

## Communist Political History and its Traces in the Albanian Landscape of the Time



### Architecture & Design

**Keywords:** Space, territory, landscape, historicism, determinism, trace, structuralism, design, interaction, politics, economy, propaganda, ideology, seal, centre, sanctification, faith, doubt, failure, reconditioning, revitalization.

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### Abstract

My research probes into the phenomenon of territorial marking from the interaction between territory and man as a politically engaged social being rather than as an individual. In this case, the landscape itself assumes the features of relative changeable space where the history imprints are layered in time; imprints of the political and economic power. Albanian landscape during the 50 years of communist regime was designed ideologically and bears the seal of the political power of that time when, under the totalitarian mono-party leadership, anything built on the territory, was intended to testify the historicist idea of “the only successful path taken for prosperity”. That path meant building a socialist and atheist country based on the struggle of classes, without private property and isolated from its neighbours and the “hostile” world. Due to this policy imposed on any aspects of life, the territory could not be immune and bore the imprints of development, modernisation and emancipation. Under the State propaganda pressure, but also with the naive determinist popular hope of building a country on collective labour and a future communist “paradise”, new automobile and railway paths were open, bridges and residential centers were constructed, the whole country was electrified and industry developed. All of these positive changes, evident in the landscape at the time, were “the pride” in designing the new Albania. So, the interventions in the territory also bore ideology-based absurd distortions, with a frenzy of building concrete installations and bunkers across the entire territory, backed by an artificial graphic propaganda with pompous slogans of the cult of individual marking mountain slopes, with monuments and monoliths that turned into pilgrimage sites to sanctify the fallen for the motherland. The text is intended to encompass space as an anthropological phenomenon and the landscape as a guide, which helps us to read the face (the seal) of the political power, through the footsteps he has left in it.

### Introduction

Space as philosophical, conceptual, virtual phenomenon as well as physical, real, perceptible, tangible phenomenon was for centuries and still is one of the most elaborated subjects in philosophical thought being it from an idealistic or religious perspective as well as a materialistic or scientific one.

According to Kant, the concept of space is present in our minds. We receive signals of reality through perception, but in our head the concept of space is present, innate and concurrent. Castells argues that space is also a social expression, and structural changes that human society undergoes are associated with new forms and processes of space.<sup>15</sup>

Speaking of space, Norbert Schulz believes that while space defines the three dimensional organization of the elements that make up an environment, character defines the overall atmosphere, which makes the most complex feature of any environment.<sup>16</sup> While Heidegger defines that space takes a meaning not only from emptiness in itself, but also by the concrete elements placed in it as well as by the surrounding environment.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Manuel Castells, *The Rise of the Network Society*, Cambridge, MA Oxford, UK, 1996.

<sup>16</sup> Christian Norberg Schulz, *Existence, Space and Architecture*, Praeger Publisher, London, 1971.

<sup>17</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Building Dwelling Thinking*, a lecture presented to the Darmstadt Symposium, 1951.

*Ergo*, space is a form of dialogue, and landscape design, as one of its main instruments, is a means of expression that makes concrete, reveal specific relations.

The urban landscape and beyond is the place in history in which every historical period attempts the impossible, to leave its traces in the urban and architectural space of cities, around and between them.

*“Landscape is not only something to be built or to be conserved. Above all, it demands to be recognized, perceived, heard and described ... Landscape is the hypothesis of history in the territory, what was ethical, aesthetic, what was in architecture, philosophy, developing and descending, in crisis and prosperity, in war and in peace, in history or myth, in moments of faith and in those of anxiety, everything is written in the landscape profile, everything is interpretable, and even culture, like God, intervenes and runs to help”*.<sup>18</sup>

## **Analysis**

For the following analysis, which focus precisely on the phenomena of landscape design by man, we are interested in space as a general concept, but especially its revealing forms:

-Space (of landscape) as an anthropological phenomenon; landscape could very well be a guide that helps us to read beyond what we see to appear on the surface; in itself it has no well-defined character, but we convey meaning and interpretation to it.

-The landscape as a relative, active space; which changes its character starting from the relation inscribed in it, and fits to the objects and changes it undergoes; which is fluid.

-The landscape as power or as the face of power.

-The space (of landscape) as ideology, symbolism, a chalice of all objects that exist and are written within it.

-The space as a heterotopy, as a place where it can only conceptually enter.

## **Methodology**

To support the arguments, we have applied comparative methods of interdisciplinary research in the fields of knowledge, relating to the Philosophy of Space and the Landscape as integral part of it and the Totalitarian Ideology as the Seal and the Trail that it generally leaves in the life of a country under regimen, and specifically in our case, in the space landscape.

These researches are based on the method used by western structuralists in interpreting the facts about the concept of Structurality and Center (center, rather than the physical meaning of the word).

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<sup>18</sup> Giuliana Andreotti, *Paesaggi culturali. Teoria e casi studio*, Unicopli, Milano, 1996.

Accepting the idea that everything, every structure has a center, and this center is dictated by the Signed Transcendentals that are Idealism and God (according to religious teleology and eschatology) or Materialism and Man (according to marxist-leninist historicism and determinism), supporting the idea that this center determines the very nature of the structure.

In the case of communism, the center is the historical idea of the future of human society, dependent on the relationship in production and the productive forces, which make it possible to replace the social order as a consequence of the class struggle mechanism, with determinism (final historical determination) communist society, as the only "paradise" to be achieved by work, where all will be equal and without distinction of classes.

This center, that is the communist ideology, gives shape and determines the construction of the society's hull in all its components as political, ideological, economic, spatial, landscape and human.

### **Second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century Socialist Albania and its Journey towards the "Communist Paradise"**

The end of the Second World War consequently found Albania a destroyed country, with a ruined economy, and empty finances. The liberation found a backward country, a fundamental backwardness inherited from the past, as a country smaller than it had to be, with a territory which had been partitioned from 1913 annexations, with a mostly rural population and 90% illiteracy, with a small and under formation working class, with a socio-economic system still half feudal and weak capitalist relations of production and without a proper tradition of democratic regime.

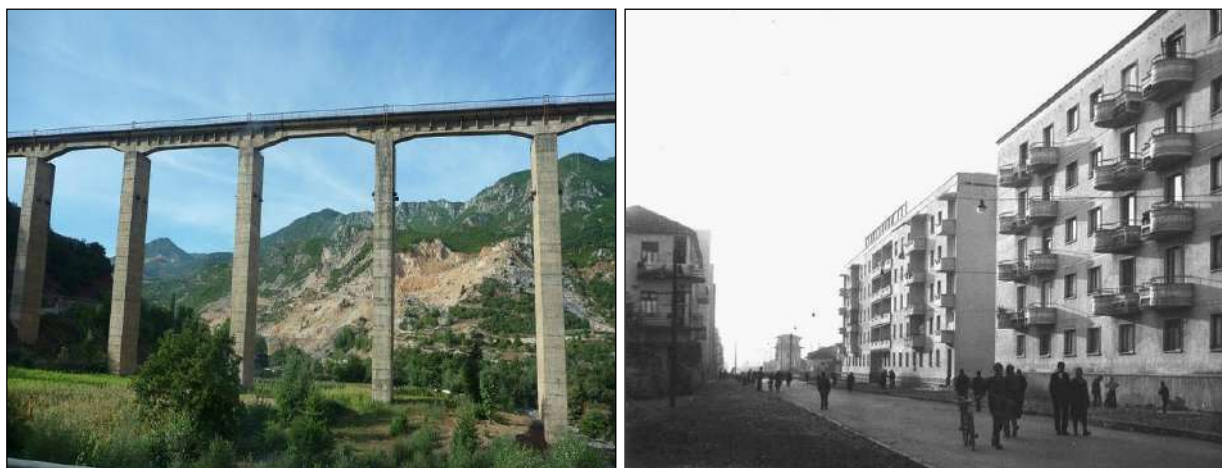
Finding of the path to economic development was urgently needed due to the historical moment and situation. After the Second World War, Albania became part of the Eastern Communist camp, as a consequence of the decisions taken from the victorious Allies, during the Yalta Conference, in January 1945. Thus, facing two alternatives of political and economic system that could be installed, communism or capitalism, Albania chose the first one. A country of a socio-economic mono-party system was built, with a centralized economy, without private property and free initiative; every component was based on the Eastern Communist system, mostly copying the Stalinist USSR. Albania appears poor and economically backward, in the photos taken by the researcher Branimir Gushiq, who together with his wife, Mariana, an ethnologist specialised on regional issues, organized a research expedition in Albania in 1947. (photo no. 1)



However, working for several years, displaying an unseen collective enthusiasm, with volunteers of all ages coming from all over Albania, with great sacrifices and efforts, as well as with the assistance of the "*big communist brother*", the Soviet Union, the country was eventually reconstructed and it recovered from the disastrous consequences of the war. The development policies that had started after the country's independence, like the war against illiteracy, the drying of marshes, building of the sewage systems, agricultural reform, development of new roads and infrastructure, made possible the transformation of Albania from "an agrarian and semi-feudal country (1945) into an agro-industrial country (1955)".

The planning policy will continue with the second phase, that of building the economic base of socialism (later on towards an industrial-agrarian phase, which was expected to be consolidated in the 1980s and 1990s).

This second phase, the expansion of the socialist system in all fields included the planning and construction of many industrial works (continuous assistance was provided by the Soviet Union), roads and railways, engineering works such as bridges and hydro-power plants, construction of many new housing estates, as well as expansion and development of existing ones. (photo no. 2, 3)



The programme of the communist government for the transformation of Albania, from a backward country into an industrial society, was in a way a great success and in few years, Albania improved a lot in terms of agriculture, industry, education, arts and lifestyle. However, the political oppression eclipsed these national achievements. But political and economic oppression, and the prohibition of faith and free speech soon overshadowed these national achievements.

### **Monumental Propaganda of War and Labor**

In 1967, the party-state passed new laws which forbade any religious belief. This made Albania the only atheist country in the world where exercise of religious practices was punishable.

This made possible the replacement of all the religious celebrations of the three religions, with the new atheist and socialist celebrations. Marxist-Leninist theory is included in this history of metaphysics as a new center that attempted to replace a former one, religion, offering a teleology and eschatology with scientific justification. The spread of atheism with every effort through propaganda and the education system in general and education in particular, aimed to create especially a new religious vacuum in the younger generation that would be filled with the mass faith in Marxism-Leninism and Communism.

Local and national celebrations were held to commemorate the party victories during the World War II, or they were dedicated to the hard work that was done to reconstruct the country and establish socialism. As a consequence, great attention was paid to impose different celebrations commemorating the dead in wars in name of the communist ideal, the so-called freedom martyrs, heroes and martyrs of homeland, exactly to rival and replace the martyrs of the religious beliefs. The places where these new national heroes fell, turned into points of gatherings, pilgrimages, celebrations or commemorations, now with new rituals, apparently different, but essentially as devotional as the previous ones commemorating religious martyrs. (photo no. 4, 5)



The cemeteries are perceived as places of sorrow and loss, where any discourse about hope is destroyed, a topos that makes us think that death was the end of hope. Michel Foucault<sup>19</sup> proposes the concept of an heterotopic space by allowing us to escape the rigid frame of conventional time and the phenomenology of death. This other dimension that we produce Foucault calls it heterotopia, as two present time-space in the same moment, but where in one we can't be a part of it concretely, but in a conceptual way.

<sup>19</sup> Michel Foucault, *Le Corps utopique – Les Hétérotopies*, Paris, Lignes, 2009

Exactly in the creation of this heterotopic space there are motives of self-denial, shed blood, hope, optimism and confidence in the "bright future" of communist society that generates the typology of martyrs graves.<sup>20</sup> (photo no.6)



The myth of the past aimed to make the present legitimate, while communist ideology joined a strict secular nationalism to serve as a single and unique platform.<sup>21</sup> The secretary of the Central Committee of the Albanian Labour Party, Ramiz Alia, considered as a vital component of the ideological and cultural revolution, the monumental propaganda dedicated to heroes of the Albanian war for freedom and independence, mainly of the National Liberation War led by the Communist Party of Albania. In a report titled: "*On The State and Measures for the Development and Further Revolutionization of monumental propaganda*" dating back to 1968, he states:

*“With the continuous care of the party and government for the preservation and further development of the patriotic and revolutionary traditions of our people, monumental propaganda acquires with us increasingly broader proportions for the immortalization of the most important events and figures, and is transforming into a powerful instrument for the reflection of the glorious history of our people and for the revolutionary and class education of the masses. Nowadays, beside the placement of hundreds of commemorative plaques, dozens upon dozens of lapidars, busts, statues, and monuments have been erected everywhere, reminding the traveller and visitor that the Albanian, as comrade Enver has said, has – sword in hand – cut the road of history in two, and that Albania has turned into a country of lapidars and construction sites”.*<sup>22</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Gëzim Qëndro, *The Thanatology of Hope, Lapidari*, Punctum Books, Brooklyn, NY & the Department of Eagles, 2015, pg.61.

<sup>21</sup> Fatos Lubonja, *Përpjekja*, no. 15, Tirana, 1999.

<sup>22</sup> Ramiz Alia, *Report on the State and Measures for the Development and Further Revolutionization of Monumental Propaganda*, AQSH, 1968, February 1

Evidences of the importance of such orientation were the investments and the continuous propaganda emanated from the party-state to “design” the entire cultural and physical Albanian landscape of the time through the erection of a variety of commemorating artworks such as monumental sculptures. Such examples were large monumental complexes such as the cemeteries of the WWII martyrs, (built without exception in all urban centres, in big or small cities, as well as in regional administrative centres) or large-size monuments that commemorated national assemblies or heroic battles. These new toponyms, that became part of the Albanian reality in 1945-1990, were planned and designed in the outskirts of the existing urban landscape, in their surroundings, mainly in those points that were easily visible from the level of the city, or that dominated above the lowlands beneath them, in which the inhabited centre laid. (photo no. 7).



In the report mentioned above, Ramiz Alia continues to be optimistic that: *“The places where objects of monumental propaganda have been placed have become the most effective centers for patriotic and revolutionary education of the masses, especially of the young generation. They are used by the party and mass organizations, and especially on the occasion of celebrations and anniversaries, as centers for the organization of a range of mass-political activities such as conversations, excursions, admission to the pioneer and youth organizations, etc”*.<sup>23</sup>

Apart from them, a significant number of monuments, memorial monuments, sculptures, smaller in size, or commemorative plaques designed the Albanian urban panorama, from public spaces at the urban centres to the furthest corners of the country. These structures were always thought to be imposing and clearly visible, especially their silhouette. The silhouette was strongly linked and dependent on the symbolic it represented. Thus, everywhere, the landscape of that period revealed such impositions even from far away. Likewise, sometimes, such sculptures came as a surprise as they became visible unexpectedly after strong road curves, in a sloping hill or mountain gorge, but they were always well-designed in the most coveted spot of the relief.

<sup>23</sup> Ramiz Alia, *Report on the State and Measures for the Development and Further Revolutionization of Monumental Propaganda*, AQSH, 1968, February 1

There were precise instructions from the party bodies and culture department of that time<sup>24</sup>, to respect, but if necessary to place the monuments at a different spot from the exact place of the event it commemorated. In such cases, it was very important that the monument was placed at the finest spot in the area or its surroundings.

Apart from the commemorative monuments with the five-pointed star on the top, at the end of the 60', new design elements, unseen before, were being increasingly introduced in the Albanian landscape, such as new high voltage transmission towers, made of metallic components which crossed rather visibly (even violently) through the entire landscape, fields, hills even mountains, especially in the 70', when the whole inhabited territory of the country was electrified.

### **“Use” of the Total Electrification in Albania**

Electrification in Albania culminated during the communist regime, in 1967 – 1971, and was one of the most prestigious projects of the Communist regime, part of a series of campaigns and continuous socio-economic policies which promoted the overall development of the country, modernization of life and hygiene, provided drinking water to each household, etc. Today, the electrification programme of the Communist regime, can be interpreted as well, as an ideological investment, aimed to show that Albania, albeit a small country could achieve and maintain the same progress as the other countries. Part of the propaganda vocabulary became the so-called “wires of the Party” which brought “the light of the Party” even in the deepest villages of the country. It was the “voice of the Party” that thundered from radios in each house. Electricity and propaganda were inseparable. Project dimensions were really impressive; 1,759 villages were electrified, more than 50,000 concrete pylons and about 330,000<sup>25</sup> out of woods were erected (photo no. 8).



It was no coincidence that it was planned and sacrificed enough for the electrification process to be all over the place and completed on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the founding of The PKSH, at that time called PPSH, in November 1971. Electrification was declared

<sup>24</sup> Muharrem Xhafa, Secretary of Labour Party, writes in the article named *Natural and Cultural Monuments during the Years of Socialism*: “...some of the most heard monument which make the country of Albanian people proud are: Monument of Skenderbeg in Kruja and Tirana, Monument of Lenin and Stalin in Tirana, Monument of Bajram Currit in Tropoja, Monument of Isa Boletini and Heroes of Vigu in Shkodra, Monument of Heroine of Mirdita, Monument of Congress of Përmeti, Monument of Mushqeta, Monument of Independence in Vlora, Monumental Ensemble of Cemeteries of Martirs in Tirana, Monument of Enver Hoxha in Tirana, Gjirokastra, Korca etc. *Lapidari*, Punctum Books, Brooklyn, NY & the Department of Eagles, 2015, Pg 53.

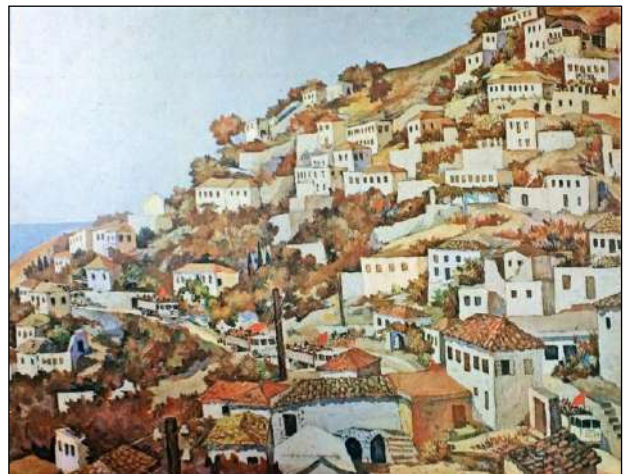
<sup>25</sup> *Electrification of Albania*, Albeuportal.



fully completed on October 25, 1970, day that was also declared as the “*Day of Light*”, where also the last village had electricity, a village in Myzeqe called Agim, thought out of propoganga that the name sounded as meaningful and symbolic. Enver Hoxha himself participated in the opening of the exhibition of figurative arts on electrification of the country at the Great Palace of Culture in Tirana in November 1970.<sup>26</sup>

As Stalin called the writers and artists “*engineers of the spirit*”, Hoxha, who copied him almost in everything he did, guided the artists: “*They must be Party's helpers in the revolutionary education of the masses*”. According to the socialist realism methodolgy, all the artists were entrusted with the task of reflecting on these changes occurring in the life of the country, preaching the construction of this new world. In this way, it was always intended for artists to be part of the propaganda supply with artistic images, illustrating a fictional reality that does not describe the truth, but rather the ideal described by ideology.

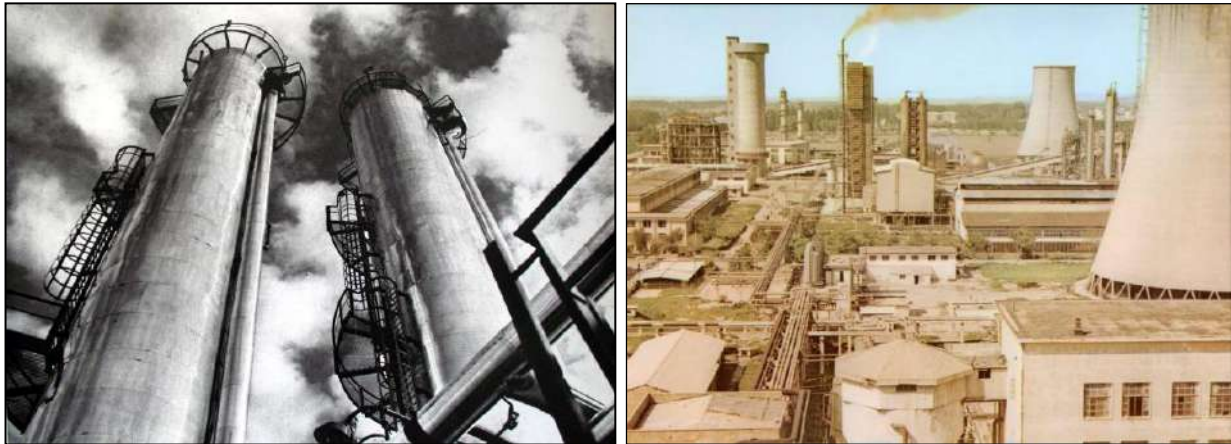
In the catalog of “*Albanian Figurative Arts*”, edition of 1978, this indoctrination is clearly apparent in the introductory text, in which it is generally spoken about the painting of socialist realism as well as the landscape as an important genre of it: “*Even landscape paintings capture new elements, brought by the socialist reality itself and expresses a new optimistic attitude towards nature in general. The colors are clean and the landscape view with the motive of electricity that is spread to every corner, in the wide landscape of “Light in the Highlands” of Agim Zajmi. The revolutionary spirit traverses the crowded houses one-on-one, glistening from the sun while through them passing red flagged trucks in the Qiriako Menikos “Thousands in Action” landscape*”.<sup>27</sup> (photo no. 9, 10)



<sup>26</sup> *Electrification of Albania*, Albeuportal.

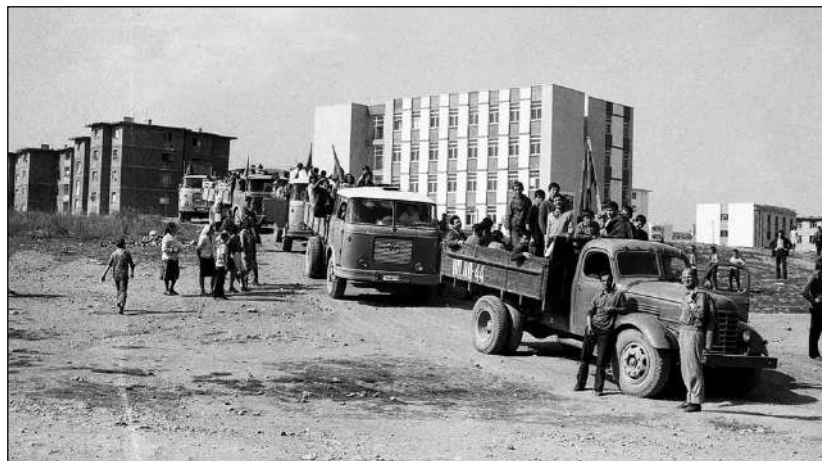
<sup>27</sup>Quote from introduction “*Albanian picture of our time*”, catalogue “*Albanian Figurative Arts*”, GKA, P.H “8 Nëntori”, Tirana, 1978.

Gigantic installations of high voltage transmission towers, everywhere in the rural landscape, were accompanied in a visual dialogue by the “*proud*” flues of small, medium and large industrial plants, positioned in the suburbs of the existing cities, but also in the new urbanised areas. (photo no. 11,12)



### Successes and Failures in Industrialization of the Country

Under the strategy of the country's planned development (inspired by Stalin's USSR strategies and policies), the Albanian communist government would give priority to the industry in relation to agriculture. The industry was considered as the “*core branch of the economy*” and within it, there would be a heavy industry priority that was the core and the main ambition of the country's “*socialist industrialization*” policy. The Albanian socialist economy was oriented mainly towards the development of mining industry, which was based on mineral extraction and processing found in the country, such as chrome, copper, coal, etc. This economy had as a function to adapt and to be adapted to the outside environment through work, production and resource distribution. The existing cities were expanded, but more attention was given to the growth of new urban centres, built according to the socialist planning of small industrial or mining cities, close to the sources of raw materials for these industries. (photo no.13)



These new urban areas, with their new standardized planning and architecture, almost the same everywhere, designed during the totalitarian period in Albania, provided a *"new face"* to these areas, albeit accompanied by a loss of identity, an emptiness and interruption of the continuity of *"the old"*, intervening with a clear ideological, historical, economic and social objective. This policy had its first successes, but as a path without prospects, it would fail in the 1990s as a regional eastern phenomenon in general.

In the last decade of the 1980s, the Albanian economy showed the signs of a total crisis, the country fell into a deep economic and financial collapse, and the centralized economy system no longer had the means to stop it. It was a crisis of the socialist system itself and consequently could not be resolved without changing it. These drawbacks were noticed in 1985 and forth, especially after the fall of the socialist system and the arrival of democracy in 1990. The immediate abandonment until ultimate degradation of these small inhabited areas was a consequence of the state's incapability to manage the local production in general and in particular the industrial production including mineral extraction and processing, production of military armaments, processing of agricultural products. As a consequence what followed was the economic collapse and extreme poverty in these towns built by the state according to the socialist strategy of urban planning (which proved to be wrong and short-lived) without taking into consideration their interaction with all the generating features, either organic, natural or even spontaneous, the dialogue of market offer-demand with participating or interested actors in the free migratory phenomenon for a better life. (photo no. 14)



### **Communist Graphic Propaganda and the Marks it Left in that Period's Landscape**

The use of space in general, as a *"theatre scene"* in which the stage was *"decorated"* with elements which helped, or obviously propagated the *"theatre subject"* of the Albanian March and the construction of socialism, the defence of the country against enemies and the unbreakable party-people unity, is obviously seen also in the dispersion of the graphical design of the political propaganda all over the country.

In the landscape of that time, not only the public space inside the inhabited areas, but everywhere in the rural landscape, especially along national roads, huge constructions of wood and steel were installed, covered by canvas or tin, in which ink slogans were written. Through these slogans the party “*advertised the propaganda as merchandise*”. (photo no. 15, 16)



Nowadays, this situation, imprinted in the collective memory or highlighted in the pictures taken at that time, would seem very paradoxical and you would clearly see the dichotomy between the slogan and the surrounding reality. Meanwhile, an advertisement (no matter how doubtful or untrue), should be hedonistic, seductive until temptation, in order to fulfil its mission of “*selling*” the product or its promotional slogan.

On the contrary these appearances are a clear evidence of the absurdity of that time that considered comfort as a sin, through inaeesthetic designs in all their comprising elements, starting with incorrect sizes or proportions relative to the selected area, weak materials that were used, writing styles that were more poorer than serious, or the dilettante drawings of symbols and figures, let alone the politicising texts, at times even ridiculous.

A typical occurrence of that time was also the intrusion (similar to the concept of “*Land-Art*” in the western countries) which was applied in the hills or mountain slopes, writing gigantic slogans such as: Enver, Glorious Party of Labour, Party-People, and Party-Enver, etc. Instructions and orientation was provided from “*above*”, detailed by the central government/ Party apparatus, and distributed to “*the base*” in districts and were executed by “*the masses*” in the entire country.

Such slogans were written in wide open areas so that they were visible from miles away, and they were accomplished through scraping the relief, cutting down bushes and transportation and installation of hundreds and thousands of heavy stones, painted in white, and decorated in such way to contrast to the grey background of the mountainous terrain.

The human resources, which were exploited for such major projects of special propagandistic importance, were mainly military units or volunteers of the Communist Sunday, composed of contingents of the working class and members of agricultural cooperatives, as well as students or pupils of all ages. (photo no. 17)



Looking at this occurrence of the cult of individual as an absurdity or as a paradigm of that totalitarian system, the contemporary artist Armand Lulaj, nearly forty years later (in 2014) developed his artistic project based on a postmodern approach to post-production, re-use or re-conceptualization of the phenomenon. Re-using this natural terrain once sealed from the dictatorship system (whose traces hadn't disappeared but only faded by time and natural agents), he "refreshed" and rewrote this "tattoo" in the mountain slope (Shpiragu mountain, in front of the city of Berat) with a slight difference, the artist finds a fascinating new presentation of the slogan interchanging the two letters E and N in their positions, thus the slogan ENVER is now transformed to NEVER.<sup>28</sup> (photo no. 18, 19)



<sup>28</sup> Armando Lulaj, *Albanian trilogy : A Series of Devious Stratagems*, Biennale di Venezia 56, Albanian Report, curator Marco Sconti.

## Pathology of Fear and “Bunker Concretization” of the Territory

In the mid 70' and 80', particularly after the break of the relations between Mao's China and Albania, everywhere in the country's landscape, especially along the green and blue border, it appeared abruptly and violently the absurd phenomenon of concrete bunkers. This was a new indicator of the pathology of a sick totalitarian regime, of its phobia of the “*enemies of the socialist revolution*” which seem to be (always according to this government and its leader) the entire capitalist and revisionist world.



Bunkers as a phenomenon continued for more than ten years planting thousands forms of armoured concrete domes, designed as gigantic mushrooms and extremely ugly, that never managed to establish an acceptable visual dialogue with the surrounding landscape. (photo no. 20)

During these years, (construction of bunkers started after 1974, intensified after 1980 and stopped only after the death of Enver Hoxha in 1985) more than 700,000 such bunkers were built, which covered each corner of the Albanian landscape, and were never used to defend from the enemies' attacks of the imperialists or revisionists aggressors, as such attack never happened. These military aggressions remained forever hypothetical, fed up by a strong nationalist and ideological propaganda, often false and extremely megalomaniac. Apparently, a pathological phobia of the leader Hoxha, immediately after the break with the Soviet Union, isolation of the country was accompanied with the fear of a possible attack from the western or eastern countries.<sup>29</sup> Disinformation and misrepresentation of the reality and national psychology reached its maximum with the introduction of slogan “*The Whole Nation as Soldiers*”. (photo no. 21, 22)



<sup>29</sup> Anjola Hamzaj, *Albanian Bunkers*, Feb 13.2014.

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In our days these bunkers are narratives of paranoia, dictatorship and absence of freedom. As reminiscences they remind us restrictions; even though each bunker was built in the name of freedom it actually limited it. Many of them, even after more than 25 years of democracy are still physically present in the country's landscape, serving as the last ghosts of communism. Today they exist only as shapes, because their meaning and function (which never justified themselves) fell together with the regime. Yet found everywhere in mountains and by the coast, the relationship of man with the bunkers is astonishing and surprising; some poor people, to make ends meet, "skin" these bunkers to extract and sell their steel, leaving the objects more awful than before. Some others, more clever, creative and contemporary, adapted to the capitalist, free-market economy, have changed their purpose, opposite to the previous one, revitalizing them into restaurants which are fascinating to the tourists and foreigners, Bars, Cafés, kiosks made of strong concrete where hamburgers and Coca-Colas are sold. However, there are other people who have rearranged these objects in dwelling facilities, taking care of them, for nostalgia or consider them as works of historic documenting values. (photo no. 23, 24)



Today bunkers are no longer part of a fortified defence, but concrete defilement of environment and their removal would have a high cost, due to the materials and special technology that was used for their construction.

These structures, already emptied by the symbolic and functional content, which look like cachalot fossils that are already extinct, are not only aesthetically unacceptable, but they create various obstacles for the development of the areas, expansion and construction of roads or new buildings, etc. Moreover, beyond the consequences they have on the space, they also influence our heterotopic collective memory, putting us under their pressure, under the emotional effects of a harsh dictatorial past. Their removal would be the removal of the only physical connection to the communist past.

## Conclusion

All these physical, voluminous, graphical, structural elements, (mentioned above) developed in space, for almost half a century, highly visible and omnipresent, nowadays as a urban archaeology, intertwining, installed, laid or immersed in the entire Albanian territory from north to south, from east to west, until the regime was still they were a part of the “*Structure*” and approach the “*Centre*”, made up the symbolic, composed the aesthetic of the socialist landscape of the time, the “*pride*” of designing the new Albania, that of the post WWII until the beginning of the 90’. After these years, as everything else in the new reality of the post-communist Albania even the landscape, destroyed and non-functional, emptied from the symbolic content it had, as a failure of the absurd trust on the historicism and the determinist plan for the communist Happy ending, will be introduced to new structural changes, different layers, almost unpredictable like in the positive sense of development, likewise in the misunderstandings. New urgent effort were noticed, for replacing previous anthropocentric centre, with a more reliable and hopeful new one. But in the new logocentric reality, proper orientation becomes even harder, because of the discourse or loss in faith at metanarratives and ideologies. The new changes were introduced in the landscape design, totally different, almost unpredictable, both in the positive sense of development and in the aspect of misunderstanding, invasion and violence to the environment with almost dangerous consequences, till irreparable damages caused by the anarchy and failure of rule of law and absence of environmental policies.

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