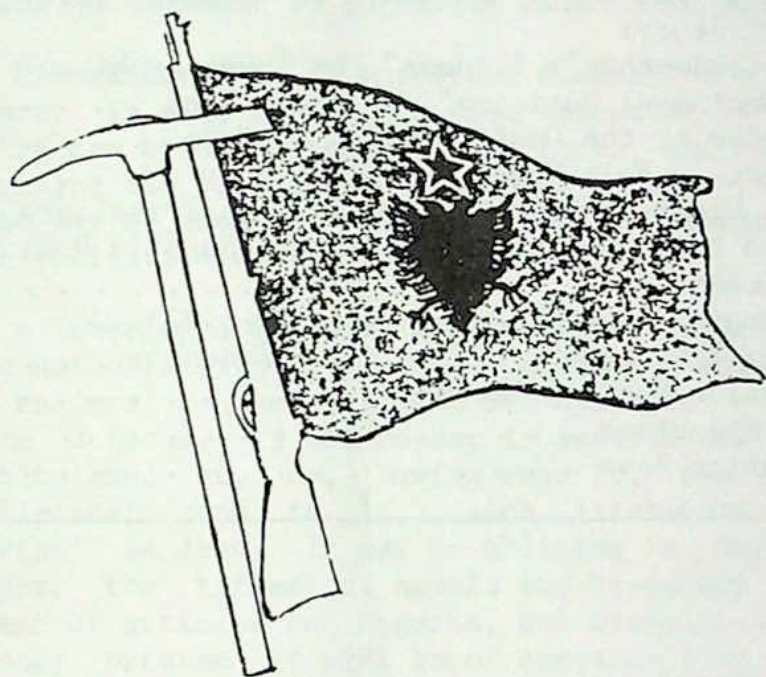


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ON EFFECTIVE LITERATURE

by Ismail Kadare

It was not by chance that Engels formulated the Marxist view of culture as follows: "Every step towards culture is a step towards freedom", and it is equally not by chance that Comrade Enver Hoxha took up this monumental wording, which for a number of reasons has fallen into oblivion in many countries, as a means of orientation for the development of socialist culture in Albania.

Literature, as an important element of a nation's culture, is also one of its most essential fields. No culture can be understood without books, and no history of writing can be understood without literature. Thus, in one way or another, the position of literature is a clear indication of the level of a culture.

A literature can have many characteristics, but if it is not effective, i.e. if it makes no impression on the readers, on people, all its qualities and values become dubious. If the reader is indifferent to it, doesn't read it, or, having read it, can find no intellectual bond to it, such literature can be described as dead. It may be obliging to bureaucratic thought, the titles of novels and plays may be the subject of articles and reports, but everything will be illusory because it will be of assistance to no one, least of all to the development of socialism. The reader will turn to foreign books or books of other periods. The expression 'if you have no chicken, eat crow' is pointless in literature. In this case it would have been better to say "if you don't have a chicken of your own, look for another one".

Should this have been the case, it would have meant that our writers and artists had neglected their duty towards our national culture, something of no little significance. Fortunately this has not been and

will not be the case, but in order to avoid such an eventuality, however small in scale it might be, we must be on guard, continuously on guard.

The role of literature in the life of peoples has long been controversial. This controversy has continued up to the present day and is as lively as ever. There have been and are still two extreme and divergent views on the role of literature. The first one supports the idea that literature must be seen beyond the context of time and negates any social colouring. The second one, regarding literature as a concrete administrative force, negates its human side. The first view has justified decadence over the centuries (literature on the problems of existence and the primordial passions of mankind, etc.). The second view has justified conformism (official literature, literature of military campaigns and chauvinist psychoses).

These two views survived in literature after the October Revolution, though couched in more acceptable terms. Just as their predecessors were far from great world literature, they too have been far from the great revolutionary art of Gorky, Mayakovsky, Brecht, etc. The two views have been in conflict for a long time and, paradoxical as it may seem, have both contributed to the discrediting of modern proletarian literature. This has been because, though coming from different directions, from the right and from the far-left, both were pouring oil on to the same fire. The supporters of the view that literature should ignore the existence of human passions made it easier for their liberal opponents to defend the opposite. And vice versa, the passion of those holding the first view entangled the far-left more and more in its errors.

This torturous dispute has been of no benefit to modern proletarian literature. On the contrary, it has caused damage, degeneration and misunderstandings which

have continued up to the present day. For world reaction it was a gold mine to besmirch socialist realism, to paralyse it and cause it to wither for decades on end. A concrete example of this situation was the beginning of the sixties, when the liberal view dominated in the Soviet Union while the opposite dogmatic view triumphed in China. Time has shown that, although hostile to one another, both views have deviated from the great revolutionary tradition.

Our literature, like every modern literature which has arisen immediately following a major social revolution, will encounter growing pains and will have to overcome impediments and misunderstandings, but these should never reach a scale likely to damage its proper development, coherence and ideological purity. We have not allowed liberalism to be combatted from a dogmatist stance, or dogmatism to be combatted from a liberal stance, something which has been decisive in the development of our literature.

The Party has defended and supported the view that our literature of socialist realism, focussed on man, must not be allowed to depart from our time and its problems. This characteristic of modern socialist literature is in the best traditions of great world art.

Though accepting the link between literature and our time, our Party has rejected the vulgar dogmatist view which considers literature not as a great help to the Party, but simply as an administrative tool. The latter has been a significant misunderstanding and a source of much evil.

Literature and the arts can, of course, be of concrete and immediate assistance in many cases. The mobilising capacity of poetry, songs, posters, concerts, etc. is well known, but this is only one

element of its capacity. The capacity of literature to influence is generally a long-term one. A collective of workers or a team of economists and geologists can bring about changes in the production of chrome or oil, in export and construction, in a relatively short time, whereas literature with the means at its disposal needs centuries to be of influence in solving problems.

Literature is a help to the Party in broader terms. It enriches man. It makes him more capable, more intelligent, nobler, purer and, what is more important, it makes man love his homeland, his nation and socialism more. Those who have been nourished by our view of things, and by our culture in general, are more able to work and struggle in all fields: in the chrome mines, in scientific laboratories, in aviation or in diplomacy.

But just as the help which literature can provide is a long-term matter, the damage which can be done in this field cannot easily be repaired and requires a long time to overcome. Action, mobilization and emergency measures are not applicable to literary creativity, a fact which forces us to be as open-minded careful and farsighted as possible concerning its problems.

With regard to liberal and dogmatic views on the role of literature, whereas the struggle against the former, the liberal view, has been relatively clear-cut and easy, one cannot say the same of the struggle against the latter, the dogmatist, conservative view. This was because in the literature of socialist realism, vulgar schematism has been easier to hide and amouflage than bourgeois liberalism. It becomes enveloped in far-left phraseology and slogans of pseudo-revolutionary rhetoric and can travel more easily with this passport. A recent example of this has been the pseudo-literature produced by the Cultural

Revolution in China, which succeeded in nothing more than paving the way for right-wing literature.

Schematic literature has often endeavoured to gain the status of official literature. This is an old-fashioned view, a product of the past and non-existent under Socialism.

At the last Plenary Session of the Central Committee of the Party, Comrade Ramiz Alia stated: "Marxist-Leninist aesthetic principles are not moulds to provide an unalterable shape to the cultural activity poured into them. Art in particular must not be seen as a prefabricated product".

From time to time, criticism in our country gets confused on this point especially. For example, we are in theory all against literature schematizing things and forcing reality into black-and-white clichés; but when it comes down to concrete activity, criticism in our country and bureaucratic logic begins to tally up the number of positive vs. negative characters, the number of workers vs. intellectuals, the number of negative events (e.g., divorces) vs. positive events in a work, the percentages and relations between them, etc. It enters a cul-de-sac which is very difficult to get out of.

Over two years ago Comrade Ramiz Alia pointed specifically to the necessity for literature and arts in our country to fight against mediocrity. We should all be concerned about the fact that no perceptible solution has yet been found to this problem, as should have been found. Indeed, it can be seen that mediocrity is exerting pressure to regain lost positions, and take over control once again in our publications, a hopeless endeavour.

Mediocrity, its philosophy and tactics, are

related to schematism in literature. Mediocrity and schematism are brother and sister. The struggle against one will do harm to the other. This is why they work together and are eternal allies.

Unfounded euphoria and acceptance of mediocrity as normal have often done damage to literature. There is no other explanation for the current stagnation in our publications. The problem is clear and simple: is our own literature to provide our readers with spiritual sustenance or is this role to be played more by other literatures? Spritual sustenance cannot, however, be served three or four times a year. On top of this, spiritual sustenance is different from physical sustenance, in that it is neither instinctive nor necessary for survival. If the reader doesn't like a certain book, he puts it aside, asks for something else and is able to get it.

This is the decisive aspect of the effectiveness of literature. According to bureaucratic logic, it is quite enough for a book to be "all right" and it doesn't matter at all if the book is not subsequently read. But we all want books to be read, to have an effect, and to take their place in the minds of the public and not simply in reports and papers of the League of Writers and Artists. In connection with effectiveness, it must be stated that it is high time for a serious scientific poll on literature, the arts, television programmes, to find out to what extent books are being bought, whether they are being enjoyed, whether television programmes are being watched, etc., etc.

Our Albanian literature of socialist realism now needs an expansion of its horizon of subjects, further work in writing techniques and fresh new themes. Only thus can it contribute to the image of socialist life, a task to which it has been devoted for some time now,

since the 8th Party Congress.

A literature which creates its own absurd limitations cannot contribute to the image of socialist life. Our literature is still not making use of all the 'baggage of life' and of all the events which our people have experienced over the last half a century. A paradox has thus arisen in which Party documents, the works of Comrade Enver Hoxha and the history of socialism portray a more varied and more dramatic gamut of events than our novels and plays. The cause for the various 'taboo subjects' lies primarily with our writers themselves and secondarily in their misconceptions on art and its role.

Some time ago, Comrade Ramiz Alia raised the key problem as a basis for work in all sectors: the distinction between what is in line with principles and what is not. Confusion between the two has had noticeable consequences in all spheres of existence and can, in particular, have grave repercussions for literature and the arts because it can arise more easily here than elsewhere. Unfortunately, some writers and artists, as well as some publishers and heads of organizations, although they accept this in principle, continue to the same as they have always done in their concrete activities, i.e., confusing what is in line with principles and what is not. Some of the above-mentioned problems, including some very basic ones, are a result of this confusion.

Our people have one of the oldest cultural heritages in Europe. Its antiquity gives particular weight to their words, their philosophy and their wisdom.

This profundity, which has arisen over the centuries, has now been united with an innovative reality, the reality of the most advanced social order

ever known to mankind: socialism. These two elements place upon modern Albanian literature a great, serious and wonderful responsibility, that of being a literature which enriches its own people, provides testimony for them and, as such, at the same time provides a worthy testimony for all progressive mankind.

(We are indebted to Dr. Robert Elsie, of Düren-Echtz, for the translation of the above article, which appeared in 'Zëri i Popullit' of 6 March 1988).



The busts of the Frashëri brothers
in the Great Park, Tirana

SOLAR ENERGY IN ALBANIA

by Fatos Pecani

(The author is one of a team of Albanian scientists researching the application of solar energy).

Our country is favoured by much sunshine: the town with maximal sunshine is Fier, which averages 2,840 hours of sun a year; the town with minimum sunshine is Kukës, which averages 2,001 hours.

Solar power has many advantages: it is relatively low in capital cost, it requires minimal maintenance, and it has no adverse effect on the environment,

Solar energy may be utilised in various ways, but in our country it has been decided to apply first the method of solar panels for water and space heating.

The first experimental solar energy plant was constructed by the Ministry of Energy in December 1984, with a capacity of 100 litres of water per day and a solar panel area of 1.7 sq. metres.

In 1985 the Ministry of Energy established at the Partizani Sports Palace in Tirana a larger experimental plant with a capacity of 1,500 litres of water per day and 27 sq. metre of blackened galvanized metal panels, 1.0 to 1.5 mm. thick. The plant cost 7,000 leks, including 875 leks of foreign currency. It was found to produce 550 kilowatt/hours of energy per square metre of panel per year.

It is planned to commence the installation of such solar energy units, with a capacity of up to 20,000 litres of water a day, in hotels, hospitals, schools, factories, etc. The plants will be thermo-siphonic, without pumps.

BOOK REVIEWS

Gwen Robyns: GERALDINE OF THE ALBANIANS
London: Muller, Blond & White, 1987.

Reviewed by Bill Bland

Gwyn Robyns, who specializes in biographies of women, here covers the life of the Hungarian countess who, by marrying Zog, became Queen of Albania in 1938. The book is described by its author as "a tender, enduring love story" (p. 1), and she duly expresses acknowledgements to Barbara Cartland.(p. 2).

Geraldine herself is presented as believing that the Albanian people would be glad to welcome her son "King Leka" (now living in South Africa) as Head of State, and describes her dream that Albania would become "a major European tourist resort" (p. 5). The author skates over the nature of Leka's "business activities" (p. 10), which have been described in 'The Times' as arms-dealing and drug smuggling and led to his arrest in Thailand and his deportation from Spain. One notes that among "the greatest influences" in Leka's life (p. 219) have been Franco, the Shah of Iran (after whom his son has been named), John Vorster of South Africa and Ronald Reagan.

Being an "authorized" biography, it regards unfavourably the contemporary socialist republic of Albania, which the author sees as "sinister", "poor" and "oppressed" (p. 4). Indeed, the author manages to find some new stories, such as that "many factories in Albania now work a two-day week because of the lack of electricity" (p. 4) and that Albania is an international "centre for terrorists" (p. 202).

Of particular interest in the book are the first-hand accounts of the royal family's flight from Albania in 1939 and of Zog's role in the SIS-CIA attempt of 1949-53 to overthrow the Albanian government.

Adi Schnytzer:

STALINIST ECONOMIC STRATEGY IN PRACTICE:

The Case of Albania;

Oxford University Press; 1982.

Reviewed by Bill Bland

It is refreshing to find an Oxford economist presenting an objective picture of the Albanian economy, but Adi Schnytzer succeeds in doing so in this book, which describes Albania's post-war economic development.

He uses the term 'Stalinist' on the grounds that "Albanian economic strategy represents a literal application of that set out in Stalin's last published work 'Economic Problems of Socialism in the USSR'" (p. 2), and notes that "the adoption of Stalinist ideology by the leadership of the PLA was voluntary" (p. 5-6).

He discusses in some detail the operation of the economic planning machinery, the Labour Code, workers' control, the political struggle of factions within the Party of Labour and their economic and political bases, and gives statistics of economic development in different spheres.

Equating the amount of foreign aid with the deficit on the country's balance of trade (which ignores invisible exports and imports) he estimates total foreign aid received by Albania between 1945 and 1970 at 3,415 million leks (p. 67), amounting — in various periods -- to between 11% and 23% of gross investment (p. 101).

He pays tribute to the country's "successful economic performance" (p. 1) and to its "rates of economic growth unsurpassed elsewhere in Europe" (p. 88), and calculates that per capita consumption in 1975 was 3.18 times that of 1950 (p. 108).

NEW BOOK

Serge van Hoof:

FOOTBALL IN ALBANIA; Rijmenam; 1988.

Published by the author.

This book (in English, as well as in Dutch, German and French) is a comprehensive study of football in Albania, written in cooperation with the Albanian football commentator and novelist Skifter Këlliçi and the Albanian Football Association.

It covers briefly the history of the game in Albania from the first match in 1913. Its main contents, however, consist of: a list of winning teams from 1930 to 1986-87, with team compositions from 1946; championship tables from 1946; cup final details from 1948 to 1987; records of Albanian participation in the three European cups from 1962/63 to 1987/88; details of the first division teams (including colour sketches of the colours); and details of international matches involving Albania's national team from 1946 to 1987.

The book is available at a cost of f10 (including postage) from:

Serge van Hoof,
Oude Booschootse Baan 17,
2830 Rijmenam,
Belgium.

GRANDMOTHER'S ILLNESS

A short story by Enver Kushi

The other evening I was listening to some folk songs on the radio, when an event of long ago involving my grandmother and these songs comes back to me.

I was still at school. We were in the last days of March and, coming home from school, I noticed that my grandmother was not seated as usual on her sofa near the stove. She must have gone to my uncle's, I thought, although I knew that she rarely went out in cold, rainy weather.

Mother came into the kitchen, a cup of tea in her hand.

"Where is she?", I asked.

"She's not well. She's lying down in her room".

"But why? She . . ."

I left the kitchen hurriedly and went to the my grandmother's room.

I approached the bed where she lay, her head covered with the nightcap she had brought as part of her dowry. She looked at me with her gentle eyes and smiled.

"Don't talk to her", ordered Mother.

"We should get the doctor", I told her.

"Your father has gone for him", she replied.

"She was all right last night", I exclaimed; "she

d no cough or , , "

"She's an old lady, child. At her age one catches cold easily".

I could not say why, but at this moment my thoughts turned to death. "No", I said to myself; "it's not possible. Grandmother is not so old, and spring is almost here". The old almond tree tapped on the window-pane; we were expecting it to blossom any day. "No", I said again; "She's as strong as an oak".

In fact, she did have had a strong constitution. I remembered her as always having looked the same, her pale face furrowed with wrinkles. "The doctor would come, he would give her some medicine and she would be the same as ever", I thought. I had never seen my grandmother ill before. She would get up early, drink a cup of coffee, take her place near the stove and begin to tat. All the furniture and curtains in the house were decorated with her lace. It was the same in my uncles' houses. She would make a present of some of her lace to any woman who came to the house. "A little souvenir of an old woman when I'm gone", she would say.

Vera, my young sister, came in and began to cry. Then Lola and Gim entered in turn and stood by the bed. Mother told them they must be very quiet and stay only a short time. "Grannie will be better soon", she said without conviction, to comfort Vera.

The doctor arrived two hours later. He examined her and wrote out a prescription.

"Only a cold", he told my mother; "but, of course, at her age . . ."

We went to bed late that night, Mother sleeping in my grandmother's room. Next morning I heard her tell my

father that Grannie was worse and was delirious: she had been talking all night to Sali, our youngest uncle who had been killed in the war.

My father was obviously worried, and the doctor came again in the afternoon.

My father and my uncles went to see her several times during the day. Mother spent most of her time at her bedside waiting on her. But she seemed to be getting no better.

The next morning she called out for my mother, who ran to her room, followed by Vera, Lola and Gim.

"What do you want?", I heard Mother ask her.

"Perhaps she wants to get up?", I thought.

"I want some songs", she said in a low voice; "some songs".

My little sister began to laugh. There was a tapping at the window; it was the branch of the almond tree, which my grandparents had brought with them from the highlands. It had begun at last to blossom.

I came to the door of the room. "I'll bring the radio", I said.

"A good idea!", murmured my father.

I placed the radio on a chair near the door, and then looked at the programmes in the paper to see what time some folk music would be broadcast. At the right moment we switched on the radio and the room was filled with beautiful melodies.

"Now get up and dance!", said my father jokingly.

But she only turned on her side and signed to us to switch off the radio. "Ah!", she said; "these are not from our district".

"We must find a gramophone and some records", said my father.

No sooner said than done. One of my cousins brought round his portable gramophone, and two records which he assured us were right from my grandmother's district.

She listened in silence to one song, and then signalled to us to stop the turntable.

"It is not the same", she said at last; "it is like tinned strawberries. I want real singers". And she turned away from us.

That night I heard my father and mother talking far into the night. When I awoke next morning, I found my father had already left. "For the highlands", was all that my mother would say.

He returned three days later, accompanied by a hatchet-faced old woman. With only a nod to us children, she went straight to my grandmother's room. Through the half open door we could hear them talking; from what we could hear, it seemed that my grandmother was being brought up to date on all the gossip of the district. Then the old woman began to sing in a deep, cracked, hoarse voice. . .

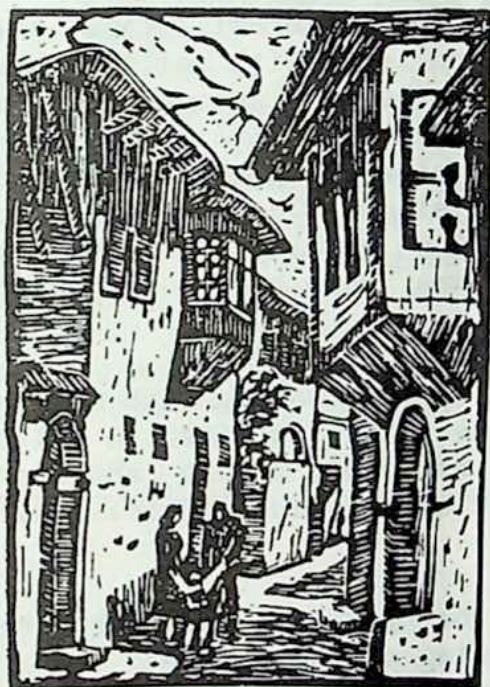
Later that day my grandmother insisted on getting out of bed. My father tried to help her but she brushed him aside. Leaning on an old stick that had belonged to my grandfather, she tottered slowly along the hall into the courtyard; my father followed slowly behind her, ready to catch her in case she should fall. She raised

her stick and pointed it towards the almond -tree.

"Bring a rug and a chair", ordered my father.

I obeyed, spreading out the rug beneath the tree and placing the chair upon it. Grandmother sat down, and reached out a hand to touch the trunk of the tree. My mother brought a tray of coffees, and grandmother drank hers in tiny sips, gazing all the time at the branches of the almond-tree. Then my grandmother began to sing. The song began very slowly, telling of the river moving through the mountain village. Then it quickened to describe the first breezes of spring, of warm, sunny mornings, of showers of petals from the almond-trees. . . .

I gazed at my grandmother's pale, wrinkled face and lively eyes and I knew that she would never die . .



Houses in Berat
Drawing by Abaz Hado

A MEDIAEVAL MUSICIAN

by Afrim Hoti



of immersion.

Recent excavations carried out within the fortress of Durrës, in the old Varosh quarter, have led to the discovery of a ceramic fragment on which is painted the figure of an instrumentalist. The object in question was found at a depth of two metres, with a whole series of objects on the floor of a large room of a building. The fragment is in pink terra cotta and its painted surface has dimensions of 9 x 5.5 cm. The external face is polished with yellow ochre, while the internal face is covered with a cream-coloured glaze tinged with yellow. The uniformity of the glazing shows that it was made by the technique

The artist has painted on the coating with a fine brush the portrait of a musician, outlined in black pigment, who carries an instrument on his shoulder. The musician wears an azure open-necked tunic, while the instrument is brown.

The constitution of the pottery fragment, the manner of glazing, the drawing of the portrait -- all these are characteristic of protomajolic ceramics of the beginning of the 13th century. In spite of being

more than 700 years old, in spite of the poor conditions in which it was discovered, the painting is very well preserved.

It is the product of one of the most technically advanced workshops of the period.

The chronicles of the period inform us that during the 13-14th centuries the town of Durrës was considered one of the great centres of production of fine ceramics. Pottery painted in this town was exported to many markets of the Adriatic and the Southern Mediterranean.

The portrait in question is represented full-face. Curly hair falls over the round face. The eyes are large and clear, the nose fine and pointed, the mouth small and tight-lipped,

The instrument rests on the front of the figure's left shoulder. The visible part of the instrument has an oval shape and carries the ends of four strings. Because the rest of the instrument is missing, we can only guess at its complete form, but from its construction it appears that it was a bowed instrument, the precursor of the type which led to viol. The discovery of this fragment of painted pottery must be considered in relation to the circumstances of the artistic life of the town of Durrës. The painting of such a musical instrument suggests that it had already penetrated deeply into the life of the people.

MURDER AT THE OmsK CORRAL

by K. Damo

A fierce struggle is going on in the Soviet Union between the 'liberals', the apostles of 'perestroika' (restructuring), headed by First Secretary Mikhail Gorbachov, and the 'conservatives' or 'hardliners' who oppose 'perestroika'. And in this struggle each side seeks to enlist artists and cultural workers to propagandise its cause. The poet of the old guard Vladimir Sidorov accuses, in the magazine 'Ogonyok', the 'liberals' of "sowing the seeds of a new Chernobyl". Another writer in the Soviet press compares the assault of the 'liberals' with "the fascist onslaught of 1941". In reply to these charges, the disciples of 'perestroika' accuse the 'conservatives' of 'Stalinism', a word regarded by both sides as a term of abuse.

The aim of the 'conservatives' is not to conserve socialism, for all the essentials of a capitalist society have long been restored in the Soviet Union. The struggle is between those who wish to continue to mask Soviet capitalism under false red flags, and those who wish to restructure this facade by replacing it with the trappings of capitalist 'western democracy'.

Under 'perestroika' the Moscow director Alia Surikova has just completed the first Soviet cowboy film, complaining vociferously of the obstacles placed in the way of its production by the 'conservatives': the army, for example, had refused to lend horses. Asked by journalists why Soviet studios should wish to produce a cowboy film, she replied: "To show that we are equal in artistic stature to the studios of America and Italy. I have wanted to make such a film for a long time, but, doubtless for ideological reasons, the scenario was only approved two years ago".

WOMEN IN FOLK SONG

by Zihni Sako

Before Liberation in 1944 the Albanian woman was divested of all rights and was denied access to almost all social activities. She had no say in family matters. When travelling, the man would ride while his wife followed on foot. Even at home, women had their separate quarters, from which they were only permitted to watch family celebrations through latticed windows.

Religion made the situation of the Albanian woman even more unbearable. It sanctioned the view that women were inherently evil. Women were assigned separate places apart from their menfolk both in church and mosque. In the towns both Muslim and Christian women had to veil their faces.

Of course, the reactionary view of women instilled by the reactionary ruling classes of society could not but exert a negative influence on people's attitudes. But if we go deep to the roots of the people's thinking, we find a treasury of correct judgments which refute these attitudes.

The satirical song 'Come, marry an old man!' denounces the arranged marriage of couples with great age differences. And the folk song

My father had me married in Vlora,
and I'm young, oh so very young!
I was given to a forty-year old man,
and I'm young, oh, so very young!

reflects a grave social injustice perpetrated against young women. Folk poets often sing of clandestine love, since if a love affair was discovered, the lovers would not only incur social disgrace but would be in great danger of punishment. A woman accused of 'immorality'

would have her hair cut off and would then be paraded through the streets, mounted backwards on an ass. In a folk song from the Gjakova district, the risks attached to love are expressed:

If my kin of it should hear,
they would beat and kill you, my dear.

The folk epics of our people provide many examples of the bravery and sacrifice of women, such as that of Queen Teuta, who led a ten-year war against the Roman legions; of Mamica, Skanderbeg's sister; of the hundred girls from Kruja who hurled themselves from the Rock of the Girls rather than fall into the hands of the Turks; of the women of Sopot, who fought valiantly against the Turkish invaders at Kaligjata; and so on. One comes upon moving examples of heroic deeds, such as the sacrifice of Argjiro, who threw herself from the walls of Gjirokastra Castle rather than be dishonoured.

In our folk songs, too, one finds passages of rare artistic beauty in which our people emphasise the important role played by women in society. They speak affectionately, and with great pathos, of the young bride who, according to legend, allowed herself to be buried in the foundations of the Rozafa Castle in Shkoder for what was believed to be the welfare of the community.

To be conscripted into the army then often meant the ruin of the family, and mothers and daughters rose, arms in hand, to avenge their sons and fathers who were killed in foreign lands. This state of affairs is reflected in such songs as 'Woe be on you, Vulak!' (Vulak being a quarter of Cairo):

Vulak, woe be on you, Vulak!
May flames consume you,
for ghosts lie in our beds.

The new folk songs of today are very different. They sing of women as workers, as engineers, as doctors, and so on. Even during the War of National Liberation, a folk song of Mirdita rejoices at the fact that a bride is not veiled at her wedding:

Don't you marry with veiled face,
your face is not deformed or ugly.

The new folk songs no longer stress the physical beauty of a woman, but her spiritual beauty. Her work is painted in vivid colours as a source of joy and power:

At work-site and school,
in times of peace and war,
the imprints of women's hands are seen
everywhere.

They are ready, too, to stand side by side with men in defence of their socialist homeland:

If hands dare touch our frontiers
blood will flow in streams;
we women work -- but we are fighters too;
that's what we are.

The new folk songs make it clear that, without the enthusiastic participation of women, neither national liberation nor the construction of socialist society would have been possible.

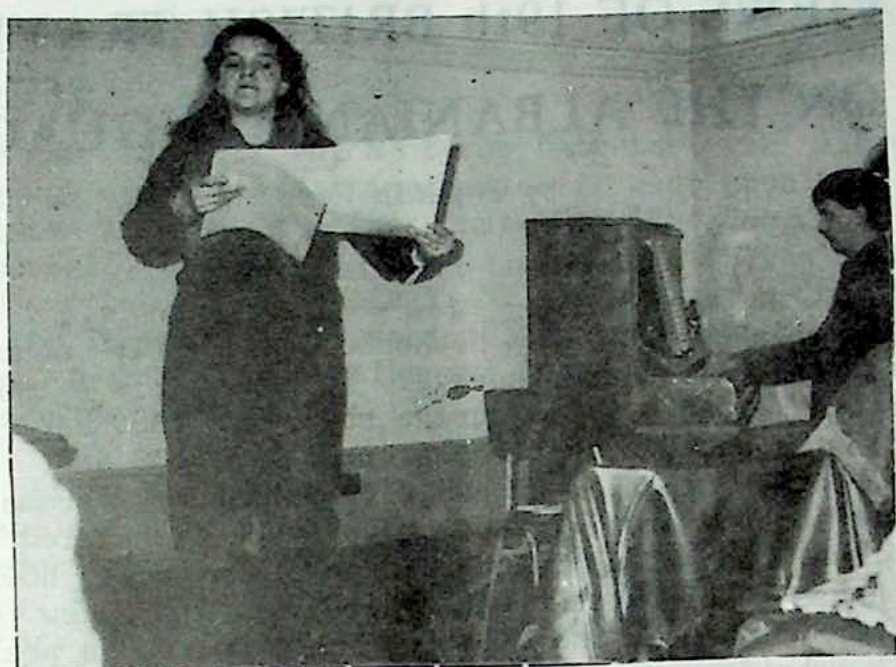




The Albanian Society delegation (1987) being entertained by a Greek family in Sofratika



Çorovoda



Paula Bednarczyk and Enzo Puzzovio
at a concert of Albanian music in London
organised by the Albanian Society



THE VIEWS OF 19th BRITISH TRAVELLERS ON THE ALBANIAN LANGUAGE

by Shpëtim Mema

(continued from last issue)

After Leake, John Cam Hobhouse was greatly concerned with the Albanian language. To his work 'A journey through Albania . . . during the years 1809 and 1810' (1813) he added a supplement (p. 1123-48) and, under the title 'Albanian Language', publishes a summary of the 1716 grammar of Francesco Da Lecce translated into English. In his abridged edition of Da Lecce, however, Hobhouse employs the Latin alphabet with a few Greek letters, and not the alphabet of Da Lecce. He prefaces this abridged grammar with various linguistic remarks and comments, from which we learn all that he knew of the Albanian language. He was not well-informed on our language and completely ignorant of the Albanian literature of the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries. All the same, he makes, perhaps by intuition, some comments which are correct and full of interest. The supplement which accompanies the work also contains some badly-recorded verses in Albanian drawn from the folklore of the Arbëresh of Attica,

Byron, too, was fascinated by our language and was among the first Western Europeans to present to the public brief passages in Albanian transcribed into Latin characters by the poet himself; he gives these in a note to the second canto of his poem 'Childe Harold's Pilgrimage' (1812). In this note the poet gives two Albanian folk songs collected, as he says, "from an inhabitant of Athens who knows and speaks Albanian perfectly". But Byron's knowledge of linguistic matters was meagre and he did not know Albanian at all. It is this which explains the many faults in the copying of these two folk songs, which he must have laboured to

write down.

The respect which Byron felt for the Albanian language and the great impression it made upon him are attested to by the fact that, in 'The Song of the Tambourgi', he presents eleven stanzas of Albanian folk poetry translated into English. In a note on 'the Song of the Tambourgi' he says: "These stanzas are partly taken from different Albanian songs, as far as I was able to make them out". (1)

Although a doctor of medicine, in his work 'Travels in the Ionian Isles, Albania, Thessaly, Macedonia, etc., during the years 1812-1813' (1815), Henry Holland shows that he was well informed on the history of Albania from antiquity. He was among the first foreigners to consider such important questions as the origin of the Albanian people and its language. He does not claim to be a linguist and admits that the Albanian language is 'almost unknown' to him. However, although his stay in Albania lasted only some six months, basing himself on Leake's work on the Albanian language he was able to draw some interesting conclusions.

Another English traveller who applied himself to a study of the history of Albania was Thomas Smart Hughes. In his work 'Travels in Sicily, Greece and Albania' (1820), he gives us a detailed history of the Epirot tribes. However, Hughes did not know Albanian and declares that he feels incapable of presenting mature reflections on the Albanian language and the problems associated with it.

The celebrated traveller Edmund Spencer, who visited Albania in the 40s of the last century, expresses regret at not having been able to acquire "a complete knowledge of this interesting language". In the course of his travels through our country, he

relies on the 1835 dictionary of Karl August Xylander, and he summarises the material he has collected in his work 'Travels in European Turkey in 1850' (1853).

The less well-known English traveller George Ferguson Bowen visited our country towards the end of the 1840s. In his book 'Mount Athos, Thessaly and Epirus: A Diary of a Journey from Constantinople to Corfu' (1852), he gives briefly some reflections on the origin of the Albanian people and its language, recommending to the reader Xylander's work as the best guide to the Albanian language.

Bowen's later book 'Handbook for Travellers in Greece' (1854) treats the Albanian language as quite distinct from other languages. It summarises the data on the historical, ethnographic and linguistic character of the Albanians and Greeks in the first half of the 19th century, based on the observations furnished by English travellers who had visited Albania and Greece in this period.

* * * * *

In general, the British travellers of this period share the view that the Albanian language was a spoken language. On the other hand, they observe that the language was sometimes written down. However, the absence of a complete alphabet impelled Leake and Hobhouse to employ modified Latin alphabets invented by themselves. Leake declares correctly that "the Greek alphabet is unable to express all the Albanian sounds, although the Albanian speech contains all the sounds of the modern Greek dialect". (2) Spencer also indirectly draws attention to the phonetic richness of Albanian when he says "I never met with any people that pronounced with greater facility our difficult 'th'" (3), and affirms that the Albanian language "contains all the guttural sounds of Celtic" (4) and that he had

received this information in Elbasan from an Albanian coming from Mirdita, a cultivated man called Nikolla Kapeli (4).

As for the dialects of Albanian, the British travellers confirm the existence of two principal dialects -- the northern and the southern. Hobhouse and Leake were familiar with the northern dialect only through Da Lecce's grammar, but later travellers entered into direct contact with the northern dialect through their travels in the north of the country. Spencer writes that Xylander's grammar and dictionary served him well when he visited Çamëria but not so well "among the inhabitants of Mirdita and the Tosks, even though the latter speak the language in all its purity". (5)

However, the main problem which drew the attention of the British travellers of this period was that of the origin of the language and, in consequence, of the Albanian people. Holland says: "The discovery . . . of a people in the mountainous districts of Illyricum and Macedonia and in some parts of the ancient Epirus who were distinct in language, dress and national customs, has naturally excited attention as to the source whence they are derived." (6)

One must emphasise that it is the merit of the British travellers that they were among the first foreigners to raise, in the first half of the 19th century, such an important and fundamental question. Furthermore, several of them succeeded in answering this question as scientifically as the level of knowledge at this time permitted.

The most remarkable figure in this connection is Leake, who founded his thesis on the origin of the Albanian people and its language on historical data, as well as on linguistic studies of the Albanian language,

which he knew better than Hans Thunmann (1774). Leake's studies later served other Albanologists, from Franz Bopp to Gustav Meyer, to establish with certainty that Albanian belongs to the Indo-European family of languages.

Before dealing with the linguistic aspect of the question, Leake gives an account of the ancient and mediaeval history of Albania. He declares that "throughout the whole course of Grecian history, from its earliest sources to the fall of the Constantinopolitan Empire, we find a people distinct from the Greeks in race and language inhabiting the North-Western side of the country (Greece -- Sh. M.) and extending along the ridges which border the sea-coast or run parallel to it" (7).

Leake advanced the idea that our language is a continuation of Illyrian and that the Albanians are descendants of the Illyrians, autochthonous on their territories. He was very familiar with classical authors such as Scylax, Thucydides, Ptolomy, Skylitzes, Nicephorus Bryennius, Anna Comnena, George Pachymeres, Nicephorus Gregorias, Laonicus Chalcondyles, Cantacuzeno, Edward Gibbon, etc. Leake's merits are seen to be all the greater when one takes into account the small number of documents written in Albanian which he knew and which served him as the basis for his studies. It was only some years after the publication of Leake's work that the New Testament was published in Albanian, in Vangjel Meksi's translation, which Meyer described as "a precious mine for the linguistic work of Xylander and Hahn" (8). Xylander relied above all on the work of Da Lecce and Leake at a moment when, thanks to the New Testament, he was given a treasury of 3,500 Albanian words.

The fact that Albanian contains many words of foreign origin caused Hobhouse to advance the erroneous

theory that Albanian was "a mixture of various languages" (9) and that the Albanians themselves are "a mixture of different nations, composed of the descendants of Greeks, Romans, Goths, Vandals, Spanish, Italians, Bulgarians and Ottomans" (10).

Holland's views on this question are more interesting and scientifically objective. He asserts: "The Albanians are directly descended from the original population of the country where they now live and we have in this people a remnant of the ancient Illyrians preserved to these later times by the mountainous character of their country, and by the warlike and independent habits which have always distinguished them". (11).

Byron, too, regarded Albanian as an ancient language which sounded to his ear like the Celtic language. He also reached the conclusion that the Albanians greatly resembled the Scottish highlanders. In fact, Byron did not concern himself with linguistic studies, but the fact that he made an effort to characterise the Albanian language was important for his time.

Hughes inclined to the thesis of the Asiatic origin of the Albanians, saying: "The features of the Albanian -- his narrow forehead, keen grey eye, small mouth, thin arched eyebrow, high cheek bones and pointed chin -- give him a very marked Scythian physiognomy". (12) Despite this error, the work of this writer was not without importance; it became well known and aroused the interest of the British and European public in the Albanian language and the people who spoke it.

Bowen held to the Illyrian origin of the Albanian people, saying: "On the whole, it seems probable that the modern Albanians are the representatives of the

ancient Illyrians and that they were driven southwards by the Slavonian migrations, which settled in Dalmatia and the adjacent provinces". (13) But this traveller did not know Albanian and was not really concerned with linguistic questions.

Spencer, too, shares the opinion of most of the British travellers that Albanian is not only an ancient language, but that it draws its origin from Illyrian. This affirmation, made at a time when the linguistic study of Albanian was only taking its first steps, had special importance and made a great contribution to the history of linguistic research into Albanian. Archaeological data would later confirm beyond doubt the correctness of this view.

* * * * *

This survey of the contacts of British travellers with the Albanian language in the first half of the 19th century gives rise to some general conclusions.

Some of these travellers contributed to the study of Albanian as editors of grammars or dictionaries of the Albanian language. In spite of inevitable defects, their work is of interest for the history of Albanian. The edited versions Da Lecce's grammar and of Daniel's dictionary were also important for the propagation of the Albanian language among European scientific circles. The British travellers give us information on Albanian and Arbëresh authors such as Bardhi, Budi, Kavalioti, Mashi, Evstrat Vithkuqari -- even on such a little known author as Vecilli (Bicili?).

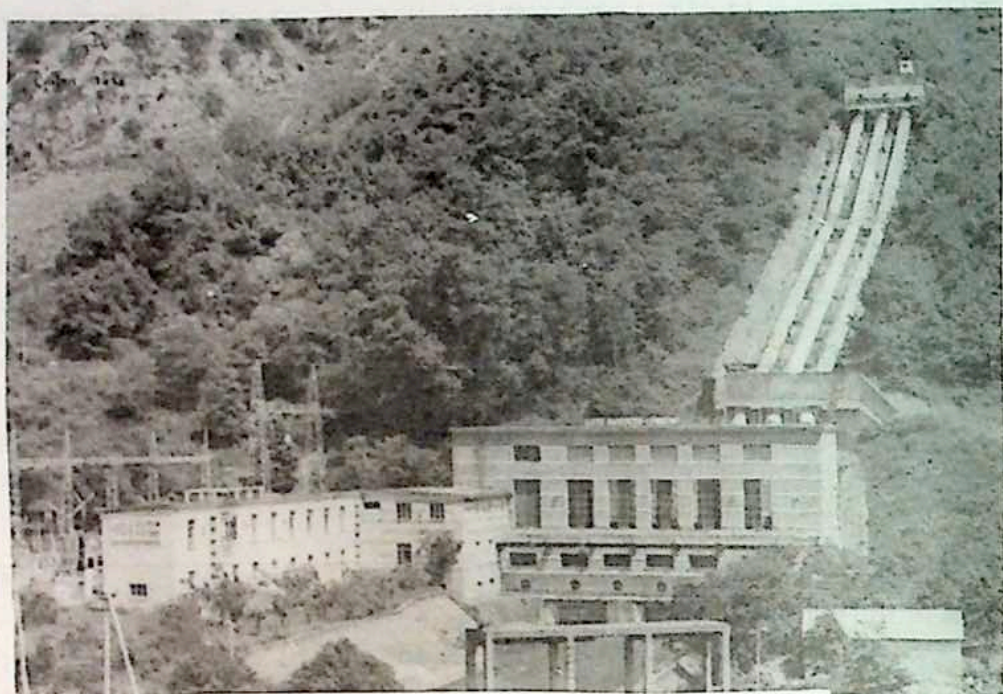
According to the British travellers, the Albanian language is an ancient one which the Albanians inherited from generation to generation through the senses. Their general opinion on the Illyrian origin of Albanian and the autochthonous character of the

Albanians in their territories was of great importance for later studies.

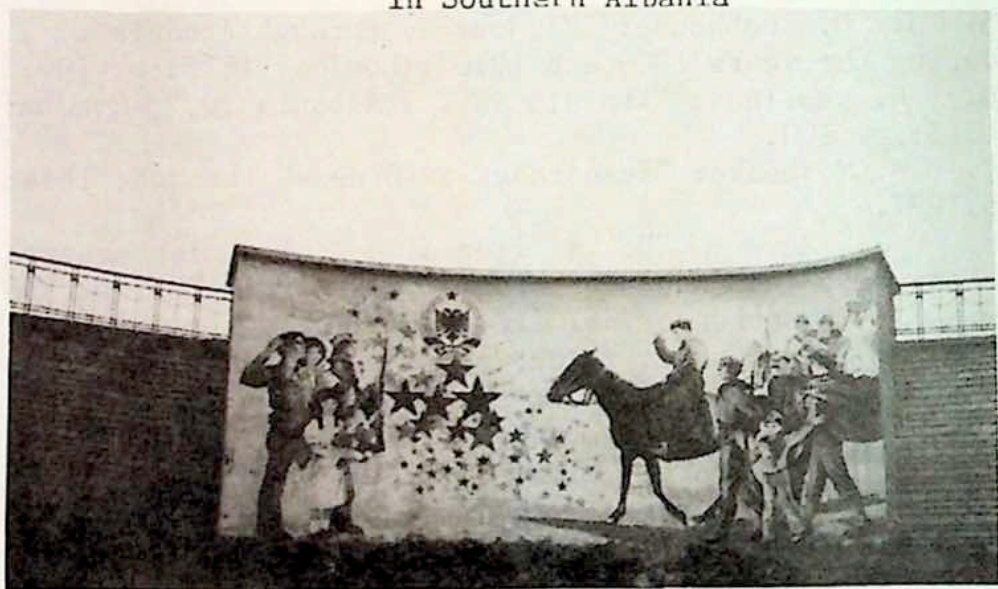
The British travellers declared that Albanian, with its own grammatical structure, was a language as rich as other languages both from the phonetical and from the lexical viewpoint. Apart from dialectal differences, natural to all languages, they concluded that Albanian constituted a single language common to all Albanians, who formed a separate nation, distinct from all others.

Finally, the interest which their observations aroused among the broad European public was important for our national culture.

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1. George Byron: "Childe Harold's Pilgrimage: A Romaunt"; London; 1812; p. 57.
 2. E. Spencer: "Travels in European Turkey", Volume 2; London; 1851; p. 132-34.
 3. E. Spencer: *ibid.*; p. 133-34.
 4. E. Spencer: *ibid.*; p. 133.
 5. J. C. Hobhouse: "A journey through Albania . . . during the years 1809 and 1810"; London; 1813; p. 100.
 6. H. Holland: "Travels in . . . Albania . . .", London; 1815; p. 100.
 7. W. M. Leake: "Researches in Greece"; London; 1814; p. 237.
 8. G. Meyer: "Della lingua e della letteratura albanese", in: 'Nuova antologia', 15 April 1885; p. 598.
 9. J. C. Hobhouse: *op. cit.*; p. 1125.
 10. J. C. Hobhouse: *ibid.*; p. 1130.
 11. H. Holland: *op. cit.*; p. 100-01.
 12. T. S. Hughes: "Travels in Sicily, Greece and Albania", Volume 2; London; 1820; p. 96.
 13. G. F. Bowen: "Mount Athos, Thessaly and Epirus: A diary of a journey from Constantinople to Corfu": London; 1852; p. 191.
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Hydro-electric power station
in Southern Albania



Mural in Përmet

OBITUARY

Lasgush Poradeci -- 1899-1987.

By the Editorial Board of 'Les Lettres Albanaises'

On 12 November 1987, on the eve of the 75th anniversary of the proclamation of independence, the distinguished Albanian poet Lasgush Poradeci closed his eyes for ever. It was he who half century ago wrote:

"The mountains are filled with snow;
the sea is filled with ships;
and the poor town of Vlora
is filled with guests.
But these are not guests;
they are Tosks and highlanders
who, elegant as bridegrooms,
bear a flag of red".

Lasgush Poradeci was both a lyrical and an epic poet. In his lyrical verses he sang of the beauty of Albania, of love for his native land. In his epic verse, ballads and rhapsodies, he evoked the great events of our history and extolled the heroes of our struggle for national liberation.

"Accustomed to his absence" Ismail Kadare confided to us, "for his age and state of health obliged him to appear only rarely in public, we yet felt his poetry to be very close to us". In fact, men of different generations can speak in these terms of his poetry: from his contemporaries, for whom this poetry was a model of poetic emancipation, to the youth of our day the poet's verses did not cease to amaze by their artistic finesse, their richness of language, their harmony and elegance, their evocative power.

On November 13th last the mortal remains of the poet lay in state in the great hall of the Union of

Writers and Artists of Albania in order that a last tribute could be paid to him by his friends, by writers and artists, by workers in diverse cultural and artistic centres, and by the students and school-children of the capital. Among those paying homage to him were Foto Cami (Member of the Political Bureau and Secretary of the Central Committee of the Party), Manush Myftiu (Member of the Political Bureau of the Party and Deputy Prime Minister), Dritëro Agolli (President of the Union of Writers and Artists), Aleks Buda (President of the Academy of Sciences) and Alfred Uçi (President of the Committee of Culture and the Arts).

Two or three days later the Union of Writers and Artists held its Plenum to discuss contemporary Albanian poetry. And present there, at the heart of the discussions, was the living poetry of Lasgush Poradeci. For the poet had always closely followed the throbbing life of Albanian poetry.

The town of Pogradec. . . Its lake, the beauty of which the poet had painted so vividly. . . For the last two years the inhabitants of the little town had not seen the poet, who was almost ninety years old and in poor health. But he appeared at last in this month of November 1987. He came home to be buried in his birthplace, as he had wished.

The promenade was lined on both sides with people -- veterans of the national liberation war and kerchiefed girls. Behind his coffin walked Aleks Buda (President of the Academy of Sciences), Alfred Uçi (President of the Committee of Culture and the Arts), Nasi Lera (Secretary of the Union of Writers and Artists), Gaqo Bushaka, (Director of the Naim Frashëri Publishing House), along with writers and artists from Tirana, Elbasan, Librazhd and Korça.

At the end of the promenade, the funeral cortège began to climb a hill, at the summit of which, between a weeping willow and a cypress, the poet would be laid to rest.

The funeral oration was delivered by the poet Llazar Siliqi (member of the Presidency of the Union of Writers and Artists):

"We are gathered here today to say a last farewell to Lasgush Poradeci, the living embodiment of Albanian poetry, one of our greatest lyric poets, who has astonished his readers since the twenties of this century by verses of striking beauty in the collections 'The Dance of the Stars' and 'The Star of the Heart'. He was a master of his art who enriched Albanian poetry. He is known as the poet of Albanian nature, of love, of the ideals of man who will surmount all dangers and difficulties, who will make every sacrifice, in order that life may go on -- as in the poems 'The Genie of the Boat' and 'The Death of the Stork'. On the other hand, the well-known ballads dedicated to the partisan heroes Reshit and Muharrem Çollaku and the poem 'Charge!', dedicated to the insurrection of the highlanders in 1911, are among the freshest, liveliest and most dynamic of his works, imbued with a deep folk spirit and love of country. The later works of Lasgush Poradeci bear witness, without any doubt, to the rejuvenation of his talent in the healthy climate of the epoch of the Party".

Then Llazar Siliqi described the life of the poet, his studies, his activities, the years of his old age.

"The years will pass", he said, "but your name, Lasgush, will remain unforgettable. Your lyric poems of rare beauty, your powerful epic verse, will live for ever -- as will your love for your people, for your country, for its wonderful language, for the poetry of

the people".

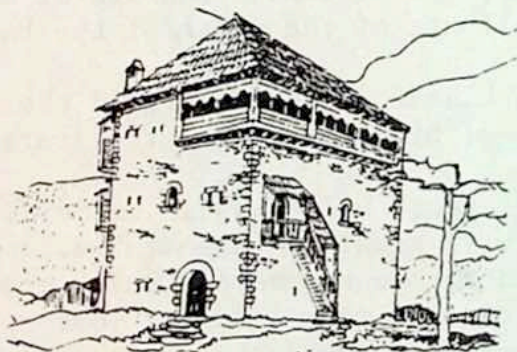
Then Misto Marko spoke in the name of the poet's friends, his voice shaking with sorrow. And, finally, Professor Aleks Buda (President of the Academy of Sciences) recited a few words to his childhood friend from one of his poems:

"O ancient song, poem of my land!
O cherished word that makes me tremble . . ."

Wreaths were laid on the poet's grave in the name of the Ministry of Education, the Union of Writers and Artists, the Committee of Culture and the Arts, the Academy of Sciences, the Enver Hoxha University of Tirana, the Pogradec Party Committee, the Pogradec People's Council, and the family of the deceased.

The writers and artists who came to accompany the poet to his last resting place took the road home just as the sun was setting over the mountains of Mokër, making the lake glow as though it were on fire.

Such natural beauty cannot fail to recall to those who pass by the great lyric poet of Pogradec, who took the name of this lakeside town and made it synonymous with poetry.



THE LAKE

A poem by Lasgush Poradeci

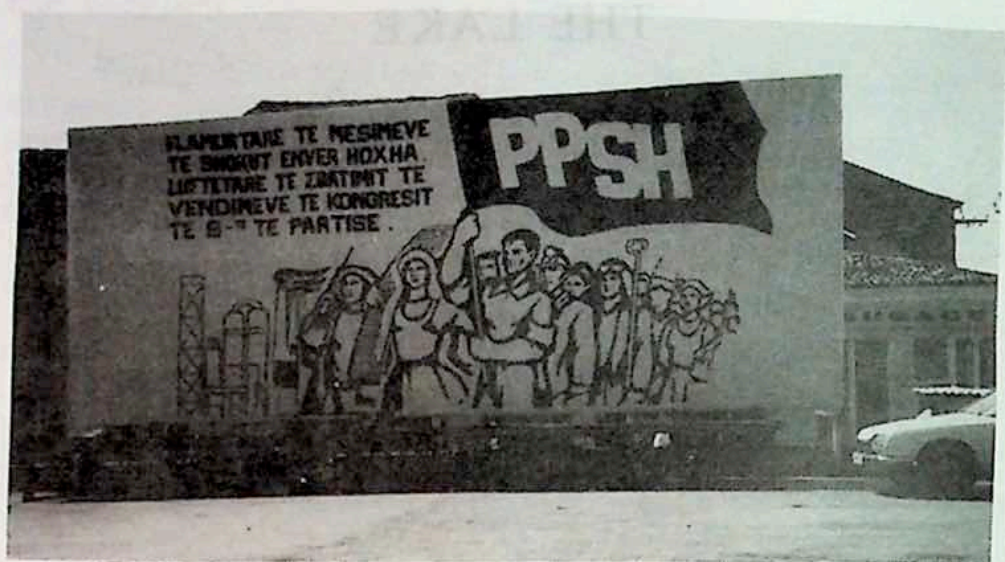
The azure lake is calm,
taking its midday rest;
its water's dazzling gleam
springs from its yawning depths.

The gentle waves caress its bank,
sweetly and silently,
and from its mossy shore
pass tiny fishing-boats.

And where they skim and glide
over the peaceful waves.
their motion leaves behind
great ripples in their wake.

These spread within your heart
wider and wider still,
like those upon the lake
from lonely painted boats.





"Standard-bearers of the teachings
of Comrade Enver Hoxha.
Warriors of the application of the
decisions of the 9th Congress of the Party"



Elbasan

ALBANIAN SOCIETY MEETINGS

On May 1st, 1988 the Midlands Branch of the Society participated in the holding of a concert in Birmingham which included Albanian music. The artists included Paula Bednarczyk and Dave Smith.

On June 3rd, the North-East England Branch of the Society held a meeting in Newcastle at which Liam McDowall spoke on "Socialist Realism and the Albanian Film". The lecture was followed by the screening of the Albanian feature film "Apasionata".

On June 3rd, Ron Gregory, Secretary of the South Wales Branch, gave a talk on Albania, illustrated with slides, to the Brackla Women's Institute.

On June 6th, Ron Gregory gave a talk on Albania, illustrated with slides, to the Wednesday Club, Bridgend.

On June 11th the London and South-east England Branch of the Society held a meeting in London at which David Keating spoke on "The Legal System in Albania", and the Albanian documentary films "Energy" and "Mediaeval Art in Albania" were screened.

On June 18th, the South Wales Branch organised a bookstall of Albanian literature at the National Union of Mineworkers' Gala in Swansea.



NEW MAGAZINES

Price
(inc. postage)

NEW ALBANIA, No. 1, 1983: 50p.
Report on the 1937 Plan; Lushnja; the National Library; town planning in Tirana; the painter Vladimir Jani; Byron; Skanderbeg in foreign literature; the school for amateurs; olives; glassware; sport in 1987.

ALBANIA TODAY, No. 6, 1987 50p.
Ramiz Alia's address to the Trade Union Congress; the role of science; the youth; human individuality in socialist civilisation; contemporary folklore.

ALBANIA TODAY, No. 1, 1988 50p.
The principle of self-reliance; the Albanian national movement; the independence of Albania in its Balkan framework; health care; the 8th Five Year Plan.



March of competition

ALBANIAN NEWS

(January - April 1988)

POLITICS

January:

Activities were organised to celebrate the 42nd anniversary of the proclamation of the Republic (11th.)

February:

The Central Council of the Trade Unions of Albania convened in Tirana (17th).

The General Council of the Women's Union of Albania convened in Tirana (27th).

March:

The 5th Plenum of the Central Committee of the Party of Labour convened in Tirana to discuss Foto Çami's report on the role of socialist culture (1st-2nd).

April:

The third anniversary of the death of Enver Hoxha was commemorated (11th).

DIPLOMACY

January:

The Ambassador of the FR of Germany Friedrich Kroneck, the Italian Ambassador Giorgio De Andreis, the Mexican Ambassador Enrique Gonzales Casanova, and the Ecuadorian Ambassador Carlos Uribe Laso, presented their credentials to President Ramiz Alia.

The Albanian Ambassador to the FR of Germany, Shpëtim Caushi, presented his credentials to President Richard von Weizsacker.

Diplomatic relations between Albania and Bulgaria were raised to ambassadorial level.

February:

The Icelandic Ambassador Thordur Einarsson and the Ambassador of the German Democratic Republic Dieter Kulitzka presented their credentials to President Ramiz Alia.

The Albanian Ambassador to Turkey Nesip Kaçi presented his credentials to President Kenan Evren.

March:

The Swiss Ambassador Pierre-Yves Simonin and the Ambassador of the Philippines Thomas T. Syquia presented their credentials to President Ramiz Alia,

The Albanian Ambassador to Austria Engjell Kolaneci presented his credentials to President Kurt Waldheim.

April:

The Nicaraguan Ambassador Roger Vasquez Berrios, the Canadian Ambassador Terence Charles Bacon, the Ambassador of Zimbabwe Chimbidzayi Sanyangare, and the Maltese Ambassador Maurice Abela presented their credentials to President Ramiz Alia.

The Albanian Ambassador to Colombia, Dashnor Dervishi, presented his credentials to President Virgilio Barco-Vargas.

FOREIGN VISITORS

Among foreign visitors and delegations to Albania during the period under review were:

January:

Greek MP Jorgo Ralis.

A group of deputies of the French National Assembly.

The Bulgarian Deputy-Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ivan Ganev.

February:

A delegation of the French Ministry of Foreign

Affairs, led by State Secretary Didier Bariani.

A Cuban trade delegation, led by the Minister of Foreign Trade, Ricardo Gabrietas Ruiz.

The First Secretary of the Communist Party of Spain (Marxist-Leninist), Raul Marcos.

March:

A Greek government delegation, led by the Deputy-Minister of National Economy, Yanni Papantoniou.

The Secretary of the CC of the Communist Party of Brazil, José Renato Rabelo.

A group of functionaries of the United Nations Programme on Development.

A government trade delegation from Vietnam.

April:

A Cuban government delegation, led by the Minister of Economic Cooperation, Ernesto Melendes.

A delegation of the Sweden-Albania Friendship Association, led by Hans Rockberg.

The First Secretary of the Communist Party of Canada (Marxist-Leninist), Hardial Bains.

FOREIGN VISITS

Among Albanians and Albanian delegations going abroad during the period under review were:

January:

Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Muhamet Kapllani to Greece.

A delegation of the Labour Youth Union to the Dominican Republic.

A trade union delegation to Egypt.

February:

A delegation of the LYU to Algeria and Western Sahara.

A delegation, led by Foreign Minister Reis Malile, to the meeting of Balkan Foreign Ministers in Belgrade

(24-26th). (See previous issue for text of speech).

A delegation led by Minister of Health Ahmet Kamberi to Vietnam.

March:

President of the Academy of Sciences Aleks Buda to the FR of Germany.

April:

A trade delegation, led by Minister of Light Industry Vito Kapo, to Turkey.

A government delegation, led by Foreign Minister Reis Malile, to Greece.

FOREIGN TRADE

In February an agreement on economic, industrial and technical cooperation was signed with France, and a trade agreement for 1988 with Cuba.

In March the first session of the Albanian-Greek joint commission on economic and scientific cooperation ended with the signing of an agreement to extend trade between the two countries, and trade agreements for 1988 were signed with Austria and the Netherlands.

In April trade agreements for 1988 were signed with Turkey and Vietnam, and a trade agreement for 1988-92 was signed with Bangladesh,

Albania was represented at the trade fairs in Hanover (January) and Basle (March).

CULTURE

In January an exhibition of Albanian caricature was organised in Bremen (FR of Germany).

In February an agreement on educational and cultural cooperation for 1988-89 was signed with Yugoslavia.

In April the 7th Festival of Albanian Newsreels and Cartoons was held in Tirana, and an agreement on scientific and educational exchanges for 1988-90 was signed between the Enver Hoxha University of Tirana and

the University of Ankara.

Among new books published during the period under review were:

E. Hoxha: "Diary", Volume 2 (1958-59).

E. Hoxha: "Works:", Volumes 58 and 59 (June-November 1976).

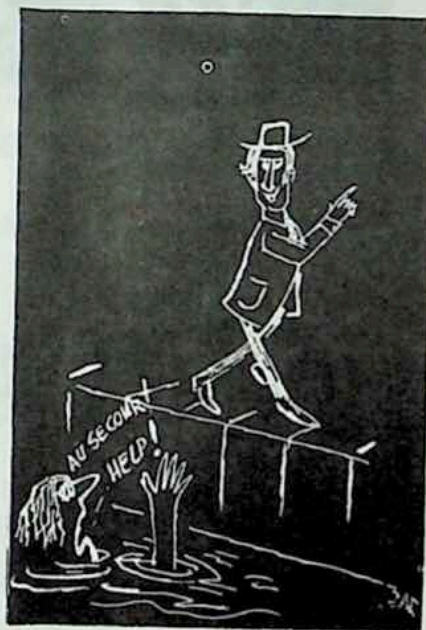
J. V. Goethe: "Selected Works" (4 volumes).

S. Spasse: "Educational Reflections".

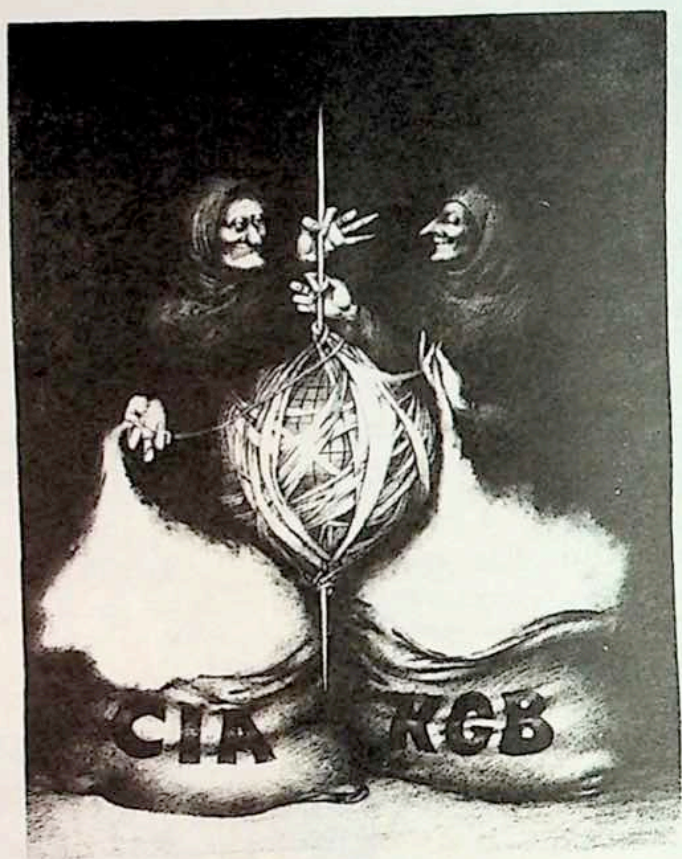
MISCELLANEOUS

At 02.02 (local time) on 9 January an earthquake with a magnitude of 4.8 on the Richter scale was registered. The epicentre was in the vicinity of Tirana. There were no casualties, but material damage was caused to some buildings.

In January the Albanian Telegraphic Agency characterised as "completely false" the report by the Yugoslav TANJUG news agency that 'opponents' of the regime had blown up a bridge in Albania,



- Wait till I inform some charitable institution



The spinners.
Cartoon by Gëzim Qëndro

ADVANCE NOTICE

This year is the centenary of the birth of Byron, and at 3 p.m. on the afternoon of SUNDAY, 27 NOVEMBER the Albanian Society will present a talk by the Secretary of the Society, BILL BLAND, on

BYRON AND ALBANIA

illustrated by readings from the poet's letters and poems by actor PHILIP MADOC.

There will also be a screening of a new documentary film entitled

ALBANIA

and of a new (1987) feature film with English subtitles entitled

A HARD BEGINNING

which tells of the trials of a new stepmother.

The meeting will be held at

THE BRITANNIA HOTEL
(Grosvenor Square, London W1)

which is equipped with large-screen video equipment.

THE ALBANIAN SOCIETY

will present

on SATURDAY, 8 OCTOBER at 5 p.m.

in the ground-floor hall of

TOLMERS SQUARE COMMUNITY CENTRE,

Hampstead Road, London NW1

(Underground stations: Euston Square or Warren Street)

a talk by LAURIE PRESCOTT on

THE WORLD AS SEEN FROM TIRANA

followed by a video screening of the film

SONG OF YOUTH

which tells the story of a young woman amateur singer,
a railway worker from Durrës.

Bookstall

Refreshments
