

The 1925 Constitution and Its Impact on Political and Legal Developments in Albania

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Abstract: *The 1925 Constitution and its impact on political and legal developments in Albania* – The 1925 Constitution marks a pivotal moment in Albania's political and legal history, establishing the groundwork for a republican system following the conclusion of the principedom era and the challenges of state formation. This study analytically evaluates the Constitution's content, emphasising the structure of the presidential republic, the responsibilities of the President, and the constraints on the functions of the legislative and judicial branches. This analysis examines how the constitution legitimised the consolidation of Ahmet Zog's personal authority and contributed to the establishment of a centralising authoritarian system. It also evaluates its influence on the transformation of the legal system, in comparison to the preceding Ottoman legislation and the endeavours for modernisation in accordance with the Western model. The research employs an interdisciplinary approach to critically examine the short-term and long-term effects of this constitution on Albanian political and legal life, thereby enhancing the comprehension of institutionalisation processes in Albania during the 1920s.

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Keywords: Constitution of 1925; Republic; Ottoman legislation; Authoritarian system; Western model of governance

1. Introduction emphasising the historical and legal dimensions of the adoption of the 1925 Constitution

Following the declaration of independence in 1912 and the precarious efforts to establish a stable state, Albania underwent an extended phase of political instability, foreign intervention, and a lack of robust state institutions. The political crisis from 1920 to 1924, culminating in the ousting of the Fan Noli government and the reinstatement of Ahmet Zog, established a new framework for the reformation of the state order. The adoption of the 1925 Constitution represents a historically significant moment for the nation's political and legal evolution.

The political events of 1924 profoundly disrupted the nation's political, economic, and social spheres. The absence of order, tranquilly, and the prevalence of anarchy in the country, coupled with the pervasive backwardness of Albanian society, rendered governance and the execution of state functions exceedingly challenging¹.

¹ F. Musaj, *Republika Shqiptare 1925–1928*, Akademia e Studime Albanolgjike, Instituti I Historisë, Tiranë, 2018, 57.

A significant number of foreign diplomats, including Albanian politicians from the previous administration, had solidified the notion that Albania required a robust governing authority. The Foreign Office also recognised the necessity for such a regime in Albania. In his examination of the 1924 events in Albania, he concluded that they were unequivocal evidence that Albania had not "...conformed to the Western model of governance. Their institutional representation is inadequate, concepts for national unity remain nascent, and without oversight, the potential for internal conflicts exists"².

The moment had arrived to sever all connections with the declining Turkish-feudal Albania and to establish a modern and contemporary state and nation, led by a strong, cooperative, and dynamic leader.

During the era of Eqerem Bey of Vlora, the name most frequently mentioned in diplomatic and political discussions was Ahmet Zog.³

Zog was diligently and meticulously striving to embody realpolitik both domestically and internationally. Zog initially concentrated on the formal constitutional legitimacy of the new state institutions in Albania.

Ahmet Zog would re-enter the government in December 1924, declaring the victory of legality. English documents from that period indicate that Ahmet Zog had not been lawfully ousted from power, as he had ascended through elections, and his removal was executed by force. His return was legally permissible in 1924. Noli did not conduct general elections to legitimise his authority. Following the recognition of Iljaz Vrioni's government by HMG (His Majesty's Government), this authority was similarly conferred upon his successor A. Zog, who was constitutionally designated as Prime Minister.⁴

Zog and his supporters characterised the restoration of the pre-June Uprising government and the reestablishment of other institutions as a "triumph of legality."⁵

Despite significant challenges in Albania regarding institutional and legal frameworks, as well as public order, Ahmet Zog and the Albanians encountered substantial obstacles in advancing the state and establishing a constitutional and legal order. This evaluation was articulated in both contemporary Italian and English documents.⁶

² *The National Archives*, London (hereinafter-TNA), Foreign Office (hereafter-FO), 371/10654 C, 217/52/90/ Memorandum of Foreign Office, 5 January 1925.

³ E. Vlora, *Kujtime 1885-1912*, vëll II, Tiranë, Shtëpia e Librit & Komunikimit, Tirane: 2001, 249; Pranvera Teli, *Shqipëria dhe Diplomacia Angeze 1919-1927* (nën dritën e burimeve arkivore angleze), Shtëpia Bouese "Neraida", Tiranë, 2005, 259-260.

⁴ TNA, FO, 371/10654, C334/52/90. Coments from FO, 7 janar 1925; Pranvera Teli (Dibra), *Angazhimi i Harry Eyres në politikat e brendshme të konsolidimit të shtetit shqiptar, 1921-1925*, "Shqiptarët dhe ndërkombëtarët 1912-1926", Akademia e Studimeve Albanologjike & Instituti i Historisë "Ali Hadri", Prishtinë, Botimet Albanologjike, Tiranë, 2021, 222.

⁵ *Historia e Popullit Shqiptar*, vëll III, Botim I Akademisë së Shkencave të Shqipërisë, Insituti i Historisë, Toena Tiranë, 2007, 47.

⁶ *Documents on British Foreign Policy*, First Series, vol. XXVI, London: HMSO, 1985, dok. nr. 308. Informacion i Eyres per Chamberlain, 29 dhjetor 1924; Pranvera Teli (Dibra), *Angazhimi i Harry Eyres në politikat e brendshme të konsolidimit të shtetit shqiptar, 1921-1925*, "Shqiptarët dhe ndërkombëtarët 1912-1926", (përgaditi: Ledia Dushku),

They assert that Ahmet Zog “has resolutely returned to establish an appropriate government in this nation, yet he will encounter significant challenges in securing suitable collaborators. He is not vindictive. He is currently reinstating order, and the populace embraces his authoritative approach”⁷.

The English envoy Eyres informed the Foreign Office that “besides legal measures to establish public order and tranquilly in the nation, President Ahmet Zog was also undertaking traditional Albanian initiatives to attain his objectives...” Zog convened the elders from the prefectures of Shkodra, Kosovo, and Dibra in Tirana for a meeting. During this assembly, the highlanders vowed their loyalty to Ahmet Zog and insisted that he implement vigorous actions to address the blood feud⁸.

The English minister in Tirana Eyres stated that Ahmet Zog “is a resolute and steadfast leader, akin to an individual who refrains from seeking vengeance for personal reasons”⁹.

Zog, as a progressive aristocrat, advocated for the gradual and organic advancement of his nation, in stark contrast to his political adversary Fan Noli, who favoured radical and abrupt transformations. He was fundamentally a Westerner with a pronounced inclination towards law and order. Upon his ascension to the presidency, Zog endeavoured to abolish customs such as blood feuds by disarming the populace, instituting a police force, and reconciling conflicting parties, achieving notable success in eradicating this ancient affliction¹⁰.

Consequently, Albania progressed with the reinstatement of Ahmet Zog. He provided the nation with essential tranquilly¹¹.

On 5 January 1925, the Supreme Council assigned Ahmet Zog the responsibility of establishing the new government¹². On 7 January 1925, Ahmet Zog delivered a speech¹³ regarding the establishment of new institutions, in which he “proclaimed comprehensive reforms pertaining to state organisation. These included the disbandment of the army, the formation of a gendarmerie force organised and trained by foreign instructors, the disarmament of the populace, the reorganisation of

Akademia e Studimeve Albanologjike & Instituti i Historisë "Ali Hadri", Prishtinë, Botimet Albanologjike, Tiranë, 2021, 222.

⁷ *Documents on British Foreign Policy*, First Series, vol. XXVI, London, HMSO, 1985, dok. nr. 308. Information provided by Eyres for Chamberlain, 29 dhjetor 1924.

⁸ TNA, FO 371/10654, fl. 117-118. Letër e H. Eyres për A. Chamberlain, 13 korrik 1925; Armend Mehmeti: *Qasja britanike për hapat e parë të Republikës Shqiptare*, në përmbledhjen me kumtesa të konferencës shkencore “*Shqiptarët dhe ndërkombëtarët 1912-1926*”, (përgaditi: Ledia Dushku), Akademia e Studimeve Albanologjike & Instituti i Historisë "Ali Hadri", Prishtinë, Botimet Albanologjike, Tiranë, 2021, 254.

⁹ TNA, FO 371/10654, fl. 102. Letër e H. Eyres për Foreign Office, 29 mars 1925.

¹⁰ R.J. Stevenson, *Zhvillimet politike në Shqipëri në vitet 1920-1939*, Geer, Tiranë, 2004, 45.

¹¹ R.J. Stevenson, *ibid*, 46.

¹² Arkivi Qendror Shqiptar (hereinafter-AQSH), F.647, V.1925, D.1, Fl.4. Telegram i drejtorisë së Zyrës së shtypit drejtuar prefekturave e nënprefekturave të vendit, Tiranë më 5 janar 1925.

¹³ *Proklamati e Ahmet Zog drejtuar popullit shqiptar*, Gazeta “Bisedimet”, nr.1. Kajro, 8 shkurt 1925, f.3: E. Vlorë, *ibid*, 246.

administrative structures, economic reforms, the safeguarding of independence and territorial integrity, and the adherence to principles of neutrality and amicable relations with neighbouring states”¹⁴.

To attain the aforementioned objectives and advance Albania in both the institutional and broader contexts, the Supreme Council convened the Constitutional Assembly in Tirana on January 17, 1925, at the government's behest, to ratify the Fundamental Statute (Constitution) and establish the political structure of the Albanian state¹⁵.

The Constitutional Assembly granted the government a vote of confidence and proceeded to deliberate on the political structure of the Albanian state. During the concluding discussions regarding the political structure of the state, on January 21, 1925, the Constitutional Assembly unanimously resolved to declare the Albanian Republic. Simultaneously, the commission responsible for drafting the Fundamental Statute submitted it to the Constitutional Assembly, accompanied by an explanatory report¹⁶.

On 21 January 1925, Albania was proclaimed a parliamentary republic. Following the vote of confidence in the new government on 9 February 1925, the Constituent Assembly concluded its duties and reconvened in parliament, yet persisted in its efforts to approve additional articles of the draft statute, culminating on 3 March 1925¹⁷. The complete publication of the Fundamental Statute of the Albanian Republic (the constitution) appeared in the “Official Gazette” on 7 March 1925¹⁸.

Upon ratifying the final provisions of the Fundamental Statute, it concluded its responsibilities and proclaimed its dissolution¹⁹.

The Fundamental Statute of the Republic, referred to as the Constitution of Albania of 1925, is a pivotal document in the constitutional and political history of the nation, signifying a crucial phase in the establishment of the Albanian state. Ahmet Zog's reinstatement to power in late 1924 signified a pivotal moment in state consolidation, characterised by the implementation of a Constitution that directed Albania towards a presidential system with robust central authority²⁰.

The Constitution of March 7, 1925 signified the shift from a monarchical system to a presidential republic, establishing a new framework for Albania at that time, and sought to institutionalise the centralised authority of Ahmet Zog, who assumed the role of President of the Republic. It was formulated and ratified in an environment where political imperatives

¹⁴ FO, 371/10654, fl. 40-41. Shkresë e Sekretarisë së shtetit për A. Chamberlain, 22 janar 1925. Armend Mehmeti: Qasja britanike për hapat e parë të Republikës Shqiptare, në Akademia e Studimeve Albanologjike, Instituti i Historisë, Instituti i Historisë "Ali Hadri", Prishtinë, Shqiptarët dhe ndërkombëtarët në vitet 1912-1926, Tiranë 2021, Botimet Albanologjike, 248.

¹⁵ *Bisedimet e Kuvendit Kombëtar*, Mbledhja nr.65, V.1925, Tiranë, 1925. 889.

¹⁶ A. Luarasi, A. Anastasi, K. Krisafi, *Çështje të Historisë së Shtetit dhe të së Drejtës*, Luarasi, Tiranë, 1998, 108-109.

¹⁷ I. Elezi, E. Elezi, *Zhvillimi historik i mendit teoriko-juridik shqiptar*, Botimet Erik, Tiranë, 2010, 39.

¹⁸ *Fletorja zyrtare*, nr.8, Tiranë 7 Mars 1925, f.1-19. Statutit Themeltar I Shtetit Shqiptar

¹⁹ A. Luarasi, A. Anastasi, K. Krisafi, *Çështje të Historisë së Shtetit dhe të së Drejtës*, Luarasi, Tiranë, 1998, 109.

²⁰ Stevenson, *ibid*, 42.

superseded democratic and consultative procedures. The approval process of this constitution was significantly shaped by Zog's consolidation of power and the prevailing authoritarian constitutional models in Europe, particularly those of France and Italy. The architects of the republican initiative, drawing upon the most esteemed studies of constitutional law from that era, articulated to the Assembly the rationale that Albania's advancement could solely be guaranteed through the establishment of a republican regime.²¹ Scholar Bush Zautner perceives Zog's methodology regarding this regime reform not as a justification for doctrines but as a means to consolidate power²².

This historical-legal perspective elucidates not only the process of drafting and ratifying this constitution but also the political objectives it fulfilled and the ramifications it imposed on the institutional framework of the Albanian state. In this context, it is essential to examine the legal frameworks established, the interplay between powers, and how it facilitated the entrenchment of an authoritarian presidential regime.

A crucial element in the examination of the Albanian Constitution of 1925 is the substantial impact of D'Annunzio's Fiume Constitution on its formulation. The Fiume Constitution, enacted during Gabriele D'Annunzio's occupation of the Italian city in 1919, incorporated features of an authoritarian regime grounded in nationalism and a robust executive, serving as an inspirational model for the architects of the Albanian Constitution²³.

This document encompassed contemporary Western principles alongside authoritarian components, signifying an endeavour to establish a robust state in a region fraught with significant political and social challenges.

The Albanian Constitution of 1925 centralised authority under the President, diminishing the power of local governments and traditional chieftains, thereby establishing a structured administration and a robust legal framework for the Albanian state²⁴. This model signifies a deviation from conventional governance structures in Albania and an alignment with the principles of legal authoritarianism and the state organisation of that era.

A comparison with the Fiume Constitution reveals that, although both constitutions centralise authority under a robust leader, the Albanian constitution appropriated key aspects of authoritarianism and modernisation from D'Annunzio's model, tailoring them to the Albanian context to fortify the state and secure international backing, particularly from Italy.

The historical and legal influence is crucial for comprehending Albania's institutional evolution in the mid-20th century and its standing in the international sphere during a time of geopolitical instability and rivalry in the Balkans.

The Constitution of 1925 was pivotal in establishing a new and

²¹ *AQSh*, F.146, V.1925, D.90, fl.11, Raport, mbi arsyet e zbatimit republikan në Shqipëri.

²² Arkivi I Insitutit të Historisë (hereinafter –AIH), A-V_16 Zautner Busch, “*Shqipëria nën regjimin e Ahmet Zogut (Translated material)*”.

²³ A. Giannini, “*L'Albania dall'Indipendenza all'Unione con l'Italia, 1913-1939*”, Roma, 1940, 68.

²⁴ Omari, Luan. Anastasi, A, *ibid*, 154.

legitimate constitutional and legal framework for Albania. It established Albania as a parliamentary republic while also assigning a significant role to the head of state. Its adoption catalysed the execution of comprehensive reforms that subsequently affected Albania's evolution, the consolidation of the Albanian state, and infrastructure development, among other areas.

Under the presidency of Ahmet Zog, Albania began to manifest more as a cohesive nation rather than a feudal collection of local beys, marking the first occurrence since the demise of Skanderbeg²⁵.

The Constitution enacted on March 3, 1925 ultimately determined the continuation of Prince Eilhelm zu Wied's position in Albania²⁶.

"Political institutions, legislative and executive bodies were consolidated, and the justice system was stabilised and modernised, grounded in the Fundamental Statute of the Republic (1925)"²⁷.

It is important to acknowledge that within one month, "the political transformations in Albania, specifically the establishment of the government and the subsequent declaration of the Albanian Republic with Ahmet Zog as President, were acknowledged by the accredited representatives from Greece, Bulgaria, Italy, Germany, the MSKS, Hungary, France, Britain, and the USA"²⁸.

2. The concepts, components, and principal innovations of the Constitution of the Albanian Republic of 1925

The 1925 Constitution represented a significant historical and legal milestone for Albania, establishing a stable legal and institutional framework that facilitated state and institutional development. It comprises a "collection of norms and regulations" that governs social relations within the constitutional domain and offers legal protections for citizens.

The Constitution is crucial for a state as it serves as a "framework of norms and regulations that organise and govern social relations within the constitutional domain," forming a vital component of the legal system and essentially acting as a "repository" of legal guarantees that the state offers to its citizens²⁹.

On January 21, 1925, the Constituent Assembly declared the Albanian Republic, and on January 22, 1925, Zog was elected as President. Article 1 of the Fundamental Statute established the structure of the Albanian state:

Albania was proclaimed a Parliamentary Republic with a President elected by the Assembly for a term of seven years. This signified the

²⁵ I.V. Faniko, *Historia e të Drejtës Kushtetuese Shqiptare*, Botimet Jozef, Tiranë, May 2014, 70.

²⁶ E.B. Christie, "The New Albanian Constitution", *American Political Science Review*, XX (shkurt, 1926), 120-123.

²⁷ I. Elezi, E. Elezi, *Zhvillimi historik i mendit teoriko-juridik shqiptar*, Botimet Erik, Tiranë, 2010, 29.

²⁸ FO, 371/10654, fl. 79. Letër e H. Eyres për Foreign Office, 24 shkurt 1925. Armend Mehmeti: Qasja britanike për hapat e parë të Republikës Shqiptare, në Akademia e Studimeve Albanologjike, Instituti i Historisë, Instituti i Historisë "Ali Hadri", Prishtinë, Shqiptarët dhe ndërkombëtarët në vitet 1912-1926, Tiranë 2021, Botimet Albanologjike, 249.

²⁹ L. Omari, A. Anastasi, *E Drejta Kushtetuese*, ShBLSh, Tiranë :2010, 9.

inaugural emergence of the republican form in Albania's history³⁰.

It should also be noted that “a new constitutional regime was adopted based on the American model. The National Assembly served as the paramount legislative authority, comprising two chambers: the Chamber of Deputies, consisting of 57 members elected by the populace, and the Senate, which included 18 members—12 elected by the populace and 6 appointed by the President³¹.

For the first time in the Albanian historical-legal framework, the republican organisation of government was instituted and evolved. The *de jure* formalisation of the separation of powers and the incorporation of fundamental rights into the constitutional text represent a progressive advancement towards the modernisation and Westernisation of the Albanian state. The President, concurrently the Commander of the Armed Forces, possessed extensive powers, including the authority to veto, appoint and dismiss ministers and prosecutors, declare war with Assembly approval, and ratify treaties, and the like. Ministers were required to secure the confidence of the Chamber of Deputies, etc.³²

In accordance with the treaties of certain Albanian lawyers and constitutionalists assert that the 1925 constitution lacked adequate mechanisms for power control and balance, rendering effective oversight of the president unfeasible.

In contrast to our previous assertions, it is important to highlight that diplomatic documents from that era indicate that the augmented authority vested in the president and the establishment of the republican system in Albania received backing from international entities, (including both the Italians and the British.).

In 1925, representative Eyres notified the Foreign Office that prior to Ahmet Zog's presidency, "The Regency was ineffective, with its members frequently travelling to Brindisi with a portion of the state treasury..." Harold Nicolson asserted that the president's powers are extensive and not surpassed even in a country like Albania, while the regulations governing the judiciary embody liberal principles³³.

The Constitution established a straightforward framework for judicial authority, designating the Supreme Court as the paramount judicial entity. The autonomy of the judiciary and the non-intrusion of other authorities in legal matters were assured³⁴.

³⁰ A. Luarasi, A. Anastasi, K. Krisafi, *Çështje të Historisë së Shtetit dhe të së Drejtës*, Luarasi, Tiranë 1998, 109.

³¹ *Fletorja Zyrtare*, nr.8, Tiranë, 7 Mars 1925, f.1-19, *Statuti Themeltar i Shtetit Shqiptar*, 3.

³² FO, 371/10654, fl. 60. Shkresë e Sekretarisë së shtetit për A. Chamberlain, 22 janar 1925. Armend Mehmeti: *Qasja britanike për hapat e parë të Republikës Shqiptare*, në Akademia e Studimeve Albanologjike, Instituti i Historisë, Instituti i Historisë "Ali Hadri", Prishtinë, Shqiptarët dhe ndërkombëtarët në vitet 1912-1926, Tiranë 2021, Botimet Albanologjike, 248.

³³ FO, 371/10656, fl. 141. Letër e H. Eyres për Foreign Office, 22 janar 1925.:Armend Mehmeti: *Qasja britanike për hapat e parë të Republikës Shqiptare*, në Akademia e Studimeve Albanologjike, Instituti i Historisë, Instituti i Historisë "Ali Hadri", Prishtinë, Shqiptarët dhe ndërkombëtarët në vitet 1912-1926, Tiranë 2021, Botimet Albanologjike, 248-249.

³⁴ L. Omari, *Çështje juridike e shoqërore*, Kristalina-KH, Tiranë 2017, 217.

The constitution acknowledged certain fundamental rights, such as the freedom of belief and religious practice; however, their implementation was constrained by the prevailing political and social influences of the era.

In political terms, this constitution significantly influenced the evolution of state administration and facilitated the purification of governmental structures from extensive and inefficient bureaucracies, thereby enabling the formulation of state policies aimed at enhancing Albania's economy.

Based on our analysis of the primary documents and articles constituting the 1925 constitution, we assert that this constitution introduced several innovations and significant elements for Albania during that period, which included:

3. The principal innovations of the 1925 Constitution

1. *Modernisation and Occidentalism*: The constitution represented a progression towards modernisation, incorporating parliamentary structure and the formal delineation of the separation of powers in Albania.
2. *State Consolidation*: It facilitated the construction and fortification of the Albanian state, resulting in a more efficient and legally compliant administration.
3. *Centralised authority*: It conferred substantial power to the President and the central administration, diminishing the influence of local government and chieftains who frequently opposed the state.
4. *Educational reform and Western ideas*: It facilitated the advancement of educational reforms and the dissemination of contemporary concepts intended for the polycentric development of the nation.
5. *Legal guarantees*: A constitutional framework that established legal assurances and incorporated liberal principles within the judiciary.
6. *International Support*: The augmented powers of the President and the republican framework received endorsement from international entities, notably the British and Italians.
7. *Representation of the two chambers*: The Chamber of Deputies represented the populace, while the Senate embodied experience, including members appointed by the President.
8. *Regulation of international relations*: The Constitution granted the state the authority to enter into international treaties and established its status as a sovereign entity.
9. *War and Peace*: The Constitution restricts the President's authority to declare war and peace, necessitating parliamentary approval.
10. *New legal standard*: The Constitution became the foundation and reference for the evolution of the Albanian constitutional and legal framework in subsequent periods.

In summary, the Constitution of the Albanian Republic of 1925 marked a significant advancement in the modernisation of the Albanian state, instituting a legal framework for institutional operations, enhancing administration, and aligning with international practices. Nonetheless, it

also encompassed constraints on power regulation and the assurance of fundamental rights, mirroring the historical circumstances and policies of the era.

4. The impact of the 1925 Constitution on Italian-Albanian relations

Despite centuries of endeavours to secure rights and establish an independent state, Albania did not promptly achieve a stable constitutional and institutional framework or the organisation of a modern Western state. Despite the significant contributions of the Vlorë Assembly (1912), the Organic Statute of 1914, the Statute of Lushnjë (1920), and the Extended Statute of Lushnjë (1922), internal political crises and foreign influences impeded the legal-political stability and advancement of the Albanian state.

In this context, the Constitution of 1925 emerged as a pivotal instrument for the advancement of international relations and the challenges confronting Albania. It facilitated Albania's establishment and enhancement of diplomatic relations, particularly with Western nations, notably Italy.

Albania, possessing a robust constitutional framework and stable governance, emerged as a dependable partner for nations like Italy, facilitating foreign investment and economic advancement. Albania aimed to obtain international backing for state consolidation; whereas Italy perceived Albania as a means to enhance its geopolitical and economic influence in Albania, the Balkans, and beyond during this period and thereafter.

Ahmet Zog, as stated by Eyres, undertook various measures to reassure the Italians that Albania would not serve as an instrument of Belgrade, seeking improved relations with its neighbours to safeguard its sovereignty and autonomy. Contemporary Foreign Office documents characterise Albania as a "danger point" and underscore the necessity for neighbouring countries to refrain from interference, advocating for conflict resolution through the League of Nations. Albania considered itself an independent state and a member of the League of Nations, while reserving the right to solicit foreign intervention when deemed necessary.³⁵

It is important to acknowledge that Albania faced challenging political and economic circumstances, both domestically and internationally, during this period. Diplomatic documents from the Foreign Office describe "Albania as "a point of danger." Neighbours ought to refrain from interference, and in instances of peril, the issue should be referred to the League of Nations"³⁶.

³⁵ *Documents on British Foreign Policy*, First Series, vol. XXVI, London, HMSO, 1985, dok. nr. 310. Information i Graham për Chamberlain, 30 dhjetor 1924. Pranvera Teli (Dibra), *Angazhimi i Harry Eyres në politikat e brendshme të konsolidimit të shtetit shqiptar, 1921-1925*, në përmbledhjen me kumtesa të konferencës shkencore "Shqiptarët dhe ndërkombëtarët 1912-1926", (përgaditi: Ledia Dushku), Akademia e Studimeve Albanologjike & Instituti i Historisë "Ali Hadri", Prishtinë, Botimet Albanologjike, Tiranë, 2021, 221.

³⁶ TNA, FO 371/10656, fl. 82-84. Memorandum i Foreign Office, 2 mars 1925. Armend Mehmeti: *Qasja britanike për hapat e parë të Republikës Shqiptare*, në Akademia e Studimeve Albanologjike, Instituti i Historisë, Instituti i Historisë "Ali Hadri",

The documents underscored that "the Albanian government asserts Albania's status as an independent state and a member of the League of Nations; consequently, it reserves the right to extend invitations to any entity it deems necessary"³⁷, including Italy.

The 1925 Constitution was enacted during a time when Albania was reliant on the major international powers, particularly Italy. The British withdrawal, executed as part of their global strategy, was manifested through specific actions by the Italians. The 1925 Constitution provided the legal foundation for the agreements connecting Albania and Italy. The establishment of the Society for the Economic Development of Albania (SVEA) in 1925 was a significant agreement, pledging to provide Albania with a loan of 50 million gold francs at an annual interest rate of 7.5%. This loan facilitated economic development and reinforced Italian-Albanian relations³⁸.

The Constitution facilitated the establishment of various political and economic agreements, thereby creating a legal and institutional framework that promoted close cooperation between the two nations. Ahmet Zog was compelled to accept Italian assistance to obtain funding for Albania's economic, military, and cultural advancement, owing to the absence of support from the League of Nations. Following the adoption of the Constitution, numerous political and economic accords were established that promoted close Italian-Albanian collaboration. Zog was compelled to acquiesce in pursuit of securing financial resources for the nation's economic, military, and cultural advancement. The persistent refusals of Albanian appeals for aid from the League of Nations, initially submitted by the Noli government, indicated to him that Albania would not receive collective support³⁹.

This Constitution allowed Albania to engage in bilateral and multilateral agreements, fostering legislation and administration that enhanced diplomatic and economic relations with other nations, particularly Italy. Under the presidential regime of Ahmet Zog, Albania established significant agreements with Italy, encompassing financial aid, infrastructure development, and support for the enhancement of state institutions. It solidified Italy's status as a significant player in Albanian foreign policy and provided legal justification for Rome's involvement in Albania.

Following the enactment of the 1925 Constitution, Albania established a novel legal and political framework that facilitated the initial strides

Prishtinë, Shqiptarët dhe ndërkombëtarët në vitet 1912-1926, Tiranë 2021, Botimet Albanologjike, 253.

³⁷ TNA, FO 371/10656, fl. 53-54. Letër e H. Eyres për Foreign Office, 26 janar 1925. Koloneli Stirling për Foreign Office, 31 janar 1925, Armend Mehmeti: *Qasja britanike për hapat e parë të Republikës Shqiptare*, në Akademia e Studimeve Albanologjike, Instituti i Historisë, Instituti i Historisë "Ali Hadri", Prishtinë, Shqiptarët dhe ndërkombëtarët në vitet 1912-1926, Tiranë 2021, Botimet Albanologjike, 248-2490.

³⁸ *Fletorja zyrtare*, nr.40, dt 31.7.1925. Konvencion mbi krijimin e bankës dhe huanë SVEA; Società italiana per azioni, Notizie statistiche edizione, XIII, Roma, 1932, f. 270; Sinan Tafaj, *Marrëdhëniet e Shqipërisë me vendet anëtare të BEE*, Shtëpia botuese Horizont, Tiranë "1999, 26.

³⁹ I. Fishta, V. Toçi, *Gjendja ekonomike e Shqipërisë në vitet 1912-1944, Prapambetja e saj, shkaqet dhe pasojat*, Tiranë 1983, 15; Ilir Ushtelena, *Diplomacia e Mbretit Zog I*, Tiranë, 1995, 91.

towards an independent and progressive foreign policy, predominantly aligned with Italy as a significant regional ally. The Constitution facilitated the establishment of an advanced management system for natural resources and foreign capital, essential for the advancement of the Albanian economy, which was then reliant on foreign investments, particularly from Italy.

Post-1925, new state institutions, including banks, infrastructure enterprises, and educational institutions, were established with Italian assistance, bolstered by Italian capital, and incorporated provisions that conferred legal and commercial privileges to Italy in Albania.

This constituted a diplomatic and legal triumph for Italy. The Constitution functioned as a guarantor for the execution of the agreements, providing Albania with immediate financial and infrastructural advantages, yet concurrently undermining its long-term autonomy.

5. Conclusions

Ahmet Zog resumed governmental authority in December 1924, declaring the victory of legality. On January 5, 1925, the Supreme Council assigned Zog the responsibility of establishing a new government.

The Constituent Assembly, convened on January 17, 1925, ratified the proclamation of the Albanian Republic on January 21 and the Fundamental Statute (Constitution) on March 7, marking a significant historical and legal milestone for the establishment of the Albanian constitutional framework. It facilitated the establishment of a more efficient and disciplined state administration, signifying a significant advancement in the modernisation of state structures. This foundational document facilitated significant reforms across multiple sectors, particularly in education, disseminating Western ideologies to foster a polycentric and more advanced society. A fundamental element of the Constitution was the consolidation of judicial and executive authority within the President and the central administration. This institutional arrangement led to the diminishment of traditional provincial authority, particularly that of chieftains, who frequently operated independently of central state oversight. This initiative facilitated the establishment of a unitary state and enhanced the power of central institutions. The Constitution ensured the freedom of belief and the unimpeded practice of religion, reflecting a more progressive and enlightened stance on civil and religious rights. It established the groundwork for an effective judicial system, facilitating the administration of justice and the management of matters pertaining to the international agreements of the Albanian state. Moreover, the Constitution's content signified a distinct departure from conventional governance models and an alignment with the principles of the rule of law as for the Western paradigm. The 1925 Constitution significantly influenced the legal and political culture in Albania, establishing new benchmarks in constitutional legislation and serving as a reference for subsequent normative and constitutional documents. Its influence extended to international relations, enhancing Albania's standing on the global stage and furnishing the nation with a suitable legal foundation for entering into significant international agreements.

The 1925 Constitution was pivotal for Albania's international recognition and the advancement of its diplomatic relations following its attainment of independence. This essential document not only established a requisite legal foundation for the formation of state institutions but also served as a significant tool in solidifying Albania's standing in the international sphere.

The Constitution, through its explicit legal-constitutional framework and the backing of a stable administration, facilitated the development of an appropriate environment for the establishment and enhancement of diplomatic relations, particularly with Western nations, in which Italy distinguished itself. The latter regarded Albania as a crucial area for augmenting its political and economic influence in the Balkans. The relationship between the two nations intensified due to a shared interest: Albania sought international backing for the maintenance and enhancement of its sovereignty, while Italy aimed to establish its presence in the region through a preferential partnership with Tirana.

The 1925 Constitution fostered a favourable environment for foreign investments, particularly from Italy, by providing legal stability and safeguarding investors' rights. This framework facilitated the economic and political advancement of the country, establishing Albania as a dependable partner with prospects for collaboration within a wider geopolitical framework.

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