



Independent Researcher
Sedat KRYEZIU

2000 SuhaReka – Prizren
Republic of Kosovo
sedatkryeziu2014@gmail.com

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8522-5457>

Başvuruda bulundu. Kabul edildi.
Applied Accepted

Eser Geçmişi / Article Past: 25/06/2022 28/06/2022

Araştırma Makalesi

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.21551/jhf.1135791>

Research Paper

Orjinal Makale / Original Paper

The Ideo-Political Differentiation a Tool to Prevent the Raising of National Awareness in Kosovo

Kosova'da Ulusal Bilincin Oluşturulmasını Önlemek İçin Bir Araç İdeo-Politik ve Farklılık

Abstract

The federal police units exercised a fierce violence to oppress the Demonstrations that took place in the year 1981 in Kosovo. The political measures included the ideological and political differentiation. A large part of the Albanian people became subject to persecution. The purpose of all these measures was to destroy the Albanian intellectual elite, in particular educational institutions, to prevent the strengthening of national awareness. It was no coincidence that the political differentiation was more severe at the University of Prishtina; many professional and national staff were fired. All these actions were taken under the guise of “fighting Albanian nationalism and separatism”, which often happened that Albanians persecuted their patriots under the slogan mentioned above. Therefore, the paper “The ideo-political differentiation a tool to prevent the raising of national awareness in Kosovo”, aims to elaborate the mentioned campaign and the consequences deriving from it.

Key words: Differentiation, Nationalism, Separatism, Persecution

Öz

Federal polis birimleri, 1981 yılında Kosova'da meydana gelen gösterileri bastırmak için şiddetli bir şiddet uyguladı. Siyasi önlemler ideolojik ve siyasi farklılaşmayı içeriyordu. Arnavut halkının büyük bir kısmı zulme maruz kaldı. Tüm bu önlemlerin amacı, ulusal bilincin güçlenmesini önlemek için başta eğitim kurumları olmak üzere Arnavut entelektüel seçkinlerini yok etmektir. Priştine Üniversitesinde siyasi farklılaşmanın daha şiddetli olması tesadüf değildi; birçok profesyonel ve ulusal personel

ATIF: KRYEZIU SEDAT, “Kosova'da Ulusal Bilincin Oluşturulmasını Önlemek İçin Bir Araç İdeo-Politik ve Farklılık”, *Tarih ve Gelecek Dergisi*, 8/2 (Haziran 2022), s. (588-593)

CITE: KRYEZIU SEDAT, “The Ideo-Political Differentiation a Tool to Prevent the Raising of National Awareness in Kosovo”, *Journal of History and Future*, 8/2 (June 2022), pp. (588-593)



görevden alındı. Bütün bu eylemler “Arnavut milliyetçiliği ve ayrılıkçılığıyla mücadele” kisvesi altında gerçekleştirilmiştir ki bu çoğu zaman Arnavutların yukarıda belirtilen slogan altında vatanseverlerine zulmettiği görülmüştür. Bu nedenle, “İdeo-politik farklılaşma Kosova’da ulusal bilincin yükselmesini engellemek için bir araç” başlıklı makale, söz konusu kampanyayı ve bundan kaynaklanan sonuçları detaylandırmayı amaçlamaktadır.

Anahtar kelimeler: Farklılaşma, Milliyetçilik, Ayrılıkçılık, Zulüm

Introduction

The highest instances of the Yugoslav government had prepared and started to implement a series of measures of persecution and punishment of the participants in the demonstrations of 1981. One of the measures that found wide implementation was that of ideological differentiation, or political elimination of all Albanian cadres who were considered “dangerous” to the power and system of the time. This method was initially applied at the University of Prishtina and expanded then to all social institutions, local communities and families. The main executor of this old policy with new methods became the Communist League of Yugoslavia, its political asset together with the Albanians loyal to power.¹

The differentiation affected all social groups that were considered to have supported the demonstrations in one or another manner, starting with politicians who belonged to the “soft” line towards the demonstrations and who strived for a further strengthening and advancement of Kosovo’s autonomy. The campaign of ideological and political differentiation will last for some years, and affected a large number of Albanians of all social groups: politicians, intellectuals, lecturers and famous scholars of Kosovo, and students, etc. The imaginary enemy was sought everywhere among the members of the organization of the Communist League of Yugoslavia (LKJ), the youth, the Socialist League of Working People (LSPP) and the fighters, labours and peasants, University students and lecturers, school teachers, etc.²

The Yugoslav leadership projected two phases of the “ideological-political differentiation”. Initially, from the numerous meetings that were organized, they tried to publicly identify the participants and supporters of the demonstrations, as well as their organizers. Meanwhile, in the second phase that would follow, it was foreseen to make political differentiation in a long-term process.³

The Albanian political leaders were the first target. The cadres who were accused of ignoring the rise of nationalism and indoctrination of Albanians with nationalism were dismissed from high state positions, then those who aimed to strengthen Kosovo’s autonomy were fired. There were also personalities who were now considered to be wasted and not useful to the Serbian government. They were fired or forced to resign as did the chairman of the Kosovo Provincial Committee, MahmutBakalli, the chairman of the Executive Council of the Assembly of Kosovo, BahriOruçi, the deputy chairman of the Executive Council of the SAC of Kosovo, PajazitNushi, provincial

1 Malnar Dario, *SHBA-ja dhe Kosova* (Prishtinë: Koha, 2013).

2 Malnar Dario, 92.

3 Malnar Dario, 92.

secretary for Education, Culture and Science, YmerJaka etc.⁴The differentiation campaign also affected other institutions: the director and editor-in-chief of Prishtina Television was fired, same happened to the director and editors-in-chief, as well as the director of “Rilindja” Newspaper and Publishing House.⁵

The campaign of ideological differentiation continued for some years and aimed to attack everything Albanian, particularly the politicians that influenced the political and cultural achievements. Fadil Hoxha was an old politician against whom the Serbian nationalist circles in September 1987 would start a savage and denigrating campaign by abusing his statement given some time ago related to gender issues in Kosovo.⁶

Through an interview given to “Zeri e Rinisë”, RemziKolgeci explains some facts about the denigration of Fadil Hoxha; he emphasized: “The Kosovo leadership members didn’t discuss the case of FadilHoxha because the decision was issued by a working groups of the Central Committee of Communist League of Yugoslavia (CCLY), headed by MilnPancevski.EkremArifi represented Kosovo and he was against the decision. Kosovo was also represented in CCLJ by AzemVllasi, Rahman Morina, SvetoDalasheviq, Kole Shiroka, Ali Shkuriu, SanijeVeseli, etc., but none of the lined in side of Fadil Hoxha.”⁷

Apparently, the degradation of Fadil Hoxha was an attempt to destroy everything that had been achieved so far, which was related to his name. So, they tried to erase everything from the historical page regarding the Albanian state-building efforts and this marked first step towards annulment of the political autonomy of Kosovo.

The University of Prishtina was the main focus of differentiation, because it was considered as the “nursery of nationalism”, since the demonstrations had begun there. Lazar Kolishevski at the meeting of the Central Committee of the Communist League of Belgrade held on April 5, led the many spears against the education system (especially the university), which was charged with the guilt of “inspirer of Albanian irredentism.”⁸

A number of lecturers were fired, and on fictitious charges such as nationalism and irredentism were sent into isolation. Simply, an open war was declared against the Albanian national awareness.⁹This campaign affected even the students who were first expelled from the University and later imprisoned with severe sentences of up to 15 years in prison. One of the main protagonists of the political leadership in the Socialist Province of Kosovo (KSA) of Kosovo, AzemVllasi, on March 12 will declare: “we can’t talk about a deceived measure but we are dealing with a counter-revolution that has deep roots. Therefore, the deepening of ideo-political differentiation in all spheres of life in Kosovo is a precondition for the normalization of the situation”.¹⁰

4 Lalaj Ana, *Kosova - Rruga e gjatë drejt vetëvendosjes 1941 - 81* (Tiranë, 2000), 393.

5 Nasi Lefter, *Aspekte të shtypjes kombëtare e politike të shqiptarëve në Kosovë (1981-1986)* (Tiranë, 2011).

6 “Rilindja,” tetor 1987.

7 Zëri i Rinisë, “Intervistë me Remzi Kolgecin, anëtar i Kryesisë së KK LKK,” 12.05 1990, 27.

8 Buxhovi Jusuf, *Kosova nga Konferenca e Londrës e deri të protektorati ndërkombëtar* (Prishtinë, 2012), 393.

9 Akademia e Shkencave të Shqipërisë - Qendra e Enciklopedisë Shqiptare, *KOSOVA në vështrim enciklopedik* (Tiranë: Toena, 1999), 126.

10 Sherifi Isak, *Kosova '81 - 89, Reflektimi në Maqedoni* (Tetovë, 2016), 22.

The Austrian newspaper “Kleine Zeitung”, dated April 9, 1981, talking about differentiations with special emphasis on the University, wrote that Yugoslavia was cutting intellectuals in Kosovo. “*There have been major political purges and such a purge was implemented especially at the University of Prishtina, through the “ differentiation process “, where the first student demonstrations begun.*”¹¹

It is understandable why the University of Prishtina and Albanian education in general were attacked, because they wanted to stop the further development of the Albanian school, to hinder the development of the national culture which had gained momentum in recent years. Under the guise of ideological and political differences, a Working Group¹² was formed at the University of Prishtina, which in cooperation with other local communist organs will review cases to determinate the measures against academicians.

The rector of the University of Prishtina, academician GazmendZajmi, and vice-rectors were fired. The daily newspaper Rilindjes, reflected in detail the measures for a host of lecturers, scientists, administration workers, students and others: , Dr. Riza Binishit, Mr. Murat Blakajt, Dr. Ali Hadrit, Ph.D. Ali Aliu, Mr. AgimVincës, Dr.RexhepIsmajlit, Dr.FehmiAganit, Dr.RexhepQosjës. Dr. Milorad Qoracit, Mr. IdrizBeranit, Dr.HivziIslamit, Dr. Mustaf Bacajtas well as to some leaders of communist league organizations and self-governing bodies. Ali Hadri was recommended to give up from lecturing, Dr. Mark Krasniqi, Dr.MujeRugova, Dr.Nexhat Daci and Dr.RashitAlidema were subject of suitability review, whereas another proposal included the firing of secretary of the Academy of Arts.¹³

The penalties imposed for political offenses under Article 134 of the LCP (Criminal Code of Yugoslavia) were very high. The most appropriate article to sentence Albanians was Article 114 (counter-revolutionary endangerment), which provided punishments up to 15 years in prison. In many cases, state authorities referred to Article 133 (for hostile propaganda) to punish Albanians.

Under the charge of openly hostile and counter-revolutionary activities and support of demonstrations following University staffing was sentenced: lecturers UkshinHoti, MuhametTernava, and ShaqirShaqiri and professor assistant ShemsiRecica – all of them form the Faculty of Philosophy, RuzhdiSefa, assistant at the Technical Faculty and HalilAlidemaj, clerk at the Faculty of Philosophy. All these people were expelled from the Communist League from an early stage.¹⁴

The differentiation measures were also extended to students through excluding and denying their enrolment, excluding them from dormitories and other measures. Due to moral-political inadequacy and unfair attitudes, 157 candidates that applied for registration were not enrolled in University. For the same reasons, 113 students didn’t receive the dormitory permits, while 64 students were expelled from the dormitory.

11 Zenelaj Eqrem, *Shtypi i Austrisë për Demonstratat e shqiptarëve së Kosovës më 1968, 1981 dhe 1989* (Prishtinë: Faik Konica, 2011), 110.

12 “The working group consisted of: AzemVllasi, Dervish Rozhaja, Hajredin Hoxha, RagipHalili, RexhepGashi, MinirDushi, SyrjaPupovci, Millan Sheshlia, BudislavSheshlia... see further: “Rilindja”,19: IX.1982, Prishtinë

13 “Rilindja,” 9 shtator 1982.

14 “Rilindja.” 9 shtator 1982.

Due to “improper behaviour” and “participation in hostile activities” the following administrative measures have been taken: 38 students have been excluded without the right to enrol for up to 5 years; 78 students were expelled without the right to enrol for up to one year; 82 students were reprimanded in writing, while 34 students were reprimanded. It should be noted that the League of Socialist Youth (LRS) in the faculties was in charge to examine the behaviour of a certain number of students, against whom concrete measures will be taken, depending on their responsibility.¹⁵

The ideo-political differentiation was not limited to the SAC of Kosovo; they extended also to Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia, or by other words - everywhere where Albanians lived. An information from the Embassy of the Republic of Albania in Belgrade addressed to the Central Committee of the Albanian People’s Party stated that the events in Macedonia took place under the influence of the events in Kosovo. There was talk of a serious situation, but it was also suggested that measures be taken by the Albanian state. Here is what the document said: *“On the contrary, in Macedonia and Montenegro, but especially in the first we see a situation that develops, which was expected, under the influence of events in Kosovo, in both directions; to increase the fight of Albanians for national rights and the measures of the Macedonian chauvinists to take advantage of the current situation to oppress the Albanians, taking assimilative measures against the Albanian population in the field of education, cultural rights, etc. The problem in Macedonia is delicate, but in such a situation we have to act too, to do something ...”*¹⁶

Persecution of Albanians continued in other places inhabited by Albanians in Eastern Kosovo. The Vranje court had become the place where severe sentences were imposed against Albanians of Presevo, Bujanovac and Ternovci regions. In March 1982, charges were filed against 11 people (9 of whom were students at the “Skënderbeu” high school in Presevo). They were sentenced to severe imprisonment on charges of being members of the illegal group “BajramCurri”. In May of that year, the Vranje court convicted 4 students from Presevo and Bujanovci on charges of being members of the illegal organization “Voice of Kosovo”. The same court, in June 1983, sentenced 7 other Albanians, all from Bujanovac. Among them 2 were teachers, 2 workers, 1 student, 1 pupil and 1 unemployed.¹⁷

Although the purpose of the ideological differences was to reveal the organizers, the participants and supporters of the 1981 demonstrations, they also had another latent purpose, to spy on each other and to create divisions among the Albanians. However, in most cases this process failed because it was facing the determined resistance of the Albanian people and sabotage on their part.¹⁸ All this campaign of reprisals influenced the Albanians to homogenize and tighten their ranks even more to defend themselves.¹⁹

But how much effective were these repressive measures applied to Albanians? Noel Malcolm in his book “Kosovo a short history” has underlined: “In the final analysis, the political response to the crisis in Kosovo not only did little to improve of the situation, but irritated it even more.”²⁰

15 “Rilindja.” 9 shtator 1982.

16 “Arkivi Qendror i Shtetit, Informacion nga Ambasada e Republikës Së Shqipërisë në Beograd për KQ të PPSH (Sektorit të Jashtëm), Nr.115/1, Beograd, 16.07.1981.” 1981, 4.

17 Nasi Lefter, 101.

18 Nasi Lefter.83.

19 Judah Tim, *KOSOVA Luftë dhe hakmarrje* (Prishtinë: Koha, 2000), 64.

20 Malcolm Noel, *Kosova një histori e shkurtër* (Prishtinë: Koha, 2001), 351.

Conclusion

The Ideo-political differentiation was systematic and affected every level of Albanian society. They started against the political leaders of Kosovo and later specifically against the University of Prishtina. The imaginary enemy was sought everywhere. The purpose of all those measures were to destroy the Albanian intellectual elite, institutions that produced intellectuals, and to prevent the rise and further strengthening of national awareness.

The ideo-political differentiation was not limited to the Socialist Province of Kosovo; with the same intensity was extended to Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia, or by other words, everywhere where Albanians lived.

During the 1980s, Albanians in Yugoslavia went through an unprecedented saga of persecution, imprisonment and murder, but this did not weaken the Albanians, but rather mobilized and homogenized them even more in their legitimate efforts for freedom and equality.

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