

Some Political And Economic Aspects Of Communist Regime In Albania

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Abstract

Albania, the small country of Balkan has a different and unique history unlike all other Balkans or Eastern European countries. It still has some traces of the 50-year period of the communist regime, which was almost cruel. In the history of Albania, year of 1944 has been settled the milestone for deciding the fate of this country, through events that occur in the political, economic and social field. This regime in Albania directly affected the lives of people, depriving the exercise of human rights and fundamental freedoms. Many of the basic human rights such as the rights of speech, freedom of thought, the right to private property, or the right to religious belief were completely forbidden with the communist state. During this regime, this political and economic system created, stimulated, developed and supported human and social anti-value by imposing an ideology that turned people into communist party captives, transforming the identity of individuals. Almost half a century, Albania had been isolated from the outside world and from democratic values and principles, it had instilled and rooted values and attitudes that were not very favorable for the development of democracy.

Key Words: communism, democracy, human rights, political rights.

Introduction

The year 1944 will mark in the history of Albania the coming to power of the Communist Party, which will define the essential aspects of events that occurred in the political, economic and social field in the country. The war-in taken power damaged the entire state, society, economy and culture in the country. The damage began with the elimination of the opposition, under the so-called "people's courts", hundreds of intellectuals and opposition leaders were publicly shot, this, without any regular criminal and legal procedures³. With the establishment of the state of the dictatorship of the proletariat, many aspects of life in the country were oriented to developments and events that occurred mainly within the Communist Party.

In political terms, every political force was completely eliminated except that of the communist party, the political and civil rights of Albanian citizens were denied, the class war was severely fought, etc. Dictatorship in Albania developed as a dictatorship run by a political caste that devoured political power by sacrificing social interests in the name of its own interests⁴. With the coming to power of communism, the elimination of the old elite will begin and the state and the party will be reunited, eliminating the rule of law and the justice system completely. As a consequence of extreme politics, the most violent forms of violence and terror in society were applied in Albania. The installation of the Stalinist system, and the following of the communist nomenclature model led to Albania being labelled the most Stalinist country in Eastern Europe.

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³ Çejku, A. 2000. "Demokracia e Imponuar; esse", Mbrothësia, Tiranë. fq. 41.

⁴ Ibid.

The change in social base in the country after the war came about as a result of the harsh application of class struggle and reforms to transform the economic system. The state will become the sole owner of the country's assets. The country dominated the agrarian economy, while in 1938 the industry yielded no more than 4.4% of national income⁵. So, the economic and social situation of Albania at the time of Hoxha's coming to power was extremely serious, like no other country in all of Eastern Europe. As in the village and in the city, the realization of economic-social transformations and agrarian reform consisted in nationalizing everything, i.e., in total return of property and all branches of the economy into the hands of the state as sole owner. In this regard, the Albanian economy laid the foundations of a socialist economy planned according to the Soviet model from the beginning⁶. In the country, a series of economic institutions were created, which enabled the complete control of the economy by the state. The economic model was based on rapid and strained industrialization. Two fundamental processes would be realized through this model: first, the creation of the working class and second, this model would lead the country towards economic independence from other countries⁷.

Social developments were guided by the creation of a large number of social organizations of the masses, which under the influence of the party, dictated and controlled every cell of social life in the country. This vast network of professional organizations had the power to control the activity of any individual. The collective principle severely damaged the private sphere of the Albanian individual. All this time, war was declared to every new and progressive thing, which was in conflict with the party-state line⁸.

Methodology

This article is based on descriptive methodology that describe the characteristics of political system in Albania, with a background of the communis regime in political, economic and social sphere in Albania. The article uses qualitative and quantitative approaches to describe the problems faced Albania. Some surveys, case studies and several documents, literature and laws which are linked with the subject are being analyzing. The findings from this article provide valuable insights to build the historical background of the country.

Discussion: Some political, economic and social aspects of communist regime

When communist iron power was established on a strong basis, Hoxha acted with the same momentum in implementing socio-economic and cultural policies. The objectives were the same as political ones, to lay the foundations of a self-confident power, and to build a strong and independent Albania, according to the Stalinist model, through industrialization, collectivization and improvement of social services⁹. The intersection of all these features would give him the hand to create the "new man", the perfect socialist man, where the Albanian identity and communist consciousness were embodied¹⁰. Of course, economically weakened Albania would have the help of Soviet allies in important sectors of the economy, until 1961, the year in which it broke diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union. China will then help Albania in economic and military terms. But a few years later, Albania severed ties with every country. The more isolated Albania remained, the more the state would be indoctrinated by Marxist-Leninist ideology. Communist regimes were also

⁵ Pano, N. 1968. *"The People's Republic of Albania"*. Johns Hopkins Press.

⁶ Akademia e Shkencave e RPS të Shqipërisë, 1983. *"Historia e Shqipërisë, V.4. 1944-1975"*, 8 Nëntori, Tiranë.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Xh. Gjeçovi, dhe P. Milo, 1998. *"Historia e popullit Shqiptar, IV Shqiptarët gjatë luftës së dytë botërore dhe pas saj 1939-1990"*, Toena, Tiranë. fq. 323

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Miranca Vickers, dhe James Pettifer, 1997. *"Albania: from anarchy to a Balkan Identity"*. London, Hurst.

shaped on the basis of contextual circumstances¹¹” The pseudo-Marxist-Leninist ideology became an ideological code compulsory in our country.

The entire process of development and construction of socialism in Albania was the signature of the Party of Labor of Albania, which was the only political guiding force of the state and society, based on Marxist-Leninist ideology. This fact is reflected in the 1976 Constitution. The name of the state passes from "people's republic" to "socialist people's republic". In the 1976 Constitution of Albania "Marxism-Leninism", it was sanctioned by constitutional law as the sole and ruling ideology. In section 3, it was written:

*"In the People's Socialist Republic of Albania, the ruling ideology is Marxism-Leninism."*¹²

This Constitution, the catalogue "Rights and Duties of Citizens" is based on the basis of "reconciliation of the interests of the individual and socialist society, giving priority to the general interest. Citizens' rights are inseparable from the fulfillment of their duties and cannot be exercised in opposition to the socialist order¹³. Article 41 of this Constitution proclaims the equality of women with men in every field, even declaring women as "the great force of the revolution". Although artificially elevating the position of women, it must be acknowledged that the communist regime succeeded in emancipating women. The role of women in society was very limited, especially because of the influence of the "Kanun", the old legal code, which Hoxha, as well as the phenomenon of blood feud influenced by the "Kanun", eradicated by extreme forms and means of violence.

But like everything else of the totalitarian regime, everything was in the function of the new communist man's scrunch. Articles 44-49 provide for the right to work, as well as elements of protection at work, or holidays. If we talk about respecting work in the conditions of the market economy, the work of that period was very poorly paid, even most of the major infrastructure works were built with voluntary work, or worse, by political prisoners. The 1976 Constitution formally guaranteed freedom of scientific work and literary-artistic creativity, but not to forget that it was the state that directed and organized the development of science and technology. Likewise, the right to education, which was guaranteed, was governed by the state on the basis of the Marxist-Leninist worldview.

Although the 1976 Constitution guaranteed a number of fundamental rights, of course, with specific significant restrictions regarding the right to free expression, it formulated a general principle, which limits the exercise of fundamental rights to cases where the individual conflicts with the general interest¹⁴. In the rights guaranteed by the Constitution we can mention: equality before the law regardless of sex, race, nationality, social position or economic situation; freedom of expression, press, organization, grouping, assembly and public demonstration; invincibility of the person, invincibility of the residence, confidentiality of correspondence and other means of communication; the right to submit petitions, complaints, remarks and suggestions to competent state bodies on personal and social matters.

However, one thing is clear in general, the policies pursued during the communist regime resulted in a comprehensive increase in industrial production, as well as a significant improvement in infrastructure, such as the electrification of mountainous areas, and the remediation of lands¹⁵. Despite these achievements, Albania still remained as the most economically lagging country compared to all other Balkan countries. This caused the population's discontent to increase significantly in the 1970s and 1980s, which resulted in repressive controls, which became norms in

¹¹ M. Newman. 2005. *Socializmi*, Tiranë: Ideart

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Article No. 36 of Albanian Constitution, year 1976.

¹⁴ Kushtetuta e Republikës Popullore Socialite të Shqipërisë. 1976. Tiranë

¹⁵ Bernd. Fischer, 2010. "Enver Hoxha dhe diktatura staliniste në Shqipëri. Instituti i Studimeve Ndërkombëtare. Tiranë.

socio-cultural environments. Stalinist social environment was the key component in the creation of the "new Socialist Albanian man"¹⁶.

During The Political Rule of Hoxha, areas such as education and health achieved great achievements by ensuring full coverage of the population with these services. Phenomena such as illiteracy or blood feuding were almost eliminated altogether. An interesting aspect of this regime in the social field is the tendency to make society uniform by avoiding localism, which can be considered a failure. During the communist regime despite their claims to have significantly reduced the influence of provincial differences, in some aspects of life, this distinction became sharper precisely because of the regime's policies. In the centralized economy system, the Albanian state was obliged to provide work to all citizens. Ensuring employment, regardless of the quality of work, reduced social conflicts and stress that unemployment causes individuals and their families. But also, the idea of a secure job, influenced the lack of knowledge of the way the labor market functions and the way of job searching, while on the social level the total lack of institutions for solving problems related to employment and vocational training.

During the nearly four decades of regime, this political and economic system created, stimulated, developed and supported human and social anti-value by imposing an ideology that turned people into communist party captives, transforming the identity of individuals. However, most historians agree when they say about Hoxha's policy, which had some important achievements: some improvements in health, education, women's rights and cultural activities¹⁷. During 1985-1990, with Hoxha's death, Albania would be led by his successor, Alia, who took over the country at a time when the economic crisis had become more sensitive and deeper. The country had the most vicious political system in the entire communist bloc. Class struggles were implemented permanently and in the most extreme forms. Albanian society was in great poverty and the country was feeling food crisis, unemployment and increasing crime, degrading the system as a whole. On the political plane, Alia decided to move forward with what Hoxha's political legacy had left behind. With his coming to power, the preservation of The Hoxha line became the chief word of any policy. He stressed that: "Loyalty to the teachings and path of Enver Hoxha would be a guarantee for the progress and protection of the country's independence"¹⁸. After 1988, intellectuals and liberal elements were increasingly giving signs of discontent. Although the country was in a difficult situation, Alia was not supportive of the idea of undertaking deep reforms to get the country out of the economic crisis. Under his direction, slow efforts were made to change or improve the country's political and economic situation¹⁹.

In 1988, Albania increased diplomatic relations by reaching relations in up to 110 countries. This opening of Albania was only for trade exchanges, as it was mineral resources such as chrome, nickel, electricity, etc., which were highly sought after by industrialized states. The regime was very careful not to have interference with Western culture and anything that violated the communist power bases.

As a result of the continued lack of development and investment (it was light industry and agriculture), in the mid-1980s the living and condition of the Albanian citizen was sadly bad. The decline in living standards was made even more evident by the lack of reforms and concrete measures to prevent the economic crisis. Lack of reflection (from the communist leadership) as well as the failure to accept the country's real crisis resulted in the continuation of the economic policies of the industrialization, leading to deepening the problems of various sectors of the Albanian economy²⁰. As a result of this deep economic crisis that had plagued the country, Alia undertook

¹⁶ Nicholas. Pano, 1968. *"The People's Republic of Albania"*. Johns Hopkins Press.

¹⁷ Bernd. Fischer, 2010. *"Enver Hoxha dhe diktatura staliniste në Shqipëri"*. Instituti i Studimeve Ndërkombetare. Tiranë.

¹⁸ Valentina Duka, 2007. *"Histori e Shqipërisë 1912-2000"*, Kristalina Tiranë.

¹⁹ In September 1986, with a decree of the Presidium of the People's Assembly, changes were made to the application of administrative and criminal measures, the effects were related to the reduction of the time of internment and measures for breaking the laws of the state.

²⁰ Valentina Duka. 2007. *"Histori e Shqipërisë 1912-2000"*, Kristalina Tiranë.

other economic reforms, but under consideration the strengthening of the communist line. But these reforms will not be functional for the immediate change of the collapsed economy, much more so in the face of the situation that Eastern Europe was experiencing.

Conclusion

As one of the poorest Balkan countries, but also led by a particularly repressive communist regime, Albania was forced to face considerable problems in the transition of post-communist society. During the communist period, Albania did not develop democratic institutions. During the transition period to democracy, the rapidity and almost complete reversal of values and beliefs instilled and consolidated by the state left the Albanian people deeply disoriented²¹.

Political pluralism in Albania came as a product of the old ruling elite, so the results could not be very positive. The new democratic system unraveled every law and social code attributed to the communist regime, without providing any long-term alternative to solving the socioeconomic problems created as a result of this change. But the Albanian road towards democracy was hard, because of political problems and high economic difficulties. For about half a century, Albania had been isolated from the outside world and from democratic values and principles, it had instilled and rooted values and attitudes that were not very favorable for the development of democracy.

The state foresees as a priority, public or social property, while private property was not eliminated entirely. The state led the country and economic development based on a single general economic plan. In terms of religion was lost from the party, because the state also provided faith in itself, the people, persecuting all kinds of religions that existed within the state. If we compare the constitutions of other states, and we talk about the principle of sharing power, then we can say that the influence of politics in communism has been not only in public institutions but also in courts, where the judiciary did not have the freedom to interpret fairly and impartially because it would violate the state order and be eliminated. The regime claims there is only one total truth and to love another truth or party, then it was a betrayal of the straight line. The opposition is being quasi-appointed by the party know what needs to be done to save society from oppression and abuses.

After all this, the root of communism in 1989 across Central Europe resulted in a completely new beginning in society, but with many consequences, both in people and in economy, politics, democratic governance etc.

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²¹ Bernd. Fischer, 2010. *“Enver Hoxha dhe diktatura staliniste në Shqipëri*. Instituti i Studimeve Ndërkombetare.

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