

National movement in Diber after Young Turks Revolution

Fatjon Kica

Abstract

As all Albanians, people in Diber welcomed the new regime of the Young Turks. After Young Turks Revolution, the movement about the national Education, in the same way as the National Movement, achieved the highest level of development during Renaissance. However the success achieved from legal development of National Education in Albania, the widespread of Albanian language in different ways and the widespread of Albanian language school nets, which became home for the strengthening of National feelings, disturbed Young Turks a lot, which used every tool against them, from the exertion of religion feelings and intrigues, to the violence.

Keywords: School, Albanian language, Revolution, Club.

Introduction

During 1907, there were efforts in Albania and Diber to cooperate with Young Turks Organization "Unification and Development" for Constitution Declaration, through which it was hoped to win the Liberation and the Albanian National Rights. Young Turks needed the help of Albanians to organize a revolution. For this reason the New Turks, made an agreement with Albanian patriots, who thought that only after the Declaration of Constitution would have the right to open schools in Albanian language, the joining of all Albanian lands in a vilayet and would guarantee the Autonomy of Albania, excepted to cooperate. As a result of this agreement there were branches all over Albania which started preparing for a demonstration. The movement against sultan Abdyl Hamiti, started growing bigger and bigger during the years 1907-1908. Albanians were a big support for the Young Turks.

In autumn of 1907 Hajredin Varvarica, Jashar Bazdarxhiu and Sali E'them Beu from Dibër e Madhe met with Ejub Sabriu in Ohër, who asked them to accept cooperation. They accepted cooperation and after they became members of the organization, they turned back in Dibër. Hafëz Ismeti, Ismail Strazimiri, Muharem Mullahi, Sherif Langu, Riza Rusi, Reshit Kusari and some others created the Diber branch with Hafëz Ismetin as a leader. The main centre of this organization was in Manastir and the leader there was Zenun Ballanca from Dibra. There was a demonstration in Diber on 22 July, 1908, and there was an announcement that if there wasn't a declaration of the constitution within 24 hours the people will do it itself. The next day on 23 July the constitution was proclaimed. People in Dibër believed what was happening and they started an activity in national field.

Efforts for the opening of Albanian schools

The win of the Young Turks revolution influenced the growth of national movement of those people who were still under Turkish control. The new political situation was

especially felt in Albania because not only because it has been one of the downtrodden countries under Turkish control, but also for the important contribution of Albanians in this revolution. As a result after the declaration of the constitution, the Movement for the National Education, indicated growth and achieved the highest phase of development for our Renaissance time.

Immediately after the fall of the absolute regime, there was an energetic liberation movement of Albanians and there was a boom of cultural and political life.

In the new political situation, Albanians patriots, not giving up from the most important political duty - to assure the Autonomy of Albania and complete liberation from Turkish control, used for the National Movement the temporary limited constitutional freedom, announced by New Turks. They worked quickly and artfully to realize, legally, some of the basic national rights, educational and political, as it was the widespread of education and culture and national ideas, the unity of Albanians not based in religion and region, to know Albanians and Albania to Turkey and internationally.

in this situation when Albanians still believed in the new constitutional regime and hoped that in these conditions could achieve their national aspirations, almost all political Albanian forces united and believed that the National Movement should be done respecting that regime, availing of the declared freedom without intending its falling through violence, through armed movement. The majority of activists in Albania and abroad and national publishers, considered it useful that Albanians should use the freedom from the constitution to set up legally the national cultural movement, to open Albanian schools all over Albania, to widespread the Albanian language.

In a published newspaper "*Shkopi*", on 15 November 1908, there was an announcement toward Albanians to open Albanian schools, and fight for their political rights, the acknowledgement of Albanians from Turkey and to work for a self governance.

The winning of Young Turks Revolution on 23 July 1908 increased Dibrans hope to be educated in Albanian language. People in Diber met together in shops and special places, where the youth, even the elderly started studying in Albanian language. Haki Stërmilli writes: "*it's time to read Albanian books freely, till now covered with dust and mould*". This made necessary to have Albanian language teachers. In this way people from Diber invited their son from Reka, the great patriot and publicist - Josif Bagerit, to come in Diber and become an Albanian language teacher in this town. Bageri returned in Dibër and started the propaganda for Schools in Albanian language, but his return wasn't welcomed, especially from the Serbian, Varnava. This person went from one village to another to convince peasants not to listen to Josif Bagerin, because he didn't believe in god. The Serbian man went to Josif Bagerit's birthplace, in Nistrovë. Josif Bageri writes: "*we had a fighting with this idiot man*".

The issue of opening schools in Gostivar, Tetovë, Dibër etj, was stimulated a lot Josif Bageri through the newspaper "*the eagle of Albania*", which brought out in Sofje. Josif Bageri felt excited too about the winning of Young Turks Revolution which would bring freedom to enslaved countries. During 1908 he would be presented in many areas in Albania as in: Shkup, Dibër etj. In September 1908, Josif Bageri hopened a school in Albanian language in Nistrovë të Reka in Dibër.

The "Union" club in Dibër

The cultural development seemed as the most important tool for the encouragement of political consciousness of Albanians and for creating a national club for Albanians. To realize these duties, after the revolution there were created Albanian clubs that quickly could be found in all cities and villages of Albania also in other cities where Albanians lived and they became big organizations with a national character, war organisms against Young Turks reaction, for the unity of Albanian country, and for the improvement of educational and cultural level in Albania. immediately, after the declaration of Constitution, in the last days of July there was established the "Union" club of Manastiri from Albanians with Fehim Zavalanin as a leader, Gjergj Qiriazin -visa-chairman and Naum Naçin as a secretary, who played an important role in creation of the new clubs and in the national Albanian movement during the Young Turks regime. there were created other Albanian clubs like "The union" club of Manastiri in: Korçë, Elbasan, Shkodër, Shkup, Tiranë, Durrës, Gramsh, Gjirokastrë, Strugë, Ohër, Dibër, Tepelenë etc.

Clubs were big democratic organizations. Participants were intellectuals, officials, judiciary and teachers, businessmen and traders from villages and cities and also Turkish sovereigns. Leaders were brave intellectuals who previously stood out for their patriotic activity.

Clubs didn't have a common and an only program. But their statutes, even though they were special for each club, had a common containing that made the clubs be together as the same national organizations. Almost in all these statutes was requested that Albania should have all the rights guaranteed from a regime, constitutional, and the right to learn Albanian language, it was let a duty to work hard for the unification of Albanian nation, for its shiny people to widespread knowledge, to be educated in Albanian language, for a better cultural education in Albania opening schools, printing offices, and publishing newspapers and books.

According to the directions of "Union" club of Manastiri, by the end of December 1908, in Diber it was opened "Union" club, with the centre at Haxhi Rexha's hotel, near pupujxhinjëve's fountain.

The club had an administrative council directed by Sherif Langu and mebers: Kadri Fishtë, Riza Rusin, Ibrahim Xhindi, Ekrem Cami, Abdurahman Tëshana and Ibrahim Jegeni. This club committed to consolidate people I Diber in application of national movement program. Many of the members of this club were the main conductors of the ideas of "Union" club in the north. This club became famous for democratic form of functioning and organization, ratified in its statute. In the in the fourth article of this statute it was said: "Members of the club could be all Albanians, while the foreigners in our country could be honored members" while in another article it was said: "Regular members of the club elect with the majority of votes the club committee, which is going to organize a meeting a week to discuss about issues"

There were a lot of participants in "Union" club in Dibër. Some other members of the club were: Iljas Pashë Qoku, Qamil Daci, Vehbi Xhidri, Tefik Xhuglini, Hafëz Mehmet Kadro, Esat Hajdaraga, Ali Zeqo, Azis Menzelxhiu, Abdurahman Xhuglini, Tafçe Isku, Ali Pustina, Ismail Strazimiri, Riza Rusi, Kadri Fishta, Zeqir Hutani, Abdi Hatibi,

Dan Cami, Aqif Uruçi, Nurçe Xhuglini, Vehbi Hatibi, Gani Bagolli, Murat Daci, Ferid Hatibi, Shaban Pepa, Hajredin Varvarica, Jashar Zeraliu, Muharem Tërnova, Tafë Tërshana, Abdullah Hatibi, Shaban Cami, Jashar Zeneli, Hamid Daci, Maliq Daci, Tefik Jegeni etc.

This club developed a big propaganda in the town and villages, bringing a great desire to read and write in Albanian language. For this reason, there were brought and there were distributed books and newspapers in Albanian language.

In the newspaper *"The echo of mountains"* it was written: *"Union club in Diber, developed a great activity to open schools in Albanian language and widespread Albanian language. Almost all the provinces in Diber circulated books and newspapers in Albanian language."*

Appreciating the "Union" club role in this area, Haki Stërmilli wrote that: *"...enrooted the idea to learn Albanian language, which for people in Diber it was like a land patent"*.

Except full time schools, clubs opened night courses to teach reading and writing to the adults. Except schools, Albanian language was taught individually or in small groups, and there were efforts to involve Albanian language in Turkish schools, and other foreign schools in Albania. Teaching in Albanian language was appreciated as a patriotic duty for all of the people who could do it. The first Albanian schools were excepted with lots of joy and happiness from Albanians and this was expressed not only in numerous letters in Albanian clubs but also in the widespread and the material help that came from the nation for these schools to exist. As all Albanians, people from Dibra had had the possibility to exercise that offered freedom from the new constitution, opening some schools in the town and villages. As for the educational situation, after Young Turks revolution, *"Drita" newspaper in Sofia wrote: "as in many other regions, here in Diber it started to enter both homeland love and Albanian language love. Today in Dibër të madhe, Dibër të vogël, Mat, Rekë and Highlands we have lots of gentlemen, honest greybeards who try for a progression of Albanian language...rich, poor, old and young people exclaim: through our language we protect our country, through schools we improve our nation"*.

The collision of Albanians with Young Turks

The movement for Albanian schools in Dibër was made in some fronts:

- There were efforts to move from illegal education to legal education, from studying Albanian language in prisons, to free schools.
- That was developed not simply as Intellectual Albanian Movement, but there were included all levels of the society from villages and cities.
- Except the requests to expand the schools net, people from Diber insisted in the issue of Albanian alphabet with Latin letters.
- Not denying the interior factor in Dibra, the movement about Albanian schools, was influenced directly by Manastir Congress, individualities who lived in Istanbul, Sofia, Bucharest, Scopie, Manastir etj.

After Young Turks Revolution, there was an expansion of the efforts to use Albanian language in Turkish schools and other foreign schools in Albania. For this reason there was a big propaganda with teachers and clergymen who taught and directed these schools. Albanian clubs, wanted by local government authorities that in Turkish

and greek schools to be taught Albanian language as a special subject. In "The Sun" newspaper "Dervish Hima and his speeches" it was written: "...let's try in any to involve in all schools in Albania, Turkish or Greek schools, the Albanian language because in this way students will learn with other subjects the beautiful Albanian language ...".

With insistence of Albanian patriots it was able to learn Albanian language in Turkish and other foreign schools. In December 1908, Elbasan's club ensured the use of Albanian language as an optional language in all schools in the city, in four primary Turkish schools, in the high school, and in the school of orthodox's community. The same actions were undertaken in many schools in many Turkish schools in Kolonja, Përmeti, Vlora, Tirana and in Dibër etj. Almost in all high Turkish schools as in Manastiri, in Korça, in Skopje, in Gjirokastër, in Berat, in Vlora, Durrësi, Janina etc, at the beginning of 1909, after a hard war with the Young Turks officers, it was able to open Albanian schools in Ohri. The achieved success from the legal development of national education in Albania, the widespread in different ways of the Albanian language and the widespread of the Albanian school nets, which became centers of consolidation of national feelings, which disturbed the new Turks, who used everything against them, from religion tools and intrigues to the direct violence. The movement for education and national culture came soon face to face to the committee "Union and development", which it was believed that it defended the constitution, acted mostly hidden than openly.

One of the most important tools that it was used by Young Turkss to stop this movement, to disrupt Albanians according to their belief and to forbid Latin alphabet, to make the Albanians especially Muslims, leave from Albanian schools, there were used religion, social and political mottoes like: "*Albanian language makes you a Christian ...it makes you destroy mosques*" etc. this campaign against Albanians lead towards a demonstration of Turkish against latin alphabet as it happened in January- February 1909 in Manastir, Dibër, Përlep, Follorinë etc. as the consul in Manastir said: "*in these provoked hidden meetings from Turkish authority, there were no Albanians there only fanatic Turkish*". In a telegram from the Manastiri club, with no date, towards Albanian clubs in Elbasan, informs for an untrue meeting, organized in Manastir from Turkish against Latin letters it was said: "*don't be impressed by the demonstration here, against the letters with a participation of three hundred people. The truth can't be conquered by oars. Tell this to governors*".

The request for Albanian alphabet with Latin letters was in contradiction with fanatic Christians, some clerks and rich people, whose interests were related with Young Turkss. Fanatic Turkish elements, induced from Turkish authorities, organized demonstrations where they wanted the use of Arabic alphabet. But they encountered with the requests Albanian people who wanted the use of latin letters. On the other side, Albanians were devoted to distribute books and open schools not only in cities but also in highlands. The teachers, Azis Lila and Hoxhë Moglica, in the villages of Dry Mountain, opened summer courses where learned not only children but the adults too. A teacher from Dibra e Madhe, Aziz Shehu, opened a school in Bllacë, he took the books from the bookshop of Ali Zeqos. Related with this, contemporaries recall: "*after the declaration of "Hyrietit", people in the village of Bllacë openly learned reading and writing in Albanian language*".

One of the tools that was used by Young Turkss to prohibit learning in Albanian

language, it was the propaganda to learn Albanian using Turkish–Arabian alphabet. Since January 1909, there circulation an ABC-book with letters in Arabian language, which was distributed in different regions in Albania.

To conquer the stamina of the people and especially Albanians stamina, during 1909 and on, Young Turkss organized some disciplinary expeditions towards some Albanian regions especially in Dibër. Young Turks reaction was not only political antagonists, but also against the movement for national education and culture that was grown a lot, especially after Manastiri Congress.

By the end of May 1909, only in Ohër, Pogradec and in Struga there were arrested 17 people, supporters of Albanian schools and Albanian writing, who were accused for retrograded propaganda against constitutional regime. Among the arrested people there was Hamdi Ohri, one of the best leaders of the national movement in this territory. Arrests and violence from Young Turkss didn't break the love for the native country, school and Albanian writing. In Dibër, propaganda for education and Albanian schools was growing and growing. Supporters of this propaganda in the town, about learning Albanian, were Hafiz Sherif Langu, Kadri Fishta, Riza Rusi, Shyqyri Qoku, Azis Menzelxhiu, Baftjar Kuka and lots of others. In highlands, shined Mersim Dema in Homesh, Eqerem Cami and Sheh Latifi in Gjoricë, Rahman Marku in Zogje, Rahman Loca in Kovashicë, Babë Isufi and Rexhep Krosi in Bllacë etc.

A valuable service, as previously, there were active in national issue in Dibër, Ali Zeqoja, Azis Menzelxhiu and Baftjar Kuka. The first one as a trader, the second as a person who sold cigarettes and the third as a renter. These three men didn't mention the danger from the Turkish government, and they transformed their shops in bookshops of Albanian books and they distributed books to the people.

Conclusions

Even though many schools opened, the main direction of the movement for national education, in this phase, was the widespread of Albanian language individually and in small groups. Though, the missing of Albanian professionals, in every city, town and Albanian region, and in Albanian Diaspora, there were patriots who worked hard for Albanian, to distribute ABC books and others in Albanian, to have courses with youth and adults to widespread the Albanian publishing.

References

- Stërmilli, H. (1940). (*Dorëshkrim*), *Dibra në prag të historisë*. Tiranë.
- Myzyri, H. (1996). *Arsimi kombëtarë shqiptar (1908-1912)*, Prishtinë ADEA.
- Historia e popullit shqiptar*, vëll. II, Tiranë, 2002.
- Mata, R. Bageri, J. (1983). Tiranë, 8 nëntori.
- Demiraj, Sh. Prifti, K. (2004). *Kongresi I Manastirit*, Tiranë, Mësonjëtorja.
- Kadiu, A. (2010). *Dibra e Madhe dhe një vështrim në Dibrën e Vogël*, Tiranë.
- Dervishi, N. Hamdi, B. O. (1872-1938), atdhetar e veprimtar i Lëvizjes Kombëtare Shqiptare, Shkup.
- Domi, Xh. (2012). *Dibra në Hulli të Historisë*, Vëll. II, Tiranë.