

CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN NATIONALIST DISCOURSE IN ALBANIA
DURING NATIONAL AWAKENING, COMMUNISM AND POST-
COMMUNISM PERIODS

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ABSTRACT

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COMMUNISM PERIODS**

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This thesis analyses the nationalist discourse in Albania during three periods of its modern history: National Awakening (1878-1912), Communism (1944-1990) and Post-Communism (1990-2002). The aim is, with the help of recent scientific literature on the subject of nationalism, to investigate the continuities and changes in nationalist discourse in Albania and the socio-political reasons behind them.

Keywords: Discourse, Nationalism

ÖZ

MİLLİ UYANIŞ, KOMÜNİZM, VE KOMÜNİZM SONRASI ARNAVUTLUK'TA
MİLLİYETÇİ SÖYLEMİN SÜREKLİĞİ VE DEĞİŞİMİ

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Bu tezde, modern Arnavutluk tarihinin üç döneminde olan milliyetçi söylem ele alınmaktadır. Bu üç dönem sırasıyla şöyle adlandırılmaktadır: Milli Uyanış (1878-1912), Komünizm (1994- 1990) ve Komünizm Sonrası (1990-2002). Tezin asıl, milliyetçilik hakkında yakın zamanlarda yapılan bilimsel çalışmalardan yardım alarak, Arnavutluktaki milliyetçi söylemin tecrübe ettiği değişimi ve sürekliliği, tüm bunların arkasında yatan sosyo-politik nedenlerle birlikte alınmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Milliyetçilik, Söylem

To my parents: *me dashuri dhe mirënjohje*



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PHONETIC TRANSCRIPTION OF ALBANIAN LETTERS

In *Albanian- English Dictionary* (Duro and Hysa 1988), the pronunciation of Albanian letters is rendered in terms of equivalent sounds in English as follows:

a as a in father	p as p in plural
b as b in better	r as r in room
c as ts in Tsar	rr as rr in burrow
ç as ch in cherry	s as s in sea
d as d in door	sh as sh in she
dh as th in these	t as t in two
e as e in set	th as th in three
ë as e in term	u as oo in loom
f as f in for	v as v in value
g as g in go	x as dz in adz (e)
gj as g in legion	xh as j in jester
h as h in history	y as u in une (French)
i as i in machine	z as z in zone
j as y in year	zh as si in vision
k as k in kind	
l as l in land	
ll as ll in all	
m as m in man	
n as n in now	
nj as ni in onion	
o as o in long	

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The last decade of the Twentieth Century in the Balkans experienced the savage ethnic conflicts of ex-Yugoslavia. These conflicts questioned not only the future in the region, but also the principles of democracy, tolerance, and human rights, and they posed a serious challenge to the project of united Europe. The new century began with a new conflict in the last ex- Yugoslav republic that was left untouched by the flames of war, Macedonia. Can we hope that the ongoing trial of Milosevic in International Tribunal in Hague will serve as the symbolic seal to ethnic conflicts in the Balkans? It is naïve to think that Milosevic is the only cause of ethnic strife in former-Yugoslavia and that after his removal from power the future in the Balkans is promising. Without a stable and permanent solution to the ethnic problems in the region, the actual peace remains fragile. Studies on the manifestations of nationalism in the Balkans can play an important function in this direction.

This thesis developed out of the concern with the recent ethnic wars in Kosova and in the Former-Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), in which ethnic Albanians living in these countries were involved. Many interpreted these conflicts as provoked by Albanian nationalists whose ultimate goal was the creation of a Greater Albania in the Balkans by carving territories from Serbia, Macedonia, and possibly from Greece. Such accounts are simplifications of the phenomenon of Albanian nationalism. A closer look at it would highlight certain complexities that derive from the constraints of certain institutional arrangements, such as boundaries, international powers, socio-economic developments, interethnic relations and political systems, to the imagination and goals of the actors themselves. The Albanians in the Balkans consider themselves and are considered by others to be part of a single nation, but since 1913, when the boundaries of Albania were established, they have been living apart in

different Balkan states without much communication with each other. Since the Albanian national movement in 1878-1912, there have been no other pan-Albanian national movements, although the idea of an Ethnic Albania has been kept alive, mainly in Albanian émigré communities abroad. Therefore, more scrutinized research on Albanian nationalism which pay attention to the diversity and contingency of the ideas grouped under the terms 'Albanian nationalism' is needed. The focus of this thesis is on the nationalist discourse in the Republic of Albania. The main assumption is that this discourse has demonstrated continuity but also important changes over time in different socio-political contexts. Therefore, the hypothesis of the thesis is the following: Different socio-political contexts that developed over time had a definite impact on Albanian nationalism. The contexts chosen are the period of National Awakening (1878-1912), Communism (1945-1990), and Post-Communism (1990-2002). The three periods have been important for the emergence of Albanian nation, state and nationalism. Each of these periods was a break with the past and a new beginning for Albania and the Albanians. Therefore, old identities were shattered and transformed to new ones. These changes were reflected in the nationalist discourse in Albania. For each period, the imagining of Albanian nation as expressed by important actors, is analyzed. The representatives for the National Awakening period are Naim Frashëri, Sami Frashëri and Pashko Vasa, whose works were crucial for the founding of Albanian national culture. For the imagining of the Albanian nation during Communism we depend on the works of Enver Hoxha, who ruled the country during most of this period and whose orientations and directions regulated all spheres of life in Albania. As articulators of Albanian nationalist discourse in Post-Communism two intellectuals of a nationalist party, Abdi Baleta and Hysamedin Feraj are taken.

The thesis starts with a theoretical framework within which the subject is organized and analyzed. Then each of the three above-mentioned periods is treated in a separate chapter. Each chapter contains a section on the socio-political situation of the period under analysis, another on the components of nationalist discourse, and ends with a section where the main arguments of the chapter are recapitulated. The nationalist discourse of each period is analyzed by the components of the imagining of the nation, the relationship of the national identity with religious and regional identities,

how the nation is defined in contrast to its imagined enemies, national myths and evaluation of national historical, political and cultural heritage. In the concluding chapter of the thesis, the main arguments and hypothesis are revised and discussed.



CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The 'nation' and the body of ideas and statements connected to it, commonly referred to as nationalism, are multifaceted phenomena. No single theory in the social sciences has been able to fully explain their emergence and functioning. In the ongoing debates, it is generally accepted that the nation is a modern creation, but there are many agreements on the main cause behind it: Nairn (1981) argues that uneven capitalist development caused conflict of interests in colonized world, which took a national character and later were transferred to Western core countries as well; Gellner (1983) argues that the rapid industrialization created the need for cultural homogenization, which in turn brought the creation of nations; Kedourie (1993) traces nationalism to transformation of Kant's ideas of human beings as autonomous, by intellectuals alienated from their social environment; Anderson (1991) gives emphasis to the print capitalism that made possible the imagination of the nation as a community; Breuilly (1994) stresses politics and the state institutions as the main factors behind the formation of nations; Van den Berghe (1979) is among the few who think that nationalism is based on biological drive towards kin selection and nepotism, which makes the nation resemble to an extended kinship group. There is also dissent among scholars on the importance of the pre-modern historical past for the nation: on one side, Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983) argue that the traditions claimed by the nation are in fact invented by political elites in modern times; on the other side Smith (1987) argues that the myths and memories of the pre-modern past play an essential role in the existence of the nations. Historically speaking, we can distinguish between 'old nations' formed in the absolute monarchies in Western Europe, where a national identity and some sort of national consciousness were acquired long before the formulation of a nationalist

doctrine, and 'new nations' in Eastern and Central Europe in the Nineteenth Century, "for whom the two processes developed simultaneously: the formation of national consciousness and the creation of nationalist movements" (Seton-Watson, 1994: 134). This division corresponds to what other social scientists have termed 'civil' ('territorial') and 'ethnic' ('cultural') types of nationalism. Civil nationalism refers to processes in which the absolute rule of monarchs in Western European states was transformed to the rule of citizens, who have equal rights, freedoms, and duties. These citizens by the virtue of their alliance to the same institutions of the state formed a nation. Ethnic nationalism refers to political movements whose members aimed at the creation of independent states, generally out of multinational empires, for a cultural group that they perceived to constitute a nation. Albanian nationalism, whose discourse is analyzed in this thesis belongs, belongs to the 'ethnic' type because it attempted to create an independent state based on a perceived Albanian nation out of territories that in the Nineteenth Century were under the administration of the Ottoman Empire.

Recent studies on nationalism rather than concentrating on answering the question "what is a nation", have been dealing with the ways in which the nation as a political and cultural form is institutionalized (Brubaker, 1996). Such a perspective gives priority to political discourses in which the ideas centered on the nation are circulated. In the same vein, this thesis focuses on the continuity and changes in the nationalist discourse in Albania during three periods: National Awakening (1878-1912), Communism (1944-1990), and Post-Communism (1990-2002). The term 'discourse' is used in Foucauldian sense of an "individualizable group of statements", or in other words, a group of utterances and statements that "seem to be regulated in some way and which seem to have a coherence and a force to them in common" (Mills, 1997: 7). What differentiates the nationalist discourse from other political discourses is that it is centered upon the 'nation'. Nationalist discourse claims that the interests and values of the nation stand above all other interest and values. By claiming to speak in the name of a nation, the nationalist discourse creates and reshapes the nation. The nation comes to existence and lives through the nationalist discourse. In this sense, it can be said that the nation is an "imagined political community" (Anderson, 1991: 6). The main assumption behind the definition of the nation as a community that is imagined through the

nationalist discourse is that the nation is not a fixed and unchangeable entity. This does not mean that it is false; as Anderson puts it, "communities are to be distinguished, not by their falsify/genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined" (ibid.). Therefore, it can be said that a nation exists in so far as some people imagine themselves to be part of it, although they may have invented many aspects of their national traditions in order to establish the continuity of the nation with an alleged historical past.

The Albanian nation was firstly imagined in the nineteenth century by Albanian intellectuals who, similar to other intellectuals in Eastern Europe, wrote and propagated about on behalf of their 'nation'. If in Western Europe intellectuals as a social group had to compete with other groups -state bureaucrats, entrepreneurial classes, aristocracy, working classes- in Central and Eastern Europe they acquired a near-monopoly in the formation of nation and national languages (Schöpflin, 2000: 19-20). Nevertheless, nationalist intellectuals had to work within (1) institutional and (2) cultural constraints. Institutional constraints are mainly social, political and economic factors that influence nationalist discourse and make it variable over time. Crises in the institutional order provide opportunities for the formation of new identities or reformations of old ones. This thesis is organized around such institutional crises that made possible, in the first place, the nationalist discourse and the imagining of an Albanian nation in the Nineteenth Century and later on the changes in this discourse during Communism and Post-Communism.

Cultural constraints, on the other hand, have to do with the cultural heritage of the past that nationalists use in the construction of their nation. The nations can exist only in the context of nationalist discourse, which makes them modern, but the discourse itself is constructed by cultural elements: memories and myths of ethnic communities. Even if we agree with Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983) that traditions and historical pasts of nations are invented and manipulated by elites, the elites themselves are not free to choose *any* past or tradition, nor can they create them out of nothing. Elites have to choose or create traditions from the already existing pool of memories and myths of ethnic communities, although elites may add other elements and transform the tradition and the historical past to fit their interests in a given socio-political context.

For the purpose of this thesis we follow Smith's definition of an ethnic community, or 'ethnie': "a named human population with myths of common ancestry, and shared culture, including an association with a homeland and some degree of solidarity, at least among the elites" (Smith, 1999: 13). Ethnies have always existed in human history, sometimes persisting, sometimes merging with one another in the formation of new ethnies. What distinguishes the nation sociologically from ethnies is a mass, public culture, a common economy and common legal rights and duties for all members. Often in nationalist discourse the nation is not distinguished from the ethnie: rather it is the nation that persist in all historical ages and waits to be 'awaken' or 'resurrected' in the present. According to Anthony D. Smith, "the nation may be a modern social formation, but it is in some sense based on pre-existing cultures, identities, and heritages" (1995a: 13). Smith uses the metaphor of archaeologist to describe how the nationalist intellectuals (re)construct the nation from the ethnic past: (1) they try to provide a suitable past for their nations; (2) they want to relate the past to the present era; and (3) they want to provide inspiration and models for the regeneration of the community (ibid.: 15-6). The role of ethnic elements is especially crucial in times of institutional crises. Nationalists use the historical past to "overcome radical uncertainty, by finding concrete models to redefine collective goals and myths of destiny by which to unify and energize populations in the task of regeneration" (Hutchinson, 2000: 657). For this reason, an important part of the thesis is devoted to the identification of myths of Albanian nationalism in the three periods by referring to cultural constraints as well.

A myth is a narrative that combines the historical fact with legendary elements. Through myths human collectivities establish an imaginary foundation of their own being, set their own systems of values and ethic and also create emotional bonds for the community. In this sense, we agree with Barthes that "myth is a type of speech...it is a mode of signification...Myth is not defined by the object of its message, but by the way in which it utters this message" (1993: 109). Myths have always accompanied ethnic communities, but in modern era there are some novel elements in the making of myths: (1) the activities of myth making are more widely diffused due to developments in communication technologies; (2) modern myth-making is intrically bound with nationalist worldview of the 'true' relations between social and political units and of

citizens with collectivities; (3) to the new (re)formulated myths in modern era a revolutionary component was added, because nationalism became, in the first place, a vehicle for rapid social change, for mobilizing people to a better future, and for destroying regional ties in the interests of the nation (Smith, 1984: 98-9). Nationalist discourses contain a variety of myths, but among them we always find some constant themes: myths of temporal origin, myths of location, myths of heroic age, myths of decline and myths of regeneration (ibid.: 100-5). Albanian nationalist discourse is no exception: for each of the three periods we will differentiate the various myths created by the Albanian nationalists and analyze the uses that actors made of them.

Myth not only engenders unity and harmony with the national community, but also has the capacity for emphasizing divisions, and “the myths are involved more often for the later” (Connor, 1994: 140). A nation’s myths are proper to it and cannot be appropriated by another. If something like this happens, its members feel their national identity threatened. In fact, every identity is defined both from within and without. A nation is imagined as limited by the existence of all other nations, but for it only some of them, often adjacent to it, that form the ‘significant others’ of its identity. The significant other may be an ethnic group or a nation (1) that threatens the existence of the given nation, or (2) that threatens to blur the distinctiveness of the nation because it may be culturally related to the given nation (Triandafyllidou, 1998: 600). The significant others are an important factor in the formation of the national identity of the Albanian nation, although many Albanian historians and politicians tend to negate it and to claim that the essence of the nation has remained uninfluenced despite the continuous invasion that it has experienced during the centuries.

Nationalists claim to secure the nation against any divisive influence from within the nation. That is why they are very sensitive to the regional and tribal identities of the people. In the case of Albanian nation the religious divisions were added to the burden of Albanian nationalists, in contrast to other Balkan states where the Orthodox Church played a unifying and homogenizing role, thus helping in the institutionalization of the nation.

Once the Albanian nationalist discourse was formed during National Awakening, a constraint was created for the successive articulators of the discourse.

Therefore, in the discussion of the nationalist discourse during Communism a section on its evaluation of National Awakening is included. Consequently, in the analysis of nationalist discourse during Post-Communism we also deal with its evaluation of the National Awakening and Communism.



CHAPTER 3

NATIONAL AWAKENING

Nationalist ideas began circulating in Albanian émigré communities since the beginning of the nineteenth century. But for the Albanian National Awakening, the crucial moment was in 1878 when the League of Prizren was formed. The League was the first organization in the history of Albania that behaved on behalf of the Albanian *nation*. During its three years of existence the ground was set for the formation of Albanian nationalist discourse and political demands that would remain essentially the same till the proclamation of Albanian independence in 1912. Therefore, before turning to the analysis of Albanian nationalist discourse, we will look at the institutional framework before and during the League of Prizren.

3.1 Institutional Framework

During the nineteenth century, Albanian inhabited lands were part of the Ottoman Empire. Feudal relations were still predominant. Market oriented capitalist relations were developing slowly in the main cities but a unified market did not exist. The mountainous areas were organized in tribal communities that enjoyed special freedoms granted by the Porte. Albanians were culturally distinguishable from other ethnic communities in Balkans, but they were internally divided. The geography of the country and the poor state of communications made possible the existence of numerous micro-cultures among the Albanians. The two main branches of Albanian ethnics were the Gëgs in north and Tosks in south, with the Shkumbini river in central Albania forming a natural boundary between them. Gëgs and Tosks differed mainly in the spoken dialects of Albanian language, but also in other ways of life (Malcolm, 1998: 14). In addition to the tribes, another source of division was religion. Albanians were

mostly Muslims but there were Catholic tribes in the north-west and Orthodox Christians in the south. The majority of the Muslims were from the Sunni branch but a substantial number of them belonged to Bektashi sect and other minor Sufi orders. Religion has never been a source of open conflict among Albanians, but nevertheless there were frictions between religious communities, who in cities used to live in separate quarters. To this contributed the *millet* system of the Ottoman Empire that privileged the Muslims. Relations between religions became tense when the Ottomans attempted to implement the reforms of *Tanzimat*, which equated the status of Christians with the Muslims. As a consequence, tribal and religious divisions would be the main concern of nationalists.

Administratively, Albanian lands were divided in three *vilayets* till 1875 and in four vilayets afterwards (see Appendix A). The vilayets of 1875- Shkodra, Kosova, Manastir and Janina- included also non-Albanian populations but were created in such a way that in each of them the Muslim populations was predominant. The administrative division of Albanian lands was another source of division and the single most important goal of Albanian nationalists would be the creation of a unified Albanian vilayet.

Politically speaking, Albanian national movement was preceded and influenced by the (1) *ayans*, (2) reforms of *Tanzimat*, and (3) the international situation during and after the Ottoman-Russian war of 1877. The ayans were powerful local lords whose power rested in the ownership of *çifliks*. Ayans who dominated the Albanian political life in the second half of eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth century were Ali Pasha of Janina and the Bushati family of Shkodra. In deviance of the central authority of the Porte, they ruled independently on most of the Albanian lands. Their importance for the Albanian national movement is summarized by Zavalani (1965: 59):

The masters of Janina and Shkodra were not nationalists. Even their patriotism can be questioned, although they professed to be Albanians when it suited their purpose. Doubtless their main motive for action was lust for power and wealth. Nevertheless a study of Albanian nationalism in modern times must begin with them. They were able to unite for several decades considerable parts of the country under common administrations, to curb the particularism of numerous local lords, to make clans of differing religions collaborate in peace as in war. Although using different methods both Ali and the Bushatis taught their countrymen lessons in the advantages of centralized government, and by leading Muslims in battle against the Sultan-Caliph they successfully destroyed the

belief that every Muslim was a Turk with interests best represented by the Porte. Local solidarity beyond the clan level made its appearance in Albania under their leadership. The precedent, while of transient significance at the time, became important half a century later when Ali Pasha and the Bushatis became heroes in the eyes of Albanian nationalists who viewed their exploits as early manifestations of nationalism.

The Albanian ayans' rebellions came to an end when the Porte's armies crushed Ali Pasha in 1821 and Mustafa Bushati ten years later. With the aim to establish central authority and to modernize the empire, the Porte in 1840 began to implement the reforms known as *Tanzimat*. The reforms endangered the position of landlords and chiefs of clans, because they were intended to curb their autonomy of action. The new regular army took from them the income they used to earn as mercenary soldiers. The Muslims in general were not content that the status of Christians would equal theirs. The reforms were a burden also for the popular masses, due to the new taxes and the military service that lasted up to 12 years. Moreover, the new laws of the empire claimed to put an end to the local customs that governed the public life of Albanians. So, the masses were prone to support the chiefs and lords in their opposition to the central government. The numerous local uprisings that occurred in Albania between 1830s and 1870s were seen by most Albanians as the conflict between the people against the functionaries of the central government, some of whom were not Albanians, thus reinforcing the Albanian ethnic identity. The legitimacy of the central government was shaken and the Albanian ruling classes began to search for a new source of legitimacy for the purpose of their opposition to the reforms. This made room for the penetration of the nationalist ideas and for the popularity of the concept of 'Albanian nation' as the highest source of legitimacy (Feraj, 1998: 75-6).

The nineteenth century was the century of liberation wars in the Balkans against the Ottoman Empire. Albanians participated in these wars on both sides. Revolutionary young Albanians, like Naum Veqilharxhi participated in Romanian uprising of 1821. Veqilharxhi was to be one of the pioneers of the Albanian National Awakening. Albanians participated in the Ottoman army that fought against Serb and Greek revolutions, while many Orthodox Albanians fought on the Greek side. Christian Balkan peoples with the help of Russia and European powers achieved their autonomy

or independence from the Ottomans. As soon as the Balkan Christian states were formed, they began making projects for further advances into Ottoman lands. So, in 1844 Serbian minister Ilia Garasanin made a project called 'Nacertania' for the enlargement of the Serbian state and the reestablishment of the medieval empire of Stefan Dusan, which meant incorporating in it Northern Albania; in the same year the Greek prime minister made the plan called 'Megaliidea' for the restoration of the Byzantine Empire. In 1860 Greece and Serbia made their first diplomatic agreement to parcel Albanian lands of the Ottoman Empire: Serbia would take the lands north of Shkumbini river and Greece all the south from Shkumbini river to the Gulf of Arta (Raça, 1990: 90-1). Albanian Muslim landlords felt so threatened by these projects, that to them "independence from Constantinople began to seem less attractive" (Barkey and Chrirot, 1983: 41). On the other hand, it became apparent that Ottoman Empire could not exist for long and Albanian émigrés began forming political organizations for the protection of the interest of Albanian nation.

This was the general situation in Albania at the eve of the Ottoman-Russian war of 1877. The Ottoman army was defeated and the Treaty of San Stefano was signed, according to which the Ottoman lands in Europe were to be divided among Balkan Slavic states. The other powers of Europe objected and gathered in Berlin to revise the Treaty. In the meantime, Albanian landlords and chiefs united in the city of Prizren formed a military league for the protection of their territories. In Istanbul a group of prominent Albanian politicians (including Muslim, Orthodox, and Catholic Albanians) formed the 'Central Committee for the Defense of the Rights of the Albanian Nation', headed by Abdyl Frashëri (Malcolm, 1998: 220). The Committee established contacts with the League in Prizren and they together adopted a political program that called for the unification of all Albanian lands in a single autonomous vilayet, where Albanians would enjoy political, cultural and economic rights. Abdyl Frashëri in a meeting of the League said:

The Porte will do nothing for Albania ...The Porte would probably give up a part of Albania under European pressure...Let us think and work for ourselves. Let there be no difference between Tosks and Glegs. Let us be Albanians and make one Albania" (ibid.: 226).

While the League agreed on the question of autonomy, they were divided on the ways of achieving it: moderates wanted to achieve autonomy only with the assent of sultan, radicals headed by Abdyl Frashëri were determined to fight over the issue, even against the sultan. The League fought Montenegrin armies in the north and countered the territorial claims of Greece in south. Under the pressure of European powers the Porte handed the city of Ulqinj to Montenegro. Outraged by this, the radicals of the League proclaimed a provisional government and took over the administration of four vilayets from the Ottoman authorities. The Porte reacted promptly and crushed the League, arresting its leaders.

3.2 Nationalist Discourse

After the defeat of the League, nationalists continued their political activities by forming cultural societies in Albanian colonies abroad. Such societies existed in Istanbul, Bulgaria, Romania, Italy, Egypt and USA. Through the publishing of books and newspapers they wanted to infuse the national consciousness into the masses as a preparation for the future political activities: “their literary and scientific works brought to Albania a new kind of culture, a secular culture with patriotic content and tendency” (Xholi, 1987: 13). One of the first and the most important societies was formed in Istanbul in 1879, ‘Society for the Printing of Albanian Letters’. It included members such as the brothers of Abdyl Frashëri, Naim Frashëri, who was to be national poet of Albanians, Sami Frashëri, a publicist and writer known in Turkey as Semseddin Sami, and the Catholic Pashko Vasa, the Ottoman governor of Lebanon. The works of these three writers will be taken as exemplary of the Albanian nationalist discourse in the National Awakening period.

3.2.1 Imagining the Nation

The imagining of the nation as a cultural community and as a source of all legal, political and economic life was new not only to the nineteenth-century Albanians, but

also to most parts of Europe of that time. In this respect, Albanian intellectuals were pioneers. Sami Frashëri in *ABC of Albanian Language* (1879) writes:

Human beings on earth are divided in nations. There are many nations on earth. All those people who live in one place, speak one language and have a kind of customs and way of live are a nation (Frashëri, Sami 1988a: 241).

This conception of the nation was influenced by romanticism. This is apparent in the works of Naim Frashëri. In one of his poems he mentions the separation of humanity in different races, among which “the white race is the best”, according to physical and spiritual characteristics, while all the others are “almost barbarians”. The white race, according to him is divided in nations, some of which are mixed with other races (Frashëri, Naim 1986a: 62). On such definitions we see the influence of the ideas of social Darwinism that were predominant in scientific circles at that time. The organicist view of the nation is expressed by Pashko Vasa in his work, originally written in French, *The Truth about Albania and Albanians* (1879): “The life of the nations, alike that of individuals, is subject to anomaly and perturbing...and as everything that has a beginning, the life of nations develops, grows weaker, and finally is transformed” (Vasa, 1987: 69). Nationalist intellectuals thought of Albanian nation as a human community that has in common the ethnic origin, culture, faith in God and destiny. Naim Frashëri (1986a: 115) wrote:

All we Albanians
Are a kin and a race
We all have one destiny,
One blood, one language, one faith.

For nationalists, among the characteristics of Albanian nation, the language was the most important; Naim Frashëri wrote:

Each nation has its own language. The language is what divides human beings in nations. All people that speak the same language are brothers, are a nation, a kin and have the same spirit, one blood, one heart, the same characteristics, customs and motherland (Frashëri, Naim 1986c: 75).

On one hand, the language was the main element that united all Albanians, regardless of differences in customs, religion and tribe, and it distinguished them from their neighbors. In the poem 'Albanian Language', Naim Frashëri urged all Albanians, men and women, old and young, to learn how to read and write the language, because through it they would come closer to each other and be away from the foreigners; the poem ends:

Because the language of Albania
Is God's language
(Frashëri, Naim 1986a: 128).

By learning their own language, Albanians, according to Sami Frashëri would secure their national continuity: "a nation that loses its own language is lost and forgotten...People are not lost but by changing their language, they are themselves changed and become part of another nation" (1988a: 244). He wrote that once Albanians were numerous but their numbers had been reduced with time under the assimilatory pressure of their more learned neighbors. He thought that in modern times the pressure was becoming stronger, due to the modern means of communication and propaganda and because of the political projects of neighbors on Albanian lands. That is why Sami Frashëri in the political pamphlet, *Albania: Past, Present and Future* (1899), writes that the first means to preserve the Albanian nation is the cultivation of native language, the second being the creation of a national Orthodox Church with Albanian liturgy, in order to curb the influence of the churches of Serbia, Bulgaria and, especially Greece on Orthodox Albanians (Frashëri, Sami 1999: 77-8).

The second reason for the emphasis on language was that it was essential to the modernization processes and for the participation of Albanians in the European civilization. According to Sami Frashëri, all nations move from the barbaric stage to civilization. For him Albanians of his time were half-barbarians and through the cultivation of their native language they would acquire the knowledge and sciences of Western civilization (Frashëri, Sami 1988a: 275).

In accordance with nationalist outlook, Albanian nationalists claimed that it is a necessity for the individual to be member of a nation, indeed it is the natural state of human nature:

If man doesn't love his nation
And his motherland
He has no part in humanity
And doesn't love himself neither,

wrote Naim Frashëri (1986a: 56). The nation also fulfills existential needs for eternity:

People all die
But life doesn't become deserted
language, motherland remain
forever unshaken
(Frashëri, Naim 1995: 93).

Besides common origin and culture, the other component of the imagination of nation is its specific territory, "the homeland of the nation and also the natural setting in which it can exercise its sovereign powers" (Triandafyllidou, 1998: 593). In writing about the boundaries of Albania, Sami Frashëri operated according to two criteria, ethnic and historical, but the second was subordinate to the first (Xholi, 1978: 107-8). This meant that, regardless of the historical links that Albanian nation may have with a certain territory, it can be considered the homeland of the nation if Albanians were still the predominant population there in nineteenth century. In his *General Encyclopedia of History and Geography (Kamus ul-Alam)*, published in 1889, Sami Frashëri writes about the boundaries of Albania:

Because this country has never been under a single and unique administrative unit, in establishing its boundaries it is necessary to take into consideration the population and nothing else because if we consider history, all Macedonia, at least, belongs to Albania' (Frashëri, Sami 1988b: 249).

Ethnic Albania was defined as the territory between the city of Tivar in north-west, the city of Mitrovica in north, Shkup and Manastir in east and the Gulf of Arta in south, and Adriatic and Ionian Seas in west. These territories roughly corresponded to the

outer administrative boundaries of four vilayets: Shkodra, Kosova, Manastir and Janina. This is the reason that Albanian nationalists demanded the unification of the four vilayets in a single one. This would turn the administrative boundaries into political ones, making Albania autonomous and independent later on. In the end of *The Truth about Albania and Albanians*, Pashko Vasa wrote that “it is very important that Albania be unified in a single vilayet, that she be given a simple, compact and strong administration, that the local population participate in public administration” (1987: 130). More will be said below about the mythic link of nation with its homeland.

3.2.2 Nation vs. Tribes and Religions

The nation is imagined as a community that transcends all regional and religious divisions. National identity for Albanian nationalists should not be based on any religious identity, as it was the case with Slavs and Greeks. Albanian nationalism was based on secular values. Its slogan were the verses of Pashko Vasa (1987: 39):

Look not to the church or mosque for pietism
The faith of Albanians is Albanianism.

Religious fanaticism was perceived by nationalists to be a danger to the existence of the nation because the Ottoman state regarded the Muslims as Ottomans or Turks, whereas Greek government used to claim that Orthodox Albanians were Greeks. For this reason, Sami Frashëri did not agree to the idea of the organization of the future Albanian state into three cantons according to three main religions. He countered this idea on two grounds: (1) we Albanians do not want to be separated but to be united as close as possible; (2) Albanians of each religion do not live separately in but are everywhere mixed with those belonging to other religions (1988b: 375). Sami Frashëri in *Albania: Past, Present and Future* wrote that the two main aims of Albanians must be the development of literary Albanian and the creation of Albanian Orthodox Church to counter the assimilatory objectives of the Greek Church (1999: 77-8). Naim Frashëri warned the Albanians Orthodox priests not to serve the interests of ‘faithless’ Greece, because Christ was not Greek and Greece is not the founder of Christianity (Frashëri, Naim 1986a: 121). As for the tribal divisions Vasa denied that they cause conflict

among Albanians: “Gegs and Tosks come from the same family, brothers that live under one roof” (1987: 119). Naim Frashëri wrote that “Geg and Tosk are place names and way of speaking of two brothers” (1986d: 188).

3.2.3 The Enemies of Albanian Nation

Similar to all other identities, the national one is formed in interaction, where the notion of the ‘Other’ is crucial. Due to political configuration of the first period in our study, the ‘external others’ of Albanian nation, were those that threatened its existence. They were Turks, Greeks and Slavs (Serbs, Montenegrins, Bulgarians and Russians). Nationalist intellectuals were keen to emphasize that despite common religious bonds, Albanians were neither Turks, nor Slavs, nor Greeks and they were actually in antagonism with all of them. Naim Frashëri demonized the Turks as merciless invaders and invoked the memory of the fifteenth-century Albanian prince Gjergj Kastrioti who had fought against the Ottomans. He was equally opposed to Greece by calling it ‘the source of evil’ and blamed those Orthodox Albanians who helped in the creation of the Greek state (1986b: 319). Against the Greeks claims that Albanians were Islamized descendents of Greeks, nationalists argued that Albanians were descendents of Pelasgians, a people that was believed in scientific circles of nineteenth century to be the oldest known population in Mediterranean, and who used to live in the Balkans before the arrival of Hellenic ethnies (there are modern historians who take the Pelasgian hypothesis seriously: see Jacques [1995] and D’Angely [1998]). Nevertheless, Albanian nationalists were not interested in the scientific validity of the Pelasgian origin but in its political implications (Xholi, 1978: 96). The dangers that were coming to Albanians by the Slavic states were apparent since the League of Prizren. One of the leaders of the League, Abdyl Frashëri in an article published in *Le Messager de Vienne* on May 3rd 1878 wrote that “one day Europe will understand that Albanians serve the cause of humanity and civilization” and that Albanians will “always be the most secure vanguard of Europe against Panslavism” (cited in Frashëri, Kristo 1984: 151).

Albanian nationalists considered the danger coming from neighbors to be more lethal to the nation than the Ottoman invasion. For this reason, they did not advocate an

immediate revolution against the Empire because by defending the boundaries of the Empire the Ottomans were at the same time defending the existence of Albanian nation. Albanians alone would be no match for the more modern and organized armies of their neighbors. Furthermore, the crush of the League of Prizren showed to them that Albanians were yet unprepared for a war against the Ottomans. Vasa wrote that

close union [of Albanians] with Ottoman Empire is the only chance of salvation; this union guarantees to them a life according to their heart and aspirations, because it does not harm their national idea, language and traditions; it does not change the character of the nation and does not threaten its existence (1987: 123-4).

What Albanian nationalists wanted to achieve under the Ottomans was a single Albanian vilayet, possibly autonomous. Albanian nationalist argued that this was in interest of the Porte, too. Sami Frashëri in an article in *Tercuman-i Sark* on January 14th 1879 wrote that “Albanian nation, by keeping Albania under the administration of Ottoman Empire, is securing the existence of this state in the Balkans... I consider the demands of Albanians as rightful and useful for the Empire” (2000: 353-4).

3.2.4 National Myths

Albanian nationalists used many national myths, most of which they invented anew, to demonstrate that the nation extended in numerous generations in the past and future, to create bonds between Albanians, to ‘awaken’ them into ‘true consciousness’ and to inspire them for actions. Another reason was to reveal to Europe the ancient history of Albanians and to convince the Great Powers that Albanians deserved to have their national state. In this thesis, the myths of Albanian nationalists will be grouped in myths of origin, territory, heroic age, decline and rebirth (Smith, 1984).

The myth of Pelasgian *origin* of Albanians was picked up by nationalists during debates with Greek nationalists over the region of Epirus. They wanted to demonstrate that Albanians as *direct* descendents of a pre-Hellenic people, Pelasgians, had primacy over the Greeks in Epirus. Naim Frashëri (1986a: 183-4) wrote that

since the creation of world
Albania has been living

Pelasgians were they called
And now Albanians
.....
We are older
In Europe than any other race;

Vasa wrote: “there is no doubt that Pelasgians are the first arrivals [in the Balkans] and are autochthon in comparison to other arrivals” (1987: 72). Through the myth of Pelasgian origin, Albanian nationalists intended to prove that Albanians are a ‘historic nation’ and therefore deserved to continue its existence in the future (Feraj, 1998: 90). Associated to the myth of Pelasgian origin is the myth of Pelasgians as the ‘cradle’ of European civilization, which established, in the eyes of nationalists, the kinship of Albanians with Western Europeans.

Myths of *territory* create emotional links of the nation with a given location. Nationalist used for the Albanian nation the metaphor of an old oak that has resisted all tempest of the ages by being deep-rooted in the ground. Naim Frashëri published in 1886 a poem titled *Herding and Farming*, which was a romantic praise of Albania, imagined as an idyllic country that was home of a virtuous, simple and hardworking people of farmers and herders. The poem opens with the verse: “O mountains of Albania and you o long oaks!” (1964: 3). The poet, residing at that time in Istanbul, wishes, like the swallow, to make a return flight in the homeland. During this imaginary flight over Albania, he visits all the main cities, mountains, rivers, plains. When he arrives at the city of Ulqinj that was invaded in 1881 by Montenegro, the poet writes: “Will Albanians let our enemy keep it [the city]?” (ibid.: 8). In this way, myths of territory of a nation make it impossible for the member of a nation to tolerate secession or cession of one part of the homeland, because all of it is a sacred space where the nation leads its existence and where its means of reproduction are secured.

The myth of the ‘*golden age*’ serves as a “touchstone of virtue and heroism, to guide and give meaning to the tasks of regeneration” (Smith, 1984: 103). The glorious past when the nation was free, prosperous and virtuous is a model to be repeated. For Albanian nationalists of the National Awakening period, the golden age of Albanians had its origins in the mythical past and had continued for centuries; history records the deeds of famous Albanians like Alexander, Pyrrhus of Epirus, Ptolemy kings of Egypt,

Skanderbeg, Koprulu prime-ministers in Ottoman Empire, Mehmet Ali the founder of modern Egypt, Ali Pasha of Janina, etc. Albanian nationalist did not imagine the 400 years of Ottoman rule as an invasion, but they thought Albanians to be 'co-rulers' of Empire together with Turks (Feraj, 1998: 45). Sami Frashëri stated that

Albania in the time of Turks became richer and more prosperous than ever, because Albanians together with Turks fought all over the world and returned home carrying gold and silver...In Albania foreign invaders did not come. All those who governed Albania were Albanians. We can say that Albania was governed by itself, by Albanians, according to their customs. This was the situation until Tanzimat (1999: 22-3).

Vasa wrote in similar vein: "until the time of Tanzimat, the situation in Albania was excellent; the country was rich, happy and strong; its military valor was feared by others" (1987: 119). Linked with the myth of golden age is the myth of military valor. Nearly all great Albanians of the past mentioned by nationalists, were kings or rulers, who

invaded all the world
Africa, Europe, Asia
(Frashëri, Naim 1986b:8).

Military valor was one of the nineteenth-century liberal criteria for a population to classify as a nation (assuming that it was economically viable), the other two being an ancient history and an established cultural elite (Hobsbawm, 1996: 37-8). According to nationalists, Albanians put their military skills in the service of the protection of European civilization. For example, Alexander the Great not only defended Europe from the Persian invasion, but also brought this civilization and freedom to Asian peoples (Frashëri, Naim 1986b: 101); nearly two thousands years later, another Albanian, Skanderbeg, saved Europe from the Ottoman aggression (Frashëri, Naim 1986b: 280); in the nineteenth century, Albanians were again defending Europe, this time acting as a barrier to the encroachment of pan-Slavism. Through this myth of Albanians as defenders of civilization, nationalists wished to obtain the sympathy and

interest of Europe, for securing allies among Great Powers that could help them in attaining the independence and could protect them from Slavs and Greeks.

The myth of golden age, including the myth of military valor and that of defenders of civilization, are exemplified best by the figure of Skanderbeg, which can be considered to be the most important myth of Albanian National Awakening. Skanderbeg was a fifteenth-century Albanian Catholic prince who united Albanian lords in a military league to resist the invading Ottoman armies. In the imagination of Albanian nationalists, he is the highest expression of the Albanian genius, who struggled not only for the freedom of his nation, but also in defense of civilization and for the triumph of the good and truth against evil and falsehood. In his greatest work *History of Skanderbeg* (1898), Naim Frashëri first describes at length the deeds of Skanderbeg, and then, at the end of the poem, he appeals to Albanians not to forget his memory and to try to resemble him (1986b: 323). Albanian nationalist intellectuals instrumentalized the historical figure of Skanderbeg for these reasons: (1) it reminded Albanians of the existence of an Albanian state in medieval times; (2) it distinguished Albanian national movement from other pan-Islamic movements at that time in the Ottoman Empire; (3) by the glorification of a medieval Catholic prince by Muslims like Naim and Sami Frashëri, Albanian nationalism put emphasis on ethnic bonds rather than religious bonds; (4) Skanderbeg demonstrated the state-forming capabilities of Albanians, which countered the arguments of their neighbors that Albanians could not govern themselves (Feraj, 1998: 82-4).

The myth of *decline* is about a historical epoch in which the nation “has lost its anchor in a living tradition” (Smith, 1984: 104), and leads a life of spiritual and material corruption where all virtues of the past are forgotten. According to nationalists, Albania was experiencing such an epoch since the introduction of the reforms of *Tanzimat*. They blamed for this situation (1) inappropriate and corrupt administration; (2) the missing of state investments in agriculture, industry, commerce and education; (3) the burden of military service and the heavy taxes (Frashëri, Sami 1999: 44-5; Vasa, 1987: 120-1). No other literary work of the period gives the atmosphere of decline better than Vasa’s poem ‘O Poor Albania’ (1887). After describing the ‘good times’ of unmemorable past, the poet turns to the present situation of Albania:

But now, Albania, you're a sight of woe
Just like an oak tree brought down low!
All step on you as if you were dead.
And not one kind word to you is said.

.....
Albanians, you are slaying one another
In hundred groups you are divided
One says I'm Turk, another Latin
Others Greek or Serbs profess to be.
Fools! You are brothers, can't you see?
Priests and mullas have made you mute
To keep you split and destitute.
Foreigners sit by your fireplace,
Your wives and sisters they disgrace,
And if money comes knocking on your door
The faith of your forebears you ignore
You become slaves of alien boors,
Whose race and tongue differ from yours (1987: 38).

The myth of *rebirth* or regeneration prescribe future orientation and actions of the nation with the aim of restoring the past glory. Albanian nationalists of the National Awakening period thought that the first thing to do was not to work and struggle anymore for others, but to concentrate on their own country. According to Naim Frashëri (1986b: 320), this was the testament that the spirit of Skanderbeg to the new generations of Albanians:

My brave sons
Do not sweat for others
Leave alone that foolishness
Unite together
Enlarge Goodness
By becoming brothers
Work for Albania.

Secondly, Albanians should be united on the basis of ethnic bonds and the separate religions must be disregarded:

Look not to church or mosque for pietism
The faith of Albanians is Albanianism
(Vasa, 1987: 39).

Thirdly, Albanians must learn to write and to cultivate their native language. They must acquire the advanced scientific and technical knowledge of advanced Europe and the same time to nourish their national culture. In modern times, to be brave in war is not enough, we also need “pen and paper” to gain the “light of knowledge” (Frashëri, Naim 1995: 88). The myth of rebirth is also the myth of catching the lost time, or in other words, the myth of finding the “shortcut to European civilization” (Starova, 2001: 66-7). For nationalists of National Awakening the place of Albania was in Europe, from which it was detached, therefore it should find the way back.

3.3 Recapitulations and Conclusions

The nationalist discourse is centered upon the ‘nation’, an imagined political community that is the legitimation of all modern political and social organizations. Such an imagination did not exist among Albanian ethnic prior to the nineteenth century. In the first half of the nineteenth century, Albanian émigrés, intellectuals and bureaucrats, under the influence of European ideas, began articulating the political and cultural discourse of nationalism. The space for its articulation was made possible by the conflict of Albanians with the central government of the Ottoman Empire. It gained momentum around 1878 with the dangers coming from Slavic and Greek invasions. Nationalists turned a military defense league of landlords into a national political organization. The actions of the League of Prizren were justified in the name of the Albanian nation, which constituted a new political discourse in Albania. Nevertheless, the short life of the League revealed that the nationalist discourse did not yet have a mass reception and was not hegemonic over other discourses, based on religion and the authority of the Sultan-Caliph. The bearers of nationalist discourse still remained a minority among the mass of Albanians - two in every one thousand, according to an estimation of a contemporary – whose primary identifications were either Muslims or Christians (Vlora, 2001: 155-6). Albanian nationalists were conscious that their task was to infuse the national worldview to the masses. In nationalist terminology, this meant to ‘awaken’ the nation to its true essence. They established the basis of the

Albanian national culture, because their works, which combined artistic, pedagogical, historical and political elements, were penetrated by the concern with the nation.

The main themes of the nationalist discourse of National Awakening were (1) emphasis on language, (2) the nation as an imagined community transcending all divisions, (3) common enemies, (4) modernization and inclination towards western Europe and (5) autonomy as the political goal.

The reasons for the emphasis on language were several. First, the language, despite its various spoken dialects, was the common denominator of all Albanians. Using Connor's terminology the language was the 'symbol of the nation' because it was a tangible element that differentiated them from other ethnic communities (see Connor, 1994: 43-6). Albanians have been speaking their language for centuries without being aware that it constituted the essence of the nation; "linguistic nationalism was the creation of people who wrote and read, not of people who spoke" (Hobsbawm, 1989: 147). Another reason for the emphasis on language was the need for a national literacy. Even in the nineteenth century literary works in Albanian were few and written with different alphabets; in the Congress of Literary Societies in Manastir in 1908 the number of alphabets would be reduced to two. Both were based on Latin letters, and with time one of them became the official alphabet. Schools would be the basic institution for the dissemination of nationalism, since religious institutions could not play that role as in other Balkan states. A further reason for the emphasis on language was that a literate population was perceived to be a precondition for the modernization of the country and the creation of a national bureaucracy.

For the nationalist imagination, the loyalty to nation had to transcend all other loyalties. Nationalists were especially concerned with the divisive role of the religions that could be used by the propagandist of other countries to rally Albanians for other causes and not the national one. The Ottoman authorities tended to divide the Albanians in Muslim and Christian identities and these identities tended to be internalized by the people. For example, a nationalist Muslim cleric in his memories wrote that at the beginning of twentieth century the religious people of Tirana used the name 'Albanian' in a pejorative sense to denote those who were against the government, Islam and the public order. Those who were called 'Albanians' were considered to be traitors and

morally degraded (Dalliu, 1995: 7). Albanian nationalist discourse was not based on religious values, but on secular ones, which made it tolerant towards religions (Feraj, 1998: 113). But this meant that nationalists could not freely exploit the religious institutions -the central means of communication in an agrarian illiterate society- for the dissemination of their ideas. Furthermore clerics could accuse nationalist intellectuals of following atheism and condemn their ideas as dangerous to the order. This in fact happened mainly in the Albanian Orthodox community, where clerics excommunicated Orthodox Albanian nationalists.

The Albanian nationalist discourse and national identity was formed in antagonism with neighbors and the Turks, the dominant ethnies in the Ottoman Empire. Albanian nationalists stressed those presumed national characteristics that differentiated Albanians from Slavs, Greeks and Turks. So, the myth of Pelasgian origin was used to counter the arguments of Greek nationalists, and to point out that Albanians were ethnically related with neither Slavs nor Turks. The myth of defenders of Europe from Turks in the fifteenth century and from Slavs in the nineteenth century became part of Albanian national identity.

Albanian nationalist discourse during National Awakening period was modernist. Nationalists wanted to modernize Albania and to make it resemble western European countries. If they countered the implementation of the *Tanzimat* reforms within the framework of the Ottoman Empire, they approved of reforms within the framework of an autonomous Albania. In their imagination, an independent Albania would be based on secular values and would be part of the European civilization. This imagination contrasted sharply with the imagination the majority of the population shared.

The demand for autonomy was another characteristic of Albanian nationalist discourse. There were several factors that determined this decision. Firstly, internal situation of Albania did not favor an immediate independence, because the nationalist worldview was not internalized yet by the masses; Albania did not have established boundaries, but was governed in the framework of four administrative units; a central market, a regular army and a united cultural and political elite did not exist. All these could develop with time in an autonomous vilayet under the sovereignty of the Porte.

Secondly, the Great Powers of Europe were determined to maintain the status quo in the Balkans because of the rivalries that they had with one another. An independent Albania would disrupt it, but an autonomous Albania would keep the state boundaries of the Ottoman Empire intact. Thirdly, an independent but weak Albania would fall prey to its more powerful neighbors. The Ottoman Empire could offer better protection in case of attack from them. Fourthly, the history of formation of the other Balkan states has passed through the stage of autonomy and nationalists wanted to follow the same way (see Tarifa, 1985: 48-60).

Although the articulation of nationalist discourse remained confined to a minority of intellectuals and politicians, they managed to influence the social and political movements of the time, which began gaining a national character. After 1900 there were nationalist societies in all cities, and nearly every local armed uprising in Albania against the central government included the demand of autonomy in the name of the whole nation. Autonomy was granted in 1912, but it was too late for Albanians because a month later the Balkan War began.

CHAPTER 4

COMMUNISM

Albania proclaimed independence in 1912. However, the Conference of Ambassadors of the Great Powers in London (1913) which established its boundaries, left out nearly half of Albanian territories claimed by nationalists. Kosova and other territories in north were annexed to Serbia and Montenegro (after 1918, Yugoslavia), and Çamëria region in south, to Greece. As the head of the Albanian state, the Powers appointed a German prince, Wied, but the real governing power rested in the international observing commission and various big landlords and chieftains. Because of the World War I, the rule of Wied was short-lived and Albania turned into a battlefield for Serbian, Greek, Italian, Austrian, Bulgarian and French armies. Its borders remained disputed by Greece and Yugoslavia till the Peace Conference of 1920. From 1920 to 1924 Albania experienced internal political rivalries and clashes with its neighbors. Finally it enjoyed a period of relative stability under Zog, a chieftain who governed Albania, firstly as president and later as king, till 1939. During his autocratic rule, in Albania the institutions of a modern, European state were introduced. Western civil and penal codes, national health and educational system were established, roads were constructed, land was distributed to peasants and other social reforms were attempted. All these affected the imagining of the Albanian nation by the part of broad strata of population (for the situation of Albania under Zog, see Fischer, 1984).

The achievements of King Zog were short-lived; in 1939 Fascist Italy invaded Albania, forcing the king and his followers to emigrate. After the defeat of Yugoslavia and Greece, Italian and German invaders agreed to attach some of their territories, including the region of Kosova, to the Albanian puppet state, in this way creating a 'Greater Albania' under the scepter of Italian emperor (see Appendix B). When Italy capitulated in 1943, its armies and administration were substituted by the Germans who

kept intact the framework of 'Greater Albania', and even granting to Albanians more freedoms than those enjoyed by them under the Italians (Fischer, 1999a: 336-7).

During the war, Albanians formed several resistance organizations against the occupiers. Loyalists of exiled king created Legality Organization, whose power base was among the chieftains in the north. The republican opposition to king and big landlords in the south created the National Front. Although some small communist groups existed in Albania under Zog, the Communist Party was created only in 1941, after the Soviet Union entered the war against the Axis Powers. Two emissaries from the Yugoslav Communist Party were instrumental in its creation, and influenced the course of action of the Albanian party during the war. The power base of the party was among the peasants and herders of the south, the workers still being a minority in Albanian society. The Central Committee chose an ex-teacher, Enver Hoxha as a provisory General Secretary- in fact Enver Hoxha would remain in this position for forty years, until the end of his life.

Under the auspices of the British, attempts were made to unify the three organizations in a single movement, but were frustrated by the Communists and the Yugoslav representatives. Enver Hoxha admitted that the main point of disagreement was the national question: the National Front wanted to maintain the unification of Albania with Kosova and Çamëria after the war, even if this meant to enter into another war against Slavs and Greeks, but the Communist Party in the first place wished the collaboration with Yugoslav and Greek resistance movements against the Germans (Hoxha, 1974: 185). Another reason mentioned by Hoxha for not cooperating with other organizations was that the communists did not want to share power after the war. Therefore, as Germans began retreating from Albania, communists waged war against them and also against all possible pretenders for attaining power, in the end becoming the new rulers of Albania.

This, in brief, was the history of the Albanian state from its creation in 1912 until 1945. In the first section of this chapter, we will see the main developments that took place in Albania during communism, which influenced the discourse about nation. The nationalist discourse itself will be analyzed in the second section, and its main characteristics will be summarized in the last section.

4.1 Institutional Framework

Albania has been a communist country for more than forty years, but its path of communist development differed from that of the other states of Eastern Europe and Soviet Union, because of its staunch Stalinist policies. The Albanian communist leader, Enver Hoxha, persisted in his position from the creation of the communist Party in 1941 till his death in 1985, a unique case in the communist world. His impact on Albania was more important than any other figure in Albanian history. Therefore, one could agree with Blumi (1997: 379), who states that

Hoxha's state must be analyzed in the context of Albania's socio-historical development; it is not enough to reduce Albania to a universally identified state form. With closer scrutiny, all of Hoxha's state institutions were specifically mobilized to effect a particular path of development that, again, maximized Hoxha's particular strategies for power rather than pursue a 'rational', implying universal, mode of development.

Immediately after the war, the communists refused to share power with any other organization. This caused a break of relations with British and American allies. Hoxha chose to depend on Yugoslavia for the development of the country along Stalinist lines. This meant relying on the heavy industry for the creation of the economic base of a socialist society and the development of a new consciousness of the masses. These two strategies in communist terminology were called 'building the material base for communism' and 'bringing up the new man'. The regime began its tasks by eradicating all the previous classes -landlords, merchants, official of the Zog regime, chieftains, intellectuals- who could pose a threat to its power, by executing, imprisoning and displacing individuals and by confiscating their property. The society was mobilized for the construction of the industrial plants, under the supervision of Yugoslav specialists. Communists initially distributed the land to the peasants, with the slogan "The land belongs to those who work it!", but soon forced them to create state-owned cooperatives, thus turning the peasantry in a property-less working class in countryside. In the late 1940s, Albania took the totalitarian form that would remain the same for more than forty years.

The dependency on Yugoslavia was so thorough, that “from 1945 to 1948, Albania lost many of the characteristics of a sovereign state” (Biberaj, 1990: 20). Yugoslav leaders intended to annex Albania into their federation, but they wanted to replace Hoxha at the head of the party with a more faithful person. In this situation, Hoxha welcomed and exploited the split between Tito and Stalin in 1948, by promptly condemning the ‘revisionist line of Yugoslav party’, and by purging the supporters of Yugoslavia in Albanian Communist Party (later, the Party of Labor of Albania). From 1948 to 1955, Albania benefited from the Soviet help: Industrial plans went ahead, Albania became member of Warsaw Treaty and Council for Mutual Economic Assistance, and the regime of Hoxha was consolidated. But, with the death of Stalin and the condemnation of his personality cult by Krushchev, Enver Hoxha felt his own position in Albania threatened. Furthermore, a rapprochement between Tito and Krushchev occurred and the latter insisted that Hoxha should rehabilitate those persons purged as defenders of Yugoslavia. In this situation, Hoxha, exploiting the Sino-Soviet rift, aligned with the Chinese party and accused the Soviet leader of not being faithful to Marxism-Leninism. Purges of the Soviet sympathizers in Albanian party and society followed. This time, the most damaged group was that of the specialists of all fields, who were educated in Soviet Union, especially the military. The position of the party was strengthened through an Albanian Cultural Revolution that mirrored the Chinese one, but changing from it in an important respect: if in China it was a mass movement against the bureaucracy of the party, in Albanian the party led the working class against the state bureaucrats. The result was the strengthening of the control of the party on society and an atmosphere of fear and paranoia (for an account of the Albanian Cultural Revolution see Blumi, 1999). China agreed to subsidize the Albanian plans of industrialization. The cooperation with China lasted till 1976, when the Chinese rulers began opening up their country, improved the relations with the United States and normalized relations with Yugoslavia. At this stage, Hoxha decided to part with China and to pursue a politics of insulating Albania from outside influences and to make self-reliance the overreaching principle of economic development. The period of self-reliance of Albania is a crucial one because “for the first time in her modern history, Albania was without a foreign ‘protector’” (Vickers, 1995: 203). Hoxha

institutionalized the idea of self-reliance in the constitution of 1976 that prohibited the government from seeking foreign aid and credit or forming joint companies with foreign capital. Article 28 of constitution stated:

The granting of concessions to, and the creation of foreign economic and financial companies and other institutions or ones formed jointly with bourgeois and revisionist capitalist monopolies and states as well as obtaining credits from them are prohibited in the People's Socialist Republic of Albania (cited in O'Donnell, 1999:84).

With the addition of economic difficulties, the regime of Hoxha became more oppressive. Hoxha became alert to the smallest sign of real or imaginary dissension from within or international threat, creating a state-of-siege society; he stated that "they will never catch us asleep, we will never be lacking in vigilance, let everyone understand clearly: the walls of our fortress are of unshakable granite rock" (cited in Vickers, 1995: 203).

In general, it can be said that survival was the most important element of politics of Hoxha, not only survival of Albanian sovereignty, but also of his rule. This made him to rely on Stalinist methods in all spheres of life. The class struggle was carried not only through the party, but also inside it; in the words of Hoxha:

The revolution, the dictatorship of the proletariat, cannot fail to use violence against the enemies of the Party, the people and socialism. The contradictions between us and class enemies cannot be resolved in any other way. To try to resolve these contradictions as contradictions among the working masses, between the various aspects of the socialist order, are resolved, means to fall into idealism and class conciliation. The purging of enemy elements from the Party, its struggle to smash anti-party and anti-socialist activity, have further tempered the Party ideologically and politically as the vanguard of the working class and leader of the people (cited in Pipa, 1990: 87).

Hoxha could maintain a firm grip on power (1) through the mobilization and regimentalization of the population, under the direction of the Party of Labor, for the construction of the socialist society, (2) through the isolation of the country from any foreign influence, (3) through the spreading of terror by periodically purging dissenters,

and (4) through its official ideology, that included nationalist elements. In this framework, we will now turn to the nationalist discourse.

4.2 Nationalist Discourse of Enverism

We will refer to the official ideology of communist Albania as Enverism, after the name of the First Secretary of the Party of Labor, Enver Hoxha. This does not mean that Hoxha formulated all the aspects of the ideology- it was elaborated in many centers and by a multitude of individuals of many professions- but the monopoly of interpretation of Marxism-Leninism, that is the monopoly of the official truth, lied in the Political Bureau of the Party of Labor and in the person of Enver Hoxha. Every political or social idea to be made public needed to be legitimated in his name (Feraj, 1998: 4). The central position of the First Secretary was acknowledged by slogans such as “The name of Comrade Enver and that of Albania are one”, or “Comrade Enver is the architect of modern Albania”, or “By saying ‘Party’ we imply ‘Enver’ and by ‘Enver’ we imply the ‘Party’”. Enverism fulfilled all the Lefort’s criteria of a totalitarian ideology: (1) it was an ideology of a party that claimed to be different from traditional parties and to represent the whole society; (2) it became condensed with the law and knowledge and claimed to regulate all activities of the society; (3) it claimed to be the only organ for the articulation of the real as such; (4) and it interpreted the experience according to its needs, but the experience could not challenge it (Lefort, 1988: 13). We can demonstrate the totalitarian character of Enverism by quoting from the speeches and writings of Hoxha. So, the role of the party as the organizer and the guiding force of the society is stated in this way:

The task of the basic organization of the Party is not just to support the orders of the director, the chairman, or the commander. It is the organization of the Party that guides all the work, that decides what must be done by the communists, and all the working people to carry the work forward, what tasks must be fulfilled, how to defeat the enemy in war, etc., and on the basis of this, each individual must carry out the duties entrusted to him. All the organs, organizations or other bodies are levers of the Party. As such they must work to put into practice the line, decisions and the correct orientations of the Party without deviating in the

slightest from all the requirements of the democratic centralism of the state and other organizations of the masses (1982: 2-3).

The party was fully identified with the people: "The Party has no interests other than those of the people, therefore anything contrary to these interests is at the same time contrary to the line of the Party" (ibid.: 4). Everything in communist Albania had to be judged in the light of the official ideology with no exception, they had to surrender themselves to the highest science, which was Marxism-Leninism:

Our ideology itself is science and it is precisely this science which leads all the others and guides them in the interests of the development and the complete construction of socialism. Our Marxist-Leninist science is neither a dogma in theory, nor is it a dogma in practice. The correct conception and application of all sciences and their methods in all fields of our life will depend on the proper understanding, the proper assimilation of Marxism-Leninism (Hoxha, 1987: 162).

The party was imagined to have a mission to accomplish that could be accomplished only by it, because it was armed with the correct understanding of historical laws together with the ability and the will to put them into practice:

The party does not and cannot place itself or remain in the leadership by chance. It secures its leading role through its correct line and its persistent struggle and work to put this line into practice. Basing itself on the theory of the most advanced class of society- the proletariat, on the Marxist-Leninist doctrine, on the laws of the materialist development of society, the Party has a broad range of vision, an elaborated and scientific opinion. It sees clearly in any situation, understands the present, foresees the future and knows how to anticipate events, by defining and always applying a revolutionary strategy and tactics which express the interests of the working class and the working masses (ibid.: 340).

Within the totalitarian ideology of Enverism we will analyze the discourse about the Albanian nation.

4.2.1 Imagining of Nation

The imagining of Albanian nation in Enverist discourse had two dimensions: the ethnical and the ideological. The ethnic dimension was similar to that of the intellectuals of National Awakening, who defined the Albanians in terms of common lineage, language, culture and destiny. On this subject Hoxha writes:

Nations cannot be created by subjective factors or by decrees, or through the desire of governments. They are a result of protracted historical processes. The Albanian nation was created and defended stubbornly, with bloodshed and work by its finest sons who toiled and sacrificed everything for it (ibid.: 144).

The ideological dimension of the imagining of the Albanian nation consisted of the effects of the socialist relations of productions and of socialist culture on the nature of the nation:

The socialist revolution has brought radical changes in the spiritual life of our society, in the thinking, psychology and way of life of our people. Our Party has devoted continuous care for the formation of the new man with a Marxist-Leninist world outlook, with a lofty spirit of patriotism, proletarian internationalism and socialist collectivism, with the spirit of sacrifice and heroism, with new concepts about work and life, and high revolutionary ideals (Hoxha, 1985a: 835-6).

Hoxha, by emphasizing the historicity and the material and social forces that constituted the nation, argued that the present generation of Albanians, while inheriting the national characteristics of the past generation, had undergone essential changes during socialism that had brought into existence a new Albanian man and, consequently, a new nation. According to one of the official interpreters of the Enverist ideology, Zija Xholi (1976: 31), the socialist relations of production and the new ethnic processes generated a 'socialist nation'. Whereas the Albanian nation in centuries had been class-divided, the new socialist nation was without class antagonism. It was imagined as a community depending on the alliance of two friendly classes- a working class and a peasantry of the state cooperatives- which had the same economic interests. In the socialist nation, for Xholi, the exploitation did not exist, and the national culture was "liberated from all anti-popular, anti-national and obscurantist elements" (ibid.: 32).

Such an imagining exempted from the community of the nation the ethnic Albanians living in Yugoslavia and Greece, because they lived in social relations of production different from the socialist one: in Enverist ideology Greece was portrayed as a capitalist country governed by fascists, whereas Tito's Yugoslavia as a revisionist country that had betrayed the Marxism-Leninism. Consequently, the Albanians of Kosova and Çamëria had different consciousness from those of the People's Socialist Republic of Albania. By isolating the country from all foreign influences, the regime was at the same time isolating its citizens from the Albanians beyond its borders, because these could pollute the new man. In fact, those Albanians from Kosova region, who, because of the conflict with Yugoslav government, crossed into Albania, were treated with suspicion by the Albanian regime, to the extent that some of them were imprisoned or handed back to Yugoslav authorities.

Also the imagining of the homeland was confined within the boundaries of the Albanian state. In schools, students used to memorize all the mountains, rivers, fields or industrial plants of Albania, but they were taught nothing about the physical and political geography of Kosova and Çamëria. The common cliché for geographically defining Albania was that it spreads 'from Vermosh to Konispol', these being the extreme northern and southern towns within the boundaries of the republic. These and other elements formed the imagining of the nation of Enverist discourse that was spread through schools, media, state institutions and party organizations. Given the complete isolation of the country from influences other than those of the state, has left deep impact on the consciousness of Albanians, especially younger ones that had not known any other system except the socialist one.

4.2.2 Nation versus Tribes and Religions

The communist regime in Albania struggled with several means against the perceived regional differences. There were high degrees of centralization in every sphere of life. During the process of the creation of the working class, displacements of large number of people occurred, and to accommodate them the state emphasized the national identity over regional ones; one of the popular slogans read: "Let us work wherever the homeland needs!" Also the modern way of life and the spread of

education made Albanians similar to each other. The most important action in the cultural sphere was the unification of official Albanian language. Because of the fact that the official language was based exclusively on the Tosk dialect, some scholars argue that this was part of the strategy to subjugate the Gëgs to the ruling Tosk elite. Hoxha persistently refused attempts to find a compromise between the two main dialects, even against the prescriptions of Stalin on this issue (for an elaboration of this argument see Blumi, 1997). Later on the official language was also adopted by the Albanians of Kosova, who use the Geg dialect.

Enverism was a sworn enemy of religions. Hoxha argued that religions have been brought to Albania by foreign invaders to serve their interests and the interests of the Albanian exploiting classes, and to divide the people (Hoxha, 1970: 205). From the beginning of their rule, the communists continually undertook steps that undermined the influence of religion in the social life of the country, even by massacring and persecuting the clergy. The ultimate and most extreme action was the abolition of all religious institutions in 1967. The Constitution of 1976 reinforced this action by proclaiming Albania an atheist country. Hoxha himself stated in 1973:

A cure for cancer has not yet been discovered, but for religion it has been, and if a struggle is waged in this direction, consistently and with conviction, the cure will no longer take centuries but a few decades, a few generations. The fight against religious ideology is closely connected with the fight against imperialism and revisionism, with the fight for socialism and communism (1982: 792).

The communist regime tried to destroy the influence of religious and regional differences in name of national identity and revolutionary fraternity. Its ideology, Enverism, encouraged and gave publicity to actions that served this end, e.g. marriages of partners coming from different religious or/and regional background. Atheism became an inseparable component of Enverism. On the other hand, processes linked with the modern development of Albania eroded the religious and regional identities and reinforced the national one, together with its ideological dimension.

4.2.3 Enemies of Albanian Nation

During communism Albania depended on its development on different allies, but it broke completely the relations with them when the dependency began threatening the sovereignty of the country and the exclusive position of the Party of Labor. Albania resembled a pendulum that for a time oscillated under the gravitation of single states and when reaching the terminal point of dependency, it swung back to the independent point (Pipa, 1990: 36). After each break, Hoxha condemned the former ally on ideological grounds. Upon the liberation of Albania, while undertaking the socialist course Albania cut the relations with the West, which were condemned of being capitalists and imperialists under the leadership of USA. Hoxha declared: "Today the United States of America stands at the head of all the forces of imperialism and reaction" (1982: 115). Upon the break with Yugoslavia in 1948, its leader, Tito, and his collaborators were called by Hoxha "bourgeois national chauvinists who acted under the guidance of British policy" and whose stand was "openly chauvinist, anti-Soviet and anti-Stalin" (ibid.: 50). At the time of the successive conflict with the post-Stalin leaders of Soviet Union, the reforms of Krushchev were interpreted by Hoxha as betrayal of Marxism-Leninism and of socialist revolution:

The Soviet revisionist leaders entered into a 'holy alliance' with American imperialism, the greatest enemy of the peoples of the whole world...This alliance is based on their common hegemonic interests and aims for the division of spheres of influence and for the establishment of the domination of two great powers over the world...They are united in a close alliance with each other in order to attack the revolutionary peoples and socialism (ibid.: 126).

Together with the Chinese communists, Hoxha developed the stand of the dual adversary to the world socialist revolution: "[they] pose the same danger, therefore the two superpowers are the main and greatest enemies of the peoples. That is why one must never rely on one imperialism to fight or escape from the other" (Hoxha, 1985a: 114). But when president Nixon and Kissinger visited China, the Chinese communists had made precisely the ideological deviation of allying with one of the superpowers against the other. On this 'betrayal', Hoxha stated: "We do not accept that 'American imperialism is less dangerous than Soviet social-imperialism', as the Chinese claim. We

say, 'Both of them are dangerous and must be combated sternly'" (1979: 108). In this way Hoxha departed from the last big ally of socialist Albania.

The external enemies of Albanians collaborated with the 'internal enemy'. In the words of Hoxha:

The external enemies always co-ordinate their overt and covered activities with internal enemy elements, who act in various ways and forms to weaken the regime of the proletariat which suppresses them, and they link all their activity with the propaganda, actions and political circumstances of their external allies. This alliance may or may not be organized with secret connections but the alliance and collaboration exist, and they grow stronger the more careless we are and the more we lack revolutionary vigilance (1982: 799).

In accordance with this imagination of the links of external enemies with internal ones, after each break with a foreign ally, in Albania purges were undertaken against individuals in state institutions and the party. In describing this phenomenon, Pipa (1990: 54) uses the metaphor of Albania successively marrying and divorcing the Yugoslav Wolf, the Soviet Bear and the Chinese Dragon, the purges serving as a thorough housecleaning to erase the traces of the former partner in order to welcome the new one. If one asked who constituted the internal enemy, the answer was that in a community that was imagined as being without class antagonism, in the first place, the enemy were the members of the 'overthrown exploiting classes' that resented the new situation. In the second place, if Enverism claimed that the party was infallible, then the communists who were against the party line or expressed doubts about the decisions of its leader, automatically became part of the internal enemy. Finally, internal enemies were all those who failed to observe the socialist norms in all spheres of life. Because the party decided about virtually everything and Albania was imagined as a revolutionary mobilized country, every ordinary crime was at the same time a political crime. For this reason, the Albanian justice system practiced the 'penal politics', according to which an accused individual was given the sentence by taking into consideration not only the crime committed, but also his or her political past, his family biography and his contribution for the party (Kasoruho, 1996: 100). The activities of the internal enemy, according to the Enverism were multifold and he could damage socialism in many ways:

[the internal enemy] utilizes, inflates and spreads everything which comes to his hands or reaches his ear, he encourages people's weaknesses, uses self-criticism in his own interest, sows confusion, anarchy and indiscipline, encourages exaggerated desires, theft and hooliganism, and does not do those things openly for he protects himself, but he lets others, often possibly the 'good people', do them, in order to compromise them and in this way add them to his ranks (1982: 799-800).

In this way, Hoxha was reiterating a common and integral theme in totalitarian discourse: the portrayal of the internal enemy as parasites of the healthy body of the people, from which it logically followed that the struggle against it was a kind of prophylaxis (Lefort, 1986: 287). Hoxha used the imagining of external and internal enemies as a shorthand scapegoat for all the failures of the system. That was another explanation for the high frequency and the thoroughness of his purges. Especially in the period of complete isolation he used to say to the people that external enemies had put a blockade to Albanians because "Albania is a thorn in the flesh of the imperialists, revisionists and all the capitalist of the world, and not one of them, at any time, ever wishes it well" (Hoxha, 1982: 796-7). In another occasion, Hoxha declared that the "Albanian socialist society is being built and developed in an ocean of capitalist-revisionist hostility, which is striving in every way to exert a direct or indirect influence to hinder us and which could hinder our advance" (1985a: 213). In this way, a psychology of siege and xenophobic elements were introduced to the Albanian national identity. The slogans of the day were "Lets work and live like under siege"; "Lets break the imperialist-revisionist siege"; or "We must fight against foreign manifestations in our culture". Because of these characteristics, Fischer (1995: 39) has termed Hoxha's politics as 'state-of-siege nationalism'.

To defeat the external and internal enemies, for Enverism meant to "wage the class struggle consistently in order to defend the victories achieved, and to make our Homeland, socialist Albania, even stronger, even more invincible, for the good of the people and the cause of communism" (Hoxha, 1982: 848-9). The isolated Albanians were a people-in-arms, all of them mobilized to the fight: "Vigilance should not be understood as a monopoly or the duty of a Party forum or state organism only, but as a

problem for everyone, for every communist and citizen of the republic” (Hoxha, 1987: 736).

By giving precedence to ideological enemies of the Albanians, Enverism differed in this respect from the nationalism of National Awakening, for whom the ‘significant others’ of Albanian nation were imagined to be the Greeks, the Slavs and the Turks. Towards neighboring peoples, Enverism adopted a proletarian internationalist trend, according to which the Balkan peoples were friendly to each other, but their chauvinist political elites and the rivalry of the superpowers, USA and USSR, tried to divide and to antagonize them. Therefore, on one hand, Hoxha condemned Tito as chauvinist for wanting to turn Albania into the seventh republic of Yugoslavia, and the ‘monarcho-fascist’ rulers of Greece for having territorial ambitions on southern Albania. On the other hand, he proclaimed that the Balkan peoples had similar fates in history by being invaded by common enemies and in the struggle against them, the Balkan peoples were fraternalized with one another:

We are friends with neighboring Yugoslav and Greek peoples. The imperialist powers and their agencies have laid their fuses and detonators among us to set us squabbling with one another. But to us, the Balkan peoples, these things have become lessons and, in the face of the common danger, even though we may not agree with one another in many respects, we have found and must find a common language. The facts of history cannot be wiped out. When one has been attacked the other has been attacked, too, by the same enemy (Hoxha, 1982: 882).

For Hoxha Yugoslavs were ‘fraternal peoples’ (1985a: 130), whereas about Greeks he wrote:

At any time and under any circumstances the struggle of the Albanian people in defense of their independence, freedom and sovereignty is at the same time beneficial to the defense of the freedom and independence of Greece and its people. This we say to fraternal Greek people with an open heart, for we are the descendants of those who aided them and stood loyal to the end to the revolution of the year 1821 when others abandoned and betrayed it. The friendship between our two peoples has been tempered in our common fight against Italian fascists and the German nazis (ibid.: 131-2).

This stand of Hoxha towards Greece was in complete opposition to that of Naim Frashëri who reproached the Albanian precisely for helping in the creation of the Greek state, which was an action against Albanians' national interests. Judging from the perspective of the nationalism of the National Awakening period, Hoxha made another extreme act, this time towards Yugoslavia. Fearing that the Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia in 1968 could be repeated against Albania, he offered Albanian help to Yugoslavia and Rumania if these were to be attacked by the Soviets. Hoxha in 1969 declared:

In terms of our declaration, if Yugoslavia or Rumania were attacked we would defend those countries, would take their side, but dotting the i's as always, without hiding the irreconcilability of our views with those of the Titoites; moreover, we once again make known the ideological differences we have with the Rumanian leadership. We considered that such a resolute stand was in the interests of socialism and the defense of our Homeland, because if Yugoslavia were attacked it can be assumed that Albania would be attacked, too (1982: 567-8).

These stands towards neighboring countries were held without considering the situation and the human and political demands of the Albanians living in those countries. To this issue we turn in the section devoted to the Albanian national question.

4.2.4 Evaluation of National Awakening Period

Enverism evaluated the period of National Awakening through theoretical perspective of Marxism- Leninism. The National Awakening was considered to be the logical and historical consequence of the material evolution of Albanian society in the nineteenth century, combined with the result of uninterrupted wars of Albanians in centuries for their freedom and independence. The activities of the few nationalist intellectuals of the period were not interpreted as adding something new to the character of Albanian struggle, but, according to Enverism, those intellectuals were only the mouthpiece of the people and articulated people's objective wish and interests. About the fact that most exponents of National Awakening were of feudal or bourgeois origin, Hoxha wrote that they were detached from the interests of their classes and embraced the interests of the people, who were struggling for liberation from the "claws of

imperialists and traitorous feudals” (Hoxha, 1973: 427-8). Hoxha portrayed the National Awakening as the forebearer of the communist movement. Therefore, he attributed to its protagonists internationalist character (Hoxha, 1977: 12) and reserved the praise only for the radical branch of the national movement, the moderates being ‘traitors’, ‘collaborationists with the enemy’. But despite the similarities and the inspiration of the communist movement from National Awakening, for Hoxha, it could not be ranked equally to communist revolution. By taking Marxism-Leninism as the criterion of the truth, he pointed to the fallacies of the intellectuals of National Awakening period:

But we must not forget for one moment that these men of our Renaissance also have their negative aspects, which must be subjected to our Marxist-Leninist criticism. Their weaknesses lie in their philosophical concepts, which are idealist. This is a heavy impediment, it is the philosophy of their epoch which is in contradiction and struggle with our ideology (1982: 365).

As an example of the National Awakening idealist philosophy, Hoxha takes the issue of religion and says that the Albanian national culture should not make room for National Awakening intellectuals’ religious writings: “No, as Marxists and in the interest of the people and socialism, we must combat these negative aspects. In ideology we cannot make concessions to the beauty of verse or language” (ibid.). The practice of cultural politics in socialist Albania was the censoring of those works of the founders of Albanian national literature that were not in accordance with the ideological line of Enverism. According to Hoxha, National Awakening, because of various flaws, including ideological, could not reach its objectives; its ideals could be realized only in socialist Albania:

To our generation belonged the great honor to put in life the desires and aspirations of our forebears, the noble dreams of our great patriots of the National Renaissance...who worked and fought in their lives for the liberation of our dear Homeland, a people’s Albania...where the happy life and high virtues of our people flourish. Socialism brought these bright days to our Homeland (Hoxha, 1985b: 129-30).

It can be said that the concern of Enverism in the assessment of the National Awakening was to legitimize the position of the Party of Labor as its descendent and inheritor, and not to give a complete picture of the ideas of that time and their meaning for the future.

4.2.5 The National Question

After the establishment of Albanian boundaries in 1913, large Albanian territories were given to Greece and Yugoslavia. The Albanians living there were subsequently negated their national and human rights and were subjected to state sponsored strategies of extermination, assimilation and migration. The situation changed during the years of World War II, when most of these territories were incorporated to the puppet Albanian state under Italian and German invasions. That is why all Albanian groups of anti-fascist resistance, except the Communist Party, wanted to preserve the existent boundaries after the war. The Albanian communists gave priority to the cause of war against the fascist invaders, by collaborating with the Balkan peoples. Enver Hoxha said to Yugoslav communist during the war: "We do not accept the new boundaries established by the fascists" (1974: 218). He did not accept to collaborate with other Albanian groups of resistance that advocated the creation of 'Ethnic Albania' (ibid.: 185). After he came to power, he persecuted the members of those organizations. In the years to come the national question would be mentioned by Hoxha only in the framework of international relations, in his quarrels with Yugoslav leadership. Internally, Enverism left the national question in oblivion. No mentioning was made about Kosova and Çamëria anywhere in party propaganda, in school textbooks, in scientific gatherings, etc. The official history text of Albania for the period of post-1913 mentioned the Albanian territories outside the state boundaries only in cases when those had relevance for, or connections to the events happening in the Albanian state (Islami, Frashëri et. al., 1959: 14). The Albanian nation was imagined by Enverism within the state boundaries, whose citizens, were imagined as differing ethnically from those outside the boundaries, due to the processes of socialist system.

In speaking about the relations of Albania with other states, Hoxha mentioned Kosova only when defending himself from accusations of 'Albanian chauvinism' or 'irredentism'. He argued that he and the leadership of the Party of Labor could not be

called chauvinists, because they treated the case of Kosova according to Marxism-Leninism: “Only Marxism-Leninism, scientific socialism, the theory of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin provides a correct solution to national problems” (1987: 154). This stand meant that Enverism gave priority to the ideological demands of socialist revolution to nationally-based demands. Therefore, while condemning the ruling elite of Yugoslavia of genocide in Kosova, Hoxha stated that the Albanians of Kosova “alongside the other oppressed peoples of Yugoslavia, *shoulder to shoulder* with the genuine Yugoslav Marxist-Leninists, will continue the struggle to unmask the Titoite clique and defend their own interest” (1982: 92-3; my emphasis). Hoxha excluded any territorial claim of Albania to Yugoslavia, and in response to the accusations of Yugoslav leaders he said:

In order to disguise their chauvinism, the Great-Serb chauvinists label us Great-Albanian chauvinists. The slogan of ‘Greater Albania’ was coined by the fascist Italy of Mussolini; and everybody knows the expansionist-aggressive aims which he and the Ballists [members of Albanian National Front during the war] had, just as the Serbian Cetnici. Our two peoples fought heroically, *shoulder to shoulder*, against these common enemies and vanquished them (1987: 202-3; my emphasis).

Hoxha always subscribed to proletarian internationalist slogans when considering the issue of Kosova: if Albanian and Yugoslav peoples, according to him, had fought ‘shoulder to shoulder’ against common enemies during the World War II, then the Albanians of Kosova should do the same by collaborating with the other peoples of Yugoslavia for overthrowing Tito and his revisionist clique, but could not raise national demands, because that would weaken Yugoslavia as a state and the cause of socialism. In cases when Hoxha spoke openly about the cultural rights of Albanians in Yugoslavia, he did so by binding to the principle of non-interference in internal affairs and within the framework of minority rights. So, in his speech in the meeting of communist parties in Moscow in 1960, Hoxha stated: “We demand that Albanian minority in Yugoslavia should be granted the rights ascribed in the Constitution of People’s Federative Republic of Yugoslavia. Is this demand chauvinistic or Marxist?” (1960: 81). This stand did not change until 1981 when Hoxha verbally backed the Kosova Albanians demanding for their province the republican status within the federation. But still on this

occasion, to assure Yugoslavia that Albania would not make anything more than declaration in support to Albanians of Kosova, he added:

The lofty spirit of sacrifice and profound internationalist feeling characterize our people. We have always wanted good neighborly relations with Yugoslavia. Our stand is unalterable. If anyone, imperialism or social-imperialism, attacks Yugoslavia, socialist Albania will fight shoulder to shoulder with the peoples of Yugoslavia. This is what we have said and this is what we shall do (1987: 156-7).

Hoxha adopted the same internationalist stand towards Greece and never raised the issue of Albanians of Çamëria that were expropriated by the Greek government and expelled to Albania after the war because of their alleged cooperation with the fascists. Therefore, as a conclusion it can be said that for Enverism the national question did not exist, but, at best, only question of Albanian minorities.

4.2.6 The Messianic Character of Enverism

In the last phase of communist rule, that of self-reliance and complete isolation, besides its internationalist trend, Enverism took messianic characteristics. After many ideological quarrels with the Yugoslav party, Soviet party, Chinese party and Eurocommunism, Hoxha claimed that only Albania was faithfully following Marxism-Leninism, while all the others had deviated from it:

We are the only country in Europe and the only communist party fighting heroically and successfully resisting this great pressure which is exerted day and night. All the former communist parties of Europe, including that of the Soviet Union have betrayed Marxism-Leninism, the cause of the proletariat, the revolution and their own peoples. They betrayed the cause of socialism and turned their countries into capitalist countries. The Party of Labor of Albania did not betray, it stood its ground fearlessly, unyielding it uphold the principles of and defends socialism, its own country and revolution (1982: 789- 90).

A popular slogan at that time, that was attributed to Hoxha himself, said: "Albania is a shining sea-mark of socialism to the world". Because of this position of Albania in the

world, Hoxha imagined that capitalist and revisionist countries were trying to vanquish the last and the only fortress of socialism. He warned the people:

We must always bear in mind that the strategy of the capitalist, imperialist, social-imperialist and revisionist states has been constantly directed against Albania. So much more now and in the future it is and will be hostile to our country, as the only country in which scientific socialism is being faithfully built according to the great Marxist-Leninist principles (1987: 730).

Enverist ideology presented the tiny Albania as the vanguard of the world revolution:

We are the soldiers of that great and powerful army which is making the revolution of which they are so afraid and which will be the end of them! This revolution is the powerful blow, the continuation of the Great October Revolution, the peoples' liberation wars (Hoxha, 1982: 870).

In the writings of Hoxha, Marxism-Leninism is presented as a religion, whose pure form was to be found only in Albania and whose prophet was Enver Hoxha himself. From a position of that resembling a world leader, Hoxha welcomed in Albania revolutionary groups from all over the world and used to instruct them on how to successfully accomplish the revolution in their respective countries. The following citation by Hoxha illustrates his Manichean worldview and the imagined role of Albania on the side of the 'good' against the 'evil':

Consistent in their Marxist-Leninist line, the Party of Labor of Albania and the Albanian people have been and are against the monopoly bourgeoisie and international reaction. Therefore, in the future, too, they will spare no effort and will fight, together with all the other anti-imperialist and anti-social-imperialist peoples, with all the Marxist-Leninist parties, all the revolutionaries and the world proletariat, all progressive people, to foil the plans and manouvres of the enemies and ensure the triumph of the cause of the freedom and security of the peoples. At every moment our country will be found standing beside all those peoples whose freedom and independence are threatened and whose rights are violated (1985a: 121-2).

In the same messianic vein was the proclamation of Albania as the only atheistic country in the world, a step that even Stalin was too prudent to take. Judging from the relative position of Albania in the Balkans, and from its economic and military strength,

a messianic role in world politics was beyond its capabilities. A messianic Enverism served mainly for internal propaganda, and such, it had repercussions for the national identity of Albanians, which is discussed in the last section of the chapter.

4.2.7 National Myths

Enverism pretended that socialist Albania constituted a new nation different in many respects from the past generations. But, it also was confronted by an imagined historical heritage and a nationalist ideology inherited from the National Awakening period, which served communists in consolidating their rule and facilitated their task of transforming the Albanian society. Enverism solved this contradiction by a compromise like that of the relationship between the Old and New Testaments, by incorporating the glorious moments of ethnic past of Albanians that, according to them, foretold and anticipated the establishment of the socialist system. These glorious moments were the Illyrian origin, Skanderbeg, National Awakening, and the Partisan fighters of World War II. (Lubonja, 1999: 145-6).

Although Hoxha himself expressed some interest in the myth of Pelasgian origin of Albanians (Vehbiu, 1999: 67), the myth of origin from the Illyrian tribes was firmly entrenched in Albanian socialist historiography, because, unlike the Pelasgian myth, it could be supported on the interpretation of some archaeological evidence. There were two uses of the myth of Illyrians to Enverism. On one hand, it was used in the same way as the myth of Pelasgians in National Awakening period to fulfill a need of a suitable past for counteracting against the territorial pretensions of neighbors on Albania:

We have been obliged to undertake studies of the genesis of our people, because these have been and are not only scientific problems, but also major political problems. The conclusions from these studies have served us to oppose the foreign reactionary and aggressive forces (Hoxha, 1987: 711).

On the other hand, the myth of Illyrian origin was used by Enverism in connection to regime's need of legitimation by linking the past to the present:

Of all the Illyrian tribes we Albanians are the only ones who are living and advancing and now we are building socialism. This is a special, distinguishing

characteristic of a people with vitality, a people who have known how to survive' (Hoxha, 1985a: 228).

Hoxha also served of the myth of Skanderbeg for the legitimation of his policies: if Skanderbeg alone, without any foreign help or support, achieved victories over the Ottomans, the greatest power of that time in Europe, socialist Albania could do the same against the two superpowers. After 20 years in power, in 1965, Hoxha wrote:

Our small people with a glorious past, which astonished the whole world by defending for 25 years the European civilization from the Ottoman hordes, under our legendary hero, Skanderbeg, after getting rid of invaders during the World War II, under the guidance of the Party of Labor is now working for the prosperity of the country (1985b: 129-30).

Another myth used by Enverism was that of National Awakening being a revolutionary popular movement against all invaders, without distinguishing between Ottomans from Slavs and Greeks, in order to provide a precedence for the position of socialist Albania. One of the communist historians of Albania put it in this way:

The war in two fronts, with two objectives, constituted one characteristic of Albanian [National Awakening] movement...None of the objectives had priority over the other...They constituted a whole, a single duty, with two sides that complement each other (Buda, 1978: 33).

The most important myth of Enverism was that of the partisan fighters of the World War II. In one of his numerous praises to partisans, Hoxha said: "All the blessing which we have created and are enjoying during the years of socialism stem from the National Liberation War of the people led by the Communist Party, which has always been enlightened by Marxism-Leninism- its unerring guide" (1987: 822). Enverism claimed that the partisans single-handedly liberated Albania from Italian and German occupiers. This myth dominated the cultural sphere in socialist Albania; it was overwhelmingly present in history texts, artistic literature for both adults and children, films, dramas, operas, music and even in the coins. Moreover the partisan myth reinforced the illusion of the ability of self-isolated Albania to protect itself from the imperialist-revisionist aggression (Fischer, 1999b: 142).

Other myths of Enverism were self-reliant Albania and irreligiousness of Albanian nation. On the self-reliance, Hoxha stated: "Socialist Albania today is the only country in the world which is building socialism entirely with its own forces, without accepting credits from anyone and without taxes, without inflation and unemployment" (1987: 824). This assessment, in fact, was a manipulation of truth, because the modernization of Albania would not have been made possible without foreign credits, which Albania used to write off after the break of relations with the creditor country.

Enverism claimed that the abolition of religion in 1967 and the proclamation of Albania an atheistic country, was not an extreme act but one in accordance with the irreligious character of Albanians. According to this myth, religions had had no relation whatever in the formation of the Albanian national identity. Pashko Vasa's slogan 'The religion of Albanians is Albanianism' was interpreted by communists as expressing the reality and not as part of the program of intellectuals in National Awakening period against the divisive role of religions (Puto, 1999: 37-8).

4.3 Recapitulation and Conclusions

Upon coming in power in 1944, the Albanian communists were faced with the task of transforming a semi-feudal society into a modern one. They subscribed to the Stalinist model of development. The two most important components of Stalinism were the overthrow of the 'exploiting' classes through waging a ruthless class struggle, and the building of a socialist economy based on heavy industrialization. The latter task could not be accomplished by Albania alone, and a characteristic of socialist Albania was its economic dependence on its successive bigger allies: Yugoslavia, Soviet Union and China. But the Albanian leader, Enver Hoxha did not allow this economic dependency to turn into a political one. Therefore, at the latter stage of communism, Albania broke its relations with the outside world and claimed to build socialism with its own forces.

Hoxha succeeded in shutting the country to the outside influences and in maintaining his own position by relying on a totalitarian system backed by a powerful ideology. The official ideology, here termed as Enverism, has been formulated in

countless speeches, writings, diary notes, orientations, etc., by Enver Hoxha, that were taken as guidelines in all public activities in socialist Albania. From these primary sources, Enverist discourse on Albanian nation can be analyzed. This discourse inherited many elements from the nationalist discourse of the National Awakening, but it also had its own characteristics. The Enverist discourse on the nation had these elements: (1) an imagining of the nation in both ethnic and ideological dimensions; (2) aggressiveness towards religious and regional identities; (3) xenophobia; (4) modernization along socialist lines; (5) independence of Albania and the maintenance of personal power of Hoxha as political goals; and (6) messianism.

During the communist period, the Albanian nation was imagined, like in National Awakening period, in its ethnic components- common language, territory, origin- but the ideological dimension was added. Albania during communism was called 'socialist homeland' and Albanians a 'socialist nation'. The Albanian nation was imagined as being egalitarian, without class antagonism, virtuous, and with a class consciousness. Its alleged purity was to be kept unspoiled by continually struggling, under the guidance of the party, against both foreign and internal enemies. Implied in this imagining of Albanian nation was the sense of superiority of the citizens of Albania over the Albanians living in Yugoslavia and Greece. Also the boundaries of socialist homeland were imagined as congruent with those of the socialist nation.

What Enverism had in common with the National Awakening was the concern about the imagined harmful effects of religious and regional identities on the national identity. But Enverism differed from the National Awakening in its aggressive policies in trying to eradicate completely those identities, especially the religious one. In 1967, Albania was proclaimed an officially atheistic country and the myth of irreligiousness of Albanians was created. However, on regional identities, the ideology of Enverism did not correspond to the practice. In the name of subjecting regional identities to the national one, Enverism subjected the Geg identity to the Tosk one, because the Tosk dialect was made the base of the official language and many regional cultural elements proper to Tosks gained the status of the 'national', or the 'correct', whereas the Geg way of life gained the status of the deviance.

Enverism had a xenophobic element that was not visible in the nationalist ideology of National Awakening period. Socialist Albania was imagined, through official propaganda, as being encircled on all sides by enemies that envied its way of life and wanted to destroy it. By using a number of historical myths, in which Albanians were portrayed as triumphing over their enemies, Enverism attempted to create a sense of superiority of Albanians vis-à-vis all foreigners. What these past and present enemies had in common, was that they were different from Albanians.

Like the intellectuals of National Awakening period, Enver Hoxha and the communists had a modernist outlook. But while Sami Frashëri and Pashko Vasa wished for a capitalist development of Albania, Hoxha pursued a process of modernization like that of the Soviet Union in the time of Stalin. Emphasis was put on heavy industry for meeting the needs of Albania for industrial products. State owned factories and agricultural cooperatives were established in which the mass of Albanian workers and peasants were employed.

The main political goal of Hoxha was the maintenance of independence of Albania, which was in accordance with his other aim of maintaining his personal position of power against any possible foreign or internal challenges. One can say that the two political objectives complemented one another. To this end served the totalitarian organization of the country, with all its economic policies, class struggle and the various myths generated by the powerful state and party propaganda. Hoxha managed to keep a tight control on Albania, in this way preventing the occurrence of any dissention that could provoke a possible foreign intervention to remove Hoxha from the power. Likewise, he did not pursue irredentist policies and remained silent about the Albanian national question. At most, Hoxha raised the issue of Albanians of Kosova in Yugoslavia in the function of his quarrels with Tito. He also instrumentalized the Albanians of Yugoslavia to use them as protection shield from any possible foreign attack.

Xenophobia of Enverism was complemented by messianism Albania was proclaimed the only true Marxist-Leninist country in the world and professed to be a model that others must try to resemble. Messianic elements reinforced the self-

identification of Albanians as a socialist virtuous nation; in their imagination the outside corrupts world should try to resemble Albania and not the other way around.

Enverism, with all its component remained alive in Albania even after the death of Enver Hoxha in 1985, although some reforms in its implementation were attempted. The totalitarian system began to dismantle at the end of 1990, following similar events in other Eastern European countries.



CHAPTER 5

POST-COMMUNISM

Albania was one of the last communist dominoes in Central and Eastern Europe to fall. The first demonstrations against communist rule began in some cities in 1990. In July 1990 thousands of desperate young Albanians stormed the embassies of foreign countries in Tirana. The regime was forced to implement some reforms and make certain concessions. Some private economic activities were allowed to develop. In December 1990 the first opposition party, the Democratic Party was formed. The first pluralist elections that were held in 1991 ended in the victory for the Party of Labor. But because of the opposition's protests and the general strike of trade unions, the new government resigned. The next elections were held in March 1992. The opposition forces headed by the Democratic Party won. Ramiz Alia, the communist president, resigned soon afterwards and was replaced in his post by the head of the Democratic Party, Sali Berisha. This was experienced as a turning moment, not only for the citizens of Albania, but for all Albanians. During the recent years, so many things have changed, that communism seems a remote reality. Also the identities that people hold have changed, including the national identity. The concern of this chapter is about the imagining of the nation and about the politics of nationalist intellectuals in post-communist Albania. First of all, we review the situational framework of Albania on the eve of democratic reforms and some developments that took place in Albanian politics and that are linked with Albanian national question.

5.1 Situational Framework

When the Democratic Party came to power in 1992 it was faced with three basic issues: (1) legacies of communism, (2) national question, and (3) international situation in the Balkans and Europe. The legacies of communist dictatorship significantly

impeded the development of democracy and market economy in important respects. The Party of Labor had the monopoly over all aspects of life and few intellectuals had some vague ideas about their functioning, so they were totally unprepared to deal with the new experiences. The rule of law and the respect for human rights was not the practice during communism; the Party of Labor went so far as to abolish in 1960 the Ministry of Justice (Biberaj, 1999: 71). There was a deep gulf separating the people from the state: the society was deeply polarized between 'us' and 'them'. But, on other the hand, people were accustomed to expect everything to be provided by the state. During communism, national identity was so much mixed with the party ideology, that with ideology's collapse the national identity of Albanians was shattered. This phenomenon was also common to other communist countries where "[t]he party, never considered the proper agent of nationhood, was nevertheless acting in this fashion, which polluted nationhood at the same time as affording the party a limited degree of popularity" (Schöpflin, 2000: 162). Because the communist rule in Albania was harsher than in other communist countries, many analysts thought that Albanians during communism have experienced the destruction of the national traits and dignity. They pointed to the eagerness of Albanians to abandon their country and to their readiness to change their names, religion and nationality for better adapting themselves in the migrating country. Not only the masses, but also the intellectuals in Albania new little or nothing about the Albanians outside the borders; as Vickers and Pettifer (1997: 143) rightly observe, "[d]ue to the very restricted media and propaganda turned out by the Hoxha regime, Albanians in Albania knew more about what was happening in Mozambique than in Kosova".

At the same time, new developments were taking place in Albanian territories in Yugoslavia. With the successive independence of the constitutive republics of the federation, the Albanians were now separated among the republics of Montenegro, Serbia- together forming the rump Yugoslavia- and the Former-Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM). Belgrade in 1989 had abolished the autonomy of the province of Kosova and was since ruling it by a police regime resembling apartheid. Albanians of Kosova on their part proclaimed Kosova a sovereign republic and created a shadow government and parallel institutions. Under the president Ibrahim Rugova they followed

a passive Ghandi-like resistance against the Serb rule. This situation of neither peace nor war continued until 1998 when fighting began between Serb forces and Albanians' Kosova Liberation Army (KLA), escalating into a full-scale war that brought the NATO intervention a year later.

The relations of Albanians and Slavs in FYROM were tense, too. Albanians boycotted the independence referendum in protest at Slav majority to recognize Albanians as a constituent nation. Although afterwards the Albanians participated in parliament and other the institutions of the republic, they continued to demand what they called essential rights, such as the declaration of Albanian as second official language in areas predominantly inhabited by them, university education in Albanian and the rise in proportion of Albanians participating in the army and police. The situation exploded in 2000 when an Albanian group called National Liberation Army began to fight the government forces. An agreement was signed with the help of international community that granted to Albanians most of the rights they demanded.

The number of Albanians now living in the province of Çamëria in Greece is unknown. Greece does not accept to grant them minority rights. While the Orthodox Christian Albanians who live there are in the last stage of full assimilation, the Muslim Albanians of Çamëria were expelled to Albania after World War II with the motivation that they had collaborated with Italian and German invaders. Their descendents in Albania demand the right to return to their ancestral home. On its part, Greece showed concern about its minority in Albania, and also raised territorial claims in southern Albania. Through the use of the economic weapon and pressures in international organizations, Greece has tried to exert influence on Albanian political life. The relations between Albania and Greece were deteriorated when a Greek terrorist organization, MAVI, in 1994 killed two Albanian soldiers in the border town of Peshkëpia. In response to this act, Albania arrested five members of Greek minority accusing them of espionage, possession of illegal weapons and fomenting separatism (Biberaj, 1999: 162). When the unrest of 1997 happened in Albania, which was mainly caused by the collapse of financial pyramid schemes, in some circles, Greece and Greek lobby in America were accused of standing behind the escalation of rebellion (see Baze, 1997).

Before coming to power, the Democratic Party expressed concern about the national question. Berisha told its supporters in 1992 that one of the party's goals was the national unification (Miranda and Pettifer, 1997: 152). But after DP came to power, its stand changed. The new government's foreign policy was influenced mainly by economic situation and by concerns about security. Albania could not overcome its economic difficulties without substantial foreign capital. For large-scale investments security in the region was of first-hand importance. The tragic media pictures of the wars in Croatia and Bosnia made Albanians aware of the consequences of a war that could begin in Kosova or Macedonia and spread in other Balkan countries. These worries were also shared by the international community, who urged Albania to follow peaceful politics with its neighbors. Knowing the powerlessness of Albanian army in the face of any Serb attack, the Albanian government was the first of the ex-communist countries to apply for membership in NATO. It moderated its stand towards the national question and declared that it will be solved within the framework of a united European state. Berisha made steps back from his prior declarations by considering the regional autonomy as an acceptable solution to Kosova's status.

At the beginning, DP was in fact a common front of individuals of different political ideas that were united only by their common hate of communists and by the wish for rapid reforms (Biberaj, 1999: 66). Nationalists took part in it because it had a nationalist and populist character. After DP came to power, a differentiation process in its ranks began. Dissatisfied about the new stand towards the national unification and by the slowing down or abandonment of several anticommunist reforms, in 1994 a group of nationalist politicians departed from DP to form the Democratic Party of the Right. Nearly a year later, this party changed its name to National Revival Party (NRP). It is headed by Abdi Baleta, who has served for a period as Albanian representative in United Nations Organization. From 1991 to 1996, he was elected twice as a member of the parliament on DP's ticket without ever being a member of the DP. The central goal of NRP is the unification of all Albanian ethnic territories in a single state. The party's weekly journal, *Revival (Rimëkëmbja)*, covers the political, economic and cultural aspects of the Albanian national question. The articles in *Revival* by Abdi Baleta and his collaborate Hysamedin Feraj, a lecturer the Faculty of Social Science in University of

Tirana, together with other texts of theirs, constitute the object of analyses in this chapter of the nationalist discourse in post-communist Albania.

5.2 Nationalist Discourse

As was pointed out above, the elements of the nationalist discourse in the Post-Communist period can be delineated in the writings of the most prominent intellectuals of the National Revival Party, Abdi Baleta and Hysamedin Feraj. Their texts about nationalism and the Albanian national question serve as a reference point for the study of the ideas of contemporary nationalism in Albania.

5.2.1 Imagining the Nation

The nationalists in post-communist Albania define the Albanian nation in ethnical terms. For Baleta, 'ethnie' and 'culture' are not the same, because an ethnie is formed through numerous generations in history and each generation genetically transmits to the other the characteristics of the ethnie (Baleta, 1998a: 36-7). Ethnies are prior to nations and nations are created from the transformation of ethnies. From an ethnie, according to Baleta, more than one nation can be created, e.g. from the Slavic ethnie there are several contemporary nations. On the other hand, 'an ethnically pure nation', which implies the existence of 'ethnically impure nations', is a scientific nonsense for Baleta, because, firstly, no nation can pretend to be descendent of a single ethnie, and secondly,

when the nation is formed this means that all those that feel themselves to be part of it do not have any doubt about any other belonging, even if they are not descendent from the same ethnie. In this sense, the nation is nationally pure and there is no place for discussions on 'multiethnic nations', (Baleta, 2000: 20).

Baleta holds that the creation of nation in the world is a positive process. Also the creation of the nation-states that are based on a single nation is positive: "the troubles during the human history have been caused more by the creation of states that include many nations and ethnies" (ibid.: 21). The establishment of new nation-states is the most distinguishing characteristic of post-communist Europe, according to Baleta, who

asks “why only Albanians are recommended a contrary process”. He is referring to the Albanians in the Balkans who, after the collapse of Yugoslavia, are living in six states: Montenegro, Serbia, Kosova, (Albanian nationalists consider Kosova to be a sovereign state after the proclamation of the independence in 1991), Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), Albania and Greece (see Appendix C). Albanian nationalists argue that Albanians, irrespective of their actual citizenship, are part of one nation and have the right to create their own nation-state. Therefore, being an ethnic Albanian in the respective countries overrides all other differences of citizenship, religion, class, gender, age, profession, etc., and makes the demand for a single state legitimate in the eyes of nationalists. Additionally, they imagine the homeland of Albanians as a whole, as unbroken by the boundaries of the Balkan states:

Between Albanians there exist only forced boundaries and not natural ones. Also, there are differences that are caused by those artificial and brutal boundaries. But these differences can be erased quickly and without difficulty if we Albanians are properly determined and organized (Baleta, 1995a: 138).

The ideological dimension in the definition of nation that was present in the Enverist discourse about the Albanian nation is absent in the post-communist nationalist discourse. The imagining of the nation in post-communist times has affinities with that of the National Awakening period. Nevertheless a difference exist between them: whereas the intellectuals of the National Awakening period held a perennial view of the Albanian nation, in the sense that they thought that the Albanian nation had always existed and that it is eternal, Baleta and Feraj seem to take account of the scientific studies on the nation and nationalism in the recent years. For them, the Albanian nation is a development from the ethnical genealogy of the Illyrian tribes of the Antiquity and the Albanians of the medieval times. Feraj (1998) has argued that the transformation of the Albanian ethnies into a nation has taken place in the nineteenth century. Still, sometimes in their mythical language about the nation, the distinction between the Albanian ethnies and nation becomes blurred, for example when in an interview Baleta (1998b) spoke of “a thousand-year struggle of Albanian nation for its survival in the Balkans, against Slav and Greek neighbors that want to exterminate it”.

5.2.2 Nation vs. Tribes and Religions

Contemporary nationalists in Albania, similar to the intellectuals of the National Awakening period and Enver Hoxha, are against the divisive influences of the religious and regional identities on the Albanian national identity, but they acknowledge the interplay between the national identity and other identities. While distinguishing the ethnic identity from the religious one, nationalists recognize the influence that religions have had on the formation of the Albanian nation. They especially emphasize the positive role that Islam, the religion of the majority of Albanians, has played during the late centuries in the consolidation of the Albanian nation. Baleta says that the

basic elements of [Albanian] identity are language, ethnic descent, which distinguish [them] from neighboring nations, and Islam has become a characteristic of Albanian national physiognomy, which stresses even more their separate identity from the surrounding peoples (Baleta, 1997a: 8).

Islam has affected the national consciousness not only of Muslim Albanians, but of Albanian nation as a whole:

Islamization ensued as a natural historical process, with indelible historical, religious, and ethnological, but also national consequences for the Albanians. Islam has become an inner characteristic of the psychological formation of the Muslim Albanians and of all Albanian national identity (Baleta, cited in Clayer, 1997: 133; see also Baleta, 1995b: 7).

Baleta argues that the mass Islamization of Albanians in the Seventeenth Century occurred because of the perceived threat coming from neighboring Orthodox peoples. The religious conversions done for the preservation of one's ethnicity or nationality is not a phenomenon peculiar to Albanians; Baleta gives the example of the Bogomil Slavs of Bosnia-Herzegovina who were converted into Islam because of the pressures of Catholic and Orthodox Slavs around them, and the Khazars living between Caspian and Black Sea, who in order to resist to both Muslim-Arab and Orthodox-Byzantine encroachments between the ninth and eleventh centuries, were converted into Judaism (Baleta, 1995a: 63). On his part, Feraj (1998: 63) argues that the Muslim Albanians in

the nineteenth century embraced the national identity more easily than Orthodox Albanians; nationalism did not collide with their religious identity, because their imagined enemies were Orthodox peoples. The importance of Islam for the Albanian identity remains the same nowadays, according to Baleta (2002: 144):

The preservation of Islam in Albanian lands has vital importance for the preservation of Albanian national identity and individuality...Therefore, Albanian nationalist is the one who protects and not the one who fights against Muslim faith in Albania.

But the protection of Islam does not mean to dedicate oneself exclusively to religion at the expense of the nation, but to see it as a function of the nation. Islam, like other monotheistic religions, is universal in character and tends to downplay the national differences in the face of common religious bonds. Baleta thinks that this kind of 'Islamic internationalism' is damaging to Albanian national interests:

Internationalism of all forms when reaches the level of despising and negating nationalism, turns into such an indoctrination that confuses the people...Both Christianity and Islam in certain environments have the tendency to turn their universal character in a kind of internationalism like that with ideological base [proletarian internationalism] and to combat nationalism...In this sense, 'Islamic internationalism', too, is as damaging to Albanian nationalism as socialist ideological internationalism and the Christian internationalism are (Baleta, 2000b: 4).

From this citation, and the preceding ones, it becomes apparent that Baleta and other nationalists want to instrumentalize the religious identity to nurture and protect the national identity. Because the surrounding Slavs and Greeks are predominantly Orthodox and because the Catholic Albanians are a small minority, nationalists stress the Muslim components of the Albanian cultural heritage. They do not see the Orthodox Albanians as outsiders to Albanian nation, but in order to diminish the influence of the Greek propaganda on them, nationalists are arch-defenders of the Autocephalous and Autonomous Albanian Orthodox Church. Therefore, they were against the decision of Albanian president to accept a priest of Greek nationality and citizenship in the head of

the Albanian Orthodox Church. They have called for his removal, but until now they have not been able to realize their objective.

Similarly, the attitude of nationalists towards regional identities is tolerant insofar as they do not endanger the national identity or are not used by different groups to discriminate others. On this issue, Baleta writes:

The division of Albanians into Gëgs and Tosks is God-given...and no one can change it. It is damaging when these differences are exploited by certain groups for evil aims, for dialectical, political, power discrimination on regional basis, as it happened in Albania during the communist rule (1997b: 4).

After the creation of the nation and the national state, regionalism is a retrograde, destructive, and for Baleta it is equal to anti-nationalism (1988c: 4).

5.2.3 Enemies of Albanian Nation

To those who maintain that nowadays Albania has no enemies, Baleta responds that they are aiming at covering up the fact that Serbia and Greece (but also Macedonia) remain the most dangerous enemies of the Albania (1997c: 4). According to him, since a thousand years, e.g. since the arrival of the Slavs to the Balkans, between Serbs and Albanians there has never been periods of mutual understanding, but only conflicts (1999a: 60). On the latest war in Kosova he says that it was neither a war of Albanian-Islamic terrorists against the Christendom defended by the Serbs, nor a war against a dictatorial regime, but a liberation war of Albanians against a colonial and military rule, and also a struggle for the solution of a national question that has remained opened since the pulling back of the Ottoman Empire from the Balkans (1999b: 6). Nationalists maintain that Greece, on its part, has been penetrating economical, political, religious, and cultural spheres of Albania in the last twenty years with the intention of realizing in the near future the annexation of southern Albania (see Baleta, 1995a; Feraj, 1997). This is not a new phenomenon: “the history of Albanian-Greek relations is clear. It shows a constant hostility against Albania and Albanian nation on the part of the Greek state” (Baleta, 1995a: 126). Albanian nationalists think that Greece’s first step in invading southern Albania is the assimilation of the Albanian inhabitants of the region. Greece, according to them, follows a systematic strategy: by exploiting the poverty of

Albanians it gives work permits only to those Muslims who accept to be converted into Orthodox Christians; the second step is declaring all Orthodox Christian Albanians as Greek minority; then the final step is demanding national rights, such as the right of self-determination for the Greeks in Albania, which is a short step way from the complete annexation of the region to Greece (Baleta, 1998a: 53). Greeks work in close collaboration with Serbs: “for at least 200 years, there is a Serb-Greek conspiracy [against Albanians], since the appearance of Megali Idea and Nacertania” (ibid.: 39). That is why Baleta argues that in Albania to counter the attacks of Greek chauvinism means countering the attack of Serb chauvinism (1995a: 18).

The responsibility for the ordeals of the Albanian nation, according to Baleta does not lie solely with Serb and Greek governments; also the respective peoples have their collective responsibility:

I think that the people bear their own collective responsibility. There are peoples that in certain historical periods are negative in respect to other peoples. I can say that Serb and Greek peoples in many periods have been turned in negative factors in respect to Albanian people...Therefore, a people that continually elects, produces governments that behave badly towards other peoples, with that people something is going wrong. The collective responsibility is sanctioned in international documents (Baleta, 1996: 5).

Continuing the same reasoning, Baleta says that after the latest war in Kosova, it is better for both Serbs and Albanians to live separately. He is skeptical and critical of the attempts of the international community for the creation of a cooperative atmosphere between the different ethnic communities in Kosova and for the building of a multiethnic society there.

For me it is progressive when as many bridges between Albanians and Serbs are destroyed. Let Serbs and Albanians each stay in their respective river-sides...let us first learn to live separately and to respect one-another and then, when the proper time arrives, let us built bridges, so we can visit each-other (Baleta, 1998a: 183-4).

Nationalists think that only on equal status and on equal terms would the Balkan peoples learn to know, respect and co-operate with each other. For the Albanians to be on equal status to other Balkan nations means to have their own nation-state.

5.2.4 The National Question

In an interview in 1996, Baleta stated that the national unification of Albanians in a single state is a historical duty for all of them. It is not a voluntary or facultative cause that belongs to a group of people, a political party, or a generation. Baleta argues that even if, in a hypothetical case, all present living Albanians were to decide in a referendum to abandon the national question, they all would be wrong and would be considered as traitors by the preceding and future generations. Baleta thinks that the national unification is something on which a nationalist Albanian minority has the right to impose on a majority of Albanians who may not want to be united in a single state (1996: 5). Albanian nationalists base similar arguments on the alleged unalienable right of a nation to have its own state. The emblem of the National Revival Party reads: "One Nation, One Fatherland, One State". According to them, Albanian nation was treated unfairly because their opinion was not asked when the boundaries of their state were established in 1913. To this argument of the violated right, Feraj adds another: "National unification is not accomplished only to realize a norm: Justice. There is meaning in unification because it adds to our capabilities to win in the rivalry [of the nations]" (1997: 109). According to this argument of realist paradigm, the nations of the world compete with one-another for the scarce resources and in this competition some dominate and some are dominated. If Albanians do not want to be dominated by the other Balkan nations, they must be united under a single state. The present Albanian state is very weak, according to nationalists, and therefore cannot develop because its neighbors will impede everything that strengthens the Albanian nation. So, they argue, that the only way out for Albanians is to create their own nation-state, regardless of the sacrifices that are needed for its realization. Moreover, Albania is too weak to act as a factor of stability in the Balkans; it can only produce instability, as the unrest of spring 1997 proved. Therefore, "if Albanians cannot stabilize Albania and Kosova, they cannot be a factor of peace and stability in the Balkans" (Baleta, 1998a: 135).

About the means to realize the national unification, nationalists do not exclude the armed struggle, which they call 'liberation war'. The National Revival Party supported the struggles of the Kosova Liberation Army (KLA) and that of National Liberation Army (NLA) of the Albanians of Macedonia. The armed struggle, according to nationalists, should be combined with the political and legal means when the circumstances permit this, but it is important not to move astray from national goals. They do not think that the goal of the national unification will be achieved immediately; intermediate steps and solutions are a necessity. In this sense, they accept the Republic of Kosova as a temporary compromise (Baleta, 1995a: 177). Nationalists, in the endeavor for the solution of the Albanian national question do not give precedence to the interests of the existing Albanian state at the expense of the national interest. According to them, this has happened in Albania since the creation of the state in 1913, hoping that a strong Albania would serve just as the Kingdom of Piedmont served for the unification of Italy. Baleta thinks that this was a wrong course, although it was dictated by the circumstances in the beginning of the twentieth century. Because of its weakness and dependency on other countries, Albania, for Baleta, cannot be the 'Piedmont' of Albanian nation. The role of 'Piedmont' in present conjunctures

must be played by political forces and social groups that in their activities do not recognize artificial territorial boundaries, that in all Albanian territories act as in a space invaded by the enemy (Baleta, 1999a: 183).

In their struggle, Albanians should try to exploit the international actors, but should not condition their national aims with the international support for them. For example, on the independence of Kosova, Baleta writes:

International support or non-support for the idea of independence of Kosova is a condition of great importance that can favor or impede the realization of this right of Albanians. But even if there are not many chances for securing international support in the near future, this cannot justify the changes in objectives, strategy or the Albanian national program (ibid.: 53).

National Revival Party does not see the integration of Albania in a United Europe as contradicting the national unification but the latter must take precedence over the

former, because the party claims that the Albanian nation must be integrated in Europe on equal terms with other nations.

5.2.5 Nationalism and Politics in Albania

Baleta defines nationalism as a “force that is capable to transform the national instinct into national consciousness and in general morality” (1995a: 92). He also says that “some scholars of nationalism define it as the ‘exaltation of the national’. This is precisely what we, Albanians, need in contemporary conditions” (ibid.: 3). Nationalists think that after the communist regime, which for them was anti-nationalist, a national revival is necessary in Albania. But this must be a ‘contemporary nationalism’ that takes into account the actual conditions in Albanian territories, in the Balkans and international relations, and not a nostalgic nationalism that is oriented towards the past. In the first place, nationalism must coordinate the struggle for national unification with that of establishing a democracy and a market economy in Albania (ibid.: 5). Contemporary nationalists consider themselves to be the continuation of the ideas of the National Awakening, albeit in different times. According to Feraj, Albanian nationalism has these characteristics: (1) it is non-messianic, which means that it does not aim at the liberation or salvation of other peoples, except the Albanian one; (2) it is protective, because it claims to unite the Albanians in a single state to protect them from their neighbors, and does not claim the territories belonging to other nations in the name or reviving a medieval empire; (3) it is realist, in the sense that it takes into account the distribution of power in a given conjecture, (4) it is pragmatic, in the sense that it does not estimate any value in itself but judges everything in the function of the rightful solution of the Albanian national question; (5) it is religiously tolerant, in the sense that it acknowledges the social function of the religions to the extent that it does not contradict the national issues; (6) it is not xenophobic, which means that Albanian nationalist are ready to keep friendly relations and to cooperate with other peoples, with the exception of those who have invaded the Albanians at the present. Feraj thinks that these characteristics are shared by all nationalists since the times of National Awakening (1998: 111-5).

In making comparisons between Albanian nationalism and the nationalisms of Serbs and Greeks, Baleta states:

Albanians are among the few cases in the world that have not reached the degree of aggressive nationalism in order to fulfill their national rights. This is not a merit linked with the qualities of the Albanians. This is a consequence of their geo-political position and of historical developments during the centuries. But, even if we cannot allow ourselves to call the fact that we have never been in the position of aggressive nationalism, an 'Albanian characteristic', we have the full right not to remain silent about this historical fact that gives us the right to affirm that no one should complain of Albanian nationalism (1995a: 41).

According to Baleta, Albanians have never elaborated nationalist programs that were damaging to the 'honor, dignity, individuality, or ethnic territories of neighboring nations' (ibid.). The reverse has happened to them by the nationalisms of Serbs and Greeks, which the Albanian nationalists use to term 'chauvinisms'. One of the books of Baleta is titled *Albanians Opposing Serb-Greek Chauvinism* (1995a). This title itself suggests that Albanians are victims of the attempts to exterminate them, and that they are justified in 'opposing', that is in protecting themselves from the 'Serb-Greek chauvinism', in other words, from a deadly conspiracy against them. So, the title transmits the common and simple message of 'us-good' versus 'them-evil' to the readers.

Albanian nationalists do not consider nationalism to be an ideology:

In the world few ideologies exist, in contrast to the great number of nations. No nation pretends to have been created on the basis of an ideology specific to it. Religious and philosophic doctrines have become the property of many nations...Albanians do not need a 'national ideology'. They need the conservation and development of national spirit and values, of national heritage and tradition, they need a clear national ideal and program, humanist and advanced philosophic and political doctrines, a diversity of ideas and of forms of political organizations (ibid.: 53).

Albanian nationalists maintain that the national and ethnic questions should be treated separately from ideological ones and they distrust the mixing of the two in one. Feraj states that once it was believed that proletarian revolution and socialist ideology would solve all conflicts, including national ones, and therefore the dedication to ideology was

deemed to be more worthy than the dedication to one's nation. According to him, experience disproved this belief in ideology. Nowadays, Feraj continues, it is claimed that democracy, and the market will solve the national problems. But, by citing the examples of Czechoslovakia and Canada (Quebec), Feraj argues that democracy in itself cannot guarantee the right and permanent solution to national questions (Feraj, 1997: 7). If the possibility exists that the democratization processes in the Balkans may not result in the ending of the ethnic conflicts, then nationalist call to Albanian nation not to cease its struggle for its national rights. This seems to be a relevant observation, for example, on the ethnic situation in Macedonia, where a relatively democratic government could not prevent the interethnic war between Albanians and Slavs. Nationalists think that the Albanian national question should not be sacrificed to the question of building democracy in Albania, "because things can precipitate in such a way that the moment for the solution of national question makes itself apparent before than we in the Republic of Albania establish a proper functioning democracy" (Baleta, 1995a: 20-1). The national question is linked to the question of democracy in another way, according to Feraj. He states that the authoritarian regime in Albania is the price that the citizens of Albania must pay for the abandonment of the cause of national unification by their political elite. In his argument, the world powers that want to preserve the status quo in the Balkans by impeding the national unification of Albanians, are interested in supporting non-nationalists or even anti-nationalist rulers in the Republic of Albania. These politicians on their part try to limit, by undemocratic forms, the articulation of nationalist ideas in public and the activities of nationalist organizations, thus damaging the chances of democracy in Albania (Feraj, 1997: 125-8). Feraj is referring to the period 1992-1997 when Europe and USA supported the authoritarian regime of president Berisha because of his non-nationalist stand on the question of Kosova. The system of governance that Berisha created was unable to anticipate, prevent and contain the crisis of 1997, which was provoked by the collapse of pyramid financial schemes and escalated into armed conflicts.

According to their stand towards the national question, Feraj divides the political parties in Albania into three groups. In the first group there are the parties for which the Albanian national question does not exist. The second group is composed of parties that

accept the existence of the national question, but do not involve themselves in its solution. In the third group there is only one party, the National Revival Party, that not only acknowledges the existence of the national question, but also engages for its rightful solution (ibid.: 106-9). Nationalists think that in Albania the politics about the national question resembles a zero-sum game: every step that advances the unification of Albanian nation is a loss for Slavs and Greeks, and vice-versa. Feraj states:

in Albania there are only nationalisms that fight with one another...in Albania there are no cosmopolites, internationalists, etc., in their pure form, but there are only nationalists: Albanian nationalists, Serb nationalists, Greek nationalists... (Feraj, 2000:2).

5.2.6 Evaluation of National Awakening and Enverism

The beginnings of Albanian nationalism are to be found in the National Awakening period and its ideology. The first attempts for the creation of the national Albanian state were undertaken during the years of the Albanian League of Prizren. For this reason, contemporary nationalists in post-communist Albania consider the League as a climax point in Albanian history. Baleta writes:

For present-day Albanian, the most great historical event that should raise their spirit and minds is, without doubt, the League of Prizren...At the times of the League, Albanians managed to create their national state in their ethnic territories, although the circumstances of the time made it impossible and useless the complete separation from the Ottoman Empire...The league of Prizren was the purest manifestation of Albanian nationalism; a manifestation of such a conceptual, organizational and territorial level that Albanian nationalism has never since achieved (Baleta, 1998d:1).

Baleta does not accept that the League of Prizren was a simply a military alliance for countering the Slavs and Greeks; for him it was the concretizing of the ideas of Albanian National Awakening for the establishment of a national state. In this attempt, Albanians followed the examples of unification of Italy and Germany, and demonstrated that they were in union with the developments that were taking place in Europe in the second half of the nineteenth century. Albanians were not late-comers in

the European history of nations (*ibid.*). Contemporary nationalists argue that the ideals of National Awakening have relevance for our times, for one thing, the Albanian national state has not yet been realized. Baleta writes that “the [national] program of Albanians can be expressed in two words. We have the program of the League of Prizren” (1998a: 40). Nationalists maintain that the Albanian nation in the present day needs a political and cultural revival similar to that of the National Awakening.

As we saw in the preceding chapter, Enverist historiography considered the radical branch of National Awakening as constituting the whole movements, and condemned the moderate branch as traitors. Nationalists in post-communist Albania do not accept this interpretation as being faithful to historical facts. They not only argue that the moderate branch, which was for temporary cooperation with the Ottoman government against the more dangerous threat from Slavs and Greeks, should be taken into account by historians, but also that the moderates were closer to the spirit of Albanian nationalism, because their primary concern was to protect Albanian territories and the nation from dismemberment (*ibid.*: 163). The fact that Albania was under the Ottoman occupation was of secondary importance to both the moderates of National Awakening and contemporary nationalists. On this issue, Baleta says:

If we equalize the Greek soldiers with the Ottoman ones, then we have learned nothing from our history...The Ottoman soldier was more truly a protector...There are no parallelisms between Ottoman and Greek soldiers, between Serb and Ottoman soldiers, all the more that the danger from the Ottoman soldiers has vanished since the beginning of this [twentieth] century. While the danger from Greece and Serbia still exists today... Then, why should we hear such palavers that equalize the enemy with the friend (*ibid.*: 226-7).

Similarly, Feraj (1998: 126-7) argues that whereas the moderate branch of the League of Prizren was the bearer of nationalist ideas, the radical branch by provoking armed conflict of Albanians with the Ottoman administration, served the Serb-Greek plans to weaken both Albanians and Ottomans, in order to make it easier to invade the lands of the Empire that were predominantly inhabited by Albanians.

Contemporary nationalists' attitude towards Enverism, as ideology and practice, is highly negative. They consider Enverism having been destructive to the Albanian nation and anti-nationalist. Feraj, by comparing the ideas of Albanian nationalism with

the ideas of Enverism, makes these comparisons: (1) according to *self-definition*, Albanian nationalism is oriented towards the idea of the Albanian nation as a particular community, while Enverism, because of its communist roots is concerned about humanity in general; (2) according to *political goal*, Albanian nationalism aims at the salvation of Albanian nation from dismemberment and at the attainment of freedom, welfare, happiness for the nation, whereas Enverism aims at the building of a classless society without exploitation; (3) according to the *path of development*, Albanian nationalism believes that the Albanian state in its present borders can neither build a stable political system nor develop economically, whereas Enverism believed that the Albanian socialist state had managed to construct the best political system in the world and that Albania could develop in relying to its resources; (4) according to the *stand towards unification*, Albanian nationalism builds arguments on why Albanians should unite in a single state, whereas Enverism argued about why Albanians should not be unified; (5) according to *perceived enemies*, for Albanian nationalism the main enemies are the neighboring Slavs and Greeks and also their allies, like Russia, whereas, for Enverism these were friendly peoples; (6) Enverism was *messianic* while Albanian nationalism is not; (7) Albanian nationalism is *religiously tolerant*, while Enverism is not; (8) Albanian nationalism is *protective*, whereas Enverism is aggressive (Feraj, 1998: 222).

Baleta says that Enverism during the fifty years of its rule has destroyed in Albania the preconditions for the development of Albanian national consciousness and nationalism. This was realized through the elimination of intelligentsia, which was replaced with new intellectuals that were prepared in Slavic schools (Yugoslavia, Russia, and also the Albanian education system that was modeled after the Russian one), with Marxist-Leninist ideology and a hate towards nationalism. Moreover Albanian intellectuals during communism have internalized the ideas and world-view of Slavic and Greek sciences and cultures (Baleta, 1995a: 8-9). Feraj, too, argues that "Enverist culture and science have aimed at the destruction of the essential elements of Albanian nationalist consciousness" (1998: 328). This was done (1) by narrowing the imagination of the homeland; (2) by narrowing the imagination of the Albanian nation; (3) by overturning the Albanian nationalism's perception of enemies and friends; and

(4) by arresting in Albania's political, cultural and social life the idea of national unification (ibid.: 328-40). This process of 'denationalization', according to Feraj, was undertaken with the help of ethnic minorities that live in Albania, especially the Vlach and the Greek minorities, which during communism were dominant within the political, cultural and scientific elite in Albania. Through statistics about the nationality of members in top positions in bureaucracies of the Party of Labor of Albania- Political Bureau and Central Committee- of culture and media, of education and of science, Feraj argues that "the Enverist political practice was not congruent with the Albanian nationalist thought, with its feelings and resentments, and does not spring from nationalism" (ibid.: 348), and that "Enverism has more truly been the rule of non-Albanians over Albanians" (ibid.: 349).

In short, if National Awakening period is imagined by nationalists to be one of the 'golden ages' of Albanians, the communist period is imagined to constitute one of their 'decline ages'.

5.2.7 National Myths

In explaining the connotation of the name of the National Revival Party, Baleta (1998e: 6) writes that Albanians in their history have known many periods they should be proud of. He mentions the Illyrian tribes that fought the Romans, the attempt of Pyrrhus of Epirus to create an empire, then the glorious time of Skanderbeg, and that of the Albanian *ayans* in the second half of the eighteenth century. But these 'golden ages' were followed by periods of decline, writes Baleta. So, the Illyrian kingdoms were invaded by the Romans and later by their territories were narrowed by the incoming Slavs in the second half of the first millennium. The medieval state of Skanderbeg was destroyed after his death by the Ottomans, and the achievements of the Bushati family and Ali Pasha of Tepelen was shattered by the reforms of Tanzimat. In modern times, the historical peak of the League of Prizren was repeated in the proclamation of independence in 1912, but immediately after this revival moment, the parceling of Albanian territories occurred. According to Baleta, the Albanian state experienced a revival during the rule of king Zog, (1925-1939) but was followed by declines under the fascist occupation and afterwards under communism. The democratic reforms were

again a revival but they were seriously undermined by the unrest of 1997. Therefore, continues Baleta, by the 'national revival',

We aim at a change in the position of our nation, state and country in all spheres. By 'revival' we do not understand simply a mechanical return to a past period...on the contrary, we understand the rise of our nation in an equal level to other nations and its progress...The peak of this revival would be the union of all separated parts of the nation and of the now parcelized ethnic territories in a unitary national state in the boundaries of Ethnic Albania (ibid.).

In Albanian communist historiography the pre-Ottoman period was represented as a 'golden age' and the Ottoman invasion as a decline, because it was assumed that the Ottomans detached the Albanians from the developments that took place in western Europe that brought the modern age. Nationalists in post-communist Albania challenged this interpretation of history and overturned this thesis by arguing that, at least on ethnical terms, the pre-Ottoman period was a period of the major assimilation of Albanians, that were curbed by the Ottoman invasion of the Balkans (Feraj, 1998: 51-8). Feraj supports the view of Sami Frashëri and Pashko Vasa that the decline period for the Albanians during the Ottoman rule was the period of the reforms of Tanzimat (ibid.: 68-76). By countering the Enverist myth of antagonism between Albanian and Ottomans, Feraj constructs the myth of 'eternal friendship' between Albanians and Ottomans. According to this myth, Albanian nationalism has its roots in the tradition of the cooperation of Albanians with the invaders from outside of the Balkans (e.g. Ottomans) against the Balkan invaders (ibid.: 146). Feraj writes that Albanians during their history have confronted the dilemma of choosing to cooperate with Balkan invaders or invaders from outside the Balkans. He calls this phenomenon the 'political metaphysics of Albanians' (ibid.: 86-9). While, this 'political metaphysics' may have been perceived as an existential situation by Albanians during the National Awakening period (and also during the two world wars), there is no evidence to suggest that this has happened in any other period during the second millennium, as Feraj claims.

At the base of all political imagination of Albanian nationalists lies the myth of eternal animosity of Albanians towards neighboring Slavs and Greeks. For example Baleta writes that "since one thousand years there has been no understanding between

Slavs and Albanians” (1999a: 60), and elsewhere that “this is an ongoing one thousand-year struggle for the survival of Albanian nation in the Balkans, where Slav and Greek neighbors want to exterminate it” (1998b). The present day is no exception for nationalists: the struggle continues, sometimes in its classical forms as in Kosova in 1998-1999, sometime in new forms as the gradual everyday subjugation of Albania to Greece. The Albanians are left with no alternative except that of resisting the latest wave of decline and to realize the new revival of the nation.

5.3 Recapitulations and Conclusions

The so-called ‘democratic revolution’ in 1990s was a watershed for Albania. Many aspects of social, political, and cultural life changed in fundamental ways. The most essential change was that of passing from a totalitarian political system and a centralized economy to a political system that is based on the rule of law, respect for human rights, democratic elections and a market economy. The priorities of the Albanian post-communist governments had been economic development and the creation of democratic institutions. The stated goal of foreign policy has been the integration of Albania in Europe and in NATO. The national question, despite the explosive situations in Kosova and FYROM, has been confined to the margins of politics, because both the Democratic Party and the Socialist Party (ex-Communists) that have alternated in power in recent years, have relied more on the intervention of the international community on behalf of Albanians in these countries. Among the political elite in Albania the idea that an irredentist politics is beyond the powers of the Albanian state has gained ground. Nevertheless, some minor right-wing parties in Albania still consider the national question to be the most important problem that Albanian nation should deal with. The National Revival Party has been the most consistent in its nationalist position. The texts of the leader of the Party, Abdi Baleta, together with those of his close associate, Hysamedin Feraj are used in this thesis to represent the nationalist discourse in post-communist Albania. The most essential elements of this discourse are (1) an imagining of the nation in ethnic terms; (2) the stand towards

religious and regional identities; (3) the imagining of the enemies of the nation; (4) the cause of national unification; and (5) the emphasis on the doctrine nationalism.

Contemporary nationalists imagine the Albanian nation in ethnic terms. For them to be an Albanian is to have been born by Albanian parents. But they do not pretend on lineage purity of Albanians; nationalists accept that the Albanian nation was formed by the transformation of the Albanian ethnic that during the centuries has interacted with other ethnicities. By this fact they do not mean that it is correct to speak of 'multiethnic nations', because once the national identity is crystallized in a certain community, than they belong to that nationality and to that alone. The ethnic minorities that exist in Albania should enjoy their cultural and political rights, according to nationalists, but must comply with the fact that the Albanian state serves primary to the needs of the Albanian nation. Nationalists argue that this was the ideal of the National Awakening and they criticize Enver Hoxha for his instrumentalization of the nation and the state for ideological ends, personal power and because he left the cultural socialization of the Albanians in the hands of individuals of non-Albanian origin.

Nationalists accept the religious and regional identities as natural, but they are against their use for political ends. According to them, the primary identity of Albanians is and should be the national identity. This does not prevent nationalists from investigating the role of different religions and regions in the formation of Albanian nation. In this respect, Islam is considered by them to be very important, because it sharpened the differences between Albanians and other peoples in the Balkans. This role of Islam has not diminished nowadays and nationalists of NRP have been very active in protecting the Muslim traits of Albanian culture and identity. They are also engaged in protecting the independence of the Albanian Orthodox Church and have highly valued the contribution of the Catholic Albanians to the national cause. The precedence of religious identities over national one is considered to be a sin against nation by the nationalists in post-communist Albania.

Albanian nationalists imagine parts of their nation to be under the occupation of neighbors. It does not matter to them whether the states in which Albanians live are democratic or not; the most essential thing for them is that Albanians in those countries are negated many national rights, essentially the right to their national state. For this

reason, nationalists consider Slavs (Serbs, Montenegrins and the Slavs of FYROM) and Greeks as enemies of Albanian nation. This attitude is in complete contrast with the official position of Albanian state, whose officials claim to share common traditions and that they have common interests with other Balkan countries. Against this assertion, Baleta writes that Albanians have more common characteristics with western European countries than with the Balkan countries: "Albania is more a country of Adriatic Sea than of the Balkans. Albanian is the Balkan people that is the most closest in every aspect to the West" (1999a: 121).

Nationalists in post-communist Albania consider the national unification of all Albanian territories in a single state as the most sacred duty. They argue that a unified Albania would be a precondition for the development of democracy, market economy, and also for the peace and stability in the region. According to NRP, every Albanian should help the cause of national unification within his or her powers, capabilities and conjectures of the moment; what is important is that they should always act in the interest of the nation and homeland. All parts of the nation and of Ethnic Albania are equally valued and the interests of only a part, be it Albania or Kosova, should not take precedence if they damage the general national cause. The international support is a crucial factor for solving the Albanian national question and Albanians should try to win it on their side, as happened in NATO intervention in Kosova in 1999. But nationalists do not accept that the international factors determine what the national goals of Albanians or the right solution to their national question should be. NRP's opinion is that in the present conditions Albania cannot play the main role for the cause of national unification, similar to the role Piedmont played in the unification of Italy. Nationalists argue that those Albanians who want to work for that cause should act without taking into counting on the support of Albania; as Feraj put it on the issue of independence of Kosova, 'at the base of the building of political strategy of Kosova should be placed the assumption that Albania does not exist, and that Kosova is adjacent to a non-Albanian state' (1997: 115).

NRP maintains that in Albanian political and cultural life a nationalist spirit is needed. It claims that no harm can be done to Albanians and others from Albanian nationalism, because Albanian demands for their national rights to be respected is just.

Albanians are not aggressive towards other nations and their ethnic territories. It is the neighbors of Albanians that have developed aggressive nationalism, that is chauvinism, against the Albanian nation. NRP considers nationalism not as an ideology or as a property of one or more political parties. All parties, regardless of their ideology, should protect the interests of the nation and the country first. But in present, says NRP, this is not the case with the political parties in the country. NRP considers itself to be the only authentic nationalist party in Albania, facing all the other parties, which either do not worry at all about the national question or do not engage themselves for the its rightful solution.

Nationalists in contemporary Albania legitimate themselves by claiming to be the heirs to the National Awakening, and by their activities they try to reverse the assumed negative effects of the previous Enverist ideology on Albanian national identity.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION: CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN NATIONALIST DISCOURSE

This thesis analyzed the nationalist discourse of Albania in three critical periods. From 1878 to 1912, when the Albanian National Awakening movement took place, the rule of the Ottoman Empire in the Balkans precipitated towards its complete collapse and the centuries old order was shattered. The Albanian-inhabited territories of the Ottoman Empire were threatened by the new Balkan states. Albanian intellectuals and bureaucrats of Ottoman administration thought that Albania could be saved if it formed its own national state. But, in order to do it, first the Albanian nation had to be created. Therefore, on one hand, they introduced in Albania the imagining of an Albanian nation through their literary and political writings, and on the other hand they tried to propagate the existence of the Albanian nation to Europe.

The period of Communism (1945-1990) began under the ruins of the Second World War. The communist ruling elite set to build a 'new' Albania, along socialist lines. They served of the nationalist feelings that the world war had caused among the broad strata of population, in lying the basis for their imagined classless society. The nationalist discourse of Enverism, was intricately bound with ideological elements.

The crisis of communist rule in 1980s and its demise in 1990 was experienced in Albania as the opening of a new era. Hitherto existing identities changed rapidly. Nationalist intellectuals were now working in post-communist Albania to create a national identity that resembled to the pre-communist one, but which was also necessarily new in other respects. Their goal was the unification of all Albanian lands in a single state.

In this chapter we attempt to summarize the common and different characteristics of the Albanian nationalist discourse in these three periods.

(1) The Albanian nationalist discourse is centered upon *the Albanian nation*. National Awakening defined the nation in cultural terms, emphasizing the language as the most distinguishing characteristic of Albanian nation. This is also the case with the nationalist discourse of the National Revival Party in post-communist Albania. Enverism added to the ethnic component of the imagining of the nation as an ideological entity by emphasizing the 'socialist nation' at the expense of 'ethnic nation'. The nation imagined by Enverism was geographically more narrow than that imagined by the bearers of the National Awakening, or by the National Revival Party in post-communist Albania. Enverism included in the 'socialist nation' only the citizens of the Peoples' Socialist Republic of Albania.

(2) Albanian nationalist discourse has *integrative and homogenizing character*. National Awakening, as a cultural and a political movement, strove to homogenize the Albanian culture in order to integrate all Albanians under the national identity. Intellectuals of National Awakening considered regional and religious identities as obstacles that Albanians should overcome to be 'fraternized' with one another. To them the religious identities were the most dangerous, because those linked the Albanians to other Balkan peoples and impeded the forming of the national consciousness. Their strategy of fighting the religious influence was not atheism; they instead preached that the highest devotion of Albanians should be to their nation and that the religious matter should be subordinated to the national ones. In this sense, Pashko Vasa wrote that 'the religion of Albanians is Albanianism'. Atheism was used by Enverism to eradicate the influence of religion on the Albanian people. The communist regime closed down all the religious institution and made punishable by law the practice of religious rites. Enverism, following the famous dictum of Marx, operated according to the belief that "religion is opium for the people". Through the use of state institutions, party organizations, mass media, schools, Enverism undertook the homogenization of the national culture. One of its achievements was the establishment of a unified literary language. In practice, the literary language was based on the Tosk dialect and the Geg dialect and culture found itself suppressed during communist period. Therefore, while Enverism claimed to downplay the regional differences, in reality in some areas of life those were made sharper. Also contemporary Albanian nationalism's discourse is

integrative, but it takes a cautious stand towards religious and regional identities. Nationalists allow for the fact that these identities may have positive effect in strengthening the national identity. They emphasize the role that Islam played in conserving through centuries the Albanian ethnies. About the cultural heritage of communism, the National Revival Party argues that in many respects it is anti-national and a reevaluation of Albanian culture is needed.

(3) Albanian nationalist discourse has a certain definition of *space*. The nationalist discourse of national Awakening and that of post-communist Albania define the space in an ethnic way, whereas Enverism in ideological way. At the end of the nineteenth century nationalist intellectuals imagined the frontiers of Albania to be congruent with the extension of Albanian nation. The League of Prizren, in its endeavor to establish an autonomous state, operated according to this criterion. During communism the space was imagined according to ideological criterion. The People's Socialist Republic of Albania was imagined as being the only true socialist country in the world. The rest of the space was imagined as being occupied by capitalism and social-revisionism. Nationalists in post-communist Albania again imagine the space in ethnic terms. They do not accept the existing boundaries of Balkan states that have parceled the Albanian nation and its homeland. National Revival Party ethnizes the Albanian politics by claiming that that during communism Albania was ruled by a non-Albanian elite and that post-communist politics has two axes, the national axis and the anti-national one.

(4) Albanian nationalist discourse has a *defensive* character. National Awakening self-mission was to defend the Albanian nation from dismemberment. Enverism was defensive in that it aimed at the maintaining of independence of Albania from the full dependency on other states. Enverism imagined socialist Albania to be encircled on all sides by enemies that wanted to destroy it. But at the same time the regime made aggressive postures toward the rest of the world, because, by defending the independence of Albania, Enverism pretended to defend the only socialist country in the world that had remained true to the principles of Marxism-Leninism, thus defending the cause of world revolution. Hoxha thought that there could be no peace between the forces of world revolution and those of the world reaction. Because of this reason,

socialist Albania was imagined as attacking the capitalist world and unmasking the Soviet Union's socialism. Nowadays, the National Revival Party argues that Albanian nationalism is defensive because it struggles to protect the Albanian nation from assimilation. By claiming to defend the nation, NRP is taking an aggressive stand towards the international status quo in the Balkans. Nationalists do not accept the actual borders because they hold them to be obstacles to the normal life and development of the nation. NRP engages itself in the endeavor to revise them and create a unified Albanian state.

(5) The Albanian nationalist discourse creates *the imaging of enemies and friends*. Albanian Nationalists of both National Awakening and post-communist periods consider as the most enemies of Albanian nation the neighboring countries, without making a clear differentiation between the peoples and their governments. In addition, contemporary nationalist consider as enemies international movements of any kind that are directed against the nation as a historical and political entity, e.g. communist or religiously fundamental movements. The perceived friends of Albanians for both National Awakening and post-communist nationalists are all those countries, forces, groups, organizations and individuals that contribute to, or favor the unification of Albanians in a national state. Enverism claimed that socialist Albania was the enemy of all forces of reaction- capitalists, revisionists of Marxism Leninism, the overthrown classes- and the friend of all oppressed peoples and progressive forces of the world. In reality, the communist regime shouted down Albania from all foreign influences, and cultivated xenophobic feeling among the people. Paradoxically, Enverism had messianic pretensions, that is to help, or at least to show to world the true path to liberation from oppression and the building of a socialist society.

(6) The Albanian nationalist discourse has *political goals*. National Awakening's political goal was the unification of four Ottoman vilayets under an autonomous Albanian administration. The autonomous Albanian state would be depended on the Porte as long as the latter's rule in the Balkans would last. At the time of complete Ottoman retreating from the Balkans, the autonomous vilayet would be proclaimed an independent, sovereign state and would seek international recognition. While the explicit goal of the communist regime was the maintaining of independence

of Albania as a sovereign state and a socialist society, the implicit goal of Hoxha was securing his personal power against all possible pretenders. In post-communist Albania, the National Revival Party aims at the revival of national consciousness of citizens of Albania, as a means for the long-term goal of national unification of all Albanians in a single state. NRP considers a possible independent republic of Kosova as an intermediate step toward its union with Albania.

(7) Albanian nationalist discourse has a *modernist outlook*. The representatives of National Awakening, Enver Hoxha and contemporary nationalists wished a developed Albania, but they differ in the ways of development. Intellectuals of National Awakening argued that Albania needed to develop through private enterprises and industry like the way that Western Europe was developing at that time. Enver Hoxha and the communists instead applied a state-planned development through the concentration of all resources, like that applied in the Soviet Union and the other states in the Eastern Bloc. Communists gave Albania its modern face with industrialization, mechanized agriculture, infrastructure, urbanization, working class, mass education, professionals and intellectuals. In many important aspects, their modernization project failed or went astray. One of the reasons for this, according to contemporary nationalists is that in order to be developed, Albanian lands should be politically united first; as long as Albanians remain separated, the existing Albanian state would remain a weak and an underdeveloped one.

(8) The discourse on the nation in the three periods has a dichotomous nature. It divides the world into 'good' and 'evil'. The Albanian nation, whatever its definition according to the period, personifies the 'good' and its enemies personify the 'evil'. But whereas in the nationalist discourse the 'good' despite many simplifications, remains vague, the 'evil' takes concrete form. National Awakening professed to defend the nation from Slavs, Greeks and Turks, although at that time the national consciousness was absent among Albanians with the exception of a few intellectuals. On its part, Enverism created a psychology of siege in Albania by claiming that Western imperialists, Soviet and Chinese revisionists, Titoites, internal enemies, traitors, etc., were trying to destroy the socialist Albania and to spoil the spirit and the virtues of the Albanian people. In the same vein, in nationalist discourse in post-communist Albania,

the perceived traitors of the Albanian nation occupy a prominent part and are commonly identified by names, but little attention is devoted to analyzing the components of Albanian national consciousness and the inevitable differences and contradictions that exist in the self-definition of Albanians.

The changes in nationalist discourse in Albania, on one hand, demonstrate the contingency of the nation and its dependence on the political discourse in a given socio-political situation. But, on the other hand, the continuities in the nationalist discourse in the three periods under analysis demonstrate the constraints that the nation as an imagined community exerts on the political actors. Even if Enverism used the nationalist discourse to create a socialist society and state that differed in many important aspects from the one imagined by the intellectuals of National Awakening, the communist elite had to legitimize its rule by ascribing not only to socialist and revolutionary slogans, but also to national ones. Enverism claimed to have fulfilled the political project of the National Awakening, indeed, to have gone beyond it in many aspects. The counter-argument of nationalist in post-communist Albania is that the national project that National Awakening imagined is not yet realized and that Enverism was based on a distorted view of National Awakening. They urge for a return to the ideas of National Awakening that must be at the base of political life in Albania.

Consequently, the findings of this thesis give credit to those approaches to nationalism that emphasize the importance of the political constructing of the nation. But even in constructing the nation, nationalist actors, either consciously or unconsciously, respond to challenges from the socio-political environment and their horizons are limited by their imaging of a national community. So, in contemporary Albania nationalism has to compete for influence with the body of ideas about the Albanian nation that Enverism developed and that has taken deep roots in the consciousness of the people. Although citizens of Albania sympathize with Albanians in Kosovo, FYROM or those of Çamëria, there is little support among them for irredentist politics. Since the creation of Albanian state in 1912, irredentism has never been a decisive factor in Albanian politics. As for the cultural influence and the historical memories of National Awakening period, they can be used to fit the ends of both contemporary nationalism and the heirs of Enverist discourse about the nation, for

whom a patriotism to the republic and its institutions is sufficient. Nationalists themselves acknowledge that Albania is a weak and poor state and that irredentist policies are beyond its means. They see the national unification as a long-term and complicated process. But, they argue that Albanians wherever they are should work for the fulfillment of the nationalist ideal. Although their ideas have little influence in Albanian politics, they should not be underestimated, because, as often happens in the Balkans, combined with other social conditions and factors, they can form a powerful and explosive cocktail. As long as the Albanian question remains open the danger of a Balkan war remains a real one, as the conflicts in Kosova and FYROM demonstrated. The Albanian question needs a solution. It may not be the solution that Albanian nationalists propose, but nevertheless it needs to be a just one to Albanians, in order to serve as a basis for overcoming the ethnic hatred in the area.



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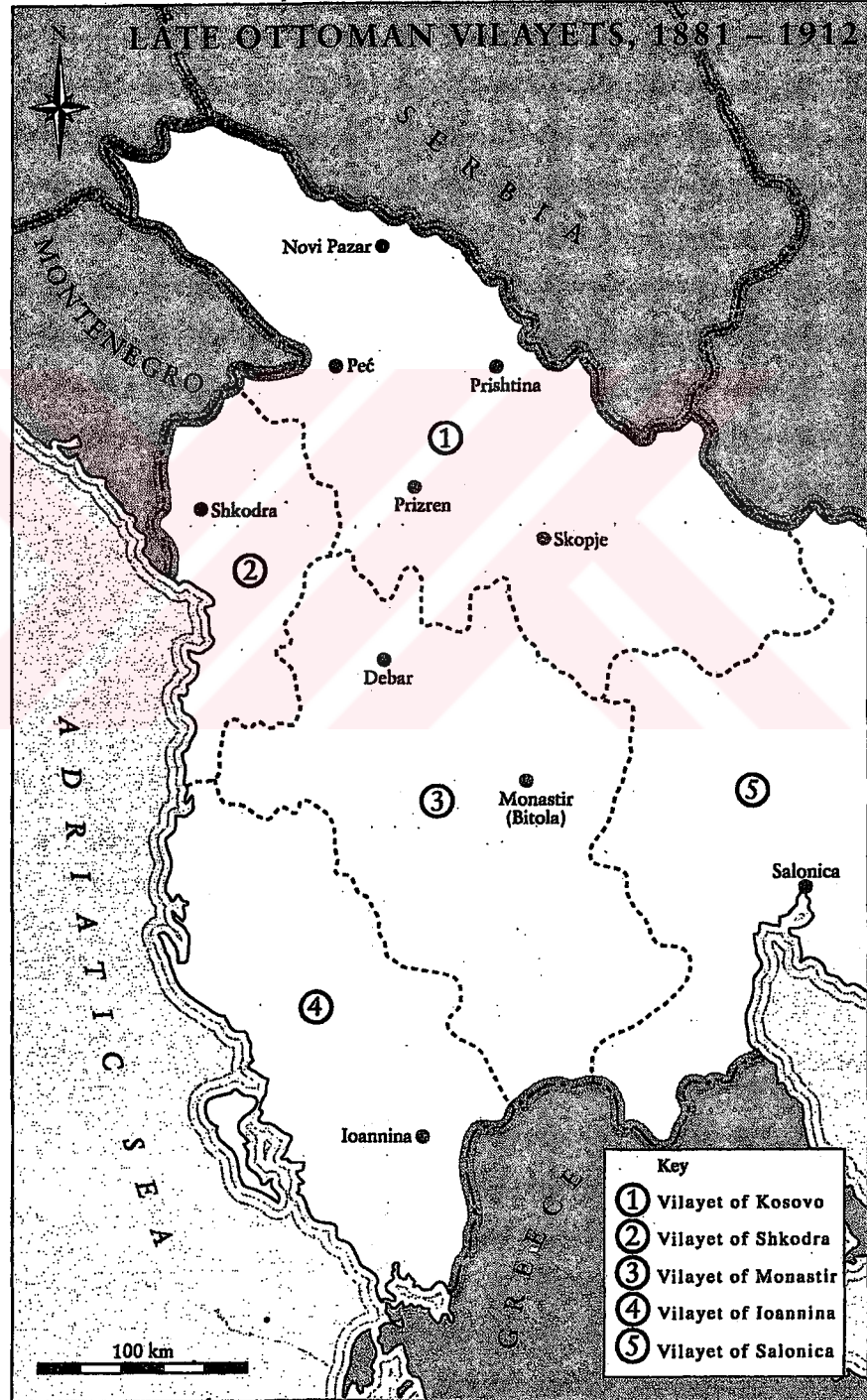
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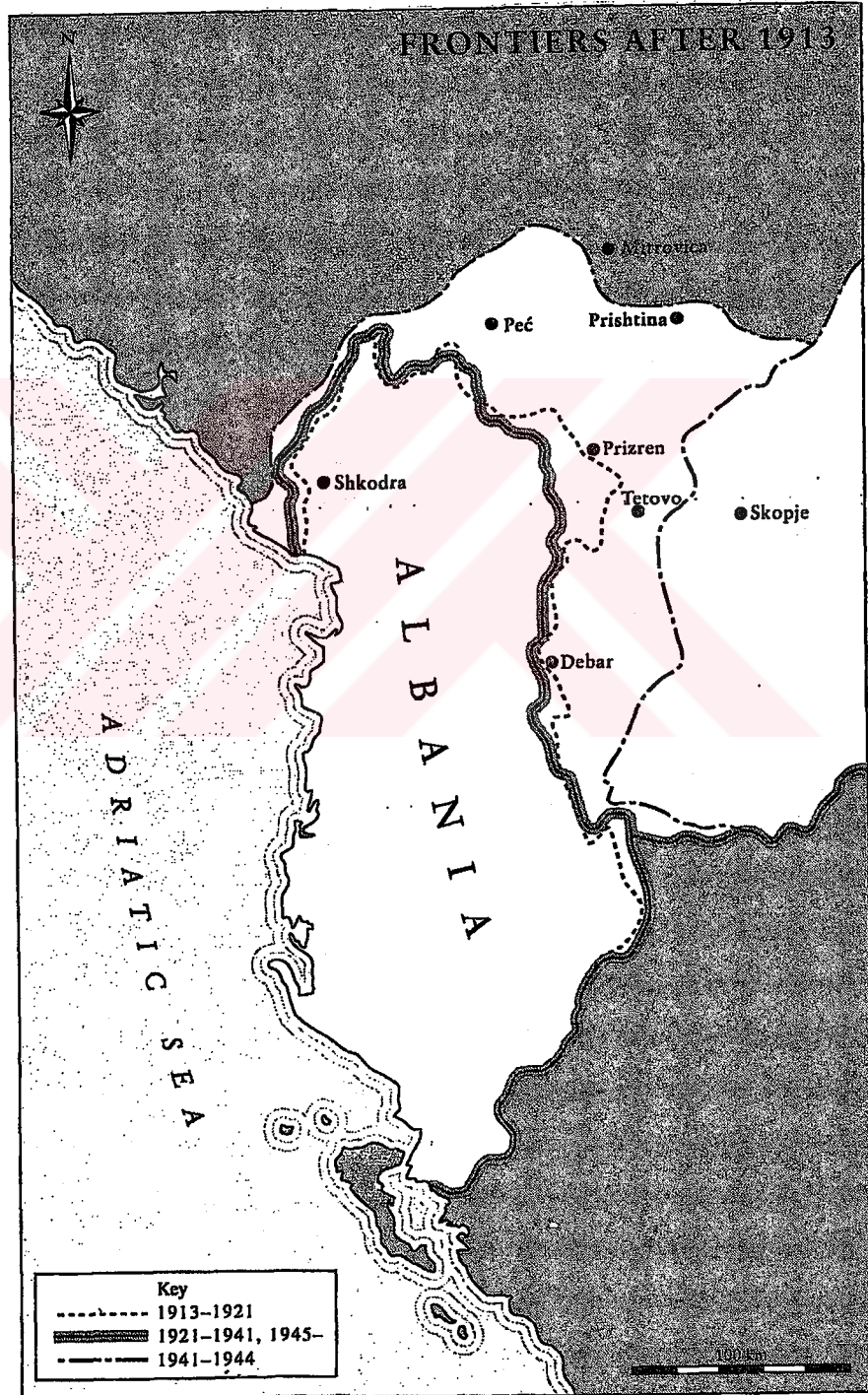
APPENDIX A

Ottoman vilayets in the Balkans in late nineteenth century (Malcolm, 1998: xxii)



APPENDIX B

Frontiers of Albania after 1913 (Malcolm, 1998: xxiv)



APPENDIX C

Albanian and its neighbors after 1990

