

Prof. Ass. Dr. Kosovar BASHA

Institute of History – Prishtina, Republic of Kosovo

E-mail: kosovarbasha@hotmail.com

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**RELATIONS BETWEEN KOSOVO AND ALBANIA
(1968-1969)**

Abstract: *This study sheds light on the relations between Kosovo and Albania during 1968. Using archival documents in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Albania, relevant literature and the press of the time, the author intended to carefully treat these relations in several aspects such as military, political, educational, and cultural. The developments between the two countries, including important academic organizations, the role of intellectuals in Kosovo, the demands of students for the Republic of Kosovo within the Yugoslavia and Albania in the meantime, are seen by the author as inseparable parts of a historical context. Albanian historiography has valuable studies in the light of these complex relationships for the period 1968-1969. The author highlights the political and economic aspects as the main characteristic of this cooperation that prevailed in these relationships between the two countries. Until 1966, the main source of the Albanian leadership regarding the events in Yugoslavia and Kosovo and Metohija was the Embassy of Albania in Belgrade, as well as embassies in other European countries, which received certain information about Yugoslavia.*

After the Brion Plenum, Albania began to receive confidential information from unnamed sources from the provincial leadership of Kosovo and Metohija. As the origin of certain information in the reports, the Nase minister often stated "from our source close to Fadil Hoxha or "from our source in Udba" or "from our source in the Kosovo leadership". I have no doubt that during this period, Albania developed a network of informers in the province, including which included influential provincial officials. The confidential documents of the Central Committee of the Party of Labor of Albania also contain some so far little-known information about events in the province and political relations in Yugoslavia at the end of the 1960s. Their content in certain measures raises the question of how much the understanding of socialist Yugoslavia in the decades after its disintegration was determined by the untouchability of the postulate of the pro-Yugoslav orientation of the leaders who created the state and party policy of the Union of Communists of Yugoslavia in the 1960s. Changes in the position of the autonomous provinces in Serbia at the end of the sixties of the 20th century were reflected in the relations of Kosovo

with Albania. State Secretariat for Foreign Affairs and the Federal Executive Council began in 1967 to encourage the cultural and economic integration of Kosovo with Albania, explaining it as a strategy for the normalization of relations between Yugoslavia and Albania. After the meetings in Pristina and Tirana and the meetings between them visit of educational delegations, it was agreed that textbooks from Albania will be used in the school system of Kosovo and Kosovar companies redirected their production to the Albanian market. University of Tirana professors engaged are in classes at Pristina faculties. The reports of the Albanian lecturers from Prishtina did not provide the party leadership of Albania with a wide range of information about the situation in Yugoslavia. The work is primarily based on unpublished archival materials of the Central State Archives of Albania in Tirana and Archive of Kosovo.

Key words: *Kosovo, Albania, Yugoslavia, Relations, etc.*

ODNOSI IZMEĐU KOSOVA I ALBANIJE (1968-1969)

Apstrakt: *Ova studija osvjetljava odnose između Kosova i Albanije tokom 1968. godine. Koristeći arhivske dokumente u Ministarstvu vanjskih poslova Albanije, relevantnu literaturu i štampu tog vremena, autor je imao za cilj pažljivo obraditi ove odnose u nekoliko aspekata kao što su vojni, politički, obrazovni i kulturni. Razvoj događaja između ove dvije zemlje, uključujući važne akademske organizacije, ulogu intelektualaca na Kosovu, zahtjeve studenata za Republiku Kosovo unutar Jugoslavije i Albanije u međuvremenu, autor vidi kao nerazdvojne dijelove historijskog konteksta. Albanska historiografija ima vrijedne studije u svjetlu ovih kompleksnih odnosa za period 1968-1969. Autor ističe političke i ekonomske aspekte kao glavnu karakteristiku ove saradnje koja je prevladavala u ovim odnosima između dvije zemlje. Do 1966. godine, glavni izvor informacija albanskog rukovodstva o događajima u Jugoslaviji i Kosovu i Metohiji bio je Ambasada Albanije u Beogradu, kao i ambasade u drugim evropskim zemljama, koje su dobijale određene informacije o Jugoslaviji.*

Nakon Brionskog plenuma, Albanija je počela primati povjerljive informacije od neimenovanih izvora iz pokrajinskog rukovodstva Kosova i Metohije. Kao izvor određenih informacija u izvještajima, Nasi ministar je često navodio "iz našeg izvora bliskog Fadilu Hoxhi" ili "iz našeg izvora u Udbe" ili "iz našeg izvora u kosovskom rukovodstvu". Nemam sumnje da je u ovom periodu Albanija razvila mrežu doušnika u pokrajini, uključujući uticajne pokrajinske zvaničnike. Povjerljivi dokumenti Centralnog komiteta Partije rada Albanije također sadrže neke do sada malo poznate informacije o događajima u pokrajini i političkim odnosima u Jugoslaviji krajem 1960-ih godina. Njihov sadržaj donekle postavlja pitanje koliko je razumijevanje socijalističke Jugoslavije u decenijama nakon njenog raspada bilo određeno nedodirljivošću postulata projugoslavenske orijentacije lidera koji su kreirali državnu i partijsku

politiku Saveza komunista Jugoslavije 1960-ih godina. Promjene u položaju autonomnih pokrajina u Srbiji krajem šezdesetih godina 20. vijeka odražavale su se u odnosima Kosova sa Albanijom. Sekretarijat za vanjske poslove i Savezno izvršno vijeće počeli su 1967. godine poticati kulturnu i ekonomsku integraciju Kosova sa Albanijom, objašnjavajući to kao strategiju za normalizaciju odnosa između Jugoslavije i Albanije. Nakon sastanaka u Prištini i Tirani i susreta između njih, posjete obrazovnih delegacija, dogovoreno je da će udžbenici iz Albanije biti korišteni u školskom sistemu Kosova i kosovarske kompanije preusmjerile su svoju proizvodnju na albansko tržište. Profesori Univerziteta u Tirani angažirali su se na predavanjima na fakultetima u Prištini. Izvještaji albanskih predavača iz Prištine nisu pružali partijskom rukovodstvu Albanije širok spektar informacija o situaciji u Jugoslaviji. Rad se prije svega oslanja na neobjavljene arhivske materijale Centralnog državnog arhiva Albanije u Tirani i Arhiva Kosova.

Ključne riječi: *Kosovo, Albanija, Jugoslavija, odnosi, itd.*

Introduction

Albanian-Yugoslav relations had an intensification even before the World War II. They became tangible as early as between the two world wars. Yugoslavia was the first country to recognize the regime in Albania. The first country with which Albania established diplomatic relations after the World War Two was Yugoslavia.¹ After this act, Albanian-Yugoslav relations were quite good, in the political, cultural and educational spheres. These interdependent relationships were crowned more in the aforementioned spheres.² As a result of this mutual cooperation, we have Enver Hoxha's visit to Belgrade in 1946, who presented his views on Kosovo in a conversation with Tito.³ *This meeting was published in his book by the well-known Albanian diplomat Lisen Bashkurti. Enver Hoxha and Tito in the meeting in Belgrade emphasized that I expressed the opinion of the Albanian side that Kosovo and other Albanian lands inhabited by Albanians belong to Albania and should be returned to it. The Albanians fought for a free and sovereign Albania, to which other Albanian countries must now join.* The Yugoslav side had other plans to fulfill the ambitions of the Slavic peoples, that by dividing into three Yugoslav republics, the Albanian population could decrease and be less homogeneous.⁴ From 1948, the relations between the two countries were interrupted and remained largely frozen in 1953. The restoration of diplomatic relations with Yugoslavia was proposed by the

¹ Vladimir Dedijer, *Interesne sfere*, Prosveta, Beograd 1980, 257.

² Sabit Syla-Qerim Lita, *Marrëdhëniet shqiptaro-jugosllave, 1944-1948, Vëllimi I*, Instituti i Historisë-Prishtinë, Prishtinë 2020, 341, 392.

³ Lisen Bashkurti, *Diplomacia e vetizolimit, rasti i Shqipërisë 1961-1989*, Tiranë 2004, 597.

⁴ L. Bashkurti, *Diplomacia*, 597.

Albanian side in November 1953. Thus, in 1954, representative offices were opened in Tirana and in Belgrade, respectively.⁵ The Albanian state became interested in the issue of Kosovo from 1959 in different forms. Referring to the work of Enver Hoxha in volume 17 of his work published in 1974, he evokes his memories where he reveals the meeting of the Political Bureau in which *some problems of the history of Albania were discussed*, where Enver Hoxha declared that *the issue of reflecting the history of Kosovo after 1912 deserves a special study*.⁶ And the historian Sabit Sylja offers us data with concrete facts where Albania, through its leader, raised its voice in various activities for Kosovo. Even at the end of the 1950s, Albania was silent with concrete actions on the political situation in Kosovo. Some of the reasons why the Albanian state remained silent on the political developments in Kosovo were due to the nature of Albania's internal political situation as well as its international relations.

Albania had political relations with the Soviet Union from 1948-1961. In this period, the Albanian state had made very little effort on the diplomatic level for Kosovo. The USSR was not ready to support Enver Hoxha on the issue of Kosovo. The Albanian government headed by Enver Hoxha, after the meeting he had with Stalin, received recommendations in March 1949, where it was expressly stated that “the issue of Kosovo should be put on the back burner” and that the first issue was “the overthrow of Tito's clique”.⁷

The leader of the USSR, Nikita Khrushchev, demanded the closure of the Kosovo issue and the unconditional improvement of Albania's relations with Yugoslavia. Albania's political orientation in foreign policy from China also brought a change of course in its ideological fabric. It must be said that Albania started using the card of nationalism since the late 60s. Whereas at the beginning of the 60s we have a slightly more serious approach to the Albanian leadership over Kosovo. The same was done by the Albanian leaders of Kosovo, who until then had not even considered doing this, because the fierce Serbian oppression made such a thing impossible. Albanian historical personalities, such as Gjergj Kastrioti-Skënderbeu, were strong points where they were seized to promote the national feeling and to proclaim to the people the feeling of patriotism. Albania through its actions, which were mainly related to the meetings of the Albanian leader with the people, in various Albanian cities. Therefore, numerous meetings were held in cities such as: Peshkopia, Gjirokastra, Fushë-Kruja, etc. In all these meetings, Enver Hoxha emphasized that the Albanian minority in Yugoslavia should have equal rights with other Yugoslav peoples. It is important that the political situation in Kosovo during this period was carefully looked at the level of propaganda and Albania's actions were largely speeches and not official diplomatic positions.⁸

⁵ Sabit Sylja, *Shteti shqiptar dhe çështja e Kosovës, 1939-1981*, Instituti i Historisë-Prishtinë, Prishtinë 2017, 154.

⁶ Enver Hoxha, *Vepra*, Vëllimi.17, 8 Nëntori, Tiranë 1974, 77-78.

⁷ S. Sylja, *Shteti*, 287.

⁸ *Ibidem*, 191.

Until the fall of Ranković, in 1966, from power, the official Yugoslav policy was against the cooperation of the Albanian population with Albania. Always according to the policy, Albanians should have a culture that had content from orientation and content.⁹ In the second half of 1966, the circumstances in Yugoslavia had begun to ease for the Albanians of Kosovo, and in this context, Albania and Kosovo began to get closer through economic routes. The Fourth Plenum of the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia started its work on July 1, 1966, in Croatia.¹⁰ In addition to the general secretary of the LCY, Tito, the members of the LCY Central Committee and the chairman of the LCY Revision Commission also participated in this Plenum.¹¹ The Albanian delegation from Kosovo was headed by the chairman of the LK Committee, Veli Deva.¹² Due to the great distortions by Ranković and his clique, the damage caused to Yugoslavia by this policy was emphasized in this Plenum. The decisions of this Plenum had an echo in the wide official and public opinion in Serbia and Kosovo.¹³ The decisions of the IV Plenum of the LCY had an echo in the wide official and public opinion in the Federation, Serbia but also in Kosovo.

In all the institutions of the country, but also in the working organizations where there was less Albanian nationality, a new active spirit and situation was created. The tendency to look with a critical eye at the social-constitutional political reality in Yugoslavia, in Kosovo, was ever increasing.¹⁴ After these circumstances, the federal level of SFRY allowed the Albanian press to publicly condemn some of the crimes against Albanians. The Communist League of Yugoslavia throughout the country promoted the slogan *from now on everything will be fixed*. The changes at the federal level were reflected in the institutions in Pristina. Some of the representatives of Ranković's clique in Kosovo, who had worked in the State Security bodies, such as Ibër Haskaj from Deçani, Enver Hoxha from Gjakova, etc., names known for the mistreatment of Kosovo Albanians who were dismissed from the security institutions state of Kosovo.¹⁵

Official Tirana had ample information about Tito and Ranković's report after the Brione Plenum. Thus, she managed to obtain information on the list of UDB officers who had committed crimes in Kosovo.¹⁶ These new events also brought Albania's political stance on the political status of Kosovo. After July 1966, Albania considered and envisioned solutions to the Kosovo issue as follows: national minority, autonomy, etc. The communist leader Enver Hoxha,

⁹ Shkëlzen Maliqi, *Nyja e Kosovës, as Vllasi as Millosheviqi*, Ljubjanë 1990, 219.

¹⁰ Sh. Imeraj *Kosova*, 34.

¹¹ *Rilindja*, 1.7.1966, 1.

¹² Pero Simiq, *Tito-tajna veka*, Beograd 2009, 329.

¹³ P. Simiq, *Tito*, 330.

¹⁴ Grup autorësh, *Historia e Lidhjes së Komunistëve të Jugosllavisë*, Rilindja, Prishtinë 1985, 500.

¹⁵ Atdhe Hetemi, *Lëvizjet studentore për Republikën e Kosovës 1968, 1981, 1997*, Artini, Prishtinë 2020, 155.

¹⁶ S. Syla, *Shteti*, 213.

on August 1, 1966, would emphasize: *National minorities must follow the right revolutionary path, the path of war against Tito's clique for the liberation of the peoples of Yugoslavia.*¹⁷ The Albanian leadership saw the solution of the Kosovo problem always within the framework of the Marxist-Leninist ideology, because that way it would not bring trouble for it. Enver Hoxha did not support the idea of expanding the status of Kosovo, stating that he preferred preserving its autonomy within Yugoslavia. From this time in Kosovo, the idea of the Republic of Kosovo began to be ignited by communist politicians of the time, but also by the few Kosovar intellectuals, who had a solid education but also patriotism. All "Kosovar" attitudes had a single objective - the separation of Kosovo from Serbia on the political level.

But even though it seems strange, Kosovar politicians like Fadil Hoxha, Veli Deva, Sejfedin Bakalli and others were not at all influenced by the communist ideology of Tirana. To a large extent, they had a pro-Yugoslav orientation, but they were legally dressed in national clothing after the Brijuni Plenum. These politicians did not oppose the initiatives of Kosovar intellectuals on the possibility that they would declare the status of Kosovo. Intellectuals like prof. Gazmend Zajmi and prof. Syrja Pupovci as a professional lawyer, then also prof. Ali Hadri and others were not influenced at all by official Tirana. Albania smelled the situation well, opposing the "second Albanian Republic" at all costs. The influence Tirana wanted to exercise was clear, and this was seen from its attitude towards these developments that it carefully observed in Kosovo in the period we are dealing with.

One of the other main reasons that Kosovo was not favored to be a republic was that the international trends were unfavorable in this dynamic year. Unfortunately, the Kosovar elite was not properly understood by the Albanian state and the work done went down the drain. Official Tirana never managed to understand that the Kosovar elite was patriotic, and that it fought its war within the Yugoslav Federation with its own forces, especially when it took heart after July 1966. In the end, we can say that the Kosovar elite, both political and intellectuals acted within the Yugoslav political conjunctures. Albania, on the other hand, took the positions we mentioned above. Through its leader, Hoxha, it made various calls on the status of Kosovo. Looking carefully at the notes of the time, we are mentioning some of these opinions given in August 1966, where Enver Hoxha emphasizes: *We hear talks about the republic of Kosovo. Kosovars must be very careful against the Titian revisionists, who can also play the card of creating "Kosovo as an Albanian republic" instead of an "autonomous province", in order to lie to Kosovar chauvinism, to better suppress the liberation war of Kosovo and to fight the People's Republic of Albania.* In Kosovo, the wind of change was coming from the middle of 1966 onwards. The interests of the Albanian state for Kosovo would be noted from 1967 onwards, when Albania with its policy would approach Kosovo in the scientific sphere.

¹⁷ *Ibidem*, 213.

The policy of the Albanian state towards Kosovo in the years we discussed above was in coherence with *the status quo* in Yugoslavia and until 1966 it was not so intense on the diplomatic level. For years, Albania refused any scientific or cultural contact with institutions or individuals in Yugoslavia, including Kosovo.¹⁸ The year 1967 would be an important turning point for Albania and Kosovo, because the first actions would be realized with exchanges of letters between the institutions of Albania and those of Kosovo.

Demand for the Republic of Kosovo, the demonstration of November 1968 and Albania

In Kosovo from the beginning of the sixties, the political, economic-social and cultural problems have grown to serious proportions as a result of irreconcilable contradictions between Serbs and Albanians. Albanians demanded more rights and declared their determination to fight for national and human rights.

The request for the Republic of Kosovo began in August 1968, when the idea of the Republic of Kosovo was first raised in the active communists of the city of Gjakova. Here it was requested that the Albanian nationality be named as the Albanian nation, that the use of the Albanian national flag be defined, that Kosovo be a Republic within the SFRY, that the right to self-determination be established, that Kosovo have 20 representatives in the Chamber of Nations of the Federal Assembly.¹⁹ These opinions expressed in this asset were supported by Kosovar institutions and intellectuals echoed throughout Kosovo. Fasil Hoxha was certainly behind these attitudes as the promoter of this entire political event for the time. The impact was also felt in Belgrade, where there were strong reactions from Serbian and nationalist political and intellectual circles, which had reacted to rallies held by students at the University of Belgrade in August and September 1968 at the same time.²⁰

On the other hand, Kosovar intellectuals began to support Kosovo's demand for self-determination even more vocally. Thus, addressing these issues, the historian Ali Hadri declared that "using the right to self-determination, the peoples of Kosovo were a creative element in the creation of the new Yugoslavia". And Gazmend Zajmi emphasized in the newspaper "Rilindja" that "This right belongs to the nation as a collective, as it also belongs to the nation". Fehmi Agani announced that "all demands that have been presented as demands of the vast majority of the population must be supported". While the most radical in this aspect was Rrezak Shala, who in August 1968 in the Communist Party of Gjakova as a provincial prosecutor insisted that *the Republic of Kosovo is an*

¹⁸ Petrit Imami, *Serbët dhe shqiptarët*, Vëllimi III, Beograd 2017, 60.

¹⁹ *Rilindja*, 19.8.1968, 1-2.

²⁰ Branko Petranović, *Istorija Jugoslavije 1918-1970*, Beograd 1980, 572.

*imperative of Kosovo and that right should not be given up.*²¹ All these discussions would be closed after a period of one month by the bodies of the party of Kosovo led by Fadil Hoxha. In September 1968, Fadil Hoxha had a meeting with Tito and other Yugoslav leaders, such as Kardeli and Bakariqi. Tito's promises were clear: Kosovo will benefit more in its decision-making rights, the national flag, etc.²² It was Fadil Hoxha, the chairman of the Commission for Constitutional Amendments, who admitted that this withdrawal of the Kosovar leadership was caused by the fact that in the meeting of the Kosovars with Tito and Kardel, they had agreed to leave this issue for later, because the Serbian reaction was great.

At the end of this odyssey, there was a forced position which Fadil Hoxha will elaborate before the Assembly of Kosovo with the words "it does not mean that the issue of the Republic cannot be raised..., but we must evaluate what is real, really real and possible in this direction of the affirmation of autonomy, which means to reach the essence and on the other hand to understand what is desire".²³ According to the Albanian legate in Belgrade, major changes occurred in the month of September in Kosovar politics against the proposal and request for a Republic. Fadil Hoxha got into a controversy with Rrezak Shala, against whom he took measures by initiating his dismissal from the Kosovo prosecutor and enabling him to get his doctorate in Zagreb. In the end, we see that Rrezak Shala was revolted by these events and expressed his indignation towards the leading leaders of the Communist League of Kosovo, saying that *Veli Deva and Fadil Hoxha are withdrawing from legitimate demands.*²⁴

Kosovar intellectuals were the few who spoke openly about this phenomenon that until then no one had even thought to mention. The sacrifice of these professors was not small for the benefit of the national cause. The rights of the Albanian population were already being defended with a resounding voice and this had an extraordinary value. Among the people who left great impressions was the effort of Rrezak Shala, prosecutor, who was in a rather delicate position in the powers he exercised. The course of events caused him to lose many privileges such as the loss of his job, only because the situation got out of control when the policy of the LCY led by Tito did not favor a status of the Republic for the Kosovars. The other professors did not lose anything, not even their jobs. Fadil Hoxha, as the main political figure, for a short period entered the hearts of the people for his courage.

The Communist League was no exception to the decisions made in the bodies of the Communist League of Yugoslavia. The decisions taken by Tito were accepted by the entire Kosovar political elite. The Albanian leadership did not trust the initiators of the Republic of Kosovo and considered this alternative

²¹ Jusuf Buxhovi, *Kosova 3*, Prishtinë 2015, 339.

²² J. Buxhovi, *Kosova*, 104.

²³ *Ibidem*, 104.

²⁴ Esat Myfari, *Kosova dhe Enver Hoxha përmes dokumenteve arkivore të pabotueme deri më sot*, Tiranë 2016, 73-74.

premature, thrown by the reaction or other elements in the republics of former Yugoslavia. The main reason was the fear that such a republic could be used by Tito against Communist-Stalinist Albania and therefore lead to the overthrow of the Albanian leadership and the overthrow of the regime in Albania. But, at the same time, they also express distrust towards those who led the processes, which apparently were not under her control.

The change in the course within a short period of time was interesting but also depressing, because the end was not realized successfully, what the Kosovar people expected. The legal path was unable to continue even from September 1968, the request for the Republic of Kosovo was closed forever. It seems that this suited even the official Tirana. The leadership of the Albanian state wanted to solve the Albanian problem within the schemes of the Marxist-Leninist ideology, because otherwise nationalism in Kosovo would become a minefield for Tirana as well. Albanian nationalism in Kosovo and the internationalism of the ALP could not be harmonized with each other. The development of these demonstrations and the situation that preceded them coincided with an irritated situation for Albania, which was distinguished by an unbalanced policy in the sphere of international relations.²⁵

All these political developments of the Kosovar leaders and the Kosovar intelligentsia would not please the Albanian people. After a three-month period, the political boils would have their own course. The impact of the movements that had started in Europe and Yugoslavia would also affect Kosovo, but at the national level, seeking legitimate rights. The first demonstrations began on October 6 in Prizren organized by young people, etc., at the same time in Pejë by the students of the "Ali Kelmendi" Normal School, where they raised banners for the flag and the University of Kosovo and above all the Republic of Kosovo.²⁶ Demonstrations in small towns were also held in Suhareka, Gjilan, on November 27. Also, in Podujevë there was a demonstration with organizers on the same day. These manifestations would reach their peak on November 27, 1968, in Pristina. In all their aims, these demonstrations were oriented towards demands, such as: "Kosovo Republic", "We want a Republic", etc. In all the demonstrations that were organized in Kosovo, there were numerous imprisonments by the courts.²⁷ Many Serbs, through the letters they wrote to "Rilindja", accused Albania of interfering in the internal affairs of Yugoslavia. Marko Nikezqi, in his discussion that he held before the political activity of Serbia, accusing Albania, among other things, said: "Our liberalization does not mean that we will make concessions on account of the integrity of Yugoslavia". Even the Kosovar leaders, such as: Fadil Hoxha, Xhavit Nimani, Ali Shukriu and Veli Deva, during their discussions had emphasized that "the demonstrations in Kosovo were influenced by the propaganda of Tirana". Likewise, the Provincial

²⁵ S. Syla, *Shteti*, 289.

²⁶ Zymer Neziri, *Isa Demaj- jeta dhe veprimtaria atdhetare*, Prishtinë 2000, 112.

²⁷ Selatin Novosella, *Demonstratat e gjashtëdhjetetës 1*, Prishtinë 2008, 116.

Committee of the Communist League of Kosovo called the demonstrations organized by Albanian nationalists and irredentists, incited and influenced from abroad, with Albania as their goal. They also issued a statement condemning the demonstrations and describing them as caused by “chauvinist, anti-Yugoslav elements” and “directed against order in Yugoslavia, against the Constitution and self-administration”.

In the Yugoslav and Serbian state circles, there was a fear of the ever-growing influence of Albania on the Albanians in Yugoslavia.²⁸ The participants of the extraordinary meeting in the Provincial Committee did not take harsh positions. The declarations of Ismajl Bajra should also be singled out, who, among other things, said: *Nationalists from the Albanian nationality try to present their activity as an effort to realize the rights of the Albanian nationality on behalf of the working class and the Albanian intelligentsia. According to Bajra, such nationalists expressed their interests as selfish and nationalist.* However, the main stamp of attitudes towards the demonstrations was given by Fadil Hoxha who emphasized: *We will not allow the worm of mistrust to enter between Albanians and Serbs in any way. We will never allow this, but if there is a need, we will also shed blood.*²⁹ Cooperation between Kosovo and Albania was also attacked at the meeting. The mutual reports were put under strong blows by the leadership of Kosovo. The meeting in question brought conclusions through which a “determined and consequent struggle” was sought against the organizers and their “nationalist platform”.³⁰ The leaders of all these demonstrations were imprisoned. In addition to these measures, a strict control was imposed on the magazine “Fjala”, which published writings by Albanian authors of the Albanian National Renaissance on its pages during 1968. It was also decided to dismiss Ali Sutaj from the post of editor-in-chief of the magazine, because he was suspected of pure nationalism.³¹ The punishments also affected ordinary members of the Communist League of Kosovo, where two members from the Albanian nationality were expelled with the motivation that they had not agreed with the evaluation of the demonstrations. Also, eight members of the LK were expelled for participating in the demonstration. The information that the Albanian Legation possessed said that nine people were fired.³²

The echo of the demonstrations of 1968 remained very large, because for the first time the national consciousness was raised after WW2. One of the main reasons why Kosovo acquired greater rights in executive powers in the form of decision-making was these important manifestations, where the general popular revolt for greater rights within the SFRY was expressed. However, in the new process of the situation, when the course of the movement of Albanians in

²⁸ S. Novosella, *Demonstratat*, 116.

²⁹ Qerim Lita, *Problemi shqiptar në RS të Maqedonisë, 1966-1974*, Logos, Shkup 2021, 224.

³⁰ Q. Lita, *Problemi*, 224.

³¹ Sabit Syla, Jakup Krasniqi, Nuri Bexheti, *Kosova në arkivat e shtetit shqiptar, 1950-1969*, Instituti i Historisë - Prishtinë, Prishtinë 2019, 313.

³² S. Syla, J. Krasniqi, *Kosova*, 324.

Kosovo changed in 1968, Albania's attitude towards the solution of its issue did not change that much, with all the sensational activity in the direction of Kosovo. Official Tirana had immediately received the first information on the course of the demonstrations in Kosovo.

The published documents of Albanian provenance, published by the researcher Sabit Syla, best reveal this information analyzed by the Albanian Foreign Ministry about the course of events in Kosovo. Always according to the document named "*Bulletin*" no. 23 and 24 on the demonstrations in Kosovo", it is emphasized that the demonstrations are the result of the struggle of the Albanian intelligentsia to gain more rights and ensure the self-determination of Kosovo; the demonstrations had a peaceful character but became bloody; the organizers are not ideologically formed and did not maneuver in the way of presenting demands; the demonstrations caused concern in Tito's clique, etc.³³ These news that Albania had available, through its channels, were the first information on the situation in Kosovo.

However, in order to better see the positions of the Albanian state, it is good to stop at the careful analysis of the assessments of the leaders and institutions of the Albanian state on these very important developments. Official Tirana did not cross the limits of legality and did not engage in concrete subversive activities, although it will be accused by the leadership of Yugoslavia led by Tito for interfering in its internal affairs. The defense of the Albanian issue was subjected to Marxist-Leninist modules and communist ideology. From the point of view of Tirana, the request for a Republic carried many risks. Albania's northern neighbor, Yugoslavia, was a revisionist country and the Albanian population under its jurisdiction could be manipulated. The unpublished archival documents carefully reviewed by the Foreign Ministry of Albania give us an overview of the effect of these demonstrations in Kosovo. Albanian diplomacy was revived from November 1968 with its political positions. In this information released by the Albanian Foreign Minister, Nesti Nase, it is stated that: *Our interest and that of our Kosovar brothers want the situation in Kosovo not to worsen, for the demonstrations not to be dramatized.*³⁴ Albania came out with several positions, mainly in the press of the time regarding positions on Kosovo. In November 1968, articles were published in "Voice of the People", such as: "Denials of facts and distortions of history cannot erase the Titoist betrayal", "Albanians of Kosovo and the national flag", these were articles that had their value in Kosovo.³⁵

Albania officially did not support the demonstrations and the request of the Republic of Kosovo. The demonstrations of 1968 were evaluated by the Kosovar communist leaders as hostile and propagandized by official Tirana.³⁶ On December 5, 1968, Enver Hoxha provides more information on how these

³³ *Ibidem*, 322.

³⁴ E. Myftari, *Kosova*, 83-84.

³⁵ S. Syla, *Shteti*, 224-225.

³⁶ *Ibidem*, 225.

demonstrations were evaluated by the Albanian state. He first says that “on November 27 in Pristina and in many cities of Kosovo, student youth demonstrations took place”, to continue further that “according to official announcements, one person was killed, and many were injured by the UDB people who attacked the demonstrators.³⁷ Enver Hoxha continued to maintain the line that *this principle does not prevent us from raising our voice in defense of the rights of the Albanian population in Yugoslavia.*

In all of these aforementioned positions, Albania did not have the courage to come out for the Republic of Kosovo but supported the right of the Kosovars for more rights within Yugoslavia. It is important that her positions were in full coherence with those of the Kosovar leaders who agreed earlier with these positions made by Tito and his clique in LCY. These goals of Albania would be the same for Kosovo until 1981, when the official Tirana would change its course on the diplomatic level. He stated, among other things, that “of course we do not have the slightest finger in these demonstrations, we did not develop any agent or subversive work either in Yugoslavia or in Kosovo”. Communist leader Hoxha dedicated the throwing of banners to the provocateurs included in the ranks of the demonstrators who want to give a different color to the demonstrations. In the end, he openly shows his opinion and attitude about Kosovo as a matter of national rights.³⁸

The echo of the demonstrations of 1968 was also great in Yugoslavia, and this reflected Tito's position at the 9th Congress of the LCY, which took place after 5 months in Belgrade. Tito reflected in three directions: the constitutional changes had to be accelerated, the Socialist Province of Kosovo should be developed in terms of decision-making powers, the Albanians should have the flag, but the flag should be in accordance with the sovereignty and integrity of Yugoslavia.³⁹ During this period, the Albanian Legation in Belgrade had accepted a request from the patriotic group of Kosovo, for support from the Albanian state, for the continuation of the war for the liberation of Kosovo. The Foreign Ministry of Albania sent a letter to the Albanian Legation in Belgrade that *the members of the delegation have no a priori right to trust the Kosovars, therefore they must be instructed to be vigilant against those who raise such demands, and that we do not separate the problem of Kosovo from the solution of the general problem of Yugoslavia.*⁴⁰ In the following, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs emphasized in its instructions that *our attitude towards Yugoslavia has not changed and that we advise the Kosovars to fight to gain rights in all directions aiming to enjoy the same rights that they also enjoy the other nationalities in Yugoslavia.*⁴¹

³⁷ Arkivi Qendror Shqiptar (Më tej: AQSH) Fondi: 10, Viti 1968, Dosja: 238, 1-2.

³⁸ Et'hem Çeku, *Kosova në sfondin e diplomacisë së Jugosllavisë dhe të Shqipërisë, 1945-1981*, Prishtinë 2009, 179.

³⁹ Grup autorësh, *Deveti Kongres SKJ*, Beograd 1969, 86-87.

⁴⁰ AQSH, 1968:179.

⁴¹ E. Çeku, *Kosova*, 179.

Patriotic groups as forms of illegal organization operated abroad in various forms. Thinking that Albania supports them, several times they reached out to the Albanian legates, such as in Belgrade and elsewhere, in order to coordinate the work on the solution of the status of Kosovo. However, the Albanian state thought that it was still early when it had to support illegal groups that had other orientations in the struggle for national liberation, or how Kosovo would become a republic. These directions are clearly seen in "Bulletin" no. 23, drafted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Albania, through which it was underlined that the developments of the situation in Kosovo should be followed carefully and without fanfare, but actively; care should be taken that the Kosovar patriotic element does not fall for the provocations of the Serbian state security; to make clear to the Kosovars the position and policy of the ALP and the Government of Albania towards Yugoslavia in general and towards Kosovo in particular; finally, to use all forms and channels, including conversations with Yugoslav diplomats, to let them know that Albania was not interfering in the internal affairs of Yugoslavia, but was simply taking care to protect the rights of Albanians in Yugoslavia. This was emphasized in order for the Yugoslav bodies not to resort to reprisals and various measures against the Kosovars and their national rights, but to use the provisions of the Yugoslav Constitution wisely.⁴² In short, Albania was very careful not to go outside its foreign policy orbit towards Yugoslavia and Kosovo within the SFRY.⁴³

The second conference of Albanian studies in Tirana, January 12-17, 1968

At a time when Detente had begun in Europe and the tension between East and West had subsided, Albanian leaders tried to use this moment to extend their influence in Kosovo. In the created circumstances, when even in Yugoslavia the Federation was releasing some of its powers to the republics and autonomous provinces, the best way was seen through the development of science and national culture in Kosovo. Some of the reasons why Albanian-Yugoslav relations improved were as follows: Albania had separated from the USSR and was preparing for isolation, the use of elements of national identity, the geographical and geostrategic position of the two countries, the economic partnership that had started in 1966 between the companies of foreign trade from the two countries. For Albania, it was a good opportunity to help the Albanians of Kosovo. Whereas for Yugoslavia this had to do with the preservation of territorial integrity.⁴⁴ Starting from the external international and internal

⁴² E. Çeku, *Kosova*, 181.

⁴³ Sabit Sylaj, Qëndrimi i Shqipërisë ndaj demonstratave në Kosovë më 1968, *Studime historike* nr. 3/4, 2012, 283-289.

⁴⁴ Skënder Lutfiu, Roli i Kosovës në marrëdhëniet shqiptaro-jugosllave gjatë viteve '70, *Vjetari*, nr. 50, Prishtinë 2014, 450.

developments between the two countries, a new danger arose, and that was the Soviet Union, which had invaded Czechoslovakia, and thus Albania, in particular, saw itself as endangered by the USSR.

In the view of historian Skënder Lutfiu, he notes several reasons why Yugoslavia made concessions to the Albanians of Kosovo and other countries in this period as follows: 1. to balance the power of the Croats to the detriment of the Serbs, because the stronger the Albanians, the Serbs will remain weaker; 2. to tell the world that you give rights to national minorities; 3. to have a good neighbor in the Balkans because it was interested in such a thing considering the political circumstances of the time.⁴⁵

Precisely with the development of new processes in Kosovo, the 500th anniversary of Skanderbeg's death, which Albania had ignored until then, also coincided. Tirana would remember the hero with important scientific and cultural events. The Albanian people of Kosovo, especially its youth, expected to enjoy these organizations as a response to the Serbian oppression until yesterday and also as a national meeting point with the Albanian state. At the end of 1967, the Committee for Cultural Relations with the Outside World of Albania, signed by Misto Treska, sent a telegram to the Assembly of Kosovo, where it invited a delegation of Albanians from Yugoslavia to join the celebration of the 500th anniversary of the death of Gjergj Kastrioti-Skanderbeg in Albania. From the very beginning, there was a debate, because Tirana requested that there should not be any Serbs or Turks in the delegation, and this was due to the fact that the celebration was exclusive only to Albanians. After receiving this telegram, Fadil Hoxha replied to this telegram in question.⁴⁶ He *appreciated the role of Skanderbeg as a historical personality, whose importance went beyond the national borders of the Albanians, because he fought against the Ottoman invaders to protect the freedom of the Albanian nation.* For this reason, it was planned to celebrate together. Furthermore, Fadil Hoxha informed that this jubilee would be held not only in Kosovo, but also in Macedonia and Montenegro where Albanians lived. He expressed the readiness of the Assembly of Kosovo to send a delegation to Tirana (January 1968) which would be *"a representation of the population of Kosovo"*.⁴⁷ In this context, he invited a delegation from Albania to participate in the historic celebration of Skanderbeg in Pristina, in May 1968.

The relations between Yugoslavia and Albania were of course not of great importance and in the telegram Fadil Hoxha gave the assurance that *the Albanian delegation would be truly welcomed and fully respected*.⁴⁸ Mark Krasniqi-geographer and dean of the Faculty of Economics, Syrja Pupovci-docent at the Faculty of Law, Fehmi Agani-director of the Albanology Institute,

⁴⁵ S. Lutfiu, *Roli i Kosovës*, 456.

⁴⁶ Arkivi i Ministrisë së Punëve të Jashtme të Shqipërisë (më tej: AMPJ), viti 1968, Dosja 17/1, 18.

⁴⁷ AQSH, viti 1968, Fondi 511, Dosja 30, 30.

⁴⁸ Agjencia Shtetërore e Arkivave të Kosovës (më tej: ASHAK), Fondi: Sekretariati Krahinor për Marrëdhënie me Botën e Jashtme, Informata dhe të ndryshme, 1962-1984, 4.

Zef Mirdita-assistant of history at the Faculty of Philosophy, Anton Çeta-scientific associate of the Institute were invited to this Albanological conference.⁴⁹ In the book of memories, prof. Mark Krasniqi recorded some moments from the visit of the Kosovar group and their meeting with the leadership of Albania in the city of Kruja. He emphasizes, among other things, *before we left, they invited us to the Provincial Council to give us instructions regarding our stay in Albania. We were welcomed by Fadil Hoxha, Ilia Vakiqi and Kadri Reufi, senior party functionaries in the Communist League of Kosovo. They told us that we should be careful if something is said against Tito, the Communist Party and Yugoslavia, and the Kosovar delegation has the duty to protest on the spot. Fadil Hoxha even according to prof. Mark told you that if this happens, then they should protest loudly, and leave the meeting.* To see the picture of the meeting of the Kosovar professors with Enver Hoxha and the cabinet with ministers of the Shehu government, it is good to see the picture of the meeting. According to prof. Mark Krasniqi, *none of our delegation talks except him (Mark), who emphasized that we are guests of the University of Tirana, and every success of Albania is our pride in Kosovo. We wish to normalize relations with Yugoslavia on the political level.* Enver Hoxha, in his speech to Kosovar professors in Kruja, in January 1968, promised them scholarships and books.⁵⁰ Among other things, Enver Hoxha emphasized *that we are the sons of a mother and grandmother, and that we are happy that you gain as many rights as possible and that we have you among us.* At the end of the story, we are informed by prof. Mark Krasniqi that the Kosovar delegation, after returning to Tirana, ran to the Yugoslav Embassy, to confess the “Albanian-Albanian meeting”.⁵¹

The main objective of the two countries had been fulfilled and the rapprochement of Kosovo with Albania was already tangible in terms of culture and science. The chronicle of events provides us with information about the events that took place in January 1968 in Tirana. This is how the solemn inauguration of the Skanderbeg statue took place, which took place in the center of Tirana. The main speech was given by prof. Alex Buda, who referred to the statement “Gjergj Kastrioti-Skanderbeg and his era”.⁵² In this scientific conference, the studies of scientific workers from Kosovo were also read: Mark Kranqi “The fight against feudalism in the traditional poetry of Albanians”, Syrja Pupovci “The Law (*Kanun*) of Lekë Dukagjini”. The goals of the Kosovar Albanians, led by Fadil Hoxha as the main Kosovar politician, were for Kosovo to have a door of rapprochement with Albania. He carefully selected the elite of Kosovar professors who were included in the faculties of Pristina that operated from 1960 under the auspices of the University of Belgrade. The caution of Kosovar professors in their pronouncements on the political situation was noticed

⁴⁹ *Rilindja*, 9.1.1968, 10.

⁵⁰ S. Syla, *Shteti*, 220.

⁵¹ Mark Krasniqi, *Kujtime e përjetime*, Pejë 2012, 300-301.

⁵² *Rilindja*, 11.2.1968, 13.

from the beginning. These Kosovar cadres in the scientific field had a very good presentation, even though their experience was not great. Alongside the most prominent Albanian professors, they defended their theses at this conference on various topics of Albanian history and jurisprudence in the medieval centuries. The Kosovar professors had the good opportunity to get to know the experience of the Albanian pedagogues, who had a greater experience, because higher education there was established much earlier, but also their experience gained in different countries, such as: Austria, the Soviet Union, etc., would be a very solid experience for Kosovar professors. The good progress in academic and scientific developments was marking a good start at the national level in these spheres between the two countries. Kosovo had a much greater interest in the beginning of these relations, also because of the great oppression by the Serbs, but also because the national consciousness had always remained high, especially after 1948, when the borders were closed for the two countries. Enver Hoxha was interested in continuing this relationship and giving clear signals that in May 1968 he would send a team headed by an official from Kosovo, prof. Bujar Hoxha.

Symposium for the 500th anniversary of Skanderbeg in Pristina - May 1968 and its effects, Directorate of Albania for Kosovo

By the middle of 1968, Albanian-Yugoslav relations were significantly normalized, and a more favorable climate was achieved between the two countries. After several months of correspondence between Kosovo and Albanian structures by a delegation of professors from the University of Tirana to participate in the Scientific Symposium for the 500th anniversary of the death of Skënderbeu, composed of prof. Alex Buda, prof. Ndreçi Plasari, prof. Bujar Hoxha, prof. Dhorka Dhamo, prof. Thoma Murzaku, prof. Mediha Shuteriqi arrived in Kosovo on May 8, 1968. The Kosovar political authorities had enabled and deeply helped the scientific institutions of Kosovo so that everything was magnificent. The Kosovar political elite also had reason to look better in front of the people, because in the past it had not been able to act freely for the benefit of national interests. Within all the possibilities created by the circumstances of the time, the holding of this symposium was a national approach to the Albanian brothers. In order to reflect as objectively as possible, the position of the Albanian delegation in Kosovo, we also have notes from the Albanian delegation.

The special feeling of awaiting is witnessed by prof. Aleks Buda's daughter, Tatjana Haxhimihali in the memoirs she published in memory of her father, prof. Aleks Buda. As we can see in these valuable notes, the delegation of professors from the University of Tirana was received in Pristina with extraordinary love and warmth. There were strong patriotic feelings that identify with Albania. This clearly proves that many citizens, intellectuals, students,

wanted to meet the members of the delegation.⁵³ The organizer of the symposium was the Albanological Institute of Pristina and the Entity of Kosovo History. The scientific symposium began in the presence of the speaker of the Assembly, Fadil Hoxha, Veli Deva-chairman of the Provincial Committee of the LK, Ilija Vaki-chairman of the Executive Council and Idriz Ajeti-chairman of the Scientific Council Symposium.

In this event, there were also incidents related to politics in general. The companions of the Albanian delegation also dealt with the illegal distribution of photos of Enver Hoxha, postcards with panoramas from Albania, etc. Seeing how sensitive the situation was among the people, the people of the Albanian delegation also wanted to prove the love of Kosovars towards the Albanian state. The delegation of professors from the University of Tirana was received in Pristina with extraordinary love and warmth. There were strong patriotic feelings that identify with Albania. This clearly proves many citizens, students, intellectuals, students who wanted to meet with the members of the delegation.⁵⁴ Excited by the reception, a grand reception was held in Rugovë, especially for prof. Alex the Buddha, as if he were their spiritual leader. During this period, Serbs wrote slogans such as “Kosovo belongs to the Serbs”, “Serbs unite because we are in danger”, “Albanian language has no place in Kosovo”, etc. on the walls of Prishtina's faculties and dormitories.⁵⁵ How much this “unification” of Albanians had a negative effect on the Serbs at this time is also evidenced by their instigated actions to the detriment of the joint “Albanian-Albanian” organizations. Serbia, with its instruments, especially those of the State Security, organized actions that wanted to destroy the greatness of this nationwide manifestation. But with great determination, nothing went wrong, and the situation remained under control during the days that the Albanian delegation was there.

Fadil Hoxha, as the tutor of this jubilee, wanted to expand the spectrum of these scientific and festive meetings and raise current and essential issues with the Albanian delegation. And he knew that the most suitable person for the meeting was Bujar Hoxha, whom he had met during the Second World War. Bujar Hoxha refused to attend the meeting. However, Fadil Hoxha understood and found other ways to convey his message.⁵⁶ At the official dinner hosted by Sali Nushi, as secretary of the Committee for Education and Culture of Kosovo, in honor of the Albanian delegation, he informed those present from Albania of the functions of the President of the Executive Council of Kosovo, Ilija Vakiqi, who made a face-to-face meeting with Bujar Hoxha. The latter in the meeting raised the need for close cooperation with Albania. Among other things, he emphasized that Kosovo should trade with Albania within the framework of Albanian-Yugoslav economic relations, having leverage and profits and also buy

⁵³ Tatjana Haxhimihali, *Aleks Buda-kujtime 2*, Tiranë, 242-259.

⁵⁴ T. Haxhimihali, *Aleks Buda*, 242-259.

⁵⁵ E. Myftari, *Kosova*, 73.

⁵⁶ *Ibidem*, 73-74.

goods. According to Vakiqi, we must forget the past. This is what he expressed in the meeting with prof. Hoxha, in the presence of the Albanian delegation. He emphasized that the interest is shared, because over one million Albanians live in Kosovo, who seek connection with the Albanian state. Being close to Elhami Niman, a member of the Central Committee of Yugoslavia, Ilia Vakiqi emphasized in the meeting that relations in the state should be improved. He considered the opinion that relations should be put in cooperation with Tito. In the end, he pointed out that we are all for rapprochement and cooperation.⁵⁷

Enver Hoxha had tasked Bujar Hoxha⁵⁸ to provide data on the position of the Commission of Amendments and the request of Kosovars for a republic, referring to the statement of April 22, 1968, by Fadil Hoxha, in the Provincial Committee of the LK of Kosovo, where he raised the possibility for Kosovo to be part of the Republic within the SFRY. Even though he had refused the meeting with Fadil Hoxha, it is understood that Bujar Hoxha acted behind the scenes, because he had trusted people, from whom he would be accurately informed about their views and would reveal Enver Hoxha's position. Bujar Hoxha on this occasion informed the ambassador, Lik Seiti, who then informed the center *in the official meeting that Bujar Hoxha had with some members of the Commission for changing the statute of Kosovo, he learned that its autonomy will be strengthened even for the majority of problems, it wants this connection with the Federation and not with the Republic of Serbia. The leadership of Kosovo has not itself proposed the creation of the Republic of Kosovo, as such a proposal, in their opinion, is not appropriate for the current situation.*⁵⁹

The emotions offered by the Albanians of Kosovo to the Albanian delegation were a cold shower from the official Tirana after this event. Albania had a complete silence in its attitudes towards Kosovo. This is how the Albanian Legation in Belgrade expressed this situation *the intelligence of Kosovo has made a bad impression, that both the press and our radio, did not even give an official announcement about the Skanderbeg symposium that was held in Pristina, as well as about the impressions of our delegation that participated there.*⁶⁰ The symposium for Skanderbeg was a scientific manifestation between the two countries, but it was intended to return to the arena of various debates that had a political character. The Kosovar elite as the host was interested in having a closer relationship with the Albanian state and this can be seen from the actions of the Kosovar political leaders. As a result of the new circumstances that were created, after 1968 the interest of the Albanian leadership in Kosovo increased. According to a document from 1981, which evaluated the political situation in Kosovo, in the first years after the demonstrations in 1968, the process of affirming Kosovo had begun. By order of the Central Committee of the Labor Party of Albania, in 1969 the special sector and later the fifth directorate was created, which would

⁵⁷ *Ibidem*, 73-74.

⁵⁸ *Ibidem*, 74.

⁵⁹ AMPJ, Viti 1968, Dosja 360, 201-231.

⁶⁰ E. Myftari, *Kosova*, 74.

deal only with the issue of Kosovo. She would define two priorities in her work: the recognition of the real situation in Kosovo, focusing on the field of political, economic and social life and on the help that should be given for its greater affirmation in the future.⁶¹

Economic relations of the two countries

An important step towards the establishment of direct economic ties with Kosovo of Albania was the decision of March 8, 1967, to enable small border trade of goods between companies from Kosovo and Albania without the prior connection of interstate agreements.⁶² The Provincial Committee of the League of Communists of Serbia for Kosovo concluded at the beginning of 1968 that it is necessary to pay more attention to the small border traffic between Kosovo and Metohija and Albania, and that it is necessary to establish more direct contacts with businessmen from Albania.⁶³ In the following period, there were a series of mutual conflicts. The visit of the delegations of the main Albanian and Kosovar companies during which commercial and cooperation agreements were reached. In 1967, Yugoslavia and Albania signed an agreement on tourism cooperation, according to which Yugoslavia organized trips to Albania for tourists from the Montenegrin coast and Dubrovnik. The agreement was concluded despite Albania's refusal to lift the entry ban on Yugoslav citizens of non-Albanian nationality.⁶⁴ While other Yugoslavs were banned from entering Albania, the visits of Kosovo Albanians to their relatives in Albania turned into numerous tourism efforts in the form of group visits to Albanian cities in the late 1960s. These visits also had a character propaganda and Albania showed guests from Yugoslavia its large economic enterprises, which were supposed to represent the economic prosperity of Enver Hoxha's Albania. The Chargé d'Affaires of Poland in Tirana Pyotr Glowacki in October 1969 compiled a report on Yugoslav-Albanian relations, in which he concluded that *the efforts of the Yugoslav side to improve relations with Albania came to the fore in a series of initiatives and proposals, but Albanians only accepted what corresponded to their interests.*⁶⁵

Tirana used the Yugoslav policy of “reaching out” to connect with Kosovo, not giving up its aggressive rhetoric towards the Yugoslav political elite. *We have and will have commercial relations with Yugoslavia, but this will not bring our positive attitude towards the Yugoslav policy towards the Albanians,*

⁶¹ E. Myftari, *Kosova*, 84.

⁶² Igor Vukadinović, *Kulturno i ekonomsko povezivanje Albanije i Kosova i Metohije [Cultural and economic connection of Albania and Kosovo and Metohija] (1967–1971). Istorija 20. veka XXXIX*, br. 2 (2021), 375–396.

⁶³ I. Vukadinovic, *Kulturno i ekonomsko*, 384.

⁶⁴ *Ibidem*, 384.

⁶⁵ *Ibidem*, 385.

said Enver Hoxha in 1969. ⁶⁶In 1968, the company “Prehrana” from Gjakovica made a tour with Albania in the amount of 200,000 dollars and for 1969 he signed a contract in the amount of 380,000 dollars. According to the report of the SFRY embassy in Tirana, the representatives of this company have developed special relations with the Albanian authorities, always receiving a positive reception in Tirana. “Prehrana” expanded its cooperation with Albania in completely different branches of the food industry as its primary activities. From Albania he imported leather, cement, cigarettes, etc., cans and exported rubber boots, knitwear and textiles to Albania. After the November demonstrations in Kosovo in 1968 and the addition of customs control on the border with Albania, it was discovered that “Prehrana” imported from Albania numerous wooden items, among which there were also Albanian national symbols. On June 19, 1969, the Federal Directorate of Customs informed the State Secretariat for Foreign Affairs that “Prehrana” from Albania was transporting Albanian flags and products in the form of two-headed eagles with the head of Skanderbeg. ⁶⁷ It played a leading role in the economic integration of Kosovo and Albania, the company “Kosmet-prevoz” from Pristina.

The director of this company, Ali Jahja, during his visit to Tirana, spoke “on behalf of the whole economy of Kosovo and Metohija” and presented to the Albanian interlocutors’ proposals that were not only related to the direct business of “Kosmet- prevoza”. Jahja led the negotiations for the transport of coal from Poland to Albania through the territory of Yugoslavia, the result of which was an agreement according to which “Kosmet-prevoz” transported coal by rail to Prizren and from there by trucks to Kukës. Jahja offered the Albanians the use of the spare parts factory in Pejë and the battery factory in Trepça, and he also negotiated the method of transporting schoolbooks from Albania to Kosovo. He suggested that parts of the textbooks be transported directly by trucks from Albania to Pristina and the rest be transported by trucks carrying chrome. ⁶⁸ The director of “Kosmet-prevoza” proposed to the Albanian side to organize a tourist visit between Albania and Kosovo, but only for people who have family or relatives on the other side of the border, knowing that Albania will provide these people with visas. The mentioned proposals of Pristina for the expansion of the Kosovar-Albanian cooperation economy were carried out two and a half months after the violent demonstrations in Kosovo, for the organization of which the Yugoslav leadership indirectly accused Albania as well. In 1969 “Kosmet-prevoz” realized commercial cooperation with Albania in the amount of 675,000 dollars. ⁶⁹ In Tirana, representatives of the company “Kožar” from Kosova Mitrovica, which offered the Albanian side jobs worth one million dollars, as well as “Progresna” from Prizren, which had concluded exchange contracts for

⁶⁶ *Ibidem*, 386.

⁶⁷ *Ibidem*.

⁶⁸ *Ibidem*, 387.

⁶⁹ *Ibidem*.

agricultural products, were also active in Tirana.⁷⁰ In contrast to the intensive economic cooperation after the Second World War, which led to the gradual inclusion of Albania in the Yugoslav economic space, economic agreements from 1966 to 1969 acted in the direction of the economic connection of Kosovo and Metohija with Albania. The chrome mining company “Deva” from Gjakova has also made connections with Albania. On January 17, 1968, a group of representatives of the “Deva” mine visited the Albanian city of Pogradec and concluded an agreement with the company “Eksportal” to export the entire amount of chrome ore from the commodity lists for 1968. “Eksportal” representatives visited Gjakovica on February 8, 1968, and concluded a contract with the “Deva” mine for the export of 12,000 tons of chrome ore through the commodity lists. They also talked with the representatives of “Kosmet-eksport” and “Progres”. In 1968, the Metohia of Kosovo and the Albanian authorities reached an agreement for the Albanian authorities to deliver fruits, vegetables, pork and canned goods.⁷¹ In 1969, the Yugoslav Embassy in Tirana came to the conclusion that Albania approaches economic cooperation with Kosovo with political calculations. In addition to this, it was said that Albania had rejected offers in the previous period to participate in the Summer Fair in Ljubljana and the Agricultural Fair in Novi Sad, but after that it suggested to the representatives of the company “Kosmet-eksport” that in Pristina a tasting of alcoholic beverages from Albania is organized.⁷²

After the adoption of amendments to the Constitution of Serbia and the adoption of the Constitutional Law of the Autonomous Socialist Province of Kosovo in early 1969, Kosovo gained the authority to “encourage and assist the development of international relations in the fields of economy, education, science, culture, means of information and physical culture”.⁷³ This led to the consolidation of existing relations and the development of new relations between Prishtina and Tirana in the sphere of education, tourism and economy. The Secretary of the Albanian Embassy in Yugoslavia, Hajrula Koburi, during a meeting in Pristina with the manager of the publishing house “Rilindja” Idriz Rexha, regarding the distribution of Albanian texts in the province, expressed his desire to familiarize himself with the text of the Constitutional Law of the Socialist Autonomous Province of Kosovo. Rexha promised him that “Rilindja” would deliver five copies Embassy of Albania in Belgrade. They talked about the deepening of culture and educational cooperation, and the manager of “Rilindja” said that “good relations in the mutual interest of Tirana and Pristina”.⁷⁴ An even more important concession than the possibility of economic connection with Albania represented the commitment of the Yugoslav state leadership for economic and financial assistance to Kosovo. In the Resolution of the Ninth SKJ

⁷⁰ *Ibidem*, 387.

⁷¹ *Ibidem*, 388.

⁷² *Ibidem*.

⁷³ Grup autorësh, *Historia e Lidhjes*, 170.

⁷⁴ I. Vukadinovic, *Kulturno i ekonomsko*, 388.

Congress from 1969, it was stated that the Federation Fund for the Credit of Economically Underdeveloped Republics and Provinces “as a form of compensation and an element of solidarity in inter-ethnic relations to obtain permanent and stable sources of funds”. The Resolution states also that “special attention should be paid to the faster development of Kosovo”, thus supporting the development of Kosovo's economy is presented as a kind of obligation of the Yugoslav Federation.⁷⁵ The director of the Prishtina company “Kosmet-prevoz” proposed from the beginning of 1969, mutual group excursions of young people from Kosovo and Albania celebrated both May 1 and November 29. He also suggested that “Kosmet-prevoz” organizes tourist trips to Albania for Albanians from Turkey, during the summer they visit relatives in Kosovo and Metohija. While the Yugoslav diplomatic representatives tried to fight for the lifting of the ban on the entry of non-Albanians from Yugoslavia into Albania, the representatives of Pristina did not raise this issue in the negotiations with the Albanian authorities.⁷⁶

Summary

From what was said above, it can be observed that Albania's policy towards Kosovo was too much concentrated within the political conjuncture of the created circumstances. From January to November, the circumstances in Kosovo were very tense politically. The politics of Kosovo tried to get closer to Albania in the first half of 1968 and this is clearly seen in the documents of the time. The events of October and November 1968 made a split in the line of mutual cooperation. The Albanian state did not support the Republic of Kosovo, clearly stating that Kosovo had to work to gain more rights within the Yugoslav Federation. The main results of this cooperation, especially scientific, were that the two countries got to know each other's policies, as well as in the political aspect of the conversations, which were extremely reserved. Albania chose to keep deepening its support for Kosovo on the diplomatic level. The Albanian state had its own substantial problems during this year. One of the main reasons for the reservation of official Tirana was the following: it came out of the Warsaw Treaty, then wanted to maintain balancing relations with Yugoslavia, in order to get closer to Kosovo. The Albanian state gave clear signals of its most visible interest in Kosovo from the beginning of 1969. The measures it took were that it intended a deeper interest in Kosovo in all aspects of life. In order to prove to herself that Albania's prejudices had been extinguished, it created a special sector (the Fifth Directorate) in 1969 by order of the Central Committee of the APS.⁷⁷ This directorate would have the duty in its work to get to know the real situation

⁷⁵ Grup autorësh, *Historia e Lidhjes*, 329.

⁷⁶ I. Vukadinovic, *Kulturno i ekonomsko*, 388.

⁷⁷ S. Syla, *Shteti*, 19.

in Kosovo, in the field of political, economic and social life. The directorate in question undertook to bring the policies of the Albanian state closer to Kosovo, in education and culture, where the national consciousness was greater. In the economic sphere, there is an effort for relations between the two countries. Through Yugoslavia, Kosovo begins to take the first steps of economic cooperation with Albania through its modest firms. These economic aspects were very modest, but they were important due to the fact that the first things of value in Kosovo, national flags, etc, came from Albania. In general, Kosovo-Albania relations under the tutelage of Yugoslavia in the years 1968-1969 had a significant intensification and significant impact in Yugoslavia.

Zaključak

Iz navedenog se može primijetiti da je politika Albanije prema Kosovu bila prekomjerno koncentrisana unutar političke konjunktore stvorenih okolnosti. Od januara do novembra, okolnosti na Kosovu su bile veoma napete politički. Politika Kosova pokušala je približiti se Albaniji u prvoj polovini 1968. godine, što se jasno vidi u dokumentima tog vremena. Događaji oktobra i novembra 1968. godine izazvali su rascjep u liniji međusobne saradnje. Albanska država nije podržavala Republiku Kosovo, jasno izražavajući da Kosovo mora raditi na sticanju većih prava unutar Jugoslovenske Federacije. Glavni rezultati ove saradnje, posebno naučni, bili su da su dvije zemlje upoznale politike jedna drugih, kao i u političkom aspektu razgovora, koji su bili izuzetno rezervirani. Albanija je izabrala da nastavi produbljivati svoju podršku Kosovu na diplomatskom nivou. Albanska država je imala svoje značajne probleme tokom ove godine. Jedan od glavnih razloga za rezerviranost zvanične Tirane bio je sljedeći: izašla je iz Varšavskog sporazuma, zatim je željela održavati uravnotežene odnose sa Jugoslavijom, kako bi se približila Kosovu. Albanska država je dala jasne signale svojeg najvidljivijeg interesa za Kosovo od početka 1969. godine. Mjere koje je preduzela bile su da je namjeravala dublje zainteresovanje za Kosovo u svim aspektima života. Kako bi dokazala sebi da su predrasude Albanije bile ugašene, stvorila je posektor (Peta uprava) 1969. godine po nalogu Centralnog komiteta APS-a. Ova uprava bi imala dužnost u svom radu upoznati se sa realnom situacijom na Kosovu, u polju političkog, ekonomskog i socijalnog života. Pomenuta uprava preuzela je da približi politike albanske države Kosovu, u obrazovanju i kulturi, gdje je nacionalna svijest bila veća. U ekonomskoj sferi, postoji napor za odnose između dvije zemlje. Kroz Jugoslaviju, Kosovo počinje prve korake ekonomske saradnje sa Albanijom putem svojih skromnih firmi. Ovi ekonomski aspekti bili su veoma skromni, ali su bili važni zbog toga što su prve stvari od vrijednosti na Kosovu, nacionalne zastave, itd, dolazile iz Albanije. Generalno, odnosi Kosova i Albanije pod patronatom Jugoslavije u godinama 1968-1969. godine imali su značajno pojačanje i značajan uticaj u Jugoslaviji.

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