

# Albania and Europe in a Political Regard



# Albania and Europe in a Political Regard

Edited by

Klodiana Beshku and Orinda Malltezi

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**P U B L I S H I N G**

Albania and Europe in a Political Regard,  
Edited by Klodiana Beshku and Orinda Malltezi

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## PREFACE

*Albania and Europe in a Political Regard* is a multidisciplinary work which aims to develop different points of view in the field of social sciences. In this sense, it is not by chance that the chapters cover a variety of different disciplines like history, sociology, political science and philosophy. These chapters stand alone and at the same time create a whole sphere of relationships between Albania and Europe.

An important element of this work is the multidimensional considerations of Europe. For instance, sometimes it is considered a continent, sometimes an organization, sometimes a concept, and other times a leader. In some chapters, Europe means the European integration or the European civilization. In others, Europe is simply the idea of Europe and its reflections in the Albanian society. The main axis that drives through the chapters is Albania in relation to Europe—how it resembles it, how it has worked in the past, and how it works today.

Starting with contemporary history, the chapter by Sofokli Meksi, “The Modernization of the Albanian Totalitarian Nature—A Survey of the Pattern of Modernity in the Ideology and Practice of the Stalinist State in Albania,” represents a critical treatment of the Albanian totalitarian experience as a result and an alternative to European modernity. The author calls the relationship of these two concepts an “antinomy,” which is very interesting considering the fact that the totalitarian Albanian regime of fifty years has not yet been studied in terms of “an alternative and extreme form of modernization,” as the author puts it.

Another contemporary question still in dispute between Albania and its neighbour Greece is treated by Orinda Malltezi in “Low Albania and Europe, 1912–1921.” The article is based on Albanian efforts in solving the case of Chameria and the responses of the Great Powers. It analyzes the triangle of struggles beginning with the impact of the Albanian political situation to its partition, continuing with the pressures of its neighbours and the Great Powers, and finishing with their actual role, also treating the application of political theories in the given geopolitical situation.

This book continues with other questions, not just contemporary ones. “Misused European Nannies Advice—‘Albanian Case’” by Merlinda Hoço brings out a very interesting perspective—the “nanny rapport”

created between European representatives and the Albanian political elite, which can sometimes be counterproductive and abusive, but at other times very helpful and fruitful. The author talks about a “change in the political philosophy of the integration process” which is accurately analyzed in this chapter.

The following chapter, “Albania and the Western Balkans in the European Context at the Beginning of the Nineties—How did the Normative Power of the European Community/Union Affect Them?” by Klodiana Beshku, continues in a similar perspective but from a different point of view. The European Union is seen as a normative factor for Albania and the rest of the Western Balkans. As the author points out, “the scholars have mainly discussed what the European Union has not done. Rarely have we discussed what the European Union and Community has done well on the managing of that conflict.” By analyzing the role of the European Community and Union in the dissolution of the former Yugoslavia and in Albania during the period 1990–1995 and how the Balkan nationalists were perceived by the rest of Europe, this chapter indicts the European Union as a soft power in a multi-national world.

The idea of how the European Union legitimizes itself as an “embodiment of Europe” and how the European Union is perceived from Albania and Albanian intellectuals is largely treated in the fifth Chapter, “I am Europe!”—The Meaning of Europe in the Discourse of Intellectuals in Transitional Albania,” written by Enis Sulstarova. The author analyzes the contradictory idea of Europe as a producer of nation-states, but at the same time, calling for European unity against the divisions of nation-states. The interesting point is how Albania reshapes itself through this contradiction.

The idea of Europe comes in a different and critical perspective in the chapter written by Arlind Qori, “The Idea of Europe as a Nodal Point of the Albanian Ideology.” This chapter covers both the cultural-civilization and the political-institutional aspects of the idea of Europe and how it has been affecting the Albanian reality. As the author points out, “This essay aims at critically analyzing the Albanian ideology of the last twenty years, understanding it as a discourse, used in the public sphere from intellectuals, the political elite and reflected in the common people. These discussions, which aim to hegemonize the discourse by constituting a centre (nodal point), is in our case embodied in the idea of Europe ....”

Another interesting approach to how Europe is perceived, not only from Albanian intellectuals but also from the Albanian people and society, emerges from the essay by Hysamedin Feraj, “The Greatness of Smallness—Wish and Will.” The author himself summarizes his work in these

terms: “The main argument of this article is developed around the implications of our being mostly self-grounded in desire instead of free will. This means that we, Albanians, do ‘wish,’ but do not ‘will’ our integration into the EU; that we see and experience the EU as an object of desire, i.e. as something out there, ready to be enjoyed for the sake of our pleasure, without taking over burdens and responsibilities to build that kind of society in our own country, as authors of our own self. So far, the consequence of this is that Albanians, contrary to being the first in the region in their wish to join the EU, are the last people on the waiting list to become a ‘candidate’ for EU membership. This ‘strange’ negative correlation between desire and achievement is a challenge for new ways of understanding and interpreting our own self.” In an interesting way, the author analyzes through the optic of philosophical discourse the truths and the paradoxes of the Albanian discourse concerning the European integration.

Europe and the Western cultural debate is considered by Ledian Rusta in “An Albanian Discourse Concerning the Conception of ‘Europe’ and the Approach of Edgar Morin and Jacques Derrida about European Cultural Identity.” The author brings out the scholarly debate about defining the cultural identity of Europe and also the reflections of this debate from prominent Albanian scholars which start with the Albanian language and continues through religion, Albanian history and Albanian society.

The last two chapters mostly represent an empirical way of dealing with Albania and Europe. The article by Prof. Assoc. Merita (Vaso) Xhumari, “Pension Reforms in the Western Balkans in the Context of EU Integration” is an example of how integration into the European Union is shaping the political and institutional aspects of the Albanian reality. The author describes how “building up new pension schemes or remodelling the existing ones to respond to the new political, economic, social and demographic realities in the Western Balkan countries remains one of the priorities in the field of social policy.” It is interesting to see how pension reforms influence the Western Balkan countries in the management of the social risks, unemployment and economic development. It emphasizes how much these countries need to design a new regional framework in order to address some common issues.

Prof. Assoc. Aleksandër Kocani wrote our last chapter, “The Value Profile of Albanian Society in a European Context (A Perspective of ‘Survival/Self-Expression’ Values).” It is about a parameter which is strongly connected to the quality of the consolidation of democracy in the post-dictator regime in Albania—the electorate portion of voting people,

how it is constituted and how it acts. There have been many recent studies on this argument and the present chapter is a further contribution on the investigation of the changing dynamics of the value profile of social actors who make up the electorate of the Albanian society.

This book is a further contribution to the relationship of Albania and Europe, now and in the past. It has come together in the moment when the first century of Albania's independence is celebrated, and we hope it meets all the criteria of being a valuable commodity to the scholarly debate about Albania, the Western Balkans, and European integration. All the contributors of this book are members of the Faculty of Social Sciences of the University of Tirana, and as members of this institution we hope that this book will be another brick in the wall of public knowledge.

## CONTRIBUTORS

**Sofokli Meksi** is a lecturer at the Political Science Department, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Tirana. He graduated in Political Sciences at the Catholic University of Rome. From 2006 to 2008 he was a lecturer at the Faculty of History at the University of Tirana, and he is currently a Ph.D. candidate at the same university. His field of interest is the Albanian totalitarian system.

**Orinda Malltezi** started her Ph.D. studies on January 2010 at the Political Science Department, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Tirana. In March 2008 she earned the master degree in Management of International Projects from the International Economics Department, Bucharest Academy of Economics. In 2003, she earned a bachelor degree in International Relations at the Faculty of Applied Economics and Business, the Eastern Mediterranean University. Orinda Malltezi is a lecturer at the Political Science Department, University of Tirana since 2004. The author's main field of interest is International Relations and Regional Studies. Her field of studies is mainly focused on the Albanian relations with the states who shaped and contributed to its developments. She is the author of various articles on the field, such as "Albanian transition and the case of Chameria," "The impact of European Court of Justice on the EU member states" etc. She started her academic carrier in 2003 as a researcher in the field of Albanology.

**Merlinda Hoço** is a full-time lecturer at the University of Tirana, Faculty of Social Science, Political Science Department. She is currently lecturing master's level courses such as European Union Administrative, Democracy, Society and Political Elite Transformations in Southeast European countries. Her academic background and field research interest areas are Politics in Transition, Transformations of Political Elite, International Development and Economic Development.

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**Enis Sulstarova (Ph.D.)** lectures in the Sociology Department of the University of Tirana on politics of identity, nationalism, citizenship and sociology of work. He has published several books in Albanian, among them a study of Albanian Orientalism from the late nineteenth century to the twenty-first century and another study on the idea of Europe in the discourses of European and Albanian public intellectuals.

**Arlind Qori** has been a lecturer at the Political Science Department, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Tirana since 2004. His field of interest is Political Philosophy. He teaches political Philosophy, History of Political Thought, Theories of Democracy and Postmodern Political Discourse. He is the author of various articles published mainly at the Faculty's journal *Politikja* and *Revista e Shkencave Sociale*. He is also the author of the book *Leksione në historinë e mendimit politik (Lectures in the History of Political Thought)*. He is a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Tirana.

**Hysamedin Feraj (Ph.D.)** is a lecturer and the head of the Department of Political Sciences at the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Tirana, Albania. He teaches a masters course in Political Theories, his lectures focussing on the Philosophy of Human Beings and Politics and Multiculturalism, Nationalism and Citizenship. His publications include *An Outline of Albanian Political Thought* (1998), *The Perfected Crisis in Albania* (2003), *Political Sciences—an Introduction* (2004) and *The Non-Philosophied* (2011).

**Ledian Rusta** has been a lecturer in the Faculty of Social Sciences in the Department of Philosophy at the University of Tirana since 2005. His areas of interest are communication, hermeneutics, philosophical logics and epistemology. He is the author of the monograph *Thus spoke Nietzsche* (2006) and participated in many national and international scientific conferences.

**Merita (Vaso) Xhumari (Ph.D.)** is Professor at the Department of Political Sciences, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Tirana. In 1997 she completed a Ph.D. in Sociology at the same university. In 2002 she obtained a Masters in European Social Security from the Catholic University of Leuven, Belgium. Since 1986, she has been a lecturer at the University of Tirana, Albania, and at the same time has been engaged as a researcher and consultant for many international organizations, such as the World Bank, the EU Commission, ILO, the UN, the Helsinki Committee, etc. She is the author of the text book for students of the Faculty of Social Sciences *Procesi dhe Institucionet e Politikës Sociale* (Social Policy Process and Institution), published by the University of Tirana in 2003, and in 2010 she was awarded the title of Professor Associate by the university. She recently authored *Pension Trajectories in Western Balkans 1990–2010*, published in 2011 in both the English and the Albanian language, and is the author of many articles presented at international events.

**Aleksandër Kocani (Ph.D.)** is a lecturer of Epistemology and Research Methods at the University of Tirana, Albania. His fields of study include the philosophy of science, voting behaviour, value system (or value profile for social actors), especially dealing with the measurement of error in quota sampling or the absence of anonymity for respondent while asking delicate questions. His publications include several monographs in the philosophy of physics, value systems etc. and university textbooks on epistemology, the history of science, research methods, and using SPSS. He has published several scientific articles on the above-mentioned subjects published in different scientific reviews both at home and overseas. He has carried out about forty studies, both alone and in collaboration. In the meantime, he contributes to the Albanian daily press through over one hundred critical articles.



**PART I:**

**ALBANIA AND EUROPE  
THROUGH CONTEMPORARY HISTORY**



## CHAPTER ONE

# MODERNIZATION OF THE ALBANIAN TOTALITARIAN NATURE: A SURVEY OF THE PATTERN OF MODERNITY IN IDEOLOGY AND PRACTICE OF THE STALINIST STATE IN ALBANIA

SOFOKLI MEKSI

### **Origin Denied**

The critical treatment of the Albanian totalitarian experience as a result and an alternative of European modernity is seemingly an antinomy. This is because usually in the Albanian public discourse of the post-communist years (but in fact, earlier on the grounds of anti-communist opposition), the Stalinist political model was published as an antithesis to those economic and political elements typical of modern European civilization, where the emphasis was put on the free market and capitalist method of production, on the welfare of social materialism based on high levels of consumption, as well as on legal guarantees, compared to previous historical periods of individual and collective freedom of thought and social criticism against the government. Implementation of the Soviet model in Albania, under this view, represents not only an outrage to the historical traditions of Albanian society, but also a deviation from the path of its “natural” policy towards the Western European model.<sup>1</sup> Thus, this period was anathema as an accidental political experience, but unfortunately a whole nation “was taken hostage” by a small minority of extremists who imposed their will on the majority. They were helped by the historical circumstances and the international ideological manipulation of the population, consisting of an illiterate peasant majority and the extreme use of state violence on the population.<sup>2</sup>

Others identified the origin of Albanian Stalinism to certain elements

of political culture, deeply rooted in the historical consciousness of the Albanians. Under this view, the origin of Albanian Stalinism was identified as “eastern” cultural heritage, specifically Ottoman-Islamic and Byzantine-Orthodox.<sup>3</sup> Others identified the origin of Albanian Stalinism with certain political and cultural elements. Throughout this powerful spirit prevailed an Ethnocentrist, or “Orientalist,” discourse that can be clearly identified in the Albanian intellectual elite, starting from the second half of the nineteenth century.<sup>4</sup> The core of this intellectual tradition lies in the identification of a cultural character typical of the Western European civilization in the genesis of the Albanian national character, often endangered by negative eastern cultural influences, whether Ottoman-Islamic or Slavic-Communist. Everything in the Albanian culture that does not contain a purely “Western” character is, according to this trend of thought, not only foreign but also harmful.

The origin of historical disasters in the nation is exactly this “Eastern infection.” Consequently, the Stalinist regime in Albania does not represent anything other than a historical accident of the queue; the dominance of the “Eastern spirit” over “the Western.” The primary aim of the study is to prove the inaccuracy of this perception. First, it should be noted that this intellectual tradition is entirely built on a Ethnocentrist conception that is extremely outdated,<sup>5</sup> and second, because in the case of the totalitarian historical experience, the European in general and Albanian in particular, there is no means for dealing with an “Eastern phenomenon,” but rather, as we shall see below, with a pure sense of the ideological-political history of Western Europe. According to this author’s view, the implementation of Albania’s Stalinist model was the direct result of European modernity and presents *an alternative and extreme form of modernization*. Arguments that will appear below will try to prove that the Albanian totalitarian experience is the direct product of historical processes that constitute the major European modernity, namely Soviet totalitarianism. Albanian totalitarianism can be considered as the direct successor to the European revolutionary tradition, namely the Enlightenment, through Jacobinism and Marxism.

### **Stalinist modernization**

In the case of the Stalinist model, we are dealing with a highly complex political phenomenon, and in recent decades scholars have extensively debated its nature, causes, and consequences.<sup>6</sup> The first group of researchers on Stalinism, the so called *Totalitarian School*, constituted the dominant paradigm during the Cold War era, and was the most famous

among numerous explanations for the origin and nature of Stalinism. Born in an era of significant political confrontation, this interpretation was thus greatly influenced by the ideological rivalry between two antagonistic systems of the bipolar world. This theory, in essence, considered the Stalinist model as the rule of a powerful and autocratic state on an atomized society, brutalized and indoctrinated into passivity by party-state structures. The primary cause of this “Red Leviathan” was, according to these researchers, the Marxist ideology of which Stalinism was a natural and logical stage.<sup>7</sup> As mentioned earlier in this study, a portion of the earliest critics<sup>8</sup> of the Albanian Stalinist phenomenon addressed under the view of a totalitarian theory, emphasized extra-social elements as state violence, ideological manipulation, and international circumstances. Albanian Stalinism, under this light, was nothing but a kind of foreign occupation, achieved not by an outside attack, but through the imposition of an organized force from the inside.<sup>9</sup>

With the softening of the rivalry between the blocs during the years 1960 and 1970, the views of the totalitarian model came under criticism from a large group of researchers. A good part of these scholars, who would be classified under the so-called Revisionist School, focused primarily on the basic premise which criticized the totalitarian paradigm, that of a totally passive society under state control. For revisionist scholars, society was an important actor in the Stalinist system, and the nature of society was a determining factor for some of the central features of the Stalinist model. These researchers considered the Bolshevik Revolution as a logical, historical process, not as a fatal deviation, thus indirectly granting to the communist states a certain degree of legitimacy, while considering the Stalinist experience as a diversion, caused primarily by the backward, rural nature and patriarchal- and authoritarian-structured societies on which this model was implemented.<sup>10</sup> In Albania such a view was affirmed following the collapse of the Stalinist regime and, as said above, stressing the importance of the “Eastern” cultural heritage in Albanian society as the main cause of Albanian Stalinism.<sup>11</sup> Both currents explaining the origin of the Albanian Stalinist regime join at a certain point—Albanian Stalinism is regarded as a diversion from the Western European model that represented the ideal of the majority of Albanian intellectuals from the nineteenth century onwards.

With the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of ideological rivalry the attention of Western researchers moved to the Stalinist model sets between contemporary European political models. If interest before the studies focused on peculiarities, this was transferred to similarities. In social theory, the academic concept of “modernity” takes a pluralistic character,

losing its original Ethnocentrist nature. Researchers now generally accept that the Stalinist model represents an alternative to modernity.<sup>12</sup> The third group of researchers on the Stalinist phenomenon, who constitute the so-called Post-Revisionist School, have as a central premise the original research of the Stalinist model; not within the societies which extended the authority of this model, but in the international context of the modern era, highlighting the similarities in ideology and practice among different models.<sup>13</sup> And this was because some of the central policies of the Stalinist system are similar to those undertaken by Western European countries through the twentieth century. The common ideological origins of these state policies were identified in Enlightenment thought which constituted the essence or ideological backbone of the modern era.<sup>14</sup> The aim of this study is to consider the Albanian Stalinist experience under the view of the post-revisionist school, researching sets between Albanian Stalinist policies in economy, culture and society, and policies similar to Western European countries.

According to David Hoffmann, the core of these policies was the reconceptualization of populations as social entities that can be studied and managed. New methods of social research, particularly statistical studies of populations, gave policy makers the opportunity to re categorize societies that they have under management. Both the opportunity to act through the state apparatus to give societies a certain shape or to transform them fundamentally was created.<sup>15</sup> This trend of thought, that of social processes being considered as scientifically understood and modified, occupied many scholars and policy makers at the turn of the nineteenth century and was the genesis of the policy of so-called “social welfare” across the European continent. Namely, under a comparative view, we see that the Stalinist model shared this feature with ideologically diverse states of Western Europe.<sup>16</sup> These state welfare programs, which contained material benefits for the masses, such as health care and jobs, in turn represented intrusion of normal life, aimed at establishing a rational and productive order in the lives of individuals.<sup>17</sup> The Soviet case, in particular, made these practices join a radical change of the population agenda, an agenda which was widely applied, using a coercive state apparatus which, in many cases, resulted in serious human consequences. Under this prism, the Stalinist model can be regarded as an extreme form of a welfare state.<sup>18</sup> Even the most dramatic element of the Stalinist model—police surveillance and control on a society—can be seen as the product of this worldview and progressive action of state policies on society. State police practices under Stalinism aimed to not only hit the social elements or certain segments identified as potential opponents of the

system, but deeper still, seen as an efficient means to eradicate certain social phenomena that were seen as inconsistent with the ultimate goal of Rational Enlightenment, where the State with its policies intended to lead society. Despite the extreme nature of the Soviet surveillance model, these policies have elements in common with the practices of twentieth-century Western states, especially during periods of war.<sup>19</sup> David Hoffmann has summarized four aspects of Soviet Socialism which may find similar parallels in European modernity: (a) The spread of bureaucracy and state control; (b) Efforts to manage and mobilize the population; (c) Efforts to impose a rational order and categorization of the population; (d) The rise of mass politics.<sup>20</sup> Below, we will try to argue that these are the features of modernity in Stalinist Albania.

According to Stephen Kotkin, the treatment of Stalinism as an extreme form of modern progressive socialist tradition forces us to research its roots to the origin of the idea of progress—the European Enlightenment—which in essence was a broad intellectual debate that began with the emergence of exact sciences in the seventeenth century. The application of research methods in studying the nature of corporate research was focused toward a rational social order, uncorrupted by the arbitrary authority of absolute states. Kotkin identifies one of the most prominent exponents of the Enlightenment, the Marquis de Condorcet, as the originator of the implementation of the Newtonian model in search of a natural social order. According to Condorcet, science would “light up the road” for the transformation of societies to natural and rational order, as well as identifying tools to achieve this order.<sup>21</sup> Science promised not only an immediate but above all a constant improvement of the human condition. A historical event that gave this worldview great strength and showed exactly the vehicle requested by Condorcet was according to Kotkin, the French Revolution. The revolution offered the model of how state policies can be used to give societies a certain shape, or also to remake them based on the principles of science. Marxist authoritarian and backward countries of Eastern Europe would turn the French Revolution into a political cult, mainly due to the similarity between political feudal systems that prevailed in these countries until 1945 and the French *ancien régime*. Marxism can thus be seen as modelling the application of the principles of the Enlightenment’s more courageous social policy and the miraculous power of the modern state machinery’s experiment of the French Revolution.<sup>22</sup> Erik Van Ree, a Dutch scholar, in his study on Josef Stalin’s political ideas, came to the conclusion that the Soviet ideological model represented a direct legacy of European Enlightenment thought.<sup>23</sup> Van Ree highlighted in particular two ideological principles inherited from

Stalinism from the Jacobin tradition: the principle of revolutionary dictatorship of the minority and revolutionary patriotism.<sup>24</sup> The first principle implies the necessity of a revolutionary elite dictatorship which was supposed to lead society toward a rational and unitary social order.<sup>25</sup> The second principle meant that the nation could survive and develop only through a revolutionary change.<sup>26</sup> As we shall argue below, these two principals will have a decisive impact on the ideology of the Albanian pre-communist progressive elite, as well as on the official ideology of the Stalinist system in Albania.

### **Modern Elements of Albanian Stalinism**

The Albanian communist regime is still a very complex topic, and the complexity of the phenomenon is aggravated by the extreme lack of genuine scientific studies on it. The aim of this study is not in any way to give an answer for basic questions about the phenomenon, but identification of some of its specific features and their interpretation under the prism of contemporary theories.

The author's point is that in many Albanian Stalinist practices we are dealing with typical modernizing policies of the Stalinist model, and these practices are similar to Western European state policies. These practices can be divided into four basic parts, borrowing the scheme of David Hoffmann: (1) the establishment and consolidation of state bureaucratic control upon society; (2) the management and mobilization of the population; (3) the imposition of a rational and scientific order; (4) the introduction of broad masses to the political process. Regarding the ideological aspect, Albanian Stalinism based its legitimacy precisely on the claim of establishing a rational social order and on order based on the principles of the European enlightenment, as in the case of the Soviet model. Two of the main pillars of the official ideology were: the principle of revolutionary dictatorship of the minority expressed in the language of the official discourse under the Leninist terminology of the so called "necessity of Party leadership," and also the principle of revolutionary patriotism, which emphasized radical revolutionary transformation in all areas as the only means for survival and development of the Albanian nation. The Albanian communist regime, in the core of its political discourse, has always claimed being a modernizing force, a progressive vanguard that would raise their society toward a more just political and social order.<sup>27</sup> And vice versa, the communist regime delegitimized the former order by qualifying it as backward. The regime's claim for social justice was closely connected with the idea of "progress."<sup>28</sup> Just as in the

case of Soviet socialism, the way toward progress was ideologically predetermined.

A typical element of Stalinist dogmatism lies precisely in the Albanian regime's extreme observation of these ideological principles. Communalities between the Albanian and Soviet modernization drive appear more clearly if we look at the context of the four main social areas where the modernization processes surfaced. In the political realm, the Albanian state had clear Stalinist features in legitimacy, competences, the institutional aspect and implemented policies.<sup>29</sup> Ideologically, the Albanian "dictatorship of the proletariat" carried the historic mission of radically transforming the old society to the new Marxist order. In addition, on behalf of this mission, the Stalinist state apparatus penetrated deep into society. In the economic field, similarities with the Stalinist model were also numerous, from total state control and planning of social economy to those specific features that can be considered as typically Stalinist as collectivization in agriculture and the intensive and rapid drive toward industrialization.<sup>30</sup> As in the case of the Stalinist model, the Albanian regime turned industrialization into the core mission of its economic efforts, and this was not only to create that majority proletarian class which, in theory, was the hegemonic power holder, but, as in the case of Stalinism, to create an industrial base for social development, a feature typical of the modern economy. Creating an industrial economy was also an important political target.<sup>31</sup> It was thought that if the Albanian state could create an industrial economic structure, it would be liberated from foreign economic dependency that, in Marxist logic, meant political dependency.<sup>32</sup> The social impact of the regime might also be characterized as Stalinist.<sup>33</sup> Marxist ideology presupposes that changes in economic structure must necessarily be reflected in the social structure. By that logic, the overthrow of the old social hierarchies constitutes a primary task. The violent overthrow of the old hierarchies had a clear modernizing aim.<sup>34</sup> The old elite, whether it be feudal or bourgeoisie, was regarded as an obstacle in the path of development. State social policies to foster the society constituted one of the clearest examples of the modernizing character of the Albanian Stalinist regime.<sup>35</sup> Massive state economic investments in industry caused a shift of the population from rural to urban areas.<sup>36</sup> The cultural features of the Albanian Stalinist model of modernization were also evident.<sup>37</sup> A new society needed a new culture, and vice versa, and a new culture was seen as a necessary condition of ideological reformation that the totalitarian system wanted to impose on the population.<sup>38</sup> The creation of a secular, state-centred, and ideologically selected educational system<sup>39</sup>—a central feature of modernity—served to

instil in the new generation of the population the rational principles of European enlightenment, under the vestige of the soviet model.<sup>40</sup>

The Albanian regime used multiple policies for managing and mobilizing the population. Mobilization campaigns basically had two main goals: economic and military. By economic mobilization planning, the regime aimed at realizing more and more ambitious economic targets, using human energy to compensate for shortages in capital and technology.<sup>41</sup> In the military field, mobilization tended to create a military force of popular character which, despite minimal economic and technological opportunities in Albania, would serve as a guarantee in front of the border states generally hostile and technologically and economically more developed.<sup>42</sup> To create a conscientious and efficient workforce and military population, the Albanian Stalinist system intervened massively in the society with the intent to discipline, foster loyalty, and to promote public health measures and physical preparation. As Hoffmann stated, these policies were similar to those employed by the Western countries throughout the twentieth century.<sup>43</sup> The imposition of a rational order through the state educational system was a prerequisite, not only for economic and military mobilization, but also for the ideological penetration of the system into the political culture of the masses. In this regard, it can be noted that only under the Stalinist system, for the first time in the history of Albania, the extensive involvement of the population in the political process was enabled.<sup>44</sup> The Albanian Stalinist regime officially declared the right of every citizen, regardless of gender or social status, to formally participate in the decision-making process. Public debates on problems of a political nature, although commanded and controlled by the party apparatus, took place in cities or in agricultural areas, in military barracks, prisons and forced labour camps. Regardless of educational level, status or gender, all citizens were required to have political awareness. Of course, this process remained under the control of the party-state apparatus and any opposition to the Stalinist nature of the system was unthinkable, but nevertheless by stimulating the wider participation of the population in policy issues, Albanian Stalinism turned the Albanian political system from an elite, closed system to a popular system, albeit one controlled and monitored centrally. For the first time, the population began to think of politics as something that emanated from their will, thus shaping in the Albanian political culture a modern conception of citizenship. Even continuous campaigns of terror and intense police control, distinct features in the Albanian Stalinist experience, can be classified as similar to those of the Soviet model, in the wake of those aforementioned state policies aimed at strengthening the

discipline and loyalty of the subjects in the process of the implementation of the economic and military objectives from the centre. Officially, the Albanian Stalinist penal policy clearly affirmed its “prophylactic” (to use a term coined by the American Sovietologist Peter Holquist<sup>45</sup>) nature—the cleansing of those segments of society and social phenomena that were incompatible with the new order programmed by the party-state apparatus.<sup>46</sup>

The excesses and brutality of the class struggle in Albania was, according to the author, a product of the deep sense of uncertainty and paranoia that characterized the leadership of the Labour Party of Albania in times of economic failure and complete international isolation. In the ideological realm, the two principles of Western revolutionary tradition, originating from the Jacobin ideology, the principles of revolutionary dictatorship of the minority and revolutionary patriotism, are easily identifiable in the official discourse of Albanian Stalinism. The first principle falls under the Leninist formula of the “revolutionary vanguard” or “unique and leading role of the party.” The “leading role” of the PLA during the whole experience of Stalinist Albania was not ever in doubt, even during the 1960s when the regime launched intensive populist campaigns in imitation of the Chinese Maoist model. The Albanian Communist Party considered itself as the embodiment of the enlightened ideals of progressive thinkers who have shaped the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the foundation of the Albanian national identity, and as a major historical force that carried a messianic mission to save the masses from oppression and centuries-old backwardness.<sup>47</sup> Scattered into every cell of society and the state apparatus, the members of the party, the revolutionary elite, had as a primary mission to provide a personal example, if ideologically practicable, and to control the vast amount of population in their efforts toward the realization of the centre’s objectives.

Revolutionary patriotism is another important principle in the discourse of the Albanian regime. This principle, propagated under the term of “socialist patriotism,” essentially means the bond between the people and the communist conception of the nation and its socialist development.<sup>48</sup> The official discourse acknowledged a deeper patriotism in the working class compared to the bourgeoisie because the bourgeois class always put its economic interests over national ones.<sup>49</sup> Only through the realization of the proletarian revolution and the consequent establishment of the proletarian state did the interests of the working class amalgamate with national interests. The deepening of the revolution constituted, under this perspective, a patriotic act. In the official propaganda, the establishment of the Stalinist system represented a revival

of Albania from the vulnerable situation where pre-communist elites had thrown it, a refuge from the aggressive intentions of neighbouring states and a guarantee for survival and social development of the nation.<sup>50</sup> As we mentioned above, Erik Van Ree identifies these principles as clear evidence of the continuities between Stalinist ideology and the Western revolutionary tradition of Jacobin and Blanquist origin. Accepting as correct the thesis of the Dutch researcher, we would add that Albanian Stalinism inherited these two principles, categorized under the lexicon of dialectical materialism, and also from the progressive intellectual tradition from pre-communist Albania. The Albanian National Renaissance thinkers had set as a primary duty to themselves to change the medieval mentality and customs of the population and to submit it for affirmation and the welfare of the nation.<sup>51</sup> This stream of thought continued until the 1930s, years characterized by an intense intellectual debate on the need and nature of a national modernization drive. In the face of resistance from conservative forces and the apathy of a population overwhelmingly illiterate, most of these thinkers favoured radical reforms, although only a small minority preferred the Marxist path rather than Enlightenment's rational Western model. In those years, Albania was going through an economic and political crisis and the triumph of the Stalinist model in Albania, according to the author, was made possible by the international conjuncture between the years 1920–40 when the Soviet modernization alternative seemed more attractive than Western classical liberalism. Many young Albanian intellectuals saw Stalinism as a more efficient way to modernity, especially for a backward country with limited resources as was the case in Albania. Now, twenty years after the collapse of Albania's Stalinist system, we can state that the Soviet modernization model failed to implement most of the expectations of its supporters during the second half of the last century. The radical reforms that the system imposed on society had dramatic consequences-human, cultural and economic. However, the impact of the Albanian Stalinist regime could be regarded as a modernization character, despite its extreme nature and dogmatic core. This regime was the product of the impact of Western revolutionary tradition on local elites and of the international scenario during and after the Second World War.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Plasari, Aurel. *Vija e Teodosit rishfaqet: Nga do t'ia mbajnë shqiptarët?* Tiranë, 1992, 51., cit. from: Sulstarova, Enis. *Arratisje nga Lindja: Orientalizmi shqiptar nga Naimi te Kadareja*. Tiranë, Dudaj 2007, 215–216; Pipa Arshi. *Stalinizmi Shqiptar: Aspektet ideo-politike*. Princi&IKK, Tiranë, 2007, 43.

- <sup>2</sup> Pipa, Arshi. *Stalinizmi Shqiptar: Aspektet ideo-politike*. Princi&IKK, Tirana, 2007, 43–44, 238–245; Zavalani Tajar. *Histori e Shqipnis*, Tirana, Phoenix, 1998, 352–372.
- <sup>3</sup> Plasari, Aurel. *Vija e Teodosit rishfaqet: Nga do t'ia mbajnë shqiptarët?*, Tiranë, 1992, p51.; from Sulstarova, Enis. *Arratisje nga Lindja: Orientalizmi shqiptar nga Naimi te Kadareja*, Tirane, Dudaj 2007, 215–216.
- <sup>4</sup> Sulstarova, Enis. *Arratisje nga Lindja: Orientalizmi shqiptar nga Naimi te Kadareja*. Tirane, Dudaj 2007, 263–270.
- <sup>5</sup> Dalanty Gerard. *Modernism and the escape from Eurocentrism*, at: Dalanty Gerard (ed.). *Handbook of Contemporary European Social Theory*. New York, Routledge, 2006, 266.
- <sup>6</sup> On historical studies on Stalinism see: Kotkin Stephen. *Magnetic Mountain: Stalinism as a Civilization*. University of California Press, Berkeley, 1995, 2–6; Hoffmann, David. *Stalinism: the Essential Readings*. Blackwell, Oxford, 2003, 1–7; Fitzpatrick, Sheila. *Stalinism: New Directions*. Routledge, London, 2000, 1–14. McCauley, Martin. *Stalin and Stalinism*, Pearson, New York, 2008, 8–12.
- <sup>7</sup> On the totalitarian school, check: C J. Friedrich & Z. K. Brzezinski. *Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1956.
- <sup>8</sup> Pipa, Arshi. *Albanian Stalinism: Ideo-Political Aspects*. Princi & IKK, Tiranë, 2007; Zavalani, Tajar. *Histori e Shqipnis*, Tiranë, Phoenix, 1998.
- <sup>9</sup> In this regard a part of the studies on Albanian communism is focused on the impact of the Yugoslav Communist Party in the ruling establishment and the advent of the Albanian Communist Party, in the years 1941–1948, check: Plasari, Ndreçi & Malltezi, Luan. *Marrëdhëniet shqiptaro-jugosllave 1945–1948, dokumente*. Tiranë, Drejtoria e Përgjithshme e Arkivave, 1996, 3–17. Another part of the researchers saw the Albanian Stalinism as a product of panslavism, check: Skëndi, Stavro. “Albania within the Slav Orbit: Advent to Power of the Communist Party.” *Political Science Quarterly* 63 (2) (1948): 257–274; Feraj, Hysamedin. *Skicë e mendimit politik shqiptar*. Tiranë, Pegi, 2006, 354–361.
- <sup>10</sup> Lewin, Moshe, *The Making of the Soviet System: Essays in the Social History of Interwar Russia*. London, Harvester Press, 1985, 310–314.
- <sup>11</sup> Misha, Pirro. *Duke kërkuar rrënjët, ose kthimi i shqipëtareve ne histori*. Tiranë, Toena, 1997, 43; Plasari, Aurel. *Vija e Teodosit rishfaqet: Nga do t'ia mbajnë shqiptarët?* Tiranë, 1992, 51.; Sulstarova, Enis. *Arratisje nga Lindja: Orientalizmi shqiptar nga Naimi te Kadareja*. Tirane, Dudaj 2007, 215–216, 231–232.
- <sup>12</sup> Dalanty, Gerard. *Modernism and the escape from Eurocentrism*; Dalanty, Gerard (edit) *Handbook of Contemporary European Social Theory*. New York, Routledge, 2006, 271–272.
- <sup>13</sup> Hoffman, David. *Stalinism: the Essential Readings*. Blackwell, Oxford, 2003, 107.
- <sup>14</sup> Kotkin, Stephen. *Magnetic Mountain: Stalinism as a Civilization*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1995, 6; Hoffmann, David. *Stalinist Values: The Cultural Norms of Soviet Modernity*, Cornell University Press, New York, 2003, 7–10.
- <sup>15</sup> Hoffmann, David. *Cultivating the Masses: Modern State Practices and Soviet Socialism*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011, 4–8.

- <sup>16</sup> Hoffmann, David. *Stalinist Values: The Cultural Norms of Soviet Modernity, 1917–1941*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003, 7–8; Hoffmann, David. “European Modernity and Soviet Socialism.” In Hoffmann, David and Yanni Kotsonis (eds.), *Russian Modernity: Politics, Knowledge, Practices*. London: Macmillan, 2000, 245.
- <sup>17</sup> Hoffmann, David. *Cultivating the Masses: Modern State Practices and Soviet Socialism*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011, 1–2.
- <sup>18</sup> Kotkin, Stephen. *Magnetic Mountain: Stalinism as a Civilization*. University of California Press, Berkeley, 1995, 20–21.
- <sup>19</sup> Holquist, Peter. “‘Information Is the Alpha and Omega of Our Work’: Bolshevik Surveillance in Its Pan-European Context.” *The Journal of Modern History* 69 (3) (1997): 415–450; Holquist, Peter, “State Violence as Technique: The Logic of Violence in Soviet Totalitarianism.” In Weiner, Amir. (ed.) *Landscaping the Human Garden, Twentieth-Century Population Management in a Comparative Framework*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003, 19–45; Hoffmann, David. *Cultivating the Masses: Modern State Practices and Soviet Socialism*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011, 15–16; Ree van Erik. *The Political Thought of Joseph Stalin—A Study in Twentieth-Century Revolutionary Patriotism*. London, Routledge, 2002, 284–285.
- <sup>20</sup> Hoffmann, David. “European Modernity and Soviet Socialism.” In Hoffmann, David & Yanni Kotsonis, eds. *Russian Modernity: Politics, Knowledge, Practices*. London: Macmillan, 2000, 245.
- <sup>21</sup> Kotkin, Stephen. *Magnetic Mountain: Stalinism as a Civilization*. University of California Press, Berkeley, 1995, 6–7.
- <sup>22</sup> Ibid. 7–9; Hoffmann, David. *Cultivating the Masses: Modern State Practices and Soviet Socialism*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011, 5.
- <sup>23</sup> Ree van, Erik. *The Political Thought of Joseph Stalin—A study in Twentieth-Century Revolutionary Patriotism*, London, Routledge, 2002, 281.
- <sup>24</sup> Ibid., 278.
- <sup>25</sup> Ibid., 284.
- <sup>26</sup> Ibid., 278.
- <sup>27</sup> *Rezolucioni i Kongresit të Parë të Partisë Komuniste Shqiptare*, Tiranë, 1948, 8.
- <sup>28</sup> Hupchick, Dennis P. *The Balkans from Constantinople to Communism*, Palgrave, London, 2002, 385; Koka Viron. *Rrymat e mendimit politik-shoqëror në Shqipëri në vitet 30 të shekullit XX*, Akademia e Shkencave, Tiranë, 1985, 289–290. On the impact of the Enlightenment and the French revolution in Albania see: Zholi Zija., *Revolucioni Francez dhe Mendimtarët Shqiptarë*, Akademia e Shkencave, Tiranë, 1990, 5–18.
- <sup>29</sup> Pano, Nicholas C. “Albania.” In Rakowska-Harmstone, Teresa. (ed.) *Communism in Eastern Europe*. Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1982, 218; Pipa A. *Stalinizmi Shqiptar: Aspektet ideo-politike*. Princi&IKK, Tiranë, 2007, 181.
- <sup>30</sup> *Vjetari Statistikor i Shqipërisë*, Ministria e Ekonomisë, Tiranë, 1991, 143–171; *Rezolucioni i Kongresit të Parë të Partisë Komuniste Shqiptare*, Tiranë, 1948, 52–53.
- <sup>31</sup> Hupchick, Dennis P. *The Balkans from Constantinople to Communism*.

Palgrave, London, 2002, 384.

<sup>32</sup> Uçi, Alfred; Xholi Zija. *Materializmi Dialektik dhe Historik*, Tiranë: 8 Nëntori, 1974, 323.

<sup>33</sup> Uçi, Alfred; Xholi Zija. *Materializmi Dialektik dhe Historik*, Tiranë: Nëntori, 1974: , 388–405.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 411.

<sup>35</sup> *Rezolucioni i Kongresit të Parë të Partisë Komuniste Shqiptare*, Tiranë, 1948, 55–56; *Vjetari Statistikor i Shqipërisë*, Ministria e Ekonomisë, Tiranë, 1991; on health policies see 117–128; on educational and artistic policies see 87–116.

<sup>36</sup> The urban population shifts from 20% to 36%, see: *Vjetari Statistikor i Shqipërisë*, Ministria e Ekonomisë, Tiranë, 1991, 35.

<sup>37</sup> Hupchick, Dennis P. *The Balkans from Constantinople to Communism*, Palgrave, London, 2002, 419; *Rezolucioni i Kongresit të Parë të Partisë Komuniste Shqiptare*, Tiranë, 1948, 54–55.

<sup>38</sup> Uçi, Alfred, Xholi, Zija., *Materializmi Dialektik dhe Historik*, Tiranë, 1974, 537–540.

<sup>39</sup> On the data of the educational policies for the period 1950–1990, see *Vjetari Statistikor i Shqipërisë*, Ministria e Ekonomisë. Tiranë, 1991, 89–106. On the State campaigns against analphabetism see Kondo, Alfred. *Lufta kundër Analfabetizmit në Shqipëri 1945–1955*. Tiranë, Shtëpia Botuese e Librit Shkollor, 1985.

<sup>40</sup> *Rezolucioni i Kongresit të Parë të Partisë Komuniste Shqiptare*. Tiranë, 1948, 55.

<sup>41</sup> Instituti i Studimeve Marksiste-Leniniste pranë KQ të PPSH. *Historia e Partisë së Punës të Shqipërisë*. Tiranë, Naim Frashëri, 1968, 409–410.

<sup>42</sup> Hoxha, Enver. “Atdheu është i të gjithë popullit, prandaj duhet të mbrohet nga i gjithë populli.” (Fjala në Plenumin e XII të K.Q. të PPSH, 1 korrik 1971). In Hoxha Enver, *Veptra të Zgjedhura: Në ndihmë të Ushtrisë Popullore*. V. III. Tiranë, 1975, 201–233.

<sup>43</sup> Hoffmann, David. *European Modernity and Soviet Socialism*. In Hoffmann, David & Yanni Kotsonis, (eds.), *Russian Modernity: Politics, Knowledge, Practices*. London: Macmillan, 2000, 249–259.

<sup>44</sup> See *Article 43* of the Constitution of People’s Socialist Republic of Albania, 1976.

<sup>45</sup> Holquist, Peter. “State Violence as Technique: The Logic of Violence in Soviet Totalitarianism.” In Weiner, Amir. (ed.) *Landscaping the Human Garden, Twentieth-Century Population Management in a Comparative Framework*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003, 19–45.

<sup>46</sup> Omari, Luan. “Shteti ynë i diktaturës së proletariatit, mjeti më i fuqishëm në duart e klasës punëtore e të partisë së saj për zhvillimin e luftës së klasave.” In Instituti i Studimeve Marksiste-Leniniste pranë KQ të PPSH, *Sesione shkencore për Luftën e Klasave*, Tiranë, “8 nëntori”, 1977, 287.

<sup>47</sup> Instituti i Studimeve Marksiste-Leniniste pranë KQ të PPSH, *Historia e Partisë së Punës të Shqipërisë*. Tiranë, Naim Frashëri, 1968, 510–511; Uçi, Alfred; Xholi, Zija. *Materializmi Dialektik dhe Historik*, Tiranë, 1974, 457–460.

<sup>48</sup> Uçi, Alfred; Xholi, Zija. *Materializmi Dialektik dhe Historik*, Tiranë, 1974, 501.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 500–501.

<sup>50</sup> Koka, Viron. *Rrymat e mendimit politiko-shoqëror në Shqipëri në vitet 30 të shekullit XX*, Akademia e Shkencave. Tiranë, 1985, 289–291; Instituti i Studimeve Marksiste-Leniniste pranë KQ të PPSH, *Historia e Partisë së Punës të Shqipërisë*. Tiranë, Naim Frashëri, 1968, 510.

<sup>51</sup> Frashëri, Kristo. *Historia e lëvizjes së majtë në Shqipëri dhe e themelimit të PKSH-së*. Tiranë, Akademia e Shkencave e Shqipërisë, 2006. 10–17.