

# THE VIRTUALLY UNKNOWN ALBANIAN EDITION OF TEMPO

Today it is only possible to find copies of this version of the magazine in the Mondadori Foundation in Milan

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At the start of 1939 King Zogu reigned in Albania (ex Interior Minister, then President of the Council of Ministers, later presidente of the Albanian Republic, who finally crowned himself with the support of Rome). The love-hate relationship between Zogu and Italy which had marked the politics of the neighbouring countries for decades was definitively broken when the Albanian monarch decided to wed a young Hungarian bride of German descent, snubbing an heiress of the Italian nobility, as Mussolini's Government wished.

Italy felt Zogu's actions were an affront, taking into account that Albania was, effectively protectorate of Rome, considered territory vital to her domination of the Adriatic, in accordance with Fascist aspirations of a new Mediterranean order. When the Italian forces in Spain were due to return after Franco's victory in the Civil War, the authorities decided to force the issue by demanding a new and obviously unacceptable treaty from Zogu. With his predictable refusal they had the excuse they sought for an immediate invasion of Albania by the *Regio Esercito* (Royal Army). There was practically no fighting in a war in which the death toll reached just a dozen and not even a hundred wounded. Albania, with its own statutes, remained a separate country, but now under the reign of King Vittorio Emanuele III, effectively absorbed by Italy, but with its own Fascist regime.



*Cover of number 4 of the Albanian edition (Botim Shqiptar) of Tempo, which took the name Koha (time, in the local language). It shows a photo of Mustapha Merlika Kruja, new Head of the Albanian Government imposed by the Italian forces of occupation which doubtless had a key influence on the growth of Fascism in the country. His appointment was decisive in the appearance of this edition, which had been blocked for months*



*Covers of some of the first issues of Koha, the Albanian version of Tempo*

#### **Four editions in the region**

One of the aspects which Fascism was most interested in developing in this new territory was the press, as that which existed in Tirana was quite rudimentary. In 1940 a new daily appeared in the Albanian capital, *Tomoris*, as well as a bilingual magazine, *Albania*. Two years later, in January 1942, as part of the expansion policy undertaken by the Mondadori weekly throughout Europe, a new version of *Tempo* appeared in Albanian. This was doubtless intended by Mussolini's Government to reinforce their influence in the Balkans and the magazine was evidently the spearhead of the Italianization of the whole region. There were in fact four different editions of *Tempo* in this part of Europe; Greek, Croatian and Romanian, as well as the Albanian. The latter had its own translated title (*Botim Shqiptar*), but, as occurred in Greece and with some issues of the Romanian edition, it also followed the same criteria as in both other cases, simply translating the title literally into Albanian (*Koha*). In total *Tempo* published 37 issues of the Albanian edition, which stopped, like all the others, at the end of June 1943, after the fall of Mussolini. The cover of number 4 was dedicated to Mustapha Merlika Kruja, the new Head of Government of the puppet Albanian regime, whose rise to power spelt another step in the process of transforming the country into a Fascist state. This coincided with the start of the Albanian edition of *Tempo*, which had been ready for several months but had not materialised until then.



*The covers appear distorted because they were scanned from a bound volume of the magazine in the Mondadori Foundation, which possesses the only copies*

### **The Mondadori Foundation periodical library**

The subjects on the covers of the magazine swung from Italian soldiers in action to quaint cultural scenes, especially feminine ones. Nevertheless, this conclusion is based only on those copies which are known to us, because of all the editions of *Tempo*, only those copies donated to the Foundation by the Mondadori family have been found. Today they are in the Milanese seat of the organisation. The fortunes of war and the post-war panorama led to the family fleeing to Switzerland in exile after the fall of Fascism in Italy and only those copies which had been bound accompanied them.

These volumes make up just 26 issues because the majority of editions up until that point were preserved when they were bound after that many numbers. The exceptions are the German and Croatian editions because they reached two volumes and so the Foundation has 52 numbers of each. As a result the **Fernández-Xesta Archive** actually has more issues of *Tempo* than the Mondadori Foundation itself.