

## The scientific cooperation between Kosovo and Albania during 1968

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### **Abstract:**

*The 60s of the 20<sup>th</sup> century marked significant events for Albanians in two sides of the border. The improvement of relations between Yugoslavia and Albania, affected Kosovo to start the collaboration for which Kosovo waited for approximately 20 years. The relations after 1968, should be seen from several perspectives between Yugoslavia and Albania. First of all some of the major factors which encouraged a decent beginning were the circumstances created in Czechoslovakia after the Soviet Union invasion. Albania's reaction was immediate, which supported Yugoslavia during the invasion. The second factor are the Albanians from Kosovo, to whom Albania with Enver Hoxha's influence had started to play the nationalistic card namely, national-communism. Thirdly, Tito's attempts were clear after Plenum of Brione, he wanted to balance the politic between Yugoslavia and various clans but also different nations and nationalities. In the meantime, the roots of the relations between Kosovo and Albania date from 1966, the beginning of this relation were the market trades which opened the road for further cooperation in education and culture between Kosovo and Albania. In this research we have been focused on elaborating the scientific collaboration of these two countries, the effects, the results and the cultural activities that were held in this important year for the Albanians in general. Developed as a research that covers more pictures and expresses the path of this historic*

*relation for the Albanians. The study is greatly based on the archived sources that are not published which were carefully chosen from the Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Albania, the Central Albanian Archive, The State Agency of the Kosova Archives, also the press of the particular time which covers a quite interesting period.*

**Key words:** Kosova, Albania, year 1968 etc.

## **I. BREAKING THE ICE IN THE KOSOVA-ALBANIA COLLABORATION**

In 08 December 1967, the Committee for Cultural Relations with the Outside World of Albania with Misto Treska's signature<sup>1</sup>, a telegram delivered to Kosovo's Assembly, invited a delegation of Yugoslavia Albanians to join the celebration of 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Gjergj Kastrioti Skanderbeg's death in Albania. In 02 January 1968, the head of Kosova Assembly, Fadil Hoxha, responded to the telegram.<sup>2</sup> In his telegram, Fadil Hoxha valued the role of Skanderbeg as a historic personality, the importance of whom went beyond the national borders of Albanians, because he fought against the ottoman invaders to protect the freedom of Albanian nation. For this reason the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Skanderbeg's death was planned to be celebrated together. Furthermore, Fadil Hoxha informed that this jubilee was going to be held not only in Kosovo but also in Macedonia and Montenegro where Albanians lived. He expressed the Kosovo's Assembly readiness to send a delegation to Tirane which would be "a resemblance of Kosovo's population".<sup>3</sup> In this context he invited a delegation from Albania to participate in the historic celebration of Skenderbe in Prishtina in May 1968. The visit of a delegation in Kosovo,

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<sup>1</sup> Kryetar i Komitetit për Marrëdhënie me Botën e Jashtme të Shqipërisë.

<sup>2</sup> Arkivi i Ministrisë së Punëve të Jashtme të Shqipërisë ( më tej AMPJ ), viti 1968, Dosja 17/1, 18.

<sup>3</sup> Arkivi Qendror Shqiptar ( më tej AQSH ), viti 1968, Fondi 511, Dosja 30, 30.

after two decades, frozen relations between Yugoslavia and Albania, of course was not of a great significance and in the telegram Fadil Hoxha gave the reassurance that “the Albanian delegation would be truly welcomed and fully respected”.<sup>4</sup>

## **II. THE SECOND CONFERENCE OF STUDIES IN TIRANA 12-17 JANUARY 1968**

In the context of scientific collaboration between two countries, the Public University and the Institute for Language and History from Tirana invited eight scientific employees from Prishtina to attend the scientific activity named “The Second Conference of Albanological Studies” in Tirana. In this conference were invited Esat Mekuli chief editor of “Jeta e Re” journal, Mark Krasniqi dean of Economic Faculty, Bogumil Hrabak chief of language and literature rostrum, Syrja Pupovci assistant professor at Judicial Faculty, Fehmi Agani principal of the Albanological Institute, Zef Mirdita assistant of history in Philosophical Faculty, Anton Ceta scientific cooperators of the Albanological Institute of Prishtina.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, there were many scientists from France, Austria, Jugoslavia, Germany etc. who participated in this scientific activity. Gjergj Kastrioti Skanderbeg was treated as a significant national and international figure who protected the freedom and united values of the European civilization against Osman invaders. The 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Skanderbeg’s death, not only with solemn celebrations but also with scientific gatherings contributed to the acknowledgement of the Albanian nation’s past. The conference was held based on the welfare and friendship between the scientists who helped to completely give value to the figure of Skanderbeg. The solemn inauguration of Skanderbeg statue took place in the center of Tirana. This

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

<sup>5</sup> Rilindja, 09.01.1968, 10.

statue was created by Odhise Paskali, Andrea Mano and Janaq Paco. The primary speech was held by prof. Aleks Buda named "Gjergj Kastrioti Skanderbeg and his era" where he elaborated in a broad way the multidimensional personality of this historic actor with a great role in XV century.<sup>6</sup> In this event, the studies of scientific employees from Kosovo were read as well. Mark Kraniqi "The war against feudalism in the traditional poetry of Albanians", Syrja Pupovci "Canon of Leke Dukagjini" etj. Also an important part was taken by the studies and discussions from the department of morphology, syntax and lexicography of Albanian language. In this conference the role of Skanderbeg was not valued in an idealistic way but from a historic materialism point of view. He was treated as a unity of the unbreakable power and aim of the people. Furthermore, the national and international role of the war of the Albanian people under Skanderbeg's leadership was elaborated. According to the scientists the value of that war did not decrease because of the continuation of traditions in the further wars that happened against foreign invaders. In the end of this scientific activity there were many complex problems that were explained.<sup>7</sup> In the meantime, in January 1968 in Prishtine the political class of Kosovo held an academy for the jubilee of the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Skanderbeg's death. The solemn academy was held in the hall of the Traditional Theatre of Prishtina where important figures took part such as Fadil Hoxha head of Kosova Assembly, Iljaz Kurteshi head of the Provincial Conference of LSSP, Bogolub Nedelkoviç head of Provincial Connection of Syndicates, Mahmut Bakalli secretary of the LK Committee of Prishtina and other participants of the Executive Committee. In this manifestation the speech was held by Sali Nushi the head of the cultural room in the Executive Council, and prof. Ali Hadri as a historian.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Rilindja, 11.02.1968, 13.

<sup>7</sup> Rilindja, 12.02.1968, 11.

<sup>8</sup> Rilindja, 17.01.1968, 1-2.

### III. SYMPOSIUM 500TH ANNIVERSARY OF SKANDERBEG IN PRISHTINA 09-12 MAY 1968

After a months-long correspondence between the Kosovo and Albanian structures and a delegation of prominent professors of the University of Tirana composed by prof. Aleks Buda, prof. Ndreçi Plasari, prof. Bujar Hoxha, prof. Dhorka Dhamo, prof. Thoma Murzaku, prof. Mediha Shuteriqi arrived in Kosovo on May 8, 1968.

The delegation participated on the occasion of the 500th anniversary of the death of Skanderbeg in Pristina and visited Kosovo cities such as Prizren, Peja, Gjakova and Mitrovica. Members of the delegation had organized and spontaneous meetings with their Kosovo counterparts researchers and lecturers, the student, peasant, etc.<sup>9</sup>

The delegation of professors from the University of Tirana was met in Pristina with love and extraordinary warmth. Were strong patriotic feelings that identify with Albania.

This clearly witnessing a large number of citizens, students, intellectuals, students who wanted to meet with members of the delegation. Organizer of the symposium was Albanological Institute of Prishtina and the Institute of History of Kosovo. Scientific Symposium started in the presence of the President of the Assembly Fadil Hoxha, Veli Deva chairman of the Provincial Committee of LK, Ilija Vakiq chairman of the executive council and Idriz Ajeti chairman of the scientific council symposium. After being elected the Labor leadership, entered the scientific workers of all countries. The welcoming speech held Sali Nushi who wish good luck for this important scientific event.<sup>10</sup> Keynote speech at the symposium held Ali Hadri "The historical significance of the Albanian liberation movement in the era of Gjergj Kastrioti Skanderbeg. Also the

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<sup>9</sup> AMPJ, viti 1968, Dosja 360, 202.

<sup>10</sup> Rilindja, 10.05.1968, 4.

author was the director of the History Institute. Ali Hadri said that Skanderbeg has great merit for the successful Albanian resistance against the Ottoman invaders and was one of the most talented military leaders of the time in the West. According to him this military and leader took moments to cooperation with international alliances as Alfonso V, Janos Hunyadi with Dubrovnik and a time with Venetian Republic.

According to Ali Hadri crucial role in the movement of Albanians against the Ottoman invaders played masses which gave a mass character. While taking word renowned scientist prof. Aleks Buda, among others remind Skanderbeg as one of the brightest figures not only in thousands of years of history of Albania but also European history. According to Aleks Buda under the leadership of Skanderbeg Albanians fought for land protection, freedom and independence of its culture and the stance flood of Ottoman aggression in the Balkans and Albania.<sup>11</sup> Professor of the History Department at the University of Belgrade refer "Gjergj Kastrioti Skanderbeg and Bosnia". According to Professor Çirković relations of Skanderbeg with Bosnia did not have any great importance and remained unnoticed. The first connections of Skanderbeg were with Vladislav. From 1461 emerge data according to him more extensive about Skanderbeg cooperation with Bosnia in the war against the Turks. Professor Çirković emphasize that the most important moment was the year 1463 when Skanderbeg was invited to Bosnia to fight against the Ottomans<sup>12</sup>. Besa Bakalli – Haxhiq another prospect researcher to refer on Skanderbeg relations with the Kingdom of Naples. According to her after the year 1447 Skanderbeg connecting Naples to provide foreign aid to some degree to resist the Ottomans. In this scientific symposium were also European scientists which referred to the papers. Dr. Sauer Nordonendorf scientific worker from Vienna stressed that the sword and helmet of Skanderbeg are kept in

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<sup>11</sup> Rilindja, 10.05.1968, 5.

<sup>12</sup> Rilindja, 11.05.1968, 4.

Vienna. According to him Skanderbeg's importance from the contemporary viewpoint was that was defender of freedom and independence of his people and Western forces before ottoman squatters, and Skanderbeg not only fought for his people but also for the entire Balkans.<sup>13</sup> Another personality was Hamid Haxhibegiq professor of the University of Sarajevo who stood about legislative activity at the time of Sultan Mehmed II - Fatih and canons have value according to him for Albanian lands. He introduced register for the Kosovo region in which mentioned cadastral register of 1455. The old scientific worker from Albania Mediha Shuteriqi gave a very interesting reference to the "Albanian women in the war for national liberation. According Shuteriqi women in all centuries-old wars for freedom and independence have played an important role. She cited the active participation of women in the fight against the Ottoman invaders side by side with men. According to prof. Shuteriqi are stored names of countries that speak of the heroism of Albanian women. After Albania was occupied by the Ottomans position of Albanian women deteriorated more by her.<sup>14</sup> Meanwhile Bujar Hoxha professor of the University of Tirana read the statement on " Figure of Skanderbeg in Albanian literature". According to prof. Bujar Hoxha, the Albanian National Renaissance came to the figure of the fifteenth century hero as a symbol of the indomitable resistance to foreigners. In his monumental figure of Skanderbeg in accordance with liberating ideas and concepts of the Renaissance embodied for the first time with major notes Naim Frasherri in the epic "History of Skanderbeg." Naim tried talking to the fellow through time and figure of Skanderbeg with voice of homeland exhausted by the five-century slavery, recall tasks give Albania light from shining soul of the hero out playing trumpet for liberation.<sup>15</sup> From Albania was also

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Rilindja, 12.05.1968, 6.

presented Dhorcka Dhamo researcher of art with the theme "Skanderbeg in fine arts." Prof. Dhamo said Skanderbeg personality has been a source of artists and especially sculptors. Mentioned small bust carved in the mud in 1917 by Murat Toptani. And finally add that Odhise Paskali with his work gave a new dimension to this figure in the arts. In the field of linguistics they were treated very topic by a university professor. Petro Janura was presented on the topic "The figure of Skanderbeg analogy subject between Dante's Divine Comedy and the " History of Skanderbeg " of Naim Frasheri. Meanwhile Rexhep Qosja read the paper "Skanderbeg in poetic vision of Naim Frasheri".<sup>16</sup> As part of the symposium was also held discussions. There was such controversy between prof. Hasan Kaleshi and prof. Skender Rizaj about Ottoman defters. Alex Buda also spoke at the hearing positive words on Besa Bakalli statement that in his opinion represents a synthesis of the treated issues. Big fuss these days if the development of the symposium made the subject of the publication entitled "Skanderbeg in World Literature" written by prof. Alex Buda. The paper was published in the newspaper Rilindja<sup>17</sup>, the focus was treating our national hero from world literature. Poet as Ronaz, British playwrights Marlowe, Lilo, German Lybeki, Italian Saroki treated it in the context of events in Albania. Scientific workers from Albania did visit some educational and scientific institutions in Prishtina. They exchanged views with Kosovo art workers about problems in Albania. The delegation visited the ward of publications of "Rilindja". The editor of publications Ramiz Kelmendi briefed them about the achievements of this house and the penetration of the book of the broad masses. Also scientific workers from Albania visited the Faculty of Philosophy. Dean Dervish Rozhaja briefed on the achievements of the Faculty of Philosophy. They visited the cabinets and libraries of the faculty being interested in

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<sup>16</sup> Rilindja, 12.05.1968, 7.

<sup>17</sup> Rilindja, 09.05.1968, 11.



literature by libraries. During these visits they put the crown on the monument to fallen heroes in the fascist camp Prishtina. During these days they also visited the Higher Pedagogical School in Prishtina. Director Bardhyl Zajmi show the results of this school. Also in Albanology Institute of Pristina Albanian delegation was welcomed by the Director Fehmi Agani. They exchanged views on further cooperation in Albanological sectors, exchange of documents in the fields of philology history, folklore etc.<sup>18</sup> Peja normal school students were out on the balcony, had hung a portrait of Skanderbeg drawn by a student, without the knowledge of the department were surrounded by red and black flag and sang the song "Kushtrimi". When the delegation came from Albania was expected by 200 students. Such a warmth welcome was in Gjakova too. Reception in the city was in pedagogical high school. Students had gathered in the yard and embraced delegation. Aleks Buda spoke a few words and was interrupted by applause from the fervent cheers. The room began calling on "Skanderbeg". Following this visit, the delegation went to Prizren where was received in pedagogical high school by the leaders of this institution. Even here the reception was very enthusiastic.<sup>19</sup>

#### **IV. CULTURAL ACTIVITIES IN KOSOVO FOR THE 500TH ANNIVERSARY OF SKANDERBEG**

In Kosovo during this period we held various cultural activities on anniversary of death of Skanderbeg. In some cities in Kosovo was undertaken several events which were intended to enliven cultural life and national feeling of the Kosovo Albanians. In the town of Mitrovica was held four formal academy. It was the most magnificent in the normal school. They held lectures on the life and Skanderbeg wars. Normal School awarded three prizes in literary creativity. Riza Greiçevci won the award for

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<sup>18</sup> Rilindja, 17.05.1968, 2.

<sup>19</sup> AMPJ, viti 1968, Dosja 17/1, 261-262.

poetic prose. But students Murat Emini and Abdyl Topallaj to portrait. They read poems by Jakup Ceraja, Adem Zejnullahu.<sup>20</sup> In the city of Ferizaj appeared drama of Sulejman Pitarka "Trimi i mirë me shokë shumë" with interpretation of amateurs of Ferizaj. Actors like Muhamet Maloku to the role of Skanderbeg illustrated with charm a few moments of our national hero as brave and wise strategist. Peter Berisha played the role of Moisi Golemi. The role of Sultan Mehmed II was played by Hajriz Musliu which was the adequate role. Assistance about this show gave the music composed by Severin Kajtazi and Mark Kaqinari.<sup>21</sup> In the Philosophy Faculty literary group of high schools and faculties of Pristina held literary hours in the Faculty of Philosophy amphitheater.<sup>22</sup> During the month of May in the city of Prizren was interpreted collage of Ahmet Qirezi "Skanderbeg" with the theatrical ensemble interpretation of the Culture and Artistic Association "Agimi" in Prizren. Director Pashk Laqi used the best amateur troupe and they brought the beautiful scenery especially in the court of Gjon Kastrioti. In this show appeared actors like Sefedin Krasniqi, Besa Luli, Veli Halimi, Haxhi Krasniqi, Ali Galica, Zaim Fetahu etc.<sup>23</sup> In Gjakova was held a muster of folk songs and dances in honor of the 500th anniversary of Skanderbeg. The program began with cultural and artistic society "Agimi".<sup>24</sup> The program of this society was made of folk songs and dances and folk dances from several villages. In city of Peja high school students prepared the work of Sterja Popoviqi "Skanderbeg". It was a charming performances and drama of Loni Papo "Cuca e Maleve" in the interpretation of normal school "Ali Kelmendi" and directed by Ruzhdi Spahiu. Xhejlane Bojku in the role of Cuca testified that can give scenic creations. In Gjakova in other nights of musical muster were presented groups from

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<sup>20</sup> Rilindja, 20.01.1968, 9.

<sup>21</sup> Rilindja, 28.01.1968, 7.

<sup>22</sup> Rilindja, 28.02.1968, 10.

<sup>23</sup> Rilindja, 02.05.1968, 20.

<sup>24</sup> Rilindja, 29.05.1968, 10.

different cities of Kosovo. Musical Society "Jedinstvo" of Mitrovica was presented with a mixed program of Albanian repertoire. Singers Ahmet Myezini and Selime Bajrami played with quite successfully Albanian ethos songs. From thousands of spectators these several daily show in the town of the Gjakova, were watched and had a special interest.<sup>25</sup>

## **CONCLUSION**

The politic situation after Plenum of Brione in Yugoslavia changed the politic course of Jugosllavia towards Albania. For the Albanians in Kosovo and in Albania year 1968 was a year of coming together for both countries. This approach happened exactly after a long pause of interaction between Yugoslavia and Albania. It was exactly Skanderbeg's death anniversary that reunited Albanians from both sides of the border. The first attempt was that of January 1968, where cooperation was made possible. The scientific employees and university professors were the ones who did lead this new relation between these two countries. A more prestigious event was the one in Prishtina which took place in May 1968, when the Albania delegation was surprised by the hospitality of Kosovo people. The symposium turned into a national holiday, and just like that the year 1968 was the beginning of great relations which lasted for 13 years until 1981 when demonstrations occurred and stopped this welfare. Albania with Enver Hoxha's permission after 1968 would cooperate with Kosovo in all cultural-educational fields, and as a result these relations would enable a stronger national feeling through cooperation.

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<sup>25</sup> Rilindja, 16.06.1968, 9.