

KOSOVA AND THE SOCIAL AND CULTURAL LIFE DURING THE YEARS 1945-1990



History

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Abstract

Kosova and its social and cultural life during the years 1945-1990 is a summary of the pre-independence period of Kosova which is characterized by the miserable condition of the Albanian people in its northeastern area, Kosova where the post World War II Kosova is annexed as part of the new Yugoslavia, although with the appearance of the unification and socialist brotherhood and with the commitment of the Albanian people in the anti-fascist war it was expected a different treatment that didn't happen, in the effort we have made in this manuscript is to point out as objectively as possible this phase of transformation of Kosova from a province and after a war that followed with the destruction of Yugoslavia, the political situation underwent changes sometimes for good and sometimes for bad for the Albanian people in the economic, socio-legal and cultural aspects.

Kosova after the World War II, as well as all the other countries in Europe involved in war, were destroyed not only in the material aspect but also in the human and cultural aspect. But Kosova, unlike other countries had a story of continued occupation despite from the promised self-determination giving to it a minimal autonomy, while the Albanian and Partisan brigades from Kosova fought towards the north against the Yugoslav and Partisan brigades for Kosova complete liberation. Over the Albanian population a fierce pressure was committed where there were bans of symbols and arrests and all other cultural and national movements, which as a result from these circumstances broke out revolts in cities like Gjilan in December 1944, Ferizaj in December 1944, in the region of Drenica in December 1944 and January 1945 and in Mitrovica in January 1945 and their number reached over 30 000 people, but these revolts were crushed by Serb-Montenegrin divisions whose forces reached up to 40 000 people. By order of Joseph Broz Tito, on February 8 – July 5, 1945 a military administration was established in Kosova with the pretext of suppressing the reaction.¹

In April 1945 two delegates of the National Liberation Council of Kosova, Dushan Mugosha and Mehmet Hoxha took part in the Anti-Fascist National Liberation Assembly of Serbia and declared that Kosova wanted to become a province within Serbia, but this was postponed for the meeting of the People's Council of Kosova in early July respectively on July 8 and 10, 1945 in Prizren where in one of the items on the agenda was the Draft Resolution on the annexation of Kosova and Metohija to the Federal Serbia, the Council members were 33 Albanians out of 142 and thus this resolution was approved by acclamation, with no voting and speech.²

¹ Gjeçovi, Xh., Milo, P., et.al. (2009). *Historia e popullit shqiptar IV*. (Tiranë, Toena), pp.363-365.

² Malcolm, N. (2011). *Kosova një histori e shkurtër*. (Prishtinë, KOHA), p.399.

The Constitution of the People's Federal Republic of Yugoslavia of January 1946 stipulated the totality of the federation with all its constituent entities, mentioning alongside the Republic of Serbia, Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Slovenia, Montenegro, the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina and Autonomous Region of Kosova-Metohija. But at the same time, the Autonomous Region of Kosova-Metohija, together with the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina, was also included within the People's Republic of Serbia.

The Constitution of the People's Federal Republic of Yugoslavia of January 1946 sanctioned the double bond and the dependency of the Autonomous Region of Kosova-Metohija on both the Yugoslav Federation and the Republic of Serbia. It guaranteed the existence of the ARKM and set out the basic principles of its organization and autonomous functioning. As such, ARKM, despite being part of the People's Republic of Serbia, firstly it was the constitutional category of the People's Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

According to the People's Federal Republic of Yugoslavia constitution of 1946, the highest body of popular power in the ARKM was the People's Council of the ARKM, which was elected by citizens, not directly, for a three-year term. The political and administrative executive body was the Executive Council of ARKM, which was elected by the people's provincial council. For its work, the Executive Council of ARKM was reported in front of the People's Council of ARKM.

The Constitution of the People's Federal Republic of Yugoslavia of January 1946 did not recognize ARKM's financial and judicial autonomy. The popular court of ARKM, as a second instance court, established on July 10, 1945 and was overturned in December of the same year.

ARKM was directly represented in the Council of Nations of the People's Assembly of the People's Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, through its delegation of 15 deputies. In all other political-social forums and administrative-executive bodies of the federation, the representatives of ARKM were absent, and ARKM could not issue its own laws, but only decisions.³

Kosova in Yugoslavia, especially after the Second World War, during the Tito regime (1945-1980), Kosova acquired several economic and cultural rights, which have greatly helped for the emancipation and modernization of Kosovar society. The progress based on these rights, later served as the engine for raising awareness and empowering political resistance, which later on enabled the Declaration of Independence in 1991, and its realization in 2008.

Although initially limited, the autonomy within Serbia and Yugoslavia has ensured that Kosova is a political and territorial entity. The 1974's Constitution has extended Kosova's status to that of a federal entity, equal to the constituent Republics. Kosova's political-territorial subjectivity has been so strong that, after Tito's death, Serbia needed a wild ten-year campaign to stop it

³ Verli, M. (2007). *Shqipëria dhe Kosova, historia e një aspirate II*. (Tiranë, Botinpex), p.304.

violently, and as a result, the Yugoslav federation was destroyed. According to this constitution, Kosova itself defined the politics and held the responsibility in the executive field, judicial, finance, and defense system, etc.⁴

For Kosova, the most important moment of the period of autonomy has been the provision of the right for massive education in the Albanian language (including university, since 1970s), and the development of national culture. Consequently, the foundations of the modern culture, literature, fine arts, theater, music and film in Kosova will be established after 1945, namely being influenced by the Yugoslav modernity schools.

In the early seventies it was possible to establish direct contacts between the Albanian state and Kosova, this phenomenon had been occurring for the first time since the end of the World War II. Until this time the relations had been developed within the framework of the Yugoslav Federation or the Republic of Serbia, of which Kosova was its part, signaling the pursuit of the rapprochement policy with Yugoslavia that would be provided by the head of the APP, Enver Hoxha, during his visits that he made in the spring of 1970 in the districts of Kukës and Tropoja.⁵

Unlike the other socialist countries, where culture was held as a servant of communist ideology and dogmas, the literature and the arts were left free in Yugoslavia. Tito, after seceding from Stalin, abandoned socio-realism in literature and arts, thus supporting the liberal platform of Croatian writer Miroslav Kërlezha. Writers and artists in Yugoslavia enjoyed wide freedom of expression, especially freedom for various avant-garde experiments. But there were instances and campaigns of the anti-culture regime when it was deemed to be politicized and was attacking the communist system and Tito.

Another limitation was the censorship and the prohibition of works which were considered as nationalistic: these threatened the most precious value of the so-called “brotherly union” system. Even Kosova’s visual arts have been developed under the direct influence of Yugoslav schools, which have been quite advanced with international trends and styles of the time.

Abstract art, informalism, minimalism, pop art and hyperrealism soon penetrated Yugoslavia, because of the fact that it was open to the world, and artists were sent for specializations and study visits to world art centers. By the late 60s and early 70s, Belgrade, Zagreb and Ljubljana were considered important world centers of conceptual art and the so-called “body art.” The most important examples among them are: Marina Abramović from Belgrade, and Braca Dimitrijević from Sarajevo, who have achieved international fame.

⁴ Reka, B. (1997). Kontinuiteti politik, territorial dhe administrativ i Kosovës. Instituti i Historisë. *Kosova* 5/1997, Prishtinë, f.19.

⁵ Sylja, S. (2014). Bashkëpunimi Kosovë-Shqipëri, Shkëmbimet arsimore, kulturore dhe shkencore ndërmjet shtetit shqiptar dhe Kosovës, 1970-1980. Instituti i Historisë, *Kosova* 39/2014, Prishtinë, f.375.

In this context of avant-garde styles, it is worth mentioning one artist from Kosova, Goran Gjorgjeviq (son of a female communist activist Didare Dukagjini from Prizren). Although he was not as famous as the world-renowned top artists like Abramoviq, he is still highly regarded as the pioneer of a retro-avantguard artistic style that has had a profound impact on the post-communist Eastern European visual and stage arts (represented by Neue Slowenische Kunst, with IRWIN and Laibach). For this reason, Goran has secured a significant place in the history of the modern avant-garde.

Visual arts in Kosova have been developed with a slower rate than in Yugoslavia. During the 50s and the 70s, artists were able to do advanced avant-garde research, because the art scene was small. Kosovar artists could be counted on fingers, and there was a lack of professional galleries, institutions, critics, collectionists and also educated opinion of art lovers.⁶

On November 27, 1968, in Prishtina and in some other cities in Kosova, as well as in some cities in Macedonia, it was for the first time publicly demanded, through demonstrations organized by the national movement of the time that Kosova should become a Republic. In addition to the main demand for the Republic of Kosova, other demands were made in those demonstrations, such as: “We want self-determination up to secession”, “We want unification of Albanian-inhabited areas with Kosova”, “We want Constitution” - “We want University”.⁷

The following year, the Constitutional Law of the Autonomous Socialist Province of Kosova was promulgated, and in 1974 the Constitution of the ASP of Kosova was promulgated. The latter, along with the new SFRY Constitution, though leaving Kosova as an integral part of Serbia, raised it to the level of a federal entity with veto power over federal bodies. In the 1970s, University of Prishtina, the Academy of Arts and Sciences, and the Kosova Radio and Television were established, institutions that paved the way for the intellectual and cultural growth and overall development of the Albanian Population. However, Kosova remained the most underdeveloped territory in all of Yugoslavia, whereas the Albanian nation was not recognized with equal rights to other nations of the federation and remained divided into four federal units.

Death of Josip Broz Tito in 1980, the eternal president of Yugoslavia, raised fears about the existence of the federation and the policy of “brotherly union” between nations and nationalities. Serbia’s continuous attempts to destroy even this achievement of the Albanians provoked the 1981 demonstrations, when the declaration of the Republic of Kosova was demanded within the Yugoslav federation. The demonstrations continued throughout the 1980s and many Albanian activists were jailed and others forced to leave the country.

⁶ Maliqi, Sh. Modernizmi në artin pamor Kosovar. Artikull në <https://Kosovatwopointzero.com/modernization-in-Kosovas-visual-arts> (9.11.2018).

⁷ Çeku, E. Kosova në vitet 1960-1970 dhe qëndrimi i Shqipërisë. https://aab-edu.net/assets/uploads/2016/11/02-2009-04_-_Ethem_Ceku.pdf (9.11.2018).

During the '80s, Kosova was mostly under siege. In 1987, Serbian nationalists with the new leader Slobodan Millosheviq organized a coup against the autonomy of Kosova and the Albanian population. Serbian agents blamed the Albanians for allegedly difficult Serb lives in Kosova and constant attack on their presence in the area. Accusing the Albanians of trying to commit ethnic cleansing, the Millosheviq clique imprisoned Albanian leaders and undemocratically abolished autonomy in 1989, and this was achieved through constitutional changes made in Yugoslavia, respectively in Serbia, where Kosova was hit in some ways by it, which seems to us to be three most important and decisive attempts for the liquidation of autonomy.⁸

The Serbian armed forces entered Kosova and kept it occupied for ten years in a row. Under conditions of Serbian occupation, on July 2, 1990, members of the Kosova Assembly, banned from entering the official building, issued a Declaration of Independence at its doors, thus declaring Kosova a member Republic of the Yugoslav federation. On September 7 of the same year, the Constitution of the Republic, the first democratic constitution of the Kosovar state, was adopted in Kaçanik. Unable to exercise effective power and persecuted by the Serbian occupation forces, the Kosova government withdrew into exile in Germany.⁹

After the war in Kosova during 1998-1999, peace negotiations failed and the multilateral operations through the United Nations Security Council had been blocked, the United States then launched a campaign to bomb Yugoslavia in co-operation with the NATO alliance. Driven by humanitarian aims, NATO allies launched air strikes on Yugoslavia military targets on March 24, 1999 for 73 days. During this time, KLA (Kosova Liberation Army) continued military confrontations with Serb troops, broke the Albanian-Kosova border and took control of strategic points. On June 10 of the same year, the Kumanovo Agreement was reached on the withdrawal of Serbian forces and the entry of NATO forces in Kosova. Also, it was passed onto the UN Security Council the Resolution 1244, which formally held Kosova under the sovereignty of Yugoslavia, but under the international administration of the United Nations.

On the same day, Russian forces entered the Kosova area to rescue Serbian machinery located at Prishtina Airport. The next day, the Kosova Liberation Army entered in Prishtina whereas the Serbian troops withdrew leaving the allied forces enter. The KFOR peacekeeping force was organized, where for some time the Russian troops also participated.

⁸ Stavileci, E. (1994). Ndryshimet Kushtetuese dhe likuidimi i autonomisë: Instituti i Historisë, *Kosova* 4/1994, Prishtinë, f.27.

⁹ Bekaj, A. (2008). "The History of Civil Society in Kosova," *Civil Society and Development: Kosova Human Development Report 2008* (UNDP & SDCO: Prishtinë, 2008), 35. (9.11.2018).

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