paskal Milo, *Politika e jashtme e Shqipërisë, vëllimi i parë (1912-1939)*, Toena, Tiranë, 2013, f. 723; Paskal Milo, *Shqipëria dhe Jugosllavia 1918-1927*, Tiranë, 1992, f. 442.

The signing of the Second Pact of Tirana (1927) marked the triumph of Italian politics in Albania and the failure of Yugoslav goals. However, Yugoslavia did not retreat from its ambitions towards Albania.⁵ Regarding political actions in the diplomatic terrain, Serbian politics in Kosovo were constantly pushing the Albanians, especially those at the Albanian-Yugoslav border, to leave and instead established Montenegrin and other Slavic colonists⁶

On September 1, 1928, the Constitutional Assembly proclaimed Kingdom of Albania and Ahmet Zogun declared "King of Albania under the name of Zog I".⁷ The title of "King of Albanians" was complicated especially in the context of Balkan politics as he even formally showed irredentist desire, the extension of care and responsibility to Albanians in Kosovo and other parts of Yugoslavia.⁸ Ahmet Zogu, although concerned with the problem of Kosovo, but for political reasons, the first years of the monarchy did not raise his voice⁹ beyond a formal interest because he did not want to irritate the Yugoslav government, which was in the possession of the opportunity of encouraging and organizing his emigrant politicians in Yugoslavia working to overthrow the regime.¹⁰ For Kosovo A. Zogu had a pragmatic stance, thus making efforts for stability and given the limited resources in the country, he did not intend any current provocation to the Yugoslavs over Kosovo.¹¹ The regional and international contexts were inadequate to undertake any steps towards the liberation of Kosovo and beyond and to unite with Albania. What could be done was diplomatic engagement in the international arena and in the direction of Belgrade to curb violence and mistreatment on Albanians, to keep alive the national spirit there and to prevent, as far as possible, the policy of ethnic cleansing in Albanian territories.¹²

The Albanian state with its possibilities was committed to prevent the displacement of Albanians from Kosovo. Albanian diplomatic representatives established in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, the Balkan states and other states closely followed the problem of displacement of Albanians from Kosovo and other areas.¹³ Albanians from Kosovo have not only settled the Albanian state, but many of them have also helped in the field of education by offering scholarships for studies abroad such as Kristë Maloki from Prizren. He did doctorate studies in Austria and since 1921 he had supported the Ministry of Education with a scholarship, which is supported in the function of doctoral training until the end of 1928/1929 until June 30, 1929.¹⁴

⁵Paskal Milo, *Shqipëria dhe Jugosllavia ...*, vep e cit., f. 440; Paskal Milo, *Politika e jashtme e Shqipërisë...*, vep. e cit., f. 700, 744.

⁶Arkivi Qendror Shtetëror i Republikës së Shqipërisë, më tej: (AQSH), Fondi (F) 151, Viti (V) 1928, Dosja (D) 155, fl. 9-10.

⁷*10 vjet Mbretimi 1928-1938*, Tiranë, 1938, f. 39-40.

⁸*Historia e popullit shqiptar, vëllimi III*, vep. e cit., f. 286; Bernd J. Fischer, *Diktatorët e Ballkanit*, Ais, Tiranë, 2008, f. 45; Prof. assoc.dr. Bajram Xhafa, *Kushtet historike të ngritjes së Mbretërisë Shqiptare*, në: *Monarkia Shqiptare 1928- 1939*, Qendra e Studimeve Albanologjike, Instituti i Historisë, Tiranë, 2011, f. 44.

⁹Arkivi i Institutit të Historisë në Tiranë (AIHT), Fondi (F) A.V.16, Richard Buch Zautner, *Albanien Neues Land im Imperium* (Laipzig: 1939), 10-11.

¹⁰Paskal Milo, *Politika e jashtme e Shqipërisë*, vep. e cit., f. 857.

¹¹Bernd J. Fischer, *Diktatorët e Ballkanit*, vep. e cit., f. 47.

¹²Prof. Dr. Marenglen Verli, *Interesimi i shtetitshqiptarpërshqiptarëtnëJugosllavinëvitet 20-30 tëshek. XX*, në: *MonarkiaShqiptare 1928- 1939*, Qendra e StudimeveAlbanologjike, Instituti i Historisë, Tiranë, 2011, f. 221.

¹³Dr. Zamir Shtylla, "Shpërnguljet me dhunë të shqiptarëve nga Kosova...", vep. e cit., Tiranë, 1996, f. 180.

¹⁴*Gazeta e Re*, Tiranë, e shtunë, 17 nëntor 1928, f. 4.

In the years 1925-1930 the Albanian government had installed 6978 Albanian emigrants and spent 783,811 francs of gold. Most of them came from Yugoslavia and a small part of Greece and Turkey.¹⁵

Even the press of the time beautifully reflected the emigration of Albanians from the Yugoslav Kingdom. Thus, the New Journal on January 9, 1929 wrote: "From 7-8 months on, we continue an unprecedented emigration of Albanians from Yugoslavia to our land."¹⁶

Migration of Albanians from Kosovo to Albania continued in continuity. In 1928, 149 Albanian families¹⁷ were displaced and in 1929 331 Albanian families were displaced.¹⁸

In February 1929, the Minister of Internal Affairs of Albania informed the Prime Minister that 40 Kosovar families had migrated to Pogradec from where they were installed in different settlements of Albania. Another document states that 55 Kosovar families have been displaced from Mitrovica, Gjilan, Ferizaj, Prishtina, Kumanovo, in total 202 people.¹⁹

In July 1929, two families from Greater Dibra as a result of Yugoslav pressure were forced to move and settle in Albania.²⁰

The Council of Ministers, in a meeting held on October 25, 1929, based on the request for Albanian citizenship of Toger Mehmet Delia from Radisheva - Kosovo (then resident in Gjirokastra) authorizes the competent offices to start the procedures for registration of Albanian citizenship.²¹

In October 1929, 45 families were installed in the district of Kavaja, where three families from Pogradec were expected to arrive. In the suburbs of Kruja were installed 34 families with a total of 143 members, and preparations were also made for the installation of 45 Albanian families in the Kruja region. Whereas, in the district of Lushnja sub-prefecture during 1929, 145 Kosovo-

¹⁵ Arkivi i Institutit të Historisë në Tiranë (mëtej AIH), A.V. 55, Dr. Herrman Gross, *Struktura ekonomike dhe marrëdhëniet ekonomike të Shqipërisë*, f. 8

¹⁶ *Gazeta e Re*, Tiranë, e mërkurë, 9 janar, 1929, f. 3

¹⁷ Hakif Bajrami, *Shpërngulja e shqiptarëve në Turqi gjatë viteve 1912-1941*, në: "Gjenocidi dhe aktet gjenocidiale të pushtetit serb ndaj shqiptarëve nga Kriza Lindore e këndeje" simpozium i mbajtur në Prishtinë më 20-21 janar 1994, Akademia e Shkencave dhe e Arteve të Kosovës, Prishtinë, 1995, f. 144

¹⁸ AQSH, Fondi: Ministria e Punëve të Jashtme (151), Dosja nr. 560, *Korrespondencë e Ministrisë së Punëve të Jashtme me Legatën Shqiptare në Jugosllavi, mbi emigracionin e kosovarëve në Shqipëri dhe lista e emigrantëve kosovarë*, viti 1929, fl. 45

¹⁹ AQSH, Fondi: Ministria e Punëve të Jashtme (151), Dosja nr. 415, *Raportet e Legatës Shqiptare në Beograd mbi emigrimin e shqiptarëve në Shqipëri dhe Turqi, instalimin e malezëve në tokat e Kosovës, mbi çështjen e shkollave, barbarizmat e serbve, etj., dhe korrespondenca përkatëse për këtë problem*, viti 1929, fl. 39, 42

²⁰ AQSH, Fondi: Ministria e Punëve të Brendshme (152), Dosja nr. 16 *Vendime të Këshillit të Ministrave, lutje të pesonave të ndryshëm dhe korrespondencë e Ministrisë së Punëve të Brendshme, Kryesisë së Këshillit të Ministrave, Komandës së Përgjithshme të Gjindarmërisë etj., mbi propagandën antiqeveritare të zhvilluar nga persona të ndryshëm e masat e marra nga Qeveria për internimin e mosarratisjen e tyre*, viti 1929, fl. 7

²¹ "Këshilli i Ministrave Rregjistrime në shtetsin shqiptare", në: Fletorja Zyrtare, Tiranë, vjeti VIII, nr. 62, e shtunde 9 nanduer 1929, f. 1

born families from the Yugoslav Kingdom and a total of 443 persons from Turkey were installed.²²

According to the information sent to MFA, the lawyer in Belgrade, T. Shtylla was taught that many Kosovars forced by local Yugoslav authorities for little money are forced to sell their homes and properties and then seek visas for Albania. Mr. T Shtylla after having issued several visas, asked the Albanian MPJ authorities to act on the other 30 visa applications.²³

During 1929, under the Deputy Prefect of Radostusha, Mr. Sokolovic, at the post of gendarmerie command invites Albanians to a meeting where they were then beaten and tortured, also in Nistruja, the chief EjupZylfiu was tortured and forced to escape to Albania.²⁴

There are many cases where Kosovo Albanians emigrate without visas to Albania. Such information was brought by the Mayor Xh. Leskovik from Skopje informing the MFA in Tirana that many immigrants being aware that they cannot get a visa from the Consulate General in Skopje are traveling visa-free to Albania.²⁵

With the pretext that they had sheltered guerillas, the Yugoslav Government had ordered the displacement of the villages of Shtupeç i Vogël, Drelaj and Malaj (Rugova villages) but after the intervention of the Minister of England in Belgrade this decision was annulled.²⁶

Archival documents provide data on village names from forced to migrate Kosovo Albanians and then to Montenegrin lands and homes. Such as are mentioned the names of entire villages of Peja, Mitrovica, Prizren, Prishtina, etc.²⁷

Representative of Albanian Legation in Belgrade, Mr. Shtylla informed the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Albania, R. Fico that according to information coming from the consulate of Skopje there is evidence that the expropriation of Kosovar lands and homes is continuing without interruption.²⁸ Often the Albanian Legation of Albania was an attempt to persuade Kosovo Albanians not to move to Albania but to stay in Kosovo. But it was extremely difficult to obey and not be granted visas for Albania when people demanded it or on the contrary, they were trying to kill them or throw them into the sea and no longer stay in Kosovo where everything was seized,

²² AQSH, Fondi: Ministria e Punëve të Brendshme (152), Dosja nr. 354, *Ligj, rregullore, vendim, qarkore dhe korrespondencë e zhvilluar ndërmjet Ministrisë së Punëve të Brendshme, Kryeministrisë, Ministrisë së Ekonomisë, Ministrisë së Punëve të Jashtme etj. mbi krijimin e një komisioni për instalimin e emigrantëve në tokat shtetërore*, viti 1929, fl. 68, 98, 104, 114

²³ AQSH, Fondi: Ministria e Punëve të Jashtme (151), Dosja nr. 413, *Raporte të Legatës Shqiptare ë Beograd mbi emigrimin e shqiptarëve në Shqipëri dhe Turqi, instalimin e malezëve në tokat e Kosovës, mbi çështjen e shkollave, barbarizmat e serbve, etj., dhe korrespondenca përkatëse për këtë problem*, viti 1929, fl. 29

²⁴ AQSH, Fondi: Ministria e Punëve të Jashtme (151), Dosja nr. 415 *Informata, lista emërore dhe protesta të Qeverisë Shqiptare drejtuar Lidhjes së Kombeve mbi vrasjet, plagosjet dhe krimet e tjera të kryera nga xhandarmëria jugosllave kundër popullsisë së pafajshme të Kosovës*, viti 1929, fl. 3

²⁵ AQSH, Fondi: Ministria e Punëve të Jashtme (151), Dosja nr. 560 *Korrespondencë e Ministrisë së Punëve të Jashtme me Legatën Shqiptare në Jugosllavi, mbi emigracionin e kosovarëve ...*, viti 1929, fl. 32

²⁶ AQSH, Fondi: Ministria e Punëve të Jashtme (151), Dosja nr. 413, *Raporte të Legatës Shqiptare ë Beograd mbi emigrimin e shqiptarëve në Shqipëri dhe Turqi, instalimin e malezëve në tokat e Kosovës, mbi çështjen e shkollave, barbarizmat e serbve, etj., dhe korrespondenca përkatëse për këtë problem*, viti 1929, fl. 32

²⁷ AQSH, Fondi: Ministria e Punëve të Jashtme (151), Dosja nr. 413, *Raporte të Legatës Shqiptare ë Beograd mbi emigrimin e shqiptarëve në Shqipëri dhe Turqi, instalimin e malezëve në tokat e Kosovës, mbi çështjen e shkollave, barbarizmat e serbve, etj., dhe korrespondenca përkatëse për këtë problem*, viti 1929, fl. 12

²⁸ AQSH, Fondi: Ministria e Punëve të Jashtme (151), Dosja nr. 560, viti 1929, fl. 18

where violence and pressure had reached the peak.²⁹ The Consul Chief in Skopje Xh. Leskovik expressed his concern ascertaining that if no visas were given to Albania, then Kosovo Albanians would not be able to leave but to leave for Turkey.³⁰

The Yugoslav authorities caused a problem of different kinds by asking even before Kosovo Albanians when they sought passports to migrate to Albania and in the end refused them while applying for emigration in Turkey almost all procedures were facilitated.³¹

According to a letter from the Ministry of Internal Affairs sent to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs it is stated that no. of immigrants installed on state land in 1929 was a total of 1219 immigrants. Thus, in the district of Durrës were installed 38 families with a total of 92 members, in Kavaja 76 families with a total of 301 members, in Kruja 37 families with a total of 160 members, in Fier 49 families with a total of 177 members and in Lushnje 131 families with a total of 489 members.³²

There were quite a few cases that indicated the very difficult conditions of Kosovo Albanians who had settled in Albania. So in 1929 the representatives of 60 Kosovar families in Mamuras wrote A. Zogu where they sought food that it expressed "... we are dying of starvation, we are so bad that we do not have bread to eat."³³

Zog was concerned about the developments around the Albanian - Yugoslav border with the support given by Yugoslavia to guerrilla stocks and political immigrants. He asked Mussolini's help and intervention which asked the Italian Legation in Belgrade and Athens to require the states where they operate cessation of adventure with migrants fleeing Albanians.³⁴

Tirana was informed in detail about what was happening in Kosovo. Albanian allies in Belgrade and the Albanian consulate in Skopje regularly sent notifications and reports on the situation and persecution of Albanians. One of them stated that Albanians living in Yugoslavia had no school, no book, no Albanian newspaper, freedom to the religious exercise was affected, their bodies were often burned and the clergy was threatened and killed as it happened in 1929 with Father Shtjefën Gjeçov.³⁵

Despite the diplomatic efforts of the Albanian government to stop the displacement of Albanians from Kosovo with the aim of preserving Albanian existence there in Albania came thousands of Albanians from Kosovo and other areas that were left outside the borders of political Albania.

In 1929, Hasan Prishtina addressed the League of Nations a petition reflecting the suppression, the violation of the freedoms, the ban on Albanian schools and the forcible expulsion

²⁹ AQSH, Fondi:151, Dosja nr. 560, V. 1929, fl. 8.

³⁰ AQSH, F. 151, D. nr. 560, V. 1929, fl. 20.

³¹ AQSH, F. 151, D. nr. 560, V. 1929, fl. 34.

³² AQSH, F. 151, D. nr. 560, V. 1929, fl. 45.

³³ AQSH, Fondi: Kryeministria (149), Dosja nr. I - 1107 *Lutje e emigrantëve kosovarë për t'ju përmirësuar jetësën e tyre*, viti 1929, fl. 2.

³⁴ Ilir Ushtelenca, *Diplomacia e mbretit Zogu I-rë(1912-1939)*, Ermir, Tiranë, 1997, f. 93.

³⁵ Paskal Milo, *Politika e jashtme e Shqipërisë*, vep. e cit., f. 859.

of Albanians towards Albania or Turkey. At the same time, the League of Nations was informed that Albanians' wealth was being given to Serbs, Montenegrins and Russian emigrants.³⁶

The Secretary of the League of Nations was informed by the members of the Council in the midst of the Yugoslav government's representation at the League of Nations on the petition of Hasan Prishtina. In its response, the Yugoslav representation had dismissed H. Prishtina's petition as unrealistic.³⁷ Hasan Prishtina reacted again to the Serbian side response through a memorandum addressed to the League of Nations Committee where facts and arguments refute response Yugoslav party. To prove the factual situation, it required sending a neutral investigative commission to ascertain the real situation in Kosovo and other Albanian territories in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia.³⁸

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