Kosova during 1960-1970 and Albania's position

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Summary

Based on the literature that I used and various documents from archives, this project sheds some historic and scientific light on Kosova of the period 1960-1970 and the Albania's stance on the developments in Kosova during this period. With the activation of the national policy towards Kosova in the early 1960s, Albania established an action strategy, which despite being ideologically based, was much stronger and more structured. This period evidenced a continuation of efforts to expose the

Yugoslav discriminatory policy against Albanians. Enver Hoxha considered that by exposing the Yugoslav policy he would manage to diminish the image of Yugoslavia and thus to prevent the Yugoslav state from undertaking actions against Albanians.

The demands of Albanians under Yugoslavia for a Republic of Kosova were also an issue that was analysed and studied in this project. The position of the Albanian state related to the demonstrations of 1968 and to the demand for a Republic of Kosova is analyzed based on the archive documents of the time. Following the demonstrations of 1968, the Yugoslavs addressed indirect accusations towards Albania stating that the external factor had a hand on these events. By the international community Albania was seen as a country that could have incited the demonstrations of 1968. The demonstrations of 1968 had an impact on the relations with the US policy, which became more curious in their reflections.

Albania did not manage to create and clearly state a consistent position on the demonstrations of 1968 and the demands that were made, despite the huge propaganda it conducted in support of the rights of Albanians under Yugoslavia, although it seemed to be more reserved about the status of Kosova. The Albanian state policy concerning the patriotic national

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movement was not always consistent, as it became ideological, or even controversial in some cases.

On the other hand, the concept of Kosova independence, with elements of a republic in the existing circumstances was dominating and the most preferred concept for the majority of Kosova Albanians.

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Albania's Position on Political Movement in Kosova in 1960s

In the early 1960s Albania was quite active on the Kosova issue. Then it had already included the duty of addressing Kosova issue as a political platform within the political and state institutions. The developments that were taking place in Kosova, continuous demands of the underground movement addressed to the Albanian state for support, prompted Albania to establish an action strategy, which was not so different from the ones in the previous years and from ideologically based actions. However, this support now is better structured and organized by state authorities.

Although in a situation of tensioned international relations, when the pressure against Albania increased for establishing relations and accepting treaties and peace in the Balkans, this state remained consistent in its actions dealing with the Kosova issue. Now it has changed the form of action, becoming more involved in giving instructions, however there is still an open criticism to the underground political movement in Kosova, and on some occasions we can see that Enver Hoxha made mistakes in creating concepts and alliances for resolution to the Kosova issue.

Therefore, this period was characteristic for intensified relations between ALP (PPSH) and Albanian political groups in the Diaspora and within Kosova. Although relations, information and instructing the Albanian political groups and organizations in the Diaspora were of a "top secret" character and almost underground, the liaison structures of the Albanian state were extended in numerous fields of work.

Adjusting to functional task features and applicable norms, the sector kept these documents and evidence: files on the generated data; regular index of the situation and activities of patriotic and revolutionary organizations, necessary documents and literature addressing the issue of the Albanians in Yugoslavia; information, reports and studies conducted by this Sector for the party leadership, etc. ¹

Enver Hoxha considered that by exposing the Yugoslav regime policy, through diminishing the Yugoslav image, he would manage to prevent the Yugoslav state from undertaking activities against the Albanians, and in some cases to make the Yugoslav state be more cautious in actions to be undertaken regarding Kosova. However, he looked at the resolution to the Albanians issue in Yugoslavia from a different angle and in different forms of action, which at that time and those circumstances, could not be completely accepted by the underground political movement in Kosova as their own platform.

In that period, Enver Hoxha thought that "the Kosova issue was not an easy one and that it could not be resolved as quickly as some Kosovars with good will might think," whereas regarding the accomplishment of the objectives for the solution to the political status of Kosova, he stated, "it cannot be settled because it does not depend on wishes". The war for liberation of Kosova and the Albanians in Yugoslavia, according to the political platform of the Albanian leadership was a matter existing within the territory of Yugoslavia, as the policy of Albania's leadership was not ready to accept such a war of Kosova as it could extend beyond the Yugoslav borders.

Enver Hoxha wrote, "The people of Kosova should understand that under these conditions Albania can never attack Yugoslavia. The PRA can never be an aggressor.

¹ CAA, p. 10/AP, 1966, file 171.

² Ibid, p. 16.

³ Ibid, p. 16.

However, if Yugoslavia attacked Albania that would be something else. Albania shall defend itself, fight and win, and then the Kosova problem will be posed on a completely different light."4

On the issue whether there should be an armed war, Enver Hoxha expressed himself to be against it, denouncing it as a fatal mistake. "Such a thing can never be successful without waiting for a long time before that. Perhaps, neither courage nor individual bravery would be sufficient. Revolution is one of the most serious issues; therefore it should be well prepared."5

The Albanian leadership continued to see the Kosova struggle as closely linked to the struggle of other Yugoslav peoples and in 'brotherhood' with them, since an isolated war of Albania against Yugoslavia, according to them, would be a suicide.⁶ According to the Albanian leadership, readiness should be there to benefit from any created situation. Firstly, the positions in the country should be strengthened regarding democratic rights.7 Enver Hoxha thought that the "Albanian leadership in Kosova was sold to titoism, therefore they are chauvinistic and revisionists and they should not be trusted, but their weakest points should be found in order to shake them off"8

It was too illusionary at that time to think that Albanians together with other peoples of Yugoslavia and with their support could resolve the Kosova issue. They were aware that the Yugoslav Federation and its republics at that time had managed to overcome their contradictions, and that Tito had spread his influence to all the Yugoslav structures and that his prestige in the western bloc was high.

In the respect of propaganda, Albania never stopped its activity in criticizing the Yugoslav regime and leadership. In some cases, one can see in documents that Enver Hoxha addressed harsh criticism also towards the Kosova leadership

⁴ Ibid, p. 16

⁵ Ibid, p. 18.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid, p. 19.

and asked for feedback about the impact of such criticism on relations with the Kosova leadership. He wanted to know how close the Kosova leadership was with the federal leadership. In his ideological war against Yugoslavia, Enver Hoxha also used the element of poverty and discriminatory policies applied by the Yugoslav Federation towards the economic development of Kosova.

On 16 November 1967, Enver Hoxha wrote an article titled "Titoist demagogy cannot cover Kosova's open wounds". The objective was to expose Titoist demagogy on the aspect of economic, political and cultural situation by comparing it with the situation in other Yugoslav republics. In 1967, the differences between Kosova and other developed areas of Yugoslavia grew even bigger. National income of Slovenia was 7,588 new dinars, whereas in Kosova it was only 730 dinars, as much as the Yugoslav annual average. Enver Hoxha linked this disproportion with the Titoist discriminatory and chauvinistic policy and treatment of Kosova solely as a source of raw material and as an area for colonial suppression to send redundant unskilled forces to Serbia and Montenegro. 11

Enver Hoxha called that a period of "relative peace imposed by internal crises and relations established by the Titoist regime, while "cultural liberalization" in Kosova as dangerous and false manoeuvres, which warned that Titoists were instigating a new tragedy for extermination of the Albanian nationality".¹²

The Albanian political party and scientific leadership took the struggle of the Albanians of Kosova, Montenegro and Macedonia under protection, who had "completely the right to fight persistently and decisively for the return of all immigrants from outside Yugoslavia to the country. They have the legal, moral and historic right to demand the return of Serb and Montenegrin colonists to their places of origin. They have the right to speak and write freely in their mother tongue, to have

⁹ CAA, pg. 10/ Ap, 1970-1971, file No. 387/1, p. 1.

¹⁰ CAA, p. 10/ Ap, 1967, file No. 19, p. 15.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid, p. 17.

their education system, press and literature in Albanian, libraries, theatres, studying and cultural institutes for spreading their national culture; an administration composed of Albanians, elected by the people and not imposed by Titoists. They have the right to fight against plunder and exploitation and to use their resources for their best interests."¹³

During that period, Enver Hoxha's official political position differed greatly from the position and political platform of the underground movement in Kosova. While the latter insisted on more advanced modalities and different forms of resolution to the problem of Albanians under Yugoslavia, Albania was more cautious and requested that the issue at the time to be resolved through an extended political autonomy. Thus, according to Enver Hoxha, the tasks were limited within the extension of democratic rights and a broader autonomy.¹⁴

Demands for the Republic of Kosova and Albania's Position

On 27 November 1968, it was for the first time publicly demanded in Prishtina and some other towns of Kosova and in Macedonia,, that Kosova should become e republic. Apart from the main demand for the Republic of Kosova, other demands were made at those demonstrations, such as: "We want self-determination to secession", "We want unification of the areas inhabited by Albanians with Kosova", "We want a Constitution", "We want a university", etc.¹⁵

The demonstrations of 1968 also reflected the position of Albanians in Macedonia. A document of the Albanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs writing on this impact stated, "It should be said that November and December events of 1968 caused a kind of shock among the leadership of Macedonia, and fearing from further consequences, they were forced to make some compromises. Krste Crvenkovski (the former President of the

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid, p. 19-20.

¹⁵ Kosova Archives, District Court Prishtina, the Verdict against Osman Dumoshi and the Members of the YMUA Group, 7 April 1969.

Communist League of Macedonia - E.C.) and current President of Communist League of Macedonia, Angel Cemerski, periodically to the political active of Dibra, Tetova and Gostivar, were forced to talk about the rights of Albanians in Macedonia, such as the rights to their language, flag and culture. In Dibra's Political Active, on 5 October 1970, Angel Cemerski, speaking on equality between nations and nationalities, was boasted by saying that, "Albanians were given extended rights."16 At this time, there was a big patriotic movement and endeavours among the Albanians in Macedonia for unification of Albanians municipalities with Kosova, or at least, for Kosova to become the political, economic, educational and cultural centre of the Albanians in Yugoslavia.¹⁷ Therefore, the demonstrations of 1968 forced the policy of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia and also of the Yugoslav Federation to reconsider their policies regarding the Albanians.

The Yugoslav policy was caught off guard by those events, to the extent that the Federation leader, Tito, in a press conference with foreign journalists, tried to present those events as a simple student movement, similar to the ones in some other countries of Europe.¹⁸

Following the demonstrations of 1968, the Yugoslavs indirectly made accusations against foreign factors that allegedly had a hand in these events. The international factors also viewed Albania as a country that could have incited the demonstrations of 1968, because of its anti-Yugoslav position and for protection of Albanians' rights in Yugoslavia. That document regarding Albania's influence further reads, "Perhaps through such steps like the editorial of "Zëri i Popullit" on 24 November, there were harsh condemns for "violent suppression", "unprecedented economic exploitation" and "deportations and genocide against Albanian minority.

¹⁶ Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1971, file No. 643, p. 14.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Enver Hoxha, *Political Diary of Internacional Affairs* 1968-1969 (internal use only), Tirana, p. 327.

These developments made the future of Albanian-Yugoslav relations become completely unpredicted."¹⁹

The demonstrations of 1968 also raised the curiosity of the American policy regarding their multidimensional reflections.

Concerning the Albania's policy regarding the demonstrations of 1968 and the demands made in those demonstrations, it did not manage to create or express any consistent position. In fact, it made a huge propaganda in support of the rights of Albanians in Yugoslavia, such as the rights to language, culture, education, human rights, whereas regarding the status of Kosova, it seemed to be more reserved. Furthermore, in some cases it was unclear and often controversial in its positions.

The Albanian state policy assessed that the events in Kosova at that time would be used to destabilize peace in the Balkans and to exert possible interference of 'imperialist' and 'social-imperialist' states in Yugoslavia, and that interference would reflect on the security and sovereignty of Albania.

In many documents which reflected the Albanian state political position, the main issue was what was going to happen with the Yugoslav state. If it would be invaded by Russians or Americans and what would happen to Albania in such circumstances. If its state integrity would be threatened. Therefore, even in the important developments, which somehow were in favor of resolution of national issue, seemed withdrawn and positioned to preserve a status quo.

On 5 December 1968, Enver Hoxha showed the Albanian state position in some notes. Initially he stated that, "In Prishtina and many other towns of Kosova there were held students demonstrations on 27 November," to continue further that "According to official information one person was killed" and many others were wounded by the UDB members, who attacked the demonstrators who only were requesting

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ CSA, p. 10/ Ap, 1968, file No. 238, p. 1.

²¹ The 17 year-old student Murat Mehmeti from Prishtina was killed at the demonstrations of 27 November 1968 in Prishtina.

rights.²² The Yugoslav state considered more demonstrations to have been organized by the Albanian youth who were considered enemies and inspired from outside.23 Enver Hoxha, in response to this indirect accusation, continued to maintain the line of non-interference into internal affairs of Yugoslavia. He wrote, "Naturally, we do not have anything to do with these demonstrations, we did not carry on any agency or subversive activity either in Yugoslavia or Kosova. Titoists know this, but it suits them to slander."24 He attributed the shouting of pro-Albanian slogans to "provocateurs who installed themselves among demonstrators to give different connotation to the demonstrations."25 Enver Hoxha expressed openly his opinion regarding the Kosova issue as a matter of national rights.²⁶ He argued that the position was together with Belgrade's positions towards Greek Macedonians, where "Tito stated that it was their right to protect the Macedonians of Greece, while Tirana did not have any right to protect the Albanian demonstrators and called such protection a crime."27

According to the Albanian leadership, these demonstrations proved that "Tito-Rankovic's regime did not manage to crush the patriotic movement of Albanians in Yugoslavia with terror and oppression. After the fall of Rankovic, Tito had to make some concessions and Albanians, again, won something but remained oppressed."²⁸

Hesitation of Albania Regarding the Underground Movement Activity in Kosova

Political movements that developed in that period under the organization of patriotic forces, with sublime demands, such as

²² CSA, p. 10/ Ap, 1968, file No. 238, p. 1.

²³ Ibid, p. 1-2.

²⁴ Ibid, p. 2-3.

²⁵ Ibid, p. 4.

²⁶ Ibid, p. 4-5.

²⁷ Ibid, p. 5-6.

²⁸ CSA, p. 10/ Ap, 1968, file No. 238, p. 8.

the demand for a Republic of Kosova, unification of the Albanians' occupied lands in Yugoslavia into one republic and for unification of the Albanians' occupied lands with Albania.²⁹ The political circles in Albania received such movements with hesitation and dilemma about what could happen further, and constantly expressed the fear and suspicion whether those movements were a conspiracy of Yugoslav secret services or reactionary-bourgeois forces.

This logic of fear was well-founded, since Belgrade had already built its structures within Kosova by political opponents of the Albanian regime.³⁰ This fact is also based on a document that the Albanian legation in Belgrade addressed to Albanian state political institutions. The Albanian legation in Belgrade had received a request from the Kosova patriotic group asking for support of the Albanian state for continuation of the struggle for liberation of Kosova, who asked for further instructions on how to continue the work and how to behave in due time.

The response that the special Directorate of the Albanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs returned to the Albanian legation in Belgrade read, "Our legation in Belgrade informed us on 19.09.1968 that Kosovars often showed up, requesting to make use of the current situation in the People's Republic of Albania and gave Kosovars comprehensive support to accomplish their aspirations for secession from Yugoslavia and unification with Albania".31 The document also states that, "Legation says that they do not suspect these people of anythibg, but requests from the Ministry to instruct its mission on the position it should present to Kosovars, as there are no clear instructions".32 "We consider," the response of Ministry of Foreign Affairs, said, "that the mission comrades do not have the right to trust a priori

²⁹ Mr. Ethem Çeku, Political opinion of undergorund movement in Kosova 1945-1981 Generation '81, Prishtina, 2004; Ethem Çeku, The Century of Underground, Generation '81, Prishtina, 2004.

³⁰ National Archives and Record Administration (NARA), a State Department document, 6 July 1953.

³¹ CSA, MFA, 1968, File b/7-2/b, No. 360, p. 1-2.

³² Ibid.

Kosovars who come to them with such demands. Therefore, we think to convey this message to them: to be vigilant towards those who make such demands and to bear in mind that we do not have any official territorial claims against Yugoslavia, as we do not divide the solution to the Kosova issue from the solution to the overall problem of Yugoslavia. This means removing the Titoist clique and bringing into power a new Marxist-Leninist leadership instead, which, after the resolution of national issue in Yugoslavia, would give to the Albanian population the right to self-determination with a plebiscite. In this aspect, the Albanian population should support occasional Yugoslav Marxist-Leninist forces for realization of their objectives."33 That document also stated clearly as follows, "Our stance towards Yugoslavia and Kosova issue has not changed. We advise Kosovars to struggle, as they have been doing until now, to get more rights in all aspects, with the objective to enjoy the same rights that are enjoyed by other nationalities in Yugoslavia."34

The above-mentioned document also states, "Regarding whether we are for a republic or autonomous province, you have the instructions. I repeat that we are not for creating a republic, because this would not solve the problem. The problem will be resolved only as stated above."³⁵

In 1968, Albania in its positions openly expressed the lack of readiness to enter into more dynamic movements regarding the political status of Kosova. "When visitors, whoever they are, ask for our opinion on whether a Republic of Kosova should be established or not, you should not let them know our positions, but they should be told that it is up to them to decide about it." Following this it reads, "In our opinion it is important for you to win as many rights as possible and to fight for enjoying the same rights that are enjoyed by other nationalities in

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid, p. 1-2.

Yugoslavia. For this you have had and will continue to have the support of the People's Republic of Albania."³⁷

The official position of the Albanian leadership of that time, regarding the national patriotic movement was not always consistent and principle-based; in some cases, it was completely ideological, sometimes controversial and even contradictious. In some cases, it seemed to be more preoccupied in the consequences that new political and legal status of Kosova would bring, respectively its reflections on the Yugoslav Federation with other republics and what direction Yugoslavia would take after such dramatic developments in this part of Europe.

Referring to a document of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Albania of the time, we quote, "The request for an Autonomous Republic of Kosova began to be addressed also through the press of the Province, where this request was completely justified. Many articles published on this purpose provided data and figures on the population in Yugoslav republics and their national composition, etc. Hence the question why for example Montenegro and Macedonia that have 2.8% and 6.6% of the population of Yugoslavia, respectively, and whose national composition is 72 % and 71 %, respectively, are republics, whereas Kosova that has 5.2 % of the total population of Yugoslavia and 74% of it are Albanians is not a republic, but an autonomous province."38 That document further states, "These demands of the Albanian people of Kosova, not only involve the interests of three Yugoslav republics which are bordered with the Province of Kosova, which have within their borders vast areas inhabited by Albanian population, but they present a threat to the entire federal system of Yugoslavia. Therefore, despite all major promises Tito made for Kosova, he undertook measures to stop the burst of these demands because their accomplishment would also threaten Tito's position".39 It seems that from that moment, the Albanian government stared

37 Ibid, p. 1-2.

³⁸ MFAA, 1969, File b/7-2/b, No. 461, p. 2.

³⁹ Ibid.

to be concerned about the implications that the demands of the Albanians in Yugoslavia could have in relation to the fate of Yugoslav leadership and fragile relations between the Yugoslav republics.

After a careful review of the documents of the time we could come to the conclusion that according to the Albanian official policy, three political lines were distinguished in Kosova and in other Albanians' areas in Yugoslavia. First, sound patriotic forces of the Kosova Albanians, who seeing that their demands for establishment of a separate republic and unification of all Albanians' lands within this republic could accomplished in the existing situation in Yugoslavia, they made their greatest efforts through the new Constitution, to get as many rights as possible for national equality and get away from Serbian dependency.⁴⁰ Those forces were joined by the Kosova leadership, who faithfully served to Tito. The second force, who fought for a Province of Kosova and not to get more rights than it actually had, were the Serbian-Montenegrin chauvinistic forces in Kosova.⁴¹ The third force was represented by Albanians, who not being able to assess properly the internal situation in Yugoslavia, came out openly against the platform of the Communist League of Kosova and considered insufficient the rights given to the Albanians of Kosova by the Constitution.⁴² Kosova leaders condemned the position of this group, and their requests were considered unrealistic and tendentious.⁴³ In fact, both the political concepts for an autonomy and the concept of Serbs and Montenegrins were always minority. The concept of Kosova independence with elements of a republic, based on the existing circumstances, was in fact the dominant and most desired concept of the Albanian majority in Kosova.

⁴⁰ Ibid, p. 3.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

Conclusion

The policy of the Albanian state in the early 1960s was in a difficult situation, especially after the breaking up the relations with the USSR. Albania was politically isolated and its support to the Kosova issue was more focused on ideological lines. Albania set their tasks to address the Kosova issue as a political platform of its state institutions.

Enver Hoxha, in his political concept, viewed the solution to the Kosova issue in the light of ideological reflection . He counted on a potential coalition of anti-Titoist political forces in Yugoslavia as a whole.

The general developments in Kosova, continuous demands from the underground movements towards Albania for its support, forced the Albanian politics to address the issue of Kosova.

That period was characteristic for intensified relations of the ALP (PPSH) with Albanian political groups in the Diaspora and Kosova. At that time, relations between Albania and Yugoslavia were considered as relations with reduced tensions. Enver Hoxha tried to use those new relations to influence on the political movements in Kosova. He criticized the political organization of the underground in Kosova from his ideological viewpoint, conveying messages for new forms of activities and requesting them to relinquish from slogans like, "War for unification with Albania". Enver Hoxha's official stance was in compliance with the political stance of Kosova Albanian officials at the Federal level, for the existence of only one Albanian republic, i.e., the Republic of Albania, and regarding the Republic of Kosova both parties argued against a second Albanian republic. Enver Hoxha and Kosova leadership had placed their interests against the interests of the Kosova issue.

The United States of America followed carefully the reflections of demonstrations in 1968.

Kosova then entered into a new phase of political, legal, economic and cultural development. The underground movement came out publicly with the demand for a republic. The Kosova institutions supported the political position of the

underground in the first phase. Albania had a hesitating position concerning the demand for a Republic of Kosova.

Under the political circumstances that were created after the intervention of the Warsaw Pact in Czechoslovakia, it suited well to Albania to have slow developments concerning the legal status of Kosova in the Yugoslav Federation.

Translated by: Saxhide Mustafa

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USNA - United States National Archives

NARA - National Archives and Record Administration of the USA

FRUS - Foreign Relations of the United States

RGANI - Rossiskij Gosudarstvenij Arhiv Novejsej Istoriji

RGASPI - Rosijski Gosudarstvenij Arhiv Socialno Politiceskoj Istoriji

AQSH - Arkivi Qendror i Shqipërisë (Central Archives of Albania)

AMPJ - Arkivi i Ministrisë së Punëve të Jashtme (Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs)

AK - Arkivi i Kosovës (Archives of Kosova)

AJ - Arkivi i Jugosllavisë (Archives of Yugoslavia)

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