

## Internal Policy Aspects of the Communist Regime of Albania (1945-1990)



### History & Religious Studies

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### Abstract

This paper focuses on examining the fundamental characteristics of Albanian communist regime's internal policy. The essential and specific feature of this policy was deep interference in the social and cultural life of the country. The communist regime also extended the crackdown against institutions and religious ideology. This campaign took place in several phases. In the post-war years, when it felt insecure and faced with difficulties, the regime followed a relatively moderate policy towards religious institutions. While in the early 1950s, this campaign was harsh. Albanian Labor Party (ALP) and Enver Hoxha further strengthened their power. The state machine has perfected and intensified the system of violence. Legislative elections took on a completely formal character. The candidates for deputies, who had no competitors and the rulers, were appointed by the senior ALP leadership and state party nomenclatures. Voting was not secret and no one dared to vote against the candidate submitted by the ALP, as it would be considered as an enemy and had to suffer all the consequences. Through the occasional blow of adversaries or disgruntled elements, the regime created the psychosis of fear and insecurity. Within the centralization of economic life a number of influential reforms such as collectivization, the construction of agricultural cooperatives and the rise of heavy industry were undertaken in the rural household.

Albania was the only state in Eastern Europe where communists came to power alone. In other Eastern European countries were formed coalitions with the participation of all parties, except fascist parties, which were replaced gradually by the communists. This was mainly due to the civil war that had exploded in Albania in 1943-1944 and the victory achieved by the Communists. As Albanian communists did not want to share power with any other political group, they walked on the path of oppressing the opposition and establishing absolute rule.<sup>77</sup>

The establishment of the communist regime and the exclusion of other political actors from the electoral competition incited reactions from the anti-communist forces. To counteract these reactions, the Albanian Communist Party (ACP) leadership maneuvered by including some democratic elements and participants of the National Liberation Front and in the Anti-Fascist Liberation War on the joint list of "Democratic Front" candidates, which in fact was its own list. In addition to this list, some special candidatures of some nationalist elements were also presented. This was a fundamental difference with most of other Eastern nations where non-communist forces competed in a politically organized manner.

During the war the ACP, in accordance with the instructions of the Yugoslavian Communist Party, had defined the political platform of taking power and not sharing it with any other political force. She was determined not to allow the organization of her opponents in a competitive political party, although this was in conflict with a decision of the Anti-Fascist National Liberation Committee that allowed the formation of such parties and that came to law on forming political parties on December 2nd. This law, though some democratic elements, was quite restrictive for the formation of other parties. However, the foremost is that it was not implemented.

<sup>77</sup>Peter R. Prifti, *Socialist Albania since 1944*, The MIT press: Kembrixx, Mass, 1978, pp.22-23.

The law unduly prohibited the development of the legal activity of the BalliKombëtar and the Legality, thus excluding the two main anticommunist and nationalist forces from the political process and by intruding the regrouping of political opponents, which began to be labeled as former “Ballists” and the “ex- Legalists”, or as "rubbish" of the “Balli” and the “Legality”. Democratic forces were not only weak and well-organized, but as in all Eastern Europe even in Albania, after 1944, they had difficulty adjusting rapidly to the new order being constructed.<sup>78</sup>

In the years 1945-1946, while the Yugoslavs represented the left militant arm within the communist camp, the domestic and foreign policies of the Albanian communist government were far leftist than the Yugoslavs themselves.

The elections of December 2, 1945 were not democratic and free. They developed in a tense political climate in which the leadership of the ACP, through all the leverage of its power and primarily through the State Security, prevented the organization of the anti-Communist opposition and its emergence as a legal competitor in this election. Democratic forces, faced with the organized crackdown on communist power, failed to withstand it and organize themselves in a legal and effective political movement.

The Constitutional Assembly, which emerged from the elections of December 2, 1945, was almost completely overpowered by the ACP, which was a special case in the Eastern Europe where the communist regimes were undergoing.

Also, the ACP, which for tactical reasons and applying the Yugoslav directives was still disguised after the National Liberation Front, focused on its hands like no other communist party in Eastern European countries all the legislative, executive, and judicial powers.

In Albania, oppression of political opponents was one of the worst in the East. Immediately after the end of the war, a series of special trials were held in Albania against "war criminals". This term was originally used for those suspected of collaborating with the enemy, but quickly started to be used against those who had actively opposed the regime or who viewed it with antipathy. Unlike other countries, court proceedings were a real farce. The Special Court, which was set up in January 1945 in Tirana to prosecute "the great war criminals", was led by KociXoxe and held a series of spectacular processes that lasted several months condemning several hundred former politicians, civil servants, and ordinary people who refused to submit to the communist regime. The President of the Court and other judges did not have either a legal school or judicial experience. Similarly, judicial proceedings were not based on any notion of justice.

To spark a revolutionary wave in the country and to put pressure on the rest of the population, the hearers were organized and encouraged to express their thoughts and emotions on the degree of guilt and punishment of the accused, judicial form of retaliatory hysteria explosions.

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<sup>78</sup>Milorad Komatina, “Albania and the Balkan Meeting”, *Review of International Affairs*, 1988, p.244.

On the other hand, it should be noted that even anti-communist forces in the face of this harsh and frontal blow reacted in different ways, in some cases by organizing armed insurgency against the communist regime which have entered history as the first anti-communist uprisings in Europe.

In January 1945, opponents of the communist regime organized a movement in Northern Albania, which took the form of an uprising. The uprising began with an attack on Koplík, which was taken for a short time. The Army and State Security forces managed to recapture Koplík and destroy the armed groups operating near Shkodra. The uprising was crushed in a few days. In addition to its organizers, many ordinary people who had been opposed to the regime were convicted.<sup>79</sup>

After oppression of Koplík uprising, the regime's opposing forces did not end their resistance. A group of owners and intellectuals who supported the platform of the National Liberation Front and had taken an active part in the war but opposed the communist dictatorship tried to establish an opposition party within the Front. Among the representatives of this group, who were called "group of deputies" after the conviction, were GjergjKokoshi, RizaDani, ShefqetBeja, Selaudin Toto, FaikShehu and others.

Opponents of the communist regime, despite their wild repression increased their activity and in September 1946 again began an armed uprising in Postribë, GuriiZi (Shkodër) and in the city of Shkodra which aimed the overthrow of the communist regime and expected the support of Western powers. But even this movement was crushed. Another insurgency with reduced proportions exploded in Zhabokica of Tepelena.

In the years 1949-1953, at the initiative of Western governments, several groups of political fugitives who were intended to be transformed into the nucleus of anti-Communist resistance were sent to Albania. This operation failed due to the strict control exercised by E. Hoxha's government in the country and its decipher by British double agent Kim Filbi, who was at the center of the operation and transmitted all of his details to the Soviet KGB. This was the first and last diversified operation that the Western Powers organized against the communist regimes of the East during the Cold War.

The essential and specific tip of the domestic policy of the communist regime in Albania is deep interference in the social and cultural life of the country. The communist regime also extended the crackdown against institutions and religious ideology. This campaign went through some steps. In the early post war years the regime found insecure and faced with many difficulties followed a relatively moderate policy towards religious institutions. In the early 1950s, this attitude was severed. The Muslim cleric was the first to undergo state intervention and control. Schools and publications about Muslim faith were discouraged and the process of closing mosques began.

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<sup>79</sup>Hysamedin Feraj, *Skicë e mendimit politik shqiptar*, Shkup: Logos-A, 2010, f.458-459.

In the Orthodox Church the intervention was made by replacing the independent bishops with other ones who were loyal to the regime and had agreed to establish close relations with the Russian Orthodox Church in Moscow. While the Catholic Albanian community, though it was the smallest religious group in the country, suffered the worst suffering and blows. The Catholic Church's connections with the Vatican were undesirable and considered as an addiction to an external body, which was considered as the most determined enemy of the communist dictatorship. The fact that some of the harshest objections against the communist regime had come from Catholic areas strengthened the regime's orientation to destroy the Catholic Church. This was achieved through the campaigns of imprisonments and executions of the most influential bishops. Others were systematically discredited through a systematic and unscrupulous propaganda. The independence of the Catholic Church was finally eradicated in 1951 by the July decree, which broke up the ties with the Vatican and created a state-controlled subordinate church. The pressure on religious communities continued through methods such as the closure of churches and special mosques, clergy persecution, and intense propaganda against all forms of faith.<sup>80</sup>

Persecution against religious communities in various degrees had been present also in other communist states. While other regimes came to some modus vivendi with religious hierarchy after Stalin's death, the communist regime in Albania continued to move in the opposite direction.

In the 1950s, Albanian Labor Party (ALP) and E. Hoxha strengthened their control through the state machine which intensified the system of violence. Legislative elections took on a completely formal character. The candidates for deputies, who had no competitors as well as the rulers, were appointed by the senior ALP leadership and state nomenclatures. Voting was not secret and no one dared to vote against the candidate submitted by the ALP. Through the occasional shocks of opponents or unsatisfied elements, the regime created the psychology of fear and insecurity. The most typical case was the execution of 23 Albanian intellectuals in February 1952 after the explosion that took place at the Soviet Embassy in Tirana. These intellectuals had previously entered the black list of State Security and were executed though they had no connection to the aforementioned event. During the entire communist regime thousands of people lost their lives for political reasons, were shot without trial, died in prisons, (or in the investigator and in internment), were killed at an attempt to escape at the border or at strike with police and army forces. By strictly implementing Stalin's messages, Enver Hoxha's main attention was devoted to the strengthening of the state apparatus and especially to the bodies of the Interior Affairs and State Security.

The regime's policies had a specific severity also in the economic sphere. Thus, by the law of January 13, 1945, extraordinary tax was imposed on the winnings of war. The tax was subjected to all traders and industrialists, who during the occupation had realized over 500,000 Albanian francs. Extraordinary tax on war profits was also implemented in several other European countries, but in Albania it was severe affecting the legitimate profits and even the very core capital itself. During tax enforcement, state bodies carry out a number of arbitrary actions. Those

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<sup>80</sup>*Martirizimi i kishes katolike shqiptare 1944-1948*, Shkodër, 1993, f.26.

traders who opposed the tax were punished with confiscation of property, imprisonment, or by execution.

After defining the path of the country's socialist development, the leadership of the ACP prepared the economic development program which was widely based on the Stalinist model of developing a centralized economy. It was implemented consistently and much faster than in some other Eastern European countries. The essence of the program was the complete replacement of private property by collective or state property.

Along the road to the destruction of private property, the ACP during 1945-1946 implemented a radical agrarian reform. The land was given to the villagers only to use it as the owner was the communist state. The villagers had no right to sell the land, neither let it be inherited nor lease it.

After 1948, a more radical policy of collectivization was followed and the Soviet model was fully implemented. As a result, collectivization took the purest form of the nationalization of property. The peasants were left to use only a small plot of land, a limited number of livestock, etc., which constituted the cooperative yard.<sup>81</sup>

The process of collectivization of the village in the 1950s slowed down and its conclusion was repeatedly extended by the communist government. Collectivization was made difficult first and foremost because it was not desirable for the villager, as he threw it out of the means of production and denied the right to free work. The Albanian peasant, in the vast majority, had historically been the owner of the land and the category of landless farmers was small. So, he did not believe that by joining the means of production he would have better economic results. For these reasons, it was difficult to integrate the peasantry into agricultural cooperatives. So, the main way to collectivize was the obligation and manipulation of the villagers. Alongside numerous and often fantastic promises for the future, various forms of pressure and violence were used, among which the labeling of the most respected villagers who had the greatest property as the “kulak”, undesirable and suspicious people of power. The peasantry made resistance to various forms of collectivization, but generally it was passive and ineffective.

By the end of 1959, the collectivized area reached over 83 percent of the country's land. In this way, Albania had made the most radical steps throughout the Communist East, where the process of collectivization was carried out in smaller proportions. So, in Poland until this time only 15 percent of the land was collectivized. Only Bulgaria, which had cooperated 92 percent of the agricultural land, was ahead of Albania.

Always based on the Soviet model, the ALP defined as the main direction of the development the socialist industrialization economy. According to Stalinist orientation, heavy industry would be developed with the exception of any element of the market economy and subject to the process of concepts and political interests. The implementation of this orientation

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<sup>81</sup>Peter R. Prifti, *Socialist Albania since 1944*, p.28.

was particularly difficult and costly for our small country. Industrialization absorbed numerous monetary means, which burdened almost in the wake of the lifestyle of the population.

The regime achieved significant successes in the development of pre-university education, which extended to everyone in the country. By the end of the 1950s, higher education began but remained relatively limited by the end of the regime. For this reason, Albanians started to improve their expectations by claiming for university education. But on the other hand, this was an impossible target for a part of the population that were considered to be adversaries of dictatorship, because of blood links or origins from the “kulak” family, fugitives abroad, expropriated, prisoners, internships etc. The programs and content of the school were an adaptation of the Soviet ones. Through holding this eastern experience for a long time, they left the Albanian school behind the progress of education that took place in the West. The programs and content of the learning process were intended to form political people, educate class division and hatred groups.<sup>82</sup> They were deficient or shallow in forming new generations of civilization, humanity and national feelings. The flagrant case was the failure to include in the school program the history, geography, folklore, culture etc. of Albanian lands fragmented and annexed by neighboring states.

In the 1960s and 1970s, higher education structures were strengthened and secondary education expanded especially with a dialectical profile. However, especially in the middle-aged schools, which were opened day by day and correspondence in almost every agricultural cooperative was noted a decrease of interest in learning and the level of preparation of students.

Despite numerous technical shortcomings and profound politicization, ideological discrimination, and militarization of the Albanian education system, it achieved remarkable success in terms of its inclusion. While in 1938 there were around 56000 people, in 1975, the total number of pupils and students was 700000, or 1/3 of the total population of the country.

In 1967 a new educational reform which was part of the Cultural Revolution was also implemented. A strict ideological control over the texts and works of local and foreign literature was implemented. The reform ended in 1972 and was very radical. Its essence was the establishment of the Marxist-Leninist ideological axis in the foundation of the entire teaching process and its basic components were: productive work, teaching and military training. This reform implemented by Albanian schools was similar to the Chinese "half-work, half-study" schools.

In the 60s and 70s, all the communist bloc countries initiated liberalizing reforms. Thus, the liberation of political prisoners began, political cleansing campaigns were cut off, liberal arts and literature were liberalized. Albania continued to go in the opposite direction, by strengthening the repressive character of the regime, maintaining its loyalty to the brutal Stalinist methods of government, and even practicing these methods according to the Chinese Cultural Revolution model. Under the influence of this revolution, the campaign "for the further revolutionization of

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<sup>82</sup>Enriketa Kambo, “Fillimet e riorganizimit të sistemit arsimor (1960-1963)”, *Studime Historike*, 2007, nr.3-4, f.91-93.

the whole life of the country" started in Albania. There were distinct differences among them. While Mao Ce Dun relying on the military, focused on the destruction of the Communist Party and especially the intelligence; EnverHoxha, strengthened the control over the party by striking the army and the Interior Ministry.<sup>83</sup>

The ALP encouraged and undertook the so-called "revolutionary" political, ideological, economic and social movements which aimed at creating all the conditions for its absolute political rule.

Among these movements it is distinguished the one against the religion. Through the manipulation of youth and population it was aimed the removal of the last obstacle to their political and ideological indoctrination. The anti-religion movement was a violent communist anti-human crusade. Its objectives were: the liquidation of religious institutes, the ban on the official functioning of the clergy, the categorical prohibition of religious rites and the propagation of religion. This campaign took vulgar treatment with the destruction of the objects of worship and of many works of significant cultural and museum value. For her cruelty the campaign against religion was unprecedented throughout the communist East. Albania was declared the only country in the world without church and without mosque.

The campaign for women's emancipation was the only one that had a constructive element within it. Before the liberation of Albania over 90% of women were illiterate and treated as second-class citizens. Although Zog's government had issued and started implementing laws on women's full equality with men, the norms and old habits hampered and slowed down the process. The communist government sought to make the issue of women's emancipation a revolutionary source to mobilize as many people as possible and to create sounder support for its politics, especially in the most conservative regions of the country,. The campaign also aimed to make Islam and Christianity responsible for keeping women in an inferior and backward situation.

Intellectuals were the next target of "revolutionization". After persecuting and hitting the old intelligence, the regime forced most of the country's famous writers, artists and scientists to work in factories and agriculture to "educate" and "strengthen ties" with the working class and with the peasantry. Indeed, this was an extreme action aimed at subjugating intelligence and drowning the aspirations of the new generation of intellectuals for more freedom of thought and expression. After the collapse of relations with the Soviet Union, EnverHoxha took a tougher stance on cultural issues. Soviet and Eastern influences started to be considered as ideologically and politically dangerous. In these circumstances writers and intellectuals were found under the mercy of EnverHoxha's personal opinions and prejudices and the close circle of his mediocre helpers. This policy closed and removed even more the Albanian culture from the currents of contemporary civilization and from the progressive European and world culture. Dubcek's reforms in Czechoslovakia in 1968 and the student movement against the Gomulka regime in Poland were

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<sup>83</sup>*Historia e Shqipërisë*, Tiranë: Akademia e Shkencave e Shqipërisë, 2007, vëll.IV, f.67.

of great concern to EnverHoxha. The main outcome of the four years of the "revolutionary" campaign in Albania (1966-1969) was destructive.<sup>84</sup>

Serious scholars of modern dictatorships have noted that these regimes regard as their enemies some "islands of separatism" such as: family, intelligence, private property, churches, universities, etc., which are areas of society that are not completely under the regime's control. They are the source of dissatisfaction and opposition to the regime's authority. All the totalitarian governments have made great efforts to divert these potential centers of resistance against their power, but few dictatorships like EnverHoxha's regime have been trying so hard or gone so far as to get rid of these "islands". This has been a fundamental feature of the regime's internal policies, which has had serious consequences that have been felt noticeably during the post-communist transition.

In the social sphere there were specific policies which had both positive and negative civilization effects. The communist reforms of the 1960s damaged the whole social structure of the country, family rules and provincial traditions, which had been under threat from the regime's policy for years. Collectivization, socialist industrialization, education development, population movement in cities, oppression of religious practices greatly influenced the erosion process of the former social structure. Especially the great patriarchal family was rapidly weakening. Even in some remote areas where it continued to exist, it lost its power, prestige and respect. The rules and customs of marriage underwent radical positive changes. The regime strongly opposed the engagement of adolescents. Though these engagements diminished greatly, old customs continued mainly with the intervention of the parents or the mediation by a third party, and in most cases, the consent of the youth was also taken. Muslim and Christian marriages were added, though they have not yet become a prevalent phenomenon. Since the 1970s about half of high school students and 40% of university and college students were girls. The percentage of divorces in Albania was also among the lowest in Europe. Abortion was illegal. However, patriarchal behavior was not completely eliminated. At home the woman was subjected to the old prejudices and the power of the man. There were times when girls were not allowed to choose their own partner. There was a huge drop in murder for blood feuds, as well as for other serious crimes. This was largely devoted to the harsh penalty that the state gave to the criminals of these crimes, but also to the improvement in the level of education and propaganda.<sup>85</sup>

During this time the ideological pressure on the population becomes more powerful. Anything that contradicted Marxist-Leninist ideology and the ALP line was criticized and condemned. Party organizations and its levers, social organizations, were entirely oriented towards the implementation of this task. Unlike other communist countries of Eastern Europe where, after Stalin, the role of the organizations of the masses and bodies of dictatorship diminished, in Albania this role increased. In 1967 EnverHoxha defined them as essential components of the

<sup>84</sup>Enver Hoxha, *Raport në Kongresin e VII të PPSH*, Tiranë: 8 Nëntori, 1976.

<sup>85</sup>Elez Biberaj, *Albania : a socialist maverick*, Boulder: Westview, 1990, p.67.

dictatorship of the proletariat and as a party tool to control the whole life of the country and the entire population. But the main weapon was the State Security which had horrified the population.

In 1973 the regime went from the stage of criticism to concrete actions, condemning many writers and artists. In the 1960s and 1970s, the number of convicts and persecuted politicians increased significantly, especially on the basis of the article "for publicity and propaganda against the state". Through this infamous article anyone who expressed a dissatisfaction or personal opinion could be punished even for insignificant problems which would not endanger the regime at all. In Albania, as in any other communist country, the punishment had a prominent collective character. Following the punishment of those who were considered guilty and qualified as enemies, their families and relatives were relinquished from work and occupation, internally displaced and discriminated openly in all directions, and often challenged to be punished.

The distinctive feature of the 60s-70s is the sharpening of the "class war". Enemies of the regime were sought and disposed everywhere, even among senior party and state officials. This was the way the regime had chosen to survive.

Even the strike in the field of literature and arts was quite wide. This affected not only a considerable number of creators, but created a suffocating and repressive psychosis in this sector. Liberalizing trends that began to emerge in the 1970-1973 were severely hit and drowned since the beginning.

The Albanian cultural and scientific life remained detached from the rest of the world. There was a considerable creative potential in the country but it was opposed to official restrictions. Albania was the place where culture, science, and literature underwent the most radical control. While in the Soviet Union after Khrushchev's coming to power writers and dissident artists were expelled abroad; in Albania, they were imprisoned or even executed as was the case of the firing of two new poets, Vilson Biloshmi and Martin Leka. Scientific fields such as philosophy, history, economics, and literature were widely controlled.

Albania is a country that has been convicted by international organizations for the extensive implementation of the forced labor system. Mandatory work was initially introduced by a government order in August 1947, which mobilized all the persons who had served in the pre-war administration. Shortly afterwards, this policy was reflected in the Labor Code which gave authorities widespread power to include all Albanians from 16 to 50 years old. An amendment which made the penal system an integral part of the government's plan to organize compulsory labor to a greater extent was added in September 1952 to the Labor Code. "Faults" such as job shortages, failure to execute production plan, and low quality production were punished by 6 months to 4 years of forced labor or internment in re-education camps. According to an account made by Amnesty International in January 1976, Albania had 18 working political camps.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>86</sup>Arshi Pipa, *Stalinizmi shqiptar*, Tiranë: Princi, 2010, f.150.

Strengthening the dictatorial character of the communist state and deepening the very leftist line of the ALP were reflected and sanctioned in the 1976 Constitution. The content of this constitution indicated that Albania's Stalinism went further than in other communist countries, even farther than the Stalinist regime in the Soviet Union. The 1976 Constitution was unique throughout Europe for its repressive character and for denying human rights. It aimed to perpetuate the communist dictatorship and the political power of the ALP and its leading clique.<sup>87</sup> It proclaimed Marxist-Leninist ideology as the only ruling ideology in the country, and the class struggle "as a great driving force in society." Like no other constitution it sanctioned the self-isolation of the country and the tendency in Albania's relations with the West and the East. It definitely banned the normalization and establishment of relations with the US and the Soviet Union, the introduction of foreign capital and investments into Albania, the taking of loans and loans etc. The 1976 Constitution completely ignored the Albanian national issue. Albanians living outside the borders of the Albanian state were not mentioned in it. In this way, the communist leadership further sanctioned its policy of releasing neighboring chauvinists for the sake of its narrow governmental interests.

In the 1960s and 1970s the policy of the nationalization of property, which had the greatest intensity until 1960, was intensified. Thus, in 1969 the cooperating process of craftsmen was completed and in the years 1969-70 the crafts cooperatives turned into state-owned enterprises. In 1967 some deep mountain areas were collectivized and the whole process of collectivization in the village was completed. It led to the liquidation of private property in the village and eliminated the path of development of the agricultural economy according to the laws of the market which was accompanied in the coming years with serious economic, political and social consequences.

Unlike other countries in the East, although Albania favored natural conditions, there were no signs of life in the field of tourism due to isolationist politics.

The Albanian press was one of the most boring and less informative media in the Eastern Europe. The general tone of the press was propagandistic and militant. Introducing internal and external news was done in a highly selective and tensed manner. This state of affairs incited an increasing apathy of readers, especially that of educated young people.

Despite this press and radio development, Albanians were almost totally deprived of true news and contemporary information. They could not read the foreign press which was forbidden or reserved. The only real opportunity for the world to hear was the listening of foreign radio and television programs, which the regime, with all the great efforts it made could not completely block it.

In the first half of the 1980s, the country's economic growth was halted. For the first time, the structures of the Albanian economy were put to the test of survival and self-development and the result was a complete failure. This failure was deeper and more painful in Eastern countries.

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<sup>87</sup>Arshi Pipa, *Stalinizmi shqiptar*, f.151.

Of course, Albania had taken significant steps in the process of industrialization, but its quality was poor and the political price that had to be paid was expressed in a ruthless dictatorship, terrorism and forced labor camps. The regime managed to keep its consumption low and maintained a relatively high level of investment, which fell during 1978-1985. The whole system was based on the use of agriculture, which provided surpluses for exports. This was not the appropriate path to the country's development, since it was paid at such a high price of human suffering. The growth of living standard in Albania was slower and could not be compared with Western Europe.

In all sectors of the economy, mainly in agriculture, the interest in labor was at critical levels. This phenomenon was associated with several damages to cooperative property. In 1979, it was found that 50 percent of cooperative families were fined or sentenced for theft. To mitigate the lack of interest in working in agricultural cooperatives, the communist leadership decided to deepen its policy of expropriation and nationalization. Thus, after having consistently reduced the cooperative yard (its average surface area in Albania at that time was 700 m<sup>2</sup> for a peasant family), it undertook an overly radical measure: the swarming of cattle in the countryside and the maximum reduction of the yard. The swarming was an anti-populist reform that was hated by the Albanian peasant, but dictatorship exercised so much pressure on the peasantry that there was no resistance to it. This was actually a violent expropriation that led to massive livestock damage. It was accompanied by mass slaughter of livestock in flocks and the decline in livestock production was increased. It led the economic crisis to the countryside at critical levels and was accompanied by the intensification of the phenomenon of abandonment of the village in search of a job in cities and industrial centers.

Before the swarming process, the cooperative yard gave 60% of milk production and its by-products, while the cooperative sector provided only 40%. At the end of 1981, about 40% of the cattle and 8% of the cooperative yard cattle were slaughtered. A year later the number of cloven-hoofed animals was reduced to 60% as a result of discarding or of the cooperative flocks.

While other communist-era countries were making significant changes in the spectrum of human rights and freedoms, the Albanian leadership did not give any sign of change. It even legalized some regressive measures that had been applied extensively until then. In September 1986, through a special decree of the People's Assembly sanctions were imposed on deportations of many Albanian families.

While in the Western Europe, the social state that had managed to provide enough food, shelter for all categories of the population, and which constituted the greatest social progress over many centuries; at the end of the 80s, Albania was facing seriously with massive hunger and a livelihood approaching many miseries. More than 60% of the population lived below the poverty line. This was also a major distinction between the East and West after 45 years of communism.

Also, social life had serious problems. Though some of the healthy side of the Albanian family had been preserved, the society was faced with acute problems. Essential changes were

taken in the social and cultural emancipation of women. She occupied a distinct place in medicine, education, and so on. Though there was almost complete legal and political equality with the husband, this equality became formal as the political rights in Albania were very limited for both sexes. However, the Albanian woman was not completely liberated from oppression. In the cities it worked as much as men - 8 hours in factories, etc. Similarly, she had to work as long to afford housework which was extremely severe in the conditions of heavy shortage of furniture and household appliances, and difficult hygienic-sanitary conditions. The most regressive phenomenon occurred in the village. The agriculture collectivization rescued the rural woman from the traditional isolation of the woman. However, the increasingly large number of men leaving agriculture enforced the woman to become the pillar of Albanian agriculture, doing a lot of heavy work and working long hours ranging from 11 to 15 hours a day. In Albania, the state became omnipresent and omnipotent. This influenced social and political servitude.

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