

The relationship between Prime Minister Mehdi Frashëri and his government with the press of the time (1935-1936)

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Abstract

Mehdi Frashëri 's government, which came to power on October 21, 1935, has a number of elements that make it special and of interest to the study, one of which is his relationship with the press of the time. His short tenure coincides with a long list of incidents with the latter. The press' initial reaction to his coming to power was positive unlike previous governments. Unfortunately, it would not last and quickly changed to frequent criticism rarely applied to previous governing bodies.

Mehdi Frashëri was set amidst a journalistic storm between people with opposing beliefs about how to govern. In fact, the battle between "Young" and "Old" had begun seven years prior. "Youth" or "Neo-Albanianism" was an idea put forward by Branko Merxhani and Vangjel Koca in the Gjirokastra press first and then spread in some Tirana newspapers. They demanded the coming into power of new people, with new pure minds, and moral principles. In their view, a complete social renewal was needed which could be done by overthrowing the old hypocritical, immoral, and evil administration. Enlightened people with an Occidental, patriotic, and most of all dynamic mentality had to come to power (*Minerva* 35, October 1935, p. 1, "Erdh koha jonë.."). Represented by the newspapers "Illyria", "Arberia", and "Minerva", with leading figures Nebil Cika, Tajar Zavalani, Odysseus Pascal, Stefan Shundi, etc., the press openly critiqued the methods of the government and categorized the political ruling class by the term "Old." The prime example was the minister of the interior Musa Juka, appointed by King Amet Zog. Constantly making decisions without consulting the people, his talks and affairs were completely secret from the eyes of the population and were only disclosed in the form of laws. He did not believe that common people understood problems of state and therefore everything was done without their consent or opinion (Ibid., Pp. 1-2).

On the other hand, there was press close to the authorities, represented mainly by the daily newspaper "Besa". Its publisher Fiqiri Rusi, a deputy in the Dibra area (Arkivi Qendror Shqiptar, F. 149, V. 1936, D. I-1534, fl. 108), was supported by politicians including Abdurrahman Crosse, known as one of King Zog's closest confidants. In this sense main objective of this manuscript is the analysis of the relationship between Albanian Prime Minister Mehdi Frashëri and the press of the time.

Keywords: Albania, Mehdi Frashëri, government, press.

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