

KOÇO BIHIKU

A HISTORY  
OF ALBANIAN  
LITERATURE

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ALBANIAN LITERATURE FROM ITS ORIGIN TO THE  
LIBERATION OF THE COUNTRY  
FROM THE NAZI-FASCIST OCCUPATION

(Nov. 29, 1944)

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BY WAY OF INTRODUCTION

*Albania and the Albanian people have a long and heroic history, a history of ceaseless liberation struggles. -The Albanian people have blazed the trail of history sword in hand- (Enver Hoxha). On their road through the centuries, the Albanians have clashed with savage enemies who outnumbered them, on defence of their language, culture, customs, traditions and freedom.*

*The Albanians are one of the most ancient peoples in Europe and they are the descendants of the Illyrian tribes, who in ancient times and at the beginning of the new era, lived in the western part of the Balkan peninsula and in some other parts of central Europe. Albanians appeared as a nation, created on the basis of the sameness of language and culture, and on the basis of their common territory, since the early Middle Ages. But situated as it was in a territory where the most important roads which linked the East with the West met, Albania became a place d'armes and the object of different attacks, something which hindered its normal historic development. Despite unfavourable circumstances in the 13-14th centuries, there began to develop such processes which encouraged an independent advancement*



of the country, something which began in the Albanian feudal principalities which were set up at that time, including most of the territory inhabited by the Albanians. The great popular struggle of the Albanians in the 15th century against the Ottoman invasion encouraged the alliances and unity of various regions. But the establishment of the foreign occupation and its military feudal order, discontinued this progressive historic process. The foreign yoke, which lasted for whole centuries, was a heavy toll on the Albanian people who never gave up their efforts to win their lost freedom and independence. This is proven by a long series of movements and uprisings which permeate the long period of the Ottoman bondage through and through and which were crowned with the proclamation of the national independence on November 28, 1912.

But the hopes of the masses of the people that after the elimination of the foreign bondage the country would embark on the road of democracy, modernization, social and cultural progress, failed. The big land proprietors and the reactionary bourgeoisie who had dominating positions left Albania in backwardness; industry was very weak, feudal relations existed in agriculture, the people lived in great ignorance, deprived of the most elementary political rights. On the international plane, the ruling classes followed an anti-popular policy; they opened the doors to the economic expansion of fascist Italy, which occupied Albania on April 7, 1939. It was the masses of the people who rose to win the lost freedom and independence, but this time their liberation struggle had an entirely new character. The Albanian Communist Party carried their banner in its strong hands and with courage and wisdom led them to the liberation of the country on November 29, 1944 and on the road to socialism, as a higher political and social order.

The Albanian literature is a component part of the history of the Albanian people. Patriotism and the democratic spirit are its important characteristics, something which is proved by the fact that the Albanian

people have always been led by the ideas of liberation and self-defence from the attacks of the foreigners, the ideas of the just struggles against the oppressors, against the predatory imperialist aims. As a literature of a people small in numbers, who during their entire history have persistently defended their existence, the Albanian literature understood its social mission. The Albanian writers have considered their literary work as a weapon in the efforts of the people to get rid of the foreign yoke, to preserve their mother tongue and culture, to preserve their national individuality. The struggle for freedom in the second half of the 19th century, in the period of the National Renaissance, gave a new impetus to the strengthening of the patriotic spirit of literature.

Just as the literatures of other countries, the Albanian literature has developed into two trends: the progressive trend and the anti-popular trend. But unlike in other literatures, in the Albanian literature the works with reactionary ideas are but a few. The creativeness of the authors who were closely linked with the progressive ideas constitute the basis of the literary process. Besides the ideas of freedom of the country, they were inspired by the idea of justice and progress. This spirit dominated the Albanian literature also in the 20s and 30s when the Albanian bourgeoisie turned into a reactionary force and closely connected itself to the anti-progressive forces against the working people. In that period, the Albanian literature conveyed democratic ideas, ideas of the struggle against the feudal-bourgeois order, on behalf of a happy future for the rank and file. These lies with the most progressive ideas of the time, as an important feature of the literary development, became more evident after the people's revolution was launched, which did away both with the fascists and the old ruling classes who had left the country in misery. In these decisive moments in the history of the homeland, the literature sided with the people and served them as a weapon in the struggle for the country's liberation and the affirmation of the socialist order.



It is understandable that in the conditions of the savage Ottoman enslavement, when written Albanian was fought against savagely, the development of the Albanian literature was characterized by certain features different from those of some developed literatures of Western Europe. Thus, while in these literatures the great literary trends such as classicism, romanticism, realism, etc., developed replacing one another in a natural way, in Albania the emergence, development and replacement of literary trends had some features of its own. The Albanian literature had to do, within a very short period of time, that which the most developed literatures did during the centuries, under normal conditions. This explains the fact that by the end of the 19th century and the first quarter of the 20th century, romanticism and inclinations to sentimentalism and classicism existed in the Albanian literature. The close ties with folklore are a characteristic feature of the Albanian literature not only of the past centuries but also of the present times. The national literature which was formed in the middle of the 19th century, relied on the rich artistic experience of folklore, which in the absence of an artistic literature in the 15-17th centuries had fulfilled the aesthetic demands of the people. Many valuable elements in the creativeness of a series of writers, such as the hatred against social oppression, optimism and the desire for progress and spiritual emancipation, draw their source in folklore. The Albanian writers found motifs, subjects and characters for their works in the folk songs, fairy tales, legends, etc. The artistic literature was enriched also through the exploitation on the part of the writers of the rich fresh and vivid language of the folk poetic creations. With its important ideas, colourful figures, rich artistic means, folklore remains an inexhaustible artistic source for the writers.

The national artistic form of the Albanian literature — the national literary language, is distinguished for its original characteristics. The difficult historic fate of the Albanian people has had its consequence in the

history of the Albanian language, something which is seen in the fact that the formation of literary Albanian took place later on. Two dialects are distinguished in the Albanian language, with unimportant differences between them; the south dialect (tosk) and the north dialect (gog). A number of historic causes, such as the long foreign bondage, the existence of some literary traditions developed more or less equally, the separation of different regions for a long period, the lack of a big administrative and cultural centre, etc., show why none of these dialects could become the basis of the Albanian national literary language until the middle of the last century. On the basis of these two dialects, two variants of the literary language were formed, something which found reflection not only in the works of a religious character, but also in the artistic literature. Proceeding from the 19th century, when the Albanian people had not yet formed its own independent state, the process of the formation of the unique literary language, which concluded a few years ago, began in the middle of the 19th century when the Albanian people had not yet formed their independent national state. Until late, literary works were published in both the literary variants of the Albanian language. This continued, but in a limited way, until the mid 50s of the 20th century. But although there were some authors who followed the north literary variant, the greater inclination was to use a more unique literary norm. After the liberation most of the writers had realized that the unique form of the literary expression should meet the important national content. Beginning from the mid 50s the process of the unification of the literary language proceeded more intensely and literature had a very important weight in this direction. Along with the other spheres, such as the press, radio, etc., the works of the writers played the role of a laboratory, where the written form of the national literary language was elaborated. By applying the unified norm more determinedly, the artistic literature conveyed it to the masses to a great extent.



Today all publications, the literary works included, rely on the unified literary language.

With its original characteristics, the Albanian literature helps in better understanding the ways of the formation and development of the national literatures, as well as the general laws of the development of European literatures.

The Albanian literature has become known also abroad; a number of works of the Albanian authors of the past and the present have been translated and are being translated into different languages and thus they have entered the treasury of the world culture. Thanks to these works which depict the life of the Albanian people, their dreams and aspirations, their vitality and unbent spirit in front of the enemies, the Albanian literature is becoming more known and is winning the respect of the foreign progressive reader. This book has been prepared in order to help the foreign reader to better get acquainted with the literature of the Albanian people. This book does not include all the treasure of the Albanian literature. It deals with the main characteristics and achievements of the literary process in the past and at present. Some times, in order to give to the reader greater possibilities to know the development of literature, the book deals in detail with some of the works which are not translated. The book provides further information about the historic framework, especially the social and ideological premises of the literary creativeness in different historic periods. If the book helps the foreign reader to conceive a precise and somewhat full idea about the road of the development of the Albanian literature, its teachings and successes the author thinks, he has fulfilled his duty.

## THE EARLIEST ALBANIAN LITERATURE

The earliest text in Albanian known so far is the «Baptizing Formula» of the year 1462, written by Archbishop Paul Angelus, close collaborator of Skanderbeg, the national hero of the Albanians who led them in war against the Ottoman invaders in the 15th century. The «Formula» was to be used by the families who baptized their own children when it was impossible for them to be taken to the church or for the priest to go to them. Neither in that century nor in the preceding ones do we know other documents written in Albanian except the «Formula», but the fact that we cannot trace the history of the Albanian literature in earlier centuries, does not mean that there have not existed works in Albanian before that period. There are historical documents which speak clearly that Albanian writing has earlier traditions. In a description of Albania and the neighbouring countries in 1332, which is considered as the work of a French monk, Brockard, but who has been proven to be the archbishop of Antivari, a French dominican Guillaume Adae, we read: «Although the Albanians have a language quite different from Latin, they use the Latin alphabet in all their books». The Shkodra historian of the 15th and 16th centuries, Marin Barleti, speaks of chronicles written in the native language. In his book in Latin «The Siege of Shkodra» he writes: «I have recently got hold of certain annals — fragments rather than annals — which based on the legend speak



about the reconstruction rather than the construction of this city. In them we read in the *native language* that a certain «Roza and his sister were the founders of the city of Shkodra». These assertions are true not only because they come from persons well acquainted with the country and the people of Albania but also because they fit in with the general historical data, which speak of quiet and advanced economic and cultural development of many regions of Albania during the Middle Ages, during the 13th and 14th centuries when the Albanians had already been formed into a nation with well defined features. This is the epoch when the Albanian principalities flourished and enjoyed independence after the decline of the Byzantine Empire. During this period Albania marked perceptible progress in economy, old cities were reconstructed and new ones were set up, agriculture, arts and crafts and trade advanced in a number of districts. At the same time we come across a perceptible progress in culture, there were created a large number of epic songs and legends, which represent a real network of the popular artistic creativeness according to the above testimonies; it is more likely that a religious literature developed at that time and along with it that of chronicles, first in Latin, but later also in Albanian.

Nevertheless, from the great number of the monuments of culture of the middle ages only a few have remained to this day. What has come down to us from that period is only a few fragments of the rich civilization which flourished in medieval Albania but which was brought to a standstill by the Turkish invasion which began in 1423-1426. These five centuries of foreign occupation were a period of tremendous hardships in the history of the Albanian people. The destruction of urban centres, the devastation of flourishing districts by the repeated expeditions and incursions of the invaders, and the decimation of the population, turned the country into a deplorable situation. Economic and social development came to a standstill and the country was flung some centuries backward. In spite of this, even under

such unbearable conditions, the Albanian people never ceased their struggle for existence, for their mother tongue and their own culture. The foreign invaders failed to exterminate or assimilate them. On the contrary, all along the nearly five hundred years of foreign occupation, the Albanians kept developing their culture, their literature included, with persistence and in an indomitable spirit. A clear testimony to this lies in the works which appeared during the 16th and 17th centuries when the merciless heel of the invader weighed heavily on the sore body of Albania. It goes without saying that Albanian literature during that period consisted of translated religious books and later on of original ones.

## I

The first book in Albanian we know so far is Gjon Buzuku's «The Mass Book», which was published in 1555. Nothing is known of the life and activity of this author except that this work was written from March 20, 1554 to January 5, 1555. By translating parts from the Gospel and prayers of the Roman Catholic ritual, the author intended to come to the aid of the clergy to carry the daily religious services in Albanian.

During the 17th century Albanian writing made further progress. Another priest, Pjetër Budi, stands out for his active initiative to publish books and for his patriotic activities. Budi was born in 1566 at Gura e Bardhë, a village in Mat bordering on the mountainous regions of Elbasan and Tirana, Central Albania. For twelve years he served as a pastor in various communities and he was never idle wherever he happened to be. He bemoaned the miserable conditions under which the people lived and that's why he put all his heart and soul to the cause of liberating the country from foreign domination. He took part in all the various



meetings and conventions held at that time for the purpose of working out plans for a general uprising against the Ottoman invaders. P. Budi has left behind a detailed study of the situation of Albania at that time. Through these writings he stands out as a tireless initiator and promoter of the movement to liberate the country. In close connection with his activity as a fighter against foreign enslavement is also his work for the translation or adaptation of religious writings. In 1618, he published *-The Christian Doctrine-* which represents a religious catechism. *-Roman Ritual-* published in 1621, contains prayers in church service for all the year around. *-The Mirror of Confessions-* (*-Speculum Confessionis-*) was published in the same year. The poems, most of them of a religious character, which are found in his works, are of special importance for the Albanian literature. His poems contain scenes and personages depicted in a lively style, and with a fine artistic taste, something which has served to consider Budi one of the earliest poets of Albanian literature.

Another outstanding figure in this period is Frano Bardhi (1606-1643), the author of a Latin-Albanian dictionary of 5,000 words published in 1635. The Appendix of this vocabulary contains a list of 113 proverbs, phrases and idioms some of which might have been translated from other languages but most of them collected from the folklore of the Albanian people. But F. Bardhi's major work is *-Scanderbeg-*, an apology written by him in 1636. The book is of an historical nature written in Latin as a reply to Bosnian Bishop who, in his writings, had tried to deny Scanderbeg's Albanian origin. His intimate connections with the native land and his national pride run through all Bardhi's works. Basing his arguments on numerous and undeniable historical documents and facts and presenting them with the consummate skill of a polemist, a high style and sharp language, full of irony. F. Bardhi turns down the bishop's theses, which were groundless from the historic point of view one after the other.

The last representative of this literature which developed during the 16th and 17th centuries is Pjetër Bogdani, a prelate, too (1625-1689). As it seems, Bogdani also took part in the resistance against the Turkish occupiers. That explains the fact that the life he lived was not a calm one. Pursued by the Turks he had to hide himself in the highlands of north-eastern Albania. In his long journeys through the mountainous regions, P. Bogdani tried to organize combined actions against the Turkish occupiers. With the work *-The Unit of the Prophets-* (*-Cuneus Profetarum-*), a theological treaty published in 1685, he remained an author in the history of the Albanian literature. The importance of this work lies in the fact that literary language took a step forward, being enriched with necessary words and expression which enabled the use of abstract notions in Albanian.

The literary production of the 16 and 17th centuries, in spite of its extremely religious character, had not only cultural-linguistic, but also historic importance. At the time when the foreign occupiers made constant and systematic attempts to completely subjugate the Albanian people, and, through a crafty policy of religious discrimination to assimilate the Albanians, the works of these authors were the expression of the resistance of the Albanian people to protect their national language and culture against the intentions of the foreign enslavers and especially against the assimilating attempts of the Ottoman rulers. The ardent love for the mother tongue is powerfully manifested as a common distinguishing feature of all these authors. In the postface of *-The Mass Book-*, Gj. Buzuku says that he wrote the book out *-of his love for his own people-*. Bardhi complains that the Albanian language *-is being lost and degenerating-* under the blows of foreign occupiers: to save the language it is indispensable to arouse the pride for the historic past of the country among the Albanian people. As he has said it, P. Bogdani worked to preserve the Albanian culture and language. The efforts for the development of culture and knowledge constitute another aspect of



the life and assiduous activity of the first authors of the old Albanian literature. They considered the ignorance the people were kept in as a great obstacle, as one of the causes of the grave situation the country was languishing. «People are suffering in ignorance and enslavement... knowledge and wisdom are being lost», states Bogdani. He insists on the fact that the Albanian language should be cultivated, therefore, books written in their mother tongue should be put at the people's disposal; the language should be cultivated through publications, turning it into a medium of culture; its treasury should be gathered with care and love. The call to the men of culture to write books in Albanian sounded also in the works of P. Budi.

## II

When the Turkish invaders trode on the Albanian territory, part of the urban and rural inhabitants abandoned their houses and property to escape extermination, and found shelter in the remote mountains where they led a very miserable life. Many families, especially from the regions of South Albania, crossed the Adriatic and settled in South Italy and Sicily. They considered their emigration a temporary one and for a long time they cherished their hope to return to their homeland. Through the centuries they preserved their mother tongue, the beautiful folks songs, the national customs and traditions with rare love and fanaticism, they kept alive their love for the land of their ancestors and the memory of heroic and glorious acts of the homeland. The Albanians of Italy (the «Arbëresh», as they are called otherwise) still preserve the traditions and the Albanian language.

In the Albanian surroundings not only was the Albanian language preserved as a means of communica-

tion among them, but also it developed as a written language. An entire artistic literature, similar in its themes and inspiration to the literature developed in Albania during that epoch, was written in the language which preserves many features of the medieval Albanian. Texts of a utilitarian-religious character also represented the beginnings of this literature. The oldest monument of the written Albanian language among the Arbëreshi of Italy, «The Religious Doctrine» of Lekë Matranga, published in 1592, is a catechism intended to teach the Albanian population the principles of Catholicism. It is worth mentioning that the first religious poem in Albanian is found there. The 17th and 18th centuries mark an enervation of the cultural life among the Arbëreshi. They begin to show interest in the historic past of the homeland, to gather information and facts on their characteristic traditions, their way of living and their customs, they wrote sketches about their wanderings from the moment of the emigration from the land of their ancestors, they collected songs and legends which had been preserved by the people. The flourishing of a poetry, popular in its form and religious in its inspiration, mainly developed by low rank priests who were in daily contact with the common people, is an outstanding manifestation of those centuries. Being written simply and clearly, in a cadence characteristic of songs, they were also sung by the people, and probably not only during religious feasts. The majority of these poems without special artistic claims were anonymous. But later on, this poetry served as the setting for a number of poets: a Nikollë Brankati (1675-1741), Nikollë Filja (1691-1769), Nikollë Keta (1742-1803), etc., who wrote poems of religious motifs, often in the folk style. The most outstanding among poet is Jul Variboba (died in 1762). There is a poem left from this author which has drawn its theme from the history of Christianity. Though the religious spirit prevails in the poem, the popular flavour is strongly felt there. St. Mary is depicted as an affectionate



mother full of human worries and cares rather than a cold saint to whom terrestrial joys and sorrows are alien. Making use of folk lullabies the author has managed to depict in warm notes the human character of her wishes.

J. Variboba has reflected the reality in a concrete and realistic way also when he describes the surroundings in which his characters act. The Arbëreshi village of Calabria with its customs, traditions and ethnographic peculiarities, with its poor but generous people has served him as a model. The traditional shepherds of the religious legend, their behaviour and attire, remind you of the Arbëreshi peasants. «The Life of St. Mary» of J. Variboba is important also because it enriched the Albanian poetry with new verses and rhymes.

The poem of J. Variboba closes the old period of the Albanian literature of the Arbëreshi of Italy. Developed alongside the lively patriotic cultural movement, in the 19th century, this literature flourished into a vast literature, represented by J. De Rada, Zef Serembe, G. Dara, Jr. A. Santori, etc., who made their contribution to the enrichment of the Albanian national literature.

### III

In connection with the new conditions created in Albania following the establishment of the Turkish domination, with its political, social and cultural institutions, the Albanian literature gains new features. The foreign invaders made great efforts to spread their religion, the Islamic religion, their ideology and culture. In many cities Muslim religious teaching institutions, such as primary schools, high schools, etc., were set up. Besides the religious subjects, literature and rhetorics occupied a major part of their curricula. In addition to the Turkish language, the Persian language was also

taught there. Thus the pupils came in contact with the Turkish, Arabian and Persian literatures; they read not only works of a religious character, but also secular creations of outstanding Eastern poets. In this way, a taste for the Oriental literature began to be cultivated, which was a natural outcome of the transformations in the life of certain social circles in the cities, in their way of living, dressing and thinking, in their customs and habits. Educated in the Muslim schools the intelligentsia worked hard to imbibe foreign culture and ideology, it made efforts to cultivate a literature according to the patterns of Oriental literature. Thus, a new literature emerged in the Albanian literature with new motifs, ideas and characters, a literature which, in its first steps, was represented by translations and imitations from Oriental literatures. Later on, this literature won its own characteristic features, though the influence of these literature, on ideas and subjects, as well as on the language and style put the seal on the majority of its authors. In the history of and the studies on literature, this literature is called 'Albanian literature in Arabic letters or the literature of the Oriental style poets'.

The most valuable part of this literary production, which found many followers, is not that inspired by the Islamic mysticism which represented a versification of episodes from the history of Islamism, but the creations on the joys and pleasures of life, on love, though sometimes in platonic notes, human virtues, like true friendship, moral strength, etc. Many of these motifs are found in the poem of Nezim Frakulla from Berat (died in 1760), known as one of the initiators of this literature. The scanty information about his life testify to the fact that he led a troubled life. Besides his rivalries with other untalented native poets, one of the richest and most influential men of the time afflicted him. Optimism, the love for life and its joys, characterize Frakulla's poetical creativeness, with a fluent lyrical inspiration the poet sings to nature, his pen describes



it vividly and full of grace. Frakulla's hedonistic motifs go so far as to doubt the religious idea of eternal life -one who does not enjoy this life why does he need the other?-. N. Frakulla's sharp satirical vein is manifested in some of his poems, in which he mercilessly whips the untrusty and hypocritical people, who had, probably, brought a lot of grievance to the poet. While denouncing these vices the poet highly appraises the true and disinterested friendship. In some didactic poems the author gives positive opinions as where lies the value of man, he is against that concept on the nobility of man existing in feudal circles. According to his opinion, man should not be proud of his wealth and relatives, but of his capabilities and knowledge which are his own virtues.

They pretend nobility and brag  
That their ancestry goes far back,  
So dung may pretend to be amber,  
though it lacks true sheen and luster;  
Their prosperity renders them proud,  
They despise the common crowd.  
Swaggering is a risk if presented  
To some who may resent it.

In many of his poems, N. Frakulla gives his opinion about the character of poetry, its role, etc. In polemics with other contemporary poets, he admits that poetry is inspiration, talent, not mere versification, and it is reached by means of continuous exercises. He thinks the poet is right in whipping unpleasant manifestations in life and the conduct of people.

Contemporary of N. Frakulla was *Sulejman Naibi* (died in 1772), a lyrical poet with inspiration full of spontaneity and delicacy. In his poems, characterized by sincere and joyful lyricism, he sings to love, to the joys of life, the womanly beauty («Adorned Mahmude», «The Dandy Burning With Love»). The lyrical poetry won a rare finesse in the hands of S. Naibi. He was also a distinguished master of the verse.

*Hasan Zyko Kamberi* is another poet of the 18th century, who differently from the other poets of this trend is more closely linked with the Albanian reality. With his verses, the literature of Oriental style poets comes nearer to life and treats of social themes. Complaining of the difficult times that had come for the majority of the people, a complaint which grows into dissatisfaction with social reality, the ills of life, etc., are the main motifs of the poet's creativeness. In the poem «Money», H. Z. Kamberi exposes the moral degeneration of the upper strata and the disorientation of the rulers due to the increase of the role of money in society. The poet says that the king and all his men, the vesirs and the pashas give their minds to money. The muftis and sheiks also do their utmost to raise money.

Beys, pashas and other ranks  
Are prepared to offer thanks  
For every chance to fill their purses  
Though it brings them blows and curses.

This poem describes the general features of the Turkish political system corrupted and worm-eaten to the bone. Not only does the poem «Money» expose the Turkish political regime, its administration, courts and other state organs, in decay, but it also depicts many aspects of the economic and social life by the end of the 18th century, especially the Albanian life of the Korca regions.

The poem «Cercals» describes with deep sympathy the poor country folk. The vein of humor does not hinder the poet to give a realistic view of the misery of the poor.

For eight long months they can survive  
Each year if they can get it,  
It's oatmeal that keeps them alive,  
Bless him that did invent it.



Concreteness, the realistic colours, presentation of life in its most common manifestations, descriptions of and scenes from the daily life of the people's strata are characteristic of H.Z. Kamberi's poetry. The poet speaks with deep pain about the grave situation of the peasant woman.

*Muhamet Kycyky* (1784-1844) wrote diverse poems. In the poem «The Emigrants», the poet deals with the sufferings of the emigrants, their longing for their homeland they had left, compelled by poverty and unemployment. The poetical creativeness of M. Kycyky has a strong religious character. Such is the poem «Bekriu», in which proceeding from the positions of religious morality, the poet curses those who take to drink. His most distinguished works are «Ervehe» and «Jusuf and Zeliha». The first poem deals with the story of a woman. Though she experienced many difficulties, she always remained loyal to her husband. Ervehe is beautiful, happy and wise; she is the embodiment of lofty moral virtues. The other work of M. Kycyky, «Jusuf and Zeliha», which is longer than «Erveheja» (2430 verses), has the same didactic-moral character, too. Its subject is taken from the well-known biblical legend about handsome Joseph and beautiful Zolica, Pentefri's wife. The author did not follow this story exactly; he elaborated and adapted it at some places, but he did not change the ideological spirit of the poem, which preaches a virtuous life, away from various temptations which want to detach man from the right road of religion. The significance of M. Kycyky's poems lies in the fact that they made a contribution to the development of the genres of narration, usually based on a subject, mostly the novelette in verse form.

As we explained it above, the literary creativeness of the Oriental style poets was characterized by a series of problems which had nothing to do with the worries of the Albanian people, who, in one way or the other, continued their resistance against the Ottoman invaders. This is understandable, for the ideological

basis of the creativeness of the Oriental style poets was determined by the concepts and tastes of the occupiers; on the other hand, their works satisfied the spiritual demands of the city social strata linked with the Ottoman rulers, not only economically, but also ideologically. In regard to the limited importance of this literary production another thing should be mentioned: as offsprings of the religious schools which were opened in the Turkish language, they used the Albanian language greatly mixed up with foreign Turkish words. In this way, they bastardized the language, for which they would be later on blamed by Naim Frashëri, one of the founders of the Albanian national literature. The limited positive importance of some of the works of these authors lies in the secular motifs they introduced to the Albanian literature, and, especially in the intention of authors like H. Z. Kamberi, to express the sorrows and joys of the lower strata and, in connection with this, the elements of realism in the reactions with social content of this literature.



The Albanian people, who were long in the  
dark about their history, began to awaken  
in the middle of the 19th century. The  
first step was to learn about their past.  
This was done by collecting old legends  
and songs. The first collection was made  
by the brothers Naim and Sotir Frashëri.  
They published a book in 1861. This book  
was the first Albanian history. It was  
written in Italian. It was the first  
book to be written in Albanian. It was  
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book to be written in Albanian. It was  
the first book to be published in Albania.

The Albanian people, who were long in the  
dark about their history, began to awaken  
in the middle of the 19th century. The  
first step was to learn about their past.  
This was done by collecting old legends  
and songs. The first collection was made  
by the brothers Naim and Sotir Frashëri.  
They published a book in 1861. This book  
was the first Albanian history. It was  
written in Italian. It was the first  
book to be written in Albanian. It was  
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## In the middle of the 19th century, the history of the Albanian people, the period from 1861 to 1912, when the nation first declared its independence, was dominated by the idea of the national renaissance.

# ALBANIAN LITERATURE OF NATIONAL RENAISSANCE

In the 40's of the 19th century, in spite of the  
struggle against the foreign invaders, the Albanian  
people were not forgetting their national identity.  
They were looking for a way to national renaissance.  
The first step was to learn about their past.  
This was done by collecting old legends  
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ALBANIAN LITERATURE OF  
NATIONAL RENAISSANCE

In the political and cultural history of the Albanian people, the period from the first half of the 19th century up to November 28, 1912, when the nearly five hundred foreign yoke was abolished, is one of the most important. This period, during which the struggle of the Albanian people for national liberation assumed unprecedented impetus and the Albanian culture underwent deep-going changes, is known as the National Renaissance.

In the 40's of the 19th century, in spite of the savage oppression by the foreign invaders, the Albanian people rose with increasing determination to win their own freedom. A number of peasant uprisings broke out, against the reforms of Tansimat proclaimed to strengthen the Turkish empire, but which caused other sufferings to the oppressed peoples of the Balkans. These uprisings were crushed, but the resistance of the Albanians against Ottoman enslavement grew more and more. The fire of the people's uprisings was not extinguished throughout the 19th century. Almost every decade, in various regions, both in northern and southern Albania, the masses of the people, who could bear exploitation, endless abuses and arbitrariness no longer, rose up to throw off the heavy Ottoman yoke. The struggle of the Albanian people for national liberation assumed great impetus especially from 1878 to 1881, when the Big Powers, neglecting the national aspirations



of the Albanian people, decided to partition Albania at the Berlin Congress (1878), among the chauvinistic neighbouring states. Very indignant at these unjust decisions, the Albanian people decided to defend the territories they had inhabited for centuries on end. Led by the Albanian League of Prizren, the Albanian popular forces, fought arms in hand against the decisions of the Big Powers, which denied the Albanian people their existence as one and indivisible nation, against the Sublime Porte and against the predatory intentions of the chauvinistic monarchies of the Balkans. These events gave a powerful impetus to the awakening and development of the national consciousness of the Albanians. The entire period from that time until November 1912 was characterized by the continuous upsurge of the struggle for national liberation, which was extended, strengthened and won an ever more organized and conscious character until at last it was crowned with the proclamation of freedom and national independence.

Beginning with the 80's, a broad cultural patriotic movement developed. It found its expression in the organization of the cultural patriotic associations, the publication of newspapers and magazines in Albanian, the opening of Albanian schools, etc. In 1879, a group of Albanian patriots set up in Istanbul «The Association of Printing Letters in Albanian», which charged itself with the task of developing the national culture through the publication of books, the opening of schools and the cultivation of the Albanian language in general. Immediately after this, in other countries, where there were Albanian emigrants, such as in Bulgaria, Rumania, Egypt, etc., associations were set up which carried out a valuable activity to arouse the national consciousness through publishing newspapers, books and encouraging the love for the mother tongue. The association «Dëshira» («The Desire») (1896), acting in Sofia, managed to set up a printing shop, which it placed in the service of the national cause. At the beginning of the 20th century such patriotic associations were set up in the United

States of America, where there were many Albanian emigrants. These associations played a great role in propagating the Albanian national question and in mobilizing them in struggle for national liberation, in making the Albanian question known to the progressive public opinion in Europe and in the United States, in collecting aids for the uprising that burst out in the years 1910-1912.

Alongside the setting up of the associations, a broad movement began to open up Albanian schools. This movement was closely linked with the tasks facing the Albanian people in their struggle for liberation from the foreign occupiers. The organizers of the schools were activists of the patriotic movement, who thought that without a written language and without its own culture a nation can neither be liberated nor can it advance. They charged the school not only with the task of spreading knowledge, but also with the task of arousing patriotic sentiments, the education of youth in the spirit of readiness to respond to the call of the homeland. The first Albanian schools were opened in Korça and its districts in 1887. In 1892, one of the first active organizers of Albanian education, P. N. Luarasi, opened six schools in the Kolonja villages. That very year, an Albanian school was also opened in Prizren. Thereafter, Albanian schools were also opened in other cities and regions of Albania. The fact that some of the initiators for opening schools paid the work for spreading education in Albania with their own lives, speaks of the great importance the setting up of the national school had in the strengthening of the patriotic movement. Realizing the great importance learning in the mother tongue had for the development of national consciousness, the agents of the Greek Patriarchate in Istanbul did their utmost to hinder the opening of Albanian schools.

The progress of the Albanian national movement and especially the creation of various patriotic associa-



tions brought with itself the development of the patriotic press. The newspapers issued tried to enlighten the important questions facing the patriotic movement in that period; they discussed acute political, ideological and social problems. The press worked hard to arouse the national consciousness and drawing an ever greater number of people in the ranks of the patriotic movement. The majority of Albanian newspapers and magazines were published out of the borders of Albania and the borders of the Ottoman Empire, because the Turkish authorities had denied the Albanians their national fights, such as the right to publish Albanian books, etc. Conscious of the great role of the written word, the foreign occupiers fought by all their means against the development of every form of the Albanian national culture, the press included. The first organ of the Albanian press is considered «L'Albanese d'Italia», which the outstanding Arbëreshi writer, J. De Rada, issued in Naples in 1848. In the years 1883-1887 the same writer issued the magazine «Fjamuri i Arbërit» («The Arbëri Flag»), which, together with the newspaper «I Foni tis Alvanias» («The Voice of Albania») (1879-1880) of the Arbëreshi patriot of Greece, A. Kullurioti, were, at that time important tribunes of the Albanian national question. After the League of Prizren, the Albanian press developed rapidly. Newspapers and magazines followed one another and at the beginning of the 20th century they were 90. One of the organs which played an important role in the development of the Albanian culture and literature is «Drita» («The Light») (later on «Dituria» — The Wisdom), which «The Association of Printing Albanian Letters» issued in Istanbul in the years 1884-1885. Prominent writers and activists of the patriotic movement: Sami Frashëri, Naim Frashëri, Jani Vreto and others, worked for the publication of this review. From 1888 until 1905, in Bucharest, the patriot N. Naço published (with interruptions) the paper «Shqipëtar» («The Albanian»), whereas in the years

1897-1898 J. Meksi and V. Dodani issued the paper «Shqipëria» («Albania»). In 1897 in Sofia «Kalendari Kombëtar» («The National Calendar») began to be published. Although with long interruptions, this review was published until 1926; it was rather a cultural review which published writings of a popular scientific character as well as original and translated literature. The newspaper «Drita» («The Light») (1901-1908) edited by the patriot Shahin Kolonja, was an important organ issued in Sofia. This paper was characterized by the militant spirit and the uncompromising attitude it maintained on most important questions of the struggle for national liberation. The patriotic spirit and progressive ideas are evident in «Kombi» paper («The Nation»), which S. Peci in collaboration with F.S. Noli issued in the years 1906-1909, which carried on an uninterrupted struggle against the enemies of the Albanian national movement, especially against the Greek shovinst propaganda. A series of other organs such as «Rrufeja» («The Lightning») edited by the patriot Jani Vruho in the years 1909-1910, «Shpresa e Shqypnisë» («The Hope of Albania») (1905-1907) of N. Ivanajt, «Shqypja e Shqypnis» («The Eagle of Albania») (1909-1912) of J. Bagëri, «Koha» («The Time») (1911-1912) of M. Grameno, etc., have rendered their contribution to the patriotic press.

All these organs were closely linked with the struggle for national liberation; the aspirations of the masses of the people for a free and independent life, for the economic and social progress of the country, for the flourishing of national culture found their expression in them. The patriotic press helped especially the development of the national sentiment, it became, not only an untiring agitator of the national question, but also a mobilizer of the honest Albanians in struggle for the liberation of the homeland. The papers and magazines published during the National Renaissance were of great significance, because they became the cradle of the national literature. Before publishing them in separate editions, most of the authors, such as J. De Rada, N.



Frashëri, Asdreni, etc., published their writings in various papers and magazines.

Besides the organs of the patriotic movement, other papers and magazines of an opportunist or reactionary character were issued, such as the magazine «Albania», a well-known organ of the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, the paper «Liria» («The Freedom»), which was published in Salonica in the years 1908-1909.

The Albanian literature of this period underwent important changes under the influence of the new historic reality, the impetuous events of internal life. It avoids its ties with the religious ideology, turns to the reality of the time; treats of new theme puts itself in the service of the movement for national liberation, becomes a powerful weapon of its propaganda. Literature thrashed out and solved tasks of a general national character. The writers wrote about the wretched situation of the people under the yoke of the Turkish rulers, the lack of the most elementary national rights, the plight which reigned in the country and the heavy consequences of foreign slavery, they propagated the idea of national and political renaissance of the Homeland; they called on the Albanians to wake up and take up arms against the Turkish invaders, against the traitors and all the anti-national elements, the Turkomans and the Greekomans, who as minions of the foreigners stirred up splits among the people weakening in this way the general popular movement for national liberation.

In the 40's of the 19th century Jeronim De Rada made a name as a prominent poet. He wrote the lyrical-emotional poem «Milosao» and the poems «The Unlucky Scanderbeg», «Serafina Topia», etc. in which he raised high the glorious epic of the wars of the Albanians under the leadership of Scanderbeg. Almost at the same Anton Santori made his appearance with the poem «The Dance of the Great Joy», pervaded by the freedom-loving spirit, and the first Albanian drama «Emira», with the theme from the daily life of the Arbëreshi village of Calabria. Another

Arbëreshi poet, Gabriel Dara Jr. worked in the middle of the past century. He became known with the posthumous poem, «The Last Lay of Bala» with the theme from the epoch of Scanderbeg. In 1884, there were published the first patriotic poems of Naim Frashëri, who rendered an invaluable contribution to the strengthening of the Albanian national literature and its enrichment and flourishment. His works in verse and prose followed one another: «The Poems about the First School» (1886), «The Boy's reader» (1886), «Livestock and Agriculture» and «Summer Flowers» (1890), «The History of Scanderbeg» (1898), etc. Nearly at the same time with N. Frashëri, the poet Ndre Mjeda entered the literary career. In 1887, he published the allegorical romantic poem «The Nightingale's Lamentation» and many other romantic creations, which, after a long time he collected in the volume «Juvenilia» (1917). Contemporary of Mjeda was Andon Zako-Çajupi, who, besides poems of a patriotic and satirical content, also made himself known with a series of dramatic works, such as «A Fourteen years Old Bridegroom» (1902) and «Posthumous» (1937), which played an important role in the strengthening of the Albanian drama. At the beginning of the 20th century, new names in literature come into view: Asdreni, a poet of ardent temperament, whose poems responded to the aspirations of the poor for national and social liberation; Mihal Grameno, the author of a series of short stories with the themes drawn from the daily worries of the city poor people; Risto Sulqi and Hil Mosi, who eulogized in their pathetic poems the heroic acts of the brave fighters of the uprising in northern Albania of the years 1911-1912. Although they had not the same understanding of all the problems of the Albanian life and the same political aims, all the authors of the Albanian literature of the National Renaissance, suffice it to mention only the names mentioned, had the one idea of the importance of the Albanian literature during the National Renais-



sance, of the important qualitative changes it underwent in that period, being enriched with new themes and subjects, new artistic means. They placed the struggle of the Albanian people for freedom, social progress and national culture in the centre of their attention.

In its greatest part the literature of this period was developed as a romantic literature. The optimism, the ardent dream of the beautiful future of the homeland, the high pathetic notes are characteristic features of the artistic production of the authors of the National Renaissance. Even when they depicted the unbearable conditions of the foreign enslavement, when they encouraged the patriotic spirit of the Albanians, when they stigmatized all the enemies of Albania, the writers expressed the patriotic romantic pathos overwhelming them, rather than creating literary characters and surroundings with their objective characteristic features. Failing to find their patriotic ideals embodied in the surrounding reality of Albania, a number of writers turned their eyes back to the distant historic past, the time of Scanderbeg, when the Albanian people, united and conscious of their interests, fought with unprecedented heroism and courage to defend their freedom and territory from the foreign invaders. Undoubtedly, reflecting that time and its heroes, the authors of the National Renaissance did not give «the typical environment» of the time and the country, but expressed their patriotic ideas.

The growing interest in the national history, in the characteristic features of the Albanian national life was also expressed in the great concern in folklore which the activists of the National Renaissance began to show: the folklore was considered by them the wealth of national culture, a testimony to the vitality and national individuality of the Albanian people. The folklore reflected the history of the people, their freedom-loving spirit, their centuries-long war for independence, their thoughts and expectations, their wisdom and esthetic

conception. Many patriots and writers enthusiastically set to collect songs, tales, legends. One of the first ideologists of the movement of the National Renaissance, Zef Jubani (1818-1880) published in Trieste «A Collection of Albanian Folk Songs and poems, Rhapsodies» in 1871. In 1878, the enemies attempted to deny Albanian people their right of existence as a nation, calling Albania a mere «geographical expression». The well-known patriot Thimi Mitko (1820-1890) brought into light his collection of folk material «The Albanian Bee», which testified to the Albanian's antiquity and individuality. Th. Mitko helped the foreign public opinion to know the Albanian people through his poetical genius. The pupil and disciple of Th. Mitko, Spiro Dine (1844-1922), published another collection of creations from the folk artistic treasure entitled «The Waves of the Sea» (1908).

Alongside romanticism, tendencies of sentimental and realistic character appear in the Albanian literature, something which speaks of the complicated process of the moulding of the culture of the Albanian people, who, within a relatively short period of time, had to make up for the lost time to overcome backwardness in many spheres of life, which was due to the prolonged and heavy national and political yoke. In respond to the demands of the time in the 20th century the realistic tendency strengthened. In the creativeness of some authors of that period (Andon Zako Çajupi, Asdreni, etc.) realism, as a principle of the artistic reflection of life, was further developed.

With the further strengthening of the struggle for national liberation and the new relationship of social and class forces in the Albanian society by the end of the 19th century and especially at the beginning of the 20th century, anti-popular and reactionary tendencies begin to appear in the Albanian literature. Some men of letters (F. Konica, Mithat Frashëri) tend to formalism and ethnographism; alongside this, the clerical-catholic literature develops. All of them made up the reactionary



camp, which was opposed to the patriotic literature inspired by the ideas of the struggle for national liberation, which expressed the demands of the masses of the people, fought for social liberation and the country's progress.

The new content of the literary works, their close links with the general struggle for liberation encouraged new literary forms. In the new epoch of the literary development unknown or little known genres appear and develop. Poetry, which assumed special impetus occupied the principal place. The patriotic verses, which called on the Albanians to rise in fight to save their homeland, the lyrical verses, the elegies, ballads and poems, are of first-rate importance. Satire in verse form also occupied a prominent place. It responded to the struggle against the enemies of Albania. At the beginning of the 20th century poetry appears, which aimed to reflect life in its typical aspects. Sketches, short stories and later on novels, which came into light at the end of the 19th century and especially at the beginning of the 20th century, mark the rise of the artistic prose in Albanian literature. The beginning of this century also marks the rise of drama, though some work was previously published (e.g., the drama «Emira» of A. Santori). At that time literary criticism appears as a special kind of literary creativeness.

Proceeding from some formal peculiarities, such as the language and certain changes in the choice of themes in the Albanian national literature, is distinguished the Arbëreshi literature, which developed in the Arbëreshi colonies of South Italy, in Calabria, and in Sicily. Due to political-social circumstances, it carries some specific characteristics. The Albanian literature of the National Renaissance, which is represented by N. Frashëri, P. Vasa, A. Z. Çajupi, N. Mjeda, Asdreni, etc., is distinguished by the fact that, although they worked in the political centres of the Albanians abroad, they were closely linked with the patriotic movement at home and they were its outstanding activists.

## NAIM FRASHËRI

(1846-1900)

Naim Frashëri is one of those great artists, whose creativeness constitutes an important stage in the literature of their own countries. He promoted the role of the Albanian literature in the struggle for liberation from the foreign and national yoke: by virtue of its profound ideas and special artistic merits, his poetic creativeness became one of the most important factors in moulding the national consciousness of the Albanian people. Apart from this he showed compatriots the path to progress and knowledge, taught them the values which make up the sure future of a people. His works were a source of inspiration for the contemporary writers and those who followed in their make, thus, becoming active elements for the progress of the Albanian literature. As a great artist, Naim Frashëri increased the artistic expressive means of literature, making a valuable contribution to elaborating the Albanian national literary language. It's thanks to Naim that the Albanian literature assumed a greater communicating force, succeeded in influencing ever broader strata of the population, in stirring up in them the feeling of active and conscious patriotism.

Naim Frashëri was born in 1848, in Frashër, a village in South Albania, in the family of ruined landlords. His father and his eldest brother, had to engage in trade and later on work as officials in the administration. Naim spent his youth amidst the beautiful scenery of the village, which left indelible imprints in the sensitive spirit of the future poet. There, in his native village, he took his first lessons, learnt Arabic and Persian which helped him later to become acquainted with the literature of the peoples of the East. In 1865, his family settled in Janina. Naim enrolled in the city's secondary school Zoisimes, which was regarded as one of the best



schools of the time in the Balkans. For him this was a period of intensive work to acquire culture. He studies Old Greek and Latin and reads a lot from world literature. It was the antique literature which attracted the poet's curious mind most of all. He reads Homer and Virgile passionately. The works of the great French illuminists, Voltaire and Hugo, whose ideas would be reflected in his political creativeness, played an important role in forming his ideas and moulding his character. Later, in one of his works, he speaks with admiration of the French bourgeois revolution of 1789, that destroyed the old world and together with it the old political, ideological and social institutions and views which hampered the progress of mankind:

Europe's was a sorry plight,  
Dark confusion was her share,  
To shake her and put things right,  
She needed Rousseau and Voltaire

After finishing the secondary school in 1871, Naim worked as a clerk in various cities of South Albania. At this time, he falls ill and goes abroad to get cured. Returns to the Homeland when feeling somewhat recovered and when the national movement had begun to gain force throughout Albania. It was 1877-1878, when the Albanians had risen to defend their territory under the guidance of the Albanian League of Prizren with Abdyl Frashëri, Naim's brother, as one of the main leaders. After these events, the poet's creativeness gains artistic maturity, is freed from the influence of the traditional canons of Oriental poetry and is pervaded by the spirit of patriotism.

In 1882, together with his family Naim is transferred to work in Istanbul. This date marks an important event in his literary and patriotic activity. In this city he found a group of Albanian patriots, who were engaged in a fruitful work to awaken the national consciousness and organize their compatriots in the struggle to save the

Homeland. His younger brother, Sami, stands out among these patriots. In Istanbul the poet set down to work with great zeal for the problem of the national movement. Member of the Censure Committee at the Ministry of Education of Turkey, he managed to obtain the permission to publish many books in Albanian. Simultaneously he writes and publishes many of his works. A regular collaborator of *-The Light-* magazine issued by the Albanian patriots of Istanbul, he supplies it with verses, fables and short articles in prose, of a didactic and scientific character. Later on, in 1866, he collected these writings into four small volumes: *Boys' Reader-* (First and Second part), *-Verses for the First Schools-* and *-General History-* destined for the Albanian schools which had recently begun to be set up. These books contained elementary information on natural sciences, geography and history of various countries, the brilliant scientific achievements of the 19th century, the theories of Kant-Laplace and Darwin. From the verses of a didactic character, of interest is the verse *-Verse for the First School-*. In his verses, fables and rhymed proverbs, the author tried to make the people aware of what was useful to them and served their spiritual emancipation and progress, those moral values of life which would bring about the attainment of happiness, taught them to love knowledge and progress: *-Don't eat your words, stand up like a man-*, *-In this life we should be true to ourselves-*, *-Except truth nothing is honourable in life-*, *-The man who works only for himself is like a tree which bears no fruits-*, *-Body is sound and healthy by working, mind is enlightened by learning-*, *-If we learn and sing we shall live better-*, *-A man who is not for civilization but wants to live like a beast, he who does not want light, does not want kindness, but wants to live in darkness, does not recognize justice and does not see light. . .-*, these are some of the fundamental ideas of the work. Apart from preaching love for work and learning, his sympathy for the poor, apart from glorifying the moral virtues like gentleness, bravery, honesty, frankness and



correctness, panteism has also found reflection in the above verses by means of which the author tries to overcome religious divisions (at that time there were three kinds of religions existing in Albania) and ensure the unity of the Albanian people. But the leitmotif is the love for Albania, for the Albanian language, the call to the compatriots to unite. «He who does not love his nation and Homeland is not a man, he does not love himself either». According to Naim Frashëri, active patriotism, the love for Albania, the struggle for its liberation bring about happiness. «You should love your nation and the Homeland more than yourself, as part of your body; For them to die, /for them to live,/ for them to try night and day, /to embellish and glorify them,/ to honour and give them light. In his verse «The Sun Ray to the Violet», through the violet covered with «heaths, shrubs and thorns», the author alludes to the wretched situation of Albania under the foreign yoke. The work is characterized by the fiery optimism and ardent belief of the poet in the future of Albania. At that time the Albanians had already begun to wake up and become conscious of the existing situation and find the road to escape from the hateful slavery. This makes the poet happy, fills him with strength and new energies.

As can be seen, the verse «Verses for the First School» is important to understand the patriotic and illuminist ideals of the poet as well as his concept on art. A distinguished activist in the movement for national liberation, Naim Frashëri placed his talent consciously in the service of the cause of the liberation of Albania; he did not conceive art outside the life of the country, outside the struggle of the Albanian people to win their national independence.

The poet compares himself with the light which enables people to see and get to know the world better, and shows the compatriots the correct path:

Amongst you I've been standing,  
With anxiety burning,

To bring you a ray of sunlight,  
To turn into day your night.  
For this I've always pined,  
Resolved and unresigned,  
To light your way and show  
Each other how to know,

The poet remained faithful to this concept on poetry to the last day of his life. In his later works, he will again turn to the role of poetry in life, but this time his thoughts will have a more definite content. Then, filled with a great love for his Homeland, he will write that the lofty ideal of the poet is,

To give Albania some light  
From his own spirit bright.

Simultaneously with works of a didactic character, Naim Frashëri writes also literary works. In this period, up to the end of the XIX Century he was engaged in lyrics. His best creations from this sphere of literary creativeness are «Livestock and Agriculture» (1886) and «Sun Flowers» (1886), in which the poet delved more deeply into patriotic subjects. In «Livestock and Agriculture», the poet expresses his ardent love for Albania, he gave vent to his great longing for Albania in lines of special sincerity and lyricism, he expressed his confidence in its future. The poem is built in the form of an ardent and deeply felt hymn to the Albanian nature, it is a warm song to its beauty and richness; the poet's heart is full of love for everything Albanian, for the Albanian mountains, slopes, and forests, for its freedom-loving and hard-working people.

O mountains of Albania, you mighty stalwart oaks,  
You blooming plains, you meadows lush, my memory evokes,  
You gentle hills, your smiling vales, your lively limpid  
streams,



Your snow-capped peaks, your slopes, your cliffs, your woods  
that fill my dreams,  
I sing to your white fleeced flocks and to their pastures  
green,  
O blessed land, to me you are the finest ever seen.

The beauty of the Homeland is incomparable for the poet.

The universe has thought of making Albania most beautiful and rich, says the poet. . . It has bestowed on it all the blessings of the earth. «Flowers and grass and leaves, plants and grain, and trees and woods, all the beauty it has bestowed upon Albania». The descriptions of the lives of stockraisers, the presentation of grazing livestock in beautiful and lively colours, carry special warmth. The poet is filled with wonder at the beauty of the Homeland, he is fully confident that such a country is entitled to live in freedom. The high mountains stand on guard, they are the embodiment of the indomitable will of the Albanians to live free and of the horror of the enemies of the Albanian people.

Beloved Albania, I proudly bear your name,  
And wish to see revived your glorious ancient fame,  
Mother Albania, though far away and alone,  
I'll never fail to be your truly devoted son.

The poet calls on his compatriots to unite and organize in the ranks of the patriotic movement, to think and act like true patriots putting the benefit of the Homeland above all, to take the path of learning and progress. He has confidence that soon happy days will come for Albania «Donate, donate Albania the happy day of Freedom» cries the poet enthusiastically addressing Gods, whom he sees as a pantheist, that is merged with the universe, the source of all the benefits.

An important place in the poem is occupied by the lyrical descriptions of everyday cares of the shepherd

and the farmer, their quiet and untroubled lives, the simple manner in which they perceive the world around them, their sincere love for nature and work, and in general their sincere feelings, their joy over the fruit of their labour, are portrayed by the poet in vivid colours. Rural life is depicted in contrast to the urban one, for from the worries and troubles of the latter. The pantheism of life in the bosom of nature no doubt stems from the illuminist convictions of the poet. Apart from this, an important place in the poem is occupied by the advises given by the poet, which sometimes assume the form of reasoning on the meaning of life, on the high moral ideals one must proceed from in this activity: the poet refers to the love of work and honesty as qualities of the true man. All these side motifs have been masterly introduced in his patriotic pathos, which is the main one in the poem. In most cases, the pathos of work is expressed through apostrophies and exclamations which give the work a marked pathetic-emotional colour. N. Frashëri has an unshaken confidence that Albania will not submit to the enemies; that its high mountains are a symbol of its invincible spirit and the poet addresses them with a powerful apostrophy:

O Mountains of Albania, you hold your head so high,  
You awe and fear inspire, you pierce the clouds and sky,

The conscious objective of the poet to arouse in the Albanians the love for the Homeland the pride for being Albanian, permeates the two poetic collections: «Summer Flowers» (1890) and «The Paradise and Flying Words» (1894). But the path the poet has chosen is only partially similar to that he has chosen in «Livestock and Agriculture». The long verse «The Paradise», is a poetic narration of the historic past of the Albanians, of the bravery they have displayed since ancient times against the various enemies, their courage, vitality and militant spirit, which have always characterized them in the course of history, their ardent love for the country and



their unconquerable spirit as their main characteristic. With great enthusiasm the poet evokes the epoch of Scanderbeg when the Albanians -stood up to Turkey, honoured Albania, they took up arms and fought and saved the whole of Europe-. Then the author mentions one by one other Albanian fighters, who clashed with Turkey, like Gjoleka, Rrapo Hekali, Silihdar (Zyluftar) Poda, etc., who went down in history as brave and intrepid fighters. With the feeling of lawful pride, the poet recalls also those prominent Albanians who shed their blood for the liberation of Greece, such as Marko Bocari, Miauli, Bubulina, Kanari, or the Arbëresh braves who followed Garibaldi in his well known campaign for liberation. All these are for the poet a live testimony that Albania just as in the past, in the XIX Century as well, will find strength in itself to get rid of the grave situation in which it was languishing:

Albania won't be divided,  
Poor, abandoned, unprovided;  
Every time she seems to wane  
like the moon she's up again.

These words express the ardent confidence of the poet in the future of Albania. But to save the Homeland from foreign bandage the Albanians must leave enmities aside and take the path of unity. The poet addresses lines filled with anger and indignation to evil doers, who had denied the Homeland and the mother tongue and did the bidding of the foreigners who had occupied Albania. The poet advises his compatriots to wake up, to unite, to look after the interests of the Homeland, because history is developing in the interest of the Albanians: the national movement is following a right course and the day of liberation of «Albania is not far off». The motif of the coming liberation of Albania was dealt with especially in the verse «I Express», which is permeated by the sincerity of the poet's feelings. A virtuous man is he who thinks of and acts to the benefit of his own country; only

by doing his bit for its liberation can one enjoy the respect of all the country.

Whoever proves a man this way  
When battle rages in full sway,  
Immortal shall remain his name,  
Forever shall survive his fame.

The interests of the Homeland are such as to leave aside religious and local divisions and strengthen unity and fraternity for only this is the road to freedom, of drawing Albania out of the abyss into which the enemies have plunged it.

Instilling the love for the mother tongue, for whose beauty and sweetness the poet sung passionately, holds an important place in the creativeness of Naim Frashëri. Loving the mother tongue, cultivating and elaborating it, this is the way says the author, for the national question to advance and flourish, for the much expected day, the liberation of the Homeland, to come («Our Mother Tongue», «Korça», etc.);

In his long verse -Eternal Word- burning with longing to see his Homeland among the developed and advanced countries, N. Frashëri advised the Albanians to give up some old traditions which hampered them on their road of social and cultural progress.

In the last years of his creativeness, N. Frashëri turned to epic poetry. He wrote two poems: «The History of Scanderbeg» and «Qerbeleja». The first poem as can be guessed from its title is about Gjergj Kastrioti-Scanderbeg. Just as all the other Albanian authors, who embodied in their creativeness the figure of our national hero, Scanderbeg, Naim Frashëri, turned to the XV Century not to dodge the acute problems of his time, but to throw into relief the important problems preoccupying him in regard to the glorious past, which he thought was an effective poetic means to make his compatriots aware of the fundamental idea: the unity of the Albanian people. Speaking about the epoch of Scanderbeg, his life, his heroic deeds, the poet aims to instil in the minds of the Albanians that



only by achieving an unbreakable unity like that of the time of Scanderbeg could Albania come out into light. The poem describes chronologically the key moments of the hero's life, from his boyhood to his death. This enables the reader to consider it as a history given in a poetic tableau. Naim Frashëri depicted the time of Scanderbeg as it really was, a glorious time, when the Albanians, conscious that they were defending their national interests, their very existence, put all their energies and the country's resources in the service of the sacred struggle against the foreign occupiers, and for twenty four years in succession managed to safeguard their freedom from the mightiest military power of the time. In Naim Frashëri's poem, Scanderbeg appears as a popular hero, modest, full of boundless love for the country, an unequalled brave, a distinguished statesman with rare organizational abilities, far-sighted and a great strategist and above all, one who is aware of the historic role of his work. Following in the wake of the traditions of the works of the great European humanists of the 16th-17th century, the poet presented the hero as the embodiment of mental and physical beauty, a perfect hero. As modest he is with the people so proud stands he in face of the enemy, as generous he is with those who make mistakes so merciless is he in face of traitors and evil doers. Scanderbeg is handsome, with a strong and fine body; "... he was the most handsome of men and shone like the sun...". The poet compares him to the "dragon" (lion) and depicts him as possessing "the strength of a semigod". An important place in the poem is held by the description of Scanderbeg's activity to unite the Albanians, overcoming the separatist tendencies of some Albanian feudal chiefs, to ensure that military political unity which for 25 years on end became an insurmountable wall for the most famous and powerful sultans of Turkey. Many scenes describe the heroic battles of Scanderbeg, depict his successive victories overcoming not only many internal but also external difficulties, because there were not few enemies like Venice, etc., which wanted to dig the grave

for Scanderbeg and the Albanian people. By means of numerous facts and details the author has emphasized the popular character of Scanderbeg's battles, who not only liberated Albania from the foreign yoke and as long as he lived made it invincible in face of the Turkish assaults, but also defended Europe winning admirers in all the European countries, who appreciated him as the savior of European civilization and as the inspirer of all their liberation struggle.

By evoking this heroic and glorious time in our national history, Naim Frashëri wanted to tell his compatriots that just as in the epoch of Scanderbeg, in the XIX century, too, when the national movement was successfully developing throughout the country, unity was the only way to the liberation of the country from the Ottoman rule. The motif of unity permeates the whole of the poem, it finds expression also in the last lines with which he ends his major work:

If you keep united  
Albania's future is secure ..

"The History of Scanderbeg" was one of the most popular works of the period of National Renaissance; its most beautiful and inspired parts, like the return of Scanderbeg to Kruja, etc., were learnt by heart by the patriots who found embodied in it their most sacred desires. In the the series of the efforts of other Albanian authors for depicting the heroic figure of Scanderbeg, Naim Frashëri's work holds the place of honour; its spontaneous inspiration, lyricism, the sweetness of language and the clarity of narration are characteristic features of the poem.

Naim Frashëri has remained immortal in the consciousness of the Albanian nation for he sang with enthusiasm to the Homeland and had confidence in its beautiful future, in the ability of the Albanian people to embark on the road of economic, social and cultural progress. This ardent and sincere love for the Albanian people was the sap which nourished his poetic creativeness.



## NDRE MJEDA

(1866-1937)

Ndre Mjeda was another distinguished figure of the Albanian literature of this period. Inspired by the sincere love for the Homeland and the profound sympathy for the common people, his works have great artistic merits, and for this they occupy a place of honour in the Albanian poetry. Characteristic of Mjeda was his high artistic demand of: before publishing his works, he worked on them with admiring patience.

Mjeda was born in Shkodra in the family of a peasant herdsman settled in town. He took his first lessons in a religious school under the direction of the Jesuits. He was a bright pupil at school, therefore, seeing his abilities, the managers of the school decided to make a priest of him and sent him to Spain, Poland, Croacia and Italy to attend higher studies. Having received his doctorate in philosophy and theology, he was assigned to teach in a high religious school. But his high pedagogical-religious career went no farther. He abandoned the Jesuit order and returned to his Homeland to take part in the patriotic movement of his compatriots, as a cultural activist and as a poet. In 1887, Mjeda published his first poetic work "The Lament of the Nightingale", which is an allegoric poem with a patriotic content. With the nightingale shut in a cage the poet alludes to the enslaved Homeland, its miserable situation under the foreign domination. The poet's voice strikes a note of profound sadness, he weeps sorrowfully for the poverty-stricken country.

My nightingale gentle and sweet,  
your song is but a sad lament,  
The dawn you do no longer greet  
with joy, as you were always wont.

Often sadness and hopelessness overcome the poet; he does not know when the day will come for the nightingale to fly free "to the nest of its ancestors", for the slavery to be abolished. However, the prevailing note is optimism, the poet's belief that the bright day of freedom is coming:

So why, my gentle nightingale,  
you break my heart with your sad wail.  
The soil is rich, clement's the weather,  
Be gay again, let shine your feather,  
Life's hazards come and go  
Like winter and its snow.

In 1901, together with his brother, he sets up in Shkodra the patriotic cultural society "The Dawn", which worked out an alphabet based on the criterion that every letter responds to a single sound, and published school books. From 1901 to 1907, Mjeda carries on a vast cultural-patriotic activity, takes part in the meetings and commissions which worked to compile a unified alphabet and rules of the written language.

In 1917, Mjeda published the volume of lyric poems "Juvenile". This work had a wide repercussion among the public and won attention, not only for its patriotic poems, but also for its rare artistic merits. A great range of motifs and ideas are observed in this volume. The poetry cycle "The Exile", portrays the figure of a patriot, whom the foreign invader (=the tyrant-) sends in exile. Through very well-found artistic plastic drawings of nature, the poet conveys the great longing of the exile for his country, his sufferings in exile. The hero addresses the migrating birds, the cranes, to bring him news from his beloved, from his native town, from his Homeland:

O tell me, please, can people yonder  
still enjoy the sunrise.  
The sparkling stars, the moon's white wonder,



The hills in spring disguise?  
Can flowers still smell nice and sweet  
Where plains and mountains meet?

With the passing of time, Mjeda's patriotic lyrics assumed a growing concrete character and a greater patriotic spirit. In the poetry «Mustafa Pasha in Babuna», with an irresistible force Mjeda pours his hatred for the representatives of one of the big feudal families in North Albania, at the beginning of the XIXth century, one of the faithful collaborators of the foreign occupiers. Lack of courage, infidelity, readiness to leave the others in the lurch to save his skin, these make up the true physiognomy of this dirty renegade. Never did Mjeda's sarcasm strike hardest at the enemies than in these lines:

Away from here, you brutal man,  
you cruel tyrant with all your clan,  
Albania ousts you over the waves,  
to Anatolia, the hell of Slaves.

The poet thinks that only the people, the rank and file have stood in the forefront of the struggle against the foreign invaders for the liberation of the country. They have kept the feeling of patriotism alive in their hearts and have taken to the field of battle regardless of sacrifices. The poem «Mustafa Pasha in Babuna» bursts out through notes of anger and indignation.

In the verse «The Albanian Language» the poet sings to the Homeland the beauty of the mother tongue, evokes the past times when the Albanian's bravery had enhanced Albania's honour and authority. Mjeda believes that the Albanians will unite and foil the enemies' plans which seek to sow disruption. Malediction and hatred comes out of the poet's lips against the ill-wishers of the Homeland:

Geg and Tosk from plain and hill  
One folk we are united  
Our common tongue, our common will

Shall keep us undivided  
Cursed be all instigators  
of dissention and discord,  
Nature's subtle violators  
of good friendship and accord!

The call to unite, to consolidate their ranks in struggle to win freedom and independence of the country, can be found also in the verse «Unite». The poet speaks of the miserable state to which the country has been reduced. «The land withered away never to put on the green gown». The foreign invader behaves and rules the country the way he chooses. And this is, the poet says, because the Albanians are split, because many of them lack national consciousness:

O brothers close your ranks, unite  
under Albania's flag.  
A common origine you share,  
A common tongue you speak,  
A single heart beats in your chest  
Geg-Tosk from end to end.

The verse «For an Albanian School Closed by the Ottoman Government» (Korça 1902), condemns the policy of reprisals the Turkish government implemented with regard to the Albanian schools. But it is useless for the foreign invaders to act in this manner, says the poet, for the stern measures they undertake do nothing other than step up the struggle of the Albanians for their rights.

One of the most powerful, and passionate poetic works of Mjeda is his poetry cycle «Freedom», which was written in 1901-1911, but was published in 1937. «Freedom» is painted with the heroic colour of the atmosphere of the years 1901-1911, when the liberation movement was gaining momentum and the popular masses were becoming evermore active. The call of the poet to the highlanders to take up arms and fight not only for their



national liberation but also for social liberation is the essence of the poem.

Rise up, you serfs, you toilers of the land,  
Drop for once your hoes, your plows and stand,  
Fight arms in hand your liberty to win  
Fight to the bitter end and never give in!

The poet hopes that the liberation of the country will be ensued from the establishment of social justice and the proper observation of the peasants' rights:

...and fear no more.  
For once this storm of fire is brought to end  
No landlord shall exploit you as before.

However Mjeda's most important work is the lyric-poetic poem «Life's Dream» which was published in 1917, in the volume «Juvenile». The poet's sympathy for the common people, his compassion for the life of the poor people of the Northern mountains full of privations and sufferings, found full expression in «Life's Dream». The simple but heart-rending history of a poor family, the mother and her two daughters, make up the subject of this poem. Their life drags on monotonously, with their dreadful efforts to make both ends meet in those barren crags. The mother and her two daughters do not ask much from life, just to have something to eat and live undisturbed in the corner of the earth where their hut is. But the miserable reality does not let them enjoy such «life». Like a bolt out of the blue, the misfortunes fall on them, and that little happiness of theirs is torn to pieces. One day Trina, the girl who shepherded the goats in the mountains, is taken ill and soon dies of tuberculosis consumption. The other girl, Zoga, gets married. The poor mother remained alone, solitary. To save herself from getting helplessly old, she calls for the death to come and take her away. With its deep human spirit, realist representation of life, its natural inspiration, «Life's Dream»,

remains one of the most prominent works of the Albanian progressive literature.

As a patriot, Mjeda continues to take part in the political life of the country. In the course of the years 1920-1924, when the progressive forces were fighting for the development of the newly liberated Albania along the road of democracy and social progress, Mjeda supported these objectives. A Shkodra deputy, he delivered speeches in the parliament of the time, where he defended the interests of the overwhelming majority of the population. Later on, Mjeda retires from the political scene and leads the life of a simple village clergyman. He dedicates most of his time to his linguistic studies, where he shines as a skilful scientist. In 1934, he published the study «Remarks on the Articles and Possessive Pronouns of the Albanian Language».

In Mjeda's biography as a poet, these years form a new stage. From now on, he will take the subject for his political works not from the reality in which he lives, but from the very glorious past of the country. The poetry cycle «Lissus» and «Scodra» evoke the militant deeds of the Albanians' ancestors, the Illyrians or the epoch of Skanderbeg. Apart from the historic characters, there are also imaginative characters. In general, these works lack that passionate spirit, that militant-publicistic character of the poems of the first period of his life.

Mjeda died in Shkodra, in 1937. The progressive part of the Youth and intellectuals saw him to the grave with special honours, for he was the poet who all along his life thought of the benefit of the Homeland, and worked to help the development of the national culture.



## ANDON ZAKO ÇAJUPI (1886-1930)

Andon Z. Çajupi was born in 1866, in one of the villages of Gjirokastra, South Albania. After finishing the elementary studies in 1882, he goes to Egypt, to his father, who was a big merchant of tobacco. In Alexandria, the poet finished a French Licé. In 1887, he sets out for Switzerland to study law. After graduation in 1894-1895, he again settles in Egypt, where he opened a lawyer's office. However, he did not exert his profession for long, because things went wrong with him. As a result of a conflict he had with Xhedi<sup>1</sup>), with regard to a law suit, he was forced to give up the law office and lived on the riches his father left him. If from the professional point of view this period was fruitless to him, from the political and literary point of view it was important. In the bosom of the Albanian exiles in Egypt, the patriotic movement had begun to take a good shape. The political events of the end of the XIX century, the allround strengthening of the movement of the Albanian people for freedom and independence, accelerated the process of the awakening of the Albanian exiles in Egypt. A.Z. Çajupi unhesitatingly embraced this movement taking an active part in all the activities organized in connection with other patriots who carried their activity in Turkey, Rumania, Bulgaria. An active man of the pen in the patriotic organs he never fails to discuss on the acute problems of the patriotic movement. Worth of mention is his article published in 1898, concerning the problem of the alphabet, which was a burning issue in the Albanian circles and was looked upon as a problem of a national political significance.

<sup>1</sup> Xhedi — an inherited title kept by the government people of Egypt during 1898-1914.

An important event in the life of the future poet was his meeting with the distinguished poet of the Albanian Renaissance, Naim Frashëri, who made an indelible impression upon him and played an important role in his later development as a poet and active member of the patriotic movement.

In 1902, A. Z. Çajupi published the poetic volume *«Father Tomor»*. This work had wide repercussion among the Albanian patriots and was considered as a remarkable cultural achievement. With this work, Çajupi ranked himself among the distinguished writers of the time.

In *«Father Tomor»*, the poet displays himself as an ardent fighter for the liberation of the Albanian people from the foreign yoke, an untiring propagator of the patriotic ideas, the ardent champion of the interests of the people, sworn enemy of the pro-Turkish beys. In his poetries, Çajupi evoked the most important contemporary problems, which concerned the Albanian society at the turn of the XIXth century and the beginning of the XX century. He put his poetic inspiration in the service of the movement for national liberation.

One of the first motifs of Çajup's poetry is the awakening of national consciousness. This has determined the content of the poems *«Enslavement»*, *«Where We Are Born»*, *«Homeland»*, in which he sings with feelings of profound warmth to the Homeland, the relations with the native country, to the great honour which Albania enjoyed in the past. A feeling of love mixed with nostalgia comes out of the poem *«Homeland»*,

My country is that site  
Where I first saw daylight,  
Where I adored my mother,  
And honoured my dear father,  
Where I knew every stone  
and never felt alone,  
Where lie my forbears' bones  
Under neat white tombstones,  
Where I first spoke my tongue,  
Made friends with old and young.



Where I grew up on crumbs,  
laughed and cried with my thums,  
There do my bright hopes lie,  
There would I wish to die.

At the time when Çajup lived, the enemies of Albania continued to bemuse the people through demagogical slogans in regard to the character of the patriotic movement and divide the Albanians. Burning with anger, the poet speaks against the contradictions which weakened the struggle of the Albanian people for independence, tore the mask of the foreign propaganda and called on the Albanians to unite to realize the only lofty aim: the gaining of national freedom. Çajupi dedicated his best poems to the unity of the Albanians. These poems are characterized by passionate spirit. («Father Tomor» «Lament», «Pledge for Pledge», «What We Are», etc.). He addressed his compatriots with ardent words, for the time had come to take up arms, for they could win freedom and independence only through the uprising.

Take up your arms, prepare to swear,  
A solemn pledge to take,  
No Turk on Albanian soil to spare,  
Nor your freedom to forsake.

In the poem «Pledge for Pledge» the call for uprising rang even more forcefully and clearly:

The day has come for us to fight  
For Albania's freedom,  
And rather perish for our right  
Then live in abject serfdom

In Çajup's creativeness, just as in the activity of Naim Frashëri and other contemporary authors, the figure of Scanderbeg is presented as the embodiment of the boundless love for the Homeland and an ardent fighter of the unity of all the Albanians in the national movement. In

the poem «Scanderbeg's Wish On The Deathbed», the poet says, the only behest he left the Albanians before he died was to safeguard their unity.

As a realist and patriot he was, he waged an energetic and long struggle against the various enemies of the national movement. In his verses he laid bare both the perfidious policy of the Jeunes Turks and the cunning demagogy of the Greek shovinists. Nothing hampering the political emancipation of the Albanians, their participation in the patriotic movement escaped the satiric irony of the poet. In the verse «The Sultan», before the readers' eyes rises the grotesque and hyperbolic figure of the Sultan of Turkey, who with disgusting cynicism speaks of his predatory aims and deeds. Çajup wrote also fables. Making use of La Fontaine's fable motifs and figures, in many cases he gave them an actual colour suitable to the time and ridiculed Turkey or the Greek shovinists with their predatory aims.

In his creativeness, Çajup was inspired by progressive democratic ideals, by confidence in social justice. Many of his verses display the profound sympathy of the poet for the common people, the poor working people. He speaks respectfully of their work, which is useful to the society («The Soil», «The Shepherd's Pipe» «Poverty and Freedom»). The poet sees in them the carriers of the best human feelings, which had been trodden upon and had deteriorated in the existing social order. This is the idea which is at the centre of the poem «The Poverty and the Freedom»:

Poor and humble I may be  
But I am happy and free.

I'll never barter my liberty,  
No nature's gift can honour share  
With liberty sublime and fair.

Besides the motif of the struggle for national liberation, the aspiration for social liberation also finds expres-



sion in the creativeness of the poet. In the poem «July», the poet calls on the popular masses to rise to win their rights just like the French people did in the July uprising of 1830. The poet's disgust for the society with antagonistic classes is expressed also in the verse «Desire», in which he speaks sorrowfully of the degeneration of the relations between and feelings of the people in the bourgeois society, where money reigns supreme.

In his poems, Çajupi resounded the important events of the international political life, he mercilessly exposed the impertinent policy of the big imperialist states, which fiercely and brutally trampled underfoot the sovereignty of the small and unprotected states. On the other hand, he expresses his sympathy and respect for the peoples fighting for their liberation, as was the case with the Boers, who had risen and were fighting heroically against the British imperialists. The poet is filled with compassion and pity for the grave situation of the Egyptians, who do not enjoy their rights. He has expressed these feelings in the verse «Egypt». For the poet, the Imperialist states are the enemies of the people, treacherous and vile, who brutally trample the small countries.

Çajup's satiric talent found vent also in the pamphlet «Selaniku Club» (1909), in which with an unrestrained force he struck the pseudo-patriots, who in the interest of the Ottoman occupiers tried to prevent the national liberation movement of the Albanian people from gaining force.

A.Z. Çajupi is known in the Albanian literature not only as a poet, but also as a playwright, the author of two comedies («14-years Old Bridegroom», and «Post-Mortem») and of a tragedy written after the rules of classicism («The Man of the Earth»). In the comedy «14-years Old Bridegroom», through a refined humour the author ridicules one of the most evil aspects of the patriarchal life of the Albanian countryside, the custom of marriage for money with a striking age difference. Vivid characters live and move about in the comedy. They have well-sought after characteristic features. The author has truthfully depicted the local colour of the village of

Southern Albania. The author hits the mark when describing the gossip, the absurdity of some customs of rural life. The subject of the comedy «Post-Mortem» (1910), is taken from the political life of the circles of Albanian patriots. The author mocks those Albanians who support the policy of the Jeunes Turks in Albania, as well as those honest but naive patriots who believed the enemies' deceitful promises.

With his works, A.Z. Çajupi made an important contribution to the enrichment of the Albanian literature, with new characters and themes. The democratic spirit and realism are characteristic features of his talent.

## OTHER POETS AND WRITERS OF THE END OF THE XIXth CENTURY

In the period which we are speaking about, there were other authors who, each according to his abilities and inclinations, helped the development of the Albanian national literature.

**Pashko Vasa** (1825-1892) was a statesman and publicist. Since his youth he was devoted to the idea of national liberation. In 1848, he took part in the uprising of the Venetian people against the Austrian occupation, and was a member of the headquarters of the uprising. After the suppression of the uprising, he went to Turkey where he made a career in the administration of the Empire. In 1870, he was made a Pasha and in 1882, he was appointed Governor of Lebanon. Although often far from his country, P. Vasa was closely linked with the movement for national liberation. In 1864, together with other patriots



who resided in Istanbul, he was at the head of the struggle for the foundation of a patriotic cultural society and the establishment of a unique Albanian alphabet, on whose basis the Albanian language would be written. In 1878, he published in Istanbul the booklet in French, entitled «The Latin Alphabet Adapted to Albanian». The book «The Truth About Albania And the Albanians», which appeared in Paris and Berlin in 1879, was an important contribution to the defence of the rights of the Albanian people and to making known the demands of the Albanian patriotic movement to the foreign public opinion. In literature, Pashko Vasa made a name for himself with the verse «O Albania, poor Albania», one of the most popular poetic creation of the period of National Renaissance. Published in the form of a flying paper in the years 1878-1880, the verse sounded as a strong appeal to the Albanians to wake up and unite under the idea of the liberation of the country. With bitter words the poet speaks of the wretched situation in which the country groaned, the religious or local divisions the enemies of Albania fanned up to split the Albanians.

Awake, Albanians, from age-long slumber,  
on church and mosque rely no longer,  
you owe no duty to priest and pope,  
To love your country is your only hope.

«The religion of the Albanian is the Albanian cause» — this became the militant motto for the unity of all Albanians at that time.

P. Vasa wrote in French «Bardha of Temal» (1890), a novel of a sentimental and melo-dramatic character, in which he depicts a patriarchal environment where strict customs and powerful passions mix with each other. He wrote in Italian «Roses and Thorns» (1873), which is a collection of lyric verses pervaded by the longing for the country and hatred for the foreign invaders.

Filip Shiroka (1859-1935) is known as the poet of the longing for the Homeland. His verses are characterized by a spirit of slight nostalgia, the spontaneity of the line and notes of clear lyricism. The minor elegiac spirit is due to the poet's life, who, since very young, after the events of 1878-1881 in Albania, is obliged to leave the Homeland and settle first in Egypt, then in Lebanon. In the course of his more than 50 years of exile he saw the Homeland very rarely. Shiroka wrote his poems within a short time, in the years 1895-1903, and collected them only in 1933, in the book «The Heart's Voice». The poems «The Verse-Writer» and «The Beauty of the Verse» although dealing with the role and place of poetry, convey the love of the author for the Homeland. According to him, poetry, as the expression of the life of the nation, must render its contribution to the efforts for the liberation of the Homeland. Addressing, the poet Shiroka says:

And should the country be in danger  
From any foe, your own or stranger  
Brave mothers shall arm their own sons...

The struggle of the masses of the people in defence of Ulqin from the Monte Negro chauvinists in 1880 inspired the patriotic enthusiasm of the poet, who wrote in Italian the verse «Albania Take up Arms» («All' Albania, all'armi»), a true clarion call for war to the compatriots for the defence of the Homeland from the predatory aims of the neighbouring chauvinists.

F. Shiroka wrote the poems «To the Man», «Gjergj Kastrioti» and «At Scanderbeg's Grave», which take their themes from the distant past and Scanderbeg's heroic deeds. Evoking the glorious years of the XVth century, the poet expressed his ardent love for the Homeland. Shiroka tried to arouse in his compatriots the pride for the past of the Homeland and the confidence that the day of the liberation of the Homeland is not far.

Once more in Albania the sun of freedom shall shine,  
Kastrioti's sons won't let their country down



In order to ensure the liberation of the Homeland it was necessary for all Albanians to unite, irrespective of differences in religion or district. In a series of verses («A Dream», «On the Grave of a Greek maniac», «Love for the Homeland», «How the Albanian Language Is Deteriorating» etc.), the poet stigmatizes all the enemies of the Albanian national question, the Greek maniacs and the Turkish maniacs, who let no stone unturned to weaken the national movement and divide the Albanians. At the same time, the poet ironized also those Albanians who let themselves be caught into the snares of the enemies' propaganda. «They are not of my breed», says the poet with disgust. He also condemns harshly those who looked down upon the mother tongue inserting in it many foreign words.

The most popular creation of F. Shiroka is the verse «Go Swallow» (1895), and «Come Swallow», in which with a moving artistic force, the poet from afar in a foreign country expresses his ardent longing for the Homeland. The lines in which he evoked the time of his youth, his home, the dead parents, the beautiful nature of his native country, have an exceptional penetrating force and warmth. In the poet's imagination, the Homeland appears in moving lyric colours but in a somewhat idealized spirit.

The grass in spring time's fresh and green,  
The fleece of the flock is white and clean,  
The shepherdess is softly singing.  
Around her, playful lambs are bleating.  
In Shkodra town, where I was born,  
The men are bold and fearless,  
The girls their innocence adorn  
With grace and beauty peerless,  
Thither my fancy takes its flight  
To Shkodra gay and bright.

By virtue of its sincerity and power of expression of the longing for the Homeland, this poem entered all

the antologies of the Albanian literature and school books. It is one of the most beautiful creations of the poetry of National Renaissance.

**Luigj Gurakuqi** (1879-1925) was one of the prominent active members of the struggle for the liberation and economic and social progress of the country, a statesman, publicist and distinguished orator. Besides politics, his other passion was poetry, and his activity in this field continued up till 1907. He wrote verses after various motifs as for example: the ardent love for the Homeland, the stigmatization of all those who looked down upon the mother tongue, the call to unite, the lauding of braves who did not yield to difficulties.

The first verse of L. Gurakuqi bears the title «Answer to Gegë Postripa», which as can be inferred from the title, is an answer to the known verse of F. Shiroka «Go Swallow». This poem describes realistically the grave situation of Albania at the end of the XIXth century. With pity, the poet speaks of the various divisions and backward customs which hampered the unity of the Albanians against the foreign invaders.

The historic past of the country and the outstanding people who sacrificed themselves for the Homeland are depicted in L. Gurakuqi's poems as the embodiment of true patriotism, «Song», «The Day of 29 October, 1900»). In the poem «I Honour You, Kosova Compatriot», which is dedicated to Mati Logoreci, one of the tireless workers of education of that time, the poet ridicules those short-sighted Albanians, who after having visited some capital of Europe, or learnt a foreign language, spoke disdainfully of everything Albanian, ignored the beautiful traditions of the Homeland, the mother tongue which they used mixing it with foreign words.

The best of L. Gurakuqi's poems is regarded the poem «Resistance», in which he evokes courage and strong character, the persistence to realize one's lofty ideals in life. This verse remained an ardent call of the poet to the



young people to be brave and unflinching in face of difficulties:

This life, indeed, is full of disenchantment,  
of painful struggle, sorrow, disappointment,  
Like fire of straw all laudable intent  
No sooner is ablaze than spent.  
Your single high purpose gives you resistance  
And keeps your heart strong,  
If failures and setbacks you counter with patience  
You'll never go wrong.

These words were aimed to give heart to the young people, telling them that the national problem is the most lofty ideal of one's life.

L. Gurakuqi wrote also some verses after intimate motifs as for example "The Black Headed Birdie", "The Memoirs of the Beloved".

Educated after the examples of classical literature, a man with a vast literary culture, L. Gurakuqi used careful and accurate expressions, a rich and pure language. L. Gurakuqi published also a metric treaty "Versing in Albanian" (1904), in which for the first time he made some efforts to codify the Albanian metrics.

**Aleks Stavre Drenova (1872-1947)** Aleks Stavre Drenova, known in the first years of the XXth century under his penname Asdren, holds an important place in the Albanian poetry. Among Asdren's poetic creations of the first period are a number of verses in which he sings to the Homeland in high tones and expresses his admiration for the beauty of the nature of the country ("I Want", "Desire", "To Albania", etc.)

The country is in its full beauty,  
The earth is yielding golden bounty,  
The sun is shining brightly,

The moon is smiling kindly,  
A land of fairy revelry,  
of knights and deeds of chivalry,

writes the poet in a burst of feelings that make him sometimes idealize Albania of that time. In these lines and some other verses, the poet's patriotic ideal for a beautiful and flourishing Albania found full expression. The poet sought this ideal in the heroic past when Albania lived free and united in face of the dangers posed by the enemies ("To Kruja", "Scanderbeg's Sword", "Scanderbeg's Last Night", "To Ali Pasha Tepelana" etc.). By evoking the patriotism and efforts of the distinguished figures of our national history for the benefit of the Homeland, the poet called on his compatriots to follow their example.

An ardent patriot, who had made the liberation of the Homeland the ideal of his life, the poet thought that the duty of every Albanian was to serve the Homeland and the people. The idea of the efforts and sacrifices to be done to liberate the Homeland and win national independence pervade the majority of these works full of fire and militant spirit. Asdren reminded his compatriots of the responsibility history had charged them with. He pointed out that the liberation of the Homeland would be achieved only if all Albanians waked up and united for the benefit of the country. ("Our Situation", "Address"). With a view to attain this goal, Asdren did not hesitate to touch them in their pride, reprimand those who let themselves be deceived by the enemy propaganda. The characteristic feature of Asdren's verses was his optimism in the future of Albania, his strong belief in the patriotism of the Albanian people, his conviction in the justice of the Albanian national questions.

When the national movement rose to a new height and the wave of the uprising was rapidly spreading both to the North and to the South, Asdren's creativeness assumed a new content. To this period belong "the Voice of the Uprisers", "To the Treacherous Chiefs", "The



Reward», etc., which hold an important place in the Albanian literature. In his works Asdreni reflected the most important event of the time—the determined struggle of the popular masses for the liberation of the country from the most advanced political positions of his time. The idea that the rank and file, the poor people are the pivot of resistance to Turkish occupiers is the central idea of these creations. At the same time, he strongly stigmatizes the indifference of the nobility top strata in regard to the national question. Contrary to the egoism of the big bourgeoisie who cared only about its own affairs and pleasures, at a time when the upsurge of the liberation struggle had swept over the country, in the verse «The Voice of the Uprisers», the poet evokes the poor people, for in them he saw the carriers of sincere and unflinching patriotism. The splendour of the high patriotic act of the Highlanders is realistically felt in their words that for the sake of freedom they «abandoned their fireplace and home— taking shelter in the «caves, holes, mountains», and despite their being badly dressed and hungry they were determined not to give way to the enemy:

While we shed streams of blood, you gain health,  
While we face fearful death, you harvest wealth.

These words of the uprisers were the severest indictment to be brought against the rich, who in those difficult moments took care only of their narrow class interests. The greedy and egoistic rich were attacked even more fiercely by the poet in his verse «To the Treacherous Chiefs», written in 1912, but which was not published. To these people, the poet showed his deepest hatred and warned them to cease their disruptive activity, otherwise the popular vengeance would come down upon them mercilessly.

In his verse «The Reward» (1912), he narrates the tragic fate of a patriotic fighter, who gave everything for the liberation of the Homeland and for this the nobility awarded him only ingratitude and scorn.

His severe criticism of the egoism of the rich classes, levelled from firm democratic positions, made him take a realistic stand. From his patriotic enthusiasm, romantic pathos, Asdren passed on to the presentation of the social characters of the epoch in typical circumstances. His objective to present typical phenomena and characters brought about qualitative changes in the poetic spirit and style of his verses, which assume realistic tendencies.

Unlike many contemporary poets, Asdren stands out for a variety of motifs and ideas. If we go through his works, we will see that side by side with the patriot who calls for war against the foreign bondage, the figure of a honest man rises, who suffers spiritually at seeing the deterioration of the society as a consequence of the great role of the money and the vile deeds people do in order to gain money. Disappointment at and discontent from the social reality, lack of confidence in the possibilities of a better arrangement of society, the notes of sadness and pessimism, these are characteristic of the lyric hero in many of Asdren's poems:

Why should men in endless squabbles,  
Waste their lives and cause much pain?  
The world could do without its troubles  
If all pursued an honest aim?

Asks the poet in sheer naivety. But, however, one cannot fail to see that although he lacked a clear understanding of the laws of the development of society, in some poems, Asdren realized the right cause of disharmony and disagreements characterizing the relations among people in a class society. It is the thirst for money, to use it as a means of rule over the others, the reason that urges people to «kill and steal shamelessly».

In a number of poems, Asdren sang to love as one of the greatest pleasures of life. In general, Asdren's love lyrics are simple regarding their content and form, they never within a limited circle of motives. In most cases the poet expresses his admiration for the girl and tells her about his love («The Power of Love», «My Longing»



etc.). Time and again, the feelings of happy love alternate with a light sadness.

Asdren lived to be 75. This was a long life covering some of the most important events of the historic life of the people in the XXth century. The poet was lucky enough to see Albania liberated from the Turkish yoke. But just like many other patriots and democrats, Asdren had cherished the illusion that the ensurance of national independence would pave the way for the advance and flourishing of the Homeland and would bring about the improvement of the life of the common people. But life proved that this was only an illusion. The upper classes made use of the patriotism of the masses of the people to realize their aims. The key positions in the newly-founded Albanian state were occupied by the reactionary and anti-patriotic elements, former officials of the Ottoman Empire, many of whom had fought against the Albanian national cause. Mainly a lyric poet, this time he takes again the whip of satire and strikes these people remorselessly. To this period belong a number of satiric poems like, "Hymn to the Feast", "The Albanian Republic", "Patrimony", etc. In them, burst forth the poet's indignation and scorn for the old regressive social forces, who were trying to prop the Mediaval regime inherited from Turkey.

In one of the most important works of this period, "The Man of the Earth", the poet portrays the wretched life of the masses of the people under the heel of the boys, the dashing of their hopes to improve the plight they were in.

The strengthening of the reactionary anti-popular regime in the 20s and 30s increased Asdren's sorrow and motifs of despair, tiredness and pessimism, sometime even motifs of fatality and total submission to the reality pervade his creativeness more and more. This spirit determined the content of many of his poetical creations of that period. However, despite these creations, with his greatest sound creativeness, Asdren remained the poet who, up to the last beat of his heart, thought and fought for an Albania of the poor, "the peasant's sandals".

## POETS AND PROSE WRITERS OF THE LAST YEARS OF THE PERIOD OF NATIONAL RENAISSANCE

At the beginning of the XXth Century of the liberation movement appears a whole range of intellectuals, with progressive democratic views, who stood close to the masses of the people and considered them the main force of the struggle for the liberation of the country. These intellectuals tried to give the movement a revolutionary character, linking the cause of national liberation with the cause of the liberation of the peasantry and with the destruction of the mediaval anachronic social relations. Besides Asdren, among these intellectuals were M. Grameno, H. Mosi, R. Siliqi, etc.

**Mihal Grameno** (1872-1931) was born in Korça in the family of a small grosser. Having finished the elementary school, he set out for emigration, went to Rumania, where he took part in the Albanian patriotic movement, and very soon became one of its most active members. In 1907, when the first armed units begin to be set up, he returns to the Homeland and takes to the mountains to fight, arm in hand, against the Turkish occupiers. After 1908, he carried out a vast work as a publicist. From 1908 to 1924, he runs such organs as, "The Orthodox League" and "The Time"; he writes articles also for other organs. A special characteristic of his journalistic articles is the pronounced democratic spirit, expressed in the fierce principled struggle he waged against the enemies of the Homeland, in his fiery defence of the interests of the democratic strata of the town and countryside. At the beginning of the XXth Century, he severely attacked the Turkish occupiers, as well as the pro-Greek maniacs, tools in the hands of the enemies of Albania. The writer did not spare his sarcasm against the pseudo-patriots from the



ranks of the feudal class who, when the day of liberation from the Ottoman bondage was approaching, became ready to occupy the main posts in the new national Albanian state. «Do not suppose Albania will become a little Turkey and the past will repeat itself! No, never!» — says the poet to those people. As for M. Grameno, the sound force on which the development and progress of the country depend are the popular masses, who have always been trying for the benefit of the Homeland. «Have confidence in the poor, and the barefooted, for they are the future of the Albanian nation». M. Grameno was the first in the Albanian democratic press to ardently hail the Great October Socialist Revolution and pointed out its great significance to the liberation struggle of the peoples. «Lenin fights not only for the freedom of the Russian people, but also of the whole world, so that everybody lives free and never become a slave», wrote M. Grameno in 1921.

M. Grameno has his place in the Albanian literature as the author of patriotic songs which were very popular at the beginning of the XXth Century («For the Homeland», «The Blessing of Freedom», «Farewell», etc.). The lyric hero of these verses is the patriot youth who has taken up arms and is calling on his friends to follow his example.

For motherland, for motherland  
Raise the red banner high  
Rush boldly in battle, arms in hand  
And fight to win or die.

Most important was his contributions as an author of short stories from the Albanian life, which rank him among the founders of the Albanian prose. In the story «The Chimney», he narrates the history of the love between Malo, the son a bey, and a poor peasant girl, Vehide. Their marriage meets with the flat opposition of Malo's father, Rushan Bey. After many hardly convincing vicissitudes, in the end the youths marry each other. The

writer criticizes the obstacles social inequality raises to prevent the union of two people in love. The author's stand is embodied in the presentation of Rushan Bey as a phanatical defender of backward customs. Blind with social prejudices, he does not stop even before crimes against the couple in love. But the end of the drama tones down. Rushan Bey repents for what he did, and in the end he approves of this marriage. In the story «The Kiss», we learn of the melo-dramatic story of two people in love who, for lack of money, cannot get married. Miti, the main hero of the story, sets out for emigration to win some money, but in exile he goes to the dogs and forgets his beloved. His sweet-heart hears of this and having waited for him 7 years, she makes up her mind to marry another man. Repenting what he did, MITI turns home to ask forgiveness from his sweet-heart. It was precisely the day of her marriage. The girl murders herself, Miti dies over her body. With the short story «The Grave of Bapism», the writer attacks the anti-Albanian and inhuman deeds of the Greek maniac clergy who stop at nothing to force people to deny their nationality.

M. Grameno has written also two dramas: «The Curse of the Albanian Language» (1905) and «The Death of Pirro» (1906). In the first, the poet deals with the spreading of the Albanian language in struggle against the Greek maniac elements; the truthful description of the environment alternates with sentimental scenes, where there are some melo-dramatic notes. Whereas «The Death of Pirro» takes its subject from the ancient historic past; it narrates the end of Pirro after his triumphant return from his battles against Rome. The author tries to expound the idea of the antiquity of the Albanian people and the idea that since the ancient times Albanians were organized in a united state, echoed the efforts of the patriots to strengthen the national consciousness of the Albanians. M. Grameno's plays although naive and shallow, had not only an educational significance but also literary-historic importance, for they paved the way for the development of the Albanian drama.



Just as M. Grameno, L. Gurakuqi and other contemporary authors, Hil Mosi, too, (1885-1933) was a man of action. He took part in the National movement since at an early age, when a pupil at a secondary school in Austria. In 1908, he returns to Albania to carry out a broader patriotic activity. He organized patriotic societies, and still in this year participated in the Manastir Congress which discussed the question of a unified alphabet, on the basis of which, Albanian language was to be written. During the years 1909-1910, he was in Korça, where he created the «Vilazëria» Sports Association, with many young patriots participating. Five of the best members of this society fell as freedom-fighters in the field of honour in 1911. In the same year, Hil Mosi participated arms in hand in the insurrection of Malësia e Madhe in the Northern Albania against the Turkish occupiers.

His work as a poet is closely connected with the activity he carried out in the political field. The ardent love for the Homeland, the close ties with the native land, are among the main motifs of his patriotic lyrics. In many of his creations the poet sings to his birthplace with moving notes, he evokes the joyful years of childhood, delineates the nature of the Homeland, gives vent to his ardent love for the Homeland.

In some works, H. Mosi recalls «the fierce battles of Scanderbeg» and expresses «his readiness to go to fight for the salvation of the Homeland the soonest possible».

Mother Albania, to you I swear  
To never falter or retreat,  
High your banner in battle to bear...

In the fire of battle I'll never fear  
To die for you, mother Albania.

The war cry is felt more strongly especially in the poems «The Call» and «Let's Lay Down our Lives», which seen from the artistic point of view, are among

the best, full of fighting spirit. Many of the works of Mosi of that period sound like insurgent marches and hymns. Such verses as «To the Homeland», «To Our Fighters», «The Mashkullori», «The Song of the Society», «Brotherhood» etc. are some of the best works of his patriotic lyrics. They are songs dedicated to the distinguished patriots, Bajram Curri, Isa Boletini and Çerçiz Topulli, to the martyrs of the Orman Çiflig, to Spiro Bellkameni and other fighters in the freedom units. Some particular work of his, such as that eulogizing the manly death of a fighter of the Ç. Topulli unit was made into a song which became very popular.

Many of his works are based on the poet's own impressions and experience in the Malësia e Madhe uprising. The poet eulogized the patriotism of the courageous highlanders, who in spite of many privations and shortages did not yield to the enemy and he expressed his confidence in the liberation of the country («The Flames of War», «At Dinosa's Mansion», «The Outlaw», «To the Homeland in Flames» etc.).

And should this year some of our things go wrong,  
No one should fear Albania's days are over,  
With spring time back, the mountain will give us cover.

These verses reflect the staunch determination of the courageous highlanders not to abandon their weapons until winning freedom.

Two volumes of love lyrics belong to Mosi's pen: «Tears of Love» (1915) and «Flowers of Spring» (1927). In these poems one can find felt verses full of sincerity, which sing to the joy happy love brings, to the joyful feelings and hopes of youth, etc. H. Mosi carried out a valuable work to acquaint the Albanian reader with works of distinguished foreign writers. He adapted love lyrics from Goethe, Schiller, Lessing, Uhland, Coerner as well as the dramas «The Robbers» by Schiller, «Filia» by Coerner, «The Servant of the Two Lords» and «The Two Servants» by Goldoni.



**Risto Siliqi** (1882-1936) was also a man of action. Young as he was, Siliqi had to emigrate because he was active in the patriotic movement. In 1911, we see him arm in hand in the Malësia e Madhe uprising, the main events of which he described in his book *«Mirror of the Bloody Days»* (1912). Later on he also took an active part in the political life of the country and together with H. Mosi published the *«Shqypnia e Re (New Albania)»* newspaper (1913-1914), where he defends the rights of the Albanian people. In 1915, he took part in the defence of the city of Shkodra from the predatory ends of the invaders of the Montenegro forces.

Besides the chronicle of the 1911 uprising, R. Siliqi wrote a number of verses which draw their theme from the events of this uprising. They affirm the lofty patriotism of the people's masses, who being well aware of the sacrifices required courageously fought against the Turkish invaders and displayed acts of rare bravery. In the verse *«Mehmet Shpendi»* we see the monumental figure of one of the well-known leaders of the 1911 uprising; the hero is described as hurling himself on the Turkish invaders like an eagle from the crags. In *«Our Fighter»*, the poet gave a general picture of the popular fighters who defended the freedom of the Homeland and wavered an unceasing war to oust the enemy although victory did not always beam on them. They fell in the field of honour as men do, leaving behind orphans to the mercy of fate. The fact that the history of the proud mountaineers which has been characterized by continuous efforts and unprecedented sacrifices has been an heroic history forms the idea the author confirms in the verse *«Our Fighter»*.

The short poem *«Mrika-an Object of Scandal»*, is one of the finest works of the Albanian literature of that period. The theme it treats and the high artistic level of the poem make it of special importance in the literature of that period. Through the tragic story of a young girl from the highlands who had to pay for her *«error»* of yielding herself to the pleasures of life with her own

life, the author showed the cruelty of the patriarchal customs which denied people the right to love. As a realistic work, *«Mrika an Object of Scandal»* is a work of importance as it contributed to social problems and it holds their place in the Albanian literature.

**Milto Sotir Gurra** (1884-1972) is an author of moving short stories and sketches often of naive and didactic notes about the hard life of the Albanian emigrants in foreign countries. The writer presents emigration as a great tragedy making the life of hundreds of people miserable, depriving them even of that small happiness, life in the poor southern regions of Albania could provide. The short story *«The Mother»* shows how emigration destroys families and makes people live a life of anxiety. Loneliness, the miserable and unhappy life of the families of the emigrants is the theme of the short stories *«The Death of Mara»* and *«The Belated Cheque»*, where the author shows how the dreams of the poor families who sent their sons away to remote countries in the hope of overcoming poverty, were not realized. The hero of the short story *«The Belated Cheque»* goes to America in the hope of making some money and coming back home as soon as possible. But the cruel reality of the capitalist world foiled his plans; only after some years could he save some money but it was too late, because his mother has been deprived of her house which she had mortgaged at the usurer's to pay her son's fare. In a number of sketches (such as *«Love After Death»* etc.), M.S. Gurra depicted life in the big cities, how the light and base pleasures there ruined many young emigrants. Many sketches depict the daily life of the poor of the cities, the efforts of common people to earn their daily bread, their hopes, dreams and desires.

Although simple in character and at times permeated by a naive sentimental note, the writings of M.S. Gurra are of certain importance as for their democratic spirit and instructive values.



## THE ARBËRESH LITERATURE

The 19th century found the Arbëreshi literature in the course of a new development, which was determined by the upsurge of the Italian bourgeois-liberation movement, and by the new, higher stage of the patriotic movement in Albania at that time, with which the Arbëreshi men of culture and Arbëreshi writers had close contacts.

Like all the masses of the people in South Italy, the Arbëreshi, too, suffered not only from the feudal exploitation but they languished under the savage political yoke, too. Therefore, they embraced freedom-loving ideas, the ideas of the struggle against absolutism and tyranny which spread in Europe after the French revolution of 1789. The Arbëreshi were at the head of the revolutionary movements, of the insurgent plots and actions which characterized the social life in those poor and backward regions of South Italy during the entire second half of the 19th century, until the creation of the unified Italian state. They fought side by side with the carbonaris, took part in the revolution of 1848 and we find them in the ranks of Garibaldi. In this atmosphere romanticism developed in the Arbëresh literature inspired by the enthusiasm of the struggle for freedom and the dream of a better future. It embraced the Arbëreshi society in the first half of the 19th century.

In the new historic-social conditions the longing for Albania, the memory of the glorious epoch of Scanderbeg, which were kept alive in the Arbëresh folklore, became the main source wherefrom the Arbëresh writers drew out the chief motifs for their poetical works. This responded not only to the love of the Arbëreshi of Italy for the homeland of their ancestors, but also to their freedom-loving spirit and boiling hatred against the despotism of foreign oppressors. These themes found their poetical embodiment in the well-known poems of J. De Rada, G. Dara Jr., in some inspired lyric poems of Z. Serembe, in the works of A. Santori and in the writings

of a series of minor authors. Alongside these works, there are found creations which describe the life of the Arbëreshi, raise sharp social problems, such as the hard living conditions, the great poverty of the Arbëreshi rank and file, their discontent towards the reality of the feudal society and later on towards the bourgeois society. The works of A. Santori, Z. Serembe, V. Stratigoi, etc., described the Arbëreshi village and the hard life of the common people at that time. The Arbëreshi authors of the 19th century gave preference to lyrics, in the broad meaning of the word, as an expression of the poet's thoughts, which generalize the phenomena of life. Hence, the cultivation of lyric-epic genres, like the lyric-epic poems, of the verses of lyric content, the balads, etc. The other genres were less developed, some drama came out and prose was represented only by the works of publicistics.

**Jeronim De Rada** (1814-1903). J. De Rada is the figure which dominated the entire Arbëreshi literature of the second half of the 19th century and one of the distinguished representatives of the Albanian literature of the National Renaissance. When young, he read a lot, became acquainted with the ancient authors. He had a liking for Shakespeare, Goethe, Calderon, but he was passionately drawn especially by the romantic authors of the time like V. Hugo, U. Foscolo and others. Just like many romantic poets he showed interest in folklore, gathered old lyrical and epic songs sang by the village old women and maidens. Many years later, in 1886, he would publish a collection of folk songs -Rhapsodies of an Arbëreshi Poem- («Rapsodie di un Poem Albanes»), which occupies a worthy place in the history of Albanian folklore. Folklore helped De Rada to form his poetical personality.

The historic past of the Homeland of his encestors, which bred in him the hope that Albania would revive and live again free and independent, appealed to De Rada. The interest he took in the character and historic events



of the past, led the poet into writing epic poems which gave excess to a broader portray of the past. His first work, although having as its subject the Albanian life of the XV Century in the background, is not a real representation of the medieval Albanian life; it lacks the aristocratic surrounding with its characteristic features making up the historic colouring of the time.

And soon he found himself engaged in poetry. His first poem «Milosao» (1836) especially its two first songs were written under the influence of popular poetry. The young poet drew the subject for this work from the Albanian life of the 15th century. It is the story of Milosao, the son of the Shkodra ruler, with a common peasant girl, Rina. The idyl takes place in a joyous atmosphere, which the author managed to depict through a spontaneous pure lyricism, aroused by the emotional lyric descriptions. The chats at the village fountain, the secret meetings and people spying on them that upset the maiden, all these things give the impression of a sentimental work, moreover so, because it depicts the sincere love not realized due to social inequality, a characteristic theme for this literature. (Milosao's mother, an aristocrat, does not allow her son marry a poor girl, in spite of her virtues. But the love which wins over social inequality is not the only poetical concept the author evolves in his work. The direction the story takes brings out another idea in the poem. Once his mother was against Milosao's love, telling him that he had forgotten his duty to the homeland. Years pass, Milosao's child dies, his wife cannot bear the misfortune and dies also out of despair. Milosao is alone, deeply grieved and unconsolated. He recalls his mother, who had not agreed to his love, telling him, besides other things, that he had forgotten his duty to the homeland for his own happiness. He considers the misfortune that had befallen him as a condemnation, therefore, he responds to the first call of the homeland and goes to war to fight against the foreigners where he bravely falls down in the battlefield. «Milosao» was the work of the poet's youth; it is distinguished for its spontaneity of inspiration,

delicate lyricism and the ability to describe the sorrows of human heart.

In the poem «Serafina Topia» (1839), whose subject is taken from events of the 15th century, when the Albanian people fought with unprecedented bravery under the leadership of Scanderbeg against the foreign occupiers, the author evolves comprehensively the idea of placing the interests of the homeland above everything. This idea, very actual at the time, is developed in the poem through the story of the love of Serafina, an imaginary Albanian princess from Southern Albania with the brave fighter Bosdar Stresi, a love finding the disapproval of Serafina's parents because of the enmity existing between the two families. The description of the worries of the two youths occupies the main place in the poem, which is fragmentary and somewhat obscure with a course of action lacking cohesion. Discontented with this work and pushed by desire to improve it, the poet reworked it twice, once in 1843 and later in 1898. The latter which appeared under another title «A Description of Human Life», is the most complete variant of the poem «Serafina Topia». This work depicts with great force and clarity the sacrificing of personal interests and sentiments for the duty to the homeland. This poem, too, draws its subject from the story of the unlucky love of Serafina with Bosdar Stresi, but, unlike the first variant, in «A Description of Human Life», the love finds refusal by the girl's parents not for the old enmity existing between the two families rather than patriotic reasons. According to the opinion of Serafina's father what caused great damage to Albania was the disruption among the chieftains, therefore, he decides to marry his daughter with the offspring of a royal family with influence in Northern Albania, Nikolla Dukagjini, helping in this way to strengthen the unity of Albanians. In conformity with this poetical concept, the author gave new colours to the figure of Serafina, in whose consciousness becomes rooted the idea of sacrificing her feeling before the altar for the interests of the homeland. This pushes her to obey the will of her parents



and sacrifice her own happiness for the interests of the homeland. Serafina is an Albanian girl, who is compelled to lower her head before the strict customs of the patriarchal life and shut her pure love deeply into her heart. In her character finds embodiment the ideal of the writer that, before the interests of the homeland, personal feelings, personal happiness are worthless. At the same time, describing Serafina with all the good qualities, deep thoughts and a great wealth of feelings, the author aimed to embody in her his ideal of human personality evolved in a complete and all-sided way. Unlike Serafina, Bosdar does not agree with his destiny, the loss of love causes him a deep spiritual wound which time could not cure. With the passing of years his spirit dries and he turns a cruel man. But, alongside the unlucky romantic hero, we find in him the fighter for the freedom of the homeland, though this peculiarity is not a main feature in his character.

The author has described a great number of characters in the poem, most of whom stress its patriotic idea. Well depicted are, Radavan, a brave courageous fighter, clashing with the Turkish occupiers and who always comes victorious over them; Astrit who kills the Turkish Irart in a bold duel and later is captured and jailed for the rest of his life. The author has reflected the idea of the union of all Albanians in struggle against the Turkish invaders also in some episodic characters, part of which are historic personages such as Scanderbeg, Lekë Dukagjini, Vrana Koni, and other Albanian princes. On the poem we find also representatives of the common people, who are described as carriers of the resolute and sincere patriotism.

"The Unlucky Scanderbeg" (1884) is the poetical work of De Rada, on which he worked hard from 1837 until 1879 to give a general panorama of Albania of the 15th century, to describe the Albanian life of that period in the political, social and the family aspects, to reflect not only heroic fighting battles but also personal dramas. The epoch of Scanderbeg has found original expression in this work. The history and legend, the real fact entangle

in a harmonious way, alternating and completing one another. Really, like many other contemporary writers, De Rada could not avoid a certain idealism of the historic epoch he reflected, but, nevertheless he managed to depict that special epic force which constituted the essence and the content of the Albanian history of the 15th century: the heroic spirit and ardent patriotism. The poet wanted to describe the resistance of the Albanian people against the foreign invaders, their indomitable spirit before the danger facing them, to tell about the numerous facts of individual and mass heroism, such as the description of the Shkodra battle, the scene when Astrit kills the Turkish pasha and the scene of Scanderbeg's fight with two Tatars, etc. The poem put the stress on those aspects and events which resounded the problems facing Albanian society of the 15th century. By describing the epoch of Scanderbeg, the author wanted to give an example to his compatriots and at the same time, by reflecting this situation, he wanted to express his worries about the most important problems confronting the Albanian national movement, such as the problem of the unity of the Albanians, the problem of leadership in war and the problem to find the ways to get rid of the Ottoman yoke. The poem depicts the Albanian people rising in war against the Turks as a single unity. Through the heroes and their actions, the poet pointed out their love for the homeland, their bravery and resistance. This is well depicted since the author has created characters from all social strata. Although the title suggests it, Scanderbeg is not the central figure of the poem but the symbol of the patriotism of the Albanian people, their unceasing freedom-loving spirit. Scanderbeg is given in some strokes of brush and embodies the ideal of the poet for a correct leadership which could unite the Albanians of the 19th century in struggle for freedom and independence. In describing Scanderbeg's outer appearance the poet is based on the legendary tradition. Through powerful hyperboles he outlines the bravery and the extraordinary physical strength of the hero, at the same time he aims at discovering his inner spiritual world and



tells about the inner impulses of his actions; the love for his homeland and people. The ardent patriotism of the Albanian people, their bravery are also embodied in the other heroes, such as Astrit, Radavan and the women, like Inota, who are distinguished for their force of character, stoicism and generosity.

The patriotic spirit of the poem appeared also in the condemnation of disruption among the feudal princes, of indifferentism of the aristocracy, who idled the time away and did not worry about the fate of the homeland, in the condemnation of the disloyalty and the disrupting rule of Venice, which made its utmost to weaken the Albanians. De Rada described the Turks as cruel, perfidious and morally degenerated, who brutally and barbarously fringe upon the most elementary moral human principles.

«The Unlucky Scanderbeg» helped the strengthening of the Albanian patriotic movement of the 19th century, by making a perfect description of the indomitable spirit and the patriotic spirit of the Albanians, the necessity for a unity without regional and social strata restrictions.

The poetical creations of De Rada are those of a great romantic poet. He has the merit of being the first to give the example of a national literature which sings to the past to eulogize national sentiments. The influence of De Rada on the Arbëreshi literature is very great, but his work is of importance for the entire Albanian literature. De Rada has helped the evocation of Scanderbeg and his period which occupy a significant place in the Albanian literature of National Renaissance.

*Gavril Dara the Junior* (1826-1885). He was born in a family in which the memory of the first homeland was kept alive and nourished with love generation after generation. The poet's grandfather, doctor in medicine and law, had been one of the first collectors of the Arbëreshi folklore, who had also written poems in Albanian. The father of Gavril Dara Jr., Andrea Dara, followed in the wake of the family tradition, contributing to the Albanian

language and literature through the collection of folklore and the publication of an «Albanian-Italian and Italian-Albanian dictionary». Thus, the future poet grew up in a tense patriotic atmosphere, which left deep impressions in his character and thinking. After he finished the higher studies in law, Gavril Dara Jr. successfully started the career of the advocate, at the same time taking an active part in the political life. It was the time when the liberation struggle of the Italian people was heading towards the realization of its aims. Garibaldi had succeeded in uniting the people of the regions of South Italy and driving out the foreign rulers. Dara was one of the regional leaders of the campaign of Garibaldi, member of the Revolutionary Committee of his home town, Girgenti. Later on, he was appointed to important government administrative posts in Sicily. After 1874, perhaps because he was disillusioned, he withdrew from politics and took to archaeology and studies in the field of philosophy.

Gavril Dara Jr. cultivated love poetry, he wrote many poems of patriotic and political character, but his most outstanding work is «The Last Lay of Bala», which was published posthumously in 1900. Just as De Rada, Gavril Dara Jr. drew the theme for his poetical work from the glorious years of Scanderbeg's period. The poem describes many events, the story of the love of a few couple and many characters act in it. In brief, here is the story of the poem: Nik Peta, Scanderbeg's fighter, leaves his country to win honour and glory in war. In his journey he meets another fighter, Pal Golemi. The road led them to the Lala town, Peloponesia, along the seashores. There, in a garden, the two young nights get acquainted with the daughter of the ruler of the Lala town, the pretty Mara. When the girl saw them, she told them that they should be proud of their arms not there among women, but in the field of men. Nik Peta responds with the bravery of the Albanians that both the Turks and the Lala people will soon learn about them. Truly enough a fight takes place the other day, where the Albanian fighters display their bravery. Mara fell in love with Nik



and saves her lover's life, when her father, in response to his proposition for marriage, perfidiously hatches up his death. Nik turns back to his homeland, resolute to fight to the end to defend his country. The news reaches him that Sultan has sent Ballaban Pasha to Lala to kidnap the beautiful Mara. With the permission of Scanderbeg, Nik Peta sets off to save his lover from the clutches of the Turk. By means of beautiful scenes the poet describes the fight. Nik Peta turns back to his country with his lover and marries her. The last part describes the bloody battle of Berat between the Albanians and the Turks. The Albanians fight bravely against the enemies. Mara dreams a bad dream, which makes her decide to set out together with her father-in-law to get news about her husband. They reach the battle field at the moment when the fighters were preparing to bury Nik Peta and Pal Golemi. This scene is depicted with great emotional force and rare plasticity.

She stared at us, then turned around  
And saw her man dead on the ground  
Her maiden cheeks grew pale, she screamed  
Upon the lifeless form she sank cold as snow...

Two graves are lying side by side  
At Valkal by the mountainside,  
An oak over Pal Golemi's tomb  
spreads boughs and dusky leaves of gloom

The other grave Nik Peta keeps,  
By him his uncle's daughter sleep,  
Their love was true to the last breath,  
It had not ceased after their death,

An apple tree there white and trim  
grows by a cypress tall and slim,  
They'll never dry, they'll never wither,  
They'll never die, unless together.

The importance of the poem does not lie only in the fact that the poet succeeded in giving an inspired

lyric story of the painful love of the youths. The patriotic theme occupies an important place in the poem. The main hero, Nik Peta, is not only equipped with the virtues of the night, but also with the characteristics of the fighter for the freedom of Albania. He never forgets his duty to his homeland and, whenever it is in need of him, he hurries and fights against the Turkish occupiers until he falls heroically on the battle field. The high moral figure of Nik Peta, his loyalty to the homeland is clearly given through his words to an old fighter for the freedom of Albania:

While Albania's flag still waves  
In the wind upon these hills  
While the stranger's steeds press hard  
And their neighing I still hear,  
Brave old captain of the guard,  
You shall find me standing here.

Mortally wounded, he does not feel sorry for «the young bridegroom» «to change the wedding for war» and «the songs for Valkal». He places love for the homeland above personal happiness and he feels himself proud to die in a glorious day: «in this glorious day, the day of our Arbër». At the last moments of his life, he says his last farewell to his comrades-in-arms and then to his mother and his wife.

The patriotic spirit has found embodiment also in the description of the struggle of the Albanians against the Turks, as well as in the figure of Scanderbeg, who although appears in some of the main scenes, is depicted by the poet just as history knows him, a wise leader, a great valiant, devoted to the people and their fighters, and merciless towards the enemies, always on guard of the freedom of the homeland. Love for the homeland, the freedom-loving spirit, bravery — these virtues distinguish also Scanderbeg's fellow-fighters.

The poem includes many beautiful pages which describe the characters and their feelings, nature in its various aspects. The poet masterfully describes dramatic



scenes. The poem is outstanding for its rich language, the well-found characters full of emotional spirit.

«The Last Lay of Bala» marked a step forward in the development of the Albanian poem. At the same time, through this work, Gavril Dara Ir. rendered a valuable contribution also by evoking the figure of Scanderbeg and his glorious epoch.

*Zef Serembe (1843-1901)* The patriotic cultural movement which developed among the Arbëreshi, was to Zef Serembe, just as to De Rada, G. Dara Ir. and other Arbëreshi writers, an inspiration which is felt throughout the best parts of his poetical creativeness. But Serembe was a lyric poet whose creations reflected the great problems of the time in an original way, his creations were sometimes optimistic and pervaded by a manly spirit, and at other times full of hopelessness.

Son of an active participant in the revolutionary movement in Calabria against the Burbons in 1848, since at an early age, Serembe was nourished with the love for freedom and hatred against political and social oppression and bondage. His early lyrics such as, «The Sea-farer», «For the Freedom of Venice», «Vigour», etc., express his desire for action. The verse «The Sea-farer» is permeated by the optimistic spirit. In it the poet declares with joy that he is starting for war.

You are crying!?  
Now, don't,  
Life is sport.  
Joy and woe pouring out,  
Our Homeland calls on us.

These are words he says to his sweet-heart in his native village. The content of the verse does not comply with the poet's life: the ballad is but a poetical vision, which reflects the desire of the poet for work and deeds. This eagerness to spend all his energies for his ideals emerges

also in the poem «To the Prettiest of Strigara», which as to its structure, reminds us of the ballad «The Sea-farer». Here, too, the poet imagines himself starting for war, where «blood oozed the ground like the fountain water». The war which the poet speaks about, is imagined in a broader scope than the struggle against the foreigners, who had occupied the country: as the struggle for the realization of the lofty humane ideals. The active optimistic spirit pervades the poem «For the Freedom of Venice» (1860). The participation of the Arbëresh in the voluntary forces of Garibaldi, their heroic acts in the battle-field, raise enthusiasm in the heart of the poet, hopes that the contribution of the Arbëresh to the liberation of Italy would urge them to think of Albania, too, and would make them devote themselves to the struggle for its liberation from the centuries-long slavery. He achieves this not only through evoking Scanderbeg's figure, whom the poet says, Garibaldi resembles so much with his fighting vigour, but also by voicing his confidence that the Arbëresh are a real force in the future struggle for the liberation of the Homeland of their forefathers.

Serembe is not alone in this war. In the poems, «To Domenico Mauri», «To the Death of Pietro Iriani», etc., he speaks enthusiastically about the men of actions and sacrifices he came to know. The poet rejoices over their deeds, which gave birth to his spiritual élan.

Great is my delight  
Today, my heart jumps with light,  
Everything on earth gives me joy.

These are some lines from the poem «To Mrs. Lena Gjika», dedicated to the distinguished woman-literary and publisher of Albanian origin, Dora d'Istria, who in the middle of the 19th century carried out a broad activity for the affirmation of the Albanian cause in the progressive European public opinion. With the figure of Domenico Mauri, an Arbëreshi activist, a participant in the revolutionary movement in South Italy, Serembe threw into



relief the features of the indomitable fighter, who stoically overcomes the obstacles on his way to reach the aim he has devoted himself to. In the verse «To the Death of Pietro Iriani», the poet extols the manly courage and unyielding stand in the struggle for the happiness of common people. He honours the memory of the outstanding Arbëreshi revolutionary militant:

Your word and deed honoured this land,  
You never worried, in silence waited  
For the prison, or any other punishment on hand.

The characteristic feature of the poet, the aspiration for freedom and hatred against despotism, is seen also in the poem «To Ali Tepelena», in which, though without denying the ruler of South Albania the courage to revolt against the Supreme Porte in the beginning of the 19th century, Serembe condemns him of his crimes and atrocities among the people as well as of the fact that he betrayed the hopes he raised among the people who saw in him the fighter for the independence of Albania.

In Serembe's creativeness, art and life are inseparable. This is evident in those early lyrics such as «Vigour», «Elegy», etc., which were permeated by the motif of loneliness and despair because he finds no field of action to employ his own forces. The poem «Vigour» is one of the first poems, which displayed with great clarity the dissatisfaction and the spiritual suffering of the poet, who complains of having to idle his days in boring passivity.

Charming birds in rapture singing,  
Fill my heart with bitter yearning,  
I waste my life in loneliness,  
In this land of wilderness,

accept the poet with regret. Source of Serembe's sufferings and his grief was the miserable state of the Albanian people. The poet reproaches the Arbëreshi severely, who «rest and sleep» at a time when Albania languished in a

humble state. The Homeland of the ancestors, Albania, which reminds the Arbëresh that they are foreigners in Italy, remains one of the principal motifs of the patriotic lyrics of Serembe. The poet's ardent love for Albania is declared clearly in «Elegy», which is one of the most beautiful lyrics, one of the masterpieces of the Albanian poetry and is highly emotional with an effort to probe deep into the innermost world of the lyric hero. This poem reveals clearly the reason for the profound unhappiness which is prevalent in the best part of Serembe's creativeness,

I regret I could not see  
My people happy and free,  
The sunbeams shining bright  
On villages gay and white,  
The peasants their crops enjoying,  
To nobody duty owing.

There was also another reason which gave birth to poet's pessimism and dissatisfaction: the cruel reality of the contemporary Italian society. Serembe lived in the period of bitter disillusion for the Italian and Arbëreshi democrats, who saw that their dreams did not turn true; the liberation and unification of Italy did not bring about the improvement of the situation among the popular masses of South Italy, which continued to live in great misery and ignorance. The gloom of the contemporary social life rendered the situation of the poet more tragic, who had it clear that there was no field of action to employ his energies. To these must be added also the woes and bitterness of his personal life. The chief motifs of his lyrics, «Fate», «Life», «After the Harvest», «The Singer and the Nightingale», «Life Is One Day», etc., are dissatisfaction, disillusion, and desperation. The poet complains,

Bad luck has me by the throat  
And ruined all my hopes,



whereas in another verse he says,

My heart is a seat of joy and sorrow.

Many of his lyrics have a pronounced autobiographical character; they are a rather vivid reflection of the spiritual ups and downs of the poet, who is full of noble aspirations for the life, who finds support no where and is a stranger to life and neglected by it. The motif of the tragic dreams and bitterness which fills the life of man, who from his boyhood has nourished many hopes and beautiful desires in his spirit, constitutes the leitmotif of many lyrics of Serembe and of some of his love songs, especially those of the last period, which carry the seal of spleen and tragic gloom. The whole life of this poet is a painful spiritual drama. In his youth, he was enamoured of an ordinary Arbëreshi peasant girl, who together with her family migrated to Brasil, where she died shortly after. This made Serembe very unhappy. In 1874 he leaves for Brasil, urged by his desire to see the tomb of his girl. Then he returned to his native place physically and morally destroyed, much despaired, and impoverished, and unconsolated. Being even more dissatisfied with the cruel reality of that time, again Serembe leaves Italy for South America. In 1897, we come to his trace in Buenos Aires in Argentine. His life came to an end as it seems when he was on the verge of insanity in Sao Paulo of Brasil in 1901. These tragic circumstances made the motif of happiness which love brings about, of the love as one of the sweetest delights of life which is prevalent in the first songs, «The Song of the First Love», «Her Face», «Gay Song», etc., be later replaced by the awareness that the personal happiness is impossible, a thing which hurled the poet into a profound pessimism. «Reminiscences» brought this spiritual condition forth with special emotional force,

And I sit lying as the broken guitar,  
Which has been badly tried,  
As a lonely sparrow poor me, I live,  
Quiet I am in the day, at night I cry.

Some poem of the last period carries a note of resignation and religious mysticism. Sorrows, however, did not break Serembe; they could not destroy his strong aspiration for justice and freedom. The assertion of the active life and great optimism remain fundamental characteristics of Serembe's work. Evidence of this is the publication of a flashing paper, a little before he died, of a variant of the poem he had written in his boyhood «To God», which is run through by the revolting spirit. The poet addresses protesting words to God:

Aren't Thou the emmensity of all?  
Moves not man and creature alive in yonder universe?  
Doth Thou not pain all us and sooth?

Serembe's drama is the drama of the ordinary man, with an uncertain life, who was a victim of the cruel capitalist reality and the vicissitudes of life, the drama of a sincere talented man, who saw with his own eyes the destruction of his noble ideals which inspired him.



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### III

## ALBANIAN LITERATURE OF 1920-1930

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The centuries-old struggle of the Albanian people against the foreign rule was crowned with the proclamation of independence on November 28, 1912. But although they won their freedom, the Albanian people found obstacles to build their independent life. Since its early days the new national state was faced with numerous difficulties. On the eve of the First World War as a result of foreign intervention and the stand of the feudal class, a grave situation was created in the country, a situation which became even worse during the years 1914-1918 when Albania became an arena of war between the belligerent forces and powers. Taking advantage of the circumstances, the imperialists and the chauvinist states set on putting their annexationist aims towards Albania into practice. When the First World War came to an end, the Italian imperialist circles and the chauvinist monarchies of the Balkans did not withdraw their armies from Albanian territory thus making clear their aims of getting hold of important regions of the country. This could not but give rise to the stern opposition of the patriots and masses of the people who in spite of the difficult and complicated internal and external situation of the country had never given up their efforts of defending the independence and territorial integrity of the Homeland. Convinced that they could achieve this independence and territorial integrity only through their own force, in the summer



of 1920, the Albanian people resolutely rose against the partition of the country, took up arms and after a period of stern fighting, ousted the Italian forces from their positions in Vlora and forced the armies of the chauvinist neighbouring states to withdraw from the regions they had occupied.

After the security of independence and territorial integrity, one of the main tasks was the abolition of feudal remnants and the application of a number of reforms of bourgeois character which would democratize and modernize the state apparatus and would ensure the economic and social development of the country. The big landlords and the old social forces, who had in their hands the political power, were stubbornly opposed to these measures the economic and social development of the country called for, as they didn't want their interests to be affected. This led to the exacerbation of the class contradictions in the country and to the deepening of the political struggle. The masses of the people and especially the poor peasantry with whose blood the liberation of the country had been won, rightly persevered in their demands for their bad living conditions to be improved and they rose up in struggle against the old social forces which posed an obstacle to the application of the economic and social reforms in the country. The democratic petty-bourgeois intellectuals, who stood at the head of the democratic movement which broke out in 1921-1924 in Albania, expressed the interests of the masses of the people and the poor peasantry. They carried on an important activity in the press organs of the time to spread the democratic ideology. So was formed a socially progressive public opinion which started to play a significant role in the life of the country. The bourgeois-democratic Revolution of June 1924, which brought to power the democratic government headed by Fan S. Noli, was the climax of the struggle between the democratic forces and the reactionary ones. But internal reaction, backed Yugoslavia and the big im-

perialist states, succeeded in overthrowing the democratic government and setting up a savage oppressive regime. A wave of reprisals and arrests spread throughout the country, destroying whole organizations and clubs which had become centres of the democratic movements. So monarchy was established in Albania, monarchy headed by Ahmet Zog, the representative of the big landlords, the rich bourgeoisie and the other reactionary forces.

The organs of democratic emigrants carried on the struggle against the bourgeois-landlord regime and inside the country the democratic movement started to revive at the beginning of the 30ies. At that time some new periodicals such as «Flaka» (1939), «Rilindja» (1934-1935), «Bota e Re» (1936-1937) etc. came out. Exploiting those few curtailed rights which were proclaimed in the middle of the 30ies, the democratic elements succeeded in carrying on a fruitful work through the pages of these periodicals for the exposure of the reactionary regime by putting much stress on the miserable situation of the country and criticizing the arbitrariness and abuse of the officials, the Ottoman outdated methods prevalent in the administrative apparatus of the time, etc.

The changes which took place in the life of the country and especially in the ideas of people were also reflected in literature. The opposite tendencies in literature which emerged at the beginning of the 19th century were now forming definite currents, which were represented not by certain individuals but by entire groups of persons, who were engaged in an open struggle with one another in theory as well as in their literary practice. So there developed two currents: the progressive current and the anti-popular reactionary current.

The new social and historical conditions imposed new features also on the progressive literature. Social problems were now the main subject of this literature. The writers concerned themselves with the miserable and difficult living conditions of the working masses, with the impact of the savage economic and political



oppression on their lives. But it wouldn't be fair to think that these problems were an entirely new topic for Albanian literature. As we saw above, there are short stories of Çajupi, Asdren, Mjeda etc. which deal with more than one social problem of the time. Many poems reflected the wishes and hopes of the common people for better days, they expressed their indignation against the perfidy and anti-patriotism of the higher classes. We find the social motifs also in the prose and drama of the period of the National Renaissance. However, they occupy a relatively minor position in the whole of the literature of that period which was permeated by the fervour of the struggle for national liberation. Albanian literature now truly entered a new stage of development when the progressive writers, with clearer ideas and aims treated the acute social problems emerging from the new conditions and circumstances of Albanian life on a large scale. And this was in the years 1920-1930. The literature of this period was permeated by the pathos of defending the working masses, by the democratic spirit. The ideals of those writers were formed in the political and social movement in the ranks of which they militated. They thought that the social life of the country should undergo deep changes, that the left-overs of the old social relations which had forced the working masses to a half-starving and gloomy life should be abolished, that conditions should be created for the economic, social and cultural development and progress of the country. Taking this stand, the progressive writers could not fail to see critically the social reality which was quite the opposite of their ideals. The critical spirit of literature led to the further confirmation of realism as a principle of the artistic reflection of life. The writers were now trying to go deeper into their characters and present the circumstances wherefrom they emerged more clearly. Gradually, they applied this principle in an ever more conscious way, and became the main advocates of the new literary tendency, critical realism, which began

to take shape in Albanian literature in the year 1930.

The realistic literature of that period had a very deep content. It realistically exposed the wounds of Albanian society, caused the all-round oppression by the anti-popular regime, it revealed the tragic life of the working masses, the heavy impact of the unjust social relations on people's characters, on their relations and lives. At the same time, it showed the fine characteristics hidden in the people, their love for work, their ardent aspirations for a free life and social justice.

With the content of this realistic literature being broadened, there came about in a natural way the elaboration of the previous principles and forms of presenting life and the emergence of new forms. Their laying bare of the difficult life of the people led to the evolution of the realistic short story and sketch, where expressive details and contrasts played a significant role. Migjeni, N. Bulka, S. Spasse, Dh. S. Shuteriqi and A. Varfi made the most notable achievements in this field. Their aim of creating strong characters gave vitality to the historical-romantic short story, a field where M. Kuteli and some other writers were distinguished. As far as the social content is concerned, the verse and the poem with scenes and conflicts taken from the social reality were closer to the short story. Noli and Migjeni in particular, as well as other young writers, K. Cepa, Sh. Musaraj, S. Asllani, Q. Stafa, V. Stafa, G. Pali were distinguished in this field. The reflection of the gloomy atmosphere of the time, of the demands and aspirations of the younger generation led to the emergence of the socio-psychological novel to the development of which H. Stërmilli and S. Spasse made a contribution. Following this, novels with a patriotic subject began to emerge (F. Postoli etc.). During this period, love and nature lyrics were notably developed and L. Poradeqi was especially distinguished in this field.

This progressive literature developed in an open struggle with the anti-popular literary currents which in a refined way came to the defence of the existing order. The clerical Catholic writers idealized the back-



ward life of the highlands with its patriarchal-tribal customs, they fought the new ways of social life, the democratic and materialist ideas, they preached the spirit of submission and obedience. The most well-known writers of this literature such as Gj. Fishta, V. Prenushi, A. Harapi etc. supported the ideological expansion of Italian fascism, thus, paving the way for the Italian aggression of April 7, 1939. The bourgeois writers were characterized by their tendency to avoid treating social problems, to conceal the sharp contradictions of the Albanian reality of the time, to prettify the exploiting classes. Some of them tried to retreat to the world of antiquity or flew up in the skies among fairies. (E. Haxhiademi), while others wrote about the cosy and spiritually poor life of the conservatory petty-bourgeois strata of the city of Shkodra and the bourgeois intellectuals (E. Koliqi).

In struggle against the anti-popular literature, the progressive writers defended the materialist aesthetics. They thought literature an important factor in the social life of the country and as such it should play its role. According to them, literature should reflect the main problems of society. «How many virgin subjects await their pen (of the writers — K.B.). Family tragedies, the reaction of old people against modernization, the mother cursing her daughter because she married a man of another religion, the peasant suffering from the crisis, the imprecations of the poor highlander upon the new world, upon the threat (the fascist invasion — K.B.) hanging over the Homeland, poverty, suffering, deception, perfidy, harshness and servilism which for us are the invention of this century 'without scruples and conscience', aren't all these», N. Bulka wrote, «virgin subjects awaiting the pen of the writers?» The progressive writers fought for a literature which would reflect life as it is, without embellishments and veneer.» «We should say the truth. We should be as realistic as possible.» wrote Dh. S. Shuteriqi. The progressive writers fought against outdated stale romanticism which repeated the

themes of Western literature of the beginning of the 19th century.

The analysis of the literary process of the years 1920-1930 in Albania makes us draw the conclusion that its content formed the progressive literature. The liberation movement against the bourgeois-landlord yoke charged the writers with the task of realistically reflecting the life of the working masses, their wishes and aspirations for social justice. Thanks to the efforts of these writers, the people took the place they deserved in literature, common people, who had for centuries been cruelly oppressed by the beys, the bairaktars, the Church and the Mosque, expressed themselves in the works of the progressive writers. This represented a notable phenomenon in literature, a great step forward in the development of the artistic consciousness of the Albanian people.

## FAN S. NOLI

(1882-1965)

In the history of Albanian culture Fan S. Noli occupies a distinguished position as a poet, publicist, orator, historian, musician, and translator of the masterpieces of world literature, as a man who made a valuable contribution to the treasury of the national culture of the Albanian people.

The first quarter of this century, when Noli carried on his chief political activity, was characterized by the



stepping up of the struggle against the beys as a social class along with the struggle in defence of national independence and territorial integrity of the Homeland against the dangers threatening it. It was not only after November 28, 1912, still under the wing of the Sultans, that the Albanian beys sold out the freedom and independence recently won through the blood and sacrifices of the people, but this helped to make it clearer that without abolishing the left-overs of the medieval feudal relations on which the economic and political rule of the Albanian land-owners was based, neither the national independence nor the territorial integrity of the Homeland or the establishment of a progressive political and social regime, which would turn Albania into a country as the distinguished activists of the Albanian Renaissance had expected, could be secured. The Albanian patriots had always seen the overthrow of the foreign yoke as something which would pave the way to the economic development and social cultural progress of the country. At the same time, they saw that the land-owner class constituted an obstacle to their achievement.

Fan S. Noli was among those activists who understood this great historical truth. Son of the poor, he was a sworn enemy of the old social forces which had oppressed the people and kept it in darkness. In the years 1921-1924, with his powerful speech, overwhelming logic and talent of a distinguished orator, Noli rose against the class in power, the beys and land-owners. His speeches at parliament as a deputy elected by the people's masses and his practical activity at that time contributed to the strengthening of the Albanian democratic movement. His notable features as a statesman, the resolute struggle he waged against the old social forces of obscurantism, his advanced political programme concerning the development of the country, the sympathy and popularity he enjoyed among the broad masses of the people quickly brought him at the head of the general anti-feudal democratic movement. As the Prime-Minister of the

first democratic government which was formed out of the bourgeois-democratic revolution of June 1924, F.S. Noli made efforts to lead the country on to the road of democracy, economic, social and cultural progress. But his long-cherished dream of seeing Albania as he said, «a civilized European state, a rich, properly governed, orderly state with its own laws, to the benefit of the people and not to the foreigners or to the interest of the intriguing blood-thirsty sheriffs,» was not realized at that time. F. S. Noli did not cease his fight against the forces of obscurantism and regress even when he was forced to go to exile after the overthrow of the democratic government by the force of foreign bayonets. He participated in the revolutionary wing of the Albanian political exiles who settled in France, Austria, Switzerland and elsewhere. From his experience in the events of 1924, Noli drew the correct conclusion that without relying on the poor, on the workers and peasants and without linking with the liberation movement of the oppressed peoples against imperialism and the reactionary regimes, victory over the power of the land-owners and the reactionary bourgeoisie could not be achieved. This is where the influence of the ideas of the international communist movement of the time on Noli were reflected. In these years, with his powerful political articles, he made a valuable contribution to exposing the reactionary clique, the anti-national and anti-popular policy.

His literary creativeness, whom he regarded as a weapon to realize his ideals, is closely connected with Noli's activity as an outstanding militant of the Albanian patriotic and democratic movement. Noli's first work is the play «Israelis and Philistines» written in 1902 and published five years later in 1907. The significance of the work is that it expresses the viewpoints of the young author, who right from the beginning of the 20th century defended the idea of the revolutionary road to drive out the Turkish occupiers. The author drew the subject from the Bible, it is Samson's history, who went to



convert the Philistines into Monotheistic religion, hoping in his power of oratory, but he fails. An important and very actual philosophical and political range of problems about the Albanian patriotic movement of the time are interwoven in the drama. The author maintains a double stand towards Samson. On the one hand, in Samson's character he embodies a courageous person ready to lay down his life for his ideal. He is determined to rise against all those who want to hinder him on his road. But at the same time, the author condemns Samson, when he forgets the task he had been assigned to by the people because of his love for Delilah. But the cause of the failure of Samson's mission lies deeper: he failed because he absolutized the importance of propaganda, of speeches and preachings against the enemy. This idea reflected the political situation in Albania at the beginning of the 20th century when the question of the road to be followed for the liberation of the country was being discussed.

Noli distinguished himself as a poet, too. He wrote few poems of his own, 18 altogether. But the problems they deal with, the new ideas they express and their artistic vigour, mark a new phenomenon in the history of Albanian literature. In a number of verses such as «Hymn of the Flag», «Contribute to Your Mother!» etc., Noli with a powerful pathos expressed his ardent love for Albania, eulogized the heroic past, expressed his unwavering confidence in the future and called on his fellow countrymen to spare nothing for the revival of the Homeland.

The name of Noli is also linked with the development of political lyrics; he wrote a number of poems which reflected his own experience of the events of the Albanian political life of the years 1921-1924. These poems were written about the end of the 20ies, when he was in exile and were a sort of effort on the author's part to make out the sense of these events. The author expressed his ideas in a roundabout way, through the

biblical motifs. Proceeding from figures and episodes in the Bible, he wrote poems with a political essence such as «Moisi in the Mountain», «Christ and the Whip», «Saint Peter over the Brazier», «Baraban's March», «Jesus' March» etc. In «Christ and the Whip» Noli alluded to the chaotic situation, the arbitrariness, open violation of laws, deception, exploitation and abuse of power which characterized Albania in the years 1921-1924 under the rule of the reactionary forces. And just like Christ, who made use of the whip (violence) against double-dealers and usurers who had turned the temple into a «trading market», Noli too used violence, but only once. The last verse is something like a self-criticism on the author's part; he says that when he came to power, he was lenient with his enemies who took advantage of this leniency and with their actions brought much harm to the country. As far as their subjects are concerned the verses «Jesus' March» and «March of the Crusade» are very close to it. The first alludes to the role of the author himself, who is called a «saviour», who fought for the Homeland and gave his citizens «wealth, freedom and power» and is ready to sacrifice himself for them. The verse is more like an ode the adorers dedicate to their liberator. The «March of the Crusade» also alludes to the political programme Noli followed in his activity, but his physiognomy here is more concrete, he is the determined champion of the poor masses and the irreconcilable enemy of exploitation and tyranny. In his verses which have as their theme the political struggle of the years 1921-1924, Noli rightly characterized the reactionary forces and especially their chieftain, Ahmet Zogu, who is regarded as a cunning person who was able to hide his true face of a reactionary and rabid enemy of the progress of the country. The verse «Salep-Sultan's Song» is written to another poetical key, it is a satirical verse which exposes Zogu's circles and his ignorant and unintelligent men. This exposé has been achieved through the creation of an Ottoman coloration which characterized



Zog and his men. The poet calls Zog a «Salep-Sultan», like the Ottoman Sultan of Istanbul.

As an embodiment of the ardent love for the country and the people, of courage and moral purity, Noli contrasted the representatives of reaction and regress with the figures of the distinguished militants of the democratic movement, Bajram Curri and Luigj Gurakuqi. Both verses «The Dragobia Cave» and «Dead in Exile» have been dedicated to these distinguished patriots who were perfidiously murdered by the men of Zog. These verses are not characterized by an elegiac spirit or pessimism but by optimism and powerful notes. The depiction of the figure of B. Curri is of a monumental nature, the poet calls the hero «the eagle of the Highlands», «the legendary Antheus». These epithets taken from Albanian epic folklore and ancient mythology reveal the role of B. Curri as a defender of freedom when «the tyrant overran the Homeland» and as a man expressing the aspirations of the masses of the people for their political and social liberation (the brave, the champion of the poor).

The portrait of the poet is depicted as a memorial

Highland born and highland bread,  
There a bullet laid him dead,  
Dragobia's dragon fell  
On the rocks above the dell.

The earth quaked, boulders rolled,  
He stood tall, firm and bold,  
One amid the din and rumble,  
Tribune staunch of weak and humble

For he loved you when they scorned you,  
For he wept when they abused you,  
He sheltered you when you were homeless,  
Mother dear, for you he died!

The portrait of Gurakuqi, first depicted by soft notes, becomes epic by the end of the verse. Gurakuqi is not

only the son cherishing a profound and true love for the Mother but also the «giant Liberator», who besides «his generosity» had a «heart of iron.»

At the beginning of the 30ies, when it was thought that the bourgeois-landlord monarchy had consolidated its positions inside the country, Noli wrote two of his most beautiful verses which are characterized by historical optimism and are full of new feelings and hopes. («By the Rivers» and «Run, O Marathon Fighter»). These verses reflect the unwavering confidence of the poet in the sure victory of the poor over their oppressors. In «By the Rivers», the poet at first gave a concise but very expressive picture of the evils which had been imposed on the masses of the people, the poverty and ignorance the country was plunged in. The tragic fate of the poor under the heel of the reactionary classes undoubtedly worries the poet, but he does not lose his confidence that it won't be long when the people will have the courage to rise against the tyranny they are living under. The signs of the new drive of the people's movement give new life to the tired and sick poet, give him new confidence and strength. Deeply convinced in victory, Noli called on the poor to rise and strike at their enemies:

A call resounded down the stream  
It shook me from my troubled dream  
It burst out like a thunderbolt  
To raise the people to revolt.

In vain the tyrant for safety runs,  
The people's heart with vengeance burns,  
The stormy wind is madly blowing,  
The blood-stained stream is overflowing.

The trumpet is calling loud and clear,  
Workers and peasants from far and near,  
Rise and strike, spread death and horror,  
Men from Shkodra, men from Viora!



«By the Rivers» is justly seen as the climax of the political ideas of the poet, who through his own experience and the Albanian democratic movement drew the conclusion that it would be only the people's revolution of the workers and peasants which would save Albania from the abyss the reactionary forces were leading it to.

The hope for victory over the anti-popular regime constitutes the poetical idea of the verse «Run, o Marathon Fighter». For Noli, this Marathon fighter is the herald of the victory of the «small» over the «giant», of the «oppressed» over the «tyrant».

In the last years of his life Noli again turned to poetry. The characteristic anti-feudal motif of Noli was seen once again, with the same harshness as in the «Salep-Sultan's Song», in the verses «Sultan on the Cabinet» and «Sultan's Death», which he wrote in the years 1961-1964. These works were so to speak the whip Noli cracked for the last time to the left-overs of the reactionary exiles, the representatives of the boys overthrown by the people's revolution, to those who had resorted to every possible means against people's Albania and carried on their dirty work as agents of American imperialism to create every possible obstacle in the way of the Albanian people to live happy and be masters of their own fate.

His skilful translations of the masterpieces of world literature make up a special chapter and constitute a valuable contribution to the treasury of national culture. Thanks to his wonderful talent and capability to deeply penetrate into the very spirit of the artistic work, Noli made Shakespeare's works, rich in ideas, sound Albanian («Macbeth», «Othello», «Hamlet», «Julius Caesar»), his translations rang with the biting sarcasm of Omer Kayyam, with the subtle and wise parody of M. Cervantes (Don Quixote), with the social criticism of H. Ibsen «An Enemy of the People» etc. He chose among the works of progressive world literature those works which with

their sharp social content helped the Albanian people in their struggle for social justice against the forces of reaction.

The cultural and literary legacy from Noli is part of the treasury of the national culture of the Albanian people, his literary works and writings on public affairs were one of the major factors in the 20ies and 30ies for the moulding of the political consciousness of the democratic intellectuals and progressive youth.

*Foqion Postoli 1889-1927.* Postoli was born in Korça in the family of a small merchant which was gradually being ruined economically. He had to emigrate when he was 16 to secure his living, first he went to Turkey, then to the USA where from 1910 to 1921 he was a worker in a shoe factory. During this time he took an active part in the patriotic movement of the Albanians there and made his first steps in literature by collaborating with the magazine of the Albanians in America, *Dielli* (the Sun). In 1919, he finished the novel «For the Defence of the Homeland» which he published as supplement in «Dielli». Three years later, in 1922, he published novel «Forget-me-not», which in 1924, he adapted into a drama so that it could be put on stage. In 1922, he published the drama «Mother's Task» with the subject taken from the problems of the time.

The events of the novel «For the Defence of the Homeland» take place from 1895 to the years 1912-1913. Follows in a few words the subject of the work: Nica, an ordinary peasant girl marries Estref, the son of Rakip Bey. But the life of the young couple is not smooth. At first, Rakip Bey does not want to recognize the marriage, so when his son goes to war, he sends the newly-born daughter of Nica away from his home telling Nica that the girl had died. He did this in the spirit of an aristocrat, to preserve the «purity» of his family. After some time the news came that Estref was killed. Shocked by the news, Nica goes almost



mad and leaves the house to calm her spirits in wandering. She was housed by an old man and woman who lived in a forest and Nica lives there for a long time. Only after 14 years does she come to know that her daughter whom she considered dead is alive. Nica immediately sets out to search her and once when she was passing her village together with her dog, she saves an Albanian girl from some Greek soldiers making a pass at her. Then she discovered that this girl was her own daughter who had grown up in the family of a farmer. After the Greek soldiers left Korça and its surroundings, Estref too returns to the village, he had not been killed as word had spread but had only been wounded and had run away from the place where he was being kept a captive. In this atmosphere of the joy of victory he meets with his wife and daughter whom he thought lost. So as is seen, the novel is full of unexpected events and vicissitudes which have further confirmed the naive melo-dramatic spirit of the novel. The author has failed to motivate the behaviour and the essential social features of the characters. The importance of the novel lies in the patriotic spirit which permeates it. When Estref goes to war, Nica tells him not to forget Albania and have the struggle «for the defence of the Homeland», the chief ideal of his life. Through many details the author reveals the ardent patriotism of the peasants who secretly learnt to read and write their mother tongue with so much eagerness. Nica asked Estref to bring her some books in Albanian to read. Jako, Estref's servant, had been keeping the national flag hidden for years, and he raised it when Albanian became independent. The patriotic tendency of the novel is also seen when the author exposes the Greek chauvinists.

The masterpiece of F. Postoli is the novel «Forget-me-not» (1922), the subject of which is taken from the historical events of the years 1905-1908 and especially from the struggle of the Albanian fighters against the Turkish invaders and the Greek maniacs. The story

mainly takes place in Korça. The merchant, Mr. Kristo has only one daughter, beautiful Olimbi, who falls in love with the servant in her father's shop, Dhimitri, who is a clever, honourable and patriot boy, a participant in the movement against the foreign invaders. The two youngsters dream of leading a happy life together. As a sign of his steadfast faithfulness, Dhimitri gives Olimbi the «Forget-me-not». But the coming of Niko, the secretary of Mr. Kristo, poses an obstacle to their love. Niko is a Greek and he assumes a chauvinistic stand towards Albania. Through flattery and wiles he wins the heart of Mr. Kristo, who thinks him suitable to become his son-in-law and even made a partner of him. But Olimbi does not want to marry Niko. Then, Mr. Kristo and Niko think of getting rid of Dhimitri by denouncing him to the police as an enemy of the Turkish government. But Olimbi was able to warn Dhimitri who reluctantly leaves the country and his love for America. On his way in a stormy night he comes upon a pack of hungry wolves from the paws of which he was saved by a fighting unit of Macedonian insurgents. The news comes to the city that Dhimitri is eaten up by the wolves. Olimbi goes mad with despair. Mr. Kristo regrets his doings against Dhimitri. The «forget-me-not» by which she remembers Dhimitri consoles Olimbi. Later, she comes to know that Dhimitri is alive and hopes of seeing him again. Meanwhile, the author relates how the first fighting units for the liberation of Albania began to be set up in the mountains. As the commander of a fighting unit, Dhimitri saves Mr. Kristo from a gang of robbers Niko had sent to rob him on the way. Dhimitri is also able to free Olimbi who had been left to the mercy of Niko in Korça. In 1908, when the new government was proclaimed, Dhimitri together with the other fighters returned to Korça as many patriots deceived by the demagoguery of the Jeunes Turcs did. In compliance with his generally sentimental spirit, the novel has a happy ending. Kristo agrees to the marriage of Olimbi with



Dhimitri. The novel is mainly directed against the Greek influence in Albania. The author describes the Greek chauvinists as enemies of the Albanian people who used religion to divide the Albanians and weaken the patriotic movement in Albania. Through the behaviour of Niko the author has showed that in order to achieve their ends the Greek chauvinists collaborated even with the Turkish invaders. The author has vested Niko with negative characteristics, he is an egoist and dirty intriguer. In order to secure his economic well-being, he does not hesitate to blackmail, rob or denounce others to the police.

The success of the novel lies in the achievement of the figure of Dhimitri, through the person of whom, the author gives the figures of the sons of the poor, who at the beginning of the 20th century joined the ranks of the patriotic movement bringing with them their revolutionary spirit and determination to achieve their goal, the liberation of the country. The honour, wisdom, and ardent love for the Homeland, have been emphasized in the character of the hero. When the liberation movement was stepping up and the Albanians took up arms against the foreign yoke, Dhimitri was among the first to respond to the call of the duty to the Homeland. His stand reflected the determined patriotism of the poor who constituted the pillar of the struggle for national liberation. The democratic spirit of the novel is also seen in the stand of the author towards the rich merchant, in the character of whom, the author emphasized the typical characteristics of a part of the big Orthodox bourgeoisie, which fell into the trap of the propaganda of the Greek chauvinists, thus, becoming an obstacle to the solving of the Albanian national question.

In spite of their naive spirit and unexpected turns and didactic tone, the novels of F. Postoll retain their literary-historical importance as an important step in the development of the larger forms of the Albanian prose.

*Haki Stërmilli (1895-1953)* Since he was a young man, H. Stërmilli took an active part in the patriotic and democratic movement of the beginning of the 20ies. He was one of the leaders of the organization of progressive youth «Bashkimi» («Unity»), which played an important part in carrying out the bourgeois-democratic revolution of 1924 and actively supported the democratic government which came out of this revolution. After the failure of the revolution, he emigrated to France, Austria, USSR and Yugoslavia. In 1929, the Yugoslav authorities handed him over to the reactionary regime of Zog who threw him into prison. Fascist invasion found him on the side of the people. He took an active part in the National Liberation War against the fascist invaders. After the establishment of the people's power in Albania, he was elected deputy to the People's Assembly.

H. Stërmilli started his literary career when he was young, as early as 1922. As a start, he wrote some short stories and dramas in which he described the sufferings of the Albanian population of Dibra and Kosova region caused by the Serbian chauvinists. According to the decisions of the Peace Conference, they had been unfairly given to Yugoslavia («The Miserable Dibra Girl» (1923), «Love and Loyalty» (1923) and «Lucky Dawn» (1924)). As his first works they were not ripe artistically, full of outer effects. The work which made Stërmilli's name known in the history of Albanian literature is the novel «If I Were a Boy» (1936), in which he defended the Albanian woman who suffered from family despotism. The author reflects the life of a young girl, who's been locked within the four walls of the house by fanatic parents, depriving her of participating in social life. The novel narrates realistically the life and customs of patriarchal family in which every manifestation of natural human feelings was brutally suppressed and the subjugation to the will of the head of the family was a sacred law. Stërmilli delineates the



painful story of the heroine, who contrary to her desires, was taken away from school and separated from her comrades when she was not yet 12 years old, because this was the custom. After being shut up within the four walls of the house, she is constrained to go to her relatives with her face hidden under a veil. Being a witty and sensitive girl, the heroine protests against these brutal customs which hinder the natural development of man. Her acquaintance with a young educated polite young man is the only outlet for her to escape family despotism. The aspiration for an independent life, the desire to freely develop her mind and spirit is strengthening in her. Love gives her courage to rise up against the environment, to seek to get rid of this heavy yoke once and for all. The opposition of her family to her desire to marry the young man she loved does not break her but makes her more determined. Although her father and stepmother want to force her to marry an old wealthy, ignorant and ugly tradesman, the heroine does not cease striving for happiness and finding no other way out, she decides to elope with her lover, but she fails. After this, her life with the husband she does not love loses meaning and is ruined.

The heroine's sufferings are narrated by the author as typical offspring of the reality of the bourgeois-landlord society of the time. Ignorance, the brutal stand towards the individual tyrannic domination of the conservative morality and backward customs in the family and social life are defended and supported by the state, which savagely opposes the woman taking the place belonging to her in society. The writer does not contain his anger while speaking about the despotism and fanaticism in the family life, about the ferocious patriarchal customs which hindered the free development of personality. He severely attacks the demand of backward morality to cover woman with the veil, restrictions made on her in the name of defending her «honour». In moving colours, even without preserving the artistic skill some-

times, Stermilli succeeds in depicting the painful consequences of this inhuman stand towards the woman.

When the book appeared, it was warmly received by the broad masses because of the current problem it dwelt upon. With his novel, the author made his contribution to the efforts of the progressive circles of the Albanian society for the emancipation of the woman.

**Lasgush Poradeci** (born in 1896) Lasgush Poradeci holds a special place among the writers of the years 1920-1930. As a writer, Poradeci was under the strong influence of the theory «art for art's sake»; for him, poetry has its own way, and is detached from the problems of social life. However, his creativeness did not fail to escape the influence of the most important events of the Albanian life of the twenties, which he considered from patriotic positions. Positive are also a series of love lyrics, in which we find the spirit of the popular poetry, as well as some verses about the love of the poet for the home-town, the beauty of the Albanian countryside.

Lasgush Poradeci belongs to those writers who were introduced to the Albanian literature in the beginning of the twenties, when Albania commenced its normal independent state activity. Together with other patriotic youth, he happened to enjoy the freedom and independence of the country. This was reflected in the verses, «The 28th», «The Singing Cords», «The Mountain Has Put on Its Mantel» and «The Last Worry», which carried the general popular joy for the attainment of the long-cherished dream, the winning of freedom. The poet recalls the proclamation of independence on November 28, 1912, and shows reverence for this great historical event for the Albanian people. In the verse «The 28th», written with ascending pathetic notes, which are characteristic of the poetry of the National Renaissance, Poradeci calls it «sacred day», which filled the hearts



of the Albanians with an indescribable delight. Full of new hopes for the free future of Albania, the young poet was driven to despair to see that the landlords and the old social forces took control of Albania; they were people who had given no contribution to the national question, but, on the contrary, had fought against it. Former memurs of the Ottoman Empire, backward in spirit and mentality, who did not know Albanian at all, were placed at the head of the state administration. All these made bitter impressions on the poet, reflected in the verses «To Naim Frashëri» and «To Naim», in which he has expressed feelings of distress about the efforts of the patriots of the National Renaissance which came to nothing.

Lasgush Poradeci has written many love lyrics. A characteristic of Poradeci, as well as of the romantic poets of the 19th century, is the leitmotif of unearthly love, inconceivable love. The lass is an object of unlimited admiration of the poet. He compares her with lofty things, he calls her «star», «sun», etc. In most cases it is an unfortunate love, which has taken the peace away from the poet and indulges him in sufferings. However, along with the poetry permeated by this spirit, in Poradeci's creativeness we find many love lyrics, which are optimistic and inspired by folklore, such as «The North Wind Blows on the Barren Mountain», «At the Door by the Mill», «The Dance of Flowers», «Who Gave You the Beauty», «The Stream of Our Village», etc. The love of life and the lively colours describing the lowland life characterize the verse «The Stream of our Village»:

Silver — white the waters gush,  
From the mountain village spring,

Lads who don their caps of plush,  
Bearing in their gait a swing,

On their lips a smile so sweet,  
From their hearts a pining sigh,

As they meet and as they greet,  
Blushing lasses passing by,

The time to blurt a greeting, the time to lift a padlock,  
The time to say good-night, I found myself in wed-lock

L. Poradeci is master of landscape lyrics, which he raised to a new scale unprecedented in the Albanian poetry up to that time. Worthy of mention are those in which the nature of the birthplace of the poet is depicted in magnificent colours, such as «Poradeci», «The Napping Lake», «End of Autumn», in which sweet lyricism mingles with the vividness of colours, giving the description special plasticity. In the poem «Poradeci», it is nature which makes the poet feel tranquil, but who still feels a little worried of the fact that everything in the world is moving and does return no more. This worry is seen also in «The Napping Lake», in which the beauty of nature is given with the finesse of great landscape poets.

Along with the verses stemming from the love of the home-town, we see «The Song Sung by the Old Men», which is a symbol of the profound and ardent feelings of the people, their wishes, pains, the dreams of the ordinary people of this country. The poem shows his closeness to his home-town, the land of his ancestors, from which stems everything important to the life of the country.

A special place in the creativeness of Poradeci was occupied by the theme of the unequal struggle with the fate, a theme dear to the romantic poets. But contrary to the tragic solution that characterizes their creations, in his lyrics Poradeci sings to the triumph of man over the obstacles he meets in life. The motif of the indomitable will and spirit in face of obstacles brought about by life is treated in the poems, «The Boat and the Flag» and «The Genius of the Ship», and in other poems. In



the first poem, life is presented in the shape of the «wild wave», «the endless whirlpools», which toss the boat and threaten it with complete extinction, but the hero is intrepid in face of dangers, he proceeds holding his head high:

Blood-smear'd flag, red and black,  
Lead us forth in bold attack,  
No foe shall ever see our back!...

The hero of the poem «The Genius of the Ship» is also a brave fighter, who ignores obstacles and forges ahead with courage through the «hostile storm», with confidence in himself that he leaves behind a «glittering wake». He knows that even if he loses the battle, others will follow his path and will come out triumphantly. The idea of continuity and triumph in struggle for the realization of the noble ideal, are among the most important ideas of poetry. These poems were coherent with the progressive current of the Albanian literature, which tried to instil in the consciousness of the readers the spirit of protest and struggle against the landlord-bourgeois society.

An extensive place in the creativeness of L. Poradeçl is occupied by his philosophical lyrics, in which, in the spirit of philosophical mysticism, the poet treats in general the question of the essence of the life of man, the matter and the spirit, etc., which he answered from the positions of the reactionary philosophical theory, as widespread among the intellectual bourgeois reactionary circles in Western Europe following World War I. The tendency of the poet to detach himself from the reality of the time, his mystic individualism and concept on art, found expression in his philosophical lyrics.

A poet with lyrical finesse, L. Poradeçl has gone down in the history of the Albanian literature for those creations which reflect the ties of the poet with his home-town, the feelings, joys, and perpetuations of

common people, for his beautiful lyrics on Albanian nature, are all felt. With these creations he enlarged the scope of our poetry enriching it with new artistic motifs and means

## MILLOSH GJERGJ NIKOLLA

(1911-1938)

But however little he lived, as a powerful artist with rare poetic gifts, Migjeni contributed much to the Albanian literature of the XXth Century. His works constitute a new chapter in the Albanian literature of the 20s and 30s. It played an important role in raising the artistic consciousness of the Albanian people.

From the ideological point of view, Migjeni was formed very soon and without peculiar complications. He managed to escape from the influence of various decadent trends, which were very widespread in the European literature of the time as well as the influence of religion with which the middle school nourished him. Having finished the Theological seminary, he faced the alluring prospective of attending the faculty of Theology. Such a thing would enable him to enter the ranks of the privileged high intelligentsia. As a man with an independent character, closely linked with the progressive ideas since he was at school, Migjeni hated to follow this way in life. Since very early, he set about taking part in the struggle of the progressive people for social liberation of the popular masses from the heavy bondage of the land-owners and the bourgeoisie. This aspiration, the setting up of a happy and just society where the rank and file live free and sure for the morrow, became the main



aim of his life since the very beginning. Having this program, Migjeni ranked himself without doubt on the side of forces who at that time represented the progressive tendency of the social-political development of the country.

In his first verses («The Sons of the New Century», «Awakening», «The Spark»), Migjeni expressed his disapproval of the reality of the landowner-bourgeois society in a romantic manner. He hated the order in power, the backward relations and customs, ignorance and everything old which like a heavy grave stone suffocated the country. The main motif of Migjeni's first romantic creations is the determination to carry out lofty heroic acts on behalf of freedom and justice:

We no longer intend for the sake  
of putrid beliefs and their claim to «sanctity»  
to sink anew in the marsh of bigotry,  
to chant old hymns to inane divinity,  
Lugubrious hymns of abject slavery.

These lines express the spirit of discontent and revolt of the Albanian progressive youth against the social order of the time, its aspirations for the regeneration of the life of the country on free and just basis. (It is not by accident that the verses expressing the aspirations for a more beautiful life, are titled by the poet «The Songs of Revival»).

One of the first most typical verses of Migjeni is «The Song of the Youth». The poet's love for the youth, is the love for the new, for the living forces which would destroy the «Evil Chains» hampering the progress of the Albanian society. «The Song burning in his soul» are the aspirations of the youth for a more worthy life which the poet urges the younger generation to dedicate itself to.

The poet expresses the objective of the struggle of the new social forces through romantic allegory. The future of the country is compared to the «dawn» which

arouses joy and new hopes in the people. Sometimes behind the romantic figures of the «dawn» we notice a more concrete content. The poet has in mind a «Happy and Just National Dawn» in which he sees the embodiment of the new life. But, however, Migjeni's creativeness at that time is characterized by romantic feelings and allusions for the future.

Migjeni regarded art as reflection of life, as one of the forms of social conscience. Unlike the sham romanticism of the decadent and individualist poetry, he regarded literary activity as an expression of the interests and wishes of the poor masses and as a means of social struggle. With the passage of time, Migjeni's works assume a social content, romantic allegory is replaced by concrete figures with a clear-cut ideological content. The writer's eyes discerned a painful drama in the reality of the landowner-bourgeois society, the drama of the exploited masses, of the poor in general. Migjeni artistically portrayed in his works the most impoverished strata of town and countryside. They were workers who wandered all day long in search of work, they were the highlanders who led a precarious existence, despisedly and outcast from society; beggars, prostitutes and unlucky people, whom life had treated harshly. Poverty had hurled them into each other's arms, they fused with each other easily and became one. They suffered extremely under the landowner-bourgeois order. Migjeni focussed his attention on the great plight they were in, the gloomy aspects of their life and the never-ending sorrows and misfortunes. He did not portray directly the relations of oppression and exploitation; he treated the precarious existence of the poor masses in the landowner-bourgeois society, poverty, uncertainty, worries and untold sufferings, which were direct consequences of these relations. With his works, the writer tried to improve the life of the poor. Pointing at the horrible want, the wretched situation of the oppressed and exploited masses, Migjeni voiced his protest against the existing order, against the social inequality and injustice. To Migjeni mattered that the pro-



gressive section of the population understood the problem of poverty in which the overwhelming majority of the people suffered in all its entirety. Being aware of this situation was of special importance for the struggle to be waged by the progressive elements against the order in power. This original content of Migjeni's work determined the tendency to describe the naked social existence of the heroes, the realistic drawing of the miserable life of the poor, the use of expressive details which carry a generalizing effect. These are the fundamental characteristics of Migjeni's individuality as an artist.

The overwhelming bulk of Migjeni's works taken together, form a vast realistic tableau of the life of the oppressed and exploited masses of the people, the poor ones, who have only one worry: how to secure a morsel of bread. In «The Poem of Misery», one of the most important poetical works, Migjeni portrays with thick palettes the shuddering misery, he denounces the anti-human character of the contemporary society, where woman is deprived of her right to be a mother, where mother «pulled her empty breasts» and had nothing to give her baby, where children were denied the right to enjoy their childhood, where the worker had to give up his life in order to win some coins to feed his family, etc. The poet calls misery a shame to human society, which could not ensure people the most necessary conditions for however little worthy existence. The great contrast between the luxury of the rich who «sleep with their ladies on beds of happiness», and the hungry life of the overwhelming majority of the population, arose the great indignation of the poet, who when speaking of the privileged classes fills the lines full of biting irony. «The Poem of Misery» resounded as a grave accusation against the landowner-bourgeois contemporary order and its apologists.

In his writings, Migjeni revealed desperate attempts of the poor people, their desperate attempts to make a living, even by enduring insults and revolting abuses, their efforts not to fall into the abyss of life. With a

detailed description of the hero's movements, thoughts and behaviour, in the «Forbidden Apple», the author delineates with great artistic force that hopeless and miserable state in which the hero of the sketch, like the overwhelming majority of the population, lived. The sketch «The Cherry», in a very concise and realistic manner, lays bare the situation in which the people's life had been reduced to a mere fulfilment of the most urgent needs to keep body and soul together. The Highlanders were not far from the primitive life which could exist in Europe at that time. From all the natural demands of the life of the people of that century, they have but the most necessary ones: keeping body and soul together and the reproduction of human tribe. The young bride who, from one moment to another is expecting her child, and placates her hunger by eating some cherries, tells more than hundreds of pages of vague description. The sketch «The Forbidden Apple», goes with this sketch, too. It is also a powerful realistic picture of the terrible living conditions of the poor inhabitants of the Highlands. The struggle for existence, in face of famine threatening them, becomes a source of new misfortunes: the child who freezes while being left overnight in the corner of the hut to leave the place free for the cattle, the cow of the house, which keeps the family alive by providing milk for them. This is a very strong evidence of that tragic situation the people were reduced by fear of starvation. When bread is wanting in the house, the cattle are dearer than one's ownself, dearer than the children. Colours, details seem to carry a special symbolic note, they do not individualize the story presented in the sketch which appears as a vivid fragment of life, as a dense instance of poverty reigning supreme in the Highlands. The author succeeds in portraying the general character of the situation in the country, which is also typical. The heartless attitude of contemporary society towards the poor is powerfully portrayed in the sketch «A Refrain of my City», which stands out for its thrilling realism, as well as the sketch «May the God Give You». The verse «Unfin-



shed Melody» presents the heart-felt drama of common people, who, after being morally crippled were outcast from society. The scene it describes was very common at the time, it was one of the numerous scenes which everyday caught the poet's eye in the reality of the landowner-bourgeois regime, it was a «fragment» of a huge tableau he saw everywhere. The fate of the heroine of the verse was not uncommon, nor was it specific for Albania of that time. The sketch «Do You Want Coal, Sir» shows this very well. A future victim of the unjust society might be also the young Highlander, who before selling the horse loaded with wood, must sell her body first.

Migjeni matured very soon from the artistic point of view. In the last years of his creativeness, he stands completely on the positions of realism. This determined his transition from writing short stories in prose (descriptions, portraits and particular scenes from life), to writing novels, in which he portrays more deeply and thoroughly the phenomena and processes of the Albanian nature. In his last works, Migjeni came to portray the fate of his heroes in close connection with the social environments of their life and managed to penetrate more deeply into their inner world. Herein lies the importance of the stories «Donate Us Our Daily Bread Today», «The Story of One of Them», «The Student Back Home», «Let the Inner Doors be Flung Open», etc.

«Donate Us Our Daily Bread Today» is the story of a jobless, writer and his endless sorrows and boundless desperation in his efforts to search work, which turn into anxiety when he feels that his family too, like thousands of other poor families, is threatened by starvation. This is no other than a slow physical break-down and Migjeni lays bare in a realistic manner and bitter truthfulness all the deep-rooted tragedy of the oppressed strata. Indirectly polemizing with the defenders of the class society, who said that «only the lazy-bones, those who dodge work do not win in life,» Migjeni evokes the love for work as the most important feature of the hero's character.

The hero thinks of the time when he worked as a waiter with the pleasure of a man who has tested the joys of work: «He remembered himself waiting for the customers, tray in hands, he was quick, faultless, clean». But this is not the main thing in the story, but the reflection of the moral amputation of the lower strata in face of the difficulties of the struggle for subsistence, the ruinous consequences of unemployment for the proletarian families. Migjeni showed that misery, the fear of starvation, destroyed the life of the poor families throwing them onto the road of moral degeneration. How the terrible reality of the landowner-bourgeois society destroyed the lives of thousands of people, driving them to prostitution, is shown also in the «The Story of One of Them». The slow-flowing tone of narration, which is now and again interrupted by sometimes ironical and sometimes publicist intervention of the author, the common subject without special events seem to help evoke with artistic force the anti-human character of the reality of the time, the inhuman stand of the society towards these people, who not only were denied the right to live and work honestly, but after being morally and physically mutilated, were also outcast from society. Migjeni's love for the people was the love of a man who lived cheek by jowl with people, and felt the misery and oppression of the poor masses, and wanted to destroy the unjust political and social order. Hence his humanism was a revolutionary one. Migjeni did not reconcile with the reality of the time, therefore, he sought that force which would build a new society on new basis and he saw this force in the masses, who had not awoken yet. However, the poet was certain that very soon they would become conscious of their interests. However, Migjeni pointed out the manifestations of discontent and protest of the heroes against their unendurable living conditions. Migjeni with a rare artistic skill, like no other writer before him, delineated the life of the people like it was, with the tragedy that could be narrated, but at the same time, stigmatizing the privileged classes. The writer did not portray the rich classes



in the aspect that revealed their direct activity as the force that exerted savage exploitation on the masses, but by presenting their inner world, their everyday relations, their disagreements and quarrels determined by definite narrow moral and family interests («The Student Back Home», «Let the Inner Doors Open», «May The God Give You», «In the Church», «A Refrain for My City»). The writings dedicated to the descriptions of the representatives of the rich classes are permeated by satire. In them, the writer hit at the egotism and inhuman character of the rich classes, their hypocritical morals, their pseudo-liberalism, etc. Migjeni stigmatized not only the rich classes but also their overt and covert advocates; the anti-popular artists and journalists, who under the slogan of apolitism served the reactionary classes, the order in power. «The Program of a Magazine» is a strong pamphlet addressed to the journalists financed by the State, allegedly to defend those who «are defenceless», to spread the «religious morals» and arouse the feeling of «nationalism». The sketch «A Story on the Crisis», was a strong whip Migjeni lashed against the writers, who screamed that their art was disinterested, lived on its own; did not care either for the interests of the poor or for the rich. According to Migjeni, the slogan of «the Art for Art's Sake», of the art devoid of life, was a big lie, a mask of those who had sold themselves out to the ruling classes and their reactionary state.

In the conditions of the police regime of Zog, when the people lacked a tribune to express their thoughts, Migjeni's work constituted an ardent and powerful support for the rights and lawful demands of the people for a worthy human life and progress and culture. It awakens social conscience against social injustice, it introduced among the people the spirit of protest and opposition to the landowner-bourgeois order.

## NONDA BULKA

(1907-1972)

Migjeni's contemporary, Nonda Bulka is one of the important figures of the progressive literature of the thirties. He was a master of the pamphlet, sketch, and short story. The sceptical spirit, the sharp irony which assumes the form of biting sarcasm, the short and concise phrase, the energetic rhythm of narration are some of the characteristics of Bulka's prose, in which we find typical facts and aspects of the social reality of the landowner-bourgeois order. He made the focus of his satire, especially, the high representatives of the anti-popular regime, the deputies, ministers and high officials, who received fat salaries and did not bother about the troubles of the people. Many of them, the author points out, had faithfully served the Turkish occupiers and, to the irony of the fate, they were regarded by the reactionary regime as veteran patriots, and by virtue of this, they received high pensions. The author exposed the world of the deputies, the high officials, the beys and big merchants also in its intimate aspect; he laid bare the moral scum, the vices, intrigues and base behaviour of these people, who passed themselves off as the cream of Albanian society. Bulka portrayed the people of the regime as they really were, criminals, ignorants, brutes, overbearing degenerate people, gamblers, who skinned the people allegedly in the name of the Law and justice. The negative phenomena in Bulka's writings are not given separately, but as a typical manifestation of the contemporary social and political order, where the money, the yardstick of everything had great power. This forms the subject of a series of sketches, like «Nastredin», etc.

N. Bulka's democratic spirit manifests itself also in the anti-clerical and anti-religious spirit of his works. A man who took things for what they were worth, Bulka pointed out the true role of religion as opium for the



people. («To You», «Irony and Nothing More», «Tragicomic Memories», «The Voice of the Cook», «Prayer to the God», etc.). The author not only laughs at the religious legends, but doubts also the existence of the God itself, with whom the clergy frightened the naive believers. The anti-religious militant spirit of his works arose the furious anger of the Jesuits, who reacted very fiercely. The author met the attacks against him with courage, hitting at the brutality and prepotence of the clergy, and advocating the free thoughts and secularism of the spiritual life.

Many of Bulka's writings evoke the grave situation of the people, unemployment, the difficult life full of privations of the popular strata («The Son of Mustafa», «Mysterious Man», «The Beggar», «Mother and Son», etc.). In the sketch «When Mohamed Meets the Christ», the author wrote: «There (In the Heaven according to religion — K. B) may be maize in abundance, and no tax-collector at all. Is there any remedy for us down here? If not, we don't want to have anything to do with you». The writer speaks of the orphans, whom nobody takes care of, of the waifs and strays, who have not a morsel of bread, of persons, who for hours on end wait on queues at the town-hall to take a handful of maize, of people, who because of poverty have run into debts, of women, who have become prostitutes in order to secure a living; All the writings about the terrible living conditions of the people, who live under the fear of the tax-collector and the usurer, are pervaded by notes of bitter irony against the cause of this situation, the ruling classes, for which the interests of the country were alien. Characteristic of N. Bulka was his pointing out of the absurdity of the reality of the landowner-bourgeois society, of its illogical and ridiculous sides. In this direction, too, one of the typical features of N. Bulka's style was manifested.

The range of Bulka's themes and ideas is relatively broad: the denunciation of the reactionary policy of the bourgeois governments of Western Europe, the stigmatization of fascism, especially its aggressive plans, the con-

demnation of imperialist wars, constitute the motifs of the pamphlets «Abissynia Tale», «Half an Hour Italian», «Irony and Nothing Else», etc. In the sketch «From Berlin to... Pogradec», the author lashed the demagoguery of the reactionary circles of the West, who raised a hue and cry about disarmament, but in practice they did nothing. «The diplomats keep coming and going and they sweat crying. Long Live Peace' and in the end, Hitler bangs the fist on the velvet bench saying «I am armed! Do what you like!» N. Bulka made the denunciation of the great imperialist states, their back-strange activity on the people's backs, from the positions of the interests of small peoples. In his writing «Irony and Nothing Else», the author wrote angrily: «We slaughter each other, the brothers of other continents, for the sole reason that they do not speak our language. Even the beasts would not do such a thing... But man does not feel pity to kill another... Five people round a table hold the fates of one people in their hands. War or peace, happiness or misery. What they like they do, but even they treat each other on the sly... Is there anything more ironic than the opening of a Disarmament Conference when the whole atmosphere smells of powder?». Pointing his finger to the grave social wounds, Bulka did not always give an answer to the problem he put up for solution, did not show an outlet. Hence his note of scepticism and light pessimism ensuing from his lack of clarity for the future. Bulka's strong point as a writer is his democratism, humanism, his critical stand towards everything reactionary and regressive hampering the march of the country towards economic and social progress.



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# IV THE LITERATURE OF THE PEOPLE'S REVOLUTION

The April 19, 1949 issue of Soviet News carried an article, one of the first in our series, on the subject of the People's Revolution. The article was written by the Soviet writer, Leonid Brezhnev. It was a long and detailed study of the literature of the People's Revolution, and it was a very important contribution to the understanding of the literature of the People's Revolution. The article was written in a clear and concise style, and it was a very good example of the literature of the People's Revolution. It was a very important contribution to the understanding of the literature of the People's Revolution.



THE LITERATURE  
OF THE PEOPLES REVOLUTION

On April 7, 1939 the troops of fascist Italy landed on Albania, one of the first victims of fascist aggression in Europe. The Albanians put up an armed resistance in an unequal fight, which grew in proportion to the increased burden of foreign oppression. Protests, strikes and demonstrations were organized in the first months after the invasion, and soon assumed the character of a broad popular movement. The communists were the spirit of resistance of the masses to the fascist invaders. After April 7, 1939, they appeared as the sole political force capable of leading the struggle of the Albanian people against Italian fascism. With the founding of the Communist Party of Albania on November 8, 1941, the anti-fascist liberation movement became a conscious movement of the broad masses of the people, including workers, peasants, young men and women as well as the sound patriotic and democratic forces of the country. By the end of 1941 and the beginning of 1942, the strikes and demonstrations developed into the armed struggle. Partisan units operating throughout the country, in fierce clashes with the enemies, liberated many regions of the country, despite the efforts of the fascist occupiers to suppress the stand of the Albanian people with fire and sword, with military operations against the free zones in the hope of destroying the partisan forces. The enemy forces burnt and razed to the ground whole villages, killed or massacred barbarously hundreds of peo-



ple, while throwing hundreds of others into prisons and concentration camps. The Albanian partisans, keenly conscious of their duty, with iron discipline, in many bloody clashes beat back the extensive operations the Nazi command undertook in the winter of 1943-1944 and June 1941. The National Liberation Army came out stronger and more tempered from the battles against the Hitlerite forces. After foiling the plans of the German occupiers, the partisan forces went over to the offensive to liberate the entire country. In fierce and heroic battles the National Liberation Army liberated the main cities, until on November 29, 1944 the last remnants of the Nazi armies and reactionaries were driven out of Albania and after five years of ceaseless war against the foreign occupiers, this was the greatest victory of the Albanian people in their centuries long history full of heroic efforts. Comrade Enver Hoxha has said: «The National Liberation war is the most brilliant page in the history of the Albanian people, because at the same time it liberated the homeland from the bondage of the fascist occupiers, smashed the ruling feudal-bourgeois classes, gave full power to the people. . .»

As a great historic event, the National Liberation war had a great influence on the Albanian literature. The idea of the struggle to save the country from the fascist bondage and to found a new democratic and people's Albania, gave life to a new literature, which appeared in the pages of the clandestine anti-fascist press, the newspaper «Zëri i popullit» («The people's Voice») the review «Kushtrimi i Lirisë» («The Call for Freedom») and other organs. This literature was part of the people's revolution. It was created in the heat of the struggle and educated the people with the feeling of the ardent love for the country. They take their themes from the resolute and uncompromising struggle against the foreign occupiers

evoking the heroism of the masses, the acts of bravery of the anti-fascist fighters, the communists and the partisans. Many articles mercilessly stigmatized the traitors, the representatives of the exploiting classes and especially the traitorous organizations «Balli Kombëtar» and «Legaliteti» which were created to oppose the liberation movement of the masses of the people. The initiators of this new literature were Sh. Musaraj, A. Çaçi, A. Varfi, Dh. S. Shuteriqi who in the 30's belonged to the trend of the progressive literature and after April 7, 1939 took a definite stand against the fascist occupation and militated in the ranks of the anti-fascist popular movement. A number of other writers, amongst whom Ll. Siliqi, F. Gjata, K. Jakova, etc. joined them. They were active participants of the anti-fascist movement, who began their literary career in the years of the people's revolution.

Obviously, the artistic word, which struck a strong emotional note, helped the masses understand the essence of the political events, the important historic tasks facing them, aroused in the people the trust that they could liberate Albania with their own forces, foil the plans and expose the demagogic slogans of the enemy, whose aim was to arouse a feeling of defeatism amongst the people. Hence the importance and the great role of journalism, which was characterized by profound ideas, militant spirit, irreconcilable stand towards the enemy, clarity, unpretentiousness of style, diversity of means of artistic expression.

A most outstanding contribution in this field was made by the leader of the Communist Party of Albania and of the Anti-fascist National Liberation War of the Albanian people, Comrade Enver Hoxha. His writings laid the foundations of the revolutionary journalism which was formed in the heat of the struggle against the fascist occupiers. His articles provided a brilliant answer to the complicated problems of the time in one of the most important moments of our history, making a resolute defence of the interests of the masses of the people. The uncompromising struggle against the foreign occupiers is



the main theme of his article. Relying on the historic experience of the Albanian people, Comrade Enver Hoxha demonstrated with facts that in order to save the country from the great dangers threatening it, they should fight the fascist occupiers even more strongly and resolutely, foil the criminal plans of the enemies against Albania. «Freedom is not donated, but won», this is the leitmotif of many of Comrade Enver Hoxha's articles. «The war is made neither with roses nor with cottonwool, and freedom is won neither with words nor with compromises, but with sufferings and bloodshed». The author affirms his deep hatred against all bankrupt politicians, who in their efforts to stop the people from rising in struggle, spread rumours that the final victory could be achieved without bloodshed, but with compromises with the fascists. However, the war of the people was the guarantee to the liberation from the fascist yoke. Denouncing the defeatist slogans of those reactionary elements, who said that the Albanian people were unable to solve their vital questions, that their fate would be determined from outside, by foreigners, comrade Enver Hoxha showed that the masses of the people, conscious of their interests and strength, were capable of smashing the foreign yoke and achieving the final goal, the liberation of the country and the creation of a free people's Albania. «It is only through our force, will, courage, the steel-like unity which characterizes our people, only through stern and ceaseless struggle», wrote the author, «we will win freedom, will liberate our Homeland, will give prosperity and happiness to the Albanian people». Optimism, unflinching confidence of the people in the final victory of the struggle against the fascist occupiers and their tools, ran like a red thread in Comrade Enver Hoxha's articles. In a number of sketches and articles of his early period, the author points out with pleasure the important fact that an ever greater number of people were embarking on the road of active conscious struggle, extols the heroic deeds of the communists and the patriots against the Italian fascist, mentions the courageous acts of the partisan units,

which were engaged in the course of the war against the foreign occupiers. The author describes this war against the fascist occupiers and their stooges as a «legendary epic» a «gigantic clash». Pride in the patriotism and courage of the masses of the people in this war, in the magnificence of this epic, pervades many articles. The National Liberation War against the foreign yoke, an event of great historic importance in the life of the Albanian people, is described as one of the most brilliant, heroic and remarkable struggles in the long chain of their centuries-long struggles. Delineating the close connection of this war with the freedom-loving and heroic traditions of the past, which were raised higher in the years of the people's revolution, Comrade Enver Hoxha simultaneously reveals the socialist perspective of the country. «At present, the Communist Party of Albania», the author writes in January 1943, «is fighting at the head of the National Liberation Front (or the Common Front against the occupiers) for the liberation of the country and a new democratic Albania. This is the first stage of our struggle. This does not mean that we are not working for the preparation of the second stage. The first prepares the dictatorship of the proletariat.»

Comrade Enver Hoxha showed that the fundamental factor of every victory of the successful development of the people's revolution in Albania, is the masses of the people, their high consciousness, heroism and unprecedented spirit of sacrifice in the war against the enemies. «The new times brought the factor people into focus, placed them on the tribune of history more powerfully than ever. Now they have their say, have taken up arms, whereas the politicians and double-dealers have remained on the other side of the barricade». With their heroic and uncompromising war, the Albanian people made their contribution to the struggle of the oppressed peoples against the fascist plague. This won them the sympathy and support of the other freedom-loving peoples, who spoke with admiration of their struggle «...at the most difficult moments of the liberation struggles of the other oppressed



peoples, the heroism of our people— writes Comrade Enver Hoxha, —served as an encouragement and was an expression of admiration for the struggles of those fraternal countries—.

The Albanian people defeated their enemies, the foreign occupiers and the exploiting classes, because they were led by the Communist Party, a young but mature party, which faithfully followed the teachings of Marxism-Leninism. The Communist Party became the leadership of the Albanian people thanks to its great struggle to ensure the steel-like unity of all the healthy forces of the country, overcoming many difficulties, thanks to its numerous sacrifices, the blood of its finest members. «History» — the author points out, will write about the legendary epic of our people in the anti-fascist struggle to ensure the steel-like unity of all the healthy forces, of the fighters of the town and country, about the rear of the army, the great and immortal role of the Communist Party of Albania—.

The profound content, the important generalizations conveyed in a spirited, dynamic, and sharp clarity, modesty, the happy use of various means, both of oral and written language, the use of the rich vernacular, are some of the characteristics of Comrade Enver Hoxha's articles.

During the years of the people's revolution Nako Spiru, Secretary of the CC of the Communist Youth of Albania, made himself known as a publicist. N. Spiru showed his mastery in pamphlet-writing. The reactionary politicians, the friends of the Lieutenantcy, the men of the «Fifth Column» and their stooges, those who put all sorts of slanders into circulation in order to discredit the struggle of the Albanian people: the traitors, professional intriguers, who entered all political combinations, the rotten intellectuals, the fanatical reactionaries, the new career-seekers in the field of politics who under a nationalist disguise did their utmost to dispossess the people of their freedom and tried to ride roughshod over them as they had done in the past, the

gold-out scribblers who wrote the articles for the papers issued by the German command and the traitor organizations, were the target of his scathing satire. The author is particularly severe in his unsparing criticism of the manoeuvres of the bourgeois-nationalist organization of the «Balli Kombëtar», the true political features of which he laid bare by pointing out the utter discrepancy between the ballists' claim to «patriotism» and their treacherous activity. The aim of the «Balli Kombëtar», which «has not liberated even a single hamlet», the author writes, is «to smuggle itself into history with a few shots fired here and there», «to create a non-existing epic». The articles of Nako Spiru throw a lurid light on the treacherous, anti-national role of the «Balli Kombëtar», especially in the time of the nazi occupation, when its armed detachments aligned themselves with the nazi forces and helped them drown in blood the liberation movement of the people. The problems of the youth, of its education and organization in the struggle against Italian fascism occupy an important place in the pamphlets of Nako Spiru. The pure and noble aspirations of the Albanian youth, which throw itself into struggle in the name of a happy future for the people, ring forcefully in many of Nako Spiru's articles. The author defended this youth against the slanders of the propaganda of the fascists and their agents, open or disguised, against the «big-bellied gentlemen with high-sounding names», who had sold Albania's freedom on foreign markets and now were trying to discredit the struggle of the youth by calling it a «child's affair». The author gave these men his answer in articles which had a wide echo in the circles of the youth. N. Spiru made a mock of the hopes of the reactionary politicians who fluted themselves that they could, through manoeuvres, deprive the youth of the fruit of its struggle. «We are marching towards our brilliant future, leaving our dark past behind once and for good», — the determination of the youth to march on the road



of freedom and happy future comes out clearly in these words of Nako Spiru.

The articles and pamphlets of Nako Spiru were remarkably concrete; often they were based on the facts of the day-to-day struggle; they were written in a simple and concise style with flashes of scathing irony and sarcasm.

Shefqet Musaraj, poet and prose writer, devoted much time to journalism. In the press of the National Liberation War, he published articles, sketches, reports and pamphlets, in which he exposes the true face of the fascist occupiers and their tools, the demagogic slogans of the official propaganda and the atrocities of the fascist troops against the innocent population. With his skilful use of the means of satire, Sh. Musaraj ridiculed the pseudo-patriots, the old professional politicians, who pretended to be «leaders of the people»; these people declared pompously that the Albanian people could win their freedom «without bloodshed, but only with deals, or some kind of compromises». The author called them «captains of the time», who try «to pose as avowed nationalists». He portrayed these elements in the known pamphlet «Yesterday and Today» (1944). It reveals the backstage of the cunning propaganda campaign the German command launched with the help of local reaction, «Balli Kombëtar» and «Legaliteti», to persuade the Albanian people that the nazis had not come to Albania as occupiers, but for strategic reasons. With pungent satire and happy use of figures of speech, Sh. Musaraj mercilessly caricatures the tools of the nazi occupiers and their slogans which aimed at befuddling the people, splitting and, at last, diverting them from the active stand in the war. In a number of sketches such as «The Sons of the Village», «On the Eve of Freedom», «Zija's Mother», «From Path to Path with the Partisans of the First Shock Brigade», etc., the author pictured the awakening of the masses of the people, the deep-going changes of their mentality under the influence of the liberation struggle, the heroism of the partisans.

Poetry developed in step with the other literary genres. The short kinds, such as verses, songs and marches, feuilletons in verse, responded better to the demands of life, the awakening and political education of the masses, and the inculcation of the spirit of selflessness and heroism.

An outstanding poem created in the years of the people's revolution is «The Epic of the Balli Kombëtar» (1941), written by Sh. Musaraj, a scathing parody against the members of the «Balli Kombëtar», who posed as if history had allegedly called upon them to «save» Albania. With satirical details selected from the wealth of folk satire, the author uncovers the reactionary essence and intellectual and political superficiality of these politicians, whose aim was to stop the people from seizing state power in Albania. The satirical effect of the poem is created by the contrast of the high-sounding words of the members of «Balli Kombëtar» and their deeds. Those who had not fired a shot against the foreigner and until yesterday had lived in compromise and collaboration with it, as soon as Italian fascists were driven out, tried to pass themselves off as its opponents or even persecuted by it. In order to deceive the people, they take to the mountains allegedly to fight for the freedom of Albania, but the masses, who had grown politically mature and had learned to tell the friends from the enemies, turned a cold shoulder to them. Seeing that their plans had fallen to pieces, the members of the «Balli Kombëtar» decided in a rage to shed all disguise. They made common cause with the enemy to reduce Albania to ruins and to drown it in blood. The last song of the poem, in merciless satire, describes the panic of the «Balli» members when they saw that the hour of vengeance had struck. The panic of the «Balli» members was the result of the hopelessness of the situation of those social forces which gave birth to this organization. By exposing «Balli Kom-



bëtar-, Sh. Musaraj branded as traitors the big land-owners, the big bourgeoisie, the high officials and all the anti-popular intellectuals, who had ridden roughshod on the people.

In the years of the people's revolution, the revolutionary songs, the songs to the martyrs, the partisan marches and hymns, became very popular. Outstanding amongst others were F. Gjata, K. Jakova, A. Varfi. The songs of F. Gjata draw their inspiration from the romantic aspects of the liberation struggle, the enthusiasm of the people and the youth. «The Call» (1942) is like a hymn to the patriotic spirit of the people in those years (The peasant leaves the plough today / no man remained at home), the readiness of the masses to fight (all fall lightning-like/on the barbarous enemies). The militant atmosphere of the years of the people's revolution has inspired the song «Rugged Mountains» (1943), when the liberation movement was transformed into an irresistible current that was wiping out the foreign occupiers. The essence of the song «Mountains Resound» is the fervent aspiration of the masses for national and social liberation (our day will come/peace and freedom will be for the workers and peasants). Many of F. Gjata's songs breathe with the militant spirit of the youth, its ideas and feelings, its ardent love for the country and the new life. («The Song of the Youth», «The Old Man and the Young Man» etc.). «The Song of the Three Heroes», by Kolë Jakova, is one of the most popular songs in the stormy revolutionary years. It was inspired by the bravery of the three communists, whose heroic act spread throughout the country, causing admiration and pride everywhere. While «The Partisan Eagle», by the same author, is a song to the patriotic spirit of the brave partisans.

Memo Meto (1911-1944), who was treacherously murdered by «Balli» gangs brought something of his own in his songs of war. Undauntedness, optimism, in front of difficulties are characteristic features of many songs by this author. They were popular amongst the partisans

and the people, who in the course of struggle learned that «no one donates you freedom/ its roots are in blood» (The news spread, the cry). The unbounded love for the Homeland, the readiness for sacrifices, the fighting spirit of the partisans, are in the centre of his verses. The heroine of the verse «I'll Take to the Mountains» is the embodiment of the Albanian women of the time, who took up arms and joined their partisan comrades. In the verses and songs of M. Meto, the partisan struggle is seen as the struggle of the workers and peasants not only to eliminate the foreign yoke, but also to overthrow the exploiting classes which suppressed the people and had sold the country to Italian fascism («We are suffering and languishing»). The aspiration of the masses of the people to social justice is strongly worded, also in the short poem «For Freedom». International solidarity with the peoples oppressed by fascism is the motif of some of M. Meto's short poems.

A. Çaçi and Ll. Siliqi wrote a number of lyrics which were inspired by the heroic atmosphere of the struggle against fascist slavery, especially by the heroic acts of the participants in the anti-fascist liberation movement. The joy over the development of the people's struggle, the patriotic spirit of the masses are the motifs of the verses «The Mother's Eye», «On the Top of the Mountain», «The Luli of the People» by A. Çaçi, which were distinguished for their unpretentious style. While the poems «Forward to War» and «They have Risen», by the same author, were distinguished for the inviting notes and the agitative spirit.

Ll. Siliqi sang to the indomitable patriotic spirit of the Albanian people in face of fascist terror.

.....  
They murdered us and hanged our sons  
And Albania is being devastated.

But she is not asleep, Today the people have risen  
And with the fire of their hearts are burning and  
shooting the cruel, sold occupiers, the traitors,  
They have never endured occupation



In the verse «To the hero Vojo Kushi», the poet depicted in epic-legendary colours, the figure of one of the courageous commanders of the Tirana guerrilla unit, who, together with three of his comrades fell heroically in 1943. «To Branko», «To Xhavit», and «To Gjika» open up to the reader the grievances of the poet, who remembers his close friends, who fell in the field of honour. The poet recreates the high moral and spiritual physiognomy, the intellectual capacity of the young martyrs who laid down their lives at the prime of their forces. The condemnation of the cruel occupier is the main idea of these verses.

The poem «O, Ptoleme» by Dh. Shuteriqi, is a painful cry at the loss of the close comrade, with whom the author was linked not only by the same ideal, but also by the memory of the years of childhood and close comradeship. The poem is built on anti-thesis, on the one side, the participants of the general Anti-fascist National Liberation War with their lofty ideals and aims and their moral purity and, on the other, the representatives of the reactionary camp, plunged into the mire of moral and political corruption.

In connection with the performances of the partisan theatre, the new drama made its first steps with some plays («Margarita Tutulani», by A. Çaçi) and several satirical sketches, which ridicules the enemies («The Federal», by Z. Sako).

The literature of the people's revolution is the forerunner of the present Albanian literature. The new concept of the people, who were considered as the decisive force of historic development, the new type of hero, who was embodied in the creations of various literary genres, the revolutionary partisanship, heroic optimism, all these testified to the emergence of an Albanian literature, inspired by the idea of a society without exploiters and exploited.

V  
PRESENT-DAY ALBANIAN  
LITERATURE



THE CHARACTERISTIC TRAITS OF PRESENT-  
DAY ALBANIAN LITERATURE AND ITS  
STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT DURING  
THE YEARS 1944-1977

I

Present-day Albanian literature covers literature that made its appearance and began to develop in Albania after the 29 of November 1944 when the nazi-fascist occupiers were driven out by the National Liberation armed forces and the way was cleared for the building of socialism. This literature came into being to meet the needs of the new ideology of Albanian society in its new stage of historical development which it entered after liberation. Albanian literature was called upon to become an effective means for the formation of the new social order in educating the masses of working people with a new morality and mentality. It became an important factor in the spiritual life of the country, giving its inestimable contribution to the radical transformation of Albanian society.

The internal conditions which helped literature confront successfully the new historical tasks that stood



before it were a result of the fact that a major part of the militant writers who wrote after liberation had taken part in the people's revolution. The appearance of present day literature was prepared within the bosom of the literature of the people's revolution. The main achievements of that literature were assimilated and further enriched on the basis of the struggle for the building of a socialist society in Albania.

Present-day Albanian literature marks a new stage in the history of the entire literature of Albania which is expressed in the new ideas that inspire it. The idea of socialism, the idea of building a society without exploiting classes, makes up the basis of literary creativity. This has been the determining factor of the themes and problems that present day Albanian literature deals with. The actual life of the masses of working people, the struggle for the revolutionary transformation of society, stand at the foundation of the subjects of the works of present day Albanian writers who interpret the phenomena of life according to scientific socialism.

The main object of the present day Albanian writers is to reflect in their works the process of the formation of the new society in its various aspects, the efforts of the masses of working people to crush the resistance of the overthrown exploiting classes and the establishment of socialist relations, the political and ideological struggle of the new society against the bourgeois and revisionist world that tries to obstruct it. The present day writers create their heroes out of the active builders of the new order: the workers, the peasants, the people's intellectuals, the young men tempered in the battles for the triumph of a socialist life.

The new Albanian literature not only reflects the profound social transformations in the life of the country but, with its own specific means such as the art of the written word, gives a hand to the strengthening of these transformations in educating the people with thoughts, desires and expressions liberated from the wounds caused by a society with classes. After liberation the

conflict between genuine art and the social order disappeared, a conflict which was unavoidable for the feudal-bourgeois society. The lofty social ideals that inspire the Albanian writers of the present are not in opposition to the present political and social reality of Albania but are embodied in it. That is why, different from progressive writers of the period before liberation, the major part of whom felt the antagonism between their ideals and the reality of the times, the present day writers take a new stand towards society and the state because they have no other interests to protect other than the interests of the masses of the working people, the interests of the building of socialism in Albania. Precisely for this reason they steer their work of artist overtly and consciously in the course of the endeavors of all the people for the socialist transformation of life. They see the realisation of their own inspirations in the policy of their people's power. Hence the partisanship of present day Albanian literature which is permeated throughout by the conviction of the great resources of the socialist order to surmount all the obstacles that hamper its irresistible march forward. It has complete faith in the future, confirms the assurance of the people in the final victory in spite of many and various difficulties that accompany the struggle for the building of socialism and communism. It is understandable that, while turning their attention mainly towards the presentation of the strengthening of socialist relations in life, the writers of today do not avoid the critical reflection of the negative manifestations which are survivals of the overthrown old world or are a result of bourgeois and revisionist influences that get to penetrate through various channels in the life of present day Albanian society. But, different from the progressive literature of the past that developed on the basis of the pathos of the denial of the old order, present day literature aims at confirming the new social order, at protecting and strengthening socialism which makes up its most essential trait.

A fundamental factor which has helped literature



resolve the tasks that stood before it has been and is the great interest and care of the Party of Labour of Albania for art. The Party achieves its role as a leader in literary creativity first of all by educating the writers in the spirit of socialism as well as through its own efforts to help literature follow a just and fruitful course. The Party continuously pursues the processes that occur in literature, makes generalizations of the growing experience and, in accordance with the new demands of the society, formulates the tasks that come up before the men of literature at every new stage that literary creativity enters. The resolutions and documents of the Party that contain profound analyses of the Albanian society and the contradictions that are resolved in the various stages of its development, of the class struggle that accompanies the building of socialism, have helped the writers, through the knowledge of their basic tasks, to clearly see the historical perspective. This has been of decisive importance in the creative work of those men of literature who have been guided correctly in the various processes of socialist construction, who have known and know how to recognize what is paramount and characteristic in the multitude of events and phenomena that develop around it. They look at socialist society as a society that maintains in itself a particular vitality and inexhaustible opportunity of development, and on this basis they know how to resolve correctly the conflicts that they reflect in their literary works.

The new literature that developed after liberation was strongly based on the best achievements of the progressive literature of the past. Patriotism is the most powerful and specific tradition of Albanian literature. The originality of the historical life of the Albanian people is supported among others also by the fact that they, like few other peoples had to fight for centuries for their national freedom and independence, for their existence as a nation, for their national language and culture. This also sealed the character of the Albanian

literature which is pervaded by a patriotic pathos. Nearly all the distinguished writers of the past beginning with Buzaku, who stands at the top of Albanian literature and up to Asdreni, from Naim Frashëri up to Noli, are characterized by their ardent patriotic sentiments: love of country, faith on the might of the Albanian people, their steadfast aspirations to assure the people a life of freedom and dignity, the persistent struggle for the liberation and independence of the Homeland. This tradition is alive also in the Albanian literature of socialist realism. Naturally, like all the content concerning ideas of present day literature, so was its patriotism developed on a concrete historical basis, on the basis of its new social relations and socialist ideology as the ideology in power. Thus in the new circumstances patriotism acquired new qualities in literary works, it became socialist patriotism. In the consciousness of today's writers the fate of Albania is closely linked with the interests of the masses of working people who became masters of the country in protecting the victory of the socialist revolution.

Other valuable traditions that present day literature inherited from the past are also the popular spirit and realism. The most distinguished Albanian writers have always been closely attached to the progressive political and social movements of the times, have expressed their progressive inclinations towards the historical development of the country. We find this trait clearly expressed particularly during the period of the Albanian Renaissance which was a progressive movement that aimed at bringing the people out of the darkness of the feudal and imperialistic Middle Ages into the light. It was a movement for national freedom and independence, for social progress and democracy, for education and learning. Even later on, in the twenties, when the bourgeoisie abandoned the democratic slogans and became a reactionary force, Albanian literature continued to be closely linked with the masses of people, becoming the expression of their aspirations for freedom and social justice.



The writers of today have taken the realistic traditions of past literature particularly from the authors of the twenties who reflected the social reality of the times in its most typical manifestations and have advanced these traditions further.

The present day Albanian literature was also formed by using the oral artistic creativity of the people which has been and still remains to this day a vivid source that fosters the creativity of present day writers, even though at various stages the relationships of folklore to literature have changed in accordance with the flourishment and development of the latter. At the present time the poets and prose writers make use of the stylistic and intonational structure of folk-tales, the general principles of artistic language that characterize the folkloric creations.

Alongside the most sound artistic traditions of the country which they have raised to a new and higher level from the historical point of view in respect to the new requirements of life, the writers of today at the same time have also made use of the achievements of world progressive art, first of all that of the distinguished representatives of the art of socialist realism of M. Gorky, M. A. Nexö, H. Barbys, V. Mayakowsky etc.

It goes without saying that the decisive factor in the development of Albanian literature of socialist realism has been and is the very life of the country itself. The present day Albanian literature was born on the soil of national life, it has its roots in the revolutionary transformations that began to exist in the country during the years of the antifascist National Liberation War of the Albanian people and was intensified further after liberation in the process of the socialist revolution. During the acquisition of the more positive achievements of the revolutionary literature, the Albanian literature of socialist realism has always maintained its own independence, it has thwarted everything alien that did not serve to resolve the tasks that the Albanian life laid before it. Today's writers, while taking everything that

is positive from world experience, have always put up a barrier to alien influences in art and ideas; they have fought against bourgeois and revisionist art. Being conscious of their international duty, they put on a resolute defence of the best traditions of world art of socialist realism which they are enriching and developing still further under the conditions of a fierce ideological struggle that is being waged today between marxism-leninism on the one side and revisionism and reactionary bourgeois ideology on the other.

The present day Albanian literature is distinguished by a remarkable originality that has its roots on the originality of the cultural traditions of the people and especially on its folklore, on the fact that its literary creativity has flourished and is flourishing on the grounds of the problems and events that have pervaded the life of the country and has its roots especially under the specific conditions in which the Albanian people liberated themselves from the yoke of the fascist occupiers and the reactionary ruling classes, carried out the socialist revolution and are fighting today for the complete construction of a socialist society in their own country courageously confronting the attacks, blackmails and the bourgeois-revisionist blockade. The Albanian writers of today in their works have always dealt with the most important problems that have concerned the masses of workers, their life and struggles in building a happy future without any bosses and foreign enemies over their heads. At the same time they do not forget for a single moment that their literary works are directed to the masses, that is why they try to make their creations simple and clear for them. «Our socialist art and culture — Comrade Enver Hoxha has said. — must rely on our native soil, on our wonderful people; they must emanate from the people and serve them completely; they must be clear and understandable for the people and not in the least «trite and without meaning». Hence the popular character as an important trait in present day Albanian literature.



Present day Albanian literature is a realistic literature, but its realism is of a new type. While having mastered a scientific understanding of the social life, today's writers reflect the typical traits not only in their inner links with the typical surroundings but also in their perspective, a perspective concretely understood from the historical point of view. The presentation of the characters of the people in their perspective does not mean to beautify them. Socialist realism is not interested in dressing up life; it presents life as it is, but, while having to do with a society that is in constant development, socialist realism cannot ignore to look at it while it is changing, cannot in the present day leave out investigating the sprouts of the future that are born in its bosom. This constitutes without doubt, the superiority of socialist realism over the old realism.

## II

After the liberation of Albania from the nazi-fascist occupiers the power passed into the hands of the people. This gave rise to a chance to strip the exploiting classes of their economic power after they were destroyed politically. The overthrow of the exploiting classes opened the way for profound social and economic changes, for laying the foundation of a socialist society. A component part of the transformations to a socialist life of the country is also the cultural and ideological revolution, the objectives of which are to raise the cultural level of the masses of people, spread the Marxist-Leninist ideology and fix the new concepts and expressions in the people's conscience. The changes that were made at the foundation of the life of the country determined the development of Albanian literature which was called upon to be an important factor in the social life.

With the establishment of the people's power very

favourable conditions were created for literary and artistic activity. With all the difficulties and deficiencies that the country encountered the first years after liberation, the Party and the people's state took measures to give the opportunity to the writers and artists to do creative work. At this time various literary and artistic competitions were held to urge creativity in the fields of art and literature, thus widening the material basis for the publication of works of art. In 1949 the law for the protection of author's rights was published. This was something that had not existed in the past. An important event in November 1945 was the founding of the Writers League, a first organization of this type in Albania which included in its ranks all the revolutionary writers and those honorable men of letters who accepted the platform of the people's power and put their talents at the service of building a new Albania. Of course it was not easy for all the writers who had kept away from the liberation war of the masses of people against the nazi-fascist occupiers to base their creative work on a new ideological and artistic foundation. In many instances this process was arduous, requiring a review of the old social and political convictions and the esthetic and literary point of view as well as the assimilation of the new Marxist-Leninist world outlook and its new creative principles. A decisive role in this mental and spiritual transformation of these men of letters was played by the tactful and patient work done by the Party of Labour of Albania and the new power for the re-education, as well as the important successes that were achieved in the building of a better life for the people. These factors made it possible for the forces that up till then were dormant or indifferent to come to life, to be put to action in the interest of the cause of socialism.

From the very beginning the Albanian writers were rightly oriented in their creative work. They put the greatest events in the life of the country at the foundation of the thematic and problematic matter of their



works. The writers who had taken part in the war of the Albanian people against the fascist occupiers put down on paper their impressions and observations about the people and events that they had lived through in those years. They related what made up the most remarkable trait of those years: the heroic spirit of the times. Brave and courageous men, events that reveal with a unique force that spirit of self-denial and sacrifice that distinguished the fighters of freedom, a prevalent heroic enthusiasm that had encompassed all the peoples—these were the themes of the first creations, verses, poems, narratives or dramatic plays. The authors narrated in them quite simply, often without adding anything, even mentioning the names of the persons and places where the events they mention had taken place. The works were a kind of artistic document of the epoch. At the same time literature turned its attention also to the new reality, to the contemporary problems and phenomena. Poetry, because of its nature, had the advantage of echoing first the revolutionary transformations of life, the surge of the new socialist elements in the people's conscience. It is understood that when the shape of the new world was just beginning to appear it was difficult to reflect life in a concrete poetic aspect. This is why the predominance of the lyrical spirit in the poetry of the first years after liberation is accounted. The conveyance of the overall joy of the new life that began to flourish, the delight in the first successes on the road to building the socialist order — this constitutes the contents of the best poetic creations of this period. Whereas in short prose efforts are made to reflect new types, situations and conflicts. Naturally it's a question of a kind of reconnaissance of the new reality, because its complete reflection will be achieved later, when the romances come out with themes from the present day life of Albanian society. Nevertheless, these creations proved that the Albanian writers were heading towards the road of reflecting the new social-historical reality.

Now that the new literature began to come ever more closer to the new social reality and to give its contribution to the building of the new life, it did not fit in with the survivals of the landlord-bourgeois men of letters who, while trying to hide their real purpose, had gone as far as becoming members of the League of Writers of Albania. Most of the time covertly; but sometimes even overtly they came out against the league's literary creativity concerning the main problems of the country's life, the tasks of the revolutionary transformations of Albanian society. They attacked the principles of communist partisanship which they considered a restriction of the freedom of creativity. Trying to push the writers into the road of subjective creations without any social value they replaced the conscientious moment in the creative work, the world outlook with intuition. The revolutionary men of letters who defended the idea of close links between the creative work with the problems and concerns of the country and the struggle of the masses of working people for the building of the new life, gave the answer to these attacks against the new literature. The attempts of the hostile elements to hamper the development of literature to get on the right road, on the road that does service to the cause of socialism, was given an overwhelming blow at the 3d Conference of the League of Writers that was held in October 1949. However the importance of the conference does not lie only in the fact that will this victory it crowned the fight against alien points of view in the field of literature. The main task of the conference was the discussion of the subtle problem that the development of literature raised. While generalizing on the experience gathered up till then from the literary creativity, the conference confirmed the uprightness of the road that the new literature was following. Socialist realism was considered not only as a literary orientation that answers the interests of the struggles of the masses of working people for the socialist transformation of the country, but also a way through which Albanian



literature would achieve new successes and would grow from the artistic point of view. A primary place in the proceedings of the conference was given to the most urgent problems of literary development, like the problem of partisanship as a fundamental principle in literary creative work, the thematic and problematic material of literary works and closely linked with this, the problem of the creators to be most closely linked with the life of the masses of working people, the problem of raising the level of literary mastery, the problem of the new talents etc. The participants stressed the absolute necessity of mastering Marxism-Leninism as a theory which makes it possible for the creators to know well the phenomena and the new processes of life.

In the first steps of the new literature, particular importance was given to the problems of the attitude toward the cultural heritage of the past. The establishment of a correct Marxist-Leninist understanding of this problem was important both in principle and practice, because during the first years after liberation not everyone was clear about what was to be accepted and what was to be rejected from the national culture of the past. Here and there sectarian and nihilist attitudes were noticed towards progressive and democratic traditions of the past. From lack of theoretical clearness some crossed out everything that was positive from the cultural heritage of the past. In this confusion the efforts of the antipopular men of letters and their supporters played their own part to integrate the landlord bourgeois culture of the past in the socialist culture. For the formation of a right concept in connection with this problem, the writers were given a great help by the Party of Labour of Albania which showed them that the culture of the past should not be looked upon as something homogenous and compact from the point of view of its ideological contents, that two forms of culture must be distinguished from our cultural heritage: the progressive culture with which the democratic strata have expressed their aspirations, and the reactionary culture which has served

the exploiting classes and the old social forces. In the edification of the new socialist culture, those traditions of the cultural heritage that have the force of fulfilling the requirements of the new society must be taken and used with discretion. The study of progressive literature of the past in a broad scale and the publication of the words of its distinguished figures like N. Frashëri, A. Z. Çajupi, Migjeni etc. contributed in getting to know the best of the traditions of the past and from there, in their use for the erection of the socialist culture.

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In the forties literature takes on a further development. The growth of literary creativity was noticed in all directions. Prose in particular took steps forward with the contributions of F. Gjata, S. Spasse, Dh. Shuteriqi, Ali Abdihojha etc. who aimed at grasping reality extensively to create characters that embody the typical characteristics of the times that attribute to the revolutionary transformations that occurred in Albanian society. Naturally its influence in life was marked by an extension of its thematic and problematic material, but characteristic for this period is the more profound treatment of the previous themes, particularly of the central theme: the Anti-fascist National Liberation War. The authors who directed their attention to the historical events of that period arrived at reflecting the important processes that were developing in the bosom of Albanian society at the threshold of the popular revolution, the alignment of the political and social forces in connection with the stand taken towards the fascist conquest and the organization of the war for the liberation of the country, the awakening and the lofty political conscience that the masses showed during this period, the extensive activities of the communists for the awakening and guidance of the masses in war, the failure of the endeavors of the exploiting classes to deceive the people



as in the past for their selfish aims and the rage that seized them when they saw that the plans for the preservation of their class rule were ruined. The strengthening of the links with the life and work of the masses of working people and the further developing of the artistic mastery of the writers lent a hand in extending the sphere of reflection of the socialist life in the literary works. The growth of the new socialist relations, the life and efforts of the masses for the building of the new social order, appeared in many works. In the broadening of the horizon of the actual life, a contribution was made particularly by the new penmen that began to be affirmed in literature beginning with the middle of the fifties such as I. Kadare, D. Agolli, N. Prifti, Dh. Xhuvani etc. In poetry there appeared the tendency to penetrate through the new social processes and developments. This was accompanied by passing from the transmission of the general gaiety to the description of the concrete facts of constructive work in sketching the moral and spiritual features of present day people in concrete realistic colors. This brought with it a new poetic vocabulary, a fresh and expressive figuration, a vivid poetic description that stands near normal speech. The attitude of the author towards what he reflected became more active.

All these achievements made the literary creativity more motley and more vivid. The further development of literature was not easy and without difficulties. In order to grasp at the new frontiers it was necessary to surmount and to overwhelm by debate and criticism a chain of defects and artistic concepts which impeded further progress of literature. Among the defects must be mentioned the fact that at times not enough importance was attached to researching new methods in the direction of content as well as in form, something which gave cause to the appearance of a chain of flaws like routine, schematism and so on. As a result of the live and principled discussions among literary circles the impeding concepts were overcome and the need to make researches to reflect

the new developments in life was confirmed. The policy of the Party of Labour of Albania that supported the enrichment of literature with new artistic means, essential in giving dynamism to the building of socialism, gave a hand in this direction. In his speech, delivered before the writers and artists in July 1961, Comrade Enver Hoxha qualified innovative research as something natural and lawful laid down by the development of life and literature itself. "... Our life is a great source of inspiration. We are seeing with our own eyes the great things that are being done in our country,- said Comrade Enver Hoxha while addressing the writers and artists. -There is poetry and innovation everywhere and no one has the right to impede it, even if this were possible. However, this innovation must proceed on the right road, respecting the principles of socialist realism... The fine traditions of the past must not be discarded. Innovation should never mean denial of tradition.-



The sixties constitute a new phase in literary development. This is the period of consolidation and further enrichment of socialist realism in Albanian literature. It coincides with the economic and social consolidation of the new order and the transition to the complete construction of a socialist society. By this time the old economic relations were completely liquidated and were replaced by new, socialist relations. The transformation of the means of production and circulation into common property, as well as the collectivization of agriculture brought about important changes in the structure of Albanian society in which, after the liquidation of the exploiting classes, only two friendly classes remained, the working class and the cooperativist peasantry, as well as the stratum of the people's



intelligentsia. The beginning of the struggle for the complete construction of a socialist society coincided with the beginning of the open struggle against modern revisionism, with that of the Soviet Union at the head, in which Albania was engaged in the sixties. The struggle to expose the anti-Marxist, counter-revolutionary and anti-Albanian activities of the modern revisionists brought about an atmosphere of unexampled mobilization in the masses of working people who displayed in the various fronts of socialist construction a high patriotic spirit and readiness for sacrifice, thus breaking the blockade, the attacks and the constant pressures of the enemies. This was a time when the life of the nation was so full of ideological and political activities and various important revolutionary events. This explosion of the creative energies of the masses and uplift of the revolutionary spirit in social life was intensified further particularly by the measures of the Party of Labour of Albania and the Government in order to do away with manifestations of bureaucratism and liberalism, routine, concepts, habits and traditions of patriarchalism and conservatism, as well as the influence of religion.

Life itself, with the important events that took place and the further advancement of the ideological and cultural level of the masses, raised literature to a new height, progressing both in form and content. Proceeding from the intention of taking a more active part in the social life, the writers dealt with the more complex and acute problems of the times, depicted the basic aspects and conflicts of the Albanian reality of the sixties, revealed through their vivid artistic illustrations the meaning of the events that were taking place under their eyes. The analysis of important political and social problems helped raise the artistic level of the literary works. This also called for higher standards of literary work by the writers themselves who through their own persistent efforts were mastering the art of extensive artistic generalizations and going more deeply into the inner world of their heroes. Alongside epic scenes describ-

ing reality, in general, in these years the writers tried to delve deeper into and illustrate them through more perfect and concise means of expression and illustration. All this contributed to overcoming shallowness in reflecting the aspects of life, the descriptive spirit which stood in the way of development of literature. On the other hand, at this time the creative initiative grows, the inclination of the artist to express in a more comprehensive manner his individuality as a creator were strengthened. Based on sound bases, the writers express clearly and effectively their thoughts about the aspects of life that become an object of artistic reflection in their works. This could only lead to an increase in the influence of the artistic word. The sixties produced a series of remarkable literary works like "The General of the Dead Army", "What Are These Mountains Brooding on", "Commissar Memo", "The Fathers", "The Dead River", "Before the Dawn", etc., which not only confirmed the artistic maturity attained by present-day Albanian literature, but also made it possible for it to be known beyond the frontiers of the country and acquire recognition by foreign readers as well.

At this period of literary development, the problem of the fate of the country, the further development of the socialist revolution in Albania, won major importance. Characteristic for the best literary works was the extensiveness of poetic thought. The writers attempted to tackle the great problems of the epoch by often turning to history, treating the theme of the historical fate of the Albanian people in the past and in the present. Poetry was particularly cultivated during these years. It revealed the roots of the dauntless spirit of the Albanian people before difficulties in their greatest events of the past; it saw their ardent patriotic spirit, their great yearning for a free and independent life. The best poetry and verses of I. Kadare, D. Agolli, Ll. Siliqi, etc., helped the readers to a more profound understanding of the great events that the country was living through. It educated them with courage and the spirit of heroism



in front of the enemies. The prose writers tried to solve this task by relating the epic struggle of the Albanian people that liberated the country from the nazi-fascist yoke and carried out the socialist revolution while overcoming many difficulties. The reflection of the people's revolution as a natural and lawful historical phenomenon, of the decisive role of the masses in the historical changes achieved in the development of the country and of their inexhaustible creative energies burst forth in their struggle for the building of a socialist society, is found in the novels of Sh. Musaraj, A. Abdihoxha, I. Kadare, Dh. Xhuvani, etc.

Being more closely linked with the people, with their actual life, literature presented the revolutionary transformations that were being accomplished in all fields, described the new phenomena and developments of socialist society, the further implantation of the socialist ideology in life, the strengthening and broadening of socialist democracy. Subjects from the actual life of the country were taken up in novels, plays, poems, stories, etc. (S. Spasse, T. Laço, Ll. Siliqi, A. Kondo, K. Jakova, V. Koreshi, etc.), which are characterized by attempts to follow the rhythms of life in order to influence the strengthening of the new processes and developments in the life of the society.

These steps forward were taken by our literature in fierce struggle with the hostile manifestations that appeared at the beginning of the seventies in the creations of some authors who, insufficiently formed ideologically, or for other reasons, inclined towards liberalism, the pressure of bourgeois and revisionist influences in art. The weakening of the class feeling and communist partisanship, the manifestations of bourgeois objectivism and an abstract and supraclass humanism were manifestations of departure from socialist realism. There were authors who began kind of standing aloof from the major problems and shutting themselves up in their own microcosm, and shirking the reflection of the great heroic characters in which the principal features of the

present epoch are expressed. All this was linked, on the one hand, with underestimation of the tradition of Albanian art and the creativeness of the people, and on the other hand, with a kind of subserviency, on the part of certain men of letters, to the models of decadent bourgeois art. A suitable ground for the emergence of these alien manifestations was created by the confusion that some hostile elements and their followers had created around the question of the relationship between tradition and innovation. Availing themselves of the natural and legitimate desire of the men of letters to express the new phenomena with new artistic means, the enemies tried to distort all innovation attempts by urging the writers and artists to formal and abstract research and experimentation.

The 4th Plenum of the CC of the PLA had great importance in overcoming these alien manifestations and defining the tasks for the further deepening of the ideological struggle against alien manifestations and the liberal attitude towards them, in all fields. While sternly criticising erroneous trends in literary creativeness, the Plenum called on the writers to strengthen their proletarian class spirit, to reflect more truthfully the struggle of the working masses for the building of socialism, to combat more severely all alien manifestations and attitudes in our society which are an expression of the bourgeois-revisionist ideological aggression and encirclement of our country. -We are sure that- said Comrade Enver Hoxha in the report he delivered to this Plenum. -In the future, as up till now, the creative activity of our writers and artists will be inspired from our wonderful socialist reality, the heroic struggle of our people, our working class and working peasantry, from the lofty revolutionary ideas of the Party of Labour of Albania.-

After hitting hard at alien phenomena and manifestations, our men of letters mustered all their forces for a new development of their creative work. The literary life of the period 1973-1977 was marked by further



ideological and artistic growth. The best works of these years distinguish themselves for their militant spirit and the broad scope of their artistic generalizations. There was a perceptible broadening of the reflection of the problems and conflicts arising from the class struggle within our society in its efforts to guarantee the uninterrupted continuation of the socialist revolution. Treatment of themes of cardinal importance for the present-day reality, reflection of the selfless heroic work of the Albanian people in the conditions of the bourgeois-revisionist encirclement has become the main road of development of Albanian literature today. This close connection of the literary creativeness with the problems and conflicts of the time, has further emphasized the national features of Albanian literature. The period following the 4th Plenum was characterized by the emergence of new writers who contributed to the further development of Albanian literature. All this led to the enhancement of the role of literature in the education of the masses, and especially the youth, in the communist spirit.

#### THE EPIC OF THE NATIONAL LIBERATION WAR IN LITERATURE

The new Albanian literature after liberation was under the powerful impact of the impressions of the heroic war waged by the Albanian people against the nazi-fascist occupiers and the local traitors. This was understandable. The Anti-fascist National Liberation War of the Albanian people was a major historic event which marked a radical turn in the fate of the country. As a result of this war, the exploiting ruling classes were liquidated for good and the people took power in their own hands. The National Liberation War enhanced the historical consciousness of the Albanian people, revealed the high political maturity with which they coped with the difficult tasks history had put to them. The best works of the new literature could not fail to reflect this great event in the history of Albania. The poets, prose-

writers and playwrights wanted to show the greatness of the heroism of the masses of the people who drove out the foreigners and opened the way for the development of the country in the socialist road.

A number of sketches and short stories, reflecting the heroism of the people in the new historical conditions and their ideological inspiration, were published. A common feature of these first writings was their documentary character. Trying to respond to the enthusiasm aroused by the glorious victory of the people over their external and internal enemies, the writers were eager to put on paper their direct impressions of and observations on the war. They dealt with real facts and deeds, with real people.

Personal recollections and impressions written in terse language are characteristic of the first writings on the people's liberation war by F. Gjata, Dh. Shuteriqi, Z. Sako, etc. The facts that drew the attention of F. Gjata in his sketches are diverse: the heroic stand of people in difficult situations, their determination to carry the war against the enemy through to the end or their devotion to the cause for which they were fighting. In "The Youth", a short story, he narrates the heroism of a real young partisan who accepts death rather than step on the red star cap, as he is ordered by the nazi soldiers. A poor old peasant who participates in the people's war with certain skepticism at first but who is eventually convinced that struggle led by the communists will bring the people the victory over their enemies - this is the theme of the sketches "The Enemy at the Hearth Is Unbearable" and "Uncle Lim Won't Let Go of the Rifle". Of heroism and love of the Homeland of plain ordinary people speak also some of the sketches of Z. Sako "Ali's Automatic Rifle", "Sefedin's Mother", etc. The patriotism of the masses of the people who, without hustle or bustle, gave everything for the cause of liberating the Homeland from the foreign occupiers, is the central theme of the story "The Medal of Valour" (1949). This author also turned his attention towards the



birth of the new moral traits in the consciousness of people under the conditions of the people's war. This comes out in the sketches «The Father», «Reconciliation through Blood», «Bolena», etc. The hero of the sketch «The Father», at the last moment of his life, takes out of his pocket an old «napoleon» earned with so much sacrifice and tells his comrade: «This is all I've got, give it to the Communist Party as my contribution.» Of a documentary character are also the sketches «Why Are These Drums Beating?», «The Flying Chicken», etc., of I. Kadare and Dh. Shuteriqi respectively, which express the sincere and ardent patriotism of common people, their courage in engagements with the enemy.

It would not be correct if it were to limit the new prose of the first years after Liberation with these writings of a documentary character. From the outset these writers tried to present the historical events of the period of courageous struggle with the enemies in a truly artistic manner, to create literary characters with generalizing features. The stories «The Doubts of Jonuz Ranxha» and «Uncle Dem» (1953) by Dh. Shuteriqi, «The Bride» (1947) by F. Gjata, «The Crowns of Masar Bey» by J. Xoxa, etc., show this. The stories of Dh. Shuteriqi tell of the difficult process of the liberation of the patriarchal peasantry from ancient superstitions and especially from mistrust in the forces of the people, which made themselves felt for a time until eventually the peasantry joined without reservation the general war of liberation. Psychological analysis, the ability to reveal through characteristic monologue and dialogue the force of the old mentality, the use of realistic details, make up the features of the stories «The Doubts of Jonuz Ranxha» and «Uncle Dem». Both F. Gjata and J. Xoxa, in accordance with their individual artistic manner, narrate in their works the ludicrous endeavours of the political advocates of the exploiting classes and the ballists.)

1) Members of a traitorous organization which made common cause with the invaders.

to hold back the impetus of the people's movement which like an avalanche wiped out the entire old world. The characters in these stories («The Bride» and «The Crowns of Masar Bey») are portrayed in a satirical vein.

With the appearance of the novel, the National Liberation War, began to be reflected also in this long genre of epic conception. Dh. Shuteriqi was the first, in the novel «The Liberators» vol. 1, 1952, vol. 2, 1955, to paint a broad picture of the life of Albanian society in the years of the fascist rule and of the formation and development of the people's liberation movement. The novel has a whole gallery of characters whose fates symbolize the basic aspects of the historical epoch. The author captures and relates with realism the futile attempts of the landlord-bourgeois rulers, during those difficult years, to foil the aspirations of the masses of the people for freedom and social justice. The National Liberation War kindled the hopes of the common people for the realization of their social aspirations. This idea is reflected in the fate of Dokë Trepanishti who represents the type of the man who has passed his life bending his back at work to keep body and soul together. He had to get even with the unjust social order; that is why he waited eagerly for the communist call for war against the foreign occupiers and their collaborators. Mother Hatija, who represents the plain ordinary illiterate woman of the common people, awakened under the influence of the events of the war and, who begins to look upon life differently, also arouses interest. In the novel there are various representatives of the people who in various ways, according to their individual experience, join the ranks of the fighters for freedom. The awakening of the people is looked upon as a result of the great work done by the communists in clarifying and leading them. The essential traits of the communist character are embodied in Hajdar Rracani, Gani Guri, Col Trepanishti, etc., who are the spirit of the resistance against the fascists and their tools.

While being closely linked with the struggle of the people against oppression and exploitation, the author



also knows the state of mind of the ruling classes who, when they saw they were not in a position to deceive the masses of the people and, even less, to stop the drive of the organized people's movement, joined the foreign occupiers politically and militarily. The unpatriotic spirit of the privileged classes is lashed particularly in the figure of the bourgeois intellectual Leks Lala who, with very subtle means and concealed behind demagogical slogans, tries to keep the honest people, craftsmen, teachers, and others, away from the influence of the National Liberation Front.

Dh. Shuteriqi's novel has been conceived as a broad panorama of the epoch; it has the makings of an epic novel. «The Overthrow» (1954) by F. Gjata is constructed in quite a different way. The author took it upon himself to narrate in his work the political and spiritual formation and growth of the hero, an ordinary peasant boy under the influence of the ideas of the Anti-fascist National Liberation War. The fate of the hero is the typical fate of thousands of young peasants who, intolerant of the yoke of fascist slavery that weighed even more heavily on the peasantry, prompted by their love of country, rose up in arms against the foreigner and filled the ranks of the partisans. The more interesting part of the novel is that which presents the hero as having a correct idea of society and the people's condition, his conviction that the only correct way of saving the people was the organized armed struggle against the foreigners and the exploiting classes which were the enemy's social basis. His struggle with the enemies in the village, the difficulties he had to overcome in the partisan life, his participation in several battles educate him with the qualities of a capable military leader. The author gives a true account particularly of the conflict between the people and their enemies. The interests of the exploiting classes were closely linked with the interests of the fascist occupiers: that is why the landlords, the reactionary bourgeoisie and the other anti-popular forces sided with the occupiers and made common cause with them. In the novel a considerable place is taken

up by the struggle of the peasants against the agha of the village who, as a tool of the foreigners, does everything to prevent the village from joining the ranks of the popular liberation movement. Through the various episodes, often of a dramatic character, the political formation of the masses, the strengthening of their confidence in their own forces which make them rise and bravely confront the threats of the enemies, are revealed. The greed of the village agha, his role as a detestable servant of the Italian fascists and his crimes against the peasants come out of the novel through realistic scenes and details.

One of the works that describe the heroism of the people's war of liberation is the novel «A Stormy Autumn» (1959) by A. Abdihoxha. At the centre of the work is the activity of a small group of youths who have been charged with the task of setting up an underground press. The courage and the rare spirit of self-denial, the heroes show in the difficult situations they are faced with, is expressed through the fate of Petrit, the head of the group, a young worker who has known ever since he was a youngster the ruthlessness and brutality of the landlord-bourgeois class. This experience soon led him to join the ranks of the fighters for the liberation of the masses of working people from national and social oppression. After having joined the popular movement, he dedicates to it all his energies. As a determined fighter he is everywhere that the interests of his mission require it, in the mountains or in the city. An untiring man of few words, he appears as the embodiment of a conscious fighter, who has put himself completely in the service of the cause of the revolution. However, his moral mettle is put to a hard test during his arrest and the tortures he is subjected to by the Gestapo hangmen. These episodes reveal the relentless spirit of Petrit, his steadfast faith in the triumph of the cause of the people. Also in the figure of Lumto Gjinari, the daughter of an ordinary teacher, the author reveals the new traits people had acquired in the process of the war for the liberation of the country from foreign



slavery. Lumto together with Petrit represent the type of the new man that began to appear in Albanian life during the years of the popular revolution and became a predominant phenomenon in later years.

The principal idea of the novel is that everything morally pure and noble during the war years was in the camp of the resistance against fascism, whereas the herd of adversaries was made up of selfish people who lived solely to meet their personal interests or those of the reactionary class to which they belonged. Another important idea of the subject of the novel is of a philosophical social nature: living with the people, with the problems and preoccupations of the Homeland, enriches the spiritual life of the individual. Nazmi Bey, one of the leaders of the traitor organization that collaborates with the nazis, is an advocate of the exploiting ruling classes who had long betrayed the interest of the country and had become a reliable support of the foreign occupiers in Albania. The history of this character is the history of the political and moral degeneration of the individual under the influence of the anti-popular and reactionary ideas.

Lyricism, a talent for endowing the positive characters with romantic traits, the vivid sketching of the environment and nature, are characteristics of the author's style.



Poetry also started with the theme of the National Liberation War. The poets aimed at expressing that which made more impression on them: the unprecedented heroism of the popular masses struggling for life or death with the enemy who were large in number and armed to the teeth.

One of the most known and most moving poetic works of the first years was the poem «Prishtina» (1949) by Ll. Siliqi. It was prompted by a political event of the

times: in the years 1945-1947 the reactionary circles of the West, enraged by the triumph of the popular revolution in Albania, started a propaganda campaign to deny the Albanian people's contribution to the destruction of fascism. The vile slanders of the enemies gave rise to the lawful indignation of Albanian public opinion which gave the deserved answer to the evil-wishers of Albania. The indignation of the people over the vile provocations of the reactionary press resounds loud and clear in the poem. At the same time they recall their heroism in the years of the Second World War, while fighting with powerful and savage enemies. This content conditions the emotional spirit of the poem which is put together like a restless poetic speech full of pathetic appeals, moving apostrophes and expressive descriptions.

The lofty patriotic feeling and the ardent love for the people burst out at the very first verses where the poet stigmatizes in a strong stirring tone the vile slanders of the enemies who:

Wheeze like snakes,  
For the sun that shines on us today  
Is as dark as the night.  
For the blood shed by the martyrs  
Is not red and bright  
For the countryside and towns,  
The rivers and the banks,  
The hills and the mountains  
Have nothing to tell.

The poem was not only an answer to the enemies; it contains lyrical meditations about the epic of the National Liberation War as a great heroic deed of the Albanian people, as an event through which the traditional courage and ardent love for a free and independent life were revealed with remarkable force. The poet speaks with tender emotion of the martyrs and their imprisonment by the fascists; of the purity of their moral aims, of the



heroism and the lofty spirit of sacrifice that distinguished the people in the years of the bitter combat with the enemies, of their readiness for sacrifice for the freedom of the Homeland and the people. The poem reaches an epic climax when it narrates the life of the Albanian patriots interned in the Prishtina camp, where the nazis executed 104 freedom fighters. But even these descriptions, the horrible everyday reality of the prisoners, are full of inner pathos. They reproduce the heroic spirit and unexampled stoicism of the patriots who did not succumb to the tortures and suffering, but stood up to them in defiant bravery. Their lofty sacrifice, like that of the 20,000 Albanians who fell in the war for national liberation, is for the poet a vivid testimony to the magnificence of the Albanian people's war against the rule of the fascists and the local traitors, to their inestimable contribution to the defeat of the enemies of humanity:

If the voices of those killed,  
Twenty-eight thousand in all,  
Would rise today in thunderous roar,  
The earth would tremble and what's more,  
Who wouldn't hear the call  
Coming from their chests all torn?

The Anti-fascist National Liberation War of the Albanian people is described in the work as one of the most brilliant and most glorious pages in the history of the Albanian people. The poet calls it -the sun that shone in the nights of slavery- and now -blinds- all those who do not want Albania to prosper. Wherever they went, in all the regions they liberated, the partisans brought with them -one hope, one light and one flag-, and through their struggle not only the people, but also -the plains and the mountains breathed once again-.

The heroic pathos of the struggle against the foreign occupiers is also expressed in the creations of other poets like K. Jakova, F. Gjata, Z. Sako, A. Varfi, L. Qafë-

zezi, etc. The majority of them related real events and persons in typical circumstances.

The subject of the poem -The Heroes of Vig- (1953) by K. Jakova is based on a true happening: the manly resistance and the heroic death of a unit of five partisans surrounded by a horde of mercenaries, tools of the nazis, at Vig in Mirdita, a region where the reactionary forces were in power. The style of K. Jakova distinguishes itself through its epic spirit and the objective sketching of people and the events. In order to portray the heroism of the freedom fighters, the author made use of the characteristic forms of popular oral creativeness and especially of the elements of the Albanian epic folklore. The partisans are described like the heroes of the popular legends: giants of physical strength, and their encounter with the enemy in the perfidious ambush is given like in epic poetry, with the heroes hurling insults and threats directed at the enemy. The conventional poetic form has not prevented the poet from giving in vivid artistic colours the moral force of the partisans, their defiance of death, their deep devotion to their ideal to which they have dedicated their life, their profound love for the people. The author sketches the portraits of the brave partisans stressing in each of them some individual traits, while emphasizing what is common to all of them and makes them face up to the situation. At the very beginning the five freedom fighters know how the encounter with the enemy is going to end, but still they are conscious of the great responsibility that weighs on them. Therefore, in these extreme moments, all their thoughts and wishes are expressed in their determination - to live up to the name of the partisans who never separates his words from his deeds. The high devotion to duty is one of the essential traits all the members of the unit have in common. They face death with a calm conscience because they have honourably fulfilled the task with which Party has charged them. Their last desire is that their comrades know that they have honoured the name



of the communist. This is expressed in the last words of the unit given in a very moving lyrical verse:

Oh, you mountains so high,  
When the army comes here by,

This is the most truthful reflection of the new type, the communist with his enlightened mind and heroic spirit - the spirit of self-denial and supreme sacrifice of the partisans. This spirit breathes through the poem «The Heroes of Vig» - one of the best poetical achievements of Albanian poetry of the first years after Liberation.

F. Gjata with his simple, unpretentious poems, endeavours to convey the spirit of the years of war against the fascist occupiers and their tools. The ordinary sons and daughters of the people are extolled as heroes in their efforts to save the country from the clutches of the invader. His ballades «I Took the Rifle and Waited no More», «Why Are You Crying, Dear Mother?» and «The Parent's Ballade», in particular, are notable efforts in the poetic reflection of the spirit of those difficult and glorious times. The best poetic production of F. Gjata, no doubt, is «The Song of Partisan Benko», which draws its motif from a folk song about the bridegroom who left his young wife on the morrow of his wedding, in order to answer the call of the Homeland. Symbol and realistic details are combined to work out the pattern of the thoughts and emotions of a young man, torn between love of the Homeland and love for his young wife, who in a most crucial moment, at the first signal of the partisans, joined them in the war against the foe. Obviously, the poem is not a character analysis, with a plot developing according to all rules. It is essentially a poetic narrative about the patriotic enthusiasm of the politically conscious masses of the people, their courageous deeds. The pure lyricism of the folk song, combined with the poet's optimistic tones, produce a final effect that is quite personal in this poem. In another series of poems, such as «The Watchman»,

«The Mountain Paths», «The Frost on the Mountains», etc., F. Gjata reproduced in unadorned colours concrete aspects from partisan life of the freedom fighters, their love for their own folks, their life and usual worries and cares after the battles with the enemies.

The heroic spirit of the partisan years breathes in the ballades «The Commissar» by Z. Sako and «The Son of the Party» by A. Varfi. Z. Sako pointed out self-denial as a characteristic trait of the years of war. What the hero feels at the last moments of his life, mortally wounded in battle, is not despair but the proud feeling of falling like a man in the field of battle. The scorn for death, in the name of the ideal of liberating the common people, is the core of the idea in the poem of A. Varfi, about a communist who gives the enemies their deserved answer, when they try to persuade him to betray his comrades and his ideals.

As time passed, the National Liberation War theme came to be treated more profoundly. The authors began to sketch more completely the character of the participant of the liberation war and in a most original manner. The young poets gave a worthy contribution in this direction. «The Road Poem» (1958) by D. Agolli is a very personal approach to the life experience of the new generation, of those youths who took to the mountains and became freedom fighters when their moustaches hadn't sweated as yet. The poem appears in the form of a biography that the hero relates himself in the tone of a quiet friendly conversation. The poem is pervaded throughout by the motif of the «road» which, like in the imagination of the people, means the coming out into the great road of life in search of happiness. While relating about the hero's boyhood, filled with distress and privations, the poet describes the legitimate course of his life. For the sons of the common people there was no road for securing a better life for the common people other than that of the war. The hero's conscious youth began at the time when his endurance was at an end and the people were rising against the cause of their misery. So the hero,



like all other people of his age, who aspired to a new life, answered the call of the Homeland:

With the sound of rifle-shots from the mountains,  
With the shooting of rockets in the air,  
With the might of the hymn «Internationale»,  
I bid my boyhood farewell.

The road of the hero is the road of his revolutionary formation and tempering, of the process of his molding with the qualities of the conscious and convinced fighter for the cause of the people. The emotional world of the youths who come from the bosom of the people is reflected with psychological insight. The important trait is their modesty, their conscious understanding that, in joining the partisans and in fighting against the fascists, they did nothing more than their duty towards the people. Vain boasting and faked heroism are alien to them. They admit themselves: «I haven't been any rare kind of hero, however, I did defend my country and esteemed it, or could have fallen a martyr for it.»

The second part of the poem dwells on the new life of the country, of the self-denying work of the youths. In this part the fate of the hero is revealed through the motif of the «road» which symbolizes socialism and attracts the hero with its romantic independent work. The idea of a happy life, the idea of a new heroism of the youths who overcome the difficulties and build the promising future with their own hands, makes up one of the important ideas of the poem. In it are expressed the creative impulse of the independent work that goes on in the whole country, the continuation and enrichment of the heroic traditions of the war period against the fascist occupiers under the conditions of the building of socialism.

## THE STRUGGLE TO BUILD A SOCIALIST LIFE IN LITERATURE

In the very first years after the establishment of the people's power, a series of literary works saw the light: poetry, sketches, narratives and plays in which the birth of the new socialist world, the fight against the old world and the formation of the new man with the new Albanian physiognomy were described. It is difficult to say that this or that genre made more progress on this road. An entire new literature was born in the course of the revolutionary transformations. In the beginning a highly emotional lyricism developed reflecting the people's joy, the enthusiasm and high spirit of mobilization at work. Being impressed by the completion of an industrial work, or being inspired by the constructive work that was in full swing all over the country, the poetry of that period is pervaded by the pathos of the new life. Such poetry was written by the poets of the old generation, such as A. Çaçi, Dh. Shuteriqi, A. Varfi, N. Bulka, etc., as well as by the new penmen that came out into the literary life during the years of the anti-fascist resistance or after the triumph of the popular revolution, such as Ll. Siliqi, L. Qafëzezi, A. Banushi, V. Bala, D. Bubani, etc. Each of them, according to his inclination and talent, chose the respective artistic medium to reflect the joy of the whole country that had entered the road to a life of happiness. Even though sometimes these verses were very general, often quite similar, in regard to motifs and means of expression, nevertheless they were well received by the readers. They answered the enthusiastic spirit with which the whole country was building the new foundations of a new society.

The lyrical emotive spirit distinguished the poems «Well, Myzeqe» by A. Çaçi, «The Friend», «The Revival» and «The Teacher» by Ll. Siliqi, as well as the poems by M. Gurakuqi, L. Qafëzezi, etc. «Well, Myzeqe» (1947) by A. Çaçi is the poetic history of the past and of present-day Myzeqe, one of the most oppressed rural regions of



Southern Albania. The idea of the new life that began for the peasantry after Liberation is revealed through general poetic speculations and sometimes through symbol. The antithesis between the dark past of Myzeqe and the dawn of a happy future that was ushered in with the triumph of the popular revolution forms the texture of this poem. The objective, i.e. the effort to reflect the flourishing of the new life, has determined the form of the literary work. The new life comes into relief against a background of realistic descriptive fragments about the past of the peasants languishing under the yoke of beys. The last part of the poem breathes with optimism. The liberation from class oppression comes as a revival both for man and nature. After escaping the detestable past, the poor peasants unite in cooperatives, convinced that this is the conclusive road to escape misery.

Ll. Siliqi in a number of poems, in which he echoes the important events of the country's life, is a model of the application of the method of socialist realism in poetry. The impetus of the construction work, the theme of the defence of the country from the aggressive intentions of the imperialist states, and other such themes are treated in a journalistic vein, with feeling and very personal style. The poem "The Friend" (1953) is a lyrical portrait of an old peasant who had fought against the violence and despotism of the rich. Life smiled upon this man only during the years of the people's power when he became free and master of a plot of land in his own right. The poem "The Teacher" exalts the heroic act of an ordinary school teacher who, overcoming many difficulties, succeeds in opening fifty schools in the remote mountain regions which up till then lived in obscurity and stagnation. In the midst of his work he is perfidiously murdered by the reactionary forces of the mountainous region. The most distinguished literary work of Ll. Siliqi, dedicated to the building of the new life, is his lyrical-epic poem "The Revival" (1959), in which the image of the socialist Homeland, revived by the independent creative work of the masses of working people, is reproduced in truthful,

concrete portrays of the old peasants whom the agricultural cooperative saved from the want and insecurity of the former life; the young soldier who defended with his blood the borders of the Homeland; the young peasant girl and boy who love each other. The poem is full of apostrophes and pathetic calls directed to the Homeland, the poetic revelation for the successes and important victories that were achieved in the years of heroic work. This feature determines the active role of the lyric hero and of the poet himself. The hero is not merely a contemplator, but a conscious participant in the great socialist transformations of the country. His words and feelings express the thoughts and sentiments of all the conscious builders of socialism, of the generations which after Liberation were breaking through the new life. The accomplishment of this noble task fills the poet with legitimate pride:

... And we  
                                shall take pride  
That from our hands,  
You took the banner  
Of our ancestors,  
From whom we took it first.  
We shall take pride  
That we were the first  
To write the word "Communism"  
In that banner.

The call for vigilance towards the ill-wishers of our Homeland rings loud in the last fragment. Inspired by the ardent love of the Homeland, the poet strongly stigmatizes the enemies of socialism and of progressive mankind.

Treating important problems from an original angle, with the happy choice of words, I. Kadare played an important role in enriching the Albanian literature with new, untackled problems. Among his best poems



dedicated to socialist reality worth mentioning are: «An Industrial Dream» (1960) and «Notes for My Generation» (1961), etc. In «An Industrial Dream», while remaining with poetical conventions, the poet contemplates on the dynamic changes of the country on its road to socialism. The poet, a visionary, sees with his mind's eyes a new Homeland growing as an industrial complex with tall chimneys and heavy machinery, in contrast to the past when Albania as a small backward country was the constant object of the destructive attacks of repeated invasions. Historical analogies and political associations are skillfully used to develop the idea about the build-up of the industrial potential in order to secure the independence and existence as a free country. While speaking of Albania, which will soon produce its own steel, the poet recalls the long list of martyrs of the nation who gave their lives while fighting with swords produced by «foreign steel». In the steel that will be poured and modern machinery that will be built the poet sees the secure future of the country, for only with this kind of dynamic development the «soldiers of the enemy» shall never set foot on the soil of Albania.

In the poem «Notes for My Generation» I. Kadare takes up the dynamics of socialist development of Albania, through the intensive realistic aspects of construction work intermingled with historical associations.

I see my Republic  
In industrial morns,  
Dressed in overalls  
And still wearing the brimless cap.

The poem expresses the joy of youths grown up in the free air of socialism, ready to put all their energies and skills to work for the flowering of the Homeland. The aspirations and thoughts of the present-day Albanian youths found their clearer and more completed expression in the poem «Reveries» (1958) - an optimistic prospect of the future. This poem is like a pledge of our youth for

eternal devotion to the socialist Homeland.

Boundless love of country, the poetic fervour and great joy over its development and progress in the new Albanian poetry are combined with feelings of proletarian internationalism. Many poems are dedicated to the main leaders of the international proletariat, to Lenin and Stalin. In the short poems «At the Mausoleum» by Ll. Siliqi and «To Lenin» by I. Kadare, the gratefulness and profound respect of the Albanian people are expressed in warm moving verses dedicated to memory of Lenin, the great leader of the international proletariat and the genial strategist of the first victorious socialist revolution. The poets wrote with feeling about sincere friendship and fraternal solidarity with the peoples who fight for socialism in order to gain their national freedom and independence: «May You Live as Long as the Mountains, You Great Army of Peace.» of Ll. Siliqi, «Song, Song», «The Advertisement» and «In the Café» by D. Agolli, etc., besides the sympathy for the freedom-loving peoples, for the ordinary people all over the world, who are suffering under the burden of the national and social yoke, ring with stigmatization of inhuman plans of war-mongering circles, the barbarous nature of the Anglo-American imperialists who tried to suppress with fire and steel the just war of liberation of the various peoples.

Besides poetry, the new prose began to reflect the profound transformations in the social life of the country. In the earlier short stories and novels were related the difficulties in the first steps towards the building of the new life, the struggle of the masses of working people against the enemies of the socialist order, and the emergence of a new psychology. The new problems were



treated in the light of the raw material offered by the life in the Albanian countryside, the difficulties of the first years after the war, the class struggle that pervaded its life. The short story «Salë Cenl'a Boy» (1946) by Dh. Shuteriqi centres on the spiritual revival of the poor peasants on the enactment of the Land Reform which gave the land to the peasant. J. Xoxa in his short story «Priest's Porridge» (1949) reflected the difficulties encountered in re-educating the ordinary people. Among the short stories, that build their plot on the problem and efforts for the establishment of new relations in the countryside, «Waters Sleep but not the Enemy» by F. Gjata and «The Harvest» by Z. Sako, both published in 1955, are worth mentioning. These short stories are the first notable effort to tackle problems of the Albanian countryside on a more extensive scale, focussing essentially on the violence of the class struggle, on the efforts of the poor peasants to destroy the plans of the enemies and to put agriculture on the new road.

S. Spasse, who has always been interested in the problems and conflicts of the country life, continued his tradition with the novel «Afërdita back to the Village» (1955). The Albanian village with the difficulties emerging in the period right after Liberation, with efforts to heal the wounds caused by the war, with the first elements of socialism emerging there—this is the social setting for the plot of this novel. The greatest part of the village is burned, the people take lodging in makeshift huts repaired in a hurry or wherever they can. Unclad and barefooted they live from day to day, borrowing from each other a handful of flour. However, the enthusiasm of the people over the triumph of the people's revolution, their steadfast faith in the happy life that has dawned for them, their impatience to see their centuries-old dream realized, are all the more reasons for them to be mobilized for the fulfilment of the everyday tasks. Combining their collective energies, they overcome the difficulties of the beginning and, with the help of the people's power, put up new houses for those who had remained unsheltered.

They successfully fight off the typhus epidemic, solve a series of social and economic problems, thus normalizing life in the village. All this gigantic effort is depicted in a great many scenes packed with facts and carefully selected details from everyday life.

The struggle for the reconstruction of the country is carried out against the stubborn resistance of the class enemy which seeks new ways to retain part of its economic positions. The struggle against them was not easy; while making use of the old connections with the survivors of the exploiting classes of the city, which were cleverly camouflaged, they were able to cause some damage to the work for the construction of the new life.

S. Spasse concerned himself with the problem of the role and the place of the intelligentsia in the process of the building of socialism. In the novel «Afërdita back to the Village» he continues the fate of the protagonist of his former novel «Afërdita» in the conditions of the beginnings of the new life in the Albanian countryside. In the present novel «Afërdita back to the Village» Afërdita appears quite changed; she enters the new life after freeing herself from the utopian illusions of her youth and with the political experience of the anti-fascist war, in the ranks of which she had taken part. Hers is the fate of all the honest intellectuals who, in the conditions of the country after Liberation, could devote all the wealth of their skill and knowledge to the good of the people. In her endeavours to help the villagers rebuild their village, in her work to awaken their political consciousness and raise their cultural level, the heroine finds her personal fulfilment in life, one which she had sought and wished for when she began her work as a teacher. Her new life is part of the whole change that pervaded the country in the first years after the triumph of the people's revolution.



In his novel *-The Swamp-* (1959) F. Gjata made the first attempt in the new Albanian prose to reflect the full scope of the work for the building of socialism, the spiritual growth of the masses of workers in this process. He sketched the personality of the new leader, the commander and organizer of the period after Liberation. He takes the material from the work for the draining of the Maliq marsh in the Korça region, which was completed in 1946. However, as an artistic creation, many scenes, episodes and characters are fictitious. It is not the history but the artistic presentation of a specific aspect of work on the draining of the marsh. Realistic subtleties and masterfully built massive scenes are skillfully used to reflect the impetuous work of the masses, who after Liberation, came out as an active force in the field of the construction of the new life. Most of the volunteers were young peasants with notions and conceptions of life which were characteristic of the small landowner. In the beginning they did not have a clear idea of the kind of work they were going to do. There were some who, after working for a while, decided to abandon the project and to attend to their own interests. However, the bulk of them stayed on to the end, going through a real school at the work site. In the process of work they begin to feel more and more attached to it and gain self-confidence. *"When we yanked the Germans off, what can stop us from draining this pool?"* say the peasants in their enthusiasm over the work they were doing. The work at the project helps them understand that in the new social conditions they are masters of themselves and masters of the country. Even while draining the swamp they sweat for themselves, for a more prosperous Homeland, for their children. It is this new conscience that they gain during this work, which makes them go at it with all their strength to carry out the action and

finish it in spite of the difficulties and sabotage of the hostile engineers.

The swamp is the setting for a fierce class struggle. A number of the engineering and technical personnel, who were in the pay of the American Secret Service, goes the whole length in order to sabotage the draining of the swamp. The conflict develops in all of its severity, in all of the incompatibility that the opposing forces show. The political roots of this conflict are revealed through focussing on the detestable stand of the saboteurs who expressed the interests and had adopted the position of the exploiting classes which the new power overthrew, as well as through the furious resistance they put up against socialism, thus becoming payed-agents to the foreign imperialist states. The spiritual features of the enemies are defined by their anti-patriotism, their selfishness and moral corruption.

The novel of F. Gjata, *-The Marsh-*, besides the reflection of the high spirit of mobilization and sacrifice by the masses of volunteers for the construction of the new life, besides the reflection of their spiritual world, highlights a new type, the communist leader of the period of the building of socialism — Stavri Lara, the secretary of the Party Committee. His life-record is typical of the youths of the ordinary towns-people. Since his childhood he had known poverty and seen the cruel exploitation by the upper class. Doing odd jobs for the owing class, he experienced ups and downs in life which taught him the truth that the poor can be saved from oppression and exploitation only by rising up in arms against the foreigners and their tools. He took part in the movement of the people against the fascist occupiers, carrying out many tasks he was charged with, and later joined the ranks of the partisan fighters. When a partisan, he became member of the Communist Party. His ideological convictions, his unwavering faith in the triumph of the socialist cause, his talent as an organizer, his love of work and high spirit of sacrifice, his ability to lead the people and communicate with them — these



are the essential qualities of Stavri Lara's character. The hero develops spiritually and ideologically in the process of the work for the draining of the marsh. He becomes a skillful organizer and leader of the masses. Stavri Lara is not alone in the struggle for a new life. He has many friends among workers: the indefatigable communists like Liman Hysa, Hasan, etc., who are depicted in individual traits. Although they are not prominent figures, they are important characters in the new setting of the Albanian life in the first years after Liberation.

"The Marsh" is a remarkable work of the Albanian literature of socialist realism. The objective of the writer in relating the first successes that were achieved in the course of the efforts for the building of the new life in arduous struggle against many difficulties, among which was also the stubborn resistance of the exploiting classes, is to highlight on the development of the events of real life. The whole plot combines harmoniously all the parts of the novel in one compact narrative.

The atmosphere of anxiety and hesitation in the struggle to form agricultural cooperatives in the countryside serves as the main texture in the novel "Llaz Qesarati" (1959) by Sh. Musara. The socialist transformation of the countryside is a difficult process made even more so on account of the old mentality in the conscience of the peasant. Through the example of the hero of the novel, Llaz Qesarati, who, with all the political experience he has as an active participant of the national liberation movement against the foreign occupiers and their collaborators, is among the peasants who hesitate to enter the road of the new life, the writer relates how difficult it is for the peasant to give up his plot of land and enter the cooperative, to give up the old ways of life. Sh. Musara succeeds in reproducing the tense atmosphere of the Albanian countryside in the threshold of the collectivization of agriculture. The efforts of the progressive elements of the countryside, with the help of the comrades from the town, ensured the success in the collectivization of the countryside and in defeating the

intrigues of the kulaks in whose trap many of the peasants (including Llaz Qesarati) had fallen.

The young writers brought new life material, probing into here-to-fore uninvestigated aspects. In the short stories of N. Prifti the poetic way of relating ordinary facts and events of life is characteristic; the independence of his narrations with emphasis on the intonation of the language of popular idiom. The core of the profound transformations in the new realities of Albania are revealed through the mirroring of extraordinary events of life in Dh. Xhuvani's short stories. Characteristic of this writer is the ability to reveal the personality of the characters through psychological analysis. As for the short stories of D. Shaplo, they stand out for the mild lyrical colours, the development of the conflict without aggravating the contradictions between the hero and the environment.

The important social transformations that occurred in the life of the country after Liberation could not fail to affect drama. However, the plays, comedies and sketches of that time fall short of expectation. In most cases this is explained by the lack of creative experience, as well as the difficulties encountered in this type of play that requires a special craft in order to probe into the full depth of the personality of the characters. The most distinguished dramatic work dedicated to the reflection of the new life is "Our Land" (1954) by K. Jakova. The plot is built on the tragic fate of an ordinary peasant woman, Loke, the central figure of the drama, who passed seventeen years of her life away from her home with some relatives in the mountains, separated from her own children and pursued by the slanders of the wealthy man of the village, who, in order to seize her land, payed certain persons to kill Loke's husband. However, faced with a strong resistance on her part, he spread rumours



that she was a prostitute, thus forcing her out of the village. During her forced exile, Loke more than once tries to regain her dignity in the eyes of her village folks and to return to her own children. This, however, was all in vain, because through intrigues the wealthy man of the village had poisoned the minds of all villagers, and even of Loke's eldest son, a man with rooted patriarchal convictions and blind faith in the rich man. All those, who knew the truth about Loke, had not the courage to defend her. All this forms the plot of the play before its real action begins. The play actually begins with Loke's return to the village after the triumph of the popular revolution in the hope that her eldest son, at the suggestion of his younger brother who is a soldier in the ranks of the people's army and a communist, shall accept her. Loke's return to the village coincides with the implementation of the Land Reform. The main tendency of social development of the village after Liberation - the fierce class conflict between the kulak and his concealed tools, on the one hand, and the poor peasants with the communists at the head, on the other hand, found its reflection in the play "Our Land". The family conflict has been combined with the class conflict with great skill. The play centres on the idea that the popular revolution, which liberated them from the cruel and arbitrary rule of the class society and restored them their human dignity, has a profoundly humane character. This comes out in the compassionate story of Loke, as well as in the action of the peasants to escape the cruel oppression of the wealthy. Loke is a typical character, whose fate sheds ample light on that situation of a life of utter uncertainty, of the constant danger to one's life under the anti-popular rule before Liberation. In more precise terms, the fate of Loke was the fate of the poor mountain women who were constantly threatened with humiliation in the hands of the privileged classes, the civil servants of the commune or the gendarmerie. Loke's rehabilitation to her full rights in society came after the triumph of the popular revolution which

overthrew from its foundations the old world that was built on violence, theft and perfidy. The disgusting forms of the oppression of the masses of people in a society with antagonistic classes, the transformation of the avidity for wealth into a heinous passion for the fulfilment of which the exploiters did not stop before the vilest crime make Tuç Maku the prototype of this class of exploiters. Even after Liberation he uses every trick to protect his own privileges as a kulak to come out undamaged. When he sees that his class was doomed to disappear, he resorts to terror against the people of the new state.

The play is credited with having convincingly reflected the irresistible triumph of the new, even in the countryside, and the establishment of the new social relations there. Murash, Loke's youngest son who with his astuteness and determination unravels the entangled intrigues of the kulak in the division of the land, is the new element in the remote rural areas, where new times have come with men with a new social and spiritual physiognomy. These are the communists who have placed themselves at the head of the poor peasants for the destruction of the economic domination of the wealthy in the countryside.

The ability to represent a dramatic conflict, to build characters full of life in such relations that clearly reveal their social and individual peculiarities, the conciseness of dialogue, are the qualities which make the play "Our Land" an outstanding work not only in its genre but also in the whole literature of that period.

#### THE THEME OF THE PAST IN LITERATURE

Apart from the socialist reality, which occupies the main place in the range of themes of contemporary literature, and which is understandable if we take into consideration that it was formed as a reflection of the



struggle for the socialist transformation of our society, the writers also showed interest in the events of the life of our country in the past. This responded to the increased interest of the masses for the historical past of our people - a characteristic phenomenon for the life in new Albania. The working masses, which became the masters of the country, wanted to know about the history of their country, about the major events, the protracted struggles for social justice, and especially about events the development of which led to the great historical overthrow of November 29, 1944.

The past was reflected more in prose and less in plays. Among the first who turned their eyes to the past were S. Spasse, with his novel "They Were Not Alone" (1952), and K. Jakova, with his play "Halili and Hajrija" (1949).

The novel "They Were Not Alone" takes the reader back to an Albanian village of the 30's of this century. The novel is packed with events about how the bey and his men plundered and robbed in broad daylight, employing the most brutal and humiliating methods... the fruit of the toil and sweat of the peasants throughout the year. The author has known how to reflect the cruelty of exploitation that raged in the Albanian countryside, the poverty of the people who lived in torment and suffering under the unbearable yoke of the landlords. In front of the reader pass in turn the sullen faces of the poverty-stricken people, overcome by mental and physical misery. The greater part of them were able to produce only enough bread to last their families two months. To escape starvation many peasants were forced to take the axe and set out to cut down trees for firewood, or make charcoal, which they sold to the people living down in the plains or to townsmen, whereas the rest went about doing seasonal odd jobs.

In the novel "They Were Not Alone" S. Spasse related at the same time the dissatisfaction that flared up among the peasants and particularly the process of their awakening and rising up in battle for their rights

under the influence of the new ideas that the communists started to spread. Uncle Korovesh is the peasant who had fought rifle in hand in the ranks of the patriotic detachments of the year 1908 with the hope that, after the expulsion of the foreign rulers, better days would come for the peasantry. However, in the events after the proclamation of independence, seeing that the upper classes, the bourgeoisie and the landlords did nothing for the improvement of the lot of the common people, he became disillusioned. It is understandable that in creating this character, it wasn't the author's aim to relate the disillusionment of the old generation of peasants in the ideas of the war to liberate the country, but to show that the ardent desire for a free and happy life without exploiters was felt strongly among the poor peasantry. Under the influence of the new events and ideals in old Korovesh begins to awaken again the old aspiration for social justice. However, under the new conditions uncle Korovesh is not the main figure, this place is taken by the advocates of a new generation from the bosom of the peasantry, who, in contact with the communist ideas, rise in struggle for the liberation of the peasantry from the bondage Gjika, to whom the author gave the qualities of the new leader of the masses of peasants, is the courageous man who builds the peasants' faith in their own forces and the possibility of victory against the enemies. He achieves this in the process of the revolutionary struggle, in the military actions. Under his leadership the peasants burn down the fort where the bey has stored the crop that he had seized from the peasants. The peasants lose this battle against the bey, but this was their first one. The important thing was that they began to gain class consciousness. They cast away their humble submissiveness, they understood their rights and were convinced that, apart from the violent conflict, there is no other way to salvation. This constitutes the indispensable premise that would ensure the liberation of the peasantry. In this lies the importance of the novel which has a symbolical ending. The sunrise after the bat-



tle with the gendarmes, who did not succeed in getting the villagers to do the bey's bidding, of building a villa for him on the bank of the lake without pay, is the harbinger of the popular revolution.

The events reflected in the play «Halil and Hajrija» (1949) by K. Jakova are related to a remote historical period, the 18th century. The playwright takes up the intrigues and the many endeavours of the Turks to curb the Albanian rebels, who, with their heroic and courageous battles, destroyed the plans of the Sultan to subjugate the Highlands region and Montenegro. K. Jakova raises the high patriotic spirit of the Albanian highlanders, their ardent love of life in freedom, which they value above everything else, their disdain for foreign bondage and their determination in fighting to the end. These characteristic qualities of the Albanians are attributed to Halil Garrija, an historical character, immortalized also by a popular song, who can not understand life without freedom and honour. The deep hatred against the foreigners, who went to destroy the tranquility and peaceful work of the peasants, induced him to take up his rifle and take to the mountains at the head of a group of young highlanders, just as brave as he is. His character of a brave and wise fighter, who doesn't bat an eye even in front of death, stands out clearly particularly in the scene before execution. Even when the hangman is preparing to execute him, he gives the deserved answer to the Turkish pasha who tries to make him go down on his knees. «It is our mountains that are fighting, pasha... This land is ours... We do not pay tribute to a foreign master. We don't put up even with our fathers flogging us, let alone the whip of your uncivil orientals. Don't gnash your teeth! The men of the mountains are not afraid.»

## THE JOY AND THE UNDAUNTED SPIRIT OF THE PEOPLE — A RICH SOURCE OF INSPIRATION FOR WRITERS

The trend that began to emerge by the end of the fifties towards discovering the core of the main events of life became stronger from day to day until in the sixties the Albanian poetry of socialist realism matured in artistic possibilities and achieved important qualitative successes; the poetic works had a considerably great influence in the conscience of the people. The development of poetry was influenced by the important events in the life of the country during this period, particularly by the heroic and indomitable struggle waged by the Albanian people in order to ward off the attacks and conspiracies of the modern revisionists, headed by the Soviet revisionists, who tried their best to bring the Albanian people down to their knees. In responding to the needs of the times, the poets attempted to reflect the spirit of heroism that distinguished the masses of the people, their determination to continue on the true road to socialism and to defend Marxism-Leninism in spite of the many difficulties or sacrifices. There appeared in a number of poets the new features that the Albanian poetry had acquired in content and form. The treatment of the complicated problems of the life of the country, the endeavour to shed light on the profound meaning of the current events and the past history of the people characterized the political works of that period.

I. Kadare, a poet with an original poetic vision of life, who is inclined towards fresh expressive artistic illustrations, was particularly concerned with the problem of the fate of socialism in Albania during these years. On this theme he wrote a series of poems in which he knew how to express his profound meditations on the past, the present and the future of the Homeland, with associations, fresh poetic illustrations and a unique clarity. The poem «What Are These Mountains Brooding Over?» (1964) is the most brilliant work in which the



thoughts, anxieties, hopes and desires of all the people found expression in these moments of historic responsibility. I. Kadare's conviction that the Albanian people will never be defeated in spite of the conspiracies and savage attacks of the enemies, and that the building of socialism will go on with ever greater momentum and determination, was expressed through an interesting form. The poem evokes the historical past of the Homeland, without disregarding the important events of the present glorious time. The poem is a chain of meditations on the essence of the Albanian character, about those original traits that were created in it in particular conditions of the history. In the imagination of the poet the past of the Albanian people appears as an arduous road full of hardships and struggles. The poet imparts the full idea of the difficult historical existence of the Albanian people. The past centuries, says the poet (having in mind the foreign rulers), were most ruthless towards the Albanians, like dogs that savagely jump on them:

And the savage enemies gnawed at the frontiers,  
At the pale bare shoulders of the Homeland.

However, even though the Albanians were forced to traverse a road full of turbulence, unrest and danger, never for once did they accept foreign bondage. In face of danger they stood firm like men stand and did not spare their lives to protect their freedom and independence. They were not frightened either by the large numbers of the enemies or by their armaments. The unfavourable historical circumstances in the centuries stimulated and strengthened in the Albanians their extraordinary spirit of resistance that few people possess. The poem is pervaded by a leitmotiv: the amazing ability of the Albanian people to confront the historical upheavals. This idea is confirmed in the poem by the powerful verses that evoke the inexhaustible strength of this nation.

If you killed him on a hill,  
He'd appear on another,  
As if growing from the ground,  
A lean tall Arbër.<sup>1)</sup>  
And over his head  
His tall rifle  
Grows out of him  
On top of his shoulder,  
Over hills and plains  
Roaming the land.

The ardent love of the people for freedom and an independent life is closely connected with the ardent aspiration for culture and social progress which either the foreign rulers or the old social forces inside the country were not able to wipe out. In order to shake off the social and spiritual yoke and to take their worthy place among the free civilized peoples, the Albanians multiplied their efforts, particularly in recent times, in the twentieth century, in the struggle against the reactionary classes. The last part of the poem is full of imagery of Albania in a tenacious effort to find the road to a free life and social progress. This idea is communicated through the image of the proud undaunted chain of mountains that seem like a caravan roaming in the desert without knowing the road of salvation. Against this background comes to light with great clarity the idea of the historical role of the Communist Party of Albania which led the Albanian people in the struggle for the true national and social liberation.

«What Are These Mountains Brooding Over?» is one of the outstanding works in Albanian poetry. It constitutes the culmination of the poetic creativity of I. Kadare. In his poems «Armoured Poem», «The Border Land», «Albania and the Three Romes» and in another series of verses, the poet also treats with artistic suggestive force and fresh images the problem of the undaunted spirit of the Albanian people, their readiness to

1) Arbër — Albanian.



protect to the end the victories achieved in the struggle for socialism.

The «Armoured Poem» has in its centre the lyrical hero who has a clear idea of the difficulties confronting the Homeland and calls on the people to keep their eyes open against enemies. His profound consciousness of the great cause which he defends is a characteristic trait of his. The poem gives the tense situation of the sixties through artistically chosen details.

The poem «The Border Land» dwells on the spirit of preparedness to defend the country, the awareness of the entire people of the important moments that the country is living through, a time full of conflicts and great dangers. The poem «Albania and the Three Romes» is constructed on an historical analogy. The poet recalls the ancient times of the Roman occupation, and the later period, particularly the period of the Ottoman conquest when the country went through severe tests. Many foreign hordes, armed to the hilt, pounced upon the various regions of the country. They settled in them and tried to annihilate the Albanians, but it was all in vain. From these empires nothing remains except their ancient glory, whereas the Albanians were able to resist and survive in the stormy invasions that passed over them. In these historical pages the poet sees more convincingly the proof that socialist Albania will foil successfully the schemes and blackmail of the Soviet social-imperialists. In «The Sixties» the historical associations enable the poet to tear off the mask of the renegades from Marxism-Leninism and the proletarian revolution, who with flattery, promises and blackmail tried to reduce Albania to submission. The poet endeavours to help the reader understand the complexity of the events, the new difficulties that confronted Albania in its irresistible march towards socialism and communism. With concrete and quite expressive images the poet conveyed the grave atmosphere of the conflict of socialist Albania with modern revisionism, the lofty historical awareness of the overwhelming masses of the

Albanian people and the patriotic enthusiasm that breathed in every Albanian.

Albania's struggle against the imperialist-revisionist blockade is closely connected with the name of the Party of Labour which laid the foundations of the socialist Homeland and raised its glory to unprecedented heights. Using fresh artistic means in the poem «The Eagles Fly High», I. Kadare relates vividly the great changes that began in the life of the country with the formation of the Party, the great significance of this historical event. The poet is not profuse in descriptive passages, he rather tends to impart the full scope of the dramatic atmosphere of the period when the Party was formed, the difficult moments that the whole country was going through, the heroism of the communists and the best sons of the people that were the first to grapple with the enemies. The formation of the Communist Party for the poet was a natural legitimate phenomenon prepared by the preceding historical developments of the country. The Party is heir of the best freedom-loving and revolutionary traditions of the Albanian people. From the necessity of the time, it was summoned to fulfil their centuries-old aspirations for freedom and social justice, for enlightenment and for land. On its deep organic attachments with the most ardent desires and aspirations of the people the poet sees the vigour of the Party, its vitality. Its roots are deep in the centuries-old wars of the Albanian people, in the blood of the thousands of martyrs who, at its summons, rose in battle to liberate the country from the fascist occupiers:

In order to uproot you  
They must overturn  
All this heavy ancient soil.  
All the castles,  
the mountains,  
the songs,  
and kill the dead again.



The idea of the poem revolves around the strength of the revolutionary spirit that has characterized the Party of Labour of Albania from the time it was created, its steadfast devotion to the ideals of socialism and communism, its determination in the struggle against all the enemies of Marxism-Leninism. All of the poetic details and the stylistic images are brought to convey this idea with an extraordinary force.

The Party of Labour, which was created in order to save the country in the years of the fascist occupation, is today a sure guarantee for the building of socialism, for safeguarding the victories of the socialist revolution. It breaks through the stormy skies like an eagle.

The struggle for the complete building of socialism without let-up and for safeguarding the victories from the various enemies, the process of the further revolutionization of the life of the country determined the artistic development and maturity of D. Agolli. A poet with a passionate temperament, whose pulse has beaten with the rhythm of the country's life, D. Agolli echoed the problems of the people during these years. His ardent love for the native land and, in a wider framework, his love for the socialist Homeland, his close and organic association with it, his infinite devotion to it, became the central theme of his poetic creativity. -To a Mountain Poem- (1962) is pervaded by the feeling of complete identification of the poet with his country, his devotion to the Homeland, his love for the inspiring beauties of the nature of Albania. The poet recreates the rough and proud mountains of Albania, which are associated in the imagination of the poet with the bravery, courage and love of the Albanians for freedom: like their mountains the Albanian people have been invincible in front of the enemies.

On a par with it, in spirit and style, stands the poem -Devoll, Devoll- (1964), which has the form of a lyrical monologue. The poet speaks of himself and his native land, of the people and their customs. The poem goes beyond the narrow framework of the poet's personal

experience. The spiritual world of present-day Albania is revealed in the image of the hero's thoughts and aspirations, the manner in which he understands the aims in life, his place in the struggle of all the people to build socialism. The idea of the unity of the individual with the socialist Homeland runs like a red thread through the poem. The hero feels himself part of this soil; a devout son, he is keen to and feels intensively the efforts of the whole country for the new life, with its temporary set-backs and great joys, with its dreams of the beautiful future. For him there is no happiness except in the struggle for the good of the country.

Again and again I've been made a target  
By those noted snipers across the sea, yet  
I'll not shiver,  
nor lower my voice,  
But will remain communist for eternity.

The poetry of D. Agolli combines the best traditions of folk poetry with the outstanding traditions of socialist art. The simplicity and clarity of the artistic means, the communicative spirit, the aim of the poet to include in his poems the intonations of everyday speech, are characteristic of the style of D. Agolli.

The moral and political unity of the people, the close connection between the different generations of Albanian society, the old generation that protected the country from the many and various enemies who attacked it throughout the centuries, and the generation that carried out the people's revolution and grew to manhood in its flames, form the main theme of the revolutionary continuity which is typical of D. Agolli from the very beginning of his activity (-A Poem for My Father and Myself-).

In the sixties this problem acquired special importance. In face of the new enemies, who did everything in their power to impair the building of socialism in Al-



bania, the unity of the country and of all the people had to be strengthened. Furthermore, the struggle to eradicate the remnants left over from the old ideologies, those of feudalism, patriarchalism and religion that came from the depths of past centuries, which affected those strata of the population which for known reasons were still under the influence of conservative traditions. All the people, the entire masses of workers of the country, young and old, had to work for the building of our socialist country. With its overall spirit, its rich motifs that harmonize with each other and with the reflections of the past and the present, the poem "The Fathers" (1969) highlights the idea of the unity of the entire people, the idea of the continuity of the revolutionary tradition in the present-day life. The poem sounds like a warm and moving address to the old generation, to "the fathers" who have always lived with the troubles of the country and each time have defended their Homeland from the designs of the various occupiers. The poet uses simple words full of emotion, when he recalls how "the fathers" fought, how they concerned themselves over the country's troubles:

You protected Albania  
with yataghans.  
And everything beautiful and noble  
Was lifted up on your steel shoulders.

The outstanding patriotic and freedom-loving traditions of the old generation were raised to a higher level by the new generation of fighters under the leadership of the Communist Party of Albania during the people's revolution. In the years of the anti-fascist resistance the old generation did not stay on the sidelines, but gave their valuable contribution in the victorious war of the people against the fascists and their collaborators.

In the poem a central place is taken up by the problem of the unity of the different generations in the present conditions of socialist construction, when the whole society

is carrying on a persistent struggle to weed the vestiges of the old world. "The fathers" rejoice over the great successes Albania has achieved through the efforts of their sons who raised it to higher peaks of glory. The old generation pursues the development of the country step by step, making every effort to understand the essence of the transformations of the country, but due to the circumstances in which it has grown up and was formed spiritually, it finds it difficult to give up all at once the old traditions and customs that hold back the complete spiritual emancipation of the masses. This is the reason why their ideological tempering is associated with some pain. The fact that some of "the fathers" cannot bring themselves to follow the rhythm of the vigorous transformations of life is for the poet a non-antagonistic contradiction which will be surmounted just like all the other contradictions of this nature in present-day Albanian society. At the same time the poet severely scourges all those elements who are corrupted by the propaganda of the enemies, who scorn the good traditions and customs of the country and have no respect for the old generation that bore the burden of the troubled Homeland. Those who attempt to kindle the flames of the "father-son" conflict, characteristic of capitalist and revisionist countries, are branded as cosmopolitans and people who deserve to be scorned by society.

The preceding poem of D. Agolli prepared the ground for the poem "Mother Albania" (1974) in which the theme of socialist patriotism is treated more profoundly and with a wider range of artistic vision of history. Albania, an invincible and proud land with its age-old history full of struggles to shake off the foreign yoke and to live in complete freedom and independence, presents quite a different picture now, after thirty years of freedom and progress under the leadership of the Party on the revolutionary road of struggles and victories against internal and external enemies, the imperialists and modern revisionists. In recalling the difficult past of the Homeland, in evoking the endea-



yours and the sacrifices that the Albanian people went through until they achieved socialism, the poet makes the historical and philosophical interpretations of the past and the present of the Homeland. Most of the poem is taken up by the poet's meditations which are expressed in penetrating verses.

In the poem «Mother Albania» the principles of lyrical-epic narration, applied and elaborated by the poet in his previous works, are carried out still further.

The central place in the poem is taken up by the love for the socialist Homeland. It is conceived as a great feeling that emanates from the poet's close links with his country, from his profound understanding of the past, of its hard times and, at the same time, of the epic greatness of the Albanian people who not only were able to survive the upheavals of history, but also to accomplish the socialist revolution.

The poet calls Albania «the destitute of centuries», as its fate has always been in the past. The words with which the poet addresses the Homeland are full of warmth and very moving:

Let me lie upon your knees,  
Thou, the destitute of centuries,  
And kiss thy loving hands,  
The best in all the lands.

The poet sings to Albania as a son to his mother, filial in his aspirations, his sentiments, his expressions and his tastes which give his inner world a national coloration. The lyrical hero bears the characteristic traits of the Albanian: his ardent patriotism, his insatiable love of freedom, his aversion for bondage and the various enemies of the country, his aspirations to knowledge and culture. The poet calls himself a bard summoned to sing to the greatness of the Homeland and its natural beauties.

The songs dedicated to the new era, from the people's revolution up to the present time, full of bold efforts for the defence of the socialist victories and the independence of the country, are among the most beautiful and most

moving of the poem. The great heroic act of the Albanian people, who overthrew the anti-popular regimes and established their new life of happiness, is revealed in them. The road of the Albanian people towards freedom and economic and social emancipation, towards the realization of their aspirations to a dignified happy life, is described in the verses dealing with the historic background of the struggles against the ruling reactionary classes and the imperialistic states that wanted to turn Albania into a regular colony of theirs. Even though oppressed and deprived of their most basic rights the masses of the people did not bow down, but waited patiently for settling accounts with those responsible for their sufferings — the wealthy classes that had turned the Homeland into a private estate of their own.

D. Agolli narrates how the people's power in Albania was set up and developed through many difficulties. The dictatorship of the proletariat was strengthened in the struggle against the opposition of the former exploiting classes who hoped «to climb on their high horse» once again, against the criminals sent in by the foreign secret services to overthrow the new power. The poem recreates the general dynamic atmosphere of the growth and formation of the working class, the complete triumph of socialist ideology in all the fields of life and struggle with alien ideological manifestations. The work is pervaded by the pathos of the struggle against all the enemies who have attempted to impede the Albanian people in their road to freedom and socialism. This forms the leitmotiv of the poem which, in the last chapter, is fully developed through the exposure of the aggressive policy of the super-powers who «grind their teeth on both sides of the ocean» and threaten the peoples with their «dishonest schemes and blackmail». The enemies, says the poet, left nothing undone to bring Albania to its knees, beginning with «bright smiles» and ending up with savage blockades. However, the Albanians make light of all this, as they go on in their straight road enlightened by Marxism-Leninism. All this awakens a legitimate pride in the poet who says,



But we, as you can see, didn't give way to the weight,  
And our spinal columns remained straight,  
Even if the struggle goes on for a whole century,  
We will remain just as indomitable and optimistic.

The poet expresses his admiration for the invincible spirit of his people who, in spite of «stubborn blockades», did not «give up the road» which they continue with steadfast confidence in the invincible ideas of Marxism-Leninism and their own forces.

Like poetry the prose, too, endeavoured to penetrate the essence of the great events that marked the life of the country, to relate the struggles of the Party of Labour of Albania against its imperialist and revisionist enemies, as well as the determination of the masses of working people to surmount the difficulties the country comes up against on its road towards the complete edification of the socialist society.

In the novels «The General of the Dead Army» (1964) and «The Great Winter» (1974), L. Kadare dealt with a problem which had attracted him also in the poems of this period: the indomitable spirit of the Albanian people in their struggle against the bourgeois-revisionist blockade. The idea of the novel «The General of the Dead Army» is that no foreign invader has ever been able to subdue the Albanian people. The foreigners have come and gone away and no trace of them has been left, whereas the Albanian people have remained the masters of their own country. The author expresses his thoughts in a form as original as it is daring. The subject of the novel is the journey of a general and a priest of a foreign state in present-day Albania in order to collect the remains of their soldiers. The idea of the novel is based on the many instances of the inglorious end of many enemy

armies in our country, or the misery of their soldiers, as brought to light by the diaries or the letters that were written by them to their relatives.

In «The General of the Dead Army» the author has described the general of an imperialist state who despises the little states and recognizes the right of the big states to subjugate them. However, he does not go far with his pride as a representative of a big state full of disregard for the Albanians. When, during his journey through Albania, he gets acquainted with the many facts of the disintegration of the army of the state he represents. As a military man, he is startled by the stories he hears about the bitter end of the armies that were sent to subjugate the Albanian people. All this infuriates him all the more and makes him express himself openly as a sworn enemy of the free peoples. The ardent defender of the expansionist policy of the large imperialist states is vividly portrayed in the figure of the priest. The priest is described as an obscurantist and rabid reactionary who nourishes a bestial hatred towards small peoples. With the inhuman theory of the inequality of peoples which he considers something in the nature of human society, he tries to justify the attempts of the peoples with a higher level of development to subjugate the less developed peoples. In alluding to his activities in the past in Albania and his attitude towards present-day Albania, the author brands the Catholic church as the ally of Italian fascism in carrying out its plans of conquest, its notorious deep-rooted hostility to the interests of the Albanian people. However, in creating the character of the priest the author does not set himself the task of exposing the role of the Catholic church as an enemy of the freedom-loving peoples. The figure of the priest is used to expose all the present-day enemies who slander the Albanians, calling them «irascible» and «obstinate». The priest has his own malevolent version of the past of the Albanian people, considering it as a gloomy history of war and bloodshed stirred up by ferocious primitive instincts which is characteristic,



according to him, of a people with a low level of social and spiritual development. For him the centuries of wars of the Albanian people against the foreign invaders are an aspect of the atavistic instincts of the Albanian people for war and destruction. He also vilifies the present resistance of the Albanian people against the imperialists and revisionists which he regards as a manifestation of the Albanian's «aggressiveness», of their insatiable passion for war. Thus the novel echoes the actual history of Albania. The author knows how to expose the monstrous slanders of the ideologists of imperialist and revisionist states. Through masterfully written scenes and episodes the novel confirms with great convincing force the idea that the Albanian people have waged many wars only in order to uphold their freedom, independence and national individuality. The cynical prophecy of the priest about the inevitable disappearance of the Albanians is contrasted in the work with the idea of the vitality of the Albanian people, of their creative spirit and ability to surmount all difficulties that come up on their road to socialism and communism. Another evidence of I. Kadare's ability in treating the major political problems of Albanian life in long prose is the novel «The Great Winter». Here the author describes the actual life of the Albanian people, especially their conflict with the Soviet revisionists, who betrayed the cause of Marxism-Leninism, as well as the heroic efforts of the masses of working people to surmount the difficulties facing them and to carry forward the building of a socialist society. The novel is centered on the reflection of the struggle waged by the founder and leader of the Party, Comrade Enver Hoxha, at the meeting of the 81 communist and workers' parties, that was held in Moscow in November 1960. The author portrays the figure of Enver Hoxha with great faithfulness and extraordinary convincing force. In narrating the bitter conflict that arose at this meeting, the struggle to defend the revolutionary principles of Marxism-Leninism from the deviations of the modern revisionists, I. Kadare knows to portray the qualities of a great Marxist-Leninist and unflinching rev-

olutionary, of Comrade Enver Hoxha, his courage, his high principled spirit, his composure in face of difficult situations, his steadfast faith in the integrity of Marxism-Leninism and the might of the Albanian people. Besides this, in the novel «The Great Winter», I. Kadare shows that the efforts of the Soviet revisionists and the other revisionists that followed them, in order to force Albania to submit to their dictate, increased even more the revolutionary spirit of the masses of workers who summoned all their forces to face up to the difficult situations that were created and to continue without interruption the socialist revolution in Albania.

A. Kondo's novel «Discovery» (1972) deals with the clashes of the Albanian specialists with the specialists of several former socialist countries which, instead of helping the Albanian people in building socialism, as they should have done, did the opposite. Full of malevolence towards Albania, and slaves of not only bourgeois science but also of bourgeois political prejudice, they tried repeatedly to sabotage the economic construction of the country. The author convincingly describes the scientific development of the Albanian scientists, their ardent love of the Homeland which gave them courage and perseverance in surmounting the difficulties.

#### TOWARDS A BROADER REFLECTION OF SOCIALIST CONSTRUCTION

In the years 60-70 Albanian literature enriched itself with a number of works treating important problems connected with the raising of socialist construction to a higher level and with the process of the further revolutionization of the country.

The moral and ideological qualities of the new man of Albania, tempered in tough battles for the construction of the new life, found expression in the novel «Again on His Feet» (1971) by Dh. Xhuvani. The work is based on the real story of a worker, who lost both legs in an ac-



cident, and who makes strenuous efforts to return to his place in the ranks of the active builders of socialism. In choosing a man of a unique fate as his hero, the author attempts to reveal his indomitable spirit, his ardent love of country, his moral purity and his exacting demands towards himself as a figure typical of today's people formed in the free atmosphere of a socialist life.

The hero of the novel, Din Hyka, a young worker who has taken part as a volunteer in the construction of the first railroads in Albania, is profoundly affected by his invalidity not only because he is used to an active life with a lot of work, but also because he feels himself hurt by the sympathy people have for him. He is given a job as a ticket man at a billiard parlor. However, here also he is confronted with manifestations of pity and in indignation he goes away from there in hope of finding a job where he could feel morally equal to the other people around him. He eventually manages to find his place in the ranks of the active builders of socialism.

The merit of the author is that in narrating his story, he avoids both sentimental pity, as well as the pomposity, hiding obstacles encountered by the hero who had also to fight against the skepticism of the dull-witted bureaucrats, unable to understand the desire of an invalid for work. The realness of the image of the hero emerges from the fact that he is presented with lights and shades, with an invincible will to surmount difficulties, while at the same time going through fits of despair. In the novel there is no definite subject. The work is written like a chronicle of the life and efforts of the hero to return to active life. This has determined the characteristics of the novel and its intrinsic dynamism, the terseness of the narration. The character of Din Hyka was sketched out under circumstances that brought to light his qualities as a true revolutionary who couldn't imagine himself away from and outside of the work that was in full swing around him. Above all one notices Din Hyka's indomitable spirit and his deep conviction in the moral principles, qualities which are formed in him not from books or through logical

reasoning, but which are organic manifestations of his consciousness moulded in his real practical participation in building socialism. What the hero does is indeed an extraordinary heroic act, but he himself is an ordinary man just like other people. Precisely in the presentation of the heroism as a typical phenomenon in present-day Albanian life rests one of the merits of the writer. With the hero's spirit of self-denial, his principle of making demands to life, his close connections with the life of the people, the novel «Again on His Feet» was typical at that time and was characterized by a stern and persistent struggle against everything old, conservative and reactionary, when each battle was an important test of the will, courage and force of the people's character, a test which brought to light their consistency and resolution in their daily life according to their moral principles and convictions.

In the novel «Fan Smajli» (1972) Dh. Xhuvani tried to follow the process of the re-education of people through their participation in the building of an important industrial project. In the work there is reflected the atmosphere of the fifties when thousands upon thousands of peasants took part in building the first plants and factories and stayed there forever, thus filling the ranks of the working class that was newly being formed in the process of the construction of socialist industry. The biography of the hero, a young peasant, is typical of important psychological changes that occurred in the conscience of that large mass of people for whom the participation in the new industrial projects was a real school, where they were liberated from their individual petty-bourgeois ideas and which kept them tied to the old ways. With skill and appropriate psychological means the author reveals the conflict of two morals, two mentalities in the heart of the hero who, before he could decide to devote his life to the construction of socialist industry, had to go through many doubts, vacillations and thoughts that originated from the patriarchal morality under whose spirit he had grown up.



In the prose that reflects the constructive work is also included A. Abdilhojha's novel *-The Duel-* (1975) in which ethical and moral problems are discussed. The author deals with the question of the love for work of the present-day people, their readiness to do everything necessary to defend the interests of socialism. This idea is developed through the description of the strenuous efforts of the masses of the working people to save the Long Reservoir in district N from a natural calamity which endangered the flooding of 3,500 hectares of good farmland. The literary work vividly gives the atmosphere of the four days and nights of work to save the dike from destruction. There are many scenes and descriptions that reflect the drive of the thousands of workers, employees and students in order to save the dike from destruction.

A brilliant work in the literature of this period is the novel *-The Thaw-* (1975) by T. Laço in which is reflected the pathos of the edification of the new life in the first years after Liberation, the beauty of the spiritual features of the communists who with skill and courage knew how to lead the struggle for the edification of a life of happiness for the people.

The action of the novel takes place during the years 1948-1949. At this time, as is known, the people's power proceeded to implement a new system of procurement of the farm products and supplying the countryside with industrial articles, which would do away with the speculations of the capitalist elements in the countryside, would help strengthen the links of the town with the countryside and the alliance of the working class with the peasantry. The main concern of the people's power was to lead the large masses of the working peasantry on the road of socialism. By means of a simple and fluent narrative, with appropriate details from the life and psychology of the peasants, the novel reflects the incompatible class contradictions between the kulaks and the people's power, contradictions which were further exacerbated because part of the peasantry did not understand the essence of the problem and the purpose of the measures taken by the

new order in the field of its economic policy. In implementing the new system of procurement and distribution it could not avoid causing a strong reaction from the wealthy kulaks who saw that with these measures they would not be able to enrich themselves by selling their agricultural products on the black market to the speculators of the town. To sabotage the implementation of these measures by the government, the enemies used every possible means. The author very convincingly tells us of the harsh class struggle that went on in the countryside in connection with the implementation of these measures. Taking advantage of the fact that many of the peasants still had not understood properly the advantage of this system, the kulaks for a while were able to spread their slogans that distorted the contents of these measures by the people's power and to create confusion among people who had a vague understanding of politics. The novel presents types of wealthy peasants who pretended not to have anything to turn over, or hid their produce underground and let it rot merely not to sell it to the government. It reveals their social features of savage exploiters. However, the author shows the difficulties which the people's power encountered in this direction, through his description of the general atmosphere of the countryside, of the waverings and suspicions of some peasants influenced by the enemy's propaganda. The content and effect of the slogans of the class enemy are told through forceful and expressive scenes and descriptions. Without toning down the harshness of the situation and the complicated process of clarification of the peasantry, the author has been able to reflect skillfully and quite naturally the smashing of the resistance of the kulaks and the triumph of the new power, of the revolutionary forces of the countryside. This triumph is achieved through the help that the town, as a carrier of socialist consciousness, gives the peasantry. The strongest side of the work, which makes up its essential artistic value, is the reflection, through vivid and well individualized characters, of the force which knew how to direct and lead the masses of workers with wisdom and



patience on their road to a new life — Martin Kreka, the first secretary of the party committee of the district, Miti Vozari, the director of the procurement enterprise, etc. Without falling into idealism or schematism, the author has been able to give in the person of Martin Kreka the features of the capable leader of the masses who has a clear concept of the objectives that stand before him and acts with courage and determination to achieve them. Martin Kreka is devoted to the Party, whose correct line he upholds and defends from anyone, be they even his close comrades, when he sees that they distort it or show signs of opportunism, as it happens with the secretary of the party committee for propaganda, Ropj Rrapushi, a man of flowery expressions, detached from life and of a pronounced intellectualism. The essential trait of Martin Kreka's character is particularly his deep love for the working people, the workers and working peasantry. The humanism of Martin is a new humanism, developed under the new conditions and enlightened by the loftiest human aspirations. It is a revolutionary humanism which is directed against everything that prevents the edification of the new life of happiness for the masses of working people. His profound and sincere humanism is revealed not only through many scenes which show his concern for the ordinary people, his readiness to listen to their problems and complaints, but especially through his irreconcilable stand towards the enemies of the masses of working people in the countryside and the town, the kulaks and various speculators who, in taking advantage of the difficulties in the period of reconstruction, develop a black market trade, thus creating a difficult situation in the supply of the town population, particularly the working class. Prudent, modest and a man of principle, he is intimate with the people with whom he knows how to develop correct relations, relations that are founded in a deep respect for the opinion of the masses and an unwavering faith in their abilities. The character of the hero is revealed also through his personal feelings, his problems and worries as the head of his family. However, these personal

and social aspects are combined organically. This hero in many ways is a representative of the communist leader in the first period after Liberation. In this image was revealed one of the characteristics of the art of T. Laço: his ability to create well-individualized characters, his calm account of events charged with an internal tension, which grows more and more until the conflict is resolved with the destruction of the hostile forces who try to prevent the progress of the country.

An important phenomenon in literary life was the appearance of a series of novels in which attempts were made to reflect the conflicts of country life during the period of the struggle for carrying the socialist revolution further on in all fields. The importance of most works dedicated to the present-day socialist countryside rests in their realistic treatment of problems and conflicts. This we find, in particular, in the novel "The South Wind" (1972) by J. Xoxa, in which the keen eye of the author examines the new socialist elements that were becoming more and more powerful in the countryside and, at the same time, shows what obstructed the further development of the agricultural cooperatives. J. Xoxa in this novel sternly exposes bureaucratism, as an anti-socialist and profoundly reactionary phenomenon, as a great danger to the socialist order. At the centre of this novel is the chairman of the cooperative, full of concepts and habits which are characteristic of a petty proprietor who does as he pleases, who tramples upon the rights of the cooperative members and considers himself the real owner of the cooperative. The author has generalized the main aspects of this negative type. The discovery of his anti-socialist character comes gradually, through dramatic scenes and situations that bring to light the great difficulties in overcoming the obstacles that are encountered by the masses of workers. Being the son of a peasant, he loves the land with all his heart, is well-acquainted with farm work and devotes himself to all the sectors of the cooperative. But while describing these aspects, the author at the same time points out that the



motives which make him concerned about the economy of the cooperative have nothing in common with the interests of the ordinary cooperativists for the success of the cooperative, for its blossoming and strengthening. That which urges the activities of the chairman, Kiu Koroziu, is his hankering for profit, be it even in an unlawful way, in a non-socialist way. Under his influence, the survivals of the old world ideology, like running after personal interest and, in connection with this, also the yearning for private ownership, arise in the conscience of some peasants. Koroziu's behaviour and, in general, the alien anti-socialist spirit, which he tries to implant among the cooperativists, is confronted with the resistance of the peasants who do not reconcile themselves to his ways. Still they achieve nothing through their efforts because the chairman not only makes light of their opinions, but even takes revenge with cynicism on all those who dare oppose him. The author lets one understand that the negative traits of this person were expressions of his petty-bourgeois world outlook, that during his partisan years they were temporarily suppressed to show themselves in his character later, in the conditions of peace. The chairman is the perfect bureaucratic type who stands aloof from the people and employs bureaucratic methods in the management of the common economy and little by little deviates from the correct road. This is brought out clearly in his stubborn opposition to the idea of merging the cooperative, which he leads, with the neighbouring cooperatives for the purpose of creating a large modern and powerful economy. This constitutes the main conflict of the novel.

The author renders with great realism the severity of the struggle for the new and, particularly, the persistent struggle of the communists for the correct development of the countryside. The communist representative is Adnan, the instructor of the district party committee sent to the countryside to strengthen the cooperative. Adnan is an honest and devoted communist who loves the peasants with all his heart and tries with all his might

to help them in their struggle against the arbitrary activities of their authoritarian chairman. At the beginning he does not have an easy time in the struggle with the cunning chairman. However, he surmounts the difficulties, which Kiu Koroziu creates, with the support of the masses of the cooperativists and the youth. Adnan does not divorce his words from his deeds. As a communist and as a true revolutionary he lives and fights together with the peasants to save the cooperative from the impasse Kiu Koroziu had led it into.

The novel *-The South Wind-* is a work of our literature, which shows the reality as it is showing the contradictions of socialist society in its revolutionary development, the difficulties of the struggle against alien manifestations and phenomena that become an obstacle to the final triumph of socialism.

The dramaticity and severity of the struggle for the complete achievement of collectivization in agriculture is reflected in the novel *-Rough Land-* (1971) by T. Laço. The action unfolds in a mountain village where the agricultural cooperative has not been set up yet. The problem of collectivization is looked upon in this novel as a problem of the struggle against the psychology of private ownership and its survivals in the consciousness of people. The author describes the conflict going on in the minds of the peasants due to their instinctive feeling of private property which keeps them tied down to the old ways of living and working. The difficult process of overcoming the concepts and habits, which private ownership brings about, is revealed through the story of Riza, a competent farmer, who is intimately linked with his land, with his own individual economy which he has set up during all his life with great efforts and hard labour. Before he joins the cooperative, he thinks a lot about it, fearing that collective work would cause the decline of his farm. However, after he dismisses the survivals of the old ideology, Riza lives completely with the problems and concerns of the village and puts all his efforts to overcome the difficulties and obstacles of the beginnings of the new life.



In the novel the author shows his understanding of the inner world of the individual peasant, the contradictions that characterized the life of the mountain village in the sixties and gives them in very expressive details. The pages of the novel, while describing the conflict with the enemies of the new way, present at the same time the joy brought about by collective work, the spirit of socialist solidarity, the new relations and concepts that begin to take root in the consciousness of people.

In this period S. Spasse published two novels -*By the Lakeside*- and -*The Fires*-, in which he reflects the present-day Albanian countryside, a theme in which he feels quite at home. The first is a novel about the collectivization of agriculture. The author deals with the problem of the great difficulties encountered in the efforts to achieve the complete collectivization of agriculture. Here the political and economic sphere of the class struggle intermingles with the moral issue. The second novel, -*The Fires*- speaks of a backward cooperative in a mountainous region. The action is made up by the efforts of the progressive elements to have the cooperative come out of its retarded development and to put it on the road to progress. The author had created some convincing characters amongst which mention must be made of Kujtim Morava, the agronomist who comes to the countryside as a volunteer to help in raising the level of the **collective economy, of Zoga**, who represents the newly emancipated mountaineer woman who has dedicated all her energies to the development of the countryside on its road to socialism.

Among the literary works dedicated to the present time, it is important to bring into view those that pose the problem of the formation of people's revolutionary world outlook in their struggle against the survivals of the old psychology, particularly against the conservative traditions and concepts in the field of moral relations. The novel -*March*- (1975) by Vath Koreshi presents interest particularly in reflecting with psychological accuracy the spiritual revival of people under the

conditions of the new socialist life of freedom which smashed the norms of the savage patriarchal morality that reigned in the past in the mountainous regions. The difficult and persistent struggle in order to confirm the personality of the woman in the mountainous regions, when the survivals from the past in the family relations were powerful, the incessant penetration of the new concepts and ideas, the patient and tactful work with the old generation fostered and formed with the old psychology, these are problems that are touched upon in the novel -*The Forts*- (1969) by Gj. Zheji, which is distinguished by an original composition.

The important transformations that took place in the sixties were reflected also in the other short genres of prose, particularly in the short story which marked perceptible progress during this period. Besides the old writers, like Sh. Musaraj, Dh. Shuteriqi, etc., in this creative field a number of younger authors like N. Prifti, I. Kadare, T. Laço, D. Shaplo, A. Kondo, Dh. Xhuvani, A. Cerga, etc., were also very active. The distinguishing features of the majority of the short stories of these years are the reflection of the new social developments, the correct sketching of characters and their close links with the popular short story. In the centre of the story -*The Landlord and the Serf*- (1963) by Dh. Shuteriqi is a servant whose life in the past had slid to real slavery without any joy or rights, deprived of even the association with his relatives. After the victory of the people's revolution, when he fully understood his tragedy, the hero goes to get revenge on the landlord who had ruined his life, but in the end he is finished himself, because he could not adapt himself to the new life. In reflecting the awakening of the peasant, in the analysis of his complex world, the story is remarkable for its deep psychological effects. The main theme of the short stories -*The Heavy Curtains of the Mountains*-, -*The Stone Steps*- and -*The Eight Letters of Valti*- by this same author is the struggle for the triumph of socialist morality in the sphere of family relations. T. Laço in a series of short stories sketched



portraits of progressive people, of determined fighters for the new in socialism. Such is Esma, the heroine of the short story *-The Decayed Grains Are Dripping-* in which the author reflects the new ways of the present life of the peasant who places the general interest above all, and for this she comes into conflict also with her father, a man of considerable petty-bourgeois survivals, who tries to swindle as much as he can from society. The moral features of present-day people are also apparent in the short story *-The Wind of the Land-*, which speaks of a young boy who has just been released from the army and goes to work and live in the countryside. The conflict between a collectivist and an individualist world outlook is at the foundation of the subject of the story *-Rocky Strips-*, which deals with the struggle of the cooperativist peasantry to make fertile lands out of the hills and the mountains. In *-The Glowing Rope-* N. Prifti got the theme from the first years after Liberation. It speaks of the implementation of the Land Reform. Through his hero of work, Mico Smara, the author of another short story, has brought out the steadfast faith of the peasantry in the people's power, its conscious political growth. The hero, a poor peasant, takes the land of the former agha of the village that the Committee gives to him in spite of the warning by someone that the landlord is roaming nearby with armed bandits. While making use of the contrast between the hard life of the past and the happy life that the people began to lead under the people's power, A. Kondo in his story *-The New Song, Granny and Us-* relates how socialism, after saving the people from their worries and misery which their life was filled with in the class society, made their love of life grow. The difficulties in re-educating the people in the spirit of collective work and, in general, with the norms of the new life, is the problem that D. Shaplo thrashes out in his story *-The Archway-*. With subtle realistic details, without bearing on the colours too much, the author relates that life takes its own course; the hero understands after many trials that the times have changed and that

he, as all the rest of the people, must walk in step with it.

The poets also concerned themselves with the transformations that were linked with the further progress of the socialist society. The poetry of this period reflected the revolutionary atmosphere and the creative impulse of the masses of working people, an impulse that was revived in the people by the struggle to deepen the socialist revolution in all the fields, particularly in the field of culture and ideology. In the ranks of the authors, who endeavoured to echo the new problems in the life of the country, mention must be made of Ll. Siliqi, I. Kadare, D. Agolli, F. Arapi, etc. Faithful to the basic tendency of his poetic talent, Ll. Siliqi in his poem *-The Trumpeters-* (1967), written in an oratorical vein, in relating the enthusiasm of the masses of working people in their struggle to smash once and for all the survivals of the old morality and psychology, reflected the new features in life and in people's consciousness. At the centre of the poem stands the lyrico-epic picture of the present-day mountain village, where religion has lost its former power over the souls of people, where the mountaineers, once oppressed and neglected, have kicked out the backward customs that had kept them tied down to a humiliating life and have embraced the socialist norms, where the free collective work has made the peasants' spiritual world richer. The idea of the poem comes out through vivid, concrete, realistic details such as the slogan written in large letters on the mountain slope: *-Girls, never accept to be sold!-*, the cross *-abandoned in a background of smoke-* and in contrast with it the red star that *-inside the stone forts is now dispersing the stormy clouds-*, the young highland lass who does not accept to take *-an old rickety husband-*, appointed as her



lot by the parents, the young highland lad who speaks full of vitality and faith in the progress that the highlands have made, the cooperativists who, in their efforts to get as much produce as possible of their soil, fight off the draught with determination, the plots sowed with potatoes that are growing green along the mountain slope near the frontier post. All of these give the aspect of that drive that was brought about in society by the call of the Central Committee of the Party of Labour of Albania to secure the complete triumph of socialist ideology in all spheres of life. The subject itself has determined the oratoric spirit and publicistic nature of the poem. This is evident also in those songs of the poem where Ll. Siliqi exalts the lofty characters that live with the problems and questions of the times and scourges with his satire those people who, although once upon a time (in the years of war against the fascist occupiers) showed themselves to be true revolutionaries, in the life of peace became addicted to petty-bourgeois comfort, thus losing many of their former traits, and began to lead a life of petty desires and purposes. The poet invites these people to shake off their dust of petty-bourgeois comfort and to take an active part in the endeavours of the whole country, to further enhance the revolutionary spirit in life and work. The poet directed a fiery call to throw out the influences that are alien to our society also to those youths who with their imitation of styles and fashions from abroad were «out of tune» with the revolutionary atmosphere that has swept the entire country.

The struggle of the working class against the bureaucrats who try to smother the voice of the people through their supposed superiority, the vitality of the social life as a result of the overall attack against everything that prevents socialist society from marching forward were echoed by F. Arapi in his poem: «Anti-bureaucracy» (1968). The poet relates about a factory director who with his hollering tries to shut up the mouth of a worker who advises him not to decide about people on the basis of personal sympathies. The arrogant and arbitrary actions

of this person, who has become a bureaucrat, are put to an end by the workers' collective who discharge him of his function as a director. Besides this episode, in which satire is not lacking, a good place in the poem is taken up by the reflections of the poet about the events which he relates. The complete triumph of the proletarian ideology in life, the ever more strengthening of the position of the new and the uninterrupted weakening of the old, revives in the enthusiastic feelings of admirations for the inexhaustible revolutionary spirit of the working class. Under the influence of the lively atmosphere that characterizes the life of the country, the consciousness of people is revived, the communist traits go deeper and take root in their minds and their hearts. Even the poet is helped by the struggle of the masses of working people for the revolutionization of the whole life of the country to shake off all pettishness in the flames of the struggle for the complete victory of socialist ideology.

The main theme of the plays of this period is the triumph in people's consciousness of the socialist concepts and ideas, the implementation of socialist relations in the life of Albanian society. The new Albanian dramaturgy had turned its attention even earlier to the struggle for the ideological re-education of the individual, but under the conditions of the struggle for the further revolutionization of the country, by going deeper into the ideological and cultural revolution, the problem of cleaning people's consciousness of the «stains» of the old society became particularly acute. Precisely the reflection of the difficulties for the complete victory in all fields of life of socialist ideology characterizes the best plays of this period such as «The Great Flood» (1976) and «The Men of the Valley» (1976) by K. Jakova, «The Highland Lass» (1969) by L. Papa and others.



The plays «The Great Flood» and «The Men of the Valley» reveal again the characteristic features of many of the works of K. Jakova (as for example the plays «Our Land», and «Halili and Hajria»), which rest in the fact that the writer reflects very sharp social conflicts, unfolding the action with remarkable vigour and great dramatic power.

The subject of the play «The Great Flood» is taken from events that are linked with the midfifties when the socialist construction was being carried out with great speed. The liberation of the people from the chains of the old morality, the implantation of the new relations of life even in the remote mountain villages that were once backward, is the problem that the author displays through a tense account. At the centre of the world is the conflict between the young people of the mountain village, and the courageous fighters for socialism like Gjergj Melshaj, Pal Perkova, Bardha, on the one side, and the enemies of the new order like Nikollë Gjeta, Brung Troll and others. In the figure of the young mountaineer Gjergj Melshaj, a remarkable activist of the village, a determined fighter for the new life which he defends even with weapons against the subversive agents smuggled into the country from outside, who try to blow up a recently built hydro-power station, the author narrates the revival of the Highlands under the influence of socialism, the outburst of the energies and the creative drive of the young mountaineers. The new social and moral features of the hero are revealed also in his personal life. While at work in building the dam of the hydro-power station he became acquainted with the young communist Bardha, a beautiful, strong-willed, intelligent girl, with whom he is later engaged even though he knows that her father had killed his father before Liberation. According to the norms of the unwritten law of the Highlands, Gjergj has to get revenge on Bardha's family. However, Gjergj is a communist who rises above the old social concepts all the more since he knows that the tribal leaders have

caused them to quarrel in order to have a better chance to rule over the mountaineers.

The action of the play develops within a very short period of time in which Gjergj has to convince his mother and grandmother to accept in their house the daughter of their enemy as a bride. The author succeeded in portraying convincingly the powerfully emotional conflict that goes on within the consciousness of the old generation, who is under the influence of the old social concepts which the enemies of the people's power try to keep alive. The solution of the social conflict helps overcome the family conflict. The failure of the enemies' plans to blow up the dam sheds light also on their attempt to cause a quarrel within the family of Gjergj Melshaj. Here the author displays his ability to closely interlace the social conflict with that of the family and to reflect them in some of the characters of the play, particularly in the fighters for the building of socialism in the mountain regions.

In the play «The Men of the Valley» the events take place in a remote mountain village which is about to form a cooperative. The author describes the conflict within a large patriarchal family in which the word of the head of the family had always been the law for all the other members of the family. The conflict between the third son, a factory worker, together with his eldest brother and nephews and nieces, and the head of the family whom they try to convince to join the cooperative, makes up the subject of the play. The author describes with vigour the events that take place in the family; the struggle of the young people to break down the resistance of the old man of the family, the smashing of the old concepts on which the authority of the head of the family was based; the discovery of the class enemy who pretends to be a friend of the family but, in reality, is the one who had pushed on the subversive agents to kill the eldest son of the family. The action of the play develops inside the house. The author has found a composition which helps bring out the basic



idea of the work: the forward march of the new in the remote mountainous regions, the growth of the moral values of people, the beauty of the ideals and deeds of the heroes Faja, Hidri, Hida, and others.

In its outer form, «The Highland Lass» of L. Papa appears to be like the history of the discovery of a crime, but in reality it is a work about a sharp political and social conflict. The spectator and reader's attention is drawn by the author's deep insight in the world and psychology of the highlanders. The play takes us to the highland village in the first years after the establishment of the people's power in Albania when, between the old world, which was on its way out, and socialism a fierce battle was developing. The enemies, the wealthy, the chieftains and the various reactionary elements did all they had in their power to win back their lost position and to hamper the strengthening of the new order. In order to frighten the peasants, to prevent them from participating in the building of the new life, they used slanders and assassinations. This is what they did with Cuca (Lassie), the brilliant social activist of the Highlands, who, in educating the women, especially the young girls of the village, in the spirit of the new life and in getting them to take an active part in political and social life, was foiling the plans of the enemies. During her life, Cuca had experienced the unbearable oppression and injustice that hung over the peasants. Because her father had dared to disagree with the wealthy man of the village, who wanted to grab his land, the priest humiliated him by publicly refusing to baptize his newborn daughter, thus depriving her of her Christian name all her life and, as a consequence, destined her to become a nun because a female without a name was a creature that nobody would want for a wife. Cuca was saved from this humiliating life by socialism which, like for all the masses of poor peasants, opened the way for the young girl to a beautiful and dignified future. Cuca is adorned with romantic traits. The lofty social purpose, for the achievement of which she is fighting, has kindled in her an

inner fire, has awakened in her unsuspected aptitudes and energies. The courage, stoicism and the unshakeable faith in the uprightness of the cause, for which she is fighting, are her characteristic traits. The heroine is described not only as a person who has a strong character, but also as one endowed with a political and ideological consciousness enabling her to understand that the world of darkness and oppression would not be destroyed if the hearts and souls of people were not liberated from the old concepts that had frustrated their energies.

The author knows how to give the specific circumstances in which the class struggle was waged in the first years after the establishment of the people's power. Besides the left-overs of the terrorist bands, the former collaborators of the fascist occupiers, the enemies, in their fight against the new order, make use of the old conservative customs of the Highlands of which they present themselves as defenders to the masses of the peasants, because they know the great influence of the old psychology on the people. Thus, they succeed for a while in keeping under their influence certain peasants who still are not emancipated spiritually, preventing them from taking an active part in the building of a socialist life. This idea of the author is expressed through several episodic personages of the play like Pal, Cuca's brother, whose blind faith in the norms of the old canon puts him in conflict with his sister.

In the play «The Highland Lass» the author relates that the furious resistance of the enemies to the people's power is also supported by religion which has always perpetuated the oppression by the ruling class. In its vigorous exposure of the norms of the canon and of religion, which had kept the masses under a heavy spiritual yoke and in ignorance, the play «The Highland Lass» echoed an actual problem that preoccupied the Albanian society in the sixties, particularly the struggle it had started for the complete emancipation of the women from the chains of the survivals of the humiliating customs of the past and of religion.



## THE ACTUALITY OF THE THEME OF THE ANTI-FASCIST WAR OF NATIONAL LIBERATION

In the process of the country's forward march on the road to socialism, there has been a constant interest in the glorious epic of the war against the fascists and their tools. It is obvious that this was an expression of the need of the society to be ever better acquainted with the historical development of the events that brought about the triumph of the revolution and the role played by the masses of the people in these events of historic importance. However, a more complete knowledge of the events that decided the fate of the country during the Second World War was of importance also for another reason: it was an important factor in the activity of the entire people for the complete construction of a socialist society in struggle against the capitalist and revisionist world. The heroism and the high spirit of sacrifice that distinguished the years of the resistance against the fascist occupiers continued to be an inexhaustible source of inspiration for the masses of the working people in their efforts to surmount the difficulties and obstacles that the enemies created in this period. That is why during the sixties the task of the writers continued to be the reflection, in a most complete and comprehensive manner, of the heroic war against the enemies, the fascist occupiers, for the liberation of the country.

Ever since the fifties, efforts were made to pass on to a more epic description of the heroic episodes of the war years in order to point out the differentiation of the classes and social groups of those years, the awakening and the organizing of the masses of the people to fight for the liberation of the country under the leadership of the communists, the treacherous stand of the upper classes and their close collaboration with the foreigners. These endeavours were fruitful particularly in the sixties when our literature had accumulated the neces-

sary artistic experience and the writers had become more proficient in their literary works.

One of the most brilliant works of this period dedicated to the war epic is the dilogy "Before the Dawn" (1968) by Sh. Musaraj. In writing this novel, the author depended largely on his own experience, his impressions and recollections as a participant of the people's anti-fascist war. This takes up the bulk of the historical element in his novel. In making use of the material taken from history and presenting a series of artistic aspects, the author was able to sketch faithfully the political and ideological atmosphere towards the end of the thirties and the period of the fascist occupation, the efforts of the progressive youth circles and the bourgeois intellectuals to find a solution to the salient problems that stood before the Albanian society. "Before the Dawn" has the form of a chronicle; the events are described in a chronological order, without being grouped into specific categories. The novel has several lines of action. The main line is that of Qemal Orhanaj, an intellectual from the lower classes, who, being closely acquainted with the great poverty of the masses of people, attempts to find the way to save the common people of the country from the ferocious oppression and exploitation of the ruling classes. The author puts his hero through the severe tests that the Homeland goes through after April 7, 1939, when it lost its freedom and national independence, and relates his activity under the conditions of the outburst of the people's resistance against the fascist occupiers and the organization of the war for national liberation under the leadership of the communists. In passing through these events the hero matures and becomes a revolutionary, assimilates in the fire of battle the Marxist-Leninist scientific world outlook, becomes an active militant in the people's anti-fascist movement and, later, one of its outstanding cadres. The road to his spiritual and ideological development is presented as a difficult process. In his youth the hero had tried to understand the reasons of the sufferings of the



masses of the people and to find in what ways they could be avoided. At the beginning he gets acquainted with the intellectual elements of the thirties. In taking part in their discussions and conversations on various social and political topics, the hero hopes to find an answer to the many questions that worry him, but soon he realizes that the fruitless discussions of the bourgeois intellectuals, who do not know the conditions of the country and are afraid of the people, cannot help him. «They are busy doing nothing» at a time when the country was on the verge of ruin. Their attitude later on confirmed even more his conviction of the correctness of his conclusions. After April 7, 1939 most of them reconcile themselves with the fascist occupation and forget about their calls for «democracy» and «progress». Only the communists, with whom he establishes contact at the end of the thirties, are for him a power capable of solving the acute problems of the Albanian society. As a son of the common people and a man of action he becomes a communist, enters the road of the revolutionary struggle against the grave situation in which the country is. In these chapters of the novel, together with the strengthening of the people's movement, is related the ideological and political tempering of the hero, his transformation into a talented propagandist and organizer of the clandestine movement.

The author makes the physiognomy of Qemal Orhanaj more precise by showing his links and relationships with a large circle of people widely differing from one another in their stand towards the important events that the country goes through after the fascist occupation, as well as in their origin and social status. The majority of them are ordinary people, workers, craftsmen, employees, poor youths, activists of the clandestine anti-fascist movement with whom the hero collaborates. In his relations with them the qualities of his character come out clearly — his profound ideological convictions, his love for his comrades, his care and patience in the work with the people. The need for broadening the ranks of the general movement against the fascist

occupiers bring him in contact with the «social democrats» and even with the Balliats (members of the National Front). He goes to meet the people for the purpose of winning over to the side of the people's war the various elements who loved the country and wished to contribute to the salvation of the Homeland. In the debates that he conducts with these people, the author points out the ideological and political superiority of the communists over the other political forces, their ability to give a clear account to the people of the way of their salvation from the foreign yoke and their social liberation. The last chapters of the novel describe the final victory of the masses of the people over the enemies, the fascist forces and their collaborators, revealing the idea that the communists were the only force in Albania, capable of giving in its program a correct solution to the important historical tasks that were facing the country.

In close connection with the reflection of the people's war, Sh. Musaraj describes the complete capitulation of the «bourgeois nationalists», of the advocates of the exploiting classes of the landlords and the rich bourgeoisie, who did their utmost to impede the people's war for liberation. Through an accurate reflection of the life and thoughts of the bourgeois nationalists, their political opinions and, especially, their practical activity alongside the nazi invaders against the people's movement, the author exposes their reactionary features of detestable traitors, their hatred towards communism, their class ego, their disdain for the masses and their anti-patriot-

ism.

In the novel «Before the Dawn» Sh. Musaraj, through the character of the young intellectual Emira Velo, describes the hopeless situation in which that part of the bourgeois intellectuals who, led astray by their social prejudices, stayed away from the people's war, found themselves. During the thirties, Emira Velo joined the progressive youths who were dissatisfied with the feudal and bourgeois reality and were looking for a way to take the country out of its stagnation and



grave situation. Her love of country, her desire to see the Homeland free and independent and her lofty moral aims even after April 7, 1939 keep her bound to that part of the young intellectuals who did not reconcile themselves to the fascist occupation of the country. However, later on, when the resistance against the foreign occupiers took an organized character, a more conscious and more massive form, drawing ever more into its ranks the broad masses of the people, the common people, E. Velo, being influenced by her social prejudices (the environment in which she grew up and was educated) wavers and finally backs out from the general movement against the foreign yoke. The atmosphere of abhorrence from the masses and fear of the revolution, which characterized the life of the bourgeois intellectual which she lives, strangles in Emira Velo those positive elements that distinguished her from her circle, her love of country, her personal respectability and her inclination to the truth. Unable to break away from the old world, she slowly drifts to the camp of the most reactionary and most anti-patriotic forces. Through Emira Velo's story the author relates that separation from the people is fatal to the individual. Only in the battle for the social and spiritual emancipation of the people, only in putting one's knowledge and energies in the service of these noble aspirations, does the individual profit and grow spiritually.

The novel *«Before the Dawn»* was an important step of the contemporary Albanian prose in giving a comprehensive panorama of the National Liberation War, in illustrating some of its basic aspects such as the active historic role of the masses of the people and the destruction of all the forces that tried to impede the coming of the people to power. One of the merits of the novel is the sketching of a new type of hero, of the leader and talented organizer of the masses.

Another attempt of contemporary prose to present in broad scenes the epic of the National Liberation War is the tetralogy *«The Three Colours of the Time»* (1965-

1969) by A. Abdihoxha. The action of the novel has many lines which reflect the history of Albanian society in the years of the fascist occupation, the attitude of the various social classes and strata towards the problem of the foreign yoke and of the struggle to do away with it, the awakening and organization of the people for their own liberation. The author relates quite correctly that the beys who had always been the basic social support of the foreign occupiers in Albania and had looked upon the country as their own estate, became tools and close collaborators also of the Italian fascists. The broadening and strengthening of the people's resistance against the foreign occupiers showed even more clearly their real face of traitors. The type of bey, who has joined the enemies of Albania, A. Abdihoxha describes in the person of the prefect of the town Ahmet Bey Cerka. In his digressions into the past, the author reveals quite well the prefect's basic traits, such as his deep hatred for the masses of working people, his greed, his reactionary ideas. As a high official in the landlord-bourgeois monarchy of Zog, he immediately puts himself in the service of the fascist occupiers when he sees that he has found a reliable support for his class. In understanding that the movement of the masses of the people against the foreign occupiers endangers also the interests of his class, he tries to do everything he can to put out the Anti-fascist National Liberation Movement in the Elbasan region. He is ready to go along with anyone provided that the beys remain in power in Albania. When they ask him with which ally would his class accept collaboration, the fascists or the reactionaries, he answers unequivocally: *«Either one will do, whoever suits us best... as long as we get rid of communism.»* This is quite a clear revelation of the anti-patriotism of the beys who were ready to sell out the country to anyone who protected their interests. The moral and political portrait of Ahmet Bey Cerka is completed by that of another prototype of this class, Kahreman Bey Cërka, through whom the author reflected the desperate steps taken by the people of this kind in organizing armed detachments and in joining the



ranks of the fascist army in order to suppress the massive anti-fascist revolutionary movement. Their final failure brings to light the inability of the exploiting classes to stem the popular liberation movement which surged ahead like a stormy avalanche.

The novel «Three Colours of the Tune» exposes in vivid satirical colours the anti-patriotism of the bourgeois rich merchants who, at a time when the country was going through difficulties, looked after their own interests, trying to get rich at the expense of the people. The artistic effect is achieved through appropriate description of the life and troubles of Mal Agha whose individual traits reflect a rapacious and avaricious heart of one who did not look beyond the interests of his own class.

With the aim of completing the picture of Albanian society of this period, the author describes the process of differentiation, that occurred in the bosom of the privileged strata, which brought about the separation of the respectable and patriotic elements from their environment and their union with the people's resistance. Significant for this kind of people is the fate of doctor Besim Kodra who, wrapped up in his work, shows no concern for the political and social problems of the life of the country. However, the events of the war against fascism, that had swept the whole country, did not fail to shake the young doctor awake to the tremendous problem of the liberation of the Homeland, for which every true Albanian had to give his contribution. Naturally, it was possible to give the political awakening of the doctor through more convincing episodes and details, however, the general line of the spiritual development of the character is treated in an upright manner. The history professor Maksin Tyxhari is sketched as the liberal bourgeois intellectual type, who talks a lot about the rights of a sovereign people, but goes no further than elegant expressions. The development of the political events reveal quite clearly his heart of a despicable bourgeois who, when the country was in misery, made no sacrifice at all for the good of the country. A large place in the novel is dedicated to the

masses of the working people. The author describes in detail the various advocates of the masses, their struggle and efforts for the happiness of the people. Particular attention is drawn to their movement which grows like an enormous avalanche and in the end crushes the old world, the foreign occupiers and the exploiting classes that joined up with them. In the midst of war the best and the most active advocates of the masses were strong spiritually and ideologically, thus becoming conscious fighters for the cause of the revolution. The author rightfully links the transformation of the masses into an active historical force with the tremendous propagandistic and educational work that is carried out by the communists who play a great role in forming the masses with a revolutionary consciousness. A. Abdihoxha sketched the figures of some of the communists like Skënder Shpata, Spiro Shtegu, etc. In Skënder Shpata he personifies the fate of the common people who, at a very young age, felt the state of misery and the class oppression on his own shoulders. This young worker is tempered as a revolutionary in struggle with the exploiters, in strikes and demonstrations of the working class. Later on, when the storm of the worker movement against the fascist occupiers broke out, he became a very capable leader and organizer of the masses. When he was on the front during the Italian-Greek War, he carried out frequent revolutionary agitation with the Albanian soldiers who were recruited by force into the fascist army, calling on them to desert. He continues his activities also at the concentration camp where he was thrown in together with the other soldiers who had refused to carry out the orders of the Italian command to fight against the Greek people. With his fiery words, he awakens the spirit of a conscious revolt in the prisoners and organizes them to resist the repressive measures of the camp administration. His high moral qualities, his invincible spirit against the enemy, his firm political and ideological convictions and consciousness were revealed particularly in his staunch stand with which he endured the tortures of the enemy and in his heroic death.



In treating his novel as a work with many plots, A. Abdihoxha was able to reflect also the life of the Albanian countryside, the ever increasing inclusion of the strata of the common peasants into the ranks of the war for the elimination of the fascist slavery and for social liberation. This problem has entered into the novel through Spiro Shtegu who represents the poor peasant with a progressive political consciousness. His contacts with the communists helped to understand what the road to salvation was for the common peasant. When he returns to the village, together with his comrades, he begins to work to organize partisan detachments. In their battles with the fascists and Ballists the partisans are tempered, their ranks grow and their faith in the victory over the enemy becomes stronger. In every new page of the novel, the cycle of events and characters reflected in it becomes larger. Towards the end of the work the main plot revolves on the armed struggle of the Albanian people. The author has known how to interlace the different lines of the subject, which lead the reader towards the idea of the inevitable triumph of the people who have become conscious of their strength and their interests.

The action of the novel "The Bronze Bust" (1970) by D. Agolli takes place at times in the town and at other times in the countryside, but mostly in a battalion of partisans. This coincides with the artistic concepts of the author who, in this manner intends to bring out the broad political and educational activity that the communists carried out during the years of the fascist occupation with the different strata of society, in order to have all the respectable and patriotic elements join the ranks of the anti-fascist liberation movement, while instilling in the conscience of many of them the idea of the war against the foreigner, while re-educating many others and saving more of those from the influence of the enemy. In the centre of the novel is the life and activity of the communist Memo Kovaçi who is appointed commissar of the partisan battalion "Lightning". On his way to be assigned to his new duty, Memo gets wounded in a

skirmish with the Ballists, and thence his comrades take him to the city in secrecy to be treated by a physician whom they knew to be a respectable but non-political man. In sending the hero to the physician's house, the author gives the reader a chance to see some of the traits that distinguish the communists, their profound ideological convictions, their unwavering faith in the cause for which they were fighting and the great influential power of their words. In continuous and fiery debate with the master of the house about the problems of the country, as well as the problems of the general struggle of the people against the foreign occupiers, commissar Memo sees quite clearly in the stand of the doctor all the illusory character of the neutral position that the latter supports. In moments of fierce political and social conflicts, as was the war for the liberation from the yoke of the foreigners and the upper classes that joined forces with them, there can be no neutral people who stay out of the conflict. The character of the doctor is designed to show the tremendous power of the ideas of the communists who knew how to win over in the ranks of the movement even those people who are wrapped up in their own profession and indifferent towards political problems.

The commissar, as a skilful organizer who knows how to win over even those people who quite often, by the change of events or for various reasons, found themselves in the enemy's camp, but whose interests linked them with the people, is brought out in the story of Arif, an illiterate man without political experience who goes with his Ballist uncle who was a sworn enemy of the people's movement. Later on, after he had learned the truth, he turned the rifle on his uncle and joined the partisans. His going over to the ranks of the fighters for the liberation of the people from the foreign yoke is a merit of the commissar who, having a clear idea of what strata of society would support the movement and what strata would not, not only makes it possible for Arif to join the battalion, but intervenes actively in order to disperse the least bit of doubt and disbelief that the commander



or some partisan fighter show towards him and helps him to find his place in the battalion.

The traits of commissar Memo, as a new type of leader of the masses, who tries to implant in the conscience of the fighters of the battalion a correct understanding of the war and of the character of the people's army, come out quite clearly, particularly in the story of the relationship between him and the commander of the battalion, Rrapo Tabani, a brave and clever peasant in whom the deep hatred for the wealthy of the reactionary regime is combined with his dislike for discipline and organization. This is the reason why for a long time the commander had not accepted a commissar in his battalion, thinking that his fighters had no need for political enlightenment. The burdensome oppression by the civil servants of the reactionary regime had convinced him that people with schooling are cunning. They know how to turn elegant words but they lack courage. This concept towards intellectuals, commander Rrapo kept even later on and, as a consequence of it, he regards the measures that the commissar takes for raising the educational and political level of the partisans with suspicion. But with patience and tact and without rushing things, the commissar convinces the commander that in order to fight the enemy successfully, it is not enough to be brave, one must also have an ideological and political consciousness. The personal example of the commissar who, during his life in the battalion reveals himself not only as a man with a broad political horizon but also as an intrepid fighter, makes a great impression on the commander and plays a great role in his re-education.

Commissar Memo is realistically portrayed. The author relates with artistic force the infinite devotion of the communists to the problems of the national and social liberation of the masses, their irreconcilable resistance to the enemies of the common people, the exploiting classes and their political advocates, the Ballists. The commissar dedicated all his strength and energies to the people's war of liberation and, when it became necessary, he also gave his young life for the

ideal that inspired him, thus showing that the communists do not separate words from deeds.

An important asset of the novel is that the author, without being prolific, with economy of words, is able to relate the enormous efforts of the Communist Party in organizing and leading the masses of the people in war against the fascist occupiers and their collaborators, in giving important aspects of the life of the country, particularly the growth of the people's liberation movement and, in close connection with this, the anti-national role of the exploiting classes and other reactionary forces.

In their efforts to reflect the National Liberation War in a most complete way, the writers often succeeded in finding new and original material heretofore unexploited. We notice this in the novel «A Chronicle on Stone» (1971) by I. Kadare and «The man with a Gun» (1975) by D. Agolli. In «Chronicle on stone» the author focusses on provincial life, its routine and profound conservative spirit, particularly its savage reaction to the people's revolution as a new and profoundly transforming event which puts in danger the order established ever since the middle ages, the backward traditions and habits. The events and facts of everyday life of this petrified world are given through the clear perceptions of a youngster. His story, interlaced with personal observations, is spiced with a profound irony. The picture of the old provincial world, particularly its futile efforts to hamper the reviving effects of the people's revolution in the life of the Albanian society, comes out through very expressive details in which the phenomena of life are reproduced in magnified dimensions, thus gaining symbolic value. This dormant and static provincial life is contrasted to the impact of the revolution which created the possibility of liberating the people from the chains of the old traditions and habits that had frustrated their energies for centuries on end, and with its triumph opened the way to the progress of the country.

D. Agolli in his latest novel reflects the difficult



process of surmounting the backward customs that kept back a part of the poor peasantry from going at once and joining the ranks of the movement against the fascist occupiers. The hero of the novel, Mato Gruda, is a poor peasant who for a time remains detached from the general popular movement for the liberation of the country, being bent on taking revenge on the old foes of his family. However, the course of events enables him to see that, at a time when the country is under foreign occupation, the paramount duty for all respectable Albanians is to drive away the enemy. The strongest point of the novel is the reflection of the survivals and suspicions of the hero who struggles to get above the unwritten laws sanctioned by centuries-old traditions.

A number of authors also relate in their novels the heroic war of the Albanian people against the fascist occupiers and their collaborators. In the novel *-Along Blocked Trails-*, M. Kallamata aimed at relating the spirit of solidarity of the partisans, their lofty consciousness, their pure morality, their courage and patience in overcoming the many difficulties in their life as devoted fighters for the people's cause. The idea of the novel is materialized through the relating of the vicissitudes of a partisan unit, charged with an important mission, on its journey through enemy territory. At the core of the novel *-The Awakening of Nebi Sureli-*, Dh. Xhuvani put the history of the growth and formation of a young worker in the heat of the war against the fascist occupiers, of his transformation into a devoted revolutionary. Even though it is constructed as a chronicle of the hero's fate, the novel gives a truthful reflection of the epoch, its conflicts and its characteristic phenomena. The war, as an important test for the people, is the problem that S. Godo thrashes out in his novel *-The Test of Fire-* (1977). The author points out the courage and spirit of sacrifice of the partisans and their struggle against the fascist occupiers, their political and ideological growth in the field of battle.

Events and conflicts linked with the National

Liberation War found reflection also in the narratives of this period. The writers who, worked in this field, continued to be attracted by the heroism of the partisans, treated this theme in a profound manner. The general inclination was the psychological revelation of the motives and inner impulses that inspired the people to heroic deeds. This is evident in a series of narratives such as *-The Incredible-* by N. Prifti and *-The Death of the Driver-* by A. Kondo, in which the roots of the splendid morale of the partisans are revealed. The title itself speaks of the aspect of partisan life that has drawn the attention of D. Shapilo in his narrative *-A Partisan Was Judged-*. The author has aimed at presenting the relationship between the partisans, the high spirit of principles and the faith in the correctness of their comrade's stand. The narrative *-The Vulture-* by T. Laço takes up the problem of humanism of the Albanian people in contrast with the cruel and inhuman nature of the fascists.

As in other kinds of literature, in the drama of this period, the playwrights concentrate their attention on the complex phenomena of the years of resistance against the fascist occupiers and their tools. In the drama *-Kostë Bardhi's Mill-* (1971), N. Prifti describes with art the deep conflict of a peasant, which has its source in his own individual mentality. The bitter experience of life full of disillusion and sufferings has made him sceptical of the possibility of the peasantry escaping the violence and oppression by the beys. Thus, deep in his soul he nurtures the illusion that in a class society, *-If you don't bother anybody, nobody's going to bother you.-* However, on the other hand, Kostë Bardhi, as an honest man of noble feelings, revolts against the state of oppression and torments suffered by his fellow villagers. He entertains a deep hatred for the bey, in front of whose threats he stands fearless. The author, through realistic description achieves to give the survivals of the hero who goes through several tests until he is convinced that there is no personal happiness outside the happiness of the entire people. In his consciousness the sense of love



for the Homeland wins over the individualistic mentality. In the scene of the meeting with the bey, who has seized his mill, Kostë Bardhi, emerges as a man who is finally convinced that the masses of the people, led by the communists, through their struggle against the fascist occupiers will raze to the ground the old society which is based on the exploitation of man by man and will shake off foreign rule. -We labourers and you lords?... No, Shahin Milaku, that cuckoo sings no more.- Kostë Bardhi directs these words, which reveal realistically his boiling vengeance against the world of oppression and exploitation; to the bey who believed that after he took away the miller's property he would also be able to break him down spiritually. His life experience makes him join without reservation the ranks of the people's liberation movement in which his son was militating. In showing the hero's uneasy road towards the truth, the writer knew how to reflect important aspects of those years, like the magnificent work of the communists in endowing the peasants with a revolutionary conscience and fury of the exploiting classes, when they saw themselves powerless in holding back the drive of the people's liberation movement. The main character of the drama -The Thunder of that Winter- (1976) by T. Laço struggles with distressing contradictions of a complex nature. Grown up in the spirit of the deep devotion to the old traditions, it is difficult for Hodo Ruzhaj to disregard his grandfather's wish, who in his last words bid him to link himself -through life and death- with the Çaushaj family, even though his father-in-law had become a Ballist, a detestable tool of the Nazis. The activist of the movement in the village made many efforts to convince him that his interests required him dissolve the relation with the Ballists so as not to separate himself from the poor peasants like himself. Hodo, however, always held on to his own, being close bound to the traditions of his ancestors. In creating this character the writer followed the truth in life, while smoothing out the difficulties and the obstacles that confront a certain set of peasants in

their efforts to achieve their liberation from the old prejudices. The realistic reflection of the obstacles that the hero overcomes, until he is convinced that his road in life is different from that of his father-in-law, has made him life-like and consequently more convincing. This gave the writer the possibility to point out the sharp polarization of the forces caused by the war and at the same time the solidarity of the people in fighting against the enemy, which was not easily achieved. It was a difficult and labourious process because it associated with the overcoming of many backward traditions and concepts through the tremendous work of clarifying and educating the masses.

This drama portrays a number of types given in quite individualized traits that reveal their ardent love for the country, their sense of dignity, their deep hatred of bondage and their courage in face of death. This becomes evident through the story that is related in the drama in connection with the wounded young partisan girl whom the village had sheltered in secrecy and refused to turn over to the nazis and the Ballists. The drama evokes deep respect for the pure moral features and staunch stand of the villagers and their admiration for the great historical tasks of the communists who knew how to free the people from the grip of old prejudices by arousing up in their souls the fiery aspiration for a life of freedom and happiness.

#### THE ACTUAL REPERCUSSION OF THE THEMES OF THE PAST IN THE WORKS OF RECENT YEARS

The hard life of misery and privations of the masses of the working people of the country - a traditional theme of Albanian literature, held an important place also in this period; it was elaborated particularly in prose, in novels and short stories. J. Xoxe in his novel -The Dead River- (1968) has revealed with stark realism



the tragedy of the ordinary peasants during the feudal-bourgeois monarchy of A. Zogu. The author's attention has been drawn by the desperate situation in a poor peasant's family which struggles to escape the pangs of hunger. Through classical means of the realistic novel the author has been able to portray quite profoundly the gloomy life, completely void of joy, of the farmers and their desperate efforts to keep body and soul together. Such is the life of the family of Pilo Shpiragu, which is on the brink of human existence. The cruel exploitation by the bey, the back-breaking work in his service, forces this family to go in search of a better life. They hire a farmland, a property of several merchants, but everywhere the same miserable life is in store for them, because for the poor in the Albania of the past the merchants and the beys were of the same cast-blood-thirsty vampires. Pilo Shpiragu and the other members of his family were forever in need. Even though they slaved from dawn till dusk, they became even poorer until at last they remained without lodging and became miserable tramps with a donkey-load of possessions in the middle of nowhere.

The fate of Pilo Shpiragu and his family is the common fate of all those farmers who believed that in doing odd jobs they would escape dire poverty. Being full of energy and with a strong character, as well as persistent at work, Pilo Shpiragu believes that, with the land and the livestock he got, with 33 per cent interest from the town merchants, he would prosper. However, the outrageous plunder by the merchants and the bey, who persecuted him at every turn and blocked his way everywhere, made Pilo finally understand that he could not find happiness separate from the other fellow villagers who were poor like himself, who were exploited and suppressed like himself by the same enemies. With this character, who personifies a complicated type in whom clash opposite aspirations, J. Xoxe no doubt has made a valuable contribution in reflecting

the situation of the peasant who represents the element with two social psychologies, with that of the worker and that of the proprietor.

In order to relate in a most vivid manner the heavy oppression that characterized the life of the Albanian countryside, the author included in the subject of the novel also an intimate line, the love story of Vita, Pilo Shpiragu's daughter, with Adil, the son of a poor peasant. The idea that the aspiration of ordinary people to unite their fates with the ones they love, was often unrealizable for reasons of the bey's caprices, emerges again in this novel.

"The Dead Rivers" is a novel of multiple plots. Alongside the fate of Pilo Shpiragu and family, which is the main theme, the novel develops the line of many other peasants like Koz Dynjaja, Pip Kedhi, Kiu Germi, Sulejman Tafili and others, through whom the author brought to light the extreme poverty of the ordinary peasants who went through hell due to the beys, the merchants, the reactionary state and their tools. Many episodes and scenes are depicted with great artistic effect, in which the author reveals aspects of life in the countryside of Myzeqe drained out by the bey's oppression and malaria, the lack of human rights, the appalling uncertainty in which people lived, the crude forms of plunder. However, besides oppression and misery under the stagnant and tranquil surface of the life of the countryside in the thirties the author noticed the tacit and sometimes open resistance that the farmers put up to the bey and the class enemies. The heavy burden of the economic and political yoke, the arbitrariness of the bey and the advocates of the reactionary state, arouse the spirit of opposition and revolt of the people, urges them to find ways to ease the burdensome yoke that they carried on their backs. Thus, as often as the bey tries to tighten the yoke ever more, they unite and succeed in foiling his diabolical plans. Inspirers of this resistance were the progressive-minded peasants who began to appear in the Albanian countryside in the



thirties, even though it was a sporadic phenomenon. A class-conscious peasant, Koz Dynjaja, who had some experience in the political conflict against the anti-popular regime, in spite of all the persecutions and afflictions that he suffered, did not stoop down, but stood up like a man in face of the threat of the class enemy. Koz Dynjaja emerges as the initiator of all the actions of the peasants against the mistreatment by the bey and his tools. Through his good job, Koz Dynjaja succeeds in creating the spirit of solidarity in the peasants against the unjust measures of the administration of the reactionary state and the bey. Through his initiative the peasants give a hand to Pilo Shpiragu, when the merchants took also his draught oxen and the livestock and the land. As a politically enlightened element, who comes to the defence of the poor peasants' interests, he draws to himself all those yearning for social rights, all the honest peasants and the most courageous of the Trokth village. Koz Dynjaja, thus, becomes the centre of that sometimes tacit and at other times open resistance to the bey and the reactionary administration in the countryside.

The reactionary camp in the novel is represented by several characters among whom an important place is taken by Suat Bey Vërdhoma or Vroma (pest), as the peasants used to call him among themselves, as a sign of their deep hatred for him. By his record (an officer in the Turkish army), by his mentality and his reactionary opinions, by his way of life and his attitude towards the peasants, he is the prototype of his class, the beys, who had always made the lives of the Albanian people miserable. Suat Bey Vërdhoma is the cruel exploiter of the Myzeqe peasants, who not only is the cause of their dire poverty, but has also made their life unbearable by his humiliating and inhuman insults and injuries. He tries to keep the peasants in complete subjection and that explains his savagery against any sign of the awakening and the consolidation of the peasants. To suppress them, he is sided and abetted by the tribal chief and his servants

who appear as blood-suckers and toddies, who make their living by serving the upper classes in their exploitation of the ordinary peasants.

In the novel «The Dead River» J. Xoxe discovered new possibilities of developing the present-day Albanian novel. The author knew how to reflect the life of the people in the past through the events that reflect the basic characteristics of the epoch, the legitimacies and the most important processes of social life. The skill of the author lies not only in creating clear and vivid individualities, but also in his ability to develop them in close relation with the worsening of the class oppression and, at the same time, with the strengthening of the resistance of the farmers to their oppressors. The novel is distinguished by its richness of language. Being well-acquainted with the Myzeqe region, with its history and its traditions, the author has used a vivid language full of flavour and colour enriched with popular idioms of the region.

The principal problems of the novel «The Dead River» of J. Xoxe are also those of the novels «The Legend of Waterspouts» (1975) by A. Cerga and «The Mountain over the Swamp» by V. Koreshi, which reflect the conditions of the peasantry against their exploiters, the beys and the merchants, the social awakening of the people under the influence of the new ideas that begin to penetrate the Albanian countryside in the thirties.

With deep insight and with extraordinary literary mastery, S. Drini elaborates the theme of the life of the peasantry before liberation in his novel «The Overthrow of the Idols» (1975). However, the vital material of this work is new, original. «The Overthrow of the Idols» is a novel about the village life of the Highlands of Northern Albania during the thirties, of their tribal patriarchal traditions and customs, of the deep spiritual oppression that the Catholic clergy exerted on the common people of the Highlands. Having a good knowledge of the mentality of the world, in which the highlanders live,



the writer is able to reflect realistically their social relationships in respect to their background. The main figure of the novel is an old highlander, Kalosh Cami, an interesting character of present-day Albanian prose, a patriot and a freedom-loving man who values honour and respect for the people, the fellow-villagers above all. An enemy of injustice and the arrogance of the wealthy, he has been fighting all his life with the advocates of the Highland's patriarchy who, with the support of the reactionary state, cruelly crushes the peasants and tramples on their basic rights. In the person of Kalosh Cami are embodied the high qualities of the brave and the proud highlander, his ardent love of freedom, his patriotic spirit and his bitter hatred for the upper classes. As a descendant of a famous house in the Highlands for its unsubdued spirit and steadfast courage, Kalosh is the person around whom gather and unite all the poor highlanders of the village to protect their interests. The author lets the hero live in accordance with his tribal and patriarchal customs with which he had grown up and was formed, without determining from the very beginning as to what direction his character will take. He allows the man to learn from his own experience who the enemies of the poor peasantry were, and carefully develops the slow process of the change of thoughts and aims. The author relates that slowly Kalosh's eyes begin to open to his life. He begins to understand the reactionary nature of the norms and traditions sanctified by the conservatory patriarchal morality and, particularly, the real intentions of the priest with regard to the village. At the end of his life he understands that all these enemies, through exploiting some family troubles of his, intend to break him. By so doing they intended to subordinate the village, but when they failed in breaking Kalosh, they finally ambushed him and treacherously killed him.

Even though the novel is not intended to give every detail of the village life, it is a rich gallery of characters

from amongst the highlanders who, through their life and activity, help in revealing in vivid colours the environment of the Highlands, the customs, traditions, the power of some humiliating practices which were implanted in the consciousness of the highlanders.

A signal achievement is the image of the priest, without whom one could not quite thoroughly understand the social background of the highland villages in Northern Albania, in which the Catholic Church had built such a great authority, not only ideologically but also politically and socially. Dom Engjëll holds all the strings of the life of the village in his hands. The unknowing highlanders do nothing without consulting him, though in the village there are the state authorities. The chieftain of Orok appears in less striking colours, besides that of the priest, as the man who has great possessions and wealth and whose word is heard by the government, not only in the prefecture but also in the Capital. The priest's character is revealed gradually, through new episodes which emphasize his portrait. In the last chapter the whole depth of his world is revealed in its utter disgustfulness. With great economy of words, this young writer depicts a vivid and truthful portrait of the priest and of the whole gallery of his personages. With a few touches of the pen, the writer describes the solidity and unfeeling heart of the priest, this sworn enemy of the common people of the Highlands, who lives amongst his looks and hoardes, with total disregard and unconcern for the tragic existence of the villagers. Divested of any feeling of compassion and sympathy, he is interested above all in his own welfare, and tries to keep the villagers under the complete subjugation of the church and the reactionary state.

The novel *'The overthrow of the Idols'* is a significant achievement of the Albanian prose of recent years.

When we speak of the literature of this period, with themes from the past, we cannot fail to mention the novels written on the National Hero of the Albanian people of the 15th century - Gjergj Kastrioti - Skanderbeg,



and his epoch. The interest of the writers in this figure responds to a requirement of the present-day life. In getting the material for their work from the epoch of the wars of the Albanian people under the leadership of Skanderbeg, the writers are attracted by the bravery of the Albanians, their daring to fight the largest and most terrific armies of the times, their ability to valiantly resist for 25 years on end the furious Ottoman attacks and expeditions and above all, the extraordinary vitality that the Albanians showed through the centuries. The novel «The Citadel» (1970) by I. Kadare has at its centre an Albanian castle under siege, which resists all reprisals, ruses, stratagems of the enemy. The action of the novel is exhausted in the space of a few months. The castle is a symbol of the invincible spirit and solidity of the Albanian people. If the struggle of the Albanian people is symbolically described through the resistance of the castle, the enemy camp, on the contrary, is described in detail and with individualized characters. The heads of the enemy camp, the supreme commander of the army corps, the head steward, the head mechanic, the astrologer, the architect, the Mufti and others comprise a whole gallery of people in a definite setting. The author succeeds in establishing a very convincing analogy between the situation of the Albanian people in the 15th century, when they were confronted by the innumerable hordes of Ottoman armies, and the present epoch when they are working to build a life of happiness and freedom, while courageously facing up to the various enemies, the imperialists and the Soviet social-imperialists. The idea that people, no matter how small, are invincible when they are united and determined to defend their freedom and independence is another valuable idea that emerges from the novel, and which is quite valid for today when the peoples of many countries of the world are fighting boldly against the two superpowers and against the reactionary forces in order to defend their rights and to live in freedom and with dignity.

«Skanderbeg» (1976) by S. Godo is part of the historical novels that attempt to recreate the atmosphere, the types and mentality of the people, the traditions, customs and manners in the Albania of the 15th century. The writer builds the plot on those events that serve to bring as many facts as possible about the life of Skanderbeg, as a wise leader and a diplomat, a consummate general and a man of the people. The description of the battles against the Turkish armies are combined with analyses of the historical background and the reasons that account for the success of the Albanians against the most powerful Sultans of Turkey. Among the reasons for this, the writer points out the support of the free peasants, the achievement and consolidation of the unity of all the Albanian princes under Skanderbeg. This is the reason also for the defeat of the plans and intrigues of Venice. The picture of the 15th century feudal Albania, with its various forces and social classes, with its contradictions and problems, form the groundwork of this novel, which fills a gap in the Albanian literature about this important period in the history of the country.

The exaltation of the bravery of the Albanian people, their patriotism and freedom-loving spirit, their ability to put up with protracted wars of aggression against their country, their endurance through difficulties and privations — these are the main assets of the Albanians of the 15th century, which they have kept alive through the centuries, and which constitute the strongest point of the novel.

#### THE SATIRE AGAINST THE OLD WORLD AND ITS HANGOVERS

In writing about the struggle for the building of socialism, the Albanian writers of today, at the same time, have harshly lashed any regressive and reactionary view and stand that hampers the confirmation of the



socialist relations, the formation of the new man. This has been done in all literary genres, but rather more strongly in satire.

One of the earliest satirical works of this period is the poem "We're Going to Have an Election" (1948) by Sh. Musaraj, in which the hopes of the advocates of the former ruling classes, the beys and big merchants, the reactionary civil servants and all those, who hoped to regain their lost privileges with the help of the Anglo-Americans, are ridiculed. With sharp humour, Sh. Musaraj flogged the faults he notices in those people who, while working to build the new socialist life in the country, had not freed themselves of the influences of the old psychology. His novel "Çobo Rrapushi" (1960) is also written along the same lines. Through a narrative full of local idioms, with lively and pungent expressions, the writer stigmatizes the feeling of ease and self-contentment manifested in the first years after Liberation, amongst some people — former fighters against the fascist occupiers, who thought that after Liberation they would eat and drink and lead a life of ease because they felt they deserved this since they had done the war.

In the field of satire, another talented group of writers appeared amongst whom N. Bulka, S. Çomora, A. Varfi and others. N. Bulka wrote a number of his satirical poems, such as "The Lament", "A Feudal-Patriarchal Elegy", "A Rubayat for the Unmasked", and others, to ridicule those people of the old world, who lived with reminiscences of the past and waited from day to day in the hope of returning the "good old days" of theirs. With sharp irony, the poet ruthlessly stigmatizes the advocates of the overthrown upper strata, who looked upon Albania as an estate of their own and hoped to ride roughshod once again on the people, with the help of the imperialists and the reactionary states.

The social outcast, who makes believe that he is trying to adapt himself to the new life, while remaining faithful to the mentality and morality of the exploiting

class to which he belongs, is stigmatized by S. Çomora in "The Old Spider". The object of the bitter and powerful satire in this poem are also the selfish, those who retained their old world outlook, the bureaucrats, the regressive elements, etc.

In the 60's satirical poetry turns its attention to the negative phenomena which impeded the further revolutionization of the life of the country, to bureaucratism, intellectualism, liberalism, conservatism, and others. The poets S. Çomora, D. Bubani, D. Agolli, T. Miloti, etc., who worked on this type of poetry, were united in their purpose to reveal realistically the danger that these phenomena present for the socialist order and their class essence.

In expressing their ideas the writers of satire did not limit themselves only to the genre of poetry. They also utilized the enormous possibilities that the other literary genres offered, particularly drama. A number of satirical comedies were written of which "The Carnivals of Korça" (1961) by S. Çomora and "The Second Face" by D. Agolli are worth mentioning.

S. Çomora gets the subject for his work from the life of the provincial merchants of the city of Korça, who are not presented in their daily economic sphere of activity, but in their family life, in their moral relationships with one another. The comedy describes the attempts of Nikollaq Jorganxhi, a rich merchant, and his wife to marry off their only daughter. Through this hardly uncommon story the author reveals with extraordinary liveliness the avarice and emptiness of spirit of the wealthy merchants of the province, the corruption of man in a society where money is the master. N. Jorganxhi is the tightwad merchant for whom money is everything in life. He looks at everything, even his relationship with his close relatives, with an eye for the profit he can get out of them. Based on this moral principle, he does everything possible to marry off his only daughter by paying as little as possible for her dowry, at the same time trying to find a bridegroom



with a substantial income. However, no matter how much he tries to arrange this matter, he unintentionally becomes responsible for his daughter remaining unmarried and this is precisely where the humour of the work lies. The play attracted the attention of the public with its faithful presentation of the customs and the habits of the former provincial merchants, with its subtle and sharp irony, with its natural and characteristic dialogue. The merchant's wife, with her vanity, arrogance and intellectual and spiritual emptiness, characteristic of the privileged classes, of their provincial narrow-mindedness and their hatred for the masses of the people, is made fun of in details full of subtle comedy.

The satirical comedy «The Second Face» satirizes bureaucratism and conservatism embodied in Bektash Shkoza, a director who stands aloof from the people, who is always ready to resort to bureaucratic methods. The author has put in his mouth bombastic citations and expressions against bureaucratism which are in overt contrast with his actions and behaviour in practice, bringing out his conservative spirit and arrogant self-confidence and his underrating of the opinions of the masses, as well as his tendency to take it out on all those who interfere or disagree with his method of management. His exposure comes gradually. His «Second Face», which the hero tries to hide, is real face, the face of an overbearing bureaucrat who can't stand being criticized and who considers himself untouchable. The workers' collective tears off his mask and shows Bektash Shkoza his place, thus bringing his harmful actions to an end. The exposure of the hero is reached also through the pungent humour of an episodic character, a cunning peasant named Halil, who with his ironic retorts brings Bektash Shkoza down from his horse, thus revealing further his ridiculous self-assurance.

One of the most popular comedies of the recent years is «The Lady from the City» by R. Pulaha of which a film, bearing the same title and based on the same novel, has been made. With a subtle and realistic

humour, the author makes fun of petty-bourgeois ideology, particularly of the disregard and even contempt some of the city folk have for the village, a manifestation inherited from the past. Carrier of these alien concepts is an ordinary woman who does all she can, mobilizing all her acquaintances to help her secure a place in the city for her daughter who has just finished the school for doctor's aids. However, her efforts are in vain and she is forced to go to the village together with her daughter who represents our new people, always eager to serve the people wherever they are needed. The spirit of the petty-bourgeois world outlook and tastes of the «heroine» is contrasted with the people of the socialist village, with the new life of happiness of its inhabitants, which shows how far behind the times she was. All this is expressed through a parody which the author commands masterfully.

The negative manifestations of present-day life, the bureaucrats, the conservatives, people with individualistic petty-bourgeois leftovers, those who succumb to everything alien while underestimating the country's traditions, etc., are powerfully exposed also in the short narrative in which a number of writers, such as M. Kallamata, N. Prifti, Q. Buxheli, and others have worked with success. However, a notable phenomenon is the appearance of the satirical novel in present-day literature which, in general, represents something entirely new in the history of the Albanian literature. K. Jakova in «The Village between Waters» and Q. Buxheli in «The Career of Mr Maksut» have both described the destruction of the old world, satirized the advocates of the landlord-bourgeois monarchy, their cruelty, their boorishness and ignorance. Characteristic of the novel «The Village between Waters» are the concrete realistic episodes, the sharp irony and the naturalness of the narrative. Its savoury humour comes out particularly from the scenes which describe the tricks that the smart villagers play on the gendarmes and the reactionary civil servants in



order to get revenge for the oppression and plunder they are subjected to. Q. Buxheli reflects through his hyperbole and grotesque the mental sluggishness, the mediocrity and disgusting servility of the civil servants of the reactionary administration.

The novel «The Last of the Highborn» by M. Kallamata narrates the humorous and grotesque story of a descendant of a renowned family of beys, who fell for the trap of a crooked ex-accountant in a state enterprise, who steals all what remains of his possessions by pretending to be a foreign agent sent from outside to power.

The humour of the work flows from the contrast between the former bey, hoping in vain for a return of the past, and the ridiculous situation created when the organs of people's justice arrest the thief and the degenerate bey finds out the truth that he was led by the nose by an ordinary swindler.

Using the hyperbole and strong contrasting colours D. Agoll in his novel «The Rise and Fall of Comrade Zylfo» (1972) describes the arrogance of certain employees in posts of responsibility, their conventional and superficial methods in the management of work, their disregard of their inferiors and people, in general. In satirizing these manifestations the author stigmatizes the alien and regressive character of bureaucratism.

From the above panorama emerges that the Albanian literature of the present-time is characterized by an intensive process of continued growth and development. The endeavours of the writers to cope with the most complete possible reflection of socialist reality have produced in the recent years a number of literary works which mirror the new developments in social life, the

new processes and contradictions that pervade the real work and difficulties the present-day Albanians are confronted with in order to make the country more powerful. The ever increasing scope of reflection of life in the literary works goes on hand-in-hand with the search for new artistic forms. The Albanian literature of today has an exceptional variety of artistic individual styles. This is due to the great possibilities afforded by socialist realism for innovative research in all the spheres of artistic creativity. Very important successes have been achieved. Naturally, this does not mean that there is no more room for improvement. The main tendency in our literature are its ever closer links with reality, its increasing influence in social life, the continuous raising of the level of its works and in connection with this, the further flourishing of the artistic creative individualities.



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