

## *The communist press as an important element in the atheist propaganda in the Albanian totalitarian regime 1960 – 1970*

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### **Abstract**

In the Albanian totalitarian regime, the communist press played an outstanding role throughout the regime, from 1945 to 1990. The only purpose of the Albanian media would be assisting the totalitarian state. The media would transmit that selected information and data, complying with the ideological and political point of views of the party-state. Therefore, the public, the media and the public were regarded and functioned as the same unity. The atheist propaganda of the communist system was particularly special in brainwashing the Albanian people for the proletariat war that would lead into the triumph of the proletarian revolution and establishing the proletarian dictatorship in Albania, where media gave a big contribution. An introduction to the means and organization of the atheist propaganda in the communist regime in Albania follows up in this paper. In addition, a deeper prying would be performed in the atheist articles in the press, among famous newspapers of the time, such as: "Bashkimi", "ZeriiRinise", "ZeriiPopullit" etc. What was the role of the written press? Which was the true purpose of the atheist propaganda? What was the bond between the power, media and the propaganda? The Albanian communist party, confined to its Marxist-Leninist principles throughout the regime, would aim to thoroughly change the people psychologically and affect their lifestyle. In the atheist propaganda the religion would therefore be a synonym to the old, bourgeois lifestyle, the old-fashionable behaviors, emphasizing how the outdated religious propaganda had only kept the people in ignorance. The information conveyed from every element of the socialist society in the working units and party organizations would include the political, ideological, economic, social, educational, cultural activities of the Albanian communist system.

**Key words:** *Media, Propaganda, Atheism, Totalitarian, Communism*

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## ***Introduction***

### **The totalitarian media to serve the power**

The media in the totalitarian Albania transmits that particular information and data, complying the ideological and political principles of the Party and the leader of the State-Party. Therefore, the public, the media and the public were regarded and functioned as the same unity, as the state would control and manage everything. The function of media in the totalitarian regime was the organization and mobilization of the people, to build and protect the socialist Albania. The written communist press thus becomes a collective propagandist, collective agitator and collective organization. According to Hannah Arendt, the totalitarian regime promotes the extreme isolation and paranoia. In the totalitarian regime, the media is highly controlled and conveys only propaganda, leading to the isolation of people. The propaganda coming from media tries to handicap every expression of free thought or adverse political movement.

### ***Subdivisions of the communist written press***

According to ArtanFuga, the subdivisions of the press during the communist era, taking into consideration the geographical position are: the central press, represented by eight newspapers "ZeriiPopullit", "Bashkimi", "ZeriiRinise", "Puna", "Mesuesi", "Drita", "Luftetari", "Sportipopullor" and the local press, involving 27 newspapers, 18 published in the southern territories and 9 in the northern ones. ArtanFuga further specifies that according to the frequency of publishing, the main kind was the daily press, represented by "ZeriiPopullit" and "Bashkimi". "ZeriiPopullit" is not published on Mondays, while "Bashkimi" is not published on Sundays. In addition, there is the weekly press, including newspapers that are published twice or thrice a week. A third division would be when taking into account the level of dependence from the Party. "Zeriipopullit" would be the central newspaper, followed by the local newspapers serving the local Party units: FrontiDemokratik-"Bashkimi"; BashkimiiRinisë-"Rinia"; BashkimetProfesionale -

“Puna”, media of the administrative and state institutions such as “Luftetari” newspaper, of the Ministry of People’s Defense, “Mësuesi” of the Ministry of Education etc. According to the content, the media would be directed towards certain society classes. More specifically, for children, there were the “Yllkat”, “Fatosi”, “Pionieri”, “Horizont’i” newspapers, newspapers advertising literature, culture, education would be “Sport’iPopullor”, “Mësuesi”, “Drita”, “Nëntori” etc., political content: “Rruga e Partisë”, “StudimePolitike-Shoqërore”, scientifically and socially oriented, where the results of the Albanian main research institutions were published. According to the language used in the content, there would be Albanian and foreign newspapers. Represented in the latter are newspapers for the Greek minority in Albania, such as “LaikoVima” and “LogotehnicoLaikoVima”. “In a totalitarian society, except for a free, individual press reading, the mandatory press reading is often present”<sup>1</sup>.

### *Main features of communism media*

According to Schamm, main features of communism media are: Communication with the general population is used as an instrument of government and party, therefore it is closely integrated with government and party’s power, and also communication is used as an instrument inside the government and “uncovered” party, especially there are used instruments of propaganda and “agitation”. Communism media ideologically and politically was directly following the political orders coming from the central committee. ArtanFuga shows the three main forms of reading the newspaper and journals: Collective reading where most of the people come together to read because of being highly illiterate, important party structures recommended to read to people only the social activities. The second way to read the journals and newspapers, according to Fuga was: Reading them in radio where every day early in the morning program they were reading all the newspapers and journals. The third way was: Reading them in special stands located in a special area in a

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<sup>1</sup>Fuga, Artan, Monolog, faqe 71, Dudaj, Tiranë, 2010

company, agriculture companies and institutions, train stations, bus stations, hospital's entry or other public places where they use to locate the stands and hang up all the news. In the Albanian totalitarian regime, "press, the media in general and also other sectors as education and culture were considered part of the governing party's propaganda system and that can be under direct control of the party"<sup>2</sup>. In the Albanian totalitarian regime, the media was under direct control of the party that was governing. Media were under control of the Prime Secretary of Party's general committee, Party's general committee secretary for propaganda and director of press sector or director of agitation-propaganda". In Albanian totalitarian system: "Secretary for propaganda is the person who Press sector chief or director agitation-propaganda. Albanian totalitarian regime "propaganda secretary is the person who operates in general and specifically on party lines the fields of education, culture, science and media. Media event is just one of the areas that it covers closely"<sup>3</sup>secretary function was to broadcast propaganda messages and orders coming from the leaders of political power. Media in the totalitarian regime depends tight group of people that drives the party and the State with an iron fist. The leaders of the totalitarian system through media self-control, they perform according to the specifications and needs propaganda of the Party-state and transmit to the public the information that people want. "The press is government land, the opposition was not allowed, was dangerous debates and dialogue dying, the long speeches of monotonous monologue"<sup>4</sup>. Editors of newspapers, editorial responsibilities and audiovisual media executives were under the command and occasionally gave account before the propaganda secretary who orchestrates the totalitarian media corps in everything. Communist media "information system receives no power, no perception, no absorbs, but only distributes, delivers, transmits. It just grabs unchanged echo of what itself narrated. Take the world of reality only

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<sup>2</sup>Fuga, Artan, Monolog, faqe 80, Dudaj, Tiranë, 2010

<sup>3</sup>Fuga, Artan, Monolog, faqe 86, Dudaj, Tiranë, 2010

<sup>4</sup>Repishti, Sami, Nënhijen e Rozafës, faqe 111, Onufri, Tiranë 2004

those information to come in line with the structure of its ideas, ideology, and political beliefs"<sup>5</sup>.

### ***Communist media function***

The agenda of the press and the media during the totalitarian communist regime was determined by the state propaganda. According to Artan Fuga the joint media during communism were "collective organizer of the masses" as they served as instruments for the delivery of direct directives, orders and slogans from top government to the masses. The communist media were considered to be "Architects of the collective thought" which meant that communist media policy reformed and adapted day by day the political interests of the time. While regarding the third function of the communist media, we should highlight that it was considered to be a "popular opinion Tribune" in which the government reduced the role of the journalists in order to keep them under pressure and manipulated volunteer correspondents to reformulate among political elites that own power or exercise it from the center to the grassroots"<sup>6</sup>. The information and messages transmitted by the press supported the popular power. In communist media "the revolts were censored". Collective despair was censored too. The expression of personal interest was censored. Deficiencies in the market were censored. Crime was censored. Life in prisons and concentration camps were censored. Political freedoms of the west were censored"<sup>7</sup> the Ideological structures that controlled the media forced them to idealize politically the workers' measures and to support any initiative or revolution under the direction of the Party-state where "Journalism was not only the Illustrator of the ideas and policies of the Party in power"<sup>8</sup>. Artan Fuga's subject resembled a monologue autistic process. "Monologue-narcissism-institutional-collective autism"<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Fuga, Artan, Monolog, faqe 98, Dudaj, Tiranë, 2010

<sup>6</sup>Fuga, Artan, Monolog, faqe 126, Dudaj, Tiranë, 2010

<sup>7</sup>Fuga, Artan, Monolog, faqe 127, Dudaj, Tiranë, 2010

<sup>8</sup>Fuga, Artan, Monolog, faqe 149, Dudaj, Tiranë, 2010

<sup>9</sup>Fuga, Artan, Monolog, faqe 129, Dudaj, Tiranë, 2010

according to the joint Artan, are three the characteristics within which official media communication with the public realized. Fugastates that the journalist in the communist media should depart and get back to the office with the same mindset with which s/he departed. Wherever s/he goes, (the journalist) will find people working to implement the directives of the party in power. According to the joint communist journalist the media cannot possibly come out with alternatives, opinions and official directives where power had set time limits and no journalist can pass them to speak to the media of the time. Totalitarian media journalist, according to Artan, located between the borders of ideological censorship policy that officially decides to articles and programs, as well as the specific content of the reflections and analyzes what takes place in them.

### *Albanian media ideology of communism*

Communist Party that led the state in his hand all the mechanisms of power, uses the press and media in general mainly to clarify the decisions and actions of certain political or ideological. "The media and the government official propaganda does the same within Stalinist ideology based on gnoseologjinëmetalogjike essentialist and instilled a symmetrical, "antithetiste". So that rules out the opponent, the opponent as much as it excludes"<sup>10</sup>. The Albanian media ideology of communism is the official ideology of power that controls everything within the totalitarian regime which he had built, where the media obviously had a specific role. "The press was of high quality drugs. Former press aide on the Party faithful, it was not allowed any deviation, no deviation. Newspapers and magazines were few. Press dictatorship used as a plastic to hide its face"<sup>11</sup>. Public opinion on socialism by MaksVelo called reporters the class where opinion prepared by the Party could have only a dictator, he represented to the public. Dictator Enver Hoxha calling the newspaper "Union" as a very important tool to press time while wearing this last major merits

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<sup>10</sup>Fuga, Artan, Monolog, faqe 204, Dudaj, Tiranë, 2010

<sup>11</sup>Velo, Maks, Essepër Diktaturën Komunistë, faqe 58, 55, Tiranë 2003

in educating the public with the spirit of patriotism and proletarian internationalism has merit according Party leaders in toughening state of Albanian people's unity around the Party, mobilization of the people to build socialism and to expose the enemies. Praise Hoxha's letter to the editor of the "Union", not forgetting to emphasize that the newspaper "Union" will further increase its role as agitator, propagandist and collective organizer, which reveals the extraordinary role and had press time in building and further consolidation of the dictatorship. Dictator Hoxha all communists pledged that "each of us has a duty to cooperate with the press"<sup>12</sup>. In the press, according dictator Hoxha, will be taught everything about the communist government activities, events after the press "Occasionally we provide guidelines that should be dismantled and be made known Party and enforcement measures, also went under, even make conversation, but, if necessary, through articles and conferences"<sup>13</sup>.

### ***Conclusions***

The Albanian media ideology of communism is the official ideology of power that controls everything within the totalitarian regime which he had built, where the media obviously had a specific role. "The press was of high quality drugs. Former press aide on the Party faithful, it was not allowed any deviation, no deviation. Newspapers and magazines were few. Instrument of the state and the party are closely integrated with other instruments of state power. Communist press was united ideologically and politically orchestrated in the response directly to political orders that came from the Central Committee. The media is strictly controlled by the First Secretary of the Party Central Committee, secretary of the Central Committee of the Party propaganda chief of the section of the press or agitation - propaganda director. Media in the totalitarian regime depends tight group of people that drives the party and the State with an iron fist.

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<sup>12</sup>Hoxha, Enver, *Vepra* 40, faqe 120, 8 Nëntori, Tiranë 1983

<sup>13</sup>Hoxha, Enver, *Vepra* 40, faqe 122, 8 Nëntori, Tiranë 1983

The leaders of the totalitarian system through media self-control, they perform according to the specifications and needs propaganda of the Party - state and transmit to the public the information that people want.

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