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## Ismail Kadaré

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Ismail Kadaré, foto: Bjørn Andersen, 2003

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Ismail Kadaré og Enver Hoxha, muligvis omkring 1970

## Supplerende

[Wikipedia om Ismail Kadaré \[PDF\]](#)

[1977: Ismail Kadaré: »The Literature of Socialist Realism is Developing in Struggle against the Bourgeois and Revisionist Pressure«](#)

[1979-1990: Tilsvarende artikler](#)

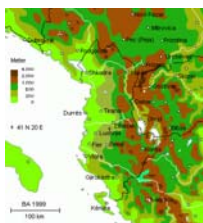
[1982: Enver Hoxha: »The Titoites«](#)

[1984: Dritëro Agolli om Kadaré's 'The Great Winter'](#)

[1984: Dritëro Agolli om Kadaré's 'The General of the Dead Army'](#)

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## Ismail Kadaré



Klik på kortet, hvis du vil have det forstørret / click <http://bjoerna.dk/kort/Albanien.gif> to enlarge it

Ismail Kadaré blev født 28. Januar 1936 i Gjirokastra i det sydlige Albanien, hvor de kulturelle og religiøse forhold er præget af nærheden til Grækenland, og hvor også Enver Hoxha var født. Da Ismail Kadaré var 3 år gammel blev Albanien besat af Italien, derefter fulgte 2' Verdenskrig - og da det socialistiske Albanien blev proklameret 11.1.1946 var han kun knap 10 år gammel. De næste mange år frem til han var omkring de 55 levede han i et socialistisk regime, hvilket har påvirket ham og hans forfatterskab overordentligt dybt - tematisk såvel som arbejdsmæssigt og personligt.

Kadaré viste gode evner for at skrive og fik muligheden for at blive professionel forfatter. Dette kunne imidlertid *kun* lade sig gøre, hvis han kom overens med det socialistiske styre, og hvis han - langt hen ad vejen - imødekom de krav der blev stillet til ham.



11.1.1946 Den Albanske Folkerepublik proklameres. Maleri af Fatmir Haxhiu. I centrum Enver Hoxha i militæruniform. Th for ham, men lidt længere tilbage Mehmet Shehu - ligeledes i militæruniform. Kopieret fra »Albania today« # 1/1981. Hvis du vil se et udsnit af Hoxha og Shehu, så *klik* på billedet.

Forholdet mellem Kadaré og det socialistiske styre var komplekst. Efterhånden som Kadaré's ry voksede, efterhånden som han også blev en anerkendt forfatter uden for landets grænser, blev han betragtet som et aktiv, og både den politiske leder, Enver Hoxha [\[A\]](#), og hans kone, Nexhmije Hoxha, der spillede en stor rolle på det kulturelle område, synes at have holdt hånden over ham og at have protegeret ham. Samtidig var der imidlertid adskillige i det politiske system, der betragtede ham med mistro, og han blev desuden konstant overvåget af sikkerhedsmyndighederne, »Sigurimi«, hvad Shaban Sinani har dokumenteret i to bind, se [\[Dossier\]](#).



Premierminister Mehmet Shehu, førstesekretær Enver Hoxha og parlamentsformand Haxhi Lleshi. Højtidelighed i Tirana i januar 1976 i anledning af Chou-En-Lai's død.

De første mange år handlede Kadaré i store træk som forventet af det socialistiske styre, det fremgår fx artiklen [»The Literature of Socialist Realism is Developing in Struggle against the Bourgeois and Revisionist Pressure«](#). Artiklen er »overgearret« - selv når man tager tiden omkring 1977, hvor Albanien stadig samarbejdede med Kineserne, men hvor man så småt var på vej til at stå alene, i betragtning, tag følgende eksempler [B] :

1/ History has known many conflicts among different literary schools, trends and tendencies. But the struggle of realist socialist art against revisionist bourgeois art is not of the same nature. This is a struggle of a new type, part of the class struggle, a struggle of the revolution against counter-revolution, a life-and-death struggle of healthy art against the sick art of the bourgeoisie and revisionism, which stinks of death and decay.

2/ In his speech of December 20th, 1974, Comrade Enver Hoxha points out that never before has there been imperialist propaganda, of such variety and breadth, for the degeneration of people and society in general, as in our days. Whole regiments of writers are included in this army of the world counter-revolution. Night and day, its kitchen is concocting all sorts of poisonous dishes for the degradation of man. Over the recent decades, the revisionist cuisine, coarser in some respects, but more refined in others, has been added to the old bourgeois cuisine. Their foul alliance, their supplementing each other in order to make the encirclement of the progressive forces more complete, have rendered them even more dangerous.

3/ Hence, the so-called flowering of bourgeois and revisionist art conceals only a profound stagnation, its external gigantomania hides only an internal dwarfism, whereas its pseudo-modern veneer covers only an endless obsolescence. Making a profound Marxist-Leninist analysis of the conservative essence of modern revisionism and the bourgeoisie, Comrade Enver Hoxha says that, »those who call us conservative are the conservatives«. And this is in the logic of things. Since they are trying to preserve or to re-establish an obsolete order in the world, regardless of what they call themselves, in essence they remain conservatives and ultra-conservatives. The same may be said of their art, too. It is not by chance that, in their spirit, in their content, even in their style and intonation, many of the works of the present-day decadent bourgeois literature are reminiscent of the Bible, the New Testament, the Koran, the Talmud and other tattered remnants of the Dark Ages. And this is one of the most coveted experiences that the revisionist art has borrowed from the decadent art. The Revelation of St John, or the Apocalypse, has become a favourite source of motifs for the revisionist pacifists. And, for them, the Apocalypse is the revolution and the revolutionary struggle.



4/ The sphere of criticism, of theoretical and philosophical literary thinking, is an important field in which this struggle has been developed and should be developed further. Not only the critics and scholars, but all the artists are duty bound to assist in the timely detection and prevention of alien influences, and to render them harmless, whether they come from the bourgeoisie or the revisionists, whether they are of the nature of a [Roger] Garaudy or [Ernst] Fischer, a Sholokhov or Solzhenitsyn.

5/ Applying this profoundly Marxist-Leninist thesis to our sphere of literature and art, we can say that the quarrels or rapprochements between the bourgeois and revisionist writers are just the continuation of the quarrels and rapprochements of their patrons. Hence you cannot rely on the arguments of the one art to combat or expose the other. To us writers of socialist realism, the revisionist literary lights, whether official writers in their countries or dissidents fled to the West, are the two sides of the same coin, for both of them have betrayed the art of the revolution for the art of the counter-revolution. Therefore, they are equally alien and dangerous to communism. Although they have mobilized entire regiments of men of letters and artists, both these forms of bourgeois and revisionist art are essentially weak, because they have no future. Therefore, in our fight against them, attack and not just defence, should characterize us.

Kadaré blev gjort til parlamentsmedlem (hvad der fx kan ses på et billede fra 1976, se illustrationen i artiklen om [1980?: »Ufuldendt april«](#) [PDF]) og til næstformand for Den Demokratiske Alliance, som Nexhmije Hoxha var formand for. Den Demokratiske Alliance var en meget vigtig organisation der havde til formål at samle en række politiske, kulturelle og andre grupper og personer om Kommunistpartiet.

Senere - omkring 1980 - blev det tydeligere at han var blevet skeptisk over for styret, måske især over for nogle af dets udartninger? På dén tid skrev han »*Drømmenes Palads*«, der på overfladen foregår i Istanbul i 1800-tallet, men som i virkeligheden foregår i 1970'ernes Albanien.

Kadaré skrev i »*Albansk forår*«, der udkom efter at han var »hoppet af« til Frankrig, om en strid han havde med Nexhmije Hoxha. Han beskrivelse viser at han havde relativt lang line, men bogen bekræfter indirekte at han ikke havde reel magt, og at han kun kunne øve politisk indflydelse i kraft af sine egne egenskaber og sit renommé.

I Albanien var det ellers sådan (og er det i høj grad stadig sådan) at man kun kunne øve indflydelse ved at have et respekteret »bagland«, især en stærk klan eller familie, men et sådant bagland synes Kadaré ikke at have haft, han var (og er) i det væsentlige en individualist og enegænger. Uden et sådant bagland var hans position i mange henseender usikker, og det er formentlig dette der fik ham til at »hoppe af«. Nok var han anerkendt og nok blev han protegéret, men det var ikke usandsynligt, at »nogle« - netop i en modsætningsfyldt overgangsperiode - kunne finde på at chikanere, overfalde eller endog myrde ham.

Kadare's politisk-litterære artikler og Dritero Agolli's tilsvarende er optrykt, fordi de er et vigtigt supplement til de to forfatterskaber. Desuden er artiklerne nyttige, når man vil se og diskutere film som »*Kolonel Bunker*« og »*Slogans*«.

#### Noter:

[A] Se: [Wikipedia om Enver Hoxha](#) [PDF]

[B] Teoretisk set *kan* artiklen være blevet skrevet af en anden end Ismail Kadaré, men jeg tvivler. Det er

tænkeligt at han *har* skrevet den - muligvis på opfordring, muligvis på eget initiativ og sandsynligvis med bistand fra partiapparatet.

[\[Dossier\]](#)



**Shaban Sinani** er professor; tidligere har han også arbejdet journalistisk. I 5 år - frem til udgangen af 2005 - var han chef for det albanske nationalarkiv. Værket om Kadaré er på albansk, men i maj 2006 udkom en særlig udgave på fransk; den franske udgave er suppleret med et langt interview med Kadaré, der er optaget af Stéphane Courtois.

Titlen *Dossier Kadaré* henviser til mange ting på én gang, 'sagen' i arkiverne, Kafka's »Processen« og nogle af Kadaré's bøger: »*Drømmenes palads*« og »*Dossier H*«.

**Courtois' interview** kommer godt rundt og giver et alsidigt indtryk af Kadaré's måde at beskrive og fortolke sin tidligere og nuværende situation på. Kadaré fortæller at ikke alle var begejstrede for at Sinani gik i gang med at finde gamle papirer frem eller for at man åbnede Sikkerhedstjenestens arkiver, men at det var en bestræbelse han selv støttede. Projektet har kostet Sinani dyrt, siger Kadaré et par gange, for den kostede ham hans job som chef for Nationalarkivet. Det var ganske vist Berisha'regeringen der afskedigede Sinani, men nogle af kuglerne var støbt af den foregående socialistiske regering. [Om denne udlægning er helt korrekt, er jeg usikker på. Det er rigtigt at Sinani - som én af relativt få - blev afskediget som følge af regeringsskiftet, men muligvis skyldtes det mest et gammelt regnskab vedrørende chefposten, selv om det *kan* have spillet en vis rolle at Sinani gjorde omtalte indsats].

Kadaré er flere gange inde på forholdet til forfatterkollegaen Dritëro Agolli. Engang var de gode venner, og Kadaré omtaler Agolli's forfatterskab meget positivt, men de kom efterhånden på afstand fra hinanden, fordi Agolli lagde større vægt - end Kadaré - på at gøre politisk karriere [Agolli som formand for Forfatterforeningen] end på at være forfatter. Muligvis har 'myndighederne' påvirket Agolli til at være fagligt jaloux på Kadaré?

Kadaré beskriver sig selv som først og fremmest forfatter og som én der ville tænke frit og uafhængigt. [Denne udlægning er næppe helt rammende, for op igennem 1970'erne fik også Kadaré politiske funktioner og blev en kendt talsmand for det officielle Albanien, samtidig med at han - uden tvivl - blev betragtet med mistro fra den politiske top. Forholdet er bestemt ikke entydigt, men meget sammensat].

Kadaré har kun truffet Enver Hoxha ved en enkelt lejlighed i 1971 [derimod har han adskillige gange truffet andre fra partitoppen, dels Hoxha's kone, Nexhmije Hoxha, der spillede en stor politisk rolle, dels Ramiz Alia, som han har skrevet og talt indgående med flere gange, bl.a. i tiden frem til afhopningen i 1990]. Kadaré er - efter Hoxha-systemets sammenbrud - blevet kritiseret af Nexhmije Hoxha for at have svigtet og for at have spillet en art dobbeltspil.

1971 var i øvrigt dét år hvor Kadaré blev optaget som medlem af Kommunistpartiet. Hvorfor blev han dét, når han ikke så sig selv som 'partisoldat', men som *forfatter*?, kunne man spørge. Det var ikke alle og enhver der blev medlemmer, men personer som partiet havde tillid til, og Kadaré blev - synes det - ikke indstillet til optagelse af hvem som helst, men af partitoppen. Kadaré mente af samme grund ikke det var muligt for ham at takke nej. [Det er nemt og gratis at være bagklog, men Kadaré kunne relativt let have sluppet fri for optagelse i partiet, hvis det var dét han ønskede - og dét formentlig uden større personlige konsekvenser. Min formodning er at Kadaré dengang anså det for opportunt (måske mente han at en optagelse ville beskytte ham eller gavne ham på anden vis) eller endda fordi han fandt det at være det *rigtigste* at gøre. Hvis

dét var tilfældet, synes jeg det ville have været i orden. »Mit« problem er slet ikke dette, men dén ikke helt gennemskuelige måde Kadaré omtaler Hoxha-tiden på i dag].

Det var meget almindeligt i Hoxha-tiden, siger Kadaré, at forfattere og andre kunstnere blev forfulgt, at deres værker blev beslaglagt og at de blev fængslet. Det gjaldt flere af Kadaré's venner og bekendte, så det var noget man på en måde vænnede sig til. Han har selv ved et par lejligheder gået i brechen for kolleger, tilføjer han, og han har ikke bidraget til at nogle blev forfulgt - hvad man heller ikke kunne se af nogle af de dokumenter der nu var lagt frem.

Nogle af hans egne ting kom ikke ud, fortæller Kadaré [og dette er - men ikke på nogen simpel måde - en indikator på at Kadaré havde en sammensat position]. Digtet »*De Røde Pashaer*« blev forbudt og destrueret, andre af hans ting kom i et fortryk tidsskriftsform, men opnåede ikke at blive udgivet i bogform. [Kadaré's omtale af »*De Røde Pashaer*« er - formentlig - kun delvis dækkende. Det er korrekt at digtet blev skarpt kritiseret og at det blev forbudt, men - at dømme efter digtets indhold - ikke fordi det i det grundlæggende var kritisk mod det kommunistiske system, derimod mod »*nogle*« unavngivne partifolk som Kadaré anså for at være bureaukrater; efter digtets indhold ville bureaukraterne blive afsløret af Enver Hoxha og udstødt af ham. Som digt betragtet er det - også efter datidige litterære standarder - gyseligt, men politisk set er det på linie med Kadaré's litteraturpolitiske artikler som er aftrykt nedenfor. Mig bekendt blev digtet *ikke* skrevet på opfordring, men på eget initiativ - og dét er en indikator på at Kadaré ikke var dén dissident han i dag giver sig ud for at have været].

En særlig historie fik den russiske udgivelse af en samling digte af Kadaré. Udgivelsen blev planlagt, mens Kadaré var på et længere studieophold i Moskva, men forlaget var ikke helt tilfreds, man fandt digtene for vestligt orienterede og ønskede at der blev optaget et særligt forord, der kritiserede digtene.

Nogenlunde samtidig indtraf bruddet mellem Sovjetunionen og Albanien, og der blev rejst kraftig gensidig kritik. De kritiske bemærkninger til Kadaré druknede, og derfor blev Kadaré ikke kritiseret i Albanien i forbindelse med udgivelsen.

Et Engelskproget resumé af et **interview med Shaban Sinani** [originalen er på Albansk] kan findes på: <http://bjoerna.net/Kadare/Sinani-2004.htm> [As a PDF: <http://bjoerna.net/Kadare/Sinani-2004.pdf>]. Jeg skylder **Gina Schaar** megen tak for resuméet.

## *Drømmenes Palads*

Bogen er én af de bedste Kadaré har skrevet. Den er på én gang simpel og meget kompleks. Den har et godt, næsten surrealistisk plot, den er klar i sin struktur, den er fantasiskabende - og den lægger op til at læseren tænker med. Kendskab til albansk historie er måske ikke *strengt* nødvendigt, men på den anden side udfolder der sig et så betydningsfuldt spil mellem fiktionen og den historiske virkelighed at man kun får en brøkdel ud af bogen, hvis man ikke *har* et vist kendskab til den albanske historie i 1800- og i 1900-tallet.

Fortællingen foregår på en tid hvor Albanien var en del af det Osmaniske Rige - formentlig er det engang i 1800-tallet, måske omkring 1830, for massakren på de albanske stormænd i Monastir i 1820'erne nævnes, og derfor også efter drabet på Ali Pasha [C].

Bogen har én centralfigur - Mark-Alem - der på mødrene side hører til Qyprilli-slægten; hele bogen ses med hans øjne. Bogen tager sin begyndelse da han, mere eller mindre per protektion, er blevet ansat i Drømmenes Palads, *Tabir Saray*, der er en stor og magtfuld efterretningsorganisation. I Drømmenes Palads samler man ikke informationer om hvad som helst, men derimod alle de drømme der drømmes i det Osmaniske Rige.

Drømmene noteres ned, samles og forsendes med særlige kuréerer til Istanbul, hvor de gennemgås, sorteres og viderebehandles på en særdeles grundig måde. Alle læses af

underordnede embedsmænd, der vælger de vigtigste ud til nøjere analyse, evt. til sammenligning med tidligere drømme med samme tema - og til sidst vælges den vigtigste, *mesterdrømmen*, ud for at blive sendt til Sultanen. I nogle tilfælde skete der ikke videre, i andre blev drømmen taget som anledning til politisk eller politimæssig handling.

Mark-Alem har fået en solid akademisk uddannelse, men er gået gennem livet uden at være engageret i noget som helst. Hvad han oplever skyldes ikke at *han* har gjort noget, forsøgt noget - men at andre har handlet, og derfor er hans tid i Drømmenes Palads også nærmest drømmeagtig.

Man mærker en tydelig inspiration fra Kafka, der slet ikke nævnes i 1977-artiklen - [1977: Ismail Kadaré: »The Literature of Socialist Realism is Developing in Struggle against the Bourgeois and Revisionist Pressure«](#), men derimod respektfuldt nogle gange i den langt senere »*Albansk Forår*«. Var Kafka blev nævnt i 1977 ville det næppe have været af positive grunde; »dogmatikeren« Kadaré ville have været nødt til at tage skarp afstand fra en så opgivende og pessimistisk digtning som Kafka's.

Qyprilli'erne - eller som de ofte skrives: *Koprülü*'erne - var en berømt og mægtig albansk slægt, der i mange generationer var fremtrædende ministre eller embedsmænd for Sultanen. Nogle af de mest berømte levede i slutningen af 1600-tallet, hvor én af dem ledede den fejlslagne belejring af Wien, og som Sultanen lod henrette for ikke at have nået hvad han skulle.

I *Drømmenes Palads* går det én af de mest fremtrædende af Qyprilli'erne ilde, sandsynligvis fordi han - i en bestemt sammenhæng - var fremtrådt med et nationalt, et albansk, ansigt, og på en måde som Sultanen og nogle af hans nærmeste (efter fortællingen at dømme) havde opfattet som en trussel. Mark-Alem gik det derimod godt; han avancerede - og havde, da bogen slutter, opnået en meget høj charge i systemet.

Hvornår *Drømmenes Palads* er skrevet, ved jeg ikke, men et par kapitler udkom - ifølge Shaban Sinani - på albansk i 1979 (sammen med nogle andre tekster) og en fuldstændig udgave i 1981. I begyndelsen af 1982 blev bogen fordømt af en forfatterorganisation og umiddelbart efter forbudt; forfatterorganisationen brød sig ikke om allusionerne til det albanske styre. Kadaré skrev senere: »[...] *det skarpeste angreb på diktaturet som disse linjers opphavsmann har skrevet - Drømmenes palass - lot seg skrive og utgi i Albania på en tid da dette landet var på sitt mest formørkede, i 1981.*« [*»Albansk forår«*, Norsk udgave s. 22].

Kadaré har - et sted i »*Albansk Forår*« - skrevet at han slet ikke var begyndt at skrive bogen med analogisk sigte. Men ingen der kendte til albanske forhold i 1970'erne kunne - da bogen kom frem - undgå at se den endog meget tydelige analogi.

*Måske* var der en kerne af sandhed i fortællingen om et drømmenes palads i den Osmanniske periode, men det var tydeligt at dét Kadaré i virkeligheden skrev om, men under overfladen, var den albanske Sikkerhedstjeneste, *Sigurimi*, og frem for alt det kommunistiske partisystem. Systemet benyttede sig déngang af angivere, personlig forfølgelse, kritik-og-selvkritik og ingen, selv ikke de der havde en høj charge, kunne være sikker på deres personlige fremtid. Fra Hoxha greb magten i slutningen af 2' Verdenskrig og frem var den ene efter den anden konkurrent eller kritiker blevet rensset ud og blevet enten fængslet eller - som det gjaldt de mest prominente - henrettet, således Koçi Xoxe, der sagdes at være Jugoslaviens-orienteret. Xoxe nævnes flere steder i Kadaré's artikler og absolut ikke for det gode.

At forsøge at publicere en sådan historie - og netop i det socialistiske Albanien, der var én



af de mest overvågede og regulerede socialistiske stater - måtte være en provokation for magthaverne, og derfor var det enten overordentlig modigt at skrive og forsøge at udgive den - eller også var det eventyrligt dumdrigt. Det eneste Kadaré kunne håbe på var at de der sad inde med den *virkelige* magt var optaget af noget andet, eller at de måske ligefrem ville vurdere bogen positivt; læste man déngang bogen, blev man ikke animeret til at »stikke snuden frem«, og måske kunne dét passe nogle af de øverste magthavere meget godt? Men i den sidste ende *blev* bogen dog forbudt (så vidt det er oplyst).



Mehmet Shehu i: »Report on the 6th Five-Year Plan (1976-1980)«, 1976

I 1980 og '81 var Hoxha'erne (og alle andre i deres gruppe) stærkt optaget af de voksende uoverensstemmelser mellem Hoxha og nr. 2 i hierarkiet, Mehmet Shehu, der havde spillet en betydningsfuld rolle lige fra Befrielseskampene under 2' Verdenskrig. Albanien havde netop brudt med Kina og stod ganske alene på Balkan, hvortil kom at man nu ikke længere fik tilført betydelige økonomiske og andre midler udefra; tidligere havde - efter tur - Jugoslavien, Sovjetunionen og Kina - støttet Albanien.

Hvad uoverensstemmelserne mellem Hoxha og Shehu i virkeligheden drejede sig om, er - så vidt jeg ved - ikke helt klarlagt, men formentlig var de i stigende grad blevet uenige om hvordan man skulle komme videre; om man skulle følge en strengt *stole-på-egne-kræfter-linie*, som var »smuk«, men næppe særlig realistisk - eller om man tværtimod skulle forsøge en åbning mod Vesteuropa?

17.12.1981 blev Shehu fundet død i sin seng - angiveligt havde han begået selvmord, muligvis var han blevet byrdet af én af Hoxha's håndgangne mænd. Kort efter påstod Hoxha at Shehu havde været flerdobbelt agent for udenlandske kræfter. Så tiden omkring 1981-1982 var vitterlig, som Kadaré selv har været inde på, én af de mest mørke perioder i det socialistiske Albanien.

#### Note og henvisninger:

[C] »*Nichen i muren*« handler om Ali Pasha af Tepelena, hans kamp mod Osmannerne og om drabet på ham.

Se evt.: [Albaniens Historie. En oversigt](#)

Om Ali Pasha kan læses flere steder, fx i Peter Oluf Brøndsted: »*Interviews with Ali Pasha in the autumn of*

1812«. Edited by Jacob Isager, The Danish Institute at Athens 1999 (distribueres af Aarhus University Press).

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## Agamemnons datter

[Bogen er under oversættelse til [Engelsk](#) og Dansk. Kommentar til bogen følger senere. Bogen er angiveligt skrevet i 1985].



1. maj 1981, Tirana. Enver Hoxha i midten.  
Forsiden af »Albania Today« # 3/1981

Dén datter der tænkes på er ikke Elektra, men Ifigineia. Euripides har skrevet to dramer om hende, det første om Agamemnon's ofring af hende i Aulis og det andet om hendes (og broderen) Orestes' flugt fra Tauroi - »*Iphigeneia i Aulis*« og »*Iphigeneia i Tauroi*«; de to dramer kan findes på dansk i Christian Wilster's oversættelse via: [http://www.mahler.suite.dk/frx/euripides/bacchus\\_start\\_side.htm](http://www.mahler.suite.dk/frx/euripides/bacchus_start_side.htm) [Vælg pågældende drama og benyt derefter '>>'-muligheden i **øverste** linie for at bladre frem].

Foreløbige noter: Det er en meget besynderlig historie. En ung mand ved radio/TV er kæreste med #2's datter, Suzana, men hun ofrer sig (på faderens forlangende) på en uklar måde og dropper ham. Det går den unge mand og tygger på - samtidig med at han diskuterer med sig selv, hvad det koster at blive til noget - og det er åbenbart temmelig meget, i det mindste så meget at man næsten får medlidenhed.

Den unge mand har åbenbart spillet en rolle i opgøret med de albanske »kinesere«, men synes politisk set at være skingrende naiv. I det mindste virker hans formodning om hvorfor datteren har droppet ham (at en ny stor udrensning, som hendes far skulle stå i spidsen for, var undervejs), at være ikke så lidt konstrueret.

Hele historien foregår på én dag, 1. maj, hvor den unge mand - til forbløffelse for sig selv (!) og hele sin omgangskreds - har fået plads på én af de mest fornemme tribuner.

Man kommer uvilkårligt til at tænke på Kadaré's komplekse rolle i Hoxha-perioden. Måske er bogen et forsøg på - midt i 1980'erne, efter Mehmet Shehu's død, men før systemets sammenbrud - at skrive sig ud af sin egen og af den albanske politiske elendighed? Måske har udgivelsen i 2006 et tilsvarende formål?

#2 refererer i virkelighedens verden til Mehmet Shehu, og forlovelseshistorien til en virkelig forlovelse: Mehmet Shehu's søn (ikke en datter) ville forlove sig med en pige fra en »problematisk familie«, se nærmere i [»The Titoites«](#).

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## Albansk forår

»Albansk forår« er skrevet i tiden hvor Kadaré besluttede sig for at »hoppe af« fra Albanien til Frankrig og i den første tid derefter, dvs. i 1990-91.

Afhopningen fandt, umiddelbart set, sted på et besynderligt tidspunkt. De fleste kunne se at det kun var et spørgsmål om tid før det hidtidige styre ville kollapse fuldstændigt - og mange så Kadaré som dén der ville kunne løfte rollen som præsident i overgangsperioden, nærmest som man havde set forfatterkollegaen Václav Havel gøre det i Tjekkoslaviet [D]. Kadaré afviste allerede dengang at være kandidat - og har gentaget afvisningen flere gange siden.

I bogen prøver Kadaré at forklare sig. Han var - på dette tidspunkt - ikke glad for det socialistiske styre eller for det kommunistiske parti, men havde bevaret venskabelige følelser for Hoxha's efterfølger, Ramiz Alia - og vel også en vis tiltro til at han ville begynde en reformering af såvel det kommunistiske parti som af det politiske system.

Kadaré skrev et brev til Alia og havde en længere samtale med ham. Herefter skrev Kadaré endnu et brev (som er optrykt i bogen). Lige som Ramiz Alia tidligere havde sat tid af til en drøftelse med Kadaré, således svarede han også på hans andet brev. Nogle af de ting som Kadaré foreslog eller bad om blev gennemført, men enten syntes han ikke det var tilstrækkeligt - eller også var der andre grunde til at han i den sidste ende besluttede at »hoppe af«, [se ovenfor](#).

Så vidt jeg kan se var grunden ikke at man ikke lyttede til Kadaré, for dét gjorde man, men at han var bange for sit skind - hvad der efter min mening er en ærlig sag. Jeg vil ikke bestride at han befandt sig i en vanskelig, måske endda faretruende situation, selv om han til stadighed var overvåget af Sikkerhedspolitiet.

Det er tydeligt i »Albansk forår« at Kadaré mente at han havde en vigtig rolle han både kunne og skulle spille, måske som fremstående kulturpersonlighed der kunne fortælle den kommunistiske Leder hvad der var galt? Hvad Kadaré i virkeligheden stræbte efter dengang er uklart. Han fremkom øjensynligt med kritik, men ikke mod systemet eller dets grundlag, kun mod vildskud og misbrug.

Allerede med digtet »De Røde Pashaer« [1974] havde Kadaré prøvet at fortælle partitoppen at »bureaukraterne« ødelagde den kommunistiske bevægelse, men Lederen selv kasserede digtet! - og andre i Ledelsen var tilsvarende kritiske eller negative.

Temaet - en venlig håndsrækning til Lederen - blev siden vendt i »Agamemnons datter«, nemlig i nogle bemærkninger om at skrive hyldestdigte om Lederen, som ikke sendes til ham eller offentliggøres, men som sendes til hans børn - formentlig for at et af børnene skulle agere »postillon d'amour«?

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**Note:**

[D] Václav Havel blev præsident for Tjekkoslavkiet 28.12.1989. Efter delingen i Tjekkiet og Slovakiet blev han i 1993 valgt som præsident for Tjekkiet; han blev genvalgt i 1998 og sad på posten frem til 2003.

## Diskussionen om digtet »De Røde Pashaer« fra 1974

I marts 2002 opstod der røre om et digt som Ismail Kadaré har skrevet i 1974. Digtet hedder »Në mesditë Byroja Politike u mblodh« (Politbureauet blev samlet ved aftenstid) eller »Pashallaret e Kuq« (De Røde Pashaer).



Maks Velo i albansk TV 2003

Maleren, forfatteren og arkitekten Maks Velo [Max Velo], der var fængslet mange år i Hoxha-tiden, havde ikke kunnet finde digtet, men havde hørt om det - måske havde han læst hvad Kadaré selv havde skrevet i »Albansk forår«? Måske var Velo skeptisk over Kadaré's beskrivelse, som tydede på at han havde optrådt mere systemkritisk end der var dækning for?

[187] »På grunn av mitt dikt De røde pasjaene ble jeg i 1975 beskyldt for å ha oppfordret til væpnet oppstand, noe som slett ikke var sant. Jeg ble ikke desto mindre tvunget til å tilstå at jeg «uforsettlig var kommet med en appell om væpnet oppstand» (jeg fikk bare tillatelse til å føye til «uforsettlig»). De krevde en skriftlig selvkritikk av meg, som antagelig ennå befinner seg i Partiets arkiver. Det var en anklage ført i pennen av meg selv, som staten kunne bruke mot meg når den måtte finne det for godt, og det visste jeg.«, se også s. 40.

Max Velo trak historien om digtet frem i ét af sine digte, hvis overskrift er: »De røde pashaers forsvinden«. I den følgende tid var der mange gætterier, indtil digtet blev fundet i statens arkiver.

Forfatteren Fatos Lubonja, også en forfatter der havde været fængslet - og tidligere en god bekendt af Kadaré - mente at det forsvundne digt var en hyldest til Enver Hoxha m.fl., og at Kadare havde flirtet med regimet, mens andre, fx Bashkim Shehu - også han engang ven af Kadaré - søn af daværende premierminister Mehmet Shehu, antog at digtet var kritisk, i det mindste mod bureaukraterne. Begge dele viste sig at være sandt.

Digtet skulle have været trykt, men det blev forhindret højt oppe fra - Enver Hoxha selv skal have været negativ over for det! Så vidt det fremgår blev Kadaré kaldt til møde hos én af Kommunistpartiets ledere, Ramiz Alia, hvor der blev læst og påskrevet, for man brød sig ikke om det. Måske fordi det var for underdanigt? Eller måske snarere *for skævt*?



Nogle i partiapparatet mente at Kadaré skulle straffes, andre - bl.a. Hysni Kapo - at det var tilstrækkeligt hvis han bøjede af og formulerede en selvkritik, og dette blev øjensynligt resultatet. Heri skal Kadaré ifølge den albanske avis »*Gazeta Shqiptare*« have skrevet:

*»The only aim and preoccupation of my life is to return in the quarries, in that great and honoured place of party's aids, without which, either my life, nor my work would have a meaning. And I thank my friend, who banned the publishing of my poem, and prevented me from the fatal fall«.*

Kadaré skal i 2002 have sagt at han *ikke* mente det gamle digt var systemkritisk, og han mindede om de omstændigheder hvorunder det i sin tid var skrevet.

I midten af marts 2002 fandt »*Gazeta Shqiptare*« digtet i statens arkiver (og forelagde det for Kadaré). I digtets begyndelse spørger han: »*Hvorfor samles politbureauet? Der er ingen trusler udefra. Men der er noget galt, og der må gøres noget. En sort kræft er på vej nedefra. De mange der opfører sig som bureaukrater underminerer bygningen. Men frygt ikke, Enver Hoxhas skarpe øje vil finde dem.*«

[En engelsk oversættelse](#) - af [Robert Elsie](#) - er fundet [*klik* tv; digtet er et stykke nede på 'siden']. Der er ikke det mindste i digtet der er systemkritisk, hverken direkte eller indirekte. Digtet er tværtimod et uforbeholdent hyldestdigt til Enver Hoxha. Kadaré fordømmer de unavngivne bureaukrater der har fordrejet kommunismen, og stoler fuldt og fast på at Enver Hoxha vil gøre det nødvendige - foretage en udrensning:

Enver Hoxha with his eagle eye  
Was the first to have doubts about them.  
He then descended to the foundations  
Of the state, as in the great ballads of old.

He bore a red torch in his hand,  
The very earth quivered,  
The light of the fire fell upon them,  
And he saw them effacing the blood of our martyrs  
As they were dividing up the cloaks.

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I November 2003 blev der afholdt en international konference i Tirana om religiøs tolerance: *Religions and Civilizations in the New Millenium. The Albanian Case*. Indbyderne var den Albanske præsident, Alfred Moisiu, og UNESCO. Ismail Kadaré var formand for forberedelseskomitéen og holdt én af de første taler. Talen er gengivet efter den konferencerapport, der blev udsendt af ACHR, The Albanian Center for Human Righths, i 2004.

## Religious tolerance. International conference in Tirana, November 2003

Ismail Kadare - Chairman of the Steering Committee of the Conference

This international meeting is being held at a time when a new concern, or better said, an old one returning with a renewed power, has reappeared in the world: the concern about relations amongst Faiths. That is the reason why Samuel Huntington's thesis, claiming the 21st century to evidence the clash of civilizations after the fall of totalitarian Utopias, and has aroused wide interest, both in the sense of its acceptance or its rejection.

This thesis, totally or partially accepted, glorified or even rejected, still presents itself in such a way that it cannot be ignored. Something important has been occurring in our world for a long time now, something that for long we have not noticed. It is difficult to anticipate whether it will be named »clash of civilizations« or not, whether it will be qualified as an unavoidable or an avoidable catastrophe. What we can state with conviction is, that the majority of the peoples of the world are directiy or indirecdy involved in this issue. As a consequence, millions of people all over the world have united their minds, will and passion, in order to prevent the worst.

I am sure our meeting here in Tirana is a part out of the mosaic of this general concern of mankind.

Owing to an unfortunate mixture of circumstances, the aggravation of the relations between different religions (Faiths) has been coexistent and even mingled with another planetary plague: terrorism.

Terrorism, as well as the conflicts, wars and hatred that create them, is much more ancient than all contemporary great religions: Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Buddhism, etc.. Terror, in ail its forms, props and masks, has accompanied human history in all its phases.

Terrorism has no religion. Terrorism is not supported by any value system. Terrorism has no home country.

Like the cuckoo that has no nest of its own, and usurps those of other birds, terrorism is in search of peoples, countries, ideologies, religious faiths, political causes, racial conflicts, ethnical tensions, social misery and so forth, to lay its eggs, which give birth to its race: to terror.

To identify terrorism with any people or group of peoples, with any major issue, with any religious faith, is to fall prey to a tragic misconception. Unfortunately, this misconception is growing and is becoming a primary factor in the efforts ro attribute to terrorism precisely what it lacks: a basis, a ground, a religion.

Terrorism and the deterioration of relations among peoples of different Faiths accompanying it, have become, as I mentioned above, a dramatic planetary problem. Our

European continent is directly involved in that concern. When we speak about Europe, it goes without saying that our Balkan peninsula is doubly involved. On this peninsula, our country, Albania, whose population pertains to three different Faiths, which is rarely found in Europe, constitutes a special case, as it is duly stressed in the program of this forum.

We Albanians, whether we like it or not, are well aware that the image of our country and people at present in the world is not an enviable one. We are also aware that this image cannot be fixed, neither by grudges, nor by revanchist sighs, but by work and by thorough emancipation. I am not further elaborating on the matter, for it is beyond the scope of our present Forum. I mentioned the damaged image of Albania only to come to another truth, namely that even in such difficult conditions, when we are under the spotlight of criticism, even when our flaws are evident, there is something that the world appreciates in us. And that something is not just a trifle. On the contrary, it is something big, and precious, especially nowadays. That is religious tolerance, and harmony among different religions.

Since times past, that tolerance has long been mentioned as a proverbial one.

And there is a reason for all this. A Balkan country of modest proportions, a country of three different religious faiths and of four religious communities, inhabiting a region widely renowned for its quarrels and grudges. A people of a bad temper, even irascible, like the majority of the Balkan people. Although of three different faiths, an ideal condition to provoke dissension, the Albanians have not experienced religious conflicts during their history.

The explanation for this religious harmony, that has been lasting for centuries in Albania, is not to be sought in any paradox, nor in any educational or emancipatory system of an exemplary kind, and much less in special moral and ethical qualities of this people. The Albanians are just like all the others. Their religious harmony is an offspring of their proper life, is a natural consequence of their particular conditions and their special path throughout history.

Conversion, or changing their faith from their primary faith Catholicism to the Orthodox faith, and later on, the conversion of some to Islam, has served Albanians as their first school of tolerance. During this process, it became a common fact among Albanians, that a part of the family preserved their original Catholic faith, while the other part was converted into the Orthodox or Islamic faith. There are multiple cases of two brothers living under the same roof, one being of Catholic and the other Muslim faith, and so forth, and that was common for entire tribes and regions alike.

It is comprehensible that when people are used to live together within the same tribe, under the same roof, being of different faiths, they spontaneously get used to tolerant ways, to social harmony. To such a man interreligious hatred seems something alien, something absurd.

When during the 19th century, in the troubled Balkans, the Albanians, (like the others), were elaborating their strategy of detachment from the Ottoman Empire, the Albanian renaissance representatives, the philosophers, the poets, the politicians, became well aware that their religious harmony was a priceless Treasure. They understood that religious dissension in Albania would endanger the existence of Albania stuck itself. So they stuck to the idea of religious harmony, and transformed it into an antidote, into a flag along with the flag of liberty.

Fortunately, the liberal vision on religious matters, urging to accept the different faiths, would somehow radiate tolerance, toward the same or a similar race, or nationality.

Tolerance towards »the Other«, who was not only of a different faith, but also of a different nationality, was demonstrated by a great and excellent example, which has not been seen often in the history of mankind: the way Albanians treated the Jews. The Albanians showed themselves to be manifestly a semitophile nation, not only in their everyday life. Their semitophilia passed most difficult test: the Holocaust. This is a widely known truth, but please, allow me to repeat again that at the end of the Second World War the number of Jews, was decreasing everywhere, but increased approximately tenfold in Albania. Let me repeat that, for peoples need good models, and we are gathered here today precisely to encourage them.

The recent publication of the documents of the Albanian Quisling Government, by which it requested its German allies to refrain from the persecution of Jews in Albania, because it would cause problems with the locals, bears witness to what degree the protection of the Jews was unanimous in Albania.

## 2.

To better understand how the harmony among the three faiths and the four religious communities, in a country as small as Albania, proceeding but with its own moral program, philosophy, ethics or strategy, clashed with the tough historical reality, and has survived unharmed to this day, allow me to remind you very briefly of what has occurred in this country with regard to religion.

The first Albanian faith, Catholicism, as ancient as that to Rome itself, was the only one in this country for nearly 1000 years. The schism between the Roman Church and the Byzantine one, the borders of which ran approximately in Albania, would result in the first conversion of a part of the Albanian Catholics to the Orthodox faith. Some centuries later, the occupation of all the Balkans by the Ottoman Empire, would bring, along with the military and administration, another faith: Islam.

Not only the Albanians were converted. The phenomenon was widespread all over the peninsula. A part of the Slavs and of the Greeks also converted to the Moslem faith. The Albanian Catholics were the first numerous Catholic population which fell under Ottoman rule. They tried to maintain their links with the Christian European World. It goes without saying a long calvary and infinite martyrdom followed for the Albanian Catholic community, those lonely tragic people, within an Empire quite alien to them. In spite of all, they kept ablaze the torch of freedom, of religion, of culture, just to remind the other Albanians of what they had lost: their homeland, and Europe.

The Albanian Orthodox community, although religiously divided from the Catholic one, made constant efforts, together with the latter, to keep alive and burning the fire of liberty and also of Albanian nationality. A new complication appeared in the life of the Albanian Orthodox community during the 19th and 20th centuries, after the liberation of Greece from the Ottoman yoke. A grotesque idea, an offspring of panhellenistic circles, the idea that all Balkan Orthodox communities cannot pertain to any other nationality but to the Greek one, poisoned the relations between Christian Greeks and Albanians. The Albanian Orthodox community, by its acts, sometimes even by sacrifice of their lives, bore witness that they were a separate Orthodox community in its own right. Much time has gone by, but unfortunately such an absurd idea is still alive in present day Greece, a member of the European Union.

The Albanian Moslems, the followers of the newest faith, would perhaps face the greatest



ordeal. By adopting Islam, the official religion of the Empire, and tempted by the benefits such positions brought, they risked despising being and be separated once and for all from their Christian brothers. That would have been the end of the religious harmony in Albania, and perhaps the end of Albania itself.

But the Albanian Moslems did not do that. And more. In order to clearly show they have changed their faith, but not their nationality, they took part, as before, in all national activities together with the Christians. They participated in all secret or open alliances, in the committees, in the uprisings against the Ottoman state. Just like the Christians, they sacrificed themselves, even by harsher penalties, for when the fate of the nation was at stake, they chose the nation.

Independence found Albania in total chaos. However, even amidst that unprecedented Balkan mess, amongst the divided principalities, amongst programs, banners, bishops, imams, feudal lords, poets and brigands, to put it short, even in the days when Albanians just wanted a pretext to go to war, religious division, save in some isolated cases, did not manifest itself.

One of the explanations, or rather, one of the secrets, why after such chaos the kingdom of Zog succeeded in a short time to establish the rule of law in Albania, was also its legislation on the relations among the three faiths in the Albanian State. Although compiled three quarters of a century before, this legislation is the best so far in the history of Albania, and one of the best of Europe. Such it is, for it relies on the tradition we discussed above. I take advantage of this occasion to suggest to the Albanian authorities that, they should be well advised to consult this legislation for similar current problems.

### 3.

The history of religious harmony in Albania is not an idyllic one. It has been and remains a dramatic one. I am not alluding here to such episodes as the tragic-comical farce of the banning of religions by the Communist regime. Nor to the excommunication and the malediction of the Albanian alphabet and of the Albanian Orthodox community reading it, in the name of religion. Nor to the pro—Turk rebellion of Haxhi Qamili. This history has essentially been a dramatic one, always fraught with grave dangers.

Today, in democratic Albania, all the survived dangers are still possible. They are also possible, as it was stated, in Europe and, no doubt, in the World. In any case, just because they are still possible we have gathered here to speak and show our concern about them.

Religious harmony, as grandiose a structure as it is, also is brittle. The first serious crack, the radicalization of one of the faiths, and the structure comes down.

In the case of Albania all three faiths, as we already mentioned, are closely linked with the nation, with its existence. We are never permitted to behave irresponsibly, to forget, to neglect the maintenance of such a structure. And even more strictly forbidden are the narrow-minded passions, the partialities, not to mention here the provocations and the agitators.

First, we must be clear on fundamental matters, those that life and history alike have established once for all, and there is no need to doubt them. All civilized people do this. There is no country worthy of its name that changes its foundations each year and each season, as nomads do.

The foundation of all foundations in religious matters in Albania is that all three main faiths are equally important and as equally legitimate. The Catholic community, though the smallest in number, represents the first faith of the Albanians. As such, it has a unique vertical descent in Albanian history and culture. As such, it has endowed the Albanian nation with fundamental signs and symbols, from George Castriot to Mother Teresa. In short, it is the most ancient bridge that has never collapsed, and links Albania with Europe.

The Albanian Moslems, although of the most recent in Albania, enjoy the same legitimacy. It is ensured not only by the power of their numerical presence, but also from the ensuing powerful contributions in all the vicissitudes of the journey of the Albanian people towards emancipation and liberty.

The Albanian Orthodox community, as well as the Catholic and the Moslem one, has been an inseparable part of the national corpus in all tempests it has overcome. They compensated the unpardonable misunderstanding regarding to their nationality with their colossal contribution to the Albanian National Renaissance, like the Catholic and Moslem brothers.

This balance of the three main faiths, not forgetting here the fourth, the Bektashis, is not wishful thinking; neither is it poetical rhetoric, nor a reconciliatory psychosis, that would seek balance and harmony where it is nonexistent.

This balance and this legitimacy are a reality, an essence. Albania is a country of three faiths. It cannot be identified with any of those three faiths. If we do not believe in this, we don't believe our sheer reason of being, we don't believe in the »raison d'etre« of Albania herself.

Hence, we are convinced that the mutual respect among the different religions must be sacred in this country. No taunts and provocations are to be permitted between these religions. No taunts from laymen to believers. No taunts from the believers to the laymen. And last, but not least no taunts of the three faiths against the State.

Unfortunately temptations to the contrary were noted, recently in the democratic period. The most sensitive misunderstandings are those arising from the relationship nation-religion. Contrary to centennial tradition, tendencies to set religion against the nation have appeared. The interference of Greek religious circles to refuse to the Albanian Orthodox community their nationality, constitutes a grave problem, which doesn't lead to anything good in the Balkans. We hope that the Greek Government puts as much pressure on those circles as possible to resolve this misunderstanding.

The appearance of a radical wing among Albanian Moslems has not only upset public opinion, but, as attested in both newspapers and TV, also the Moslem community itself. I think the conflict exceeds the inner religious frame when relations with nationality are affected. The rare but clearly written declarations in papers as well as on the internet, ideas are put forward that openly negate the Albanian nation in the name of another nation, the Islamic one. We are sure that such declarations are not supported by the majority of young Albanian Moslems, a number of which had graduated in Arab countries.

As in the case of panhellenism, associated with proselytizing Albanian émigrés proselytism, also in the case of panarabism, we are dealing with attempts at shrinking the Albanian nation. In other words, with a »soft« version of dividing the country.

Another grave violation, especially encountered in anti-Albanian propaganda, was the distortion of the idea of liberty and of human rights, identifying those only with religious

rights. For a long time, the Milosevic propaganda tried to persuade the world that the war of the Albanians of Kosova for freedom was but a religious war of Albanian Islam against Serb Christianity. Today it is not difficult to imagine how tragic it would be if Kosova had fallen into such a trap, if instead of authentic freedom, it would have sought religious freedom. And instead of fighting against Serb criminals, would have declared war on neighboring Christendom! A far away country, Chechnya, is paying dearly for a similar intrigue.

Another problem related to radical religious pressure is the effort to exploit the history of the country. Due to aggravation among fundamentalists, the distortion of Albanian history is endangered to such an extent, as to negate its roots, to deny to the Albanian people autochthony in its own land, just to spite Christianity. We are aware of what happens in the Balkans, when such theses are promoted by allegedly extreme historical situations, to be immediately transformed into human tragedies. Supported by such theses, the Cam population was banished from its lands sixty years ago. Supported by them 300,000 Kosovars were expatriated to Turkey from the Yugoslavia of Rankovich. And lately, we have eye witnessed the banishment of nearly one million Kosova Albanians at the threshold of the 21st century.

Coming back to the idea of conserving of the religious balance in Albania, I think that the time has come for the Albanian State to establish the legal and constitutional bases of this balance. The religious institutions, places of worship, schools, foundations, Albanian and foreign clergymen serving therein, home and foreign investments, are not to be left to the whims of chance, but must be ruled by law.

Consequently, the Albanian State must take the necessary measures to realize the autocephaly of the Albanian Orthodox Church.

Always in this sense, and as a consequence of the fact that the Albanian people is of three different faiths and of four different religious communities, the Albanian State must sanction by its Constitution the prohibition by law of the participation of Albania in religious alliances or leagues, as such alliances or leagues contradict the basic principle of the laity of our Republic, for they maintain a discriminatory and exclusive position to the other Faiths.

The Albanian State must underscore the principle of the laity of the Republic, making a very clear-cut separation of religion from the State and from politics.

Our country has chosen the way and the orientation towards its own natural family, the family of the European peoples. It participates today in the alliance and in the war against terrorism, against that plague that attacks the whole World and all Faiths.

Our modest country is situated right now in a zone that is called the outer court of Europe. Countries like our own that are queuing to join, offer their contributions to the European family. Our contribution, religious harmony, is the clearest message of friendship and understanding that Albania is sending to the family of nations.

Translated from the Albanian by: Lluka Qafoku

## Efterfølgeren: Angstens arkitektur



Enver Hoxha i »The Titoites« (1982)

»Efterfølgeren« er som så mange andre af Kadaré's bøger relativt nem at gå til på overfladen, men går man bare et par spadestik ned bliver den sværere og sværere.

Bogen handler om forholdet mellem to af de store gamle kommunister i Albanien, Enver Hoxha og Mehmet Shehu, og om Shehu's pludselige død, og dét uden at hverken Hoxha's eller Shehu's navne nævnes. Hoxha omtales som Lederen, Shehu som hans kårne Efterfølger.

Det er ikke så meget virkeligheden og dens detaljer, der interesserer Kadaré, men dén surrealisme der udviklede sig på samfundsplanet og det individuelle plan, den ejendommelige »psykologi« som Hoxha-styrets mennesker var underlagt, og til dét formål har han valgt nogle detaljer fra virkeligheden, drejet dem og tilføjet en række andre.

Regimets »officielle« beskrivelse af hvad der skete déngang kan man finde i Enver Hoxha's bog »[The Titoites](#)« (sidste kapitel), og den er såmænd lige så bizar som Kadaré's. Shehu havde i alle årene været agent for Albanien's fjender - for ikke færre end fire forskellige udenlandske efterretningstjenester, står der hos Hoxha - men til sidst var Shehu kommet under et så voldsomt pres at han ikke kunne andet end at begå selvmord. Skulle man tro Hoxha var Shehu parat til at opgive Albaniens uafhængighed; han lå under for kravene fra såvel imperialisterne med USA i spidsen, revisionisterne med Sovjetrusserne i spidsen og de jugoslaviske naboer i Nord og Øst (nutidens Montenegro, Kosóva og Makedonien).

Bogens plot og personer ligner - på overfladen - virkelighedens, men kombinationen af virkelighed, veltilrettelagte afvigelser og ren tildigtning fører læseren langt væk fra en samfundsmæssig, politisk eller bare en journalistisk analyse og forståelse - til en surrealistisk konstruktion, der ikke lader Kafka og hans verden noget efter.

Læseren får ikke meget mulighed for selv at »se«, men må stole på hvad de mange modsatte og forvirrede fortællere tænker, drømmer eller siger, indbefattet den næsten blinde Hoxha, den afdøde Shehu og indenrigsministeren. Dén objektive fortæller, der tager



over fra tid til anden, er egentlig ikke mere troværdig end fortællerne, selv om 'han' taler med større autoritet.

Virkelighedens Efterfølger døde - så vidt vides - natten mellem 17. og 18. december 1981 og ikke som anført i fortællingen, nogle dage før. Fortællingens indenrigsminister 'Adrian Hasobeu', der muligvis var den der myrdede Shehu - han véd det i »Efterfølgeren« tilsyneladende ikke selv - er en synligt påfaldende konstruktion der dog næppe ligner virkelighedens Kadri Hazbiu det mindste. Hazbiu var tæt på inderkredsen omkring Hoxha - eller ligefrem part i den - for han var indenrigsminister i omkring 25 år, fra 1954 til 1980, hvorefter han i en kort periode var forsvarsminister (fra april 1980 til oktober 1982). I Kadaré's bog er han et fjumrehoved der ikke forstår hvad Lederen ønsker af ham, som ikke kan tage sig sammen til at gøre noget, som siden erklærer at være »uskyldig« i hvad det måtte være, men som alligevel ekskluderes af partiet og straks efter anholdes af sin egen sikkerhedstjeneste.

Det samme gælder (helt sikkert) flere andre af bogens figurer, såsom retsmedicineren Petrit Gjadri og arkitekten - at de er litterære konstruktioner. Fælles for de to personer er at de er angste over at blive involveret. Den ene fordi han skal forestå obduktionen af Shehu, den anden fordi han var blevet gjort opmærksom på en hemmelig gang der forbandt Lederens og Efterfølgerens huse.

Kano Zhbira, som omtales flere gange er »bygget« over Nako Spiru (navnet er meget tæt på; der skal kun byttes lidt rundt i fornavnet og ændres en vokal i efternavnet, så er der identitet). Spiru var en højtplaceret, meget berømt kommunist der begik selvmord i forbindelse med opgøret med de albanske »jugoslaver«, hvoraf den vigtigste var Koçi Xoxe [udtales: Kozi Dodsje]. Spiru's historie svarer ikke til Shehu's, men han og Shehu var dog i sin tid gode venner.

Én af bogens centrale personer er Shehu's datter Suzana. En datter havde Shehu ikke i virkeligheden; hun er én af Kadaré's tildigtninger og nødvendig, fordi hun skal referere til Agamemnon's ofring af Ifiginea. Suzana's kærlighedsliv gik på grund og måtte ofres, fordi det kom på tværs af faderens politiske rolle.

At Suzana overtales eller tvinges til at opgive sin forlovelse, bringer et andet tema frem i bogen, der dog ikke udfoldes, for efter gammel Nordalbansk sædvane kunne et sådant brud udløse slægtsfejde og blodhævnsløb.

Shehu havde (vist nok) en datter uden for ægteskab, men hun er først blevet kendt i de senere år. En vis relation til datidens virkelighed er der dog, for ét af Hoxha's problemer med Shehu var angiveligt at hans søn havde forlovet sig med en pige der havde »forkerte« forældre. Hvilke tider, hvilke skikke. Datteren Suzana er en konstruktion som allerede spillede en rolle i [»Agamemnons datter«](#).

Hvad der muligvis, ifølge bogen, var med til at udløse bruddet mellem Hoxha og Shehu, var konkurrencen mellem dem, og den jalousi som Lederen havde over for sin tronfølger. Mest tydeligt kommer det frem i forbindelse med at Efterfølgeren får bygget sit hus om. Nok skulle ombygningen gøres ordentligt, men huset blev Albaniens smukkeste og dét på trods af at arkitekten - der var blevet sur på sin bygherre - gjorde forsøg på at skæmme det. Hvert forsøg på at fjerne noget, en veranda, eller at ødelægge noget, et par søjler der blev forkortet, førte til det modsatte, at huset blev om muligt mere fuldendt og dermed en endnu større torn i øjet på den blinde Leder.



Shehu's exit. Montage: BA.

»*Efterfølgeren*« er en besynderlig bog som nogle vil værdsætte, mens andre - som jeg - hensættes i undren. Hvorfor gå så langt i surrealistisk og »psykologisk« retning *uden* at slippe forbindelsen til virkeligheden? Fører det læseren tættere på en forståelse af hvad der skete dén gang i Albanien? Tættere på en forståelse af hvordan surreelle regimer som Hoxha's fungerede? Efter min mening har Kadaré gjort historien vanskeligere og mere uigennemskuelig end den var i forvejen. Men er man interesseret i Albaniens nyere historie og i Kadaré's store forfatterskab må man læse bogen, indvendingerne til trods.

Kadaré - eller måske snarere »den objektive fortæller« - antyder at albanerne er svære at forstå for os andre. Den albanske kultur og mentalitet er klart forskellig fra den franske, engelske eller danske, men den bygger på gamle principper og sædvaner, som man kan genfinde paralleller til i vores egen forhistorie. Der pågår i disse år en omfattende omstillingsproces, som er meget påvirket af de muligheder det giver at være del af en mere åben verden, og det vil - på længere sigt - også ændre afgørende på kultur, mentalitet, omgangsformer og forståelse.

Det er ikke mærkeligt at Kadaré i de senere år har brugt så meget energi på at »vende« Hoxha-perioden og på at »vende« sin egen position dén gang. Han er imidlertid ikke sluppet helt så godt fra det; måske fordi han sér tingene langt mere indviklet end fx sin kollega Dritëro Agolli? Agolli havde et mere ligefremt forhold til Hoxha-styret end Kadaré - og tilsyneladende også en mere ligefrem holdning til det efterfølgende opgør? Kadaré havde et temmelig sammensat forhold til Hoxha-styret; han var en del af systemet, et kunsterisk fyrtårn, men samtidig en afviger, og denne kompleksitet er han - tilsyneladende - ikke kommet ud af.

Oversættelsen fortjener megen ros; den skyldes Gerd Have, der tidligere har oversat »*Hvem hjemførte Doruntine?*«, »*Drømmenes Palads*« og »*Ufuldendt april*«. Skønt oversættelserne sker efter de franske udgaver, synes sproget i den danske »*Efterfølgeren*« at ramme godt.



At dømme efter omslaget var der ikke tale om selvmord; desuden kan vi se at morderen må have været kejrhåndet ...

### Noter og henvisninger:

Mehmet Shehu's lig blev genbegravet et hemmeligt sted efter den første begravelse; det er først blevet lokaliseret inden for de aller seneste år i et samarbejde mellem den tidligere indenrigsminister Kadri Hazbiu's søn og én af Shehu's.

[David Bellos: »The Englishing of Ismail Kadare / Notes of a retranslator«](#) (2005).

[Wikipedia om Mehmet Shehu](#) [PDF]

### Diskussioner i efteråret 2006



Der pågår i efteråret 2006 store diskussioner i Albanien og Kosóva med - og om - Kadaré. Var han dissident? Var han en del af systemet? Tonen er temmelig skinger. På det senere har man fundet frem til Rrapin-familien (dvs en mor og søn der nu bor i USA). Sønnen har, hævdes det, været kæreste med Kadaré's datter og gjort hende gravid, men

så blev han - ifølge påstandene - tvunget væk fra hende ved Kadaré's mellemkomst. Moderen, Janulla Rrapin, var - siges det - agent for Sigurimi, det hemmelige politi, og øjensynligt én som Kadaré ikke brød sig om. Der kan være *noget* sandt i historien, noget der er ren efterrationalisering - det er svært at afgøre udefra.

Én af dem der har kritiseret Kadaré er professor Rexhep Qosja fra Prishtina i Kosóva. Han er - i modsætning til Kadaré - skeptisk over for det hensigtsmæssige i at åbne de gamle Sigurimi-arkiver. Desuden mener han at Kadaré langt fra var en dissident, men én der var stærkt integreret i det kommunistiske system. Qosja's kritik har irriteret Kadaré og foranlediget ham til et modangreb af mere personlig karakter.

Kommentar: Måske er sandheden hverken sort eller hvid. Måske har Kadaré både været én der støttede systemet (hvad der fx kan dokumenteres ud fra hans artikler fra Hoxha-tiden) og én der - på det mere personlige og individuelle plan - i stigende grad kom til at tvivle, dog ikke så meget på den øverste ledelse som på det omfattende »bureaukrati«. Muligvis var det først efter Hoxha's død i 1985 at tvivlen begyndte at blive dominerende?

Links:

<http://www.panorama.com.al/20061103/default.htm>

[http://gazetajava.com/artman/publish/article\\_656.shtml](http://gazetajava.com/artman/publish/article_656.shtml)



»Albania today« Nr. 3/1977. The article is reprinted of historical reasons, BA

## THE LITERATURE OF SOCIALIST REALISM IS DEVELOPING IN STRUGGLE AGAINST THE BOURGEOIS AND REVISIONIST PRESSURE

by ISMAIL KADARE [\[1\]](#)

**The fight against the bourgeois and revisionist pressure is complete and effective**

<http://bjoerna.net/Kadare/2006.htm>



**when it becomes the concern of all, when all take part in it - the specialists of critical opinion and poets, artists who take up the theme of the blockade and those who hammer out the major themes of socialism, novelists and playwrights who engage in reflecting key moments of history and those who depict contemporary problems, etc.**

AS IS KNOWN, THE PEOPLE'S SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA FINDS ITSELF IN A TWOFOLD ENCIRCLEMENT. THIS ENCIRCLEMENT EXTENDS TO ALL SPHERES, INCLUDING THAT OF CULTURE; CONSEQUENTLY, THE STRUGGLE WHICH THE ALBANIAN WRITERS AND ARTISTS ARE WAGING AGAINST ITS PRESSURE IS PART AND PARCEL OF THE OVERALL STRUGGLE WAGED BY THE ALBANIAN PEOPLE, LED BY THE PARTY OF LABOUR OF ALBANIA, TO SMASH THE ENCIRCLEMENT.

History has known many conflicts among different literary schools, trends and tendencies. But the struggle of realist socialist art against revisionist bourgeois art is not of the same nature. This is a struggle of a new type, part of the class struggle, a struggle of the revolution against counter-revolution, a life-and-death struggle of healthy art against the sick art of the bourgeoisie and revisionism, which stinks of death and decay.

The relentless struggle against bourgeois and revisionist pressure is an indispensable dimension of literature and the arts in the socialist countries. The very development of realist socialist art presupposes this struggle, while the cessation of this struggle would put its very existence in jeopardy. This struggle is one of the forms of its existence. There is no way of having a realist socialist art without engaging in this struggle. There is no way your work can be close to the people, outside this struggle.

The 7th Congress of the PLA re-emphasized once again the necessity and importance of this clash. It has been and should become even more a permanent action of the revolutionary writers and artists, a great school for them. It has long become a part of the great process of the artists' acquaintance with life and must become even more thoroughly a part of it. Only by being considered as such, will it occupy its proper place in our life and our works.

The struggle against the bourgeois and revisionist pressure, as integral part of class struggle, is continuous and does not have the character of intermittent campaigns. The history of the development of realist socialist literature has been, among other things, also the history of its battle with counter-revolutionary literature. And this pressure has constantly increased, particularly in recent years.

No relaxation of this pressure can be expected in the coming years; on the contrary, it will become even stronger and more refined.

Hence, our tasks in the struggle to face up to this pressure are constantly increasing, besoming ever more serious and important.

In his speech of December 20th, 1974, Comrade Enver Hoxha points out that never before has there been imperialist propaganda, of such variety and breadth, for the degeneration of people and society in general, as in our days. Whole regiments of writers are included in this army of the world counter-revolution. Night and day, its kitchen is concocting all sorts of poisonous dishes for the degradation of man. Over the recent decades, the revisionist cuisine, coarser in some respects, but more refined in others, has been added to the old bourgeois cuisine. Their foul alliance, their supplementing each other in order to make the encirclement of the progressive forces more complete, have rendered them even more dangerous.

The present-day bourgeois and revisionist literature, expressing overall the spiritual state of the bourgeoisie and revisionism, is pervaded through and through by an unhealthy spirit. Regardless of all the powder and paint it uses, its face has the pallor of death. It preaches that all is lost because it, itself, is lost, together with the base that has given it birth; it preaches pessimism because it has no future; it preaches disintegration, the absurd, the loss of logic, because its very existence is outdated and incompatible with the logic of development of the whole of mankind. Like those microbes that fear the sun, this literature is terrified of the light, of health, clarity, life. It is afraid of the great art of the revolution, socialist realism, it is afraid of the majestic popular creativeness of all peoples of the world, it is even afraid of great classics of the past. Thus, though it may seem at first sight as if this literature and art have established their tyranny over the whole of the globe, in reality they are isolated and alone. Their domination is illusory, for Marxism-Leninism teaches us that there is no force capable of halting the development of history. Therefore, the struggle against bourgeois and revisionist art is a struggle that can and certainly will be won. Revolutionary art has already scored important victories in this struggle, and it will score still more important ones in the coming years.

Sensing this great danger themselves, both the bourgeoisie and revisionism try, time after time, to re-organize the structure of their literary and artistic forces. They are in constant movement: one after the other, the trends are being replaced. Those which are exposed more quickly are consigned to oblivion in order to bring out new trends which, also, are withdrawn from the stage as soon as they begin to fade. This recurring stratagem, which, among the naive, gives rise to the illusion of development, is nothing but running round and round in a circle, without the slightest trace of development, but only repetition and stagnation.

In reality, the decadent bourgeois art and the revisionist art which runs along behind it use an obsolete array of refurbished tricks, on which they change only the external wrappings. The deformation of reality, dehumanization, anti-ideologism, apoliticism, hermetism, the disintegration of form, de-heroization, the elimination of commitment, and other trends like these are the favourite weapons of the modern bourgeoisie, selected with great care. They have been chosen from the arsenal of the oldest decadent bourgeois art, from the decadence of the Middle Ages, or from that of barbarism.

If we examine, for example, certain aspects of literature and the art of the present super-states, we shall find that they are repeated at various stages of history. The attempt to create a super-art has been made by all the great aggressor states of the past. Brezhnev's present thesis on the «internationalization» of culture has its rusty counterparts lying in the museum of history. The militarists of ancient Rome tried to create such an art in order to make the subjugation of the peoples easier. The Byzantine emperors, the Italian fascists, who were pale shadows of the Roman conquerors, the German nazis later, and the U.S.-British and Soviet imperialists today, have all tried to do the same thing.

Despite the great support of the bureaucratic machine of the super-state, these super-cultures have always failed. They have contributed nothing to world culture, which has been and always will be created by the peoples, whether small or great, but never by the superpowers.

They are trying to reduce the national character of literature into vulgar folklorism, something to excite the curiosity of tourists. What the American imperialists have done to the national character of the cultures of the Indian peoples of the two Americas, the Soviet social-imperialists are trying to do today to the nationalities under their domination, of course, in a more refined manner. However much they may shout about the so-called

»blooming of the national spirit« in Soviet literature, everybody knows quite well the sort of cultural desert there is in the various republics of the Soviet Union, the peoples of which, in the field of literature, are treated as background natives.

The effort to create some sort of superstate art is one of the clearest expressions of the present-day bourgeois and revisionist decadence. Its pseudo-monumentalism is reminiscent of the pseudo-monumentalism of the times of revanchism in Germany. The gigantomania of imperialist art, whether bourgeois or revisionist, is a form of blackmail against the world proletariat, the progressive peoples and democratic states. By means of this gigantomania they want to remind others of their size, the number of their square kilometres, of their population and their wealth. But all this morbid gigantism, all this boastful inflation of proportions, is an effort to cover up its petty themes. From top to bottom, the art of the superpowers is entirely an art of petty themes, and the mania for sophisticated forms, for novel techniques, the treatment of cosmic themes, is only to hide this poverty and pettiness of themes. Its pettiness of ideas constitutes a basic quality of the present-day bourgeois and revisionist art.

Hence, the so-called flowering of bourgeois and revisionist art conceals only a profound stagnation, its external gigantomania hides only an internal dwarfism, whereas its pseudo-modern veneer covers only an endless obsolescence. Making a profound Marxist-Leninist analysis of the conservative essence of modern revisionism and the bourgeoisie, Comrade Enver Hoxha says that, »those who call us conservative are the conservatives«. And this is in the logic of things. Since they are trying to preserve or to re-establish an obsolete order in the world, regardless of what they call themselves, in essence they remain conservatives and ultra-conservatives. The same may be said of their art, too. It is not by chance that, in their spirit, in their content, even in their style and intonation, many of the works of the present-day decadent bourgeois literature are reminiscent of the Bible, the New Testament, the Koran, the Talmud and other tattered remnants of the Dark Ages. And this is one of the most coveted experiences that the revisionist art has borrowed from the decadent art. The Revelation of St John, or the Apocalypse, has become a favourite source of motifs for the revisionist pacifists. And, for them, the Apocalypse is the revolution and the revolutionary struggle.

The air of catastrophe, which is so prevalent in American and West European books and, particularly, films, is nothing but a variant of the end of the world, which all the religions of the world have preached to discourage the mobilization of revolutionary and progressive people. The bourgeois and the revisionists have drawn and continue to draw many things from the poisoned wells of religion. In this respect, there is the smell of decay about their art. It is not accidental that one of the revisionist and counter-revolutionary models, Solzhenitsyn's »One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich« is written in an archaic language, nearer to old Russian than to modern Russian. Likewise, the other counter-revolutionary idol, Pasternak's »Doctor Zhivago«, here and there is suggestive of the old psalms.

The co-existence of liberalism with conservatism is a phenomenon often encountered amongst decadent and reactionary men of letters. The ambivalence of such fiercely reactionary writers as Fishta, Koliqi, and Konica, who combined in themselves the most extreme liberalism with the most extreme conservatism, is a clear example of this. It is not by chance that Konica, this bey in the service of the anachronistic Albanian monarchy, had close connections with the decadent modernist circles of Europe and was even their patron.

A similar situation exists in Soviet literature today. The Report to the 7th Congress of the PLA says that the Soviet writers and artists »have turned into a caste in the service of the counter-revolution and the chauvinist and expansionist policy of Soviet social-imperialism«.

In the Soviet Union today there are two groups of writers, the liberals and the conservatives. They look as if they are opposed to each other, they even indulge in debates and polemics and are grouped around particular magazines. The Soviet leadership not only tolerates their existence, but actually encourages it. Why is this? The answer is simple: the Soviet social-imperialists need these two groups, because both of them are equally anti-Marxist, equally counter-revolutionary. There is nothing of benefit to the working class in their polemics, nothing but confusion. The one group, the liberals, are for the maximum contacts with the West, whereas the other group, the conservatives, are against this, not for the sake of something progressive, but for the sake of old Czarist Slavophilism. To the modernism of the former, the latter oppose Russian antiquity and Russian chauvinism, while the liberals oppose Western modernism to the archaism of the conservatives.

The Soviet government needs both these groups in order to employ them according to the changing political situations. When it is preparing some flirtation with the West, it pushes the liberal group forward. When it has to whip up the chauvinist hysteria, it urges on the conservative group.

This explains the dual character, both pacifist and militarist, of present-day Soviet literature. When it comes to lowering the revolutionary temperature in the workers' movement of the world, the Soviet literature lets the winds of pacifism blow. But when it comes to giving free play to the aggressiveness of the Soviet state, it unleashes the spirit of militarism. In order to extinguish the fire in Chile it needed the pacifism of the liberals, whereas in order to attack Czechoslovakia it needed the chauvinism of the conservatives. Therefore, the pacifism, »nationalism« or »patriotism« in Soviet literature are always one-sided: pacifism, but only for export, nationalism, but only for internal consumption.

This dual character of the literature of the social-imperialists is very similar to that of the reactionary art of the bourgeoisie. There, too, pacifism, coexists with the most undisguised violence, demobilizing meekness with savagery and aggressiveness.

The 7th Congress of the Party of Labour of Albania heavily underlined the vital importance, for all the arts, the continuation and advancement of the great militant action of all the revolutionary writers and artists, of their daily and hourly battle with the bourgeois and revisionist pressure. This is a complicated struggle which can be successful only if it is complete and waged in all directions.

The sphere of criticism, of theoretical and philosophical literary thinking, is an important field in which this struggle has been developed and should be developed further. Not only the critics and scholars, but all the artists are duty bound to assist in the timely detection and prevention of alien influences, and to render them harmless, whether they come from the bourgeoisie or the revisionists, whether they are of the nature of a Garaudy or Fischer, a Sholokhov or Solzhenitsyn.

Another sphere of which this struggle can be waged successfully and directly is that part of literary creativeness which deals with the reflection of the struggle against the bourgeois and revisionist blockade. Parallel with the struggle against the world bourgeoisie and revisionism, in these works the struggle is waged against their ideology, thinking and art, which are an integral part of the two-fold counter-revolutionary encirclement.

The strengthening of the proletarian partisanship and the national and popular character of literature is a heavy blow to the bourgeois and revisionist pressure. The bourgeoisie and revisionism well know how difficult it is for them to infiltrate such a literature, therefore they direct their attacks, first of all, against its proletarian partisanship and its national character. However, against the background of their slanders, proletarian partisanship and the

national character are highlighted even more brilliantly.

The linking of the writers with the people, with their life, their worries, their concerns, and their feelings, along with their thorough knowledge of life, their »reading in the open book of life«, as comrade Enver Hoxha puts it in his speech of December 20, 1974, all those things constitute another factor in the struggle against reaction. The active life, the broad sweep of the people, are an unsuitable environment for the bourgeois and revisionist microbe. Such germs do not thrive amongst the people and in the thick of life, for they develop and multiply in a closed environment, outside life, apart from the people, in the dark corners of subjectivism and ego-centrism. Therefore, the more our creative artists live in a climate pervaded by the popular spirit, the more immune with they be to the evil influence of the old world.

The treatment of great themes, which is one of the special recommendations of the 7th Congress of the Party of Labour of Albania, is also a factor in the struggle and resistance against the pressure. As was said above, a characteristic feature of bourgeois and revisionist art is the petty theme with the trappings of gigantomania. The true, socialist realist art is, in the first place, the art of great themes. It is up to the writers of socialist realism to continue the magnificent traditions of the art of Mayakovsky, Gorky, or Brecht, abandoned by the revisionists. The encyclopedia of communism will not be written and can never be written either by the revisionists or the emigrees, whether they live in Moscow or in Switzerland. It will be written by the sons and daughters of the revolution, by the truly revolutionary writers.

Another factor of no lesser importance in this struggle is the effort to raise the artistic level of revolutionary literature and art, their seriousness and solidity. Compared with them, the extravagances and clownish tricks of bourgeois and revisionist literature and art will look even more ridiculous.

In dealing with the problems related to our opposition to the pressure of reactionary bourgeois and revisionist literature and art, we mentioned these two pressures together, for that is what they are, component parts of one front, component parts of the two-fold bourgeois and revisionist encirclement. But while considering them as such in general, we are aware that bourgeois art and revisionist art have their own differences and contradictions; they are differences and contradictions that stem from the contradictions between the group of bourgeois states with the United States at the head, and the group of revisionist states with the Soviet Union at the head.

In his report to the 7th Congress of the PLA, Comrade Enver Hoxha says: »Our Party upholds the thesis that both when the two superpowers work together and when they quarrel, it is others that pay the bill. The collaboration and rivalry between the superpowers represent the two sides of the one contradictory reality .... They pose the same threat ... — therefore one must never rely on one imperialism to fight or to escape from the other«.

Applying this profoundly Marxist-Leninist thesis to our sphere of literature and art, we can say that the quarrels or rapprochements between the bourgeois and revisionist writers are just the continuation of the quarrels and rapprochements of their patrons. Hence you cannot rely on the arguments of the one art to combat or expose the other. To us writers of socialist realism, the revisionist literary lights, whether official writers in their countries or dissidents fled to the West, are the two sides of the same coin, for both of them have betrayed the art of the revolution for the art of the counter-revolution. Therefore, they are equally alien and dangerous to communism.

Although they have mobilized entire regiments of men of letters and artists, both these



forms of bourgeois and revisionist art are essentially weak, because they have no future. Therefore, in our fight against them, attack and not just defence, should characterize us.



**Noter:**

[1] Writer, deputy to the People's Assembly of the PSRA.

## Tilsvarende artikler fra 1979-1990:

Der er lokaliseret flere andre artikler fra perioden 1979-1990. De vil blive offentliggjort ud på efteråret 2006:

- [Dritëro Agolli: »Proletarian Partisanship and Some of its Aspects of the Waging of the Class Struggle«. »Albania today« # 2/1979](#)
- [Dritëro Agolli: »Literature and Arts towards a New Qualitative Leap«. »Albania today« # 2/1983](#)
- [Dritëro Agolli: »Some Features of the Albanian Novel«. »Albania today« # 1/1984](#)
- [Ismail Kadaré: »Some Aspects of the Development of the Albanian Poetry«. »Albania today« # 2/1984](#)
- [Ismail Kadaré: »Socialist Realism - Art and Great Possibilities«. »Albania today« # 6/1984](#)
- [Ismail Kadaré: »A Broad Vision of the Leader and the Epoch«. »Albania today« # 5/1988](#) [se nedenfor]
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## SOME ASPECTS OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ALBANIEN POETRY

*by Ismail Kadaré*

»Albania today« # 2/1984

**Poetry, an art dear to and valued by the Albanian people, develops successfully today. Its road of development knows no crises, because it is closely linked with life and finds a wide response among the broad mass of readers**

ALBANIA IS A COUNTRY OF ANCIENT POETRY. THE ANCIENT ALBANIANS, NEIGHBOURS OF THE ANCIENT GREEKS, EXCHANGED WITH THEM TOGETHER WITH AGRICULTURAL AND LIVESTOCK PRODUCTS, ALSO POETICAL SUBJECTS AND IMAGES. THIS IS PROVED BEST BY THE OLD ALBANIAN ORAL POETRY IN WHICH THERE ARE HOMERIC AND AESCHYLIAN UNDERTONES. ANALYSING THE OLD ALBANIAN ORAL POETRY, WELL-KNOWN SCIENTISTS AND STUDENTS HAVE FOUND THERE, AMONG OTHERS, FIGURES REMINISCENT OF ULISSES, CIRCE, POLYPHEMOS, ORESTES, CLYTEMNOSTRA AND OTHERS. SUCH FINDS ARE IN THE LOGIC OF THINGS. IF »THE ORESTEIA« OF AESCHYLUS WAS READ TO AN ILLITERATE ALBANIAN LIVING IN ONE REMOTE PART OF THE NORTHERN ALPS IN THE 17TH, 18TH OR EVEN LATER CENTURIES, THE SUBJECT AND THE FUNDAMENTAL PROBLEM OF THE GREEK TRAGEDY WOULD HAVE SEEM BUT TOO FAMILIAR TO HIM BECAUSE THE QUESTION THERE WAS ABOUT A MURDER WHICH WOULD HAVE REMINDED HIM OF ONE OF THE MANY CASES TRIED IN COURTS OF CUSTOMARY LAW WHICH DECIDED WHETHER A MURDER HAD INFRINGED THE CODE OF BLOOD FEUDS OR NOT.

One of the more ancient monuments of the oral poetry of the Albanians is the »Epic of the Kreshniks«. It is a cycle of poems created and elaborated through the centuries. Apart from traces of old Illyrian-Greek poetry and mythology, in this Epic there are many reminiscences of the European Mediaeval Epic, the Chanson de Roland, the Nibelungenlied, the Songs of Cid or the Scandinavian Sagas. In an action that lasts hundreds if not thousands of years (it is normal for the heroes of this Epic to live, sleep or, better say, hibernate for tens or hundreds of years to wake up and resume the action afterwards), this cycle of poems describes the protracted wars waged between the Albanians and the Slavs who had migrated into the Balkans in the 7th - 8th centuries AD. Although it sings about a centuries-long enmity over boundary problems, this Epic has no trace of chauvinism. It tells about weddings between Albanians and Serbs, weddings which, although they do not take place (and this shows the real state of things), show the anonymous poet's aspiration to friendship and his message of peace.

The Epic of the Kreshniks is part of the Albanian legendary epic. There are also other balads of rare beauty on mythological and legendary subjects like that of the dead brother which has inspired Buerger to write the Balad of Lenore, or that of the walled-in wife which Jacob Grimm considered to be among the finest poetry of all times.

Apart from the legendary epic the Albanians have also their heroic-historical epic. Unlike the former, which is full of supernatural beings and events, the latter has an amazing precision and concrete ness. It is like a huger archive of the history of the nation replete with abundant information, innumerable dates, names and events.

In general, Albanian oral poetry, whether epic or lyrical (the latter also occupies an important place in our literary legacy) have an encyclopaedic character. As the living memory of the nation over the centuries, poetry stood for the cultural and scientific

institutions the Albanian people did not have. It was the university and daily press, the academy, diplomacy and jurisprudence of the Albanian life.

The principal and more important messages of the nation, its conception of life and, besides, its moral, juridical, religious, political and other concepts have been handed over from generation to generation through this poetry. As such its role in the formation of cultivated poetry, and not only poetry, but the whole Albanian literature, has been exceptionally great.

The history of the relationship between popular poetry and cultivated poetry in Albania is very interesting. For long periods they have existed parallel to each other, without excluding each other and in harmony.

The oppressive Turkish rule which began in the 15th century brought about a tragic interruption of the normal development of Albania and turned its history backwards. The long night of the five-centuries long Turkish occupation was a heavy trauma for the Albanian civilization. Everything was ruined, destroyed, undone. Just as the entire nation, the Albanian culture suffered the consequences of this catastrophe, too. It began to recover with difficulty, struggling against persecutions and cunning obstacles. Many of the poets were also martyrs for the national cause. Prometheism, the spirit of self-sacrifice, pervades Albanian poetry throughout. The parable of the poet who had to feed his poetry on his blood were a reality in Albania.

The first known poem in Albanian is that of the monk Lukë Matrënga in the 16th century and it is a dirge.

A pleiad of other poets emerged after Matrënga. Pjetër Budi and Pjetër Bogdani are the more outstanding among. Part of their poetry is of religious inspiration, nevertheless it does not lack the spirit of resistance to the Turkish occupation, the more so as the religion of the occupier was religion alien to the Albanian.

A common characteristic of the Albanian poets of the Late Middle Ages, as well as of the poets that came after them, in the 18th and 19th centuries, was that they were generally people of great learning and broad culture. Knowing well many languages other than their own, especially, thinking and culture, it was for them normal and in the interest of the Nation to write both in Albanian and in another language, and to publish their books in Venice or Rome, in Paris or Constantinople, in Athens, Bucharest or London.

After the poets of the Late Middle Ages who carried the development of the Albanian poetry to a new stage, there came the great poets of the National Renaissance — Naim Frashëri, Jeronim de Rada, Zef Serembe, Ndre Mjeda, Anton Zako Çajupi, Gavril Dara and others. They were the representatives of a literary century of the more brilliant of the Albanian literature.

In 1836 »Milosao's Songs«, the first novel in verse of the Albanian literature, was published by Jeronim de Rada. It was soon translated in several languages and aroused the admiration of the Rada's contemporaries, Hugo and Mistral among them upon reading it, to de Rada: »Poetry will return to its birth place, to your shores«.

The poetry of Naim Frashëri, the greatest poet of the nation, and the other poets of the Albanian Renaissance was a great school for the nation and played an extremely important role in the national movement for liberation from the Turkish rule.

Those poets not only created fine works, but also made titanic efforts to make Albanian

literature free from the influences and mould of the Islamic culture which was stifling it. Hence, their works, against the Mediaeval darkness of the backward Ottoman world, are full of light, life and freshness. Naim Frashëri's poems in the collection »The Summer Flowers« and De Rada's »Milosao's Songs« seem like bathed in a sea of light.

After Independence in 1912, our poetry went through a new stage of development, represented by such wellknown poets as Fan Noli, Lasgush Poradeci, and Migjeni. Along with its traditional epic motifs, it enriched itself with lyrical motifs (Lasgush Poradeci), political-philosophical motifs (Fan Noli) and motifs of social protest in the restless poetical work of Migjeni, (the harbinger of the literature of the new Albania).

The poets of this period carried the emancipation of the Albanian poetry further, divested it of all romantic trappings and enriched it with the actue subjects of modern social conflicts.

The struggle for the liberation of the country from the nazi-fascist occupiers, as the greatest liberation action ever carried out by our people, brought in its wake a new revival of the Albanian poetry. The new world that was being born on the ruins of the old called for a new poetic art, an art that would inherit the best qualities of the Albanian poetical treasury while enriching itself with the ideas of modern, times,

For those in Albania who loved poetry it was very significant to hear that one of the partisan battalions that fought against the German nazis bore Naim Frashëri's name. Symbolically, this fact more than any literary manifestation expressed the stand of the epoch that was dawning towards the poetical art of the past.

The first poets of the new times emerged from among the fighters for national and social liberation, the partisans. Their poetical creations were simple poems and some of them were put to music and sung during the war and in the first years following Liberation. Some of the poets who wrote these first expressions of socialist realism in Albanian literature, like Memo Meto, were killed in the war with the nazis, others continued to fight and write like Shevqet Musaraj, Andrea Varfi, Fatmir Gjata, Kol Jakova. Many »partisan songs« lost their authorship and became part of the great popular treasury repeating the ancient process which often merged cultivated literature with anonymous popular literature.

During the National Liberation War more complete works were created as well. Such is »The Epic of the National Front«, a long satirical poem by Shevqet Musaraj, one of the veterans of Albanian socialist realism. The poem, which is the anti-epic of the Albanian collaborationists, became known as soon as it was published, in 1943. It was read in the partisan battalions and in the liberated zones of the country and even put on stage by the partisans on many occasions. After the liberation of the country; with the creation of the Albanian Writers and Artists' League, the first organization in the history of the Albanian culture to include all the creators of the pen, the development of poetry, along with other genres, assumed fresh vigour. To the partisan poets tens of other poets were added. In their poems is felt the pulse of the time, the joy and elation of the first years following the liberation of the country, years full of work, of worries and poverty inherited from the past, but also of light, and hope created by the emergence of new horizons.

Enthusiasm, sincerity, a broad democratic and popular spirit were the characteristics of the Albanian poetry of the first years after Liberation. Although young and without much experience, still it reproduced the spirit of the time, the social revolution that was sweeping away the leftovers of the feudal and bourgeois regime in Albania. On the other hand, the memories of the National Liberation War were still too vivid and as a consequence part of the poetical production could not fail to be inspired by it.

With the new poets, the offspring of the epoch, joined forces also other poets who had published their first works before Liberation like Nonda Bulka, Dhimitër Shuteriqi, Muzafer Xhaxhiu, and others. The evolution of these poets, who had formerly adhered to different literary trends, towards socialist realism is an interesting phenomenon which has often been taken up for study by our literary critique.

One of the poetical works written in this period is the poem »Prishtina« by Llazar Siliqi, a militant poet participant in the resistance against fascism, ex-internee of the nazi concentration camp of Prishtina in Kosova. His poem, written and published in 1946, along with the macabre tragedy of the extermination camp, expresses the heroic spirit and the beauty of human resistance to the nazi beast.

During the Fifties new poetical talents emerged in the different spheres of life. The new Albanian poetry drew on the purest sources of the Albanian literary tradition as well as on the great treasury of world progressive poetry, especially the work of such poets as Mayakovski and Brecht.

In the process of its development it was natural that, along positive phenomena, which were predominant, there were also shortcomings and weaknesses among which a certain rhetoric and turgidity were more apparent. However, it is to the credit of Albanian literary thinking that it detected these shortcomings and weaknesses on time, pointed them out and combatted them.

The Sixties were difficult years for Albania. The conflict with the Soviet Union, our close ally now transformed into an aggressive superpower, as well as with its satellites was reflected in our culture, too. The Khrushchevites predicted the degeneration of the Albanian literature after it freed itself from the influence of Soviet literature. According to them, the Albanian literature would be transformed into a decadent literature of the Western type or would eventually turn to nothing.

Our literature and poetry, as part of its vanguard, gave the lie to the predictions of the Khrushchevites. They neither were transformed into a branch of the bourgeois decadent literature, nor turned to nothing. On the contrary, continuing the finest tradition of world revolutionary literature, including Soviet literature, the Albanian poetry achieved new success and further development waging a struggle on two fronts — both against bourgeois decadentism and revisionism. The number of poets grew, the horizon of their interests expanded and, along with it, the artistic level of their productions rose to new heights. New lyrical and philosophical motifs were added to the favourite national subjects.

Precisely in the Sixties the Albanian poetry went through a period of regeneration through successful attempts at going from the stage of development it had already reached over to a new, higher, stage. Innovations in poetry and prose became the subject of constructive debate which assisted the development of literature as a whole. To this period belong the collections of poems by Dritëro Agolli, Fatos Arapi and other poets who enlivened the new Albanian poetry further.

In the heat of debate there were, of course, misunderstandings and exaggerations over the relationship between tradition and innovation, but all this was temporary and was soon overcome.

The Sixties saw the infusion of new life into the Albanian poetry, its enrichment with new motifs and forms of expression, especially in the field of poetical figures. Poems such as »Devoll, De-voll!« and »The Fathers of the Nation« by Dritëro Agolli, »Bloody Alarms« by Fatos Arapi as well as the new productions of Llazar Siliqi, Dhimitër Shuteriqi, Agim

Gjakova and others created a favourable poetical climate which contributed to the deepening of the links of poetry with real life and the explosion of a great number of new talents.

The Seventies were the years of the emergence of a great number of young poets who brought fresh air into the world of Albanian poetry. Poets such as Agim Gjakova, Xhevahir Spahiu, Spiro Dede, Ndoc Gjetja, Ndoc Papeleka, Adem Istrefi, Bardhyl Londo, Natasha Lake and others enriched the treasury of the new Albanian poetry with fresh motifs from the new socialist life in Albania.

Along with them, poets of older generations, among whom Lasgush Poradeci who wrote his first poems at the outset of this century and writes today about the new Albania, continued to produce fine works. To this period belongs »Mother Albania« by Dritëro Agolli which our critique has rightly ranked among the major works of the Albanian literature. Other poetical works such as »The Message« by Llazar Siliqi and »Poetical Paths« by Fatos Arapi also belong to this period.

Poetry, an art dear to and valued by the Albanian people, develops successfully today. Its road of development knows no crises, because it is closely linked with life and finds a wide response among the broad mass of readers. In its strong links with its readers lies one of its keys to success. The Albanian reader, with his constant demands of a poetry of a high quality represents an important factor in the further development of the Albanian poetry. The ancient Albanian rhapsods sung their epic songs to a broad public and the process of balad singing itself was done according to a beautiful ceremonial. This public played a decisive role in the life of oral poetry, it called for it, kept it alive, approved or disapproved it. Fortunately, for the songs of present-day life, too, the broad public of the Albanian poetry continues to be just as active and plays its positive role in all the process of creation of the modern Albanian poetry of socialist realism. So, nourished with the art of this poetry, in return the public nourishes it with life.

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## **SOCIALIST REALISM - ART OF GREAT POSSIBILITIES**

*by Ismail Kadaré*

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**The art of the working class, socialist realism, has no limitation of extension in time and space, its content and form are the most varied, and its literary techniques the most advanced, and this is only natural because no other literary method up till now has coped with such a broad material as the complete tableau of the life of the people**

IT IS MORE THAN FORTY YEARS NOW THAT, ACCORDING TO THE TEACHINGS OF THE PARTY AND COMRADE ENVER HOXHA, THE CREATIVE METHOD OF SOCIALIST REALISM IS SUCCESSFULLY GUIDING THE WRITERS OF ALBANIA, THIS ANCIENT LAND OF ARTS. THE AGE FORTY YEARS OF OUR SOCIALIST REALIST LITERATURE



IS ONLY ONE TENTH OF THE AGE OF THE ALBANIAN LITERATURE AS A WHOLE. HOWEVER, WE DO NOT THINK THAT THERE CAN BE PEOPLE OF SO DISTORTED MIND AS TO CLOSE THEIR EYES TO THE GREAT FACT THAT IN THESE FORTY YEARS IN ALBANIA MORE NOVELS, STORIES AND POEMS HAVE BEEN PUBLISHED THAN DURING THE WHOLE FOUR-HUNDRED YEAR LONG PERIOD OF THE EXISTENCE OF THE ALBANIAN LITERATURE, THAT THE ALBANIAN LITERATURE OF THE PRESENT DAYS NOT ONLY HAS PRESERVED THE HIGH STANDARDS OF THE LITERATURE OF THE PAST, BUT ALSO RAISED PARTS OF IT, ESPECIALLY THE PROSE AND THE NOVEL, THE HEAVY ARTILLERY OF LITERATURE, TO A HIGHER LEVEL.

The facts we mentioned are of capital importance for judging the literature of a given epoch. So, we are justified to say with full conviction that in the epoch of socialism our literature has developed as in no other time and that its development constitutes one of the more brilliant chapters of the history of socialism in Albania and, without doubt, a great chapter in the history of the Albanian civilization as a whole.

By successfully developing a literature which is guided by the principles of socialist realism, among other things, our writers make their militant and revolutionary contribution to the general strategy of the struggle of the working class for a new world, a new society and a new art. The successful development of our literature, which is part of the struggle of our Party for the triumph of the ideals of socialism and communism, has great importance of principle for the progressive writers which follow this development, rejoice at its successes and take it as an example.

It is known that in the present time, a period when the 'powerful bourgeois and revisionist propaganda

machines are competing for the conquest of world opinion, a large-scale campaign of denigration is being carried out against socialist realism. History up till now knows of no other literary method which has been attacked so fiercely and persistently. The polemics between different literary trends and currents, the quarrels and contesting manifestos of the past look like children's plays compared with the present savage wave of attacks the new art of the working class, socialist realism, has had to defend itself against. This fact alone is significant and sufficient for everybody to see how intolerable is this art of the bourgeoisie and reaction, and inversely, how necessary it is to the working class.

In its attacks against socialist realism the bourgeoisie has resorted to many stratagems. No matter how vulgar they may be, they have been used by the bourgeois propaganda on a broad scale and succeeded in creating a distorted image of socialist realism in the eyes of many people.

The whole struggle of the bourgeoisie to denigrate socialist realism is based on the old reactionary thesis that no true literature and art can develop in the socialist order, because the supposed levelling out of values and disappearance of strong individualities do not allow it. In order to drive home its point the bourgeoisie hunts for works of inferior quality which, beginning from the Homeric times, can be found in the socialist realist literature as easily as in any other literature, and on the basis of them, taking them as models, tries to create its own image of socialist realism.

Of course, the misrepresentation is too gross for the question not to be posed: what about the powerful works, the outstanding figures of socialist realism, such as Gorky, Brecht, Mayakovsky and others? It is clear that such a question makes havoc of the pattern of

bourgeois thinking. Put hard to it, the reactionary propaganda has found a trick to disintricate itself from its predicament. According to it, the works of these writers only partly or not at all are products of socialist realism.

So, the bourgeois propaganda is stuck in a vicious circle when it claims that socialist realism produces only works of inferior quality and that works of high quality should never be attributed to socialist realism. The capitalists have the absurd notion that the working class deserves only some sort of second-rate art.

This is one of the greatest misrepresentations ever created in the field of literature and art. Having no other explanation for this state of things, the bourgeoisie continues to resort to this vulgar distortion in order to malign the art of the working class. Otherwise, it would be compelled to admit that socialist realism is one of the (most powerful literary trends which since the first decades of its existence has brought forth such major works and writers as, despite all the opposition to them, have succeeded in dominating the literary scene of the 20th century. Of course, it is not, nor will it ever be, up to the bourgeoisie to decide what is and what is not socialist realism. This has been and will always be decided by the masters of the house, those who live in socialism and struggle for socialism.

In its unrestrained campaign against socialist realism, the bourgeoisie resorts to all means, making the most of any weakness or shortcoming that emerge in the process of development of this method. Among these shortcomings the bourgeoisie hunts with great glee for art clichés. More than once the bourgeois propaganda has identified socialist realism with clichés. However, it forgets, or rather feigns to forget that clichés were not invented by socialist realism, they are older than the world, and it is precisely the bourgeoisie that developed this routine in art to the highest degree, with its novels *à l'eau de rose*, with its commercial literature of »orphans and blue princes«, with its false luster of life, with its idealized positive heroes, with its happy ends and unwarranted optimism.

Marx has said that it often happens that the first taste of the winners comprises elements of the last taste of the losers. Some of the shortcomings we mentioned have unfortunately been transmitted from the bourgeois literature to the literature of socialist realism. The bourgeoisie which, as far as its own self is concerned, has always considered these shortcomings very tolerable, raises a hue and cry when it sees the same shortcomings on the other side of the barricade. It seizes on this because it was very convenient pretext for its campaign of abuse.

Although the bourgeoisie makes a great noise about clichés in socialist realism, it would like to see the art of the working class precisely like this — an art of inferior quality, sclerotized and sketchy. It would be ready to applaud this sort of art in silence, because it would suffer no harm from it. Inversely, the great true art of socialist realism terrifies it.

Before the Soviet literature began flirting with the modernistic and half-decadent bourgeois literature, a huge flow of clichés swamped Soviet literary life. For its part, Chinese literature knew a period of extreme use of clichés before it plunged completely into its present-day liberalism. These cases prove best that although attempts were made to hide clichés behind sectarian, and »left« phrases and stands, in the reality they were intended to prepare the terrain for the bourgeois cultural aggression.

Clichés are not a tolerable evil, as it may seem to some people who have bureaucratic concepts about literature and art. Worse still when clichés and bourgeois-revisionist influences are considered as the two opposite extremes of the same phenomenon. Clichés are the worst means to oppose bourgeois and revisionist influences. The enemies of socialist realism would very much prefer such an opposition, such a weak and discredited

enemy.

Clichés have been and continue to be combated in our literature because, with their poverty, their lifelessness, they create among the readers a state of indifference about the problems that are raised. However, indifference is only one aspect of the great harm coming from clichés. The other and worse aspect is that clichés, by presenting the ideas which are supposed to be defended in a cut-and-dried manner, that is, outside life, create the opposite reaction among the readers.

When because of the clichés the positive hero of a novel, play or film arouses antipathy instead of sympathy among the readers or spectators, this means that the novel, play or film is harmful and even dangerous to socialism.

Our socialist life, our struggle, the events we have lived through during these forty years, the documents of the Party and the Works of Comrade Enver Hoxha, in particular, where we find summed up all the major scenes of the history of the Party and our people in this quarter of a century, are full of life, of sharp conflicts and forceful confrontations, there is nothing scetchy or cliché-like about them. These documents and works are a great example and a great source of inspiration for our writers, they will be for many generations of writers sure landmarks for the further development of our literature.

The tasks the 8th Congress of the Party set to our writers: the strengthening of militancy in literature and art, the achievement of a more complete picture of socialist life and more efforts to improve quality in literature, are tasks which coincide with the further development of our literature. The more our revolutionary life is introduced into our literature, the worse will be for clichés, routine and cut-and-dried formulas. The storm or life blowing over our poems, novels, plays and films will shake off them clichés like dry unnecessary leaves.

The beginning of the serial publication of the works of our writers of the epoch of socialism enables the reader to have a complete idea of the variety and extension of the literary creativeness of such writers as Shevqet Musaraj, Jakov Xoxe, Sterjo Spase, Dhimitër Shuteriqi, Dritëro Agolli and others whose works will continue to be published in these important series. This tradition of the epoch of socialism in literature will remain always important, because it is the powerful testimony of a great epoch.

Socialist realism is the art of great possibilities. No other contemporary literary trend can have its range, fullness, profundity and greatness. These attributions do not belong to it from some kind of literary manifesto or some kind of academic tribune. It is the greatness of the people themselves whose life it has placed at its foundations more than any other art, it is its humanism, extension and light that create the major dimensions of this art.

The working class deserves a great art and it has and will always have it. The future belongs to it and it will inherit the world of the future together with all the material and spiritual wealth of mankind. The art of the working class, socialist realism, has no limitation of extension in time and space, its content and form are the most varied, and its literary techniques the most advanced, and this is only natural because no other literary methods up till now has coped with such a broad material as the complete tableau of the life of the people. We Albanian writers are proud of creating by the literary method of socialist realism, of working and struggling for its further development, for its triumph.



Vælgermøde i Tirana 10.11.1982. Tv Ramiz Alia. I midten ved mikrofonerne Enver Hoxha. Foto fra »New Albania« # 6/1982. Billedet kan forstørres ved at klikke på det.

## A BROAD VISION OF THE LEADER AND THE EPOCH

*by Ismail Kadaré*

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Comrade Ramiz Alia's *Our Enver* is one of the most important books in the political history published in the epoch of socialism in our country.

The importance of the book is conditioned by two factors: first, by the argument it treats — the figure of the founder and architect of today's Albania, Enver Hoxha: and second, because this broad vision is given by the man who is in the leadership of socialist Albania today. Being elected as the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the PLA, a function which was justly considered irreplaceable, the author, as the first to lead the country after the death of the founder and leader, considers it his duty towards the Party and the whole Albanian people to examine his own ideas about Enver Hoxha, his own assessments, reminiscences and his sense of responsibility, which, at the same time, are assessments, reminiscences and a sense of responsibility connected with the whole history of our socialist country.

In this manner, by examining the central figure of an historic epoch, which still continues, this book includes in itself the whole period of time in which we are living. The dimension of the future is, nevertheless, just as powerful, indeed it is one of the primary qualities of the 'book.

From the very first phrases of the book the author admits that it was easy to tackle the task of portraying the figure of Enver Hoxha, and this is understandable, because the portraying of this comprehensive and profound figure means practically the portraying of the entire history of Albania in the second half of the 20th century.

Although the author considers his task incomplete and unfinished (in the introduction he calls his book just «notes»), in fact this book, as a whole, is complete from all aspects. Being a homage and an act of loyalty to Enver Hoxha, it is also a wide-sweeping historical

consideration of all the questions which the history of socialism has put forward before the Albanian people, a program of the roads which will be followed in the future, a clear platform and an answer to all the analysts who, for their different purposes, follow the road of Albania's advance.

This aim is brilliantly achieved in the book, which, apart from other things, has the merit of clarity, precision, directness. As any other book which has loyalty and sincerity at its foundations, this work exists without pompous phrases, without farfetched epithets and without high-falutin rhetorics and declarations. As *Zëri in popullit* rightly evaluates it, this book, apart from other things is an example of how to write about the leader in general, about the personalities and historic events.

Comrade Ramiz Alia's book is of special interest for the Albanian intelligentsia, for the artists and writers, in particular. The fifth chapter of the book, entitled «More culture for the people», is devoted to the problems of culture, Enver Hoxha's ideas, instructions and platform of this important domain of life.

«When he spoke about culture, he was, you might say, completely in his element», says the author about Enver Hoxha. «On this subject his oratory was more brilliant than in any other instance and his thinking reached the greatest profundity.»

Putting the author's idea in other words, we can say that since for a quarter of a century the author was secretary of the CC of the PLA in charge of ideology, in which culture, literature and arts were included, he himself is just as much in his element when he dwells on problems of these spheres.

The questions of culture and evocations of it are treated not only in the chapter on culture, but also in other parts of the book, in those parts in which he speaks about the youth, the school and education, science and the emancipation of the Albanian society. These questions are mentioned in the first chapter, one of the most important and comprehensive chapters of the book, entitled «Son of the revolution», and through to the last chapter, in which there is the very well-found and moving reference to Enver Hoxha's farewell speech of Greetings addressed to the Albanian people on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the Liberation, this «real masterpiece of Albanian journalism and of Albanian culture in general», as the author characterizes it, which evokes in him the famous verse of Naim [Frashëri]:

«When you see that I am absent  
Do not think that I have died.  
I am living, still in life,  
I am truly in the light.»

The chapter devoted to questions of culture provides a complete historical tableau of everything which the new Albania undertook and carried out for the development of culture, from the last days of November 1944 until today. The action for culture undertaken by the newborn Albanian state developed hand in hand with the other fundamental tasks: ensuring the independence, carrying out the great socio-economic reforms, setting up and strengthening the democratic institutions, etc. The author explains that the whole serious attitude towards culture was illuminated by the principle that «culture is freedom, is the reign of truth, is security in the solution of situations, is emancipation and civilization.»

Comrade Ramiz Alia explains clearly that Enver Hoxha's vision of culture proceeded from the fact that our people, despite their illiteracy, were not ignorant. «Indeed, without any

exaggeration the vitality of their culture is unrivalled,» he - writes. This explains why this people, being in historical contacts and relations with the Greek culture and under the pressure of the subsequent Roman, Slav and Turkish cultural invasions, managed to preserve the identity of their own culture. Such a thing, the author continues, could not come about as a result of conservation alone. In the first place, it was the result of their inborn creative force.

In our century the National Liberation War was waged, apart from other things, under the aegis of culture. The author mentions the concise slogan of Enver Hoxha's, «More bread, more culture for the people», which became part of the program of the first Democratic Government of the PR of Albania, and entered history.

In this section of the book, Comrade Ramiz Alia depicts a powerful tableau of the clash between the correct and far-seeing vision of the Party and its founder about culture and Koçi Xoxe's distorted and obscurantist optic, couched with ultra-revolutionary slogans. This counter-current, the spawn of the darkest ignorance, combined with savagery and careerism, tried to destroy the new culture on the dawn of freedom. «Culture frightened Koçi Xoxe,» Comrade Ramiz Alia writes, «just as it frightens all those who, instead of freedom, have tyranny in their hearts and instead of the thirst for knowledge, sinister evil designs.»

The author goes on to explain the struggle which the Party and Comrade Enver Hoxha had to wage for the destruction of this dangerous clique, which, among other things, worked on the sly to bring about a division in culture, to destroy the intelligentsia and to negate the values of literature and arts in the name of the so-called new proletarian art. The author stops to dwell on the important moment when Enver Hoxha, in complete opposition with Koçi Xoxe and company, and on the basis of the Leninist principles, personally guided a careful and persistent work to create harmony in the ranks of the creative intelligentsia, especially by bringing together the generation of the 1930, the most progressive part of which, emerging from, their passivity or isolation, united with the army of the writers, artists and scientists of the new epoch. The author mentions Comrade Enver Hoxha's personal interest in the rapprochement and the activation of such distinguished scientists as Eqrem Çabej and others, which became an important factor for the further development of the Albanian science.

One of the important actions of the Party devoted to the problems of literature and arts, which the author mentions, is the 15th Plenum of the Central Committee of the Party in 1965, in which, Enver Hoxha and he himself, as leader of the ideological section, raised questions of fundamental importance, such as the relationship between the tradition and innovatory in our arts, the highlighting of the values of popular art, correct understanding of the relationship between the national and world culture, by avoiding such confusing alternatives as vulgar folklorism, cosmopolitanism, etc. Another event of special weight, on which the author has stopped, is the 4th Plenum of the CC [Central Committee] of the Party in 1973, at which Enver Hoxha himself dealt sternly with the spirit of liberalism that had begun to be noticed in the Albanian literature and arts in the beginning of the 1970s. As Enver Hoxha in his well-known speech puts it, this spirit of liberalism which emerged as an influence of the «softening» waves from the western capitalist countries and from the eastern revisionist countries, strove to orientate our literature and arts towards a spirit of conciliation, towards the anti-heroism, and abstract humanism.

Among the other events which have already become part of the Albanian cultural legacy, the author mentions the famous meeting in the beginning of the 1960s, in which the very wise and cautious intervention of Enver Hoxha was decisive in avoiding grave misunderstandings which threatened to divide our creative forces in the complicated



conditions created in our literary circles after a long debate without precedent in its history.

At this meeting the author was present together with the leader of the country, the central protagonist. Comrade Ramiz Alia delivered the main report in which the main problems emerging from this heated debate were presented. In his book he evokes a subsequent conversation which he had with Enver Hoxha about the famous argument and division between the romanticists and classicists, caused in the last century after the performance in Paris of Victor Hugo's «Hernani». In this conversation it is implied that knowledge of the world history and culture and the steps by which it has risen, has been one of the main factors which made Enver Hoxha feel in his element when he spoke about and assessed culture.

By throwing light on the figure of Enver Hoxha, on this aspect of his as an outstanding intellectual, erudite and humanist, the author explains that Enver Hoxha's passionate attitude towards the treasury of world culture and art, his intransigence towards cosmopolitanism and xenophobia, one of the infantile diseases of the socialist state, were the logical product of his all-round personality. «A man with such a broad culture and learning as Enver,» the author writes, «could not allow the isolation of the (Albanian) people from the most outstanding achievements of world culture and science of all times.»

In this moment Comrade Ramiz Alia reminds the reader that Enver Hoxha, despite the many things he had to do as leader of the Party and the state, found time to write pure scientific works such as «The Uprising of the Peasantry of Central Albania, Led by Haxhi Qamili», «A Little History», «About the Men of the Renaissance», etc. Likewise, there is also mention of his special passion for the Albanological and archaeological sciences in support of the confirmation of the autochthonous character of the Albanian people, as one of the most ancient peoples of the Balkan Peninsula.

Throughout the whole book, and not only in the chapter devoted to culture, Enver Hoxha's global vision of history and culture is present, as it is present also in his own work, in which there is a very natural ring in the mention, for example, of an ancient city like Butrint, which in one instance is evoked in connection with the ancient Greek-Albanian proximity, and in another instance, is made the scene of a dramatic conversation with a foreign prime minister, who proposed that precisely in this city a military base should be set up especially against Greece.

In Comrade Ramiz Alia's book there is always a similar combination of reminiscences, assessments and dialogues with the reader, all of them in an effort to throw a most complete light on the various aspects of the many-sided versatile figure of Enver Hoxha, and the more complete elucidation of the problems which history placed on the road of the Albanian people in this half of our century. Most of them are answers which serve as an orientation for the solution of the problems which time has raised or may raise in the future.

To remain to the examples which have to do with culture, concretely with the political articles of the French writers and journalists, there is a very significant episode which the author puts in at the last chapter of the book, in which he describes how Enver Hoxha reacted to an article which contained the phrase: «Enver Hoxha's Albania stands like a granite rock facing the external blockade,» writing on the margin with a nervous hand: «No one has bequeathed Albania to me, it belongs to the people, to all Albanians.\*

Further on Comrade Ramiz Alia writes: «To use his own words, for Enver Hoxha the people and the Party were the greatest treasures ... Before them he always felt himself a soldier and a servant.»

An inner dialectics connects the whole texture of this book, the history of the problems which are raised in it, the coherence, the continuity and the perspective of them.

The author shows that the important and decisive issues for the development of culture, literature and the arts in our country, which he has raised after the death of Enver Hoxha, have been in the logic of a whole line. The systematic struggle against the efforts to level out personalities, against the equalization of values, against which Comrade Ramiz Alia has been outspoken from the 5th Plenum of the CC of the Party in 1988, and the struggle for the uplift of quality of our literature and arts, which he raised two years ago, constitute key moments, the solution of which conditions many things in the development of our literature and arts in the future.

Our Enver is a special book for the Albanian reader. It is a book by one of the closest collaborators of "Raver Hoxha, while he was alive, and of the present leader of Albania in these three and a half years after his death. But his book is much more than that. It is the book of a comrade, an interlocutor. Therefore the pages of this book combine the penmanship of the statesman and the inmost feelings of the man. In its pages the profound political analyses and the dramatic events of history are combined with lyrical fragments, direct dialogues with the reader, parts of a diary, intimate and touching, joyful or painful memories. In its pages, along with the militancy of the communist leader, there is a strong current of humanity and benevolence.

This is a very valuable quality for any author, but when he is both author and leader of the country, this quality is amplified and assumes special dimensions. Such qualities, which are at the foundation of the social-philosophical conception, which has characterized the Albanian throughout history, about his own leaders and tribunes, both of small regions and of the whole nation, are, in the last analysis, another testimony to the culture of the Albanian people. Therefore, this book, being important and unique for the Albanian reader, because it carries the message of the leader of the country, will also be the book of a close friend.

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#### Redaktionel bemærkning:

**Rød-markering** viser at den pgl. sætning senere vil blive inddraget i en analyse.

**Blå markering** viser at Kadaré taler om en bestemt periode.

## OUR TIME AND OUR LITERATURE

*by Ismail Kadaré*

»Albania today« # 3/1990

- The Albanian literature is a great national treasury and, as such, it deserves all our energies, passion and devotion. It is part of the consciousness and dignity and freedom of the Albanian people.
- The Albanian writers have made their choice long ago: total commitment on the side of

their own people and of all the peoples of the world who strive for progress. They have no doubt at all about and are not impressed by any philosophy. The Greek tragedians wrote with a commitment, and so did Dante, Cervantes, Hugo, Brecht and scores of great men of world art. The present generation of Albanian writers feel honoured in this company and do not seek to enter any other club.

- The modern Albanian literature is one of the most emancipated literatures in this part of Europe.

The current Albanian literature, what we ordinarily call the literature of socialist realism, occupies nearly one tenth of the period of Albanian literature, whereas the literature of the period of Renaissance stands for one fifth and that of independence for one twentieth part of it. We needed this comparison to delineate a time scale of the four principal periods of our literature, which is not without a correlation to the dimensions and values they have created. As can be seen, although socialist realism is the last and culminating period of the Albanian letters, it comes third in size, next to the period of the Middle Ages and the National Renaissance. At the present moment, it spans a period of time twice as long as that of Independence and keeps growing. The day will come shortly when it will equal the time-span of the Renaissance.

This time-dimension assists us to form a clearer idea of this period, which is the closest to us, since it is the product of our time and of our socialist social order. It is an asset in making our requirements extremely serious and in weighing our words as strictly and realistically as possible.

The time of socialism in Albania is one of extraordinary events and the greatest emancipation the Albanian people have seen throughout their whole history. Their literature and culture have also experienced an unordinary growth in this period. We would not be objective if, in the assessment of our contemporary literature, as compared with that of the other periods, we were to automatically attribute all the merits of the time and of the revolution directly to the literature, if we were to place it in a privileged position confronted with the other periods. Were we to proceed in that way, we would be allowing ourselves too much euphoria, self-satisfaction and a complete lack of a sense of self-criticism towards our work.

It is true that the contemporary Albanian literature is the product of its time, but it must be assessed according to its own worth and not be allowed to assume merits from extra-literary circumstances. To put this idea plainly, let us make a hypothetical comparison between our current life and that of a period of a hundred years ago, in 1889, or sixty years ago in 1929. It is impossible to find any common elements which could compare among themselves. The effort itself would be ridiculous. However, both in 1889 and in 1929, there were masterpieces of literature, which could stand any comparison.

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The socialist literature of our country today has its roots in the dramatic time when the Albanian people, led by the communists, were locked in a life-and-death struggle against the occupiers and the local feudal lords and bourgeoisie for national and social liberation. It grew with each passing year and decade in the time of the construction of socialism. It was extended and enriched against numerous predictable and unpredictable odds which involved problems of ideas and artistic choice of the right or left directions.

Never in the long history of the Albanians had their literature created such broad contacts with the people; and the people and time never acted together with it, serving as a source of support, inspiration and benevolent encouragement. Here we must add that, despite the merits of literature, it was the nature of the new social order, the very nature of the socialist culture, which created such an unprecedented communication. All these factors converged to determine its emancipating role and character to such a broad extent which was not and could not be created before in the life of the Albanians.

This was a literature of a new type, like the new atmosphere, time and the whole order which was established in this country. At a first glance, it seems as if there was nothing in common between it and the previous literature, but gradually, when the opinion of the time became more mature and the vision more complete, it was easy to notice that this new literature was part of the Albanian centuries-old literature, was its most advanced section, which, together with the new messages, inherited the lifelong messages of the Albanian letters, just as the new time inherited the best tradition of the past.

Our contemporary literature communicates with the three other periods of Albanian letters and, thanks to its indisputable values, unites their values and qualities, which shows that, apart from other things, it is a real national art of Albania's.

The contemporary literature has one thing in common with the old Albanian literature of the Middle Ages: international recognition. By a paradox of history, it is precisely these two periods — the earliest and the latest, which are best known outside the borders of the country.

The old Albanian literature, a semi-religious, bloomy and extremely elitist literature, with very few readers in Albania, has, nevertheless, played an important role in the creation of all the mechanisms of expression of one of the oldest and most beautiful languages of Europe and in making Albania, the Albanian nation and language known all over the world. We can mention two facts in support of this: first, with its numerous publications in different countries it succeeded in making the epic wars of Skanderbeg and the drama of the Albanians known everywhere; and second, it encouraged the early investigations into the Albanian language and civilization. It was precisely two books of this literature, by Pjetër Budi and Frang Bardhi, which, three hundred years ago, came to the notice of the greatest scientific mind of that time, Gottfried Leibniz — the initiator of studies on the origin of the Albanian language and of the Albanians from the Illyrians.

The contemporary Albanian literature comes closer to the period of our Renaissance thanks to their great national emancipating mission, their militancy and unreserved commitment to the vital cause of the country. They stand close together also on account of their broad popular character, humanism, lofty civic spirit, and the nobility of art as a bridge which unites the peoples. Today, when the vulgar black winds of chauvinism are blowing in the Balkan Peninsula, these qualities appear still more wonderful.

All these values and qualities of the different periods of Albanian art, were taken up by the contemporary Albanian letters and further enriched with the new ideas of the epoch, assuming a new vitality and brilliance which they never had before. As they rose in full vigour, they built a wonderful reader, who became the broadest and most intelligent support for the development of our new letters.

The road of growth and perfection of our contemporary socialist literature has not been simple and easy.

Its first phase, that which roughly extends **from the forties to the end of the fifties**, is one

of the most interesting ones, precisely on account of the clash of opposed concepts on art. On the one hand, there was the great enthusiasm and the optimistic inebriation following the liberation of the country, the confidence and the noble feelings stirred at the dawn of a new epoch; on the other hand, there was the petty distrust towards the literature and the intellectuals, which had the effect of a cold shower, especially in the early years of this phase.

The sectarianism of Koçi Xoxe and his minions, their hatred towards the national culture and identity, inflicted a considerable damage to literature. The greater the damage since this culture was still in its beginnings, was still «brittle» and could be wounded easily. These enemies of the Albanian culture and nation in their efforts to paralyze the Albanian literature — in an effort to cause the paralyzation of our whole intelligentsia — resorted to an old mechanism: that of the complex of guilt. By making the intelligentsia, and together with it the writers, feel a sense of guilt, they hoped they could easily bring them to serve their own aims, disarm them and destroy their personality, in brief, change them from militants of their time into jesters of old feudal courts.

The overthrow of Koçi Xoxe and his ilk buried this reactionary mentality of ignoramuses, but it does not mean that this barred all possibilities of its recrudescence in the same measure as left sectarianism did.

Other difficulties on the way of the new Albanian literature were various misunderstandings in connection with the mission and role of art. They came from different directions, from the right and the left. But, whereas the political atmosphere, the pronounced anti-imperialist character of the entire life of the country emphasized the need for the struggle against the right viewpoints which defended the perpetual character of art and departure from the social problems, we cannot say the same about schematism.

The cut-and-dry views about the positive hero, the ill-famed theory of the absence of the conflict, or of the conflicting not between evil and good, but between the good and the good, and other similar misapprehensions, which appeared under a revolutionary garb, were nothing but manifestations of a sort of decadent trends, imitations of petty-bourgeois rose-water literature known in the West as fashionable literature. This kind of literature had nothing in common with the revolution, although with its arrogance and intolerance, it pretended to be the only representative of it. Whereas, in essence, it was only an expression of servility to the vulgar bourgeois art, in as much as it imitated its mechanisms.

All this was bound to create a lifelessness and superficiality in the Albanian letters and to make it insipid. Nevertheless, while it could more easily fight back and contain this assault of vulgarity, our literature had a much more arduous task in giving timely answers to the more complicated problems of the relationship between what is national and what is socialist in literature, between the typical and the non-typical, etc. Some of these problems continue to preoccupy the literary thinking today, and it is the urgent task of our criticism and all literary opinion to deal with them and put them to their place.

We are very familiar with the formulation «socialist contents and national form», but in my opinion, today this formulation does not make much sense. The first question we would be tempted to ask is: Why this division? Why the national part of literature and arts should have the attribute of the form only? I am not going to ask any such questions which are difficult to answer.

The above formulation emerged and appeared to make sense in a multinational socialist state, in which different nationalities formed a people with a specific literature of its own - the Soviet literature. In our country, which has a homogenous national constitution, this

division of component parts cannot stand.

But whereas the relationships between contents and form in this case remained only within the context of a formula the question of the typical and non-typical appeared much more complex.

The theory on the typical, elaborated in the Soviet Union in the mid 50s, precisely on the threshold of the revisionist processes, has brought about great confusion and incalculable harm to the socialist literature of all countries.

The theory of the typical, **as it was served to us**, was the theoretical breeding-ground for mediocrity, the groundwork on which it supported its edifice from which it launched its attacks for the destruction of really great art. It championed the uniform art, conformity, against militancy, against any novelty and originality in art, which form the principles of the socialist art.

**Accepting militancy in words, in fact it denied the concept wholesale**, because it disarmed the writer and deprived him of any possibility of treating the real problems of society in his work. Any protagonist that happened to be criticized found protection in the social category which he stood for, and, in this manner, the negative character could not be made a physician, artist, police officer or office employee, and even less a peasant or a worker, since the rule of the typical could not permit them to be ordinary people with vices.

It is useless to dwell any longer on the fatal consequences of this theory, if it were imposed on literature. However, we must add here that, although in theory some efforts have been made by our criticism to reject it, still the roots of this phenomenon have not been eradicated, which shows the weakness of this criticism. In the practice of our literature, this theory has been completely denied long since. It is to the credit of our new literature that it resisted this alien theory. Besides other things, it is proof of its vitality and good condition and the solidity of the ground on which it stands.

**In the beginning of the 60s**, when a non-typical event occurred and small Albania challenged the Khrushchevites, the latter made a gruesome remark about the Albanian letters. They offered two alternatives: either the Albanian literature would be disfigured and transformed into a typical bourgeois literature, or it would disintegrate and end up as a propaganda babble, as was the case with some dogmatic literatures of that period.

The challenge of the Albanian literature to this ill-wishing prophecy was worded in equally strong terms. Not only it did not disintegrate and become a propaganda slop, not only it did not degenerate into an imitation of decadent literature, but, on the contrary, defying any forecast, **it gathered new strength and vigour and experienced an unprecedented rise**. By this it showed that it was a true literature, and not a temporary flame which the first gale could blow out.

The vigorous development of all genres was accompanied **with an emancipation of writers, with the liberation of their minds from all dishes and dogmas**, with & renewal of genres and forms. Powerful innovative works created one of the most beautiful literary atmospheres in the history of Albanian letters. This confirmed again the great truth that art is immortal through the renewal and change.

It was not unexpected that **the Chinese pressure of the 70s**, which did not pass without leaving its imprint on some countries, should meet with repulsion at the gates [of?] our literature. Having reached a stage of consolidation, our literature could not be shaken by outside pressure, from any quarter it came. But, whereas it failed to put its stamp on the



Albanian letters, **this pressure, due to extra-literary reasons, had a negative influence in the school-books and programs**, with which our younger generation made their contact with our national literature and with that of the world, in general.

The 70s were marked by a stern clash on two fronts: against the influence of bourgeois liberalism, on the one hand, and against conservative schematism, on the other. Here an admission has to be made that, whereas in the front against the right trend just as before, the struggle was really efficient the same cannot be said of the struggle against the left trend. Encouraged by the Chinese pressure, it strove for revival, for regaining its lost positions and paralyzing the Albanian letters, which, by then, had grown strong enough to be overcome by schematism. Seeing that this was its last opportunity, **schematism launched a desperate attack**.

The last decade of our literature has been just as rich, not to say richer, with problems requiring explanations and solutions, with the joint efforts of the writers to overcome the expected and unexpected difficulties which emerged in the literary process.

The unharmonious development of different genres, especially of poetry and the novel, the backwardness of the theatre and the literary criticism, created preoccupations which sometimes were justifiable and sometimes were not. A problem which had emerged previously, but which the literary life brought into greater prominence, was that of **the so-called major and minor themes**. The consensus reached about this problem, that is, the total avoiding of such a metaphysical division and the assessment of literary works, not by merit of themes but by the ideo-artistic level, was a sign of the maturity of the common literary and social opinion.

The extension of themes, the inclusion in literature of the great richness of life and the complicated social, philosophical and psychological problems, have been another preoccupation of the writers. This was especially true about some themes which seemed taboos, although no one had declared them to be so, and managed to steal into the literary world. The cause for this situation, I think, should not be sought outside the ranks of our writers, it is they themselves who lacked the talent or the courage to overcome a surmountable obstacle. **In our literature there are still blanks in themes and motives from the ethical-moral motives and spheres — those impulses and passions without which the human existence cannot be imagined — and other complicated experiences which are present in the life of everyone, but which cannot be found in the pages of books. Other acute and dramatic themes which are connected with the relationship between man and society, questions of democracy, the struggle against the bureaucratization of legislation, and so on, are scarcely treated or avoided altogether. All these problems which exist together with literature since ancient time create a marked vacuum, if they remain absent.** The history of our socialist state, the published records of the Party, **Enver Hoxha's** works, are replete with facts, events and protagonists connected with the above-mentioned themes, whereas in literature they seldom occur or do not figure at all.

Some of our critics justify this blank by resorting to **the mechanism of the typical**. Others, always proceeding from the same category, have dared further afield. To the question why the facts of the history of the country should not appear in literature, they respond with the argument that literature has a generalizing effect and is concerned with what is typical, which makes the problem delicate. One must really be a barbarian in logic to accept that the fact treated in the novel or story of a writer, I repeat it, in the novel or story which bears the name of one of the numerous writers of the country, has a stronger generalizing effect, that is, has a more delicate approach, than the fact mentioned in the book of the founder of modern Albania.

**The overcoming of the above-mentioned misunderstandings and the establishment of closer contacts with life are an imperative. They will bring a breath of fresh air into the «lungs» of our literature.**

Some time has passed since the moment when a basic demand was made for our literature and arts: the struggle for better quality and against mediocrity. The problem which **Comrade Ramiz Alia** raised has to do with major things connected with the future of a literature.

Mediocrity, just as schematism and rose-water literature, the trite imagination of the positive hero, the cut-and-dry moralizing and happy endings, is by no means the quality of socialist literature. It is a universal disease of literature, which emerged together with it and will be its lifelong companion. A total life and death struggle has continued between real great art and mediocre art from the time when Homer sang the first line of the **Illiad** until our time, right to the moment in which we are speaking about literature.

The outcome of this prolonged wearing clash has determined the fate of entire literatures, of their blooming in to effervescence or withering, of their raise and fall.

**As a rule, the states and administration, beginning from ancient Rome, have not supported great art against mediocrity, on the contrary, they have put their support behind the latter against great art.** An this is in the logic of things, because it is known that **great art is a headache to the administration, whereas mediocrity is comfortable.**

**The fact that our socialist state has raised this problem in the opposite sense, that is, against mediocrity, is significant in itself, and the writers and artists ought to appreciate it for what it is.**

In socialism, mediocrity continues to work against real art with unabated fury, although the character of this struggle has its specifics. Like an ailment which is stimulated by other concomitant diseases and which, in turn, stimulates them, **mediocrity draws heavily on schematism and nourishes it and all its sub-products.** So, they operate together on a broad front to gain dominating positions in literature and they can easily win if literature and society slacken their vigilance towards them.

In socialism, mediocrity tries to flatter the bureaucrats in office with the aim of fulfilling one of its main dreams: to gain recognition, even without being proclaimed official literature.

The concept of «official» literature is unacceptable in socialism, just as its opposite, the «non-official» literature, is also unacceptable. A similar division would certainly cause a diversion of fatal consequences which could have a disfiguring effect on literature.

**Speaking about mediocrity as a negative phenomenon**, we have correctly stressed previously that the writers and artists of mediocre qualities are not to blame for being what they are. But this innocence ends at the moment when they strive to raise mediocrity into a standard, in short, when mediocrity becomes aggressive.

This kind of mediocrity strives to make the law in art. To this end, it resorts to various methods. One of them is the effort to secure for its representatives the leading positions in places where the fates of literature and art are discussed and decided. When the mediocre writers and artists, especially those with great pretensions who become over-confident, occupy such positions, they become dangerous because they want to impose their tastes

and preferences on literature and art.

This set of officials-writers can by no means help in establishing confidential relationships between the writers and artists, on the one hand, and the state administration, on the other. Sometimes they do the opposite. And this occurs at the moment when **they want to show that it is they who have the monopoly of the loyalty to the state, a loyalty which, according to them, is lacking or is insufficient among the writers and artists.**

According to this sinister logic, the latter, that is the writers and artists, must be kept under surveillance and tutelage. Similar practices and concepts disrupt the unity of the creative forces and lead to painful divisions between the writers and the state.

All this is opposed to the line of the Party on literature and arts. And this is confirmed fully in the fact that in post-Liberation Albania, **the institution of censorship has never existed and does not exist**, which is to the credit of our socialist state. If there are people who do not like this situation, they are out of touch with our time and are against the advance of the nation, against socialist democracy and the prospects which the 8th Plenum of the Party has opened.

**Literature has its own laws of development.** Various internal mechanisms protect it from destruction and ensure its rejuvenation and existence. **One of these mechanisms is the process of the selection of values.**

Selection is one of the basic and most vital processes for the existence of literature. It is similar to the process of metabolism of living beings. Interruption of it means the interruption of life.

Violation of the process of selection is the gravest act that can be perpetrated against literature. Unfortunately, sometimes it happens that this violation really takes place for different motives: it is due mostly to the pressure of mediocrity, which seeks by all means to occupy a place in the literary treasury of a people. Other motives are connected with sentimentality, literary cabaalism, lack of principles and misunderstanding of democracy.

The struggle against mediocrity cannot be waged without respecting the laws of selection. Mediocrity strives hard to disregard this principle, whereas real art does the opposite.

The principle of selection has been and continues to be flagrantly violated in our country in our **school text-books**. They are full of passages and evaluations of many, literary works that still have not passed through the sieve of selection. To include unselected works into text-books means to put together the good with the bad.

Imagine the colossal amount of work that will be required to root out the bad from them. Whereas, in the case when the principle of selection operates, the bad is thrown out of literature in a natural way, every day and every minute.

That is the reason why in the practice of studies in the world, contemporary literature is cautiously introduced, and that is done without haste. It is true that there are bourgeois conservative schools which have been severely criticized for ignoring the contemporary literature. But, the extreme opposite, the stuffing of the latter into studies is unwholesome to culture.

**In Albania, the contemporary writers occupy a much larger place as compared with the literature of the past. Sometimes the disproportions are scandalous.** Things have reached the point that an ordinary writer of our time receives as much space as a whole period of literature. This question has to do not only with ethics, the lack of modesty and a

complete absence of a sense of self-criticism, but also with a disrespect for the culture of your own people.

This phenomenon has had and continues to have its advocates. There is **a strange symbiosis between the schematic critical opinion and the mediocre literature**. Both sides are very comfortable in each other's presence; they nourish one another and, thus, create a closed circle to the detriment of art.

Apart from other things the struggle for raising the quality of our letters and arts is also directed against this dangerous symbiosis.

The Albanian literature is a great national treasury and, as such, it deserves all our energies, passion and devotion.

It is part of the consciousness and dignity and freedom of the Albanian people.

Wherever it is created, in the first place here, in the motherland, and outside the state borders of Albania, wherever the Albanians live in their own territories, the Albanian literature bears the dramatic stamp of one of the most ancient and civilized peoples of Europe, of the noble race of Albanians.

There is much talk today about the freedom of writing, about its violation, and from time to time, the writers themselves accuse others of this act. The freedom of writing, the sublime gift of the writer, cannot be snatched from him in any way. No establishment can give it to him or take it away from him. Only the writer himself can dispose of it, defend it or give it away, and in so doing, he should not seek an alibi, or accuse anyone, but must be answerable for his actions to his own conscience and that of the nation to which he belongs.

There is a great ado in the world today about how literature should be: with or without a mission, committed to the great problems of the time or disinterested in them.

The Albanian writers have made their choice long ago: total commitment on the side of their own people and of all the peoples of the world who strive for progress. They have no doubt at all about this and are not impressed by any philosophy. The Greek tragedians wrote with a commitment, and so did Dante, Cervantes, Hugo, Brecht and scores of great men of world art. The present generation of Albanian writers feel honoured in this company and do not seek to enter any other club.

The modern Albanian literature is one of the most emancipated literatures in this part of Europe. It follows the great tradition of the emancipation of the old Albanian literature of Naim Frashëri and De Rada, who were among the most illuminated minds in this zone of the Mediterranean, of Migjeni, Noli and Poradeci who were among the leading figures of Balkan emancipation in their time.

The literatures of the Balkan countries have passed through many tests in the last two centuries. Some of these tests have been so bitter that they have left marked distortions in them. One such consequence has been chauvinism, this mortal disease of literature. We have been witnesses to innumerable cases when the Balkan chauvinistic writers and academicians hid their barbarous nature, their sinister hatred, their misdeeds and jealousies against other peoples and cultures behind good manners and fine words, behind titles and degrees. It is the exceptional merit of Albanian letters, which has its source in the culture and noble spirit of the Albanian people, that they never fell to such lowliness. This literature can be proud of many things, but one of its greatest assets is, without doubt, its

love of its own people and, undivided from this, the love of the other peoples and all progressive mankind.

**For nearly half a century, the Albanian people live and are nourished with the Albanian socialist literature. Their need for it is great, their love of it is touching. This need and love makes our responsibility before this people, to whom we belong, before the time in which we live, before socialism for which we have been working and fighting for forty-five years on end without interruption, all the more important.**

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