



## Albanian Assemblies and Odes in Conflict Resolution

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### Abstract

Throughout the historical developments of Albanians, the opinion has been encountered that Albanians have a tendency not to get along with each other. This opinion has been spread by historians, philosophers, writers and journalists of different countries, especially neighboring ones. Researchers from other countries, especially neighboring countries, have tried and are still trying to reason that "Albanians have a conflicting gene", that "Albanians' souls have been possessed by the demon of revenge that does not allow them to be understood" that "intolerance does not allow Albanians to reach an agreement" etc. These thoughts are dangerous, because they take on a political meaning and become systems of concepts and ideas with an aggressiveness to the point of racism for the purposes of divisions and conquests. The work aims to provide historical data on how Albanians, in order to resolve conflicts, have talked in chambers and convened in assemblies, forgiving the bloodshed when the homeland was in danger. The purpose of the paper is to show the historical tradition of the Albanians of the assembly, to put patriotic interests above everything else, in the war against the invader. The institutionalization of the assembly, the ode, has functioned as a circuit, radiating through waves, which expand and close within a new circuit, when the homeland is in danger. The documented geohistorical map of the extent of the assembly outlines the spatial and temporal lines, in the South and the North, but is more present in Northern Albania. Archival documents show that in the odes of the assemblies, where popular leaders gathered, they resolved conflicts, shed blood, and pledged allegiance in the war against the invader.

**Keywords:** Assembly, ode, faith, conflict, conflict resolution, revenge

### 1. Introduction

The word "Kuvend" originates from the meetings of the men of a province, village or tribe, who examined and decided the most important political and social issues of their area. According to canon law, they had the nature of a self-governing organization. The assemblies were the highest form of political and social organization, where the core of the state chancellery was created. Decisions and memoranda certified by the seals and signatures of local governing authorities, or beyond; as well as the reports established with the European chancelleries show the greatness and weight of the self-governing state authorities according to the decisions in the Assembly. The institution of the assembly was the institution that no one could step outside of it and could not decide on anything. It was this institution that decided and sanctioned everything, enabling not only the survival of this provincial community, but also all the customs, laws, and traditions that started where the word gained weight and turned into law.

It is the institution of the assembly that has made this people withstand all the storms of history, but honor requires it to the point where its mental strength can reach. For the sake of honor, Albanians are ready to sacrifice not only

themselves but also their families, and this unique attitude merged with the sense of dignity and justice, so widespread and embedded among these countries through laws neatly engraved in the Canon.

The assembly of men enjoyed an extraordinary privilege, and was the highest domestic institution, and its decisions were then unchallenged. It can rightly be said that they had been that of consciousness, conscience, national identity. Hahn says that "Supreme power is in the hands of the people, who exercise it on the occasion of their meetings called the Assembly"<sup>17</sup>.

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## **2. Assemblies of the Place of Marriage**

In the history of the Albanians and especially of the highlands and autonomous provinces, for as long as the governments were powerless and weak to protect, solve and develop the problems of these provinces, the highlanders had found as a solution their assemblies and odes, the places of debates wisdom and conflict resolution. In the absence of the state and its coercive mechanisms, the assemblies in the odes of men had elaborated their own forms of communication. These forms were collective, such as assemblies, trials of elders, the force of public or individual opinion, blood feuds, etc.

The assemblies and odas have been real people's parliaments. The assemblies took their name from the place where they were established, local, provincial, interprovincial or national. Therefore, popular philosophy cannot be understood even without the contribution of the Albanian hearths. There were some true philosophers among the people, though without a school. They had great ethics and culture in the way they behaved and talked. Many times they asked a question for the whole assembly. Their culture of expression was great, the allegory and symbols they used were apt, which made the conversation enjoyable for each listener while solving very acute provincial and national problems. The Albanian room, in the old (mountainous) sense, was the largest room in the house. When a house was built, this room was the main one, "A room with many tables for funerals and weddings"! If the philosophical schools were the refuge of the philosophy of antiquity, the odes and assemblies were the refuge of popular philosophy. In the assemblies and odas, the mind is diluted, the thought is deepened. In the councils and chambers, the wise elders (popular philosophers) engaged in the joint venture to move life forward through knowledge.

The assembly in the Albanian area is likely to have arisen as a special need, especially to calm the turbulent periods, when the defeat gains ground, when the destruction rolls without stopping, so geographically spread and moreover with a platform were the assemblies. In the assemblies, the highlanders discussed problems that belonged to a certain community in times of peace and times of war. Peacetime problems were the economic problems of the development of agriculture and animal husbandry, ownership, friendship, etc. Wartime problems were mobilizations according to the call of the tribe, village, province to protect honor, land and wealth from neighboring tribes, neighboring provinces or foreign invasions, blood feud and revenge, etc. Problems of separation, faith, friendship, celebration of holidays, etc. were discussed in assemblies. Everywhere we come across the wise saying: "Men speak with reason and order" or "Word without order, work without mind, like sleep without a quilt".

At that time, several assemblies were distinguished such as: the House Assembly, the Brotherhood Assembly, the Assembly of Mehalla, the District Assembly, the Tribal Assembly (Mountain), the Intermountain Assembly (Province) and the National Assemblies.

The announcement of the meeting of the assembly is made by shooting rifles according to the prescribed method, lighting fires, using words that were called *pojakas* and other ways. In the assemblies, they were obliged to take part man for rifle (or man for property), representatives of tribes, representatives of villages, representatives of provinces or mountains, according to the purpose of the assembly and according to the way of announcing.

All participants in the assembly sat equally. Men were seated in the assembly in a predetermined manner. Usually the favorite was to sit the men in a circle, as if to show that all were equal. Each sat cross-legged. The president of the assembly also sat cross-legged, in a circle with the others, but with a more distinct distance from the predecessor and the successor. Usually the men who went to the assembly went armed, but even the way of carrying weapons in the

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<sup>17</sup> Hahn, "Mirdita in Saint Paul in Gryka t'Oroshi", year 1868

assembly was determined by a special regulation. Rifles had to be held on the lap.

The speech in the assembly took turns, one spoke and the others listened. Loud speech, threats, jokes, and insults were not allowed in the assembly. In the assembly, the men's gestures were measured. In particular, the highlanders attached importance to speaking in the assembly, especially in the men's assembly. The assembly has had its own ethical and linguistic characteristics, therefore, traditionally, participation in the assembly has been mainly for people who know the customs, who know well the rules of etiquette and in general the ways of presenting problems with such language as not to cause misunderstandings. not to cause confusion, but on the contrary, even in the most serious cases, by choosing the pleasant and appropriate word according to the case, it was intended to go towards the most fair solutions and until the reconciliation of the opposing parties<sup>18</sup>.

It has everywhere been a first-hand requirement that those who speak, especially when dealing with problems of social importance, should follow a certain order, usually letting those who are older and more knowledgeable speak first and who represent the relevant side, yes especially, it is advised to speak by weighing and measuring the words well, never allowing the word to "hit you crooked", because the word is considered as a bullet, with which you can win, but also lose your head. This is evident from the greeting words and the mutual honor and respect that prevails in the assembly log. The future, whatever it may be, when it approaches in the necessary distance as for clearly distinguishing who is at the head of the country, after laughing (clears his voice) greets in full voice: "Good assembly, men!" or "Welcome to the assembly, men!" and it is directed by the one who is the first most important to touch it and give it a hand. Meanwhile, all those present, standing up to respect him, reply in unison: "The man is coming, girl!" or "God bless you, Malsi's husband"<sup>19</sup>. The decisions that were made in assemblies were called karara or itifaqa. The decisions of the assemblies were implemented according to the time determined by the assembly, such as 3 months, 6 months, 1 year, but usually the deadlines were Shëngjergj after Shëngjergj, Bajram after Bajram, etc.

One of the most problematic points of the Albanian assemblies has been reconciliation or, as it is said in the speeches of the North, reconciliation. The aim and tireless work to reconcile conflicts has been (and remains even in our days) an initiative of all the wise men of the Albanian vices, therefore in many places it has also been connected with fair judgment, with the weighed without participation in events, without being influenced by any personal ties and, above all, without corruption. "Kij blood spoke hack!" - it is said in the Northern Highlands. This means that no matter what, even if you have an opponent, even if someone from your tribe has killed you, you must tell the truth. In particular, in the assembly, it is important to apply the principle of respect and correct attitude towards the opponent. As the Albanian proverb says: "Don't love the enemy, but protect his honor". In the parts of Northern Albania, the elders or the men who have the duty to participate in assemblies for the reconciliation of blood, have traditionally also practiced ways of speaking that are pleasing to everyone, the form of sayings that have the effect of bringing the person closer spiritually, be aware of the great influential weight that the words of wise men have in the log of the assembly or in the odes of men. The popular wisdom of the Albanian vices, through scholarly sayings that evoke harmony and reconciliation, as well as through so many proverbs and advice to prefer coolness to kidnapping, calmness and prudence to sudden explosion, not only criticizes, but also shows the way of right that must be followed in life, therefore most of the time proverbs have the character of indisputable judgments, with permanent value; they are formulated as self-evident moral guidelines and principles. Let's mention some of them, "Whoever insults his own mouth" (Kosovo), "Whoever insults the country" (Shkoder), "Those who don't belong to themselves, don't tell them to yours" (Malësi e Madhe), "As you cut the fence for yourself, so cut it for me" (Kosovo)<sup>20</sup>.

Albania has had men since when they convened, big and small listened, and as if they followed behind with their eyes closed, their word was law. Law was also the word of the great, brave, man of the assembly, Elez Isufi. Historian Nevila Nika says "If Elez Isufi spoke a word, he would gather 200 men behind him. If he spoke a whole sentence, he would gather all the surrounding villages and this is proven in all the resistances that the men of Elez Isuf have made against all the schiaj (enemies) who had as their goal the destruction of Albania". The man of the assembly knew the enemy at first glance and won a friend from the moment he stepped on the threshold of the house, few words in men's assemblies and much work in bravery fairs; for him there was no turning back.

### 3. Odes of Men, the Place of Hospitality, Knowledge and Speech

Men's odes were the most ancient forms of organization of Albanians, which functioned on the basis of customary law

<sup>18</sup> Gjovalin Shkurtaj, "Culture of speaking in the Assembly", 2022, p.3

<sup>19</sup> Gjovalin Shkurtaj, "Culture of speaking in the Assembly", 2022, p.4

<sup>20</sup> Gjovalin Shkurtaj, "Culture of speaking in the Assembly", 2022, p.4

and which was a necessary need of the local population to survive, to preserve their freedom, language and customs, a form of opposition and resistance to the state and foreign law and as an expression of autonomy and self-government. The men's room was a right, part of an ancient code, that had to be respected and applied to the decisions it made. The Albanian Chamber was in its genesis, a small university, where all national topics were discussed such as: knowledge, education, but also blood forgiveness was done, faith was established and disputes among the people were resolved. Albanian history, tradition, culture and faith were taught here. The chamber was a school for our people, a custom of a culture passed down from generation to generation for centuries. The chamber occupied an important place in the Albanian tradition.

In the men's room, disagreements and small but also big conflicts were seen, born, and encouraged, including the most tragic ones. There the fate of the woman and also of the man was determined. Marriages were made and broken, the fate of two young people was tied, but also of many families, tribes, villages and even the fate of a region but also of the entire country... Albanian women were forbidden to enter there to speak about fate own. Only men had this right to decide for her.

In Albanian odes, our heroic past was recounted through various episodes of bravery from our grandparents, uncles, from various guests, who were always welcome in our odes. "An ode without a guest was said to be like a field without seed." The seed of love was planted there the country, for the people. The seeds of loyalty, generosity, bravery, courage, patience, hospitality were sown there; there they talked about both the friend and the enemy; there was also talk about those whom the "history" we learned in schools called enemies of the people, enemies of socialism, enemies of self-government, and enemies of brotherly reunification, while they were the best sons of Kosovo. Men's odes in our highlands have a special importance. They have played an extraordinary role, especially when there was a lack of any kind of information. The men's rooms were the place where the "Council of the Wise", "Council of the Elders", "Wise Men", "Kararet e deut"<sup>21</sup>, the representatives of the men of the highlands, who together with the people made very important decisions to resolve disputes, to face the enemy and protect the country. Chambers have also acted as social institutions.

Like every people in the world, Albanians also have their own customs. Among the most prominent customs among Albanians are hospitality and trust. Hospitality was not only related to welcoming a friend at home, but he was reserved the best things that a family had (food, drinks, household equipment, etc.) regardless of his economic status. At one point, the habit of hospitality had turned into a cult when someone called from the outside: "O owner of the house", the door opened immediately and each member of the family showed hospitality with the expression "welcome" or "order in" (bujrem)<sup>22</sup>. And so the home of the Albanian, according to his worldview, had to be open day and night, both for known friends and for unknown travelers. For this mentality, in all Albanian provinces, every house had a special environment to welcome friends. In these rooms gathered not only the men of the tribe, but also from the village and the province, according to the importance of the friend. There the conversation started about the problems of the country and the province, about bravery, they talked about the land, the motherland and its future and were listened to with enough respect by the big and the small. The conversation in the men's odes was slow. The men took turns with each other. The one who spoke was listened to with attention and respect. Thoughts were given by speaking briefly, in turn and always honoring the elderly<sup>23</sup>. Interruption of the conversation, except for a brief retort, was not liked. The debate was strong and for important problem, but it was not open. With their allegorical<sup>24</sup> character and wisdom, the stories were also an expression of self-restraint and spiritual despair in times of conflict and difficult situations.

In the room, the men stood cross-legged, without leaning, with a dignified posture. This was a sign of culture in the stagnant and respect for all men's dance. A careless attitude would not be tolerated and became an object of ridicule. The most honored places in the "odes of men", "odes of friends" were held in the two corners near the fireplace. According to the rules established in customary law, the farthest friend stood in the right corner, regardless of his age or social position. Then stood the other friends, ranked according to age and the authority they enjoyed. To the left of the

<sup>21</sup> National Conference of Ethnographic Studies, Tirana, June 1977. Earthquakes - operated in the province of Lura. They were the legal decisions that represented the will of the population, for certain life problems, mainly of a social, political, economic, moral character. Karars were a discipline codified in the mind and heart of the mountaineer. Their goal was the self-government of the province according to the will of the highlanders under certain historical conditions. There were five kararas of the earth: kararas of besa, kararas of equalization, kararas of plants, kararas of living things, kararas of lands.

<sup>22</sup> Onuzi Afërdita, Pajtimi Magazine, no. 2, FPD, Tirana, June, 1997, p.75

<sup>23</sup> Canon i Lekë Dukagjinit, - "Albanian customary law", collected by Shtjefën K. Gjeçovi, Tirana 1989.

<sup>24</sup> Allegorical conversations, in general the bearers of allegory were uneducated people, but with lecturing skills. Among them there were a few who had become truly professional in telling, explaining, creating matters.

fireplace sat the head of the family, who was always very attentive, took care to honor his friends with coffee, tobacco and other drinks<sup>25</sup>. In most rural areas, the owner of the house was obliged to prepare the coffee in the presence of friends. In order to entertain friends and other guests, in addition to various conversations, the melodies of songs ("ode songs")<sup>26</sup> and the sounds of popular dances were often played in these rooms. Particularly in Northern Albania, the "odes of men" (friends) were important centers where the songs of the Kreshniks were sung. In these rooms, the history of the ancestors was also taught because it was not possible to learn it in schools. In the men's hall, important issues of war, life, work, and pride for the victory or endurance of the Albanians were discussed<sup>27</sup>.

The conversations in the chamber were characterized by the idea: "that there is no freedom without blood", "that enmity needs a bullet", "that the enemy does not become a friend", that "to win you need unity", "that betrayal is the bad seed that grows increases slavery" etc. The patriotic message came through the legends that were discussed in these rooms. The odes provided extensive historical information, which is why they have been called a "living chronicle" of the Albanian people's struggles for freedom and independence. The men in the room dealt with the events in detail, the appearance and details of the war, the proportions of the warring forces, the strategies and tactics of the people's war, the emotional attitude, etc.

"The enemy is swarming over our mountains, the hasmi has stepped on the door, but the towers are not given, the general commitment has no happiness, without a free homeland"<sup>28</sup>.

Irony and allegory have always been present in men's odes. Along with the glory that the hero wove for the people, he satirized and unmasked treason, raised a hymn to heroism, but also ridiculed cowards, intriguers, people with two faces and many flags. they took off the white shirt and put on the black shirt. The allegory in the ode is clear. They express the tragic fate that Albania has had, occupied for centuries and centuries. It was also occupied in the XX century. Almost until the middle of the 20th century, foreign invasions replaced each other and used their laws on our lands. Poverty, lawlessness and injustice have run through these conquests. Not having, in general, a modern Albanian state for a historically long time, lacking constitutions and civil and criminal codes, the people themselves have made these constitutions and codes, which they called canons, such as the Canon of Skënderbeu, the Canon of Lekë Dukagjini and other canons of the North and South. The place of creation of the Albanian customary law were the odes, which in different Albanian provinces receive different names such as: "ode of wealth", "ode of friends", "good ode", "ode of songs"<sup>29</sup>, etc.

The tolerance and understanding of the Albanians has deep roots in the history and internal organization of the highlands themselves, in the way of administration of these territories, customs, hospitality and generosity, in the oda. Chambers are not just welcoming environments, but environments where wise men convened and gave solutions to problems of national importance, when the homeland was in danger, made promises, reconciled blood and resolved conflicts.

The chambers were the places of permanent meeting points, discussions and absorption of thoughts between the representatives of the elders of different tribes, they were the hearths of reconciliations, counseling and discussions, brotherhoods and judgments, of understanding, tolerance and patriotic education<sup>30</sup>. Eldership represented the judge who settled disputes and conflicts. When strife and conflict were very harsh, the assembly of the elders of the Mountains<sup>31</sup> was gathered. It was a very difficult job to resolve a conflict by the assembly of elders because the armed forces of the two conflicting parties who were present in the assembly were waiting for the results of the assembly and this result could

<sup>25</sup> National Conference of Ethnographic Studies, Tirana, June 1977.

<sup>26</sup> Ode songs, - were generally songs of historical character. They were sung on occasions of joy, holidays, assemblies.

<sup>27</sup> M.H.D. "Ethnocultural Dibra, vol. II, Dibër e Madhe, 1995.

<sup>28</sup> Krasniqi Mark, - Albanaological traces, "The function of the men's ode in Kosovo in the era of the League of Prizren", Prishtina, 1979.

<sup>13</sup> History of the State and Law in Albania, Luarasi, Tirana, 20012, p.229.

Albanian customary law is an unwritten popular law, transmitted from generation to generation by oral tradition that has served to regulate legal relations over the centuries in our country. It was not created by any particular person, nor by any single legislative body. Just like songs, dances, legendary epics, myths, material culture, etc., it has been created by the people over the centuries, who have poured into it their philosophy, mindset and wisdom.

<sup>14</sup> Mojs Kamberi, Report, "Thoughts about the organization of chambers in Dibër", Peshkopi, 2002, p.6.

<sup>15</sup> M.H.D, Haki Sharifi, "History of Dibra", vol. I, Tirana 1965, p.8.

<sup>16</sup> M.H.D, Fondi Kujtime, memories collected by Hilmi Sadiku, D.3, p.4.

be satisfactory for both parties, the reconciliation and the conflict were done came to an end. However, when the conflicting parties were not satisfied with the decisions of the assembly, the rifle cracked and blood was shed<sup>32</sup>.

In the "odes of men (friends)" reconciliations were made between brothers, between tribes, between provinces, the organization of fighting forces was made to go to the aid of provinces that were in danger of invasion, news from the distant world was heard, judgments were given on events and conflicts, blood was sacrificed, the hearts of Albanian boys were cooked with patriotism, the nation's strength was cooked with gunpowder.

The documentation of the renaissance time and the oral stories about the organization of assemblies and assemblies in men's odes show that they played an irreplaceable role for the direct military organization of the highlanders in the wars for freedom and independence. Indeed, the Bajrak, as Sami Frashëri said, "was an army formed by the whole people for war against the enemy"<sup>33</sup>, but this army wanted a regular military organization to fight the invader, and this organization was made by the men's assemblies and odes. Therefore, in many assemblies, which preceded the great wars for national liberation and the protection of the territorial integrity, such as the Assembly of Lezha, the Assembly of Dibra, the Assembly of Kosovo, the Assembly of Labëria, the Assembly of Prizren, the Assembly of Junik, the Assembly of Vlora, etc., where many decision-making theirs, taken in men's odes, show that after solving the fundamental problem of the bond of allegiance that ensured the unity of the highlanders and the provinces, another important problem was the military organization. Problems such as:

- for the election of the military leader,
- issues regarding the provision of human forces and armaments,
- issues for the organization of resistance, ambushes, directions of attacks,
- issues about economic problems and their solutions, etc.

The historical facts found in the archives and especially the autobiographical evidence clearly speak of the holding of several assemblies in the XIX century in Northern Albania. Especially in this one period, this form of organization spread a lot in Southern Albania, this only Albanian phenomenon, which functioned in the quality of all-inclusive, genuine institutions, sometimes paralleling and opposing the institutions of power, with several main goals:

- Reconciliation of the parties involved in the conflict, regardless of the nature of the conflict,
- The union of human potentials as a fruitful way to face risks,
- Coping with changes, whether religious or regional, between people.

These features reveal the necessary awareness and responsibility, the logical degree of inspiration of the assemblies and chambers, as one of the ways to survive the Albanian ethnos.

The documented geohistorical map, of the extent of assembly and odes, delineates the spatial and temporal lines in the South and North, but more present in Northern Albania. The tradition of the assembly, as a covenant defined in cohesion with the conqueror, is manifested in all the developments on the eve of independence. The echo of the assembly, mainly to put national interests above everything else, is preserved even today. Thus, in the assemblies in which the Albanians have gathered, the popular leaders have pledged to fight against the invaders.

Expression of these assemblies and very important decisions in defense of the homeland in the odes of men, is the decision of the union of the Albanian provinces, to fight against the fragmentation of the Albanian lands during the period of the Albanian Leagues. In addition to these organizations, an indisputable role as organizations of understanding and tolerance have been the nationwide assemblies organized at the time of the Albanian League of Prizren, the League of Peja until the Declaration of Independence.

This attitude is shown by the trip of two of the leading leaders of the Albanian League of Prizren, Abdyl Frashëri and Iljaz Pashë Dibrës, to the odes of Dibra.

We are quoting:

"After a long journey to the odes of men in the province of Dibra, and the support they gave you, the two leaders of the Albanian League, gathered in July 1878, the assembly of the League in Qermanica. Debates in the Assembly of Qermanica broke out when Iljaz Pashë Dibra asked the participants to give up enmity and blood feuds. The reactions of the participants were immediate, but after many debates, the mountaineers of Dibra accepted the request in principle, but asked for a deadline. The Highlanders in the Assembly agreed to pledge allegiance for three months, agreed to repeat the pledge at the end of each quarter if the danger of war had not passed, but refused to bind the pledge with an indefinite term because the Canon of the Dibra Mountains did not allow this. New faith for the cessation of blood,

<sup>33</sup> Sami Frashëri, "Dictionnaire, Turkish-French, Constantinople", 1855. page 321

according to the custom, could not be tied before the term of the previous oath expired. The new murders, the very fresh spiritual pain that had been caused to the Dibran families by the blood feud, often made it difficult to repeat the oath in Dibër. In these critical moments, in the face of the danger of dismemberment of the homeland, forgiveness of blood was definitely required, therefore the intervention of the patriot Abdyl Frashëri in the debate was very important, decisive and convincing. According to customary law, despite the fact that non-Dibran personalities were not allowed to participate in the assemblies of Dibra, the weight of Abdyl Frashëri's words convinced the Dibras gathered in the assembly to renounce the force of custom and the laws of the Mountain Canon and accept to get engaged.

Abdyl Frashëri reminded the highlanders that "every person has a homeland and a canon." The homeland, which nature created, or the canon, which people made. How do you say men? "...Having said these words, about 10,000 men gathered in the Assembly, as one man, dropped their weapons to the ground so much that the mountains rumbled, and as if coming out of a single mouth, only a roar was heard (a single voice):

*"Forgive my blood for this faith!  
Thank you for your blood and faith.*

After this oath, all the participants shook hands with the gjaksi and hugged each other fraternally<sup>34</sup>.

Even for the creation of the League of Peja, talks were organized everywhere in the chambers and meetings in the Albanian vilayets, where the Albanians pledged allegiance and expressed their readiness for the formation of the league. Very soon the patriots called an assembly in Pejë on January 23-29, 1899<sup>35</sup>, where the formation of a new Albanian connection was announced and Besa was established between the Albanians. The Assembly also published the call "The way to salvation is in Besa-Besan!"<sup>36</sup> The main idea contained in this document is the unification of all Albanians, Ghega and Toska, Muslim and Christian, under the leadership of the League, of Besa - Besa. "What will save our nation and our homeland, - it is said in the appeal, - is the union, a general Covenant, a Besa-Besa"<sup>37</sup>.

The declaration of autonomy by the League of Prizren in 1878 and that of Independence by the Assembly of Vlora in 1912 are the two fundamental links in the chain of events of the national movement, talks in chambers and assemblies in all-Albanian and provincial assemblies, organically connected between them as an expression of the will of the people and as a direct consequence of the liberation war and state formation.

In conclusion we can say that:

During the history of the Albanians, various theses have been raised that the Albanians do not have the ability to form a state and that they do not get along with each other. These thoughts have been, have continued and are still today that Albanians and Albania should be under the governance of other states. These ideas have been born since the time of the Roman Empire, the Ottoman Empire, fascism and Nazism and continue today, where Albanians are leaving because they do not feel protected and governed.

These political theses aim to say that Albanians and Albania should be under the governance of other states and possibly neighboring states. These ideas have been tried to be based on some facts and tragic historical events such as those of 1878 with the Treaty of Saint Stephen, the Treaty of London, the "Macedonian Question", the Balkan War and the Conference of Ambassadors in London in 1913 and the bringing of Prince Vid to governed. And the story continues with the First World War, with the Austro-Hungarian, French invasions with the creation of their Republics, with the Congress of Durrës, the Congress of Lushnje, etc.

In these five hundred to six hundred years, at key moments in history, Albanians have shown the fantasy of state formation, sometimes more vivid than the fantasy of their neighbors. The Albanians united, resolved conflicts, made an alliance under the banner of Skanderbeg and made the League of Lezha in 1444 against the Ottoman Empire. Under the banner of the Renaissance they united and made the Albanian League of Prizren in 1878-1881, under the banner of Ismail Qemali they set up the government of Vlora in 1912, under the banner of the Anti-Fascist War they made the Conference of Peza in 1942 and in 1944 they liberated Albania from Nazi-fascism.

Although faded due to the new economic and social conditions, the beautiful custom of hospitality continues to be preserved. Welcoming rituals still continue to be performed in some provinces where the men's odes are still intact. In some Albanian provinces, even to this day, in the odes of the men of the highlanders, the role of the councils of the

<sup>34</sup> M.H.D, Archive, A. Lorechio, "Memorandum", 1920, p.72-73.

<sup>35</sup> ASHSH, *History of the Albanian People, Volume II, Toena, Tirana 2002, p.276*

<sup>36</sup> ASHSH, *History of the Albanian People, Volume II, Toena, Tirana 2002, p.279*

<sup>37</sup> ASHSH, *History of the Albanian People, Volume II, Toena, Tirana 2002, p.279*

elders, the councils of the wise, the farmers, etc., is preserved, for the resolution of conflicts and the reconciliation of blood by them when the law and the canon do not manage to solve them.

Despite the many changes that Albanian society has undergone, again the talks are preferred to take place only in men's assemblies and odas. Thus, these environments continue to maintain their importance, remaining "state", very important "offices" even in today's life of some areas of the Albanian highlands for the resolution of conflicts.

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