



Quelle

Joseph Swire, Drei Briefe des britischen Journalisten an den italienischen Diplomaten Ugo Sola (1930/31); [Zum Teil Auszüge]¹

Brief von Joseph Swire vom 14. März 1930 aus London an Ugo Sola in Tirana

Chatham House,
10, St. James's Square,
London, S. W. 1
14th March, 1930

His Excellency, Cav. UGO SOLA,
Minister Plenipotentiary,
The Royal Italian Legation,
TIRANA, ALBANIA

Dear Sola,

I did so much enjoy meeting you the other day, and it was very kind of you to come to see me. I much hope that whenever you are in England you will let me know, and that we meet again soon.

My publishers² are becoming rather restive with my regard to the £45 which the Albanian Government, through General Pariani³, agreed to buy. You very kindly said you would inquire into that matter for me. I am rather anxious, as I am in no position to pay the money myself.

You also very kindly suggested the possibility that the Italian Government might be able to grant me a small subvention to enable me to establish myself in Albania and build up a connection with the British and American press. If that was possible, I should be delighted, and I think I should have little difficulty in establishing a connection in quite a short space of time. As I am at present without a job, I would be very grateful if you can let me know if there is any possibility of

¹ Die nachstehenden drei maschinenschriftlichen Briefe des britischen Journalisten und Balkanexperten Joseph S. Swire (1903–1978) an den italienischen Karrierediplomaten Ugo Sola (1888–?) aus den Jahren 1930 und 1931 sind in einem mit "SWIRE Joseph – Inglese – Corrispondenza sulla Situazione in Albania per alcuni giornali inglesi" betitelten Dossier enthalten, welches sich im Albanien-Bestand des Archivs des italienischen Außenministeriums in Rom für das Jahr 1930 befindet (Ministero degli Affari Esteri. Servizio Storico e Documentazione. Archivio Storico Diplomatico. Serie Affari Politici 1919–1930. Roma [MAE SSD ASD]: Albania (1930), pacco 786, fascicolo 1–23). Warum Sola die Originale der an ihn persönlich gerichteten und partiell privaten Briefe Swires den Akten der italienischen Gesandtschaft in Tirana übergeben hat, ist nicht bekannt. Unklar ist überdies, warum Swires Brief vom 25. Februar 1931 – geschrieben zu einem Zeitpunkt, als Sola bereits von seiner albanischen Mission in die Zentrale nach Rom versetzt worden war –, nachträglich dem Bestand „Albania (1930)“ zugeordnet wurde. Sola war im Sommer 1930 als Gesandter aus Albanien abberufen worden, um die Leitung des Historisch-Diplomatischen Büros des Außenministeriums zu übernehmen. Im weiteren Verlauf der dreißiger Jahre fungierte er dann als Botschafter Italiens in Rumänien und in Brasilien. Die drei hier wiedergegebenen Briefe Swires an Sola sind die einzigen erhaltenen einer wohl umfangreicheren Korrespondenz. Solas Antworten sind im Bestand des Archivs des Außenministeriums nicht auffindbar.

² Gemeint ist der auf Naturwissenschaften spezialisierte Londoner Verlag Williams & Norgate, in dem 1929 Swires erstes Albanien-Buch erschienen war: Swire, Joseph, Albania. The Rise of a Kingdom, London 1929.

³ General Alberto Pariani (1876–1955), Militärattaché an der italienischen Gesandtschaft in Albanien und Leiter der italienischen Militärmission in Albanien. Swire hatte 1929 in Albanien Parianis Bekanntschaft gemacht.

this proposal of yours being carried out, so that I may make my plans for the future. Of course, if the Albanian Government, or a private enterprise in Albania, was able to employ me, that would be an equally good plan, as I could then build up a Press connection in my spare time.

I am at present reviewing a small book by Albert Mousset – “L’Albanie devant l’Europe, 1912–1929”⁴ – which you may not have seen? It is, I think obviously, Serbian propaganda, and is violently anti-Italian. Mousset accepts all the usual propaganda stories – including the “strategic roads” theory – and will not admit for a moment that there has ever been any Serbian aggression. Even King Zog’s return in December 1924⁵ is represented as an insurrection pure and simple, and there is no mention whatever of Yugoslav complicity! I fear the book will do much harm.

My wife asks to be remembered to you, and with kindest regards,
I remain,
Yours very sincerely,
J. Swire

Brief von Joseph Swire vom 9. Juli 1930 aus Tirana an Ugo Sola [in Tirana]

Confidential
Tirana, 9/VII/30

My dear Sola,

Since You are about to leave Albania I feel You would probably like me to set forth on paper a few remarks about my work here; and I, on the other hand, would like to take the opportunity to express my gratitude to both to You and the Italian Government for the support which has been given to me. Apart from my travelling expenses (amounting to £ 20 Sterling) handed to me by the Italian Ambassador in London, I have received from you hitherto, on 15th April, 15th May, and 15th June, the sums of 40, 42, or 40 napoleons. Were it not for that support I could not, as You know, remain here, because I have no private means and because it is impossible – unless events of exceptional international importance occur – for a journalist to earn by journalism in Albania alone more than £ 100 per annum which [*recte*: while] public interest in Albania remains so slight. I hope however to find some other work within the next few months with which I can supplement my journalistic earnings, and thus be able to remain here when and if You are unable to assist me further. Meantime, I shall be extremely grateful if You will continue to assist me.

When I arrived in Albania at the beginning of April [1930], You told me that while You would support me here You wished me to form my own conclusions, make my own observations, and act as I thought fit. I had made a definite working arrangement with the Near East and India (for a fortnightly Special letter), with the Times (for which I hold a correspondent’s pass), and with the Christian Science Monitor (which requires news, and occasional long description articles). I had also undertaken to write long articles for several Reviews, to revise the Albanian section by the Europe

⁴ Mousset, Albert, *L’Albanie devant l’Europe (1912-1929)*, Paris 1930.

⁵ Die Regierung des Clanführers Ahmet Bej Zogolli (1895-1961) wurde im Juni 1924 durch den Kleriker Fan S. Noli (1882–1965) gestürzt. Im Dezember kehrte der Gestürzte mit jugoslawischer Militärhilfe nach Tirana sowie ins Amt zurück. Vgl. Schmidt-Neke, Michael, *Entstehung und Ausbau der Königsdiktatur in Albanien (1912-1939). Regierungsbildungen, Herrschaftsweise und Machteliten in einem jungen Balkanstaat*. München 1987, S. 113–137, sowie zum gesellschaftspolitischen Hintergrund Habibi, Anila, *Politische Eliten und Klientelismus. Albanien in der Zwischenkriegszeit*, in: Höpken, Wolfgang; Sundhausen, Holm (Hgg.), *Eliten in Südosteuropa. Rolle, Kontinuitäten, Brüche, Geschichte und Gegenwart*, S. 143-173, und Dies., *Das autoritäre Regime Ahmed Zogus und die Gesellschaft Albaniens 1925-1939*, in: Oberländer, Erwin (Hg.), *Autoritäre Regime in Ostmittel- und Südosteuropa 1919–1944*, Paderborn 2001, S. 349-377.

[World] Year Book, to send articles to certain other papers should they desire them, and finally, to prepare a section on Albania for the second issue of the Near East Year Book (the first issue of which published in 1927, contained no Albanian section owing to the difficulty in obtaining information). With regard to the Near East Year Book, I was indue [*recte*: under] the impression that it would take me no more than six weeks at the most, having underestimated on the one hand the enormous amount of materiel to be sifted, and on the other hand, the difficulties, I decided however to complete it before writing any of the bigger and more important articles which I am to do, because, while having some knowledge of the history and political situation of Albania, I was wholly out of touch with the present internal situation. Unfortunately, although I think I may say I have worked as hard as it was humanly possible for anyone to do, it is only now that this work is finished. The last chapter has yet to be typed, and when that is done the section will cover some 200 foolscap pages, in fourteen chapters, namely: – General information, and History and language: Government: Poste, Telegraphs, and Communications: National Defence: Justice: Education: Religion: Public Health and Welfare: Finance: Commerce: Shipping: Agriculture: Industry and Mining.⁶ I think this is probably the most complete and up-to-date report on Albania in existence, certainly in the English language. Thus I have made a thorough study of the whole situation, and have collected a mass of information and statistics, which I now propose to use for my articles. It is my opinion that much harm is done by those who write with only a very superficial knowledge of these subjects and who are unable to give references and figures in support of these statements.

I have sent a letter regularly each fortnight to the Near East and India, in which I have used some of the materiel I have collected. Each letter has been published, although the Editor held me over for two weeks owing to shortage of space; and on the occasion some most infortunate misprints appeared which, however, have now been corrected (in a way, of course, which implies that the mistakes were mine, whereas they were the printer's!). I am to devote a section of each letter to news, and the remainder to general information. In view of the circulation which this paper has among all those who are interested in the Balkans, I attach great importance to these letters. But, as You will have gathered from letters I have received from the Editor, and have shown You, I have to be very careful when refering to neighbouring countries. [...]

With regard to the Christian Science Monitor, I have received headings for a number of articles which it would be glad to have, and now that I have all the material collected it will be a very easy matter to write these.

In conclusion, I am confident that during the next few months I shall be able to place a number of long articles setting forth the situation here very fully (both in the papers and reviews with which I have an arrangement, and in others) quite apart from the sending of news and reports. [...]

Yours very sincerely
J. Swire [...]

⁶ Veröffentlicht als Swire, Joseph, Albania, in: The Near East Year Book 1931-1932, London 1932, S. 1-108.

Brief von Joseph Swire vom 25. Februar 1931 aus Tirana an Ugo Sola [in Rom]

Rruga Berxholli,
Tirana, ALBANIA.

25th February,
1931.

My dear Sola,

It is through neither ingratitude nor laziness that I have not written to you hitherto, but quite simply because I have had so much to do that I have not had a moment to spare to write any letter which I could put off writing; & I knew you would hear what I was doing through Quaroni.⁷ I have only just now managed to get more or less abreast of my work & to carry out the programme which I set myself when I first came out here, & am now able to allow myself a little time to write to my friends, pay calls, & learn the language without the feeling that I am neglecting my work which ought to have been done long before. I am a little worried that that so little of my work has yet been published; but I think you know the difficulties I am up against, especially while articles on the big conferences which have taken place in London crowd out anything on countries such as Albania where everything is quiet & normal. I have just passed proofs of an article of mine for the Times – as usual much cut about – but the Foreign Editor writes that he doesn't know when he will have room for it. I showed that letter to Quaroni. I have sent in big articles to a number of reviews, & the [Christian Science] Monitor has several articles in hand (one of which appeared – or rather, an Americanised version of it – a few days ago); they are ready in case some event brings Albania to the fore – perhaps the attack on the King⁸ will do that – & meantime they help to direct Editor's opinions in the right direction. My letters to the Near East & India continue to appear regularly, & I think they do more good than anything. I also carry on correspondence with various people at home who are interested in Albania, particularly with Sir Edward Boyle⁹, the Chairman of our (House of Commons) Balkan Committee, who is most appreciative & tells me I am recognised as the most impartial & best-informed authority on the subject. I am now going to try to widen my press connection by submitting a series of short articles to the more popular & illustrated papers, as I have taken a large number of photos. The Near East Year Book is due to appear this month, but I gather Montague Bell¹⁰ is having trouble with his printer. I am still trying to get Bell to come out, but he professes to be too busy; I am also trying to persuade Boyle to come out.

I have written to Villari¹¹ telling him I am planning another book, & asking his opinion. I expect he will have already communicated with you on the subject. I have learnt a good deal while out here, & hope to learn a good deal more before I leave Albania; & I think that a profusely illustrated book¹² at a popular price would have permanent value & serve to clear up the many misunderstandings which still remain; moreover, my opinions would not be at the mercy of editors as in the case of articles. While all is quiet here I should have time to get the book together & to gather my in-

⁷ Pietro Quaroni (1898-1971), italienischer Diplomat. Im Herbst 1930 fungierte Quaroni als Chargé d'affaires der italienischen Gesandtschaft in Albanien, da Ugo Sola als Gesandter bereits abberufen und ein Nachfolger nicht ernannt war. Vgl. Quaroni, Pietro, *Diplomatengepäck.. Aufzeichnungen eines Botschafters*, Frankfurt a. M. 1956.

⁸ Am 20. Februar 1931 wurde auf den in Wien weilenden König Zog I. ein Attentat verübt, bei dem er selbst unverletzt blieb, jedoch zwei seiner Begleiter ums Leben kamen. Die Täter waren Exilalbaner, die mit Belgrad in Verbindung standen.

⁹ Edward Boyle (1878-1945), Jurist, konservativer MP und Vorsitzender des 1921 gebildeten Balkan Committee des Unterhauses.

¹⁰ Henry Thurburn Montague Bell (1874-?), britischer Journalist und Herausgeber des Near East Year Book.

¹¹ Luigi Villari (1876-1959), italienischer Historiker und Diplomat.

¹² Zur Realisierung dieses Buchprojekts vgl. Swire, Joseph, *King Zog's Albania*, London 1937.

formation at first hand, while at the same time contributing articles as openings for them appear or as I receive commissions for them, & being on the spot in case anything important occurs.

I am hoping that the Italian Government will think it worth while to help me to remain here some months longer so that I can carry out these plans. I thoroughly enjoy my work here, & would like to remain as long as possible. I do not want to leave Albania until I have acquired sufficient knowledge of the country, people, & language, to place me in an unchallengeable position as an expert on the country, & not merely on its history. In fact, I will remain as long as I have the means to do so, but I fear I could not do so in present circumstances if I was dependent on press work alone – Albania is altogether too tranquil & well behaved for that!! [...]

With very best wishes & kindest regards from us both, & once again very many thanks for all you have done for me,

Yours very sincerely,
J. Swire

Joseph Swire, Drei Briefe des britischen Journalisten an den italienischen Diplomaten Ugo Sola (1930/31); [Zum Teil Auszüge]. In: Themenportal Europäische Geschichte (2007), URL: <http://www.europa.clio-online.de/2007/Article=260>.

Auf diese Quelle bezieht sich ein einführender und erläuternder Essay von Troebst, Stefan: Ein britischer Journalist im Auftrag des faschistischen Italien. Joseph Swire als Korrespondent in Italien in den Jahren 1930/31. In: Themenportal Europäische Geschichte (2007), URL: <http://www.europa.clio-online.de/2007/Article=261>.