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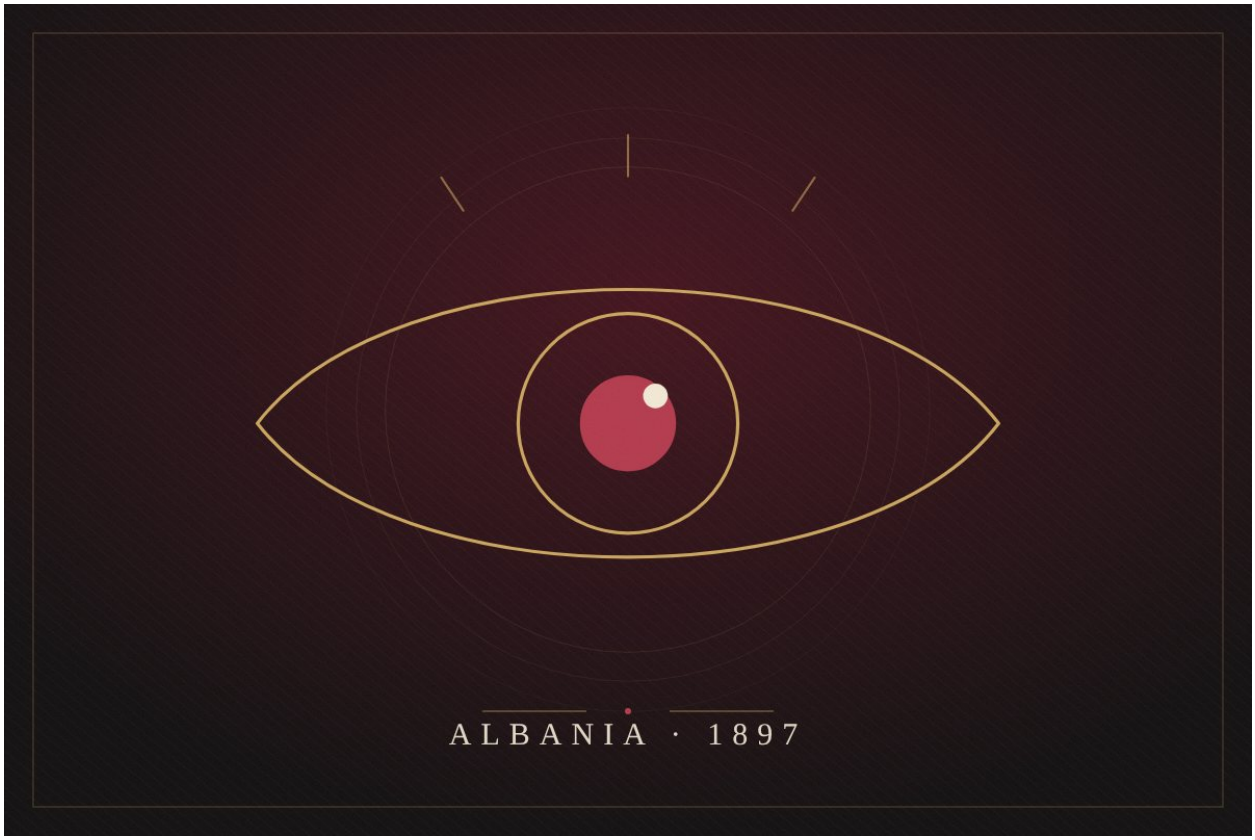
Heritage

Faik Konica: the journal Albania, Vatra and the stylist of Albanian prose

From Konica to Brussels, London and Boston: the journal founded in 1897, his role in the Albanian diaspora in America, the diplomatic mission in Washington and a prose full of irony

3 November 2026 / 2 min read

Translated from the Albanian original by the editors.



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Faik Konica was born in 1875 in Konica, a town in Epirus, today in Greece, into a well-known family. He studied at the Jesuit college in Shkodra, then in Istanbul and in France. He spoke and wrote several languages and had a broad literary and artistic culture.

The journal Albania

In 1897, when he was only 22, Konica founded the journal **Albania** in Brussels. He later moved it to London, where he continued publishing it until 1909. The journal had articles in Albanian and other languages, and aimed to inform Europeans about Albanians and to help Albanians develop their language, literature and national awareness. For many intellectuals of the time it was a real school of modern Albanian writing.

In America

In the 1910s Konica went to the United States, home to a growing community of Albanian emigrants. He became one of the leaders of the **Pan-Albanian Federation Vatra**, the main organisation of Albanians in America, together with Fan Noli. Although they often disagreed, the two worked to defend Albania's interests at the time of the First World War and the Peace Conference.

In 1926 Konica was appointed Albania's minister plenipotentiary in Washington, a post he held until 1939, when Italy invaded Albania.

> *Konica believed that a nation is built not only with flags and battles, but also with a cultivated language and critical thought.*

The stylist

Konica is known as one of the finest stylists of Albanian prose. His writings are short, clear and often full of irony. He sharply criticised incompetence, ignorance and hypocrisy, even among his compatriots. The satirical work Doktor Gjilpëra, "Doctor Needle", mocks the prejudices and figures of the time. His book in English about Albania, "Albania: The Rock Garden of Southeastern Europe", was published after his death, in 1957.

His last years

After the Italian invasion Konica remained in the United States. He died in Boston on 15 December 1942. In 1995 his remains were brought to Tirana.

Why we remember him

1. **He turned the press into a tool for national culture.**
2. **He showed that honest criticism** is a form of love for one's country, not betrayal.
3. **His prose remains a model** of clarity and elegance.

Sources

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