

The Political Inmates from Gjakova and Its Vicinity in 1945-1966 based from the Gleam of Achive Sources



Political Sciences

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Abstract

The matter of my theme will be the patriotic activity of political inmates from Gjakova and its vicinity during period of time 1945-1966 based from the gleam of archive sources. Related to this, I will focus in the matter of Kosovo as an inevitable expansion of the existence and the role of National Albanian Matter. In the matter I am working on, I will make a survey of a repeated process of the violence that Kosovo Albanian people experienced from the former Federative Yugoslavian country especially during the trials and imprisonments of individuals and groups of ethnic Albanians from Gjakova and its vicinity during the period of time 1945-1966. I can point out "The group of Gjakova" who were judged and sentenced in 1957. Five main members of the group were proclaimed guilty with imprisonment 40 years in total. As for the topic I am working on, while searching at the Regional Archive of historical matters for Gjakova with its vicinity and as conducting other researches to some family and municipal archives, I was able to get historical records and other sources which so far were not published.

Introduction

The political movement and the resistance of the Albanians in former Yugoslavian country from 1945 to 1981 can be figured out only then when we have a clear view about the illegal movement, its arrangement and the structure of the main leaders.

Even this movement operated at difficult times and circumstances it is obvious that a part of important considerable documents and information are not saved and this makes the scientific studies of respective activity more difficult. Thus, the collection of the information and the documents about the political movements and the resistance of the Albanians in former Yugoslavian country in general and the patriotic activity of the political inmates in Gjakova and its vicinity during the period from 1945 to 1966, today it is a very important matter about the public and the historiography of Albanians.¹⁸

None of the historical events is casual. They are led by a range of causes and circumstances. So, the creation of Gjakova group of the year 1957 has its detailed and faithful causes. Based on fundamental political concepts and based on the ways of the arrangements and methods of the action, the illegal movement of Kosovo passes through four basic phases starting from the year 1945 to 1981 and on.

Even though these phases are special, they are linked organically among each other including political concepts and the people who led mentioned actions.¹⁹ "First phase includes the period from the year 1945 to 1952."²⁰ The group of Gjakova shows a very important connection among the first and second phase of the illegal movement in Kosovo.

Third phase includes the period from the year 1968 to 1981. Fourth phase starts from the year 1981 and ends in the beginning of the 1990s at the time when pluralism starts in Kosovo and other areas populated with Albanians in former Yugoslavian country.

Due to the limited period of time of the discussion of this theme in conferences, besides the statistic records taken from the archives of the Association of political inmates and the other different archives of Zagreb and Kosovo which will be shown in the chart below, I will concentrate mostly to the Group of Gjakova belonging to the year 1957 which is distinguishable from its particular specifics in this period of time.

¹⁸ Shefqet Dinaj, *Historiography view, century XIX-XX, The league of Kosovo Historians "Ali Hadri"*, Prishtinë 2009, page 136-137.

¹⁹ Ethem Çeku, *Political Opinion on the Illegal Movement in Kosovo 1945-1981*, Prishtinë 2003, page 266.

²⁰ The same, page 267 and Shefqet Dinaj, *vop. Cip...*, page 267

The political inmates of Gjakova town and its vicinity from 1945 to 1966

Year	Sentenced persons	Years in the prison
1945	2 persons	8 years and six months(murdered man)
1946	5	46 years, 11 months and 15 days.
1947	8	18 years, 35 months and 18 days.
1948	2	8 years, 2 months and 24 days.
1949	14	67 years and 7 days.
1950	4	12 years, 6 months and 13 days.
1951	4	14 years, 8 months and 3 days.
1952	11	50 years and 13 days.
1953	11	62 years, 9 months and 22 days.
1954	6	16 years and 22 days.
1955	8	54 years, 4 months and 25 days.
1956	4	13 years.
1957	6	37 years, 11 months and 12 days.
1958	1	1 year.
1959	4	10 years and 8 months.
1960	1	3 years.
1961	3	8 years, 4 months and 26 days.
1962	1	11 months.
1963	5	5 years, 6 months and 24 days.
1964	8	37 years, 6 months and 26 days.
1965	1	2 years, 11 months and 29 days.
1966	1	7 months.
Total	110	476 years and 10 months.

Political-Social Circumstances which led to the Creation of “Gjakova Group (1957)”

After the declaration of the Independence of Albania (1912), during and after the First World War, Kosovo was conquered by different invading armies, until it finally got under the jurisdiction and the rule of Serbo-Croatian-Slovenian monarchy. During the period of Yugoslavian monarchy, after 1918, there were drafted projects for the separation of the Albanian country and in this context it was compiled the project for the extinction of the center of Kosovo and Kosovars. The attempt for the execution of these projects resulted with many unsuccessful reasons. Although, they didn't go away without leaving traces on the existence of the Albanian people, they used many ways for the realization of those projects from a decade to a decade: terror, persecution, massive massacres, violent expulsion (deportation) from their own lands to Turkey or somewhere else.

Under the pretext of extinction of the “counter-Revolution” in Kosovo, Josip Broz Tito set the military administration in the country on 8th of February 1945. Tito took this action in order to set Kosovo under a new captivity and he did this by assigning Sava Dërleviq, an enraged ethnic Cetnik Serb, as a head of military administration.

During the time when Yugoslavian forces took the bloodiest operations in Drenica area on 8th of February 1945, the Supreme Commander of Yugoslavian National Liberty Army, Josip Broz Tito, with the particular order with number 31 set the military administration in Kosovo. Tito took this decision on 7th

February 1945 in Belgrade, during a meeting with Serbian military members: Savo Dërleviq, Gjuro Medenica and Kërsto Filipoviq. With this order, the whole jurisdiction in Kosovo would have transferred to a group of Serbo- Montenegrin military officers who would have set the political, executive and judicial jurisdiction.

During these changes, Fadil Hoxha, as a Leader of Operational Base of Kosovo and Dukagjini area, is replaced by Sava Dërleviq, whose essential duty was Kosovo to be conquered again by Yugoslavian forces.²¹ At that time, Fadil Hoxha, was for some time as called “in house arrest” for about 6 months and he was powerless to take any actions.²²

In spring 1945, Sava Dërleviq along with partisan units killed and massacred over 4000 people and burned more than 20 villages in Drenica. On 1st of April 1945, there were also killed and massacred thousands of Albanians who were mobilized. This event in history is known as “Massacre of Tivar”.

Related to the number of killed Albanians in the massacre of Tivar, we have some contradictory details. According to the report 46th Serbian Division base dated on 8th April 1945, the number of massacres is said to be decreased at about 450 massacred and about 120 wounded.²³

In the establishment of the Congress of Communist Serbian Party in May 1945, the murderer of the Albanians, Aleksander Rankoviq, showed this number lower of about 300 people.²⁴

Albanian sources claim another number which is more precise. In Imer Berisha’s report for Hadson dated on 22nd October 1945, it is seemed that in a day and night cetnic and communist Serbs massacred all together 1670 people in Tivar.²⁵ It is so, as Tivar is the biggest massive grave in Balkan Peninsula which was opened for an hour during the Second World War.

Serbia annexed Kosovo at the Conference of National Liberty Committee of Kosovo and Dukagjin that was held on 8-10 July in Prizren. At that conference took part 120 invited delegates where most of them were ethnic Serbs and Montenegrins. The assembly began its work in extraordinary circumstances and at that case they approved the Resolution which was drafted some time in advance in Belgrade. All those, who dared to reject such an act, were sentenced with aggravated long term imprisonment or liquidation.

According to the testimonies given on 25 and 26th June 1990 by Fadil Hoxha, Xhavit Nimani, Ymer Pula, Shaban Kajtazi and Xhevdet Hamza, the members of the assembly in Prizren were appointed by “Heads”, the election of those people for the session was conducted without election procedure, in the circumstances of military and police administration. Also, according to them, it was decided that the session to be held without any discussion and without recording reports respectively without any personal pronouncement for the Resolution but only with the acclamation and signing of the Resolution one by one.²⁶

Related to the attendance at the Assembly, we have only a source document published by Dr. Isuf Bajraktari that it fact it is a list written in Serbian language with title: “Guests and delegates” in which there are written 137 names.

²¹ Ethem Çeku, the century of illegals, “ The trial against the illegal in Kosovo-documents”, Prishtinë 2004, page 26-27

²² Xhevat Koshi’s statement given to the author (SH.D) in Gjakovë on 21.6.2009.

²³ Muhamet Pirraku, Yugoslav recapture of Kosovo 1945, Prishtinë 1992, page 132, Muhamet Pirraku, and Shefqet Dinaj, Skivjani- History and cultural heritage, the League of Kosovo Historians “ Ali Hadri”, prishtinë 2010, page 53.

²⁴ Ibid

²⁵ Ibid

²⁶ Xhavit Nimani, information, at the SHHK Tribune, on 26.06.1990, and Muhamet Pirraku, Recapture..., vep citf page 154; Shefqet Dinaj, Skivjani... vep.citf page 56.

Among them there were 32 ethnic Albanians. In the document it is written that from the total number (137) 22 were “ Representatives of the people” – which it is considered that they were members and advisers of the “ Established Assembly of National Liberty Committee for Kosovo and Dukagjin coming from the meeting in Bujan on 31st December 1943 and 1 and 2nd January 1944.²⁷

The action for the collection of weapons started in winter 1955 and continued until spring 1956. The action for the collection of the weapons was a justification for using the violence and expulsion of the ethnic Albanians from their own land. Since these actions were not so easy to be realized, among the ethnic Albanians. They were influenced and encouraged by patriotic and national feelings to love their place Kosovo and they were ready to sacrifice their lives for it. Serbian extremist authorities fabricated slanders and used the violence to the people *only to bring anguish, fear and permanent insecurity to the ethnic Albanian people in Kosovo*. Rumors that “Albanians were planning a massive revolution in order to join Albania” were converted in a State count against the Yugoslavian citizens who were with Albanian nationality in Kosovo. It was officially declared that Kosovo was “, one of the most dangerous areas in the country”, where” a coup was being planned”, so based on this “the enemy had to be disarmed”.²⁸ As for the count to be more relevant and convincing to the public, ethnic Albanians coming from those outstanding areas for their patriotic obedience and feelings towards the resistance against communist Serbian regime and other foreign invaders were targeted.

It is not by the chance that the action for the collection of the weapons started in the highland of Rugova and then it got extended to the other respective areas where people were determined for the resistance against the Serbian violence like in: Smirë, Logjë, Vrellë, Rakosh, Suharekë, Krush, Kllokot, Shalë etc.²⁹

Another purpose of the Action for the collection of the weapons was *urging of the ethnic chauvinism in Kosovo*. By presenting ethnic Albanians as a dangerous population, it was urged to ethnic Kosovo Serbs and Montenegrins the hate and fear to the ethnic Albanians.

In the end but not the least, maltreated ethnic Albanians or others, who witnessed the events and serious hostile atmosphere, *were forced to leave Kosovo*. This was precisely the final aim of the Action for the collection of the weapons.

The action for the collection of the weapons was urged, arranged and executed by State Security Service in Province. These acts were conducted with the approval and awareness of the Federal Republic State Security, but in one way they were arranged by the high profile political structures that were all the time in contact with above mentioned structures. At the beginning the exponents of State Security Services used to hold meetings with all Police Station commanders of Gjakova municipality. Those figures were like: Mirk Iliqi, Milaim Gazetoviqi etc.; police officers and other operational staff; drafted operational plan; and they defined all measures to implement the plan. At these notorious institutions there were recruited the most merciless and physically strong police officers. They were allowed to do whatever they wanted with the accused Albanian ethnicity.

After the plan was approved by the political municipal authorities, the execution of the plan began at the same time in Gjakova and in the villages around. At the beginning, they arranged meetings with ethnic Albanians related to handover the weapons and after that they arranged actions for searches in the houses. The

²⁷ AIHK, LNÇ-KK, Document published by Dr Jusuf Bajraktari and Muharrem Pirraku, Recapture... vep.. cit page 154; Shefqet Dinaj, Skivjan, Skivjani ..vep.cit, page 57.

²⁸ Rilindja, 19May 1966, 16 October 1966, 16 September 1966.

²⁹ The report on the work of the commission about the verification of the distortion and misuses and taken measures on the arrangement of State Security Service at KAKM, Prishtinë, 1st November 1966, Regional Historic Archives-Gjakovë K.A Nr.I .fond 88, year 1966 page 23. (further commission report). P.24.

most influenced and well known ethnic Albanians were summoned to police station and asked to hand over their weapons. Those, who refused, were some of them more and others less maltreated. This was the first warning in order to frighten the other people and to let them know that they could not hide weapons.

The activity of first illegal group in Gjakova

Exactly at the time when Yugoslavian governors thought that they achieved their goals using violent methods in order to force ethnic Albanians to give up of any kind of resistance and not to say any words against that political system. Although, a group of activists and educated people in Gjakova came together and agreed to act and make it clear not only to their people but the other people in Yugoslavia that Albanians would never accept or agree with such violence. They also mentioned that the feeling for freedom and national unification was not over and it would not extinguish forever.

As a consequence of these circumstances in 1956 it was created the illegal group in Gjakova consisted of five active persons and some others who helped the group in other ways. Members of that group were as follows: Muhamet Brovina as a head of the group, Adem Krasniqi, Besnik Koci, Gjon Shtufaj and Hyda Dobruna as teachers. One of the members of the group called Besnik Koci, who was interviewed two years ago said, -” We had drafted our plan to take actions. As a fact for our plan was the program drafted by the meeting of Prizren Albanian league, according to which it was required national unification. After a lot of discussions and consults they had decided to carry out an action which would have effects not only in our place but wider and make the invaders understand that Albanians would never agree with that system until the matter of Albanians in Balkan was eventually sorted out.³⁰

As a date of the action they appointed 1st of May 1957. They had bought two rolls of silk; one was red and the other one was black. In his house Muhamet Brovina had sewed some flags. At midnight between 30th of April and 1st May, all members of the group were mobilized to raise the national flags up in different visible places in Gjakova town. Adem Krasniqi and Gjon Shtufaj raised a flag in Fushe Sahati place in the center of the town. Besnik Koci and Hyda Dobruna raised the flag across from the old police station building in Gjakova. As it is written in the count, flags were raised in the neighborhoods of Mehalla e Vokshit, Mehalla e Hadumit, Mehalla e Gërçarëve, Mahalla e Qerimit and in Mahalla e Sefes particularly at the place of the monument of the martyr called Mustafa Bakija.

Around the monument of Mustafe Bakija were also written six “hostile” slogans, with the following inscription:

“Down Yugoslavian Communist Party!”

“Long life Albanian Communist Party!”

“Long life Albanian flag, which is rooted to the heart of every Albanian”

“Albanian people, wake up and ask for your rights!”

“Down CP (Communist Party) of SFRY as invader of Kosovo and Metohi!”

It has to be pointed out that on 18th June 1957 Adem Krasniqi’s brother had set the national flag on the train, which was going from Peja town to Fushe Kosove. This was conducted only to forward their message to

³⁰ Statement given by Besnik Koci to Muhamet Rugova, Gjakovë 2010.

other parts of Kosovo as it happened in reality. Then there were created illegal groups in all parts of Kosovo which didn't stop their activities until the definitive liberation of Kosovo.

The contents of these slogans denoted that the above-mentioned group was decisive for their actions and the group had a very clear national project.

After the action, members of the group were very fast identified by the Yugoslavian State Security Services and related to this on 17th and 18th June in 1957 the members of the group were captured. After extended investigation, on 20th February 1958 there was held the trial in District Court of Peja town. Ethnic Serbs conducted the entire court and Vidak Petroviq was as the head of the panel.

The court panel enunciated serious penalties to the abovementioned members of the group:

1. Muhamet Brovina , born in 1920 was sentenced with 12 years serious imprisonment.
2. Adem Krasniqi, born in 1929 was sentenced with 7 years serious imprisonment.
3. Gjon Shtufaj, born in 1832 was sentenced with 7 years of serious imprisonment.
4. Besnik Koci, born in 1934 was sentenced with 9 years of serious imprisonment.
5. Hyda Dobruna, born in 1933 was sentenced with 5 years of serious imprisonment.

As Besnik Koci and Hyda Dobruna said; the way of their imprisonment denotes a range of suffers and vicissitude. First they imprisoned them in the prison of Gjakova town, then in the prison of Peja town and after that in the prison of Mitrovica e Sremit , in the main prison (Known as CZ) in Belgrade at the third underground floor of the prison. Then they were taken to the prisons of Croatia and after that they ended up at the notorious prison in Nish. Even after they accomplished their imprisonment, for five years members of the abovementioned group didn't have any human rights. This means they didn't have the right of employment, they didn't dare to meet and talk with citizens. So, they spent five more years as in house arrest.

Even after the accomplishment of the imprisonment and being released from the prison, members of the abovementioned group not only they got depressed, but they were all the times active about the realization of their ideas. So, they spent so many others years in the different prisons. With their activities they served as a model of inspiration for many other generations after them.

I have to point out that even Hyda Dobruna's wedding party was used as a cause for the imprisonment of tens of activists dedicated for national matters.

Later on, this activity went on. On 28th November 1963, a young boy called Ali Haxhi Hajdari-Nimanaj from Skivjan village set the red and black flag at the health clinic, at school and at the municipal office in Skivjan village.

While raising the flag at the health clinic, Ali was followed by the guard who later fired to Ali but fortunately he went away without getting wounded. He got flags from Albania.

In the following day on 29th November 1963, Ali was captured and arrested in Gjakova town by the aspb official named Mirk Iliq and later he was sentenced with two years serious imprisonment.

In February 1964, Ali's father named Haxhi Hajdaraj-Nimanaj was also arrested by Mirk Iliq and he never turned back to his family.³¹

³¹ I took the statement from Sylejman Ahemti narrated by Nimon Haxhi Hajdari -Nimonaj – given to the author on 10.02.2013.

Conclusion

The same conviction was given to “group of Gjakova (1957)” by the Supreme Public Court of the Republic of Serbia in Belgrade. Member of the panel were as follows: Dragomir Miljković as a presiding Judge, Milke Jovanović, Vitomir Vashić, Dushan Aragjelović and Ljubivoje Dimitrijević as members of the Court and Dushica Stanishiq as court recorder.³²

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³² Taken from the trial of Supreme Public Court of the Republic of Serbia in Belgrade. I took the document from Hyda Dobruna in Gjakovë in 2013.