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**Ideology and Educational Media: Albania's Third Grade National History
Textbooks during the Period of Self-Isolation (1978-1984)**

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Abstract

The content of the educational media, issued during the socialist era in Albania, is a field that has largely skipped attention of recent research. It is thus the aim of this dissertation to address this specific part of education and investigate for the first time the content of national history textbooks of the late years of socialism (1978-1984). More concretely, a holistic approach to the entire national narrative of the third grade has been adopted by means of addressing three key parameters: structure, content and evolution. A second priority regards ideology. Ideology is understood in post-structuralist terms as a discourse seeking to establish social cohesion among the members of a certain group in an imaginary manner. More than simply identifying, this thesis sets forth to explain ideology's operation within the frame of the national narrative. To read the messages of the visual resources that stand in the center of attention of this dissertation project, the social semiotic theory of visual communication has been implemented. Concomitantly, the use of multimodal inquiry tools proved invaluable to reach the multimodally articulated meanings that the textbooks' layouts contain.

Concerning the findings, they refer to the historical narrative and ideology. The national narrative covers the drama of the Albanian people towards the "Promised Land" of socialism and eventually communism. This storytelling goes back to the Middle Ages and follows a circular, as opposed to linear, timeline, which is a core feature of myth and mythical narratives. In terms of content, one might observe the militarization process that the Albanian society underwent, as well as the notion of fear and vigilance caused by the enemies of the socialist state, and a permanent call to arms and working tools that generates a sense of hope for the future. Another crucial finding regards the merging of the individual into a collective and mass existence having one sole will. This uniformed and homogenized pattern of depiction of the people seems related to a totalitarian discourse underlying the narrative. The above findings represent a development of the late period of self-isolation and confirm at the same time the evolution of the national narrative. With regard to ideology, there is no doubt that in textbooks the official ideological and political agenda has been mirrored. Such a fact has not been denied. What is negated though is the standard position of blatant Marxist-Leninist doctrine permeating the content of history textbooks. This study argues for a complex, subtle yet lively performance of the ideological discourse.

Structured around the core theme, or the centripetal myth, of common mobilization to resist the supposed invaders and further consolidate the socialist order, it manages to effectively fulfill its objectives: namely, the imaginary unification of the pupils and the preservation of the socialist order in the present and future. Furthermore, this discourse and above all its key message of pupils' engagement is not imposed. Rather, it has the power to fascinate the young protagonists and persuade them to get involved in the ongoing drama of the community.

National history textbooks provide a limited, though important, source in getting to know the Albanian society in one of the most controversial turns of its history. Of equal significance is the central argument this study puts forth about the cyclical mythical storytelling, which openly defies the linear version of Albanian history. Moreover, new light has been shed on ideology that moves beyond the notion of indoctrination. Instead, its complex and imaginary essence has been visually and multimodally revealed. In addition, this research offers an insight into the Albanian "mythmaking manufacture" during the self-isolation period, when myth chafed every aspect of the social sphere. A worthy contribution regards the process of identity formation. This is dominated by an introverted form of nationalism and phobic syndromes that the post-socialist Albania is still trying to recover. Another important input of this dissertation refers to the integration of Albania into the international map of schoolbook research and the enrichment of current debates with concepts such as political myth and ideology.

Zusammenfassung

Der Inhalt der Bildungsmedien, die während der sozialistischen Ära in Albanien veröffentlicht wurden ist ein Feld, das in der jüngsten Forschung weitgehend außer Acht geblieben ist. Ziel dieser Dissertation ist es daher, mit diesem spezifischen Teil der Bildung zu beschäftigen und erstmals den Inhalt nationaler Geschichtsbücher der späten Jahre des Sozialismus (1978-1984) zu untersuchen. Konkreter, wurde ein ganzheitlicher Ansatz für die gesamte nationale Erzählung der dritten Klasse angewendet, indem drei Schlüsselparameter analysiert wurden: die Struktur, der Inhalt und die Entwicklung. Ein zweiter Schwerpunkt betrifft die Ideologie. Das Konzept wurde poststrukturalistisch als Diskurs betrachtet, das auf imaginäre Weise den sozialen Zusammenhalt zwischen den Mitgliedern einer bestimmten Gruppe herzustellen versucht. Diese Dissertation orientiert sich nicht nur an der Identifizierung, sondern eher an der Funktion der Ideologie im Rahmen des nationalen Narrativs. Um die Botschaften der visuellen Ressourcen zu lesen, die im Mittelpunkt dieser Studie stehen, wurde die sozial-semiotische Theorie der visuellen Kommunikation implementiert. Gleichzeitig erwies sich der Einsatz von multimodalen Abfrage-Werkzeuge als wertvoll, um die multimodal artikulierten Bedeutungen der Layouts zu ermöglichen.

Die Ergebnisse beziehen sich auf die historische Erzählung und die Ideologie. Die nationale Erzählung berichtet über das Drama des albanischen Volkes in Richtung des "Gelobten Landes" des Sozialismus und schließlich des Kommunismus. Diese Erzählung, die auf das Mittelalter zurückgeht, konstruiert eine kreisförmige, statt einer linearen historischen Zeitlinie, die ein Kernmerkmal des Mythos und der mythischen Erzählungen ist. Inhaltlich erfährt man die Militarisierung der albanischen Gesellschaft, den Begriff der Angst und der Wachsamkeit, und einen ständigen Appell an die Waffen und Arbeitsinstrumente, der an die Schüler gerichtet ist und ein Gefühl der Hoffnung auf die Zukunft vermitteln. Eine andere wichtige Beobachtung betrifft die Zusammenführung des Individuums in eine kollektive und massenhafte Existenz, die einen einzigen Willen hat. Dieses uniformierte und homogenisierte Muster der Darstellung des Volkes scheint mit einem totalitären Diskurs verbunden zu sein, der der Erzählung zugrunde liegt. Die oben genannten Ergebnisse sollten als eine Entwicklung der späten Periode der Selbstisolierung des Landes betrachtet werden, die gleichzeitig die Entwicklung der nationalen Narrativs

bestätigt. Im Rahmen der Ideologie, besteht kein Zweifel daran, dass die offizielle ideologische und politische Agenda in jedem Fall den Schulbücher widerspiegelt wurde. Ein solcher Befund wurde nicht geleugnet. Was jedoch negiert wird, ist die Standardposition der eklatanten marxistisch-leninistischen Doktrin, die den Inhalt von Geschichtsschulbüchern durchdringt. Diese Studie argumentiert für eine komplexe, sogar subtile und lebendige Art und Weise der Funktion des ideologischen Diskurses. Strukturiert um das Kernthema, oder den zentripetalen Mythos, der gemeinsamen Mobilisierung gegen die vermeintlichen Invasoren und die weitere Konsolidierung der sozialistischen Ordnung, gelingt es diesem Diskurs, seine Ziele effektiv zu erreichen: nämlich, die Vereinigung der Schüler auf einer imaginären Ebene und die Bewahrung der sozialistischen Ordnung in Gegenwart und Zukunft. Darüber hinaus ist dieser Diskurs und vor allem seine Kernaussage des Engagements der Schüler nicht aufgezwungen. Im Gegenteil, es hat eher die Macht, die jungen Protagonisten zu faszinieren und tatsächlich erfolgreich zu überzeugen, sich am fortwährenden Drama der Gemeinschaft zu beteiligen.

Nationale Geschichtsschulbücher bieten eine begrenzte, nichtdestoweniger wichtige Perspektive, um die albanische Gesellschaft während der Selbstisolierungs- Ära kennenzulernen. Von gleicher Bedeutung ist das zentrale Argument des zyklischen mythischen Narrativs das der linearen Version der albanischen Geschichte offen widerspricht. Darüber hinaus wurde das Konzept von Ideologie neu definiert, die über den Begriff der Indoktrination hinausgeht. Stattdessen wurde sein komplexes und imaginäres Wesen visuell und multimodal offenbart. Durch diese Studie wurde noch ein Einblick in die albanische "Mythos- Manufaktur" geboten während der Zeit der Selbstisolation, als der Mythos jeden Aspekt der sozialen Sphäre durchdrang. Ein beachtenswerter Beitrag bezieht sich auf den Prozess der Identitätsbildung. Dies wurde von einer introvertierten Form von Nationalismus und phobischen Syndromen dominiert, von der sich die post-kommunistische albanische Gesellschaft noch zu erholen versucht. Letzendlich, diese Studie schafft die Integration Albaniens in die internationale Landkarte der Schulbuchforschung und die Bereicherung der aktuellen Debatten mit Konzepten wie politischer Mythos und Ideologie.

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Introduction

In the few existing studies addressing the function of education during the socialist era in Albania (1945-1992), there is a widespread consensus about its ideological and political character. The ideologization, even politicization, of the latter institution is commonly cited in the works of several western and Albanian researchers. Both sides might adopt a uniformed position by means of exalting the highly influenced post-war Albanian education system, but tend to avoid entering more details and support with concrete examples of their assertions. Similar to previous research, this dissertation project seeks to provide a contribution to the post-war Albanian education system. It focuses on a specific part of education that regards the educational media published during the late years of socialism in the country. Far from considering them de facto political instruments, textbooks' ability to convey "ideopolitical" messages is precisely the issue under examination that the present research intends to shed light on. In the frame of this introductory section, I wish to announce the main theme of this dissertation, while explaining the field, or fields, it will contribute to.

To begin with the topic, as the title makes apparent, the focus lies primarily on ideology and its presence in the educational media. National history textbooks, being more concrete the national account, is what interests me more. The choice of textbooks published in Albania during the socialist period fills a significant gap in textbook research in the wider frame of South-Eastern Europe and the lesser-known former socialist republics. In Albania, this field remained somewhat intact. Until now, very few publications have explicitly turned to the content of textbooks issued during the socialist era. This lack of research on textbooks' content alone is not enough to justify the conducting of a dissertation project. Thus, what is needed at this initial point is to explain why knowledge of educational media, particularly national history textbooks, is needed. To this first question, another could be added that regards the choice of Albania during the socialist era.

To begin with the latter choice, socialist Albania represents a unique case in the socialist camp. Starting in the late sixties, the country started down its lonely revolutionary path, initially under the auspices of the socialist China, to reach the utmost isolation phase by the end of the seventies and throughout the eighties.¹

¹ Elez Biberaj, *Albania: A Socialist Maverick* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1990), 30.

Albania also represents further particularities that were difficult to be observed in other former socialist republics. For instance, with the passage of the years, instead of a liberalization course, Albania remained faithful to the central planning of economy and a highly regulated social and political order in the interior. Such a development turned Albania, according to the historian Peter Prifti, into the last stronghold of Stalinism in Europe.² Albania has copied the Stalinist Soviet system, reassures Arshi Pipa, in all its aspects.³ Economy, security apparatus, military, education and the arts are among the fields most influenced, following Pipa. Aside from the last bastion of Stalinism,⁴ Albania also became the very last castle of socialism on the European continent. Almost three years after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the dissolution of socialism in Eastern Europe, the rigid and introverted version of Albanian socialism still stood. The end of the socialist era in the country was decided after the parliamentary elections held in 1992. At that time, Albania left behind almost half a century of socialist governing. This is, at the very least, an extraordinary record when one considers the situation prior to the Second World War. In pre-war Albania, literally speaking, a semi-feudal social order prevailed. Few, if not to say any, signs of industrialization or capitalist infrastructure were visible that would allow the transition from capitalism to socialism.⁵

Going a step further, another difference of Albania in comparison to the European, or even the Balkan standards, regards the late development of nationalism and, as a matter of fact, the relatively late establishment of a viable and independent national state. Modern nationalism is a phenomenon of the twentieth century, argues the historian Bernd Fischer, who gives his credits to King Zog (1928-1939) for having introduced this concept to his countrymen and the country in general.⁶ The contribution of Zog in the process of proto nation-building and the creation of a national consciousness is among his bigger achievements. What began in the thirties was to be successfully completed after the war and the socialist period, according to

² Peter Prifti, *Socialist Albania since 1944: Domestic and Foreign Development* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1978), 22.

³ Arshi Pipa, *Albanian Stalinism: Ideo-Political Aspects* (New York: East European Monographs, Boulders, 1990), 223.

⁴ Nicholas C. Pano, "Albania: The Last Bastion of Stalinism," in *East Central Europe. Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow*, ed. Milorad M. Drachkovitch (Stanford, California: Hoover Institution Press, 1982), 187.

⁵ Prifti, *Socialist Albania*, 22.

⁶ Bernd J. Fischer, *Albania at War 1939-1945* (London: Hurst & Company, 1999), 273.

Fischer.⁷ These alone could be enough to push someone to deal with Albania. In this critical historical turn, not only the socialist order but also primarily the premise of the first viable independent Albanian national state and national identity was established.

This dissertation project, though, is not about history, but focuses on history textbooks. After having explained why Albania has been chosen, let me come next to the first question and argue why textbooks. More specifically, I seek to explain at this point why national history textbooks have been chosen as the main sources for the present dissertation project. The reason appears quite simple: textbooks bring much to the fore regarding the society and the era that gave birth to them. They are considered by many scholars to be social and political products of their time. Christina Koulouri sees in schoolbooks the mirror of a certain society and its values.⁸ Textbooks, in particular history textbooks, argues Hanna Schissler, could be read as autobiographies of the nations.⁹ Next to revealing specific characteristics of a given society, textbooks, according to Schissler, help to identify its normative structures.¹⁰ Aside from simply knowledge, information and facts in textbooks, argues Falk Pingel, one would be able to find rules, norms and patterns of behavior a society wishes to inculcate into the younger generation.¹¹ A similar position concerning the textbooks' function as conveyors of knowledge and values to the younger generation is expressed by Simone Lässig. In terms of Lässig, textbooks reflect the knowledge and the values defined by a given society, and more specifically its political elites, as essential and thus suitable for passing on to the next generation.¹²

Going a step further, a second feature of school textbooks regards their political and ideological tendentiousness. What we have in this case are textbooks as a political medium. School textbooks, as instruments issued by the state that bear its seal, are

⁷ Fischer, *Albania at War*, 274.

⁸ Christina Koulouri, "Introduction," in *Clio in the Balkans. The Politics of History Education*, ed. Christina Koulouri (Thessaloniki: Center for Democracy and Reconciliation in Southeast Europe, 2002), 31.

⁹ Hanna Schissler, "Navigating a Globalizing World: Thoughts on Textbook Analysis, Teaching and Learning," *Journal of Educational Media, Memory, and Society* 1, no. 1 (2009): 205

¹⁰ Schissler, "Navigating a Globalizing World," 205.

¹¹ Falk Pingel, *UNESCO Guidebook on Textbook Research and Textbook Revision*, 2nd updated and revised edition (Paris and Braunschweig: United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, 2010), 7.

¹² Simone Lässig, "Textbooks and Beyond: Educational Media in Context(s)," *Journal of Educational Media, Memory, and Society* 1, no. 1 (2009): 2.

never completely free of political and ideological considerations, asserts Lässig.¹³ According to Keith Crawford, textbooks are means of socialization and sites of ideological discourse that introduce the young generation to an already existing cultural and socio-economic order with its relations of power and domination.¹⁴ This holds primarily true for the social subjects. History and geography take the lead as the subjects most influenced. More specifically history, suggests Pingel, has the most significant contribution in this direction, since it spreads ideologies and follows political trends.¹⁵

History textbooks should not be seen solely as political means. Primarily, they have a crucial contribution regarding the construction of national and citizenship identities, argue Yasemin Nuhoğlu Soysal and Hanna Schissler.¹⁶ More specifically, national history has the privilege of being the subject that contributes most to this process of strengthening the civic and national identity, according to Ann Low-Ber.¹⁷ This represents the third argument supporting my engagement with history textbooks, which should be considered, as Dubranka Stojanovic maintains, crucial instruments for shaping national identity and historical awareness.¹⁸ The nexus between history textbooks and identity formation is not new among scholars. According to Mario Carretero, Mikel Asensio and María Rodríguez-Moneo, history always remained related to the construction of individual identity and the transmission of collective memory.¹⁹ James Wertsch considers that history, more than any other subject, plays a

¹³ Lässig, "Textbooks and Beyond," 4.

¹⁴ Keith Crawford, "Researching the Ideological and Political Role of the History Textbook – Issues and Methods," *International Journal of Historical Learning, Teaching and Research* 1, no. 1 (2000): 81.

¹⁵ Pingel, *UNESCO Guidebook*, 8.

¹⁶ Yasemin Nuhoğlu Soysal and Hanna Schissler, "Introduction: Teaching beyond the National Narrative," in *The Nation, Europe, and the World: Textbooks and Yasemin Curricula in Transition*, eds. Hannah Schissler and Yasemin Nuhoğlu Soysal (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2005), 2.

¹⁷ Ann Low-Ber, "School History, National History and the Issue of National Identity," *International Journal of Historical Learning, Teaching and Research* 3, no. 1 (2003): 4.

¹⁸ Dubranka Stojanović, "History Textbooks and the Creation of National Identity," in *Teaching the History of Southeastern Europe* ed. Christina Koulouri (Thessaloniki: Center for Democracy and Reconciliation in Southeast Europe, 2001), 27.

¹⁹ Mario Carretero, María Rodríguez-Moneo and Mikel Asensio, "History Education and the Construction of National Identity," in *History Education and the Construction of National Identity*, eds. Mario Carretero, Mikel Asensio and María Rodríguez-Moneo (New York: Information Age Publishing, 2012), 1.

crucial role in the formation of national identity.²⁰ In the same vein, Keith C. Barton and Linda Levstik stress the concept of identification, which forges a sense of group membership and alliance.²¹ To achieve the task of identification with the group or community, history textbooks of all kinds make use of narratives or historical accounts, argue Cezar López and Mario Carretero.²² In a coherent and structured manner, usually organized in terms of time and space, pupils are given information about a certain community's past that might reach up to the present.

The fourth and last argument for the choice of textbooks for the present research regards the multimodal character of the educational media.²³ Textbooks, as Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen tell us, contain not only words, but also consist of visual resources, color and other graphic elements, all to be found within the layouts and interrelating to each other.²⁴ Recent research on textbooks tends to ignore this fact and focus merely on the text. In Albania, the few existing publications on the educational media follow the same mono-modal path. In the present work, I choose to approach textbooks from a multimodal perspective. Without leaving aside at the same time other means of communications, at the center of attention are the visual communication and the images that have been included in the national history textbooks. Carsten Heinze speaks in favor of a flood of images and the very fact that nowadays textbooks without pictures are hardly conceivable.²⁵ In schoolbooks, images do not have just a supportive and decorative role to the text, argue Kress and Van Leeuwen. Rather than simply illustrating the verbal communication, images are considered to be an integral part of the text. They convey messages that might not be

²⁰ James V. Wertsch, *Voices of Collective Remembering* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 70.

²¹ Keith C. Barton and Linda Levstik, *Teaching History for the Common Good* (New York and London, Lawrence Erlbaum, 2002), 45.

²² Cezar López and Mario Carretero, "Commentary: Identity Construction and the Goals of History Education," in *History Education and the Construction of National Identity*, eds. Mario Carretero, Mikel Asensio and María Rodríguez-Moneo (New York: Information Age Publishing, 2012), 140.

²³ Theo van Leeuwen, "The Schoolbook as a Multimodal Text," *Internationale Schulbuchforschung* 14, no. 1 (1992): 35.

²⁴ Theo van Leeuwen and Gunther Kress, "Critical Layout Analysis," *Internationale Schulbuchforschung* 17, no. 1 (1995): 25.

²⁵ Carsten Heinze, "Das Bild im Schulbuch. Zur Einführung," in *Das Bild im Schulbuch*, eds. Carsten Heinze and Eva Matthes (Bad Heilbrunn: Julius Klinkhardt Verlag, 2010), 10.

present in the text or could even contradict the latter.²⁶ From a general perspective, images have the ability to easily and effectively transmit messages to the viewers. Another significant aspect of the images, according to Kress and Van Leeuwen, regards their role in articulating and disseminating ideological positions.²⁷ Hence, images function primarily as channels through which political and ideological theses are conveyed to the viewers. The ideological performance of the visual communication gives good reasons for my involvement with it. More specifically, it is my aim to locate and fully discuss these ideological instantiations, as they have been formulated in the visual resources that the national history textbooks contain.

Several of the above-mentioned features of texts have a long tradition in academic discussions. For instance, the issue of political tendentiousness of textbooks in Southeastern Europe and the Balkan region has lately gained particular attention.²⁸ On the wider European continent,²⁹ and even internationally,³⁰ single investigations have also dealt with issues of ideology and indoctrination in schoolbooks. Concerning the topic of identity formation, history is the subject most widely researched. A

²⁶ Gunther Kress and Theo Van Leeuwen, "Structures of Visual Representation," *Journal of Literary Semantics* 21, no. 2 (2009): 92.

²⁷ Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen, *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design*, 2nd edition (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), 14.

²⁸ Christina Koulouri, ed., *Clio in the Balkans. The Politics of History Education* (Thessaloniki: Center for Democracy and Reconciliation in Southeast Europe, 2002); Augusta Dimou, ed., *Transition and the Politics of History Education in Southeast Europe* (Göttingen: V&R unipress, 2009).

²⁹ Joanna Wojdon, "The Impact of Communist Rule on History Education in Poland," *Journal of Educational Media, Memory, and Society* 4, no. 1 (2012), 61-77; John Rodden, *Textbooks Reds: Schoolbooks, Ideology, and Eastern German Identity* (Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006); Galina Makarewitsch and Nataly Bezrogow, "The Evolution of the Elementary Reading Textbook Cover: Sovietism, Russianess and Globality (USSR 1976-2006)," in *Das Bild im Schulbuch*, eds. Carsten Heinze and Eva Matthes (Bad Heilbrunn: Julius Klinkhardt Verlag, 2010), 155-171; Vera Kaplan, "History Teaching in Post-Soviet Russia. Coping with Antithetical Traditions," in *Educational Reform in Post-Soviet Russia. Legacies and Prospects*, eds. Ben Eklof, Larry E. Holmes and Vera Kaplan (London and New York: Frank Cass, 2005), 247-271; Vera Kaplan, "The Vicissitudes of Socialism in Russian History Textbooks," *History and Memory* 21, no.2 (2009): 83-109; Jozeph Zajda and Rea Zajda, "The Politics of Rewriting History: New History Textbooks and Curriculum Materials in Russia," *International Review of Education* 49, no. 3-4 (2003): 363-384; Jozeph Zajda, "Russian History Textbooks: An Analysis of Historical Narratives Depicting Key Events," *Curriculum and Teaching* 28, no.2 (2013): 73-100; Inga Kahlcke, "Wie mit Bildern Geschichte gemacht wird: Visuelle Darstellungen des Nationalsozialismus im Geschichtsschulbuch der DDR," *Journal of Educational Media, Memory, and Society* 9, no. 2 (2017): 86-109.

³⁰ Nurit Peled-Elhanan, *Palestine in Israeli School Books. Ideology and Propaganda in Education* (London and New York: Tauris, 2012).

significant body of work has addressed the role of history textbooks in shaping identities and citizenship.³¹ At the same time, the research on visual communication has been rich,³² with a growing interest in multimodal approaches to educational media.³³

After these initial references to the topic and the fields this research seeks to contribute to, let me shortly provide an overview of this dissertation. The manuscript has been divided into three parts. The first part is dedicated to the historical,

³¹ Luigi Cajani and Alistair Ross, eds., *History Teaching, Identities, Citizenship* (Stoke-on-Trent: Trentham Books, 2007); Carretero et.al., eds., *History Education and the Construction of National Identity* (2012); Karina K. Korostelina, *History Education in the Formation of Social Identity: Toward a Culture of Peace* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013); Maria Todorova, ed., *Balkan Identities. Nation and Memory* (London: Hurst and Company, 2004).

³² Theo van Leeuwen and Staffan Selander, "Picturing 'our' Heritage in the Pedagogic Text: Layout and Illustrations in an Australian and a Swedish History Textbook," *Journal of Curriculum Studies* 27, no. 5 (1995): 501-522; Katherine D. Kennedy, "Visual Representation and National Identity in the Elementary Schoolbooks of Imperial Germany," *Paedagogica Historica* 36, no.1 (2000), 225-245; Jaakko Väisänen, "Visual Texts in Finnish History Textbooks," in *Caught in the Web or Lost in Textbooks*, eds. Éric Bruillard, Bente Aamotsbakken, Susanne V. Knudsen and Mike Horsley (IARTEM), 297-304; Ina Markova, "Balancing Victimhood and Complicity in Austrian History Textbooks Visual and Verbal Strategies of Representing the Past in Post-Waldheim Austria," *Journal of Educational Media, Memory, and Society* 3, no. 1 (2011): 58-73; Katalin Eszter Morgan, "Decoding the Visual Grammar of Selected South African History Textbooks," *Journal of Educational Media, Memory, and Society* 6, no. 1 (2014): 59-78;

³³ Jeff Bezemer and Gunther Kress, "Changing Text: A Social Semiotic Analysis of Textbooks," *Design for Learning* 3, no-1-2 (2010), 10-29; Jeff Bezemer and Gunther Kress, "The Textbook in a Changing Multimodal Landscape," in *Handbuch Sprache im Multimodalen Kontext*, eds. Nina-Maria Klug and Hartmut Stöckl (Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter, 2016), 476-498; Jeff Bezemer and Gunther Kress, "Writing in Multimodal Texts: A Social Semiotic Account of Designs for Learning," *Written Communication* 25, no.2 (2008): 166-195; Christoph Kühberger, "Multimodale Narration. Bild-Text-Graphik-Kommunikation," in *Das Bild im Schulbuch*, eds. Carsten Heinze and Eva Matthes (Bad Heilbrunn: Julius Klinkhardt Verlag, 2010), 43-55. Nurit Peled-Elhanan, "The Representation of 'Others' in Israeli Schoolbooks: A Multimodal Analysis," *Journal of International Cooperation in Education* 14, no.2 (2011): 115-130; Nurit Peled-Elhanan, "The Geography of Hostility and Exclusion: A Multimodal Analysis of Israeli Schoolbooks," *Journal of Visual Literacy* 27, no.2 (2008): 179-208; Nurit Peled-Elhanan, "Layout as Punctuation of Semiosis: Some Examples from Israeli Schoolbooks," *Visual Communication* 8, no.1 (2009): 91-116; Bente Aamotsbakken, "Textbook Analysis- A Combined Approach of Text Linguistic and Multimodal Analysis," in *Methodologie und Methoden der Schulbuch- und Lehrmittelforschung*, eds. Peter Knecht, Eva Matthes. Sylvia Schütze and Bente Aamotsbakken (Bad Heilbrunn: Verlag Julius Klinkhardt, 2014), 217-226; Eva Insulander, Fredrik Lindstrand and Staffan Selander, "Designing Multimodal Texts about the Middle Ages," *Journal of Educational Media, Memory, and Society* 9, no. 2 (2017): 1-14.

theoretical and conceptual framework. The most crucial developments during the socialist era in Albania (1945-1992) have been summarized both in the wide social and the educational sphere. It follows the theoretical section, where relevant literature, aims, methods and materials involved are all discussed. Some needed explanations referring to the terms of ideology and myth close this initial section. The second part, the dissertation's longest part, contains the empirical research. A visual and multimodal analysis of the third grade's national narrative issued in the late period of socialism has been conducted. In the third and last part, the main findings of this research have been summed and discussed in the light of broader academic conversations.

Part I – Historical, theoretical and conceptual framework

Historical background - The Albanian attempt of socialism

The socialist era began with the liberation of the country in 1944. In late November of that same year, the last German troops withdrew from the Albanian territory. However, the process of assuming power for the communists began a few years earlier during the years of the National Liberation War and the Second World War. Their success relied largely upon the resistance offered to the Axis powers and their domination against the domestic political rivals, the nationalist and monarchist organizations. When the communist partisan forces and the members of the provisional government marched triumphantly into the capital Tirana in late 1944, the latter government was still lacking political legitimization. This would become one of the first priorities in the post-war years. The socialist era, which officially began in the following year with the elections for a Constituent Assembly, would last almost five decades. In this chapter, the main social, historical, economic and political developments will be briefly traced in a framework of almost half a century, from 1944 to 1992.

The historical process of constructing socialism in Albania is, according to the indigenous socialist and larger part of the western historiography, divided into two phases. The first begins in 1945 and ends in 1960 and is characterized by the attempts to establish the socio-economic basis of socialism. In a few cases, some scholars even locate the end of this phase in the mid-sixties.³⁴ This initial period saw the building of the new socialist state and the introduction of several reforms. Right after its installation in the capital in November 1944, the provisory government took the first measures in the direction of nationalization by means of production and the introduction of a centralized economy. The nationalization of industry, bank sector, transportations, trade, mines, water, pastures and forests began very soon.³⁵ In the summer of 1945, the government announced the agrarian reform that confiscated the land from landowners and distributed it to the peasants.³⁶ The nationalization wave that engulfed the country led quickly to the restriction of the private sector, while weakening the previous economic and political elite.

³⁴ Prifti, *Socialist Albania*, 29.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 53.

³⁶ Stavro Skendi, ed., *Albania* (London: Atlantic Press, 1957), 26.

The elections for the Constituent Assembly, held in December 1945, followed. The communists dominated the votes with over ninety percent.³⁷ In January 1946, the Assembly proclaimed Albania a People's Republic. In March, the first socialist constitution, following the pattern of Yugoslavia, was promulgated and a new government with Enver Hoxha as prime minister was formed.³⁸ The program of the newly elected government focused on laying the foundations of the socialist republic and set as a priority the reconstruction of the war-destroyed backward country.³⁹ The attempt began with the rebuilding of the houses, buildings and infrastructure in the areas that were harshly hit during the war. Concomitantly, measures were taken in the direction of bringing back into operation the industrial enterprises and mines on a socialist basis. Concerning agriculture, the implementation of the agrarian reform continued unimpeded. After the nationalization and distribution of the land among the peasants, the Albanian government adopted a novel policy that sought the collectivization of agriculture and the growth of the state sector in this field.⁴⁰ Furthermore, special attention was paid to the educational reform, and a series of social measures were announced. The reconstruction of the social and economic basis in Albania was supported by its neighbor Yugoslavia.⁴¹ A period of close collaboration between the two socialist neighbors began and lasted until 1948.

After the break with Yugoslavia, the process of building the socio-economic basis of socialism in the country continued under the auspices of the Soviet Union. From this serial ally, Albania received significant economic and military support. This proved crucial for the realization of the industrialization program and the further building of the socialist order in the early fifties.⁴² In the meantime, the Albanian leadership adopted the Soviet model of central economic planning, something that would remain unchanged in the following decades and would become one of the most conspicuous characteristics of the Albanian socialism.⁴³ During the fifties, the economy's main

³⁷ Valentina Duka, *Histori e Shqipërisë 1912-2000*. (Tiranë: Shtëpia Botuese Kristalina, 2007), 232-233.

³⁸ Biberaj, *Albania: A Socialist Maverick*, 19.

³⁹ Akademia e Shkencave e RPS të Shqipërisë Instituti i Historisë, *Historia e Shqipërisë. Vëllimi IV (1944-1975)* (Tiranë: 1983), 54.

⁴⁰ Akademia e Shkencave, *Historia e Shqipërisë. Vëllimi IV* (1983), 54.

⁴¹ Miranda Vickers, *The Albanians: A Modern History* (London and New York: Tauris, 199), 168.

⁴² Biberaj, *Albania: A Socialist Maverick*, 21.

⁴³ Prifti, *Socialist Albania*, 54-55.

orientation continued to be on industrialization. In particular, emphasis was given to heavy industry, and the further collectivization of agriculture.⁴⁴ The developments in the economic sector were followed by a general rise of the social and cultural level in the country.

The successful establishment of the socio-economic basis of socialism was succeeded by the stage of the complete construction of socialism during the sixties.⁴⁵ The principal task in this historical turn regarded the transformation of Albania from a primarily agricultural into a primarily industrial country. The industrialization plans of the Albanian leadership were supported by its next foreign ally, the People's Republic of China. The Chinese economic aid, provided in the form of credits or expertise, proved crucial for the accomplishment of the economic tasks the Third Five Year Plan (1961-1965) and the Fourth Five Year Plan (1966-1970) set forth. The further development of industry continued to be the priority of the Albanian economy even during the Fifth Five Year Plan (1971-1975), in particular heavy extracting and processing branches of industry expanded rapidly.⁴⁶ Parallel to the developments in the industrial field, agriculture saw significant changes during these years. The collectivization process equally intensified and it was fully completed by the late sixties.⁴⁷

Next to the establishment of the material and technical basis of socialism that had now entered into a culminating phase, the Albanian leadership concentrated primarily on social and ideological issues. The main task during this second stage of the socialist revolution regarded the integration of socialism into society.⁴⁸ This would be achieved through the cultivation of a new socialist mentality among the members of the socialist republic.⁴⁹ Furthermore, the Albanian leadership spoke for the creation of the "New Man," the ideal of the novel socialist society. Following in the footsteps of China, the Albanian Party of Labor launched the Albanian version of Ideological and Cultural Revolution by the mid-sixties. A large cycle of interventions and actions in

⁴⁴ Stefanaq Pollo and Arben Puto. *The History of Albania from its Origins to the Present Day*, trans. Carol Wiseman and Ginnie Hole. (London: Routledge & Kegan and Paul, 1981), 266; Vickers, *The Albanians*, 176-177.

⁴⁵ Akademia e Shkencave, *Historia e Shqipërisë. Vëllimi IV* (1983), 273.

⁴⁶ Prifti, *Socialist Albania*, 61.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 66.

⁴⁸ Pollo and Puto, *The History of Albania*, 274.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 276.

several sectors of the society was inaugurated that ended in the early seventies. Among others, administration, armed forces, religion and education found themselves involved in this revolutionary process. All began in 1966 with the campaign against bureaucracy in the state's apparatus and the reduction of several ministries.⁵⁰ The interventions in the army were intended to abolish the military ranks, and introduce party committees and political commissars.⁵¹ In 1967, the government turned to the legacies of the past, religion, women's inferior position and individualism.⁵² A highlight of this year represents the anti-religious crusade, the closure of all religious institutions and the proclamation of Albania as the first atheist state worldwide. It followed another campaign for the emancipation of women, while from the following year the revolutionary process touched upon the educational system.⁵³ Individualism, being the main feature of the capitalist mentality, was fought against in places of work.⁵⁴

The intensity of the Ideological and Cultural Revolution calmed in the late sixties. In the years 1970-1972, a moderate line was adopted that tolerated more freedom for the citizens and particularly for the youth.⁵⁵ Such a relaxation in the interior political scene coincided with a new foreign policy. Albania improved its relations with Western Europe and its neighboring countries in the economic and cultural sphere.⁵⁶ In terms of economic policy, no changes were marked. The plan for the socialist industrialization of the country remained in power.⁵⁷ Despite the opening of diplomatic relations during the early seventies, the country was steadily heading towards a self-reliant course as far as economy was concerned. In fact, this orientation towards an autonomous economical development had been supported by the Chinese

⁵⁰ Duka, *Histori e Shqipërisë*, 283.

⁵¹ Akademia e Shkencave të Shqipërisë, *Historia e Popullit Shqiptar. Vëllimi IV. Shqiptarët gjatë Luftës së Dytë Botërore dhe pas Saj 1939 – 1990* (Tiranë: Shtëpia Botuese Toena, 2009), 285.

⁵² Nicholas C. Pano, "The Albanian Cultural Revolution," *Problems of Communism* 23 (July 1974), 51.

⁵³ Pano, "The Albanian Cultural Revolution," 52-53.

⁵⁴ Pollo and Puto, *The History of Albania*, 276-277.

⁵⁵ Pano, "The Albanian Cultural Revolution," 54-55.

⁵⁶ Nicholas C. Pano, "Albania in the Seventies," *Problems of Communism* 26, (November-December 1977), 35.

⁵⁷ Prifti, *Socialist Albania*, 55.

allies since the early sixties.⁵⁸ China provided significant assistance in the completion of several heavy industrial projects that were meant to secure the future of an economically independent Albania.⁵⁹ The orientation towards an autonomous economy was to be followed at the same time in the political sphere. In 1968, Albania withdrew from the Warsaw Pact, a political and military alliance between the Soviet Union and several socialist republics of Central and Eastern Europe.

In the aftermath of the break with China in 1978, the socialist revolution entered its rearmost stage. The Albanian leadership was obliged to carry on the attempts to fully construct socialism on its own. Among the historians, this period is widely referred to as the period of self-isolation, or self-reliance. Whatever terminology might be used, the fact is that the socialist government put into practice a new strategy of independent economic development that kept Albania far from any future foreign alliance.⁶⁰ The lonely path to building socialism was officially confirmed in the constitution of 1976.⁶¹ The reliance of the country on the domestic resources in the economic field was coupled by a rhetoric that wanted the People's Socialist Republic of Albania to be the only socialist state worldwide, building socialism under a state of siege.⁶² The main threat was posed, according to the Albanian leadership, by the imperialist and revisionist superpowers. Such a policy that prioritized the preservation of the solely communist genuine state worldwide at all costs also had an immediate impact on the political isolation of the country from the international arena. The self-imposed political isolation is only one additional aspect of the economic and ideological isolationist agenda prevailing in the late seventies and throughout the eighties.⁶³ By the mid-eighties, the country was largely isolated from the outside world, while being menaced by a thriving economic, political and social crisis in the

⁵⁸ James S. O'Donnell, *A Coming of Age: Albania Under Enver Hoxha* (New York: East European Monographs, Boulders, 1999), 64.

⁵⁹ Vickers, *The Albanians*, 190.

⁶⁰ Biberaj, *Albania: A Socialist Maverick*, 28.

⁶¹ Bjoern Andersen, "The Constitution of the People's Socialist Republic of Albania. Approved by the People's Assembly on December 28, 1976," accessed 10 May, 2017, <http://bjoerna.dk/dokumentation/Albanian-Constitution-1976.htm#A.%20Political%20Order>.

⁶² Prifti, *Socialist Albania*, 261.

⁶³ Vickers, *The Albanians*, 203.

interior.⁶⁴ The crisis, relating primarily to the malfunctioning centralized economy, fueled in turn the other sectors of the Albanian society.

In 1985, when Ramiz Alia succeeded Hoxha in the post of the First Secretary of the Party of Labor of Albania, the persistent crisis seemed capable of challenging the basis of the socialist state. The main narrative of a terrestrial paradise under socialism was far from what the Albanians experienced in their everyday life. To avoid this alarming situation, Alia quickly undertook some first cautious attempts towards decentralization and liberalization of the national economy, while making the first openings in the foreign policy.⁶⁵ A novel wave of mild reforms was initiated in the late eighties and early nineties. The latest reforms concerned the decentralization of the state's economy and political system, the intensification of diplomatic and trade relations abroad and the relaxing of the control over the society, while measures were taken also in the direction of human rights and religion.⁶⁶ Still, other political parties were not allowed except for the ruling Party of Labor. In the meantime, the unrest within the country's borders grew, partly due to the international pressure and the developments in Eastern Europe. Under the created circumstances, the Albanian leadership was trying to balance between the preservation of the existing order and the introduction of controlled reforms. Despite the measures, the situation in the interior did not improve. Quite the opposite occurred. During the second half of 1990, the already severe economic and political crisis was further aggravated and was followed by the first demonstrations in several cities.⁶⁷ The public unrest and strikes intensified in 1991,⁶⁸ a year in which the first pluralistic elections took place. In less than a year and during the pertaining socio-economic impasse, the government of national salvation could not handle the situation and the country had second parliamentary elections. In this second round, the Democratic Party, the first opposition force in the country, won the majority of the votes and formed a new government.⁶⁹

⁶⁴ Biberaj, *Albania: A Socialist Maverick*, 42.

⁶⁵ Vickers, *The Albanians*, 211.

⁶⁶ Akademia e Shkencave, *Historia e Popullit Shqiptar. Vëllimi IV* (2009), 327-329.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 331-332.

⁶⁸ Vickers, *The Albanians*, 218.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 231.

The formation of the new government signified the end of the socialist adventure and the beginning of a new era for the small Balkan country. The transitory period from a tight centralized socialist economy and one-party state to the market economy and pluralist parliamentary system proved challenging. After having discussed the most significant developments during the almost five decades, I will return to education and its main developments during the socialist era.

Education system during the socialist period

In the frame of this section, the evolution of the school system from the liberation of the country in 1944 to the end of the socialist era in the early nineties will be traced. Such an ambitious task to provide a chronicle of the socialist school is based on the educational reforms implemented in the country. When the communists assumed power in November 1944 one of their priorities became the reorganization of education on the principles of Marxism-Leninism.⁷⁰ Having inherited a poor and almost nonexistent infrastructure,⁷¹ the task of establishing a new educational system seemed all but easy to achieve. The school system was not expanded and was restricted merely to secondary education.⁷² The high rate of illiteracy, more than eighty percent of the population, aggravated the situation.⁷³ Under these circumstances the provisionary government turned to the creation of a unified national and socialist educational system with a compulsory primary school that would liquidate illiteracy.⁷⁴ At the same time, a primary concern was the extension and massivization of education, and the reevaluation of the content and teaching process.⁷⁵

The year 1946 saw the official commencement of a new era for education through the implementation of the first reform that laid the foundations for the new socialist school. The educational system became unified by law throughout the Albanian

⁷⁰ Hamit Beqja, "Në Luftë për një Shkollë e Pedagogji Socialiste," *Arësimi Popullor* 41, no 1 (1986): 16-17; Skendi, ed., *Albania*, 276.

⁷¹ Fatmira Rama, "Krijimi i një Shkolle të Vërtetë Popullore Socialiste Aspekt i Rëndësishëm i Zhvillimit të Arsimit në Vitet 1944-1948," *Revista Pedagogjike* 30, no. 4 (1975): 130.

⁷² Enver Hoxha, *Për Arsimin dhe Edukatën (Permbledhje Veprash)* (Tiranë: Shtëpia Botuese 8 Nëntori, 1979), 430.

⁷³ John I. Thomas, "Communist Education in the Schools of the People's Republic of Albania," *Paedagogica Historica: International Journal of the History Education* 13, no. 1 (1973): 108-109.

⁷⁴ Sotir Temo, *Education in the People's Socialist Republic of Albania* (Tiranë: The «8 Nëntori» Publishing House, 1985), 11.

⁷⁵ Temo, *Education in the People's Socialist Republic of Albania*, 11.

territory and was directly controlled by the Ministry of Education, while school attendance became compulsory.⁷⁶ Following the Soviet model, a new structure was introduced that consisted of a seven-year elementary and four-year secondary education.⁷⁷ From the very first steps, the reform strengthened the socialist character and the ideological and political orientation of the school system. Special attention in this early stage was called to school documentation.⁷⁸ New curricula and textbooks were issued that were in accordance with the radical changes in the ideological orientation of school.⁷⁹ Higher education did not exist at the time, except for the Pedagogical Institute that was established in 1946 to meet the needs of teachers' education.⁸⁰ The University of Tirana was founded a few years later in 1957. During the fifties, secondary education grew as well. In particular, lower and middle vocational secondary schools saw a significant rise to fulfill the needs of the Albanian economy and industry for qualified workers, technicians and cadres.⁸¹ Furthermore, the Soviet education system was fully adopted.⁸² University students or teachers were sent to the Soviet Union and Soviet personnel were working in Albania.⁸³ To this it should be added that programs and textbooks were based on the Soviet experience⁸⁴ or were translations from the Soviet media.⁸⁵

In the 1960s, Albania entered the stage of complete construction of socialism. These socio-economic transformations could not leave the educational system unaffected, and it entered a reorganizational period as well. In education, these radical changes were to be accomplished in two distinct phases. The first step was undertaken with the reform implemented in 1963, which changed not only the structure but also primarily the content of education. The principal aim of this was the close connection of

⁷⁶ Rama, "Krijimi i një Shkolle të Vërtetë Popullore Socialiste," 136-137.

⁷⁷ Joseph S. Roucek, "The Sovietization of Albanian Education", *The Slavic and East European Journal* 2, no. 1 (1958): 55.

⁷⁸ Thomas, "Communist Education," 109.

⁷⁹ Hamit Beqja, *Riorganizimi i Shkollës në R.P.SH.* (Tiranë: Naim Frashëri, 1964), 19.

⁸⁰ Hamit Beqja, "Politika Arsimore Marksiste-Leniniste e PPSH dhe Zbatimi i Saj në Jetë," *Arësimi Popullor* 29, no. 5 (1974): 13.

⁸¹ Beqja, *Riorganizimi i Shkollës në R.P.SH.*, 28; Demir Dyrmishi, "Arsimi dhe Shkenca në Vitet 1949-1960," *Studime Historike*, 1-2 (2001): 114.

⁸² Roucek, "The Sovietization of Albanian Education," 56.

⁸³ Thomas, "Communist Education," 110.

⁸⁴ Kahreman Ylli, "Për një Edukatë dhe Ideologji më të Shëndoshë në Shkollat Tona," *Arësimi Popullor* 5, no. 7 (1950): 4.

⁸⁵ Enriketa Kambo, "Ndryshimet e Para në Bazat Ideo-Shkencore të Shkollës Shqiptare (1946-1950)," *Studime Historike*, 3-4 (2001): 150.

teaching with life, productive work and practice for building socialism. Regarding structure, the extension of the compulsory education by one year was decided on the premise of raising the theoretical and practical preparation of youth for work and for taking active part in the construction of the socialist society. This new orientation was also mirrored in the polytechnic character of all levels of education. Schools were equipped with gardens, laboratories and other working rooms in which students could undertake productive work. At the same time, students were offered practical work outside of the school environment in different fields of the economy.⁸⁶ New curricula and textbooks were introduced for all levels of education. The new school documentation sought to improve the theoretical and practical preparation of pupils attending eight-year education and increase the general and polytechnic knowledge in secondary education.⁸⁷ In this context of deep social and economic transformation, the ideological and political orientation of education was enhanced. Among the scholars, the second socialist reform is considered to have further contributed to the consolidation of a deeply political institution.⁸⁸ Despite the expressed will to terminate the so-called process of “sovietization” of Albanian education, the educational policies continued to be based on the Soviet experience.⁸⁹ The example of the content of the educational media, still patterned after that of the Soviet Union,⁹⁰ is indicative of the situation in the early, and almost throughout, sixties.

In the light of the undergoing Ideological and Cultural Revolution, the Albanian leadership launched a novel reform. In December 1969, the Peoples’ Assembly passed the law “On the new educational system,” which brought the revolutionization of education a step further and made its ideological and political character even clearer.⁹¹ Other aspects of the reform were the orientation towards a better preparation of cadres and working power and the connection of school with productive work. To the latter, the integration of physical and military training in school should be also

⁸⁶ Thomas, ‘Communist Education,’ 112.

⁸⁷ Enriketa Kambo, “Fillimet e Riorganizimit të Sistemit Arsimor (1960-1963),” *Studime Historike*, 3-4 (2007): 105.

⁸⁸ Kambo, “Fillimet e Riorganizimit të Sistemit Arsimor (1960-1963), 111.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 111.

⁹⁰ Thomas, “Curriculum of the Elementary Schools of Albania,” 566.

⁹¹ Temo, *Education in the People’s Socialist Republic of Albania*, 18.

mentioned.⁹² To cope with the current revolutionary developments, in particular after Albania's withdrawal from the Warsaw Pact in 1968, education performed under a new scheme that consisted of three fundamental components: teaching, productive work and physical and military training.⁹³ The new revolutionary triptych was most often seen in secondary education. The school year included six and a half months of lessons, two months of productive work, and one month of physical and military training.⁹⁴ Productive work was extended for a year after the completion of the secondary education for those who wanted to continue on to higher education. University students had to spend a similar year in production before the end of their studies.⁹⁵ In general, education was aimed at the communist education of youth and the molding of the "New Man," a soldier who would fit into the new society and fight for the cause of the socialist revolution. An additional field that saw significant changes during this era of revolutionization of education was the educational media and curricula. At the turn of the decade, a deep revision process began which included the entire school documentation and all levels of education.⁹⁶ The content of the documentation radically changed. The changes primarily concerned the strengthening of their ideological and class tendentiousness.⁹⁷ Specific attention was called to the social subjects that had to be organically permeated by the Marxist-Leninist ideology.⁹⁸ Furthermore, the importation of textbooks from the Soviet Union came to a halt. Starting in 1967 all textbooks were written by Albanian authors and published in the country by the recently established Schoolbook Publishing House.⁹⁹

In the aftermath of the large reorganizations in the structure and content of the Albanian education, a new stage of development was inaugurated by the mid-seventies. In this historical context, the final consolidation of the socialist school with

⁹² Wolf Oschlies, "Die „Revolutionierung“ des Erziehungssystems Albaniens," *Pädagogik und Schule in Ost und West* 18, no. 7-8 (1970): 176; Thomas, "Communist Education," 113.

⁹³ Thoma Deljana, "Mbi Sistemin e Ri Arësimor," *Arësimi Popullor* 25, no. 1 (1970): 13.

⁹⁴ Zuzana Finger, "Schulsystem," in *Albanien: Südosteuropa Handbuch Band VII*, ed. Klaus-Detlev Grothusen (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1993), 536.

⁹⁵ Pollo and Puto, *The History of Albania*, 285.

⁹⁶ Temo, *Education in the People's Socialist Republic of Albania*, 18.

⁹⁷ Oschlies, "Die „Revolutionierung“ des Erziehungssystems Albaniens," 176.

⁹⁸ Enriketa Kambo, "Tendencioziteti Marxist-Leninist i Shkollës Shqiptare (1966-1970)," *Studime Historike*, 3-4 (2013): 213.

⁹⁹ Finger, "Schulsystem," 535.

its original features and a popular character took place.¹⁰⁰ The revolutionization of education, a central task of the previous period, intensified and took a novel orientation. This process, which had engulfed the education system since the previous decade, now showed an inclination towards militarization. Even though no other large reform in education was implemented during the second half of the seventies and throughout the eighties, one could discern a shift in the policy line. This change regarded the strengthening of physical and military training at schools. In this historical turn, it asked for the cultivation and expansion of a military culture among the young generation.¹⁰¹ Weapons training, having already been integrated in the curricula at the close of the sixties, gained momentum in this historical turn of economic self-reliance and political isolation of the country.¹⁰²

During the late period of socialism in the country, the concept of “ideological militancy”¹⁰³ best describes the function of education. Education is the institution where the “New Man,” the active soldier who would construct and defend socialism, was to be formed.¹⁰⁴ In this light, a new wave of textbooks’ revision began in 1978 that also continued in the following year. In 1979, the School Publishing House published many new textbooks and improved the content of already existing texts in humanitarian and natural subjects. National history textbooks for the eighth-year compulsory education were partially or completely revised.¹⁰⁵ Concerning this process of new textbooks’ production, the director of the Textbook Publishing House Merkur Alimerko argues the following:

Our greatest task in this direction is the preparation of school textbooks and supplementary materials with a sound Marxist-Leninist content, high educational values to prepare a military new generation dedicated to the revolution, loyal to the Party, exemplary soldiers, distinct workers and

¹⁰⁰ Temo, *Education in the People’s Socialist Republic of Albania*, 19.

¹⁰¹ “Përgatije Ushtarake me Cilësi e Nxënësve dhe Studenteve,” *Mësuesi*, April 3, 1985.

¹⁰² Stephen R. Bowers, “Stalinism in Albania: Domestic Affairs under Enver Hoxha,” *East European Quarterly* 12, no. 4 (1989): 450.

¹⁰³ Bowers, “Stalinism in Albania”, 445.

¹⁰⁴ Kozma Grillo, “Një nder Fitoret më të Mëdha të Socializmit – Edukimi i Njeriut të Ri,” *Mësuesi*, June 12, 1985.

¹⁰⁵ “Mjete të Fuqishme të Edukimit të Brezit të Ri,” *Mësuesi*, October 3, 1979.

cooperativists to enter work wherever homeland asks- in mines, construction sites, countryside and everywhere.¹⁰⁶

The current stage of development in education was not followed by any further structural reform; however, minor interventions were not to be excluded. In 1982, new curricula and textbooks were compiled. From the school year 1983-1984, the implementation of a novel reform that focused primarily on the curricula began, while changes were also introduced in the analytic program of the eighth-year education.¹⁰⁷ The new textbooks' content sought to include the latest scientific and technical developments and avoid repetitions. An additional measure regarded the reduction of the teaching hours in history, geography, music and reading.¹⁰⁸

During the socio-economic crisis and the growing public unrest by the end of the eighties and early nineties, the voices for changes in the educational field became steadily louder. Reacting to these demands for reform, the authorities introduced a few limited-scale changes. A novel but very short stage of development took place between the years 1990-1992. This short transitory period should also be regarded as the rearmost stage of evolution prior to the decline of the socialist school. The attempts that were concentrated on the de-politicization or de-ideologization of the education system culminated in 1991. A new legislation was adopted that removed ideology, politics, productive work and military training from secondary schools.¹⁰⁹ For the school year 1991-1992, new textbooks were published and subjects with heavy "ideopolitical" content were either removed or were replaced with more neutral subjects in both compulsory and secondary education.¹¹⁰ At the same time, foreign languages were introduced in the analytic program.¹¹¹ These inconceivable changes came as a result of the internal and foreign pressure to the Albanian leadership. They widely opened the door for even deeper transformations that followed in the aftermath of the demise of socialism in 1992.

¹⁰⁶ Merkur Alimerko, "Arritje dhe Detyra për Përmirësimin e Mëtejshëm të Teksteve Shkollore," *Revista Pedagogjike*, no. 34 (1979): 47.

¹⁰⁷ Finger, "Schulsystem," 541.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 541.

¹⁰⁹ Derek R. Hall, *Albania and the Albanians* (London: Pinter, 1994), 75.

¹¹⁰ Finger, "Schulsystem," 552.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 552.

Literature review

In the few existing studies on the Albanian education system during the socialist era, the debate has been dominated by the notion of ideologization or politicization of the public institution. Issues such as class, even Marxist-Leninist tendentiousness, are quite common among Albanian and western scholars. From a general perspective, there is a wide consensus referring to the character of the post-war school system. Education in short is said to be “ideopolitical.” The word, a shorter form for ideology and politics that does not exist in any English dictionaries, was first coined by the researcher John Thomas.¹¹² In the Albanian context, the word is used at will by many scholars and it was adopted in the early years of communism to describe the developments in this crucial sector of society. Other concepts that are to be encountered in literature include indoctrination, propaganda, revolutionization, communist upbringing of the young generation and molding of the “New Man.” Even the highest point in this process of the ideologization, by others politicization, of education was chronologically defined in the late sixties. Before I move further with the discussion of the relevant literature, let me make the aim of this chapter clear. This is an attempt to provide an overview of the existing publications on Albanian education during the socialist era.

There might be general agreement about the role and function, but this is not the case when the discussion turns to the evaluation of the socialist school. The scholars appear divided into two large camps. On one side stand all those who see the transformations that the Albanian education underwent in the years of socialist government as a positive and necessary step for the establishment and further revolutionization of the socialist society. On the opposite side are the ones who approach these developments with a critical eye and tend to stress the negative legacy of this period. To put it simply, the main division in literature could be described in terms of supporters and opponents of the socialist paradigm, as it was consolidated after the end of the Second World War.

To begin with the former group and the supporters of socialist education, all positive aspects and achievements reached in this crucial field are highlighted in their work. A

¹¹² John I. Thomas, *Education for Communism: School and State in the People's Republic of Albania* (Stanford, California: Hoover Institution Press, 1969).

positive tone praises their writings, where no room for failures or malfunctioning of the school system has been reserved. Another common ground among these mainly domestic scholars is their positive stance concerning the so-called “ideopolitical” education. Hamit Beqja, a leading historian and sociologist of education, stresses the absolute need for an ideologically and politically oriented system that would strengthen and improve the overall communist education and the revolutionary class spirit of the young generation.¹¹³ Also common is the position regarding the ideological axis permeating the educational system. Beqja speaks in favor of a red thread that must permeate the entire process of teaching and educational work.¹¹⁴ A similar thesis is also shared by Bedri Dedja, who distinguishes two landmarks in the evolution of the socialist school. On the one hand, Dedja refers to the permanent priority given to the ideological formation of the young generation, while on the other hand he stresses the ideological axis permeating the content and methodology of school.¹¹⁵ The issue of the communist upbringing of youth through education, expressed mainly in the frequently cited molding of the “New Man,” is another highlight the socialist school touches upon. The formation of the “New Man” who would best fit into the novel socialist society is to be achieved through education, argues Sotir Temo.¹¹⁶ The critical task of communist upbringing of the young generation and the formation of a new individual taking place in school was tackled earlier by Beqja as well.¹¹⁷

What is seen as a necessity by the domestic scholars, the ideological and political orientation of the school system, becomes the spearhead of critique for the opponents. A leading voice against the development in the educational sector during the socialist era is the researcher John Thomas. In his monography, one of the few western works dedicated to Albanian education, Thomas considers the priority given to “ideopolitical” education to be by far the most negative development of the post-war era and speaks openly of indoctrination.¹¹⁸ He sees education as an institution

¹¹³ Hamit Beqja, “Forcimi i Edukimit Ideopolitik-Detyrë Themelore e Shkollës Sonë,” *Arësimi Popullor* 21, no. 2 (1966): 3.

¹¹⁴ Beqja, “Forcimi i Edukimit Ideopolitik,” 20.

¹¹⁵ Bedri Dedja, “Drejt Krijimit të Pedagogjisë Socialiste Shqiptare,” *Arësimi Popullor* 26, no. 5 (1971): 20.

¹¹⁶ Temo, *Education in the People’s Socialist Republic of Albania*, 71.

¹¹⁷ Beqja, *Riorganizimi i Shkollës në R.P.SH.*, 58.

¹¹⁸ Thomas, *Education for Communism*, 120.

immersed in the Marxist-Leninist and Party doctrines and comes to the conclusion that the Albanian leadership achieved a successful coup over education.¹¹⁹ The grip over education had already been observed by Joseph Roucek. He maintains that beginning in the early fifties the “ideopolitical” orientation of the Albanian school intensified, which was mainly responsible for endowing the new generation with the Marxist-Leninist principles and the communist ideology.¹²⁰ School has proven efficient merely for the task of political indoctrination of youth, argues accordingly Stephen Bowers.¹²¹ He uses the concept of “ideological militancy” to describe the educational policies during the communist era, while sharing the standard thesis of an ideologically oriented system.¹²² Even more critical is the debate concerning the ideological and political tendentiousness of the socialist school in the post-socialist era and the Albanian context. Enriketa Kambo, a long observer of Albanian education, describes school as a nest of indoctrination of the new generation.¹²³ Kambo holds the position that during the sixties the radical transformations that took place in Albanian school resulted in the integration of the Marxist-Leninist ideology in each cell of the educational process.¹²⁴ Overall, she appears skeptical of the consolidation of a deeply politically oriented institution that heavily damaged learning and teaching.¹²⁵ Furthermore, Kambo has reservations about the absolute and all-embracing character of the changes that left hardly any room free for the actors involved in the educational sector.¹²⁶ The totalitarian aspects of the socialist school and its highly regulated character are also to be seen in the work of other researchers. School is, according to Anila Mullahi and Jostina Dhimitri, a political supplement in the hands of a totalitarian state from which nothing and no one could escape.¹²⁷ Also, quite close is the position of Jani Sota concerning a highly ideologized and centralized

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 118.

¹²⁰ Roucek, “The Sovietization of Albanian Education”, 57.

¹²¹ Bowers, “Stalinism in Albania,” 445.

¹²² Ibid., 445-446.

¹²³ Enriketa Kambo, “Fillimet e Riorganizimit të Sistemit Arsimor (1960-1963),” *Studime Historike*, 3-4 (2007): 111.

¹²⁴ Kambo, “Tendencioziteti Marxist-Leninist,” 205.

¹²⁵ Ibid, 220.

¹²⁶ Enriketa Kambo, “Shkolla Shqiptare në Fillimet e “Revolucionarizimit” (1966-1967),” *Studime Historike*, 3-4 (2011): 143.

¹²⁷ Anila Mullahi and Jostina Dhimitri, “Education Issues in Totalitarian State (Case of Albania),” *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences* 174, (2015): 4104-4105.

system aiming at the creation of the appropriate citizen who would fit into a totalitarian society.¹²⁸

Next in the discussed contributions there is a group of mostly western scholars who attempted to provide a complete picture of the development of the socialist school.¹²⁹ They do not belong to any of the above two groups and enter the discussion with the aim of addressing the reforms and structural changes that Albanian education saw in the post-war era. Their primary interest concentrates on the stage of revolutionization of the Albanian school system during the sixties. Attempts to elucidate specific periods, though not always that impartial, also exist in domestic literature. This body of scholarship that crosses the borders of socialism and continues until current times addresses the early days of the establishment of the novel socialist school system right after the war and throughout the fifties.¹³⁰

Moving a step further, another deviation from the two main orientations in literature represents those researchers who began as keen supporters but after the fall of socialism shifted to the opposite side and became the most bitter critics of the socialist school. The case of Kambo is perhaps the most laudable example of this shift. Despite her critical stance against a radically oriented political system in the publications of the post-socialist period, the same researcher in her initial steps sought the promotion of a positive image of education.¹³¹ The list of renegades could also be

¹²⁸ Jani Sota, "Educational Phenomena in Albania in the Years of Communist Dictatorship and the Reformation Efforts After the Nineties," *European Scientific Journal* 11, Special Edition (2011): 35.

¹²⁹ Oschlies, "Die „Revolutionierung“ des Erziehungssystems Albaniens," 175-180; Gottfried Uhlig, "Zur Geschichte des Bildungswesens in der Sozialistischen Volksrepublik Albanien," Forschungsgemeinschaft Geschichte der Schule und der Pädagogik Sozialistischer Länder, Berlin: Pädagogische Zentralbibliothek, Mitteilungsblatt 5/1987: 1-37; Finger, "Schulsystem," 529-554; Michael Schmidt-Neke, "Albania: A History of School System," in *The Education Systems of Europe*, eds. Wolfgang Hörner, Hans Döbert, Botho von Kopp and Wolfgang Mitter (Dordrecht: Springer, 2007), 11-31.

¹³⁰ Kozma Grillo, "Arsimi Ynë Popullor në Vitin e Parë të Çlirimit të Atdheut," *Revista Pedagogjike* 29, no. 3 (1974): 12-23; Rama, "Krijimi i një Shkolle të Vërtetë Popullore Socialiste," 127-151; Dyrmishi, "Arsimi dhe Shkenca në Vitet 1949-1960," 111-125; Bedri Kola, "Development of Education During the Years 1944 - 1948 in Albania," *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences* 5, 4 (2014): 423-428.

¹³¹ Enriketa Kambo, "Charakteristische Merkmale der Entwicklung von Bildung und Kultur in Albanien nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg," in *Albanien in Vergangenheit und Gegenwart Albanien in Vergangenheit und Gegenwart : Internationales Symposium der Südosteuropä-Gesellschaft in Zusammenarbeit mit der Albanischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*,

filled by the contributions of Bekim Çomo, Kozma Grillo, Fatmira Rama and Vilson Kuri. Their early work is characterized by praises of the socialist and “ideopolitical” character of education,¹³² in particular that of the social subjects and history.¹³³ In the nineties they come to acknowledge that the social subjects carried a heavy ideological and political weight,¹³⁴ with history again occupying the top of the list.¹³⁵

The debate over the content of history textbooks has continued for decades and crosses the divisive line between the socialist and post-socialist era. The views range from the well-accepted position that wants the subject to have played a key role in the ideological and political education of the young generation,¹³⁶ to skepticism about the propagandistic function and the heavy politicization of its content.¹³⁷ Furthermore, the discussion in the early nineties, as one might expect, is guided by the pneuma of de-ideologization or de-politicization.

Leaving history aside for the moment and returning to the research of the educational media in general, one might observe that this is a field that has not been properly researched. Research on textbooks’ content remained somehow restricted in Albania,

Winterscheider Mühle bei Bonn, 12. - 15. September 1989, ed. Klaus-Detlev Grothusen (München: Südosteuropa-Gesellschaft, 1991), 173-182.

¹³² Bekim Çomo, “Shënime e Vërejtje Për Disa Çështje së Edukimit Ideo-Politik të Nxënësve,” *Arësimi Popullor* 22, no. 6 (1967): 18-38; Kozma Grillo, “Reforma Arsimore - Vepër e Shqar Revolucionare e Patisë *Revista Pedagogjike* 26, no. 5 (1971): 89-99; Rama, “Krijimi i një Shkollë të Vërtetë Popullore Socialiste,” 127-151.

¹³³ Vilson Kuri, “Për Përsosjen e Mësimit të Historisë në Shkollë,” *Revista Pedagogjike* 44, no. 1 (1989): 33-42.

¹³⁴ Bekim Çomo, Telemak Xhaxho, and Kozma Grillo “Tekst Mësimor, Jo Manifest Politik,” *Mësuesi*, February 23, 1991.

¹³⁵ Hysni Myzyri and Vilson Kuri, “Zhvillimi i Kurrikulës së Historisë në Shqipëri,” *Mësuesi*, October 9, 1996; Fatmira Rama, “Mbi Nivelin Historik të Nxënësve dhe Studentëve në Bazë të Anketimit,” in *Historia, Shkolla, Shoqëria*, ed. Petrika Thëngjilli (Tiranë: Shtëpia Botuese Toena, 1998), 28-45.

¹³⁶ Mevlan Kabo, “Gjëndja e Mësimit të Historisë dhe Nevoja për Ngritjen e Mëtejshme të Nivelit Ideo-Shkencor dhe Metodik të Tij,” *Arësimi Popullor* 19, no. 1 (1963): 46-61; Mevlan Kabo, “Disa Çështje të Edukimit Ideo-Politik të Nxënësve Nëpërmjet Mësimit të Historisë,” *Arësimi Popullor* 21, no. 4 (1965): 53-60; Llambro Filo, “Mbi Edukimin Ideopolitik Nëpërmjet Lëndës së Historisë,” *Revista Pedagogjike* 32, no. 1 (1977): 28-40.

¹³⁷ Kasem Biçoku and Agron Gani “Tekstet Shkollore të Historisë në Shqipëri,” *Mësuesi*, October 9, 1996; Dilaver Sadikaj and Ajet Shahu, “Fakti dhe Interpretimi Propagandistik në Tekstet e Historisë,” in *Historia, Shkolla, Shoqëria*, ed. Petrika Thëngjilli (Tiranë: Shtëpia Botuese Toena, 1998), 79-89; Erind Pajo, “Albanian School Textbooks in the Context of Societal Transformations,” in *Clio in the Balkans. The Politics of History Education*, ed. Christina Koulouri (Thessaloniki: Center for Democracy and Reconciliation in Southeast Europe, 2002), 445-461.

not to say inexistent. Until recently, no publication has explicitly addressed the content of textbooks issued during the socialist era. So far, only a few attempts could be named that have briefly touched upon some aspects of the curricular content and of those, it is mostly that of the social subjects.¹³⁸

Aim and research's questions

From the already limited discussion of the Albanian education during the socialist era, one might easily notice an even bigger lack of knowledge concerning the content of the educational media. Regarding this, it should be added that in these few existing studies addressing some aspects of mainly social subjects, several weaknesses are visible. First to be mentioned is a lack of systematic approach. In most of the cases it is hard to define if any of the established methods of textbook analysis have been implemented by the researchers. Usually their references concentrate on the role the socialist school had in the ideological and political formation of youth. Furthermore, to give credit to their claims, they occasionally accompany them with excerpts taken from school documentation. The information deriving from texts or curricula seems to fulfill a deep need for evidence, is highly selective, and had to relate to the corresponding argument the researchers put forth. Last, a serial limitation represents the descriptive approach of the content that keeps the researchers on a superficial level and prevents them from really addressing the key messages the textbooks seek to convey. All the above raise several objections regarding the objectivity of these studies.

Given the lack of research on the content of educational media, I enter the field with the objective to fill this gap. The principal aim of this dissertation is to examine the inner content of textbooks, in particular that of national history textbooks, issued during the socialist era. On a deeper level and remaining always consistent with the title, I seek to investigate whether and how the ideological and political practices have been introduced to the latter media. As it is visible from this formulation, the widely accepted position regarding the ideologization or politicization of education, in my

¹³⁸ John I. Thomas, "Curriculum of the Elementary Schools in Albania," *Educational Leadership* 26, 6 (1968): 565-571; Sadikaj and Shahu, "Fakti dhe Interpretimi Propagandistik," 79-89; Kambo, "Ndryshimet e Para në Bazat Ideo-Shkencore," 146-161; Enriketa Kambo, "Aspekte nga Zhvillimi i Shkollës Shqiptare në Vitet 1954-1960," *Studime Historike*, 1-2 (2003): 107-118; Enriketa Kambo, "Fillimet e Riorganizimit të Sistemit Arsimor (1960-1963)," *Studime Historike*, 3-4 (2007): 91-112; Kambo, "Tendencioziteti Marxist-Leninist," 201-221.

concrete case referring to national history textbooks, is far from taken for granted, at least not right from the beginning. Quite the opposite from what recent literature did until now, in this dissertation ideology will not proceed the analysis of the material. Instead, it is through the analysis that I will attempt to reach ideology, which as it stands for the moment should be considered all but self-evident. It follows that my attempts will not concentrate merely on showing how ideology is mirrored, but first and foremost I am interested in shedding light on its function within the history textbook pages.

The second problem encountered so far in literature concerns the lack of a systematic approach, which appears related at the same time to the issue of objectivity of these previous attempts. To this I suggest a deep and holistic approach that remains close to the under-analysis material by means of taking into consideration three key parameters: Structure, content and evolution of the national narrative. That saying, how it was built? Second, what did the entire account bring to the pupils in terms of information? Third, how did it develop throughout the decades of the socialist period? These three parameters represent the research's main questions that I attempt to answer by conducting this dissertation.

Again, this is a material-lead study that seeks to provide an additional contribution to the crucial field of educational media and their content. With this research, I wish to simultaneously integrate the long-forgotten Albania into the international debate on schoolbook research. The primary concern regards the heavily debated process of ideologization, in several cases even politicization, that the Albanian education underwent during the socialist era. In this study, the discussion has been narrowed down to the field of textbooks, more specifically national history textbooks. What interests me more and what I wish to investigate here are, to put it in Keith Crawford's terms, the textbooks as sites of ideological discourse.¹³⁹ Moreover, by means of focusing on texts, which are a significant source of information not only of education but the Albanian society itself, I seek to learn more about these two wider fields and, yet, not only them. Another aim this dissertation puts forth is to elucidate the process of identity formation, for which history textbooks are primarily responsible. Issues of equal significance belong here as well, such as the construction

¹³⁹ Crawford, "Researching the Ideological and Political Role of the History Textbook," 81

of national narratives and national myths. They are both involved in the process of Albanian nation-building that took place during the socialist period.

Methods

The main topic of this chapter regards the conducting of the research. Below, a description of the main data involved and the methods used for the analysis of the material will be provided. This study, as has been mentioned on several occasions by now, seeks to address the content of national history textbooks issued in Albania during the socialist era. Being more concrete, I am primarily concerned about the visual national narrative, in other words the visual recount of the Albanian community throughout the centuries, as it has been depicted through images included in national history textbooks. Going a step further, another priority regards ideology and its performance within the frame of the latter visual national narrative. Now the two core concepts that are under analysis have been revealed: ideology on the one hand and the visual part of the national historical narrative on the other. Ideology, mostly in the sense of propaganda or indoctrination characterizing the entire basis of the Albanian education during the socialist era, has been addressed by a limited number of researchers. Rarely, a few of them have entered the content of the educational media. Even more rare, not to say inexistent, is for scholars to have addressed the visual narrative, or better said, the images the textbooks contain. In this research though, visual resources are considered of primary concern. This represents both its strength and at the same time novelty, since images in school textbooks are not understood as simply decorative means. On the contrary, images are considered important tools of communication since they manage to transmit messages easily and efficiently to the viewers, in our concrete case to the pupils.

Despite the clear orientation towards the visual resources, verbal and other means of communication will not be left unaddressed. School textbooks, and this holds particularly true for the double-page layouts, represent a clear-cut definition of what Theo van Leeuwen and Gunther Kress call multimodal compositional units.¹⁴⁰ Within their frame they include linguistic means, visual or other graphic elements that are arranged and interrelate in different ways to each other in order to produce meaning. As in the case of the images, earlier studies tend to forget the multimodal nature of

¹⁴⁰ Van Leeuwen and Kress, "Critical Layout Analysis," 25.

textbooks and focus mostly on the verbal communication. However, prior to discussing the methodological approach, a brief reference to the main sources involved and the process of their selection proves useful.

Right after the collection of a good part of the main corpus of textbooks, a question was posed regarding its selection. A choice had to be made, since it was almost impossible to deal with such a wide historical spectrum and extended sample. The early idea to choose among the most representative texts was quickly abandoned once it was realized that there are several generations of textbooks. There is an enormous difference between books issued during the years of establishing the socialist society and school (1945-1962), those written in the period of revolutionization (1963-1977), the ones compiled during the period of the self-isolation (1978-1989) and the media that were used during late years of socialism in the country (1990-1992). This overview of the evolution of the educational media throughout the decades helped in the decision about the choice of the texts to be included in this study. I could now focus on one specific generation of texts, or more than one, while leaving out some others.

Whereas the problem concerning the wide historical spectrum of the research seemed to get resolved, that of the extended sample remained still unaddressed. National history was taught in three different grades, and those books, all very different, should be considered. They fulfilled the specific needs of different pupils' ages and, as a matter of fact, differed in terms of their content and didactic approach. The subject was taught initially in the fourth and eighth grades and covered the evolution from ancient to modern socialist Albania. Beginning with the school year 1972-1973 and for the following decade, national history was also taught in the third grade. This was an introductory to the national history course that both verbally and visually covered the historical frame from the Middle Ages to the socialist era.

After this short reference to national history, let me return to the choice of the textbooks and the rationale behind it. I focus on the years of the consolidation of the socialist character of the Albanian school system and address the national history textbooks of the third grade issued back then (1978-1984). A systematic analysis of a smaller but complete sample has been preferred instead of a descriptive approach of selected parts deriving from a larger one. This allows a deep insight over the structure

of the national narrative and a better understanding of its inner content. Another reason lies upon the historical context during which these books were produced. It corresponds to the heyday of Albanian socialism and education, which was followed by a new wave of revision of the educational media and curricula taking place in the years 1978 and 1979. This represents a highlight in the process of textbooks' revision, and it is precisely this crucial development that I wish to address in this dissertation. Namely, it is my aim to concentrate on the reconsidered national historical narrative, its overall content, key essential elements and function during one of the most controversial periods of modern Albanian history, that of self-isolation. Moreover, the use of visual resources increased remarkably during those years. By the late sixties and early seventies, images massively appeared in history textbooks. This resulted in the creation, for the first time, of a parallel visual narrative next to the prevailing verbal one.¹⁴¹ This visual account that came to occupy a significant position in texts was reevaluated accordingly in the late seventies. This holds true for all three grades in which national history was taught. New images were integrated, while many others' size, content and position were altered. I seek to identify all these transformations that took place in the national visual narrative as well as describe and explain them.

So far, I have referred to the choice of the historical context and nothing has been said regarding the grade that was selected. Now I will discuss why I chose to concentrate on the third grade. According to the analytical program of elementary circle of compulsory education, grades one to four, special attention is called to visual learning in national history.¹⁴² It is indicative of the significance that the images have that teachers are asked to accompany topics with visual resources. According to the program, visual thinking dominates in these early ages, and it is where the teaching personnel should focus. From the perspective of this dissertation project, which has set out to address the content of the visual resources, the national history that is taught in the elementary grades represents the ideal place to conduct such research. Not being able to address the entire content of the third and fourth grades, I exclusively

¹⁴¹ Denis Vuka, "The Visual Construction of the Myth of the Albanian National Leader," *Journal of Educational Media, Memory, and Society* 9, no. 2 (2017): 72.

¹⁴² Ministria e Arësimit dhe Kulturës, *Programi i Shkollës Tetëvjeçare, Klasat I-IV* (Tiranë: Shtëpia Botuese e Librit Shkollor, 1978), 76.

focus on the third grade. Such a decision gains further significance when one takes into account the fact that in the third grade pupils had their first encounter with the history of their country.

Now that the main sources involved and their selection have been explained, let me refer to the methods implemented. In searching for a tool to address the content of visual resources, I make use of the social semiotic approach of visual communication. The social semiotic theory of visual representation is introduced by Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen in their classical book *Reading Images: A Grammar of Visual Design*, which was first published in 1996. By means of offering a grammar of visual communication, the social semiotic approach describes the process through which meaning is visually articulated through the use of signs. First, the notion of sign, and second, that of sign-making and sign-maker come immediately to the fore,¹⁴³ before one turns to the meaning itself. According to Kress and Van Leeuwen, these signs are never arbitrary or neutral, but motivated by the interests of the sign-maker and the context in which they are produced.¹⁴⁴ A sign is motivated in the sense that the relation between the signifier, or form, and the signified, or meaning, is chosen on the ground of the former's aptness to best express that which is to be meant.¹⁴⁵ To put it simply, people choose signifiers, argues Van Leeuwen, because they consider them as apt for their purposes at the moment.¹⁴⁶

Starting from this centripetal assumption of social semiotics, Kress and Van Leeuwen, in their book, focus on the visual communication and provide a reliable toolkit for reading their content. Images, like any other semiotic resource and any complete system of communication, have to fulfill three major functions, or as the scholars put it, metafunctions: the ideational, the interpersonal and the textual.¹⁴⁷ By means of analyzing each of the above metafunctions of the visual resources, Kress and Van Leeuwen manage to reach and read their content. In short, the ideational metafunction refers to the ability to represent the world as it is experienced by humans. The interpersonal represents the relations of those engaged in communication, that saying

¹⁴³ Kress and Van Leeuwen, *Reading Images*, 6-7.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 8.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 8.

¹⁴⁶ Theo Van Leeuwen, *Introducing Social Semiotics* (London and New York: Routledge, 2005), 49.

¹⁴⁷ Kress and Theo van Leeuwen, *Reading Images*, 42-43.

the producer, the viewer and the represented participants or objects. Last, the textual provides information concerning the internal coherence of the elements included in an image or composition. Throughout the book, the authors widely make use of slightly different terminology that will also be followed in this dissertation. Thus, in several instances they speak in favor of representative, interactive and compositional metafunction.

The reading of the content of visual communication through the descriptive framework that Kress and Van Leeuwen suggest is quite significant, but it represents solely one restricted part of their contribution. Next to this, they consider their work as useful as far as it could be used for critical purposes. After having made clear their position that images are means for the articulation of ideological messages, they argue that their primary aim is to offer a methodological instrument that would critically analyze these political or ideological theses.¹⁴⁸ Drawing largely from the work of critical discourse analysis in verbal communication, Kress and Van Leeuwen seek to implement the same methods of critical reading in the visual semiotic resources. Such a toolkit proves useful when it is brought into the research of school textbooks and, more specifically, into the study of visual communication, which is the main objective of this study.

Going a step further and returning to the visual grammar, each of the above-mentioned metafunctions is divided into subcategories and substructures. Let us begin with the representative metafunction. The presence or absence of a vector is crucial since it institutes the first division between narrative and conceptual representations.¹⁴⁹ When images contain a vector, whether it is formed through a line, through the placement of elements or bodies in an image, or with the use of any other vectorial device, then one might speak of a narrative representation. In narrative visual representations, there is always an actor or actors, a certain action, the results of this action, and, lastly, the receivers of it. Kress and Van Leeuwen identify diverse kinds of narrative structures, or processes as they call them, such as action and reactional processes, that depend on the presence of the vectors and the participants

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 14.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 59.

depicted. At the same time, they clarify that the choice to represent the world narratively means, at its core, showing it in terms of doing and happening.¹⁵⁰

Quite the opposite happens with conceptual representations lacking a vector. They represent the participants in terms of their more generalized, stable and timeless essence, such as class, structure and meaning.¹⁵¹ There are three main types of conceptual representation Kress and van Leeuwen identify: classificational, analytical and symbolic processes. Classificational processes relate the depicted participants or objects to each other within the frame of a composition, so that they are conceived as members of the same group or class and have something in common.¹⁵² Other means to achieve this result is the symmetrical distribution of the participants in the composition, their equal size and orientation on the horizontal and vertical axes.¹⁵³ Concerning the analytical processes, they relate the depicted people in terms of a part-whole structure. There are always two kinds of participants, argue Kress and Van Leeuwen, one carrier (the whole), and any number of possessive attributes (the parts).¹⁵⁴ Maps represent a typical example of part and whole structure, showing a main carrier that possesses within its frame different possessive attributes.¹⁵⁵ Furthermore, Kress and van Leeuwen distinguish additional subtypes of analytic processes such as unstructured, temporal, exhaustive and inclusive, dimensional topographical accuracy, quantitative topographical accuracy, topological accuracy and abstraction.¹⁵⁶ Some of them will be encountered in the analysis section below and will prove quite useful for unlocking the messages of the visual resources. Last, the symbolic processes refer to what a participant means or is. Here, there are two issues at stake: the symbolic meaning and the identity of the depicted people.¹⁵⁷

Moving to the interactive metafunction and the second element of the visual grammar, Kress and Van Leeuwen try to explain the relation, or better said the interrelation, between the image and what is included within their frames and the viewers. The interaction between those engaged in communication is achieved through several

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 73.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 79.

¹⁵² Ibid., 79.

¹⁵³ Ibid., 79.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 87.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 88.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 104.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 105-106.

means such as contact, distance, perspective and angle of the depiction. When drawing a painting, a sketch or shooting a photo, the image maker should make several choices that, to a great extent, explain the social interaction and relation his or her products wish to achieve with the viewers. Let us begin with the contact. When the represented people look directly at the viewers, then a direct connection is established through the gaze, and the image is called a demand image.¹⁵⁸ The gaze, which might be supported by gestures or other means of expression, except for directly addressing the viewers, also asks or demands something from them. When a visual connection is missing, Kress and Van Leeuwen use the concept of offer image.¹⁵⁹ Such images primarily offer information to the viewers.

A second issue of immense importance in interactive meaning is the distance from which people and objects are shown. A close depiction suggests a certain familiarity between the people in the image and the viewers, as though they were friends and acquaintances, whereas a long distance would mean quite the opposite and present them as strangers and remote from the viewers.¹⁶⁰ In the first case, the person's characteristics and individuality is the center of attention, and this is exactly what images that show people from long distance fail to do. Apart from distance, perspective plays a significant role in interactive meaning. Turning to the choice of perspective or point of view, images are divided into subjective with a central perspective and a built-in point of view, and objective that do not include any kind of perspective.¹⁶¹ Such a choice might influence the relation between the represented participants and the viewers. In the former case, subjective images ask the viewers to reach the person or object of their speculation from only one specific point of view. This literally means that the point of view has been selected for the viewers and from this springs a kind of symmetrical relation between the depicted participants and the way the viewers must relate to them.¹⁶² In the case of objective images, the relation established between both sides is relatively free. Objective images on the other hand

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 118.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 119.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 125-126.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 130.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, 131.

show whatever they have to show or what objectively exists disregarding the viewers and their position.¹⁶³

Leaving aside the issues of distance and perspective, I will refer next to the use of angle of the depiction and its role in interactive communication. As far as the choice of angle is concerned, Kress and Van Leeuwen distinguish first between horizontal and vertical angle and then divide each of them into further subcategories. Regarding the horizontal angle, the producer of the image has in its disposition a frontal depiction or can choose an oblique angle to show the represented participants. The frontal angle stresses the involvement of the people shown with the viewers, whereas the oblique option would mean detachment.¹⁶⁴ The implementation of horizontal angles, according to Kress and Van Leeuwen, says that what we see is part of our world, something we are involved with, whereas the oblique angle suggests that what is depicted is not part of us and is presented as something other than us. While the horizontal angle is related with issues of involvement and detachment, the vertical angle on the other hand is a matter of power in interactive communication. The implementation of low angles in general gives the impression of superiority, exaltation or triumph, something that is lost with the use of high angles. When viewers gaze at the depicted people from a high angle it is as though they have or exercise symbolic power over the latter. In the case that the represented people are seen from a low angle, then the power moves to the side of the represented participants. Last, there is the possibility that the angle of the depiction or the caption, in the case of a photo, is at eye-level. In this case, there is no power involved and the represented participants and viewers are considered to be equal.¹⁶⁵

The third metafunction of the visual resources is called compositional and, at its core, refers to the internal coherence of the elements within the frame of the image or composition so as to create a meaningful whole. The meaning of any given visual composition, according to Kress and Van Leeuwen, passes through three interrelated systems: information value, salience and framing.¹⁶⁶ More specifically, they assume that the information value depends on the placement of the elements in the different zones of the image. Thus, right and left, top and bottom, and center and margin

¹⁶³ Ibid., 131.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., 136.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 140.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., 177.

polarizations are the most commonly used structures. When elements are positioned on the left they are presented as given and those on the right as new. Given, for Kress and Van Leeuwen, means something the viewer already knows and is familiar with, the agreed-upon point of departure for the message. New, on the other hand, means that something is not yet known to the viewer and is something they must pay special attention to. In addition, new has the meaning of problematic, contestable and the information at issue, whereas given, appears commonsensical and self-evident.¹⁶⁷ The key information seems to be positioned on the right and is something to which the viewers must pay attention. In vertical polarization of elements, the meaning differentiates. The elements put at the top gain the status of ideal, while those at the bottom are presented as real. Ideal, explain the authors, means the idealized or the generalized essence of the information. Furthermore, ideal is contrasted with the real, which prevails as the more specific, down-to-earth or practical part of information.¹⁶⁸ Visual compositions are also structured along the dimensions of center and margin, with center representing the core information to which all the marginal parts are dependent or ancillary.¹⁶⁹ Before explaining the function of salience and framing, it should be mentioned that all three compositional structures might be combined through the use of horizontal and vertical triptychs.¹⁷⁰ Going a step further, regarding the significant issue of salience and for attracting readers' attention on specific elements, visual compositions implement various means such as size, sharpness and contrast in tonal values or placement in the foreground. Last, framing devices can bring together or disconnect integral parts of compositions.¹⁷¹ Framelines or white spaces, vectors or uses of shapes and colors belong here.¹⁷² The effect of framing the elements within a visual composition, defined by the logic of space, is that they appear as a single unit of information and as such have to be approached and read.

The social semiotic visual approach, fully explained in the previous section, has been adopted for the needs of this research. Such an approach proves useful since it focuses on images and visual communication. Images that the national history textbooks contain represent the heart of this dissertation. However, as has been already

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 181.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 186-187.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 196.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 198-199.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 202.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, 203-204.

mentioned, textbooks are multimodal ensembles that include different semiotic modes.¹⁷³ To construct and transmit meanings, values or attitudes, the producers of the latter media make use of an extended range of visual and verbal modes. Textbooks should be considered as multimodal ensembles of different modes,¹⁷⁴ to use a term of Kress, which have been selected, integrated and arranged in double page layouts. The content of these layouts cannot be fully understood without paying attention to all modes operating within their frame.¹⁷⁵ To ignore this would pose a lot of problems in conducting the analysis of the textbooks' content, and even more to the reliability of the results that would derive from a restricted part of the material. A mono-modal approach, focusing exclusively on the images, would prove problematic as long as these images are to be found in a multimodal framework, such as the one the textbook layouts offer. Thus, the expanding of the perspective and the inclusion in the analysis of other means of communications is more than a matter of subtle choice. It is in fact a necessity, in case I wish to reach the whole meaning the layouts contain. Another crucial step to understanding the meaning of the layouts, and at the same time one of the main assumptions of multimodality, is to address the interaction between different modes working together.¹⁷⁶ Different parts of the layout are connected to each other and perform as a unit, reassures Kress, which are to be read together.¹⁷⁷ It goes without saying that different modes have different affordances, or as Kress calls it, different logics, to express meanings.¹⁷⁸ Speech, for instance, happens in time, one sound, word or clause follows the other and this sequence is crucial for making meaning. Image's logic on the other hand is organized on the principle of space and the relation of the simultaneously present elements in that space.¹⁷⁹

Prior to discussing the other semiotic modes to be found in textbook's layouts and speaking about a multimodal approach, let me explain first what mode is. Mode,

¹⁷³ Van Leeuwen, "The Schoolbook as a Multimodal Text," 35.

¹⁷⁴ Gunther Kress, "What is Mode?," in *The Routledge Handbook of Multimodal Analysis*, ed. Carey Jewitt (London and New York: Routledge, 2011), 64.

¹⁷⁵ Bezemer and Kress, "Changing Text," 25.

¹⁷⁶ Jeff Bezemer and Carey Jewitt, "Multimodal Analysis: Key Issues," in *Research Methods in Linguistics*, ed. Lia Litosseliti (London: Continuum, 2010), 185.

¹⁷⁷ Gunther Kress, "Text as a Punctuation of Semiosis," in *Intertextuality and the Media: From Genre to Everyday Life*, eds. Ulrike Hanna Meinhof and Jonathan M. Smith (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 143.

¹⁷⁸ Gunther Kress, *Multimodality: A Social Semiotic Approach to Contemporary Communication* (London and New York: Routledge, 2010), 76.

¹⁷⁹ Kress, *Multimodality*, 82.

according to Kress, is any given resource for making meaning that is socially and culturally shaped.¹⁸⁰ Images, writing, layout, music, gesture, speech, moving images and soundtrack represent some examples of modes. Their affordances, that saying, different logics to express meanings, of course differ according to their nature. As in the case of images, discussed above, each mode, in order to be considered a mode, should fulfill the representative, interactive, and compositional function.¹⁸¹ They should be able to represent the world as it is, show the social relations between those involved in communication, and last, connect their inner elements together into a coherent whole.

In the history textbooks that are taken into consideration in this dissertation project, one encounters images in the form of paintings, simple sketches or photos, writing communication or text, color, and of course the layout as a distinctive semiotic mode that brings all the previous elements together into a stable frame. By means of paying primary attention to the visual communication, I will concomitantly address the remaining modes of communication and the overall multimodal meaning of the layouts. More specifically, the analysis of the content of the verbal communication is considered of equally high importance. Another crucial aspect of the multimodal approach regards the relation and interplay between the verbally and visually articulated meanings. This is a crucial aspect in the process of meaning making. Equally, the function and the use of color will be addressed, as far as it influences the articulation of meaning. Concerning the layout, aside from being a mode on its own that meets all the preceding criteria, it simultaneously involves three signifying systems serving to structure and bring together the textual and visual elements that the layout contains into a meaningful whole. As in the case of images, layouts make use of the same interrelated systems: information value, salience and framing.¹⁸² To these signifying systems that operate either independently or simultaneously within the frame of the double-spread, I will refer below in the analysis section. What layout does is dispose of elements within a framed space, in our case the double-spread. It does not name or depict them as in the case of the words and images accordingly, but

¹⁸⁰ Kress, "What is Mode?," 54.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 55.

¹⁸² Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen, "Front Pages: (The Critical) Analysis of Newspaper Layout," in *Approaches to Media Discourse*, eds. Allan Bell and Peter Garret (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998), 188-189; Van Leeuwen and Kress, "Critical Layout Analysis", 26.

it positions semiotic elements and their relations in a semiotic space.¹⁸³ In a way, layout orients the readers and viewers, argues Kress, to categorizations of knowledge and structures such as central and marginal, given and new, or ideal and real.¹⁸⁴ What is significant in this case, if meaning or information is considered of primary significance, is that it comes to the readers or viewers through these preordained structures. In doing so it gains a specific status and value one is not able to ignore. This is what Van Leeuwen and Kress call the ideological performance of the layout.¹⁸⁵

Next to the social semiotic visual and multimodal methods of inquiry, this study also makes use of a comparative approach. One of the study's main preoccupations is regarding the evolution of the national narrative through the decades. To be able to trace these developments, history textbooks of the third grade that were published during the years of the People's Socialist Republic of Albania (1978-1984) will be compared to those of the previous generation (1972-1977). The comparison will be conducted on the level of layouts or chapters.

Ideology and myth: A conceptual framework

In the title and throughout the thesis, the principal aim that this dissertation sets forth to investigate is the widely used term of ideology. The examination of ideology within the educational media, in particular history textbooks, is though not possible without first making clear how the term is being understood. It is thus the objective of this section to explain right from the beginning how this difficult concept is meant and is going to be implemented. Before I clarify my position, let me first say that I distance myself from a rather common negative definition that relates ideology mostly with propaganda and politics. Equally, an easy parallelization of ideology with indoctrination and manipulation practices seems, at the very least, problematic.¹⁸⁶ This holds primarily true concerning the image of an oppressive ideational straitjacket, which is reserved for ideology.¹⁸⁷ In addition, the classical Marxist

¹⁸³ Kress, *Multimodality*, 92.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 92

¹⁸⁵ Van Leeuwen and Kress, "Critical Layout analysis," 27.

¹⁸⁶ Giovanni Sartori, "Politics, Ideology and Belief Systems," *American Political Science Review* 63, no.2 (1969): 410.

¹⁸⁷ Michael Freeden, *Ideology. A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 8.

perception of false consciousness, or as Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels explicitly describe as “camera obscura,” has been avoided.¹⁸⁸ In this definition, the very idea of the concept of ideology has been restricted to the illusion of the real material world.¹⁸⁹ Ideology, in my opinion, cannot be reduced to a set of ideas held by the ruling class and imposed on the members of the society, as structuralist Marxism suggests through the so-called “ideological state apparatuses.”¹⁹⁰

I accept ideology in post-structuralist terms. Deeply rooted in communicative practices,¹⁹¹ the post-structuralist school comes to a discursive understanding of ideology and hegemony that is oriented primarily towards the establishment of social unity.¹⁹² According to Claude Lefort, ideology is defined as a discourse within the social realm having the aim of unity in an imaginary manner.¹⁹³ This discourse, conceived of as a fold of the social discourse upon itself following the line of the instituting discourse, seeks to express general knowledge or perennial truths and to conceal all possible signs of division the social space might contain and generate.¹⁹⁴ The projection of a solidified imaginary community rest at the heart of the ideological discourse and this process on its own should appear as natural as possible. Thus, it is the main task of all those who choose to engage with ideology, argues Lefort, to discover the mechanisms that secure the imaginary essence of the community.¹⁹⁵ In this direction, the work of the theorists Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe has proven to be of significance since they further elaborated on the concept of social imaginary. Following a similar line of argumentation with Lefort, they consider the

¹⁸⁸ Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The German Ideology. Parts 1 and 3*, ed. and intr. Roy Pascal (New York: International Publishers, 1947), 14.

¹⁸⁹ John B. Thompson, *Studies in the Theory of Ideology* (Berkeley. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1984), 5.

¹⁹⁰ Louis Althusser, *On Ideology* (London and New York: Verso, 2008), 28-29.

¹⁹¹ Jonathan L. Maynard, “A Map of the Field of Ideological Analysis,” *Journal of Political Ideologies* 18, no. 3 (2013): 300.

¹⁹² Aletta J. Norval, “Review Article: The Things We Do with Words – Contemporary Approaches to the Analysis of Ideology,” *British Journal of Political Science* 30 (2013): 327-328.

¹⁹³ Claude Lefort, *The Political Forms of Modern Society. Bureaucracy, Democracy, Totalitarianism*, ed. and intr. John B. Thompson (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1986), 185.

¹⁹⁴ Lefort, *The Political Forms of Modern Society*, 202-203.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 194.

precarious social unity as deriving from discursive and articulatory practices.¹⁹⁶ Their contribution shed light on the transformation of particular discursive representations into hegemonic, which to a great extent explains how the process of precarious social unity is possible.¹⁹⁷ Before addressing social imaginary, one of the key concepts of the post-structuralist school, it must be mentioned that Laclau and Mouffe abandon the idea of the social as a complete sutured space. They argue that society is a territory praised by antagonism.¹⁹⁸

Coming back to the central issue of the establishment of the precarious social unity, in a later work Laclau introduces the concepts of myth and imaginary. He defines myth as a principle of reading a given situation, which could be a social or political order.¹⁹⁹ Myth arises when a structural dislocation emerges as a possible answer or solution. Its work is the re-establishment of social closure by means of forming a new objectivity. Laclau calls this objectivity a new space of representation, or a “mythical space,” in which dislocated elements of previous discursive spaces have been re-articulated and reconstructed.²⁰⁰ With regard to the operation, Laclau supports that myth functions as a surface on which dislocation and social demands can be inscribed.²⁰¹ As far as myth succeeds in providing an alternative discourse-narrative that occupies the space of the previous dominant order, it becomes hegemonic.²⁰² At this point, the transformation of myth into an imaginary horizon has been achieved, which, except for instituting closure and giving a unified picture of the society, provides above all a credible alternative to a crisis for the community.²⁰³ It should also be added that two extensive features that characterize myth are pure positivity and spatiality.²⁰⁴ Furthermore, myth, points out Laclau, fascinates individuals and groups since it is accompanied by the vision of the “Promised Land,” or that of an

¹⁹⁶ Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics* (London and New York: Verso, 1985), 113.

¹⁹⁷ Aletta J. Norval, “Poststructuralist Conception of Ideology,” in *The Routledge Handbook of Political Ideologies*, eds. by Michael Freeden, Lyman Tower Sargent, and Marc Stears (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 161.

¹⁹⁸ Laclau and Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, 125.

¹⁹⁹ Ernesto Laclau, *New Reflections on The Revolution of Our Time* (London and New York: Verso, 1990), 61.

²⁰⁰ Laclau, *New Reflections on The Revolution of Our Time*, 61.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 63.

²⁰² *Ibid.*, 61-62.

²⁰³ *Ibid.*, 66.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 62.

ideal society.²⁰⁵ In other words, how society could or should be. From this perspective, myth incarnates a form of “future fullness,” to make use of a term coined by Laclau, that manages hegemonically to impose a social order.²⁰⁶ An explicit example of this represents the positivist conception of progress in communist historiography that makes possible the transformation of myth into a collective imaginary.²⁰⁷

In discussing ideology, another concept, that of myth, came dynamically to the fore. Myth appears fully connected with the ideology. At least this holds true for the post-structuralist approach to ideology and the work of Laclau, where myth has a considerable role. In Laclau’s terms, myth is a principal tool for securing the social imaginary bond that counts as ideology’s primary concern. Thus, both concepts are brought together, and myth, being more concrete, lies at the very core of ideology and is highly responsible for the latter’s function. To argue that myth is merely a considerable tool of ideology seems quite in order and well-grounded in the post-structuralist territory. However, such a definition does not take into consideration the elusive character of myth, which has been the topic of long discussions in philosophy and political sciences. Several theorists have attempted to define its ubiquitous nature and main features while explaining its function in the social sphere. It is my ambition to trace these debates below and refer to some of the most significant contributions in the field.²⁰⁸ By doing so, I wish to enrich Laclau’s definition and gain at the same time some useful insights into the concept of myth, one of the principal tasks this dissertation has set forth to investigate. As in the case of ideology, myth again is not understood in the common sense as a distorted or fictive story that is contrasted with truth. There is nothing bad or negative in myth, which to my understanding is rather an inevitable element of human existence and a tool for the latter’s explanation.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 63.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 66.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 64.

²⁰⁸ A shorter version of contemporary literature focusing on myth has been published in the following article: Vuka, “The Visual Construction of the Myth,” 71-72.

Such a definition comes from the work of George Schöpflin. By considering myth as an inevitable aspect of collective existence instead of a historical distortion,²⁰⁹ Schöpflin regards myth as a set of beliefs, usually in a narrative form, that a community holds about itself.²¹⁰ What is of significance in this narrative is the content and not its historical accuracy. Myth, according to him, is more about perceptions and less about historical truths, and this is something the members of the community might be aware of.²¹¹ A second issue Schöpflin calls special attention to is the intellectual and cognitive monopoly that myth generates, which, imposed on the members of the community, acts as a means of standardization.²¹² All those who accept myth, argues Schöpflin, are by definition considered members of the community, whereas those who do not are excluded. In this manner, myth manages to establish boundaries, institute closure and build collectivities, while being mainly responsible for the maintenance of social cohesion.²¹³

In a recent comprehensive publication of Piet Fontaine, myth is considered a storytelling and a significant tool to explain and interpret the world.²¹⁴ It alludes much to history but has, at the same time, a lot of differences. Fontaine stresses the pliable nature of myth that allows details and elements to change freely while parallelizing it with a plastic material.²¹⁵ Compared to history, which is guided by facts and linearity, myth uses details and circumstances at will and shows a certain disregard towards strict chronology and linear narrative. Time in myth, instead of being fixed, functions freely in circular patterns by making use of the idea of constant repetitions.²¹⁶ An

²⁰⁹ George Schöpflin, "The Nature of Myth: Some Theoretical Aspects," in *Albanian Identities. Myth and History*, eds. Stephanie Schwander-Sievers and Bernd J. Fischer (London: Hurst & Company, 2002), 26.

²¹⁰ George Schöpflin, "The Functions of Myth and a Taxonomy of Myths," in *Myths and Nationhood*, eds. Geoffrey Hosking and George Schöpflin (London: Hurst & Company, 1997), 19.

²¹¹ Schöpflin, "The Functions of Myth and a Taxonomy of Myths", 19.

²¹² *Ibid.*, 19-20.

²¹³ *Ibid.*, 20.

²¹⁴ Piet Fontaine, "Myth and History," in *Yearbook of the International Society of History Didactics*, eds. Karl Filser, Raphael de Keyser, Henri Moniot and Karl Pellen (Schwallbach am Taunus: Wochenschau Verlag, 2001), 5.

²¹⁵ Fontaine, "Myth and History," 5.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 13-14.

additional crucial aspect of myth, according to Fontaine, is its elevation far from the ordinary life, where the events take place and the people are taken.²¹⁷

In an earlier attempt, Ernst Cassirer makes use of the concept of political myth and discusses its use in the contemporary culture of the twentieth century. By means of holding a primarily negative view, Cassirer defines myth as an artificial construction to be found in totalitarian regimes.²¹⁸ Furthermore, he speaks in favor of myth's fabricated nature and irrationality, while seeing equivalences to ideology.²¹⁹ Despite the bleak image Cassirer holds, he integrated the concept into the political sphere. The use of the term political myth would continue to mark the field and subsequent approaches even to current times.

Similarly, George Sorel defines myth as being primarily political. Sorel encapsulates the very essential idea of myth in terms of expressions of a will to act.²²⁰ With this approach, myth is understood to be a combination of powerful images that can cause political action by means of guaranteeing triumph of their cause to those engaged.²²¹ Furthermore, myth, according to Sorel, is not solely about facts and details, which, except for being unimportant, might not prove real in the end. Rather, it is the entirety of myth that counts insofar as it brings people to act in the present.²²² To put it simply, Sorel maintains the functional significance of myth instead of its factual accuracy.

Several aspects of political myth have also been addressed by Henry Tudor, who argues that myth is a tool that people make use of to understand the world they live in.²²³ Tudor holds political myth as an account of events given in a dramatic form that has a practical purpose.²²⁴ This dramatic storytelling is, in terms of Tudor, well-structured because it always contains a protagonist and a plot with a beginning, middle and end.²²⁵ Furthermore, it is told from the standpoint of the present and thus

²¹⁷ Ibid., 16.

²¹⁸ Ernst Cassirer, *The Myth of the State* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1946), 282.

²¹⁹ Robert A. Segal, *Myth: A Very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 39.

²²⁰ Georges Sorel, *Reflections on Violence*, ed. Jeremy Jennings (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), Introduction.

²²¹ Sorel, *Reflections on Violence*, 20.

²²² Ibid., 117.

²²³ Henry Tudor, *Political Myth* (London: Pall Mall, 1972), 17.

²²⁴ Tudor, *Political Myth*, 137.

²²⁵ Ibid., 137.

reconstructed according to the changing circumstances,²²⁶ and it aims to be primarily accepted as a true story by the audience or group.²²⁷ Tudor resists the thesis that wants political myth to be simply fictions. He maintains that myth is more a matter of interpretation or re-interpretation of people and events that really existed from the perspective of the present and less a pure invention.²²⁸ It is the same present state of affairs that pushes the mythmaker to select the events that will be included in his account, since only he is able to know the end of this story that is revealed in retrospect to the audience.²²⁹

The connection of myth with the socio-historical context, touched upon by Tudor, becomes more evident in the following contemporary approaches. Recently, Christopher Flood, in his attempt to provide a working definition of myth, argued the following:

Myth is an ideologically marked narrative which purports to give a true account of a set of past, present or predicted political events and which is accepted as valid in its essentials by a social group.²³⁰

In this approach, political myth, except for being defined as part of the ideological discourse, is concomitantly socio-historically contextualized. In this sense, Flood seems concerned with the context in which myth functions and more specifically with myth's (re)production and reception by a certain social group at a specific socio-historical context.²³¹

The latest and perhaps most complete attempt to deal with the function of myth and the several dimensions of political myth was made by Chiara Bottici. To the question that deals with what the concept of political myth consists of, Bottici gives the following definition:

²²⁶ Ibid., 125.

²²⁷ Ibid., 133.

²²⁸ Ibid., 138.

²²⁹ Ibid., 124.

²³⁰ Christopher Flood, *Political Myth: A Theoretical Introduction* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), 44.

²³¹ Flood, *Political Myth*, 43-44.

Political myth can be defined as the work on a common narrative by which the members of a social group (or society) make significance of their political experiences and deeds.²³²

In this explicit definition, Bottici argues that what makes a political myth out of a simple narrative is the very fact that this narrative, or mythologem, creates significance, is shared by a given group and it exerts influence on the concrete political conditions in which this group operates.²³³ The issue of its content and truthfulness does not seem to be of primary concern for the scholar. To achieve this triple task, myth has to adapt to the present conditions and needs of the group and society in which it is found, according to the philosopher. Thus, political myth is conceived as a continual process of elaboration or revision, rather than an object given once and forever of a core political narrative so as to come to terms with the present conditions and to be able to coagulate significance.²³⁴

Furthermore, Bottici's contribution is particularly useful because she addresses some of the features of myth in her work. The most crucial dimension of myth rests without doubt on the fact that they are narratives oriented towards action, an invitation to act here and now.²³⁵ This why political myth should always be up to date. Being narratives that seek to prompt action among the members of the community, they have to answer the present need for significance and fit the specific political conditions of a given group.²³⁶ A second feature Bottici calls attention to is that these narratives, or better said the events included in these accounts, are organized in a dramatic form. Political myths, according to Bottici, are nothing more than narratives that stage a drama.²³⁷ In this drama, the individual that takes part feels or becomes emotionally involved and a strong pathos is derived from his or her involvement. Such an emotional involvement of the individual does not necessarily result from the historical narratives or from the shared ideologies.²³⁸ Drawing from the previous work of Christopher Flood, Bottici acknowledges the "condensational power" of political

²³² Chiara Bottici, *A Philosophy of Political Myth* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 179.

²³³ Bottici, *A Philosophy of Political Myth*, 179.

²³⁴ Chiara Bottici, "Myths of Europe: A Theoretical Approach," *Journal of Educational Media, Memory, and Society* 1, no. 2 (2009): 13.

²³⁵ Bottici, "Myths of Europe: A Theoretical Approach," 13.

²³⁶ Bottici, *A Philosophy of Political Myth*, 183-184.

²³⁷ *Ibid.*, 196.

²³⁸ *Ibid.*, 196.

myth that consists of the capacity to condense things, meanings or ideas into a few images or “icons.”²³⁹ The apprehension of the myth’s content and messages it contains could be achieved in a conscious, but also in an unconscious, level and the same holds true for the work on myth.²⁴⁰ Last, in discussing the necessity of political myth and the mythical mediation, Bottici concludes that they stem from a deeper universal human need to live in a world less indifferent to us.²⁴¹

²³⁹ Ibid., 181.

²⁴⁰ Ibid., 127.

²⁴¹ Ibid., 200.

Part II – Empirical research

Third-grade's national historical narrative 1978-1984

In 1972, national history was first introduced in the third grade. This was an introductory course to the history of Albania that referred to the most significant episodes of the community. National history in the third grade was taught for one hour per week until the year 1984. Its historical account covered the years from the Middle Ages to the socialist era. In 1978, this national storytelling was largely re-evaluated, thus coming to terms with the novel social and historical context. In the aftermath of the entrance of Albania into the period of self-isolation, new national curricula and textbooks were published. I will now turn to these late years of socialism in the country and the texts issued from 1978 to 1984. The center of attention is primarily the visual, but also the verbal, communication. Below, the entire framework of the national narrative will be examined. The analysis will follow the main periodization of history textbooks, that is to say the Middle Ages, National Renaissance and socialist era.

1. Front and back cover

The first thing that pupils encounter, well before they even open their textbooks, is definitely the cover. In the textbooks for the third grade, the cover consists of a double page representation, which includes a front and back cover (Layout 1). It is in the existing double-spread format that the analysis will be conducted. Together, the front and back cover introduce pupils to the history of their homeland by means of providing a synopsis of the most significant historical events. This is done mostly in the upper section through a visual account. Going into more details, such an account focuses on the wars the community has conducted throughout the centuries. Furthermore, the structure of the layout, together with the narrative it foregrounds on top, appears complex. Many participants and several messages have been included, which are moreover allotted in multiple layers.



Layout 1. Elsa Minga, Tefta Malile and Vedat Demiraj, *Të Njohim Historinë e Popullit Tonë*. *Lexime Historike për Klasën e 3-të të Shkollës 8-Vjeçare* (Tiranë: Shtëpia Botuese e Librit Shkollor, 1983), Front and back cover.

To begin the analysis with the layout's structure, it has been divided in two parts, as the use of different colors suggests. The most momentous events of the Albanian history appear in the upper red section, whereas the main protagonists of the cover are to be found at the bottom and in the white section. There are three children who are the same age of the pupils and carry school bags. In addition, the three figures are shown walking parallel to the upper red section. They move from the right towards the left. Being so close to the national story-telling that, literally speaking, fully expands above their heads, they have the chance to experience first-hand the highlights of the national community.

Turning to the narrative and the upper-red section, it develops according to a linear timeline. Prior to entering its inner layers, it should be added that the essential characteristic of this narrative is the temporal analytic process, realized in the presence of a timeline.²⁴² In this temporal unfolding of events from the Middle Ages

²⁴² Kress and Van Leeuwen, *Reading Images*, 94-95.

to the present day, the most significant have been included. These glory scenes, which signify progress as we move from the past to the most current events, were possible thanks to the eternal mobilization of the masses. In this concise narrating of the nation, approached from the perspective of the masses, the idea prevails of safeguarding the homeland from falling into the enemies' hands. Furthermore, the narrative suggests that the history of the community is nothing more than the concomitant struggle for the national and socio-political emancipation of the community.

Moving a step further, this eternal national and social engagement of the masses is framed within a culminating dramatic process. This is the eternal drama of the Albanian people towards the "Promised Land," meant in the socialist present and the communist future. The prevailing red color that covers more than two-thirds of the layout leaves no doubt in this direction. First, it informs the pupils that, regarding the context, such a drama takes place, this is Albania. The red is the main color of the Albanian national flag. Second, it could be argued that the plain red enhances the dynamic of the representation, and it is considered at the same time the color of the revolution and socialism. Leaving for the moment the function of the color to which I will refer again later, I will return next to the dramatic narrative that has been staged in the red-upper section. Despite its linearity, this storytelling primarily follows a cyclical arrangement of time. Structured around the idea of permanent national struggle or resistance, history is assumed to move according to great repetitive cycles that follow each other in due time. These cycles have a similar inner structure or periodization. Each period or cycle always begins with an initial stage of birth of the national community, and it follows a maturation stage when a national state is consolidated, before the community's fall into a period of decline. Three such cycles that follow each other are to be seen on the cover, namely Middle Ages, National Renaissance and, last, the socialist era. Let us discuss them in detail below.

Albanian history begins, according to the cover, with the successful resistance of the people against the Ottoman Empire in the Middle Ages. The masses might not have been included in this case, though the pupils distinguish the legendary national hero Gjergj Kastrioti (Skanderbeg) on the left page. His lonely figure, standing on the back of a horse, holds for the symbol of the successful struggle against the invaders. The war, successful for almost a quarter of a century, allowed the establishment of the first

proto-Albanian state. Its center was the city of Kruja, which is shown behind the protagonist. The resistance, though, proved short-lived and very soon the Albanian territories were occupied by the Ottoman army. This represents the first fall of the community into a period of decline that has been shown as well. Visually speaking, the years of the Ottoman occupation are to be seen in the first gap of the timeline and the clouds. The ominous clouds that are depicted could be read as the following: what you see here are dark and difficult ages for the national community that suffered under a foreign occupation.

After the fall, the revival of the community during the period of National Renaissance followed. This second cycle of developments, shown at the left-top corner, begins with the struggles of the people for the defense of the Albanian territories. At the close of the nineteenth century the country ran the risk of partition among the neighboring countries. This danger seems to have mobilized the masses, who took up arms and fought for the independence of Albania. Such an objective was achieved in 1912 with the proclamation of the first Albanian state, though this historical event has been not shown. The visual composition, most likely due to lack of space, leaves out this grandiose achievement and moves to the second fall of the community during the interwar period. The second decline begins with the large mobilizations against the oppressive government of Ahmet Zogu. These mobilizations seem to have a social and political character, as the red flag and the clenched fist of the participants subtly suggest. The serial decline of the community is aggravated by the Axis invasion and the Second World War. Again, there is a gap in the timeline that indicates the decline stage that the community entered. Another indication of the decline is the descending line in which the group of demonstrators have been positioned.

Moving a step further, the Axis occupation did not bring the end of national history. Quite the opposite, the community revived again with weapons in hands and successfully resisted the serial enemies. The third cycle of the national account opens with the legendary National Liberation War shown on the right page. The resistance led to the liberation of the country and the establishment of the socialist order and state in the aftermath of it. Almost the entire right page has been dedicated to the socialist era. Detailed information has been offered that focuses on the post-war developments and the process of constructing the novel socialist society and “New Man.” Since I referred to the people, it should be mentioned that during the years of

socialism the nation gives the impression of a community whose members appear strongly united to each other. These members, better said citizens, positioned on the far right, have been captured while marching in a strong diagonal upward movement. Compared to the previous stages, the national community includes several female figures for the first time.

All in all, these are the three main periods or cycles that consist the national narrative, and this is how progress is made possible in Albanian history. Time, instead of being linear, unfolds in cyclical repetitive patterns. The linearity of the narrative has also been undermined by the several gaps and interruptions that are to be seen. They represent the division between the historical periods, here cycles, and mark the entering of the community into a period of decline. Furthermore, the historical development, which is all but straight and linear, should be considered. This is to be observed primarily in the timeline that takes turns in specific moments, while in other cases goes upwards or downwards according to the stage of the development in which the community is to be found

There is no doubt that the center of the composition rests in the representation of the socialist era and more specifically the late days of socialism. As it has already been mentioned, the developments of the socialist period occupy the entire right page. This is the third period or cycle the narrative consists of, which, considering the place it occupies, is perhaps the most significant. Let us see in detail what is shown in this part of the composition. In the aftermath of the heroic National Liberation War, as the layout seems to suggest, the Albanian nation re-emerged from its ashes and appears stronger than ever. This is to be observed initially in the monumental appearance of the members of the community, who are positioned at the far right and quite close to the three figures of pupils. Another visual element that stresses the dynamic appearance of the Albanian citizens in this final historical turn is their placement in a diagonal-upwards position. Their bodies form a strong vector, which, outstretched, expands out of the frame of the layout. They march in a synchronized manner upwards and forwards towards the right, in a movement that symbolizes the future.²⁴³ Moreover, the same people bear weapons and working tools, and this represents a

²⁴³ Wolfgang Holz, "Allegory and Iconography in Socialist Realist Painting," in: *Art of the Soviets. Painting, Sculpture, and Architecture in a One-Party-State, 1917-1992*, eds. Mathew C. Bown and Brandon Taylor (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1993), 74.

clear indication that supports their role as actors or doers. A book even appears in the hand of the woman who leads this dynamic mobilization. Bringing together all the elements discussed so far, one can distinguish the actors and the means that the protagonists of the socialist period implement. Still, the kind of action they are involved in has not been revealed. To put it simply through a question, what are they shown doing? To be able to respond this question, one must consider other aspects of the visual grammar.

Going a step further, let us focus next on the people's representation during the late years of socialism. The manner in which they are depicted makes them look like the members of a regular army while marching, in this concrete case, towards the future. Furthermore, they have been symmetrically distributed in space, something that could not be supported for the previous stages. This pushes the viewers to receive them as a group, the members of which are related to each other. In this case, what has been implemented is what Kress and Van Leeuwen call classificational process or structure.²⁴⁴ Being so close to each other, they appear to have something in common or belong to the same class,²⁴⁵ the class of the Albanian citizens-soldiers. The results of their recent successful action are visible above their heads. These include the industrialization of the country, mostly the establishment of the several branches of mainly heavy-industry, and second, the collectivization of agriculture. These two excellent achievements have been fully accomplished and belong to the past. The people-soldiers, literally speaking, hold in their arms by far the largest achievements of the post-war era, while being captured in a strong synchronized movement in the direction of accomplishing their next task. This is no other than the safeguarding of the recent achievements of the socialist revolution against possible enemies, and the further consolidation of the socialist homeland in the present and the future. These latter objectives will be achieved through hard work and continual vigilance, again implied in the pickaxes the people carry and the weapon the man wearing a military uniform in the first line possesses. Next to the weapons and pickaxes, they also need the book that the woman in the first line carries in her hand. The book symbolizes knowledge, or better said, the education of the citizens.

²⁴⁴ Kress and Van Leeuwen, *Reading Images*, 79.

²⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 79.

Above, I make use of the concept of the socialist homeland, which is to be fully seen in the visual communication and more specifically in the red color. The red color might be considered to be a symbolic syncretism that on the one hand denotes the color of the Albanian national flag, while on the other is correlated to the socialist revolution and socialism in general. Since I referred to the flag, it should be mentioned that this kind of symbolic dualism that denotes both the Albanian state and socialism can be better traced in the flags depicted. In the visual composition, a total of three flags appear. One is the national flag of Albania, so that there are no doubts about which country the account refers to, and the other two flags are plain red. These plain red flags should not be considered an accidental choice. Most likely they seek to accentuate the socialist movement in the country that began during the interwar period and culminated in the socialist period.

Leaving aside the use of color and returning to the people, their portrayal in the form of a military unit is really innovative. Concerning the people, in the visual communication there are two contradictory messages to be found that ask for further investigation. First to be mentioned is the leading position of the woman in a male-dominated representation, and second is the appearance of the nation in the form of the military unit. Both observations seem to be a reasonable choice when one considers the socio-historical context of the publication. Furthermore, both are dictated by the novel ideological agenda and the domestic policy adopted. In conditions of foreign entanglement, Albania chose the path of economic self-reliance in the interior. This was supposed to get the country ready for waging a concomitant struggle against modern revisionism and imperialism that was menacing the existence of the small socialist republic. An army is also needed under these critical circumstances. The war cannot be won without a reliable army, the cover subtly implies. The army is created, at least in the frame of this cover, with the participation of the entire Albanian population. This army, as the cover informs us, is fully equipped with all tools and means needed. What is more significant is that it appears fully dedicated to the present and the forthcoming mobilization of the community. The three pupils positioned at the bottom of the right page appear to have been included in this general mobilization as well. Their involvement in the national account negates, at the same time, our initial claim that has them moving in parallel lines and simply observing the evolution of the community throughout the centuries.

With this latter observation it seems that we have steadily entered the core message this introductory layout wants to transmit. This is the integration of all pupils, who most likely identify with the three figures depicted, into the sublime struggle for the safeguarding of the socialist homeland and the further consolidation of the socialist order in the present and the future.

In an overall summation of the essential message, the cover provides a complete representation of the national history by focusing on the latter years of the socialist revolution. The pupils, according to the title at the top right of the double-spread, are invited to get to know the eternal mobilizations of the masses for the national and the social cause. At the same time, their duty to enter the revolutionary process that has engulfed the country in the present conditions has been foregrounded. They are called to emulate the dynamic stance of the closely shown protagonists and give their contribution in the direction of protecting and further consolidating their socialist homeland and revolution. In other words, the pupils who attend the third grade represent tomorrow's workers and soldiers, and this why this call is highly important. After having learned about the history of their homeland, they are expected to take their position in the first line of the socialist revolution and continue the attempts of the previous generation. To put it better, what we have in this cover is a compact picture of the past, the present and, above all, the future of the community.

After having addressed the key messages this introductory cover contains, it seems reasonable to compare it with the covers issued during the years 1972-1977 (Layout 1, Appendices section). Let us start with the commonalities in both representations, namely the three protagonists and the cinematic experiencing of history. Furthermore, national history becomes interactive in that the three children, and together with them the pupils attending the third grade, are not simply observing, but are primarily getting involved in the historical events. Such an involvement, literally speaking, an entrance into the realm of the national history, proves useful as far as what the pupils see and read, and mostly what their role in the present and future regards. In a way, they are considered to be de-facto successors who will continue the attempts of the previous generations. In the example of the cover issued during the years of self-isolation, the pupils were called to protect and further develop the socialist homeland and revolution. A general sense of fear and continual vigilance caused by some invisible enemies permeates the representation. Any notion of fear or danger is to be

seen in the previous generation of covers, issued in the early seventies. Here, the idea of completing the major tasks of industrialization and collectivization of the agricultural sector dominates. Pupils are of course asked to give their contribution either in the field of industry or in that of agriculture. A final difference represents the frame of the historical developments covered in each case. A strict representation of the post-war developments is the focal point in the early seventies, whereas the successive covers expand their perspective and give an entire overview of national history.

2. Inner cover

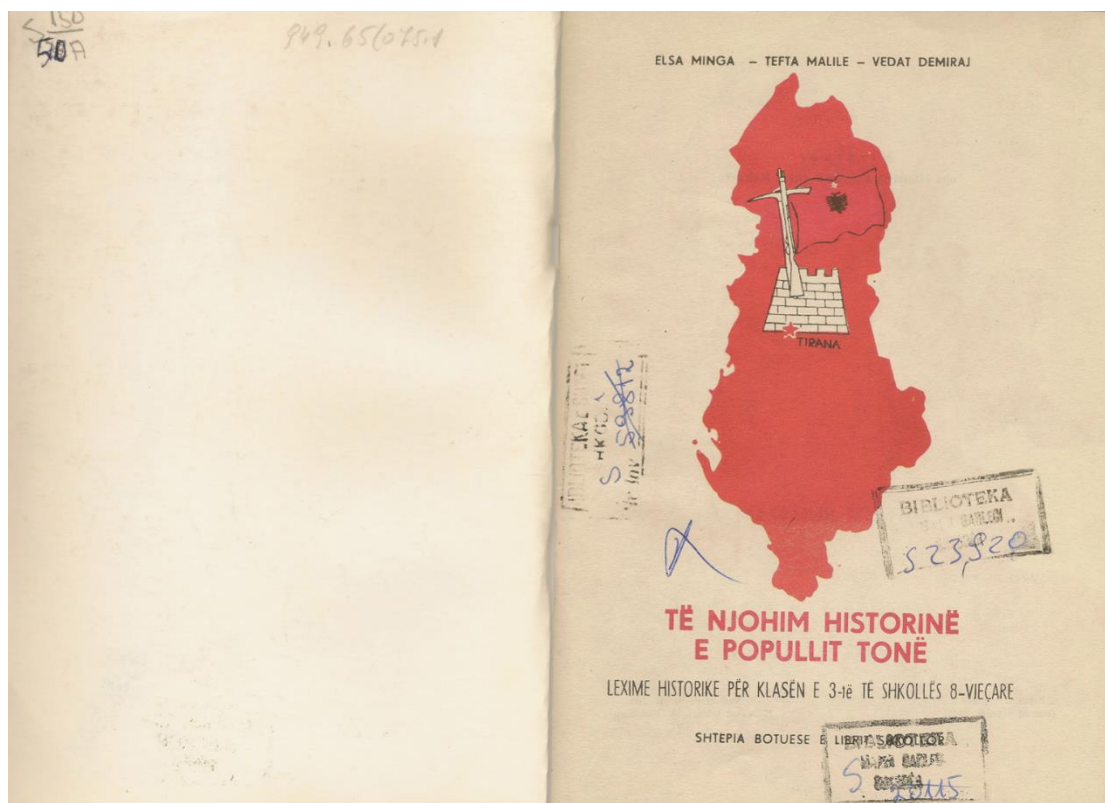
Prior to entering the historical narrative, the content of the following inner cover and preface will be addressed first. Each of them offers supplementary information to the above-addressed cover. To begin with the inner cover (Layout 2), it depicts a political map of Albania, which is followed by verbal information on the top and the bottom of the right page. At first sight, the double-spread layout gives the impression of being simple and uncomplicated. Focusing on the map, the largest visual element, it shows the state and the borders of Albania. What should be mentioned right from the beginning is that the map lacks any further topographic features or details, and second it is given out of geographical context. A utopian and at least unusual depiction of an isolated country that has borders but no real neighbors. This should be considered a political map that was created for the need of the textbooks.

Moving a step further and getting into the inner layers of the double-spread, the initial impression about an easy and uncomplicated layout is quickly shattered. Instead, the layout is complex and above all possesses a multimodal character. It contains verbal and visual information which seem interrelated to each other. On top, the names of the authors stand out, while at the bottom one can read the title of the textbook and the publisher. All visual and verbal elements are located on the right page, which endows them with additional information value. In the terms of Kress and Van Leeuwen, they are presented as something new and still unknown to the viewers-readers and where they should pay special attention.²⁴⁶

Leaving aside for the moment the placement of the elements in the layout, I will focus next on the map, its central visual element. The map included here is a clear-cut definition of a conceptual representation that lacks any vector or participants. It

²⁴⁶ Kress and Van Leeuwen, *Reading Images*, 181.

contains several elements that are related to the map according to a part-whole structure.²⁴⁷ Albania is the main carrier, the whole, which possesses within its frame a number of attributes or elements, the parts. Concerning the parts, placed relatively in the center, are the national Albanian flag, an arm and a pickaxe, a segment from a fortress and a red star followed by the name of the capital, Tirana. These are what pupils see within the borders of the red Albania, which will be addressed in detail below.



Layout 2. Minga, et. al., *Të Njohim Historinë e Popullit Tonë* (1983), Inner cover.

To begin with the red map, it clearly shows the Albanian state and territory. What is significant about this map is the fact that it is provided out of geographical context, that of the Balkans or South-East Europe to which Albania belongs. Focusing on the red color and its representational or ideational meaning,²⁴⁸ it denotes the socialist revolution taking place within the Albanian territory. The information referring to the Albanian context is additionally provided in the flag that is flying in the center. It is the national emblem, officially adopted by the Albanian state from 1976 to 1992. Insisting somehow more on the color, the bright red has, at the same time, an

²⁴⁷Ibid., 87.

²⁴⁸ Gunther Kress and Theo Van Leeuwen, "Color as Semiotic Mode: Notes for a Grammar of Color," *Visual Communication* 1, no. 3 (2002): 347.

interactive meaning. On the one hand, it transmits to the viewers a sense of dynamics and energy, on the other it creates a sense of unity and coherence within the frame of the map.²⁴⁹ This sense of cohesion derives mostly from the textual or compositional function of the red color, which occupies the entire frame of the map.²⁵⁰ The Albanian state at each and every corner is red or, in other words, socialist. The objective of establishing a genuine socialist state has been achieved according to this latter reference, and this is the People's Socialist Republic of Albania.²⁵¹ Since we referred to the flag, it is interesting to note that it is missing a flagpole. It hangs on the weapon and the pickaxe and as a matter of fact is highly connected to these two elements. The weapon and the pickaxe represent the key symbols during the self-reliance period that were consequently introduced in textbooks. Their dynamic appearance has already been observed on the cover (Layout 1), which in the current layout is further stressed through their tilted position. A vertical placement would not have the same effect. Both tools stem from the mural of a depicted fortification, again a subtle indication of the strong connection among the parts. Lastly, this fortification bears a name, that of the capital of Albania, Tirana, and it has been decorated by a red star at its bottom. The red star is a symbol that has been widely used to represent socialism and is to be seen in the flags of several socialist republics.

After having addressed the parts, the issue of their interpretation, and mostly their relation to the whole, the map, still remains open. A potential reading might be the following: Starting from the very last element, the capital Tirana, it symbolizes the bastion of socialism. It is the very last outpost of this genre that has been visually depicted in the layout as isolated and out of context, be it geographical, historical or social. The socialist Albania, furthermore, is a unique case worldwide, and as such it must be safeguarded from falling into the enemies' hands. The act of protecting the castle has been urged by the depicted weapon. At the same time the country must rely on its own resources and become self-reliant, as the depicted pickaxe subtly reminds. To reach the status of economic autarky, much work and the proper equipment is required. Again, all is to be found within the frame of the map.

²⁴⁹ Kress and Van Leuween, "Color as Semiotic Mode," 348.

²⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 349.

²⁵¹ With the adoption of the second constitution in 1976 Albania was proclaimed a People's Socialist Republic. Andersen, "The Albanian Constitution of 1976," accessed 9 February, 2016, <http://bjoerna.dk/dokumentation/Albanian-Constitution-1976.htm> .

Moreover, the map is missing a legend, but this could be easily filled by the title of the textbook. In a red synchrony with the map, the title calls for the pupils to get to know the history of the Albanian people. Knowledge means power and this power must be translated into concrete action. In this specific layout, the desired action is the pupils' future active engagement to further construct and protect their socialist homeland. It is the sole path that will secure the impregnability of the very last remaining socialist stronghold worldwide. In fact, what we have seen in this layout is the official dogma that the Party of Labor of Albania adopted during the self-isolation period. Albania, in short, is assumed to be the "Mecca" of socialism and the vanguard of the international communist movement.²⁵² As the only Marxist-Leninist Party in the world, it is opposed to modern imperialism and revisionism, and it is determined to fight for the cause of the world revolution.²⁵³ Brought into the realm of domestic policy-making, this international detachment was translated into the principle of self-reliance and the building of socialism relying on the country's own forces.²⁵⁴ This, as it has already been observed, pushed the country into the eve of complete isolation from the rest of the world.

Last, when one compares the above-examined layout to the one in use from 1972 to 1977 (Layout 2, Appendices section) a lot of differences are obvious. The central visual element, the map, might be the same, but it has a different function. The key theme, that of constructing the socialist order, appears in the earlier version as an undergoing enterprise that has not yet been accomplished. The white spots within the red Albania remind the pupils that this process is still in progress. A second difference regards the fact that in the seventies the map was blank and missing any further visual or verbal elements within its frame. Third, contrary to the inner cover issued during the self-isolation era, Albania has been captured within a vertically oriented rectangular form. Furthermore, the dark blue color surrounding its western and southern borders could be read as a possible depiction of ethnic Albania. Territorial claims might lie behind the use of different colors. Last, it is interesting to observe that the map breaks the rectangular frame at the top of the page. This might be translated as a clear indication once again showing the borders of the ethnic state.

²⁵² Prifti, *Socialist Albania*, 32.

²⁵³ *Ibid.*, 33.

²⁵⁴ O'Donnell, *A Coming-of-Age*, 88.

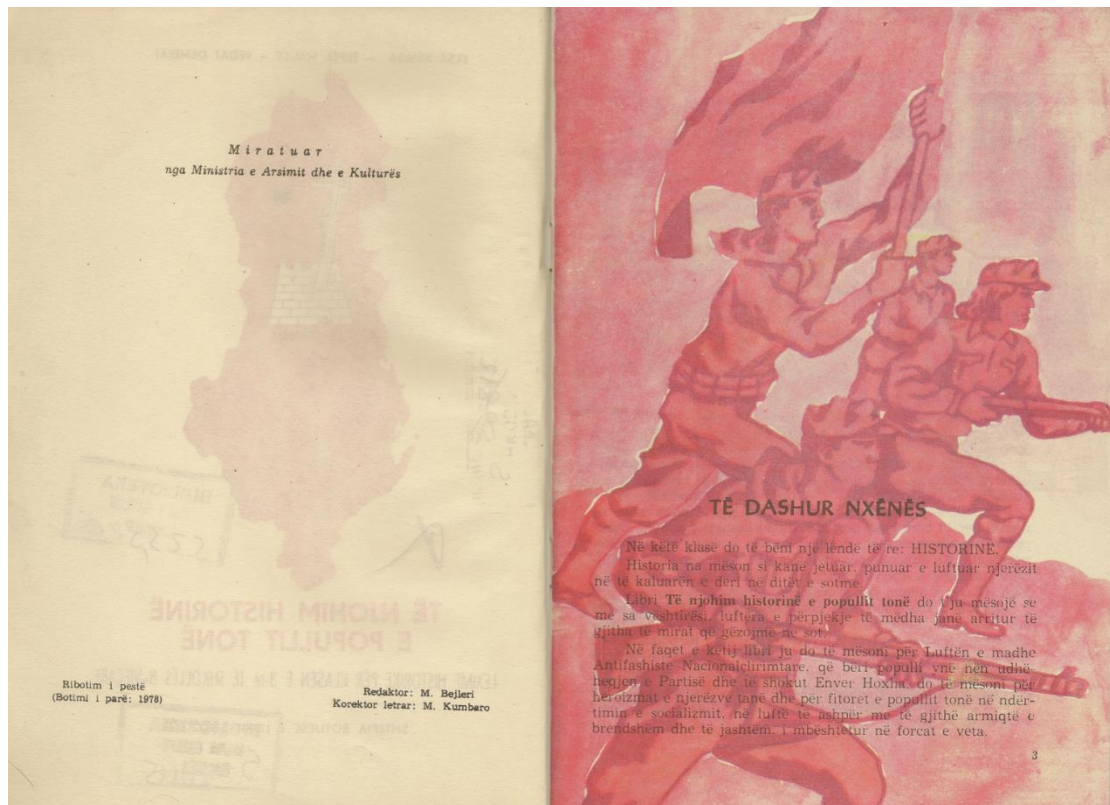
Territorial expansion towards its northern borders are not to be excluded in this concrete case.

3. Preface

In an interesting embedding of verbal and visual communication within a single page, the next layout introduces pupils to the new subject, while informing them of the principal aim of national history in the third grade (Layout 3). In the text, the prominent position of the National Liberation War and the post-war attempts to build the socialist order have been accentuated. Concerning the visual part, the focus is on a fragment depicting a military offensive, perhaps showing the same historical event and the people's heroic engagement during the Second World War.

To begin the analysis with the visual communication, this is a whole page representation showing four participants in action. All participants, except for the flag carrier, are bearing arms. They move from the left towards the right of the page. This notion of action that the picture generates is created through the presence of several vectors.²⁵⁵ They are formed primarily by the bodies and gazes of the represented participants that make the direction of their movement clear. The first vector should be considered the moving bodies of the protagonists. Another one represents their gazes, which are directed at a certain point out of the composition. And a last vector is visible in their outstretched arms and weapons. All three vectors point towards the right and most likely even out of the frame of the visual composition. The existing vectors reveal a narrative structure underlying the image. In this narrative representation one can identify the main actors or doers and a kind of action that is not yet clearly defined. This last observation turns the four depicted people into the most significant elements of the layout, the only actors from whom a certain action is being carried out. The actors and action, most likely a military offensive against potential enemies, might be shown, but what the viewers cannot see is their goal or the receivers of this action. What is additionally unknown is the social and historical context in which such an action takes place.

²⁵⁵ Kress and Van Leeuwen, *Reading Images*, 59.



Layout 3. Minga et. al., *Të Njohim Historinë e Popullit Tonë* (1978), Introduction.

Moving further with the analysis, let us now focus on the several conceptual structures that the image contains.²⁵⁶ This latter information derives from the equal size of the bodies and the military uniforms the main protagonists wear. In conceptual representations, the focus lies rather on the participants shown and their generalized and permanent essence, reassures Kress and Van Leeuwen, such as class, structure and meaning.²⁵⁷ Disregarding their male or female characteristics, their silhouettes bear large similarities. Furthermore, they are arranged relatively symmetrically across the painting and all move in the same direction. These visual details push the viewers to receive them as a group, the members of which are related to each other in terms of a classificational process.²⁵⁸ As members of the same group or class, in this concrete example the four participants appear as the soldiers of an army, most likely the Albanian army. This army seems involved in a dramatic action, as the blurred and hazy background hints. As far as the use of the colors is concerned, the monochrome

²⁵⁶ Ibid., 79.

²⁵⁷ Ibid., 79.

²⁵⁸ Ibid., 79.

of the representation should be noted. The dominating pale red has been combined with the white-gray of the background.

Leaving aside for the moment the representational, let us turn to the interactive meaning of the composition. As already mentioned, no contact between the viewers and the participants has been established. The latter are depicted through an oblique angle, or literarily speaking, the viewers can see merely their profile. Referring to the theory of visual social semiotics, this represents a clear example of what Kress and Van Leeuwen call offer image,²⁵⁹ which seeks to focus more on the mobilization of the depicted army and the action itself, rather than on the connection between the viewers and the actors. This is not to say that the creator disregards the position of the viewers, who reach the image from a low angle.²⁶⁰ This further stresses the significance and the dynamic of the represented participants. Not to forget at this point the short distance of the representation that seems to minimize the detachment that the oblique angle of the depiction might cause.

In terms of compositional meaning, the arrangement of the elements, in this concrete case participants, has been made around a central figure. He carries an enormous red flag that could be either the national flag or one denoting a revolutionary movement. Due to his vertical prolongment, he stands out from the rest of the participants. At the same time, he is distinguished and gains additional significance from the very fact that he bears in his hands the symbol of this mobilization. The flag represents the largest and highest visual element of the composition, which is a clear indication of its salience. In addition, this flag is red, but it does not contain any further symbol. The red color has also been implemented in the previous images and it has, as it has already been mentioned, a double connotation. On the one hand, it stands for the color of the Albanian national flag, and on the other it might be correlated to the cause of the socialist revolution. Furthermore, the visual elements, in our case the four participants, have been strongly framed and appear connected or as though they belong together. They all move in a synchronized manner towards the same direction and seem to have a common objective. A certain dynamic could be discerned in the tilted bodies of the four depicted people.

²⁵⁹ Ibid., 120.

²⁶⁰ Ibid., 140.

Going a step further, let us now discuss the kind of synchronized action on which the image focuses. Merely a few hypotheses have been expressed up to this point. According to the latter findings, it should be added that this mobilization on the one hand might be interpreted as the act of safeguarding the homeland against potential invaders. The flag is red and therefore connoted to the Albanian national emblem. On the other hand, the image speaks in favor of fighting for the cause of the socialist revolution. The red star in the participants' caps supports the latter interpretation. Both interpretations could even be adopted without juxtaposing each other. Before ending the visual analysis and moving to the text, another significant observation regards the placement of a woman at the helm of this movement. This reminds the pupils not only of women's contributions, but mostly emphasizes their equal, not to say leading, position in the Albanian society. As a reminder, it is a woman and not a man found in the first line. It is unclear if this is the socialist revolution or a national struggle. At the same time, this latter detail represents the only difference in comparison to the image used from 1972 to 1977 (Layout 3, Appendices section).

In the aftermath of the visual analysis, let us turn next to the verbal communication and the text. The text appears at the bottom of the page and has been not separated from the image. This is in fact an unusual interconnection between the two modes of communication appearing together. By means of concentrating on the text, after a few introductory notes referring to the new subject of history, the aim of the national history is immediately provided. Among other things, the text makes clear that the title of the textbook "Getting to know the history of our country" is indicative of its intention to bring the pupils into contact with the perennial efforts, wars and difficulties of the Albanian people. These all represent the prerequisites that made the joyful life of the present possible, continues the text. From the long line of heroism there is one event that definitely stands out. This is the National Liberation War during the Second World War that was led by the Communist Party and its leader Enver Hoxha. Possibly, this grandiose event is also the theme of the visual that concomitantly brings the pupils into a concrete historical context. Another noteworthy moment, according to the text, represents the heroic efforts of the people to build socialism. They were hindered in this attempt by internal and external enemies but managed to successfully accomplish their tasks by means of relying on their own forces. To resume what the verbal narrative states, it is the exalting of the ideal of the

partisan war next to the self-reliance dogma. Albania, according to the text, was liberated and re-built on a socialist basis by means of relying exclusively on the inner sources and the attempts of the community. The external factor has been completely omitted and the merits go to the people and the visionary communist leadership. The text, as one can easily see, provides more information in comparison to the image, which solely depicts a fragment of a military offensive during the Second World War. Another difference between the two modes of communication regards the promotion of the self-reliance dogma and the encirclement theory, which again appears mostly in the text and is a recent addition to the text.

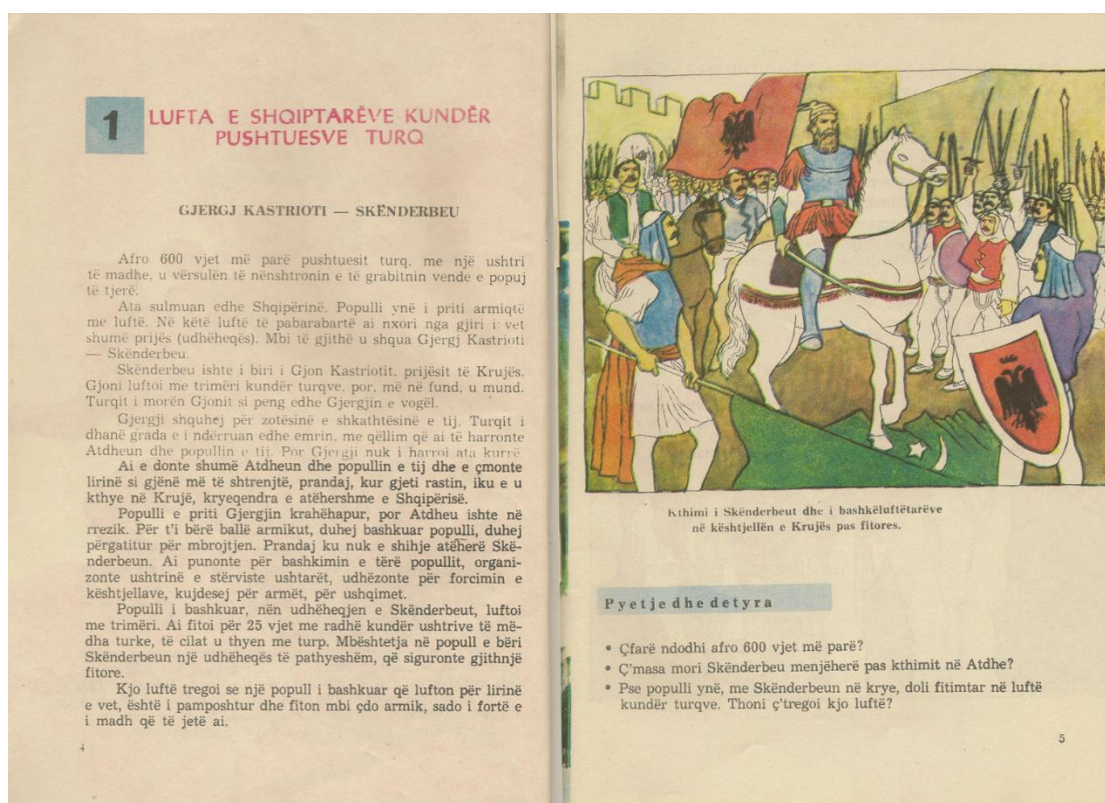
In an evaluation of the layouts addressed in this introductory section, a notion of closure of the community within the Albanian borders is obvious. Both visual and verbal narratives have been permeated by the novel garrison-state mentality, which derives from the dangers that the homeland and socialism face. Issues such as self-reliance, fear and vigilance have been equally included. Another observation turns to the militarization of the Albanian society and the novel military moral that is promoted. All these best mirror the novel ideological and political agenda adopted during the self-isolation era, well before the pupils have entered the national narrative.

4. Middle-Ages (Mid-15th - late 19th century)

4.1. Genesis-maturation: Wars against the Turks, creation of proto-national state

Albanian history begins with the Middle-Ages and the wars against the Turks, according to the first chapter of the national narrative (Layout 4). The chapter is entitled “The war of the Albanians against the Turkish invaders” and is followed by a subtitle referring to the national hero “Gjergj Kastrioti-Skenderbeu.” From the informative title and subtitle next to the national character of the war, one can immediately distinguish the name of the legendary leader. The text appearing below provides detailed information about this remarkable achievement that lasted for almost 25 consecutive years. This is the genesis hour of the first Albanian national state. Furthermore, this state has a capital, the city of Kruja, a well-trained army and an extraordinary leader. His image is also shown on the opposite page. This is, in short, what is to be found in this initial chapter of the national account. I will begin the analysis with the visual communication and go next to the text and the overall message the layout contains.

Before discussing the content of the image, a short reference to the protagonist and a significant early episode proves useful. Gjergj Kastrioti was the son of a feudal lord who grew up in the Sultan's court.²⁶¹ Renamed Iskander Bey-Skanderbeg (Skenderbeu in Albanian), he converted to Islam. He was trained in the Ottoman army and fought in several campaigns for the Ottoman cause. In 1443, Gjergj Kastrioti deserted the Ottoman army and returned to his homeland Kruja.²⁶² After taking his father's seat, he called for the unification of several chieftains, not exclusively coming from the Albanian territory.²⁶³ Kastrioti then embarked on a holy war against the Empire for 25 years. This is precisely the war that the initial chapter of the textbook refers to and to which the analysis will immediately turn.



Layout 4. Minga et. al., *Të Njohim Historinë e Popullit Tonë* (1981), 4-5.

Starting from the visual communication, one would assume that it will be addressed well before the text. It represents the most eye-catching element of the layout.

²⁶¹ Hall, *Albania and the Albanians*, 33.

²⁶² Oliver Jens Schmitt, *Die Albaner: Eine Geschichte Zwischen Orient und Okzident* (München: C.H. Beck Verlag, 2012), 54-55; Peter Bartl, *Albanien* (Regensburg: Friedrich Pustet Verlag, 1995), 54.

²⁶³ Oliver Jens Schmitt, *Skanderbeg: Der Neue Alexander auf dem Balkan* (Regensburg: Friedrich Pustet Verlag, 2009), 56.

Positioned in the right-upper section of the page it is presented as the ideal-new part of the information.²⁶⁴ Ideal in the sense of the essence of the information and ideologically the most significant part. New has the meaning of the part of communication not yet known to the reader. As a matter of fact, the image comes as the crucial point of the layout, where the pupils should pay attention. The image bears the long caption: “The return of Skenderbeu and his fellows to the fortress of Kruja after their victory.” Most likely created for the needs of the textbooks, it is a reproduction of a renowned table of Guri Madhi entitled: “*The return of Scanderbeg with victory.*” The original work of art is shown in the appendices section. (Image 1, Appendices section). Depicted within the walls of Kruja and returning to the textbook, the leader occupies the central position of the visual representation.²⁶⁵ He is surrounded by many people who are raising their swords. This is an act of military salute and warm welcome of the triumphant leader. The war is over, the enemies defeated, and the Albanians are shown celebrating this momentous achievement together with their leader Gjergj Kastrioti who stands in the middle. The main protagonist has been captured entering Kruja’s walls on the back of a white and abnormally big horse. The military leader appears as the architect of the victory against the Ottoman Empire, as the flag laying on the ground informs the viewers-pupils. His contribution is more than enough to make him the point of reference of the composition. His conspicuousness has been further supported by the size of his body and his height. He enjoys the highest possible level of the composition. His sharpness and the military uniform make him even more noticeable. His figure thus manages to capture the viewer’s gaze. This has the effect of enhancing the attachment of the viewers, in our case pupils, to the central figure and the military leader Gjergj Kastrioti.

Going a step further with the analysis, the leader seems highly connected not only to the viewers but also primarily to the people shown. In visual terms, this is introduced through the spatial arrangement of the composition along the dimensions of center

²⁶⁴ Van Leeuwen and Kress, "Critical Layout Analysis," 31.

²⁶⁵ Rudolf Arnheim, *The Power of the Center: A Study of Composition in the Visual Arts* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1982), 2.

The term of center, which is going to be addressed throughout the manuscript, is understood in the sense of a “dynamic center” in comparison to the geometrical middle of the composition. According to Rudolf Arnheim, the center is the focus point from which the forces issue and towards which the forces converge.

and margin.²⁶⁶ The center of the composition, the leader, has been surrounded by his armed men, the margins. These marginal figures, considering their size and position, thus appear connected to and at the same time dependent on the leader, who poses in the center of the composition. This notion of dependence on the center is to be seen mostly in their placement of concentric circles grouped around the national leader.²⁶⁷ These concentric circles, filled by the armed men, have a strong reference to a unique center, in this concrete case, axis, formed by the body of Gjergj Kastrioti. It is as though the image is wishing to say that without him nothing could have been achieved. He is the point of reference for the Albanian cosmos in this historical turn. In addition, this notion of connectedness of the margins to the center, in other words of the people to the leader, has been also visualized in the narrative structure underlying the image. An eye-line vector stands out that emanates from the people and is directed towards the national hero, the core reference of this painting. All men have turned to their leader, the principal actor again, who managed to unite the community and vanquish the enemies. This is his main action and contribution, the unification of the community. He prevails at the same time as a visionary statesman capable of leading his countrymen in the present but first and foremost in the future. His gaze, vanishing at some point out of the frame of the composition towards the right, indicates the future.²⁶⁸

Before moving to the text and the overall message of the layout, let me focus for a while on the use of the colors. Several colors have been implemented, though it is red that manages to capture the viewers' attention. The bigger visual element of the image is the red national flag positioned in the background. Red is also part of the leader's uniform, the decorative ribbon around the horse's body, another national emblem pictured on a shield in the foreground, and red tones also appear in the traditional costumes some of the men wear. Concomitantly, this distinguishing red color is

²⁶⁶ Kress and Van Leeuwen, *Reading Images*, 194-195.

²⁶⁷ Jan Plamper, "The Spatial Poetics of the Personality Cult: Circles around Stalin," in *The Landscape of Stalinism: The Art and Ideology of Soviet Space*, eds. Evgeny Dobrenko and Eric Naiman (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 2003), 28-29.

²⁶⁸ Mathew C. Bown, *Socialist Realist Painting*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1998, 142-143;

strongly opposed to the green of the Turkish flag appearing at the bottom.²⁶⁹ This contrast between red and green perpetuates the image of enmity between the Albanians and the Turks.

After having addressed the content of the illustration, let us turn to its central message. The image focuses on the act of the unification of the people around a capable leader, in this concrete case Gjergj Kastrioti, that made possible the heroic victory against the Turks. This war has a national character in the visual communication, since it seeks to safeguard the homeland and establish the first independent Albanian state. From this national crusade, of course the role of the masses and above all the contribution of the visionary leadership is stressed. Without the military leader, the successful waging of the war for almost 25 consecutive years would have never been possible, suggests the image. It was his appearance, according to the image, that changed the course of the war in favor of the Albanians. A similar scheme also adopts the text by means of stressing the national character of the people's mobilization on the one hand, and on the other hand their strong bond with a military genius who led the entire attempt. One might argue, though, that the text tends to emphasize more the people's contribution. Contra to what has been seen in the visual communication, the weight in the text is put on the masses and less on the leader. This is the first example where pupils experience a different approach between what the text says and what the image shows.

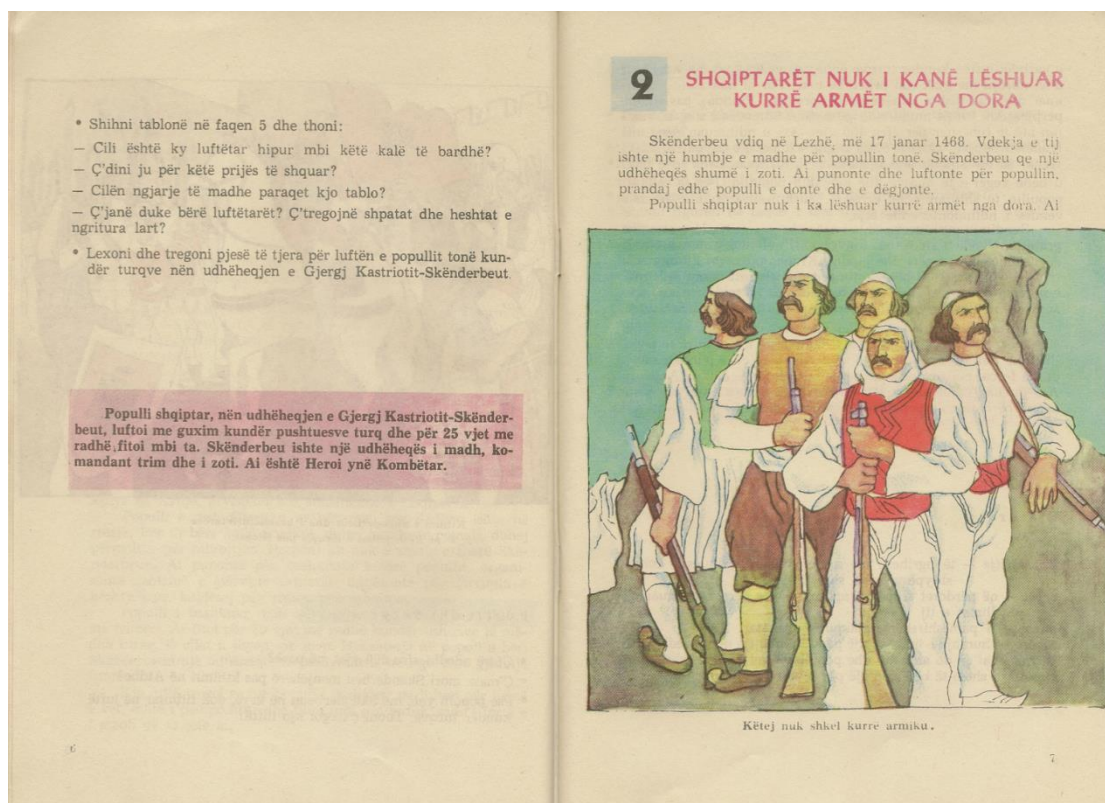
Despite the differences, it should be acknowledged that overall the layout strives to give a unified picture of the Albanian community around its visionary leadership. People and leader appear as one sole body. Their mutual interdependence is exemplary and is the deciding factor that brought, in the end, many victories. This ideal depiction of a united national group should be considered to be the key message of both text and image foreground. When comparing the current layout to the one in use during the years from 1972 to 1977 (Layout 4, Appendices section), the shift in the position of the visual communication immediately is visible. To this it should be added that from the earlier version pupils learn that the main actor is the leader. It is his contribution that has been mostly praised either in the text or in the image,

²⁶⁹ It should be noted that the textbooks refer to the Turks, or Turkish army and Turkish occupation. The most proper term of Ottomans and Ottoman Empire does not appear in the narrative.

followed by that of the masses. The title is indicative of the shift in the years. Whereas in the early seventies the first chapter is titled after the national hero, in the years of the self-isolation the hero's name comes merely as a subtitle with the title emphasizing the war the Albanian people conducted against the Turkish invaders.

4.2. Decline: Period of Turkish occupation

After the death of the Gjergj Kastrioti in 1468, the community could not resist the Turkish offensives for long. The country was conquered and a long period of national decline followed, lasting for almost five centuries. This is exactly the topic of the second chapter that, as usual, begins with a long and informative title. Right from the beginning, pupils get the information that the resistance wave never ended. The Albanians never left themselves unarmed, reassures the title-motto. It follows the text that is accompanied by a sizeable image at the bottom (Layout 5).



Layout 5. Minga et. al., *Të Njohim Historinë e Popullit Tonë* (1980), 6-7.

Let me start the analysis from the visual communication, the most conspicuous element of the layout. It occupies more than two-thirds of the page and it asks for the viewers' attention. Furthermore, the image has been endowed with specific information value, when considering its placement at the right bottom. It is presented

as the novel and still not known part of information.²⁷⁰ It is here where the pupils are asked to focus. At the same time, the image gains the status of the real and specific information.²⁷¹ The placement of the image at the bottom, zooming in on the act of resistance after the fall of the homeland into the enemies' hands, suggests something like documentary evidence. It is as if the image is saying to the viewers-pupils that what you see here is what really happened. Referring to the inner layers of the image, five participants are shown in a mountainous terrain. They all bear arms, while seeming more to be posing for the viewers rather than involved in a certain kind of activity. The only sign that might provide a notion of action is represented in their gazes. They all reach out of the composition's frame into different directions. Literally speaking, their gazes cover almost all of the four cardinal points of the compass. Only one side has been not included since it is covered by the huge rock appearing in the background. Their eye-lines form concomitantly strong vectors, revealing a narrative structure that generates a sense of action.²⁷² This kind of action, the results of which expand out of the image's frame, could be read as a gesture of surveillance, or even safeguarding of the homeland. The presence of the weapons that the main actors-doers carry shows the high state of alarm prevailing among the people. The same message has also been reiterated in the caption that accompanies the image. In the descriptive caption, pupils could read: "In this territory the enemy will never set his foot." Regarding the people shown, there are five men who share almost identical characteristics. Additionally, they have been symmetrically distributed across the space, giving the impression of a unified group, or national community, one might support. The only distinction between the members of this group is to be seen in the traditional costumes they wear. All deriving from different regions of the country, the northern, central and southern part of Albania have been represented.

Leaving aside for the moment the content, let us discuss next another detail regarding the first appearance of the current image in the textbooks issued during the self-isolation period. The image was introduced in 1978 and it remained in texts until 1984. This drives our attention to the function and need of such an image in this historical context. To begin with the context, it is not a matter of coincidence that this

²⁷⁰ Van Leeuwen, "The Schoolbook as a Multimodal Text," 37.

²⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 40.

²⁷² Kress and Van Leeuwen, *Reading Images*, 59.

image first appears during the self-isolation era. These are the years of the escalation of the state-of-siege mentality in the social sphere. Albania, being the only true remaining socialist country worldwide, was suffering from foreign encirclements imposed by several enemies.²⁷³ It is to this threat and unprecedented state of alarm to which the Albanian society had been exposed that the masses were called to react.²⁷⁴ They were asked, in fact, to remain vigilant and participate in the collective mobilization against the potential enemies. To be able to mobilize the individuals, a preparatory stage is needed. People should experience the fear and be exposed to the growing danger coming from abroad. To magnify its effect, the manufactured notion of foreign entanglement also had to expand into the past. At least this seems to be the case with the history textbooks. That saying, the Albanians and its territorial integrity appear to have been in continuous peril. Numerous invaders throughout the centuries attempted to conquer this land but never succeeded in doing so. To prevent such a danger, as the image shows, people always remained vigilant with weapons in hand. This is exactly what is also needed at the time being, the image seems to suggest. It thus functions as a subtle reminder for the pupils and future citizens to continue in the footsteps of their forefathers. To put it simply, they should stay alert with their weapons in hand to safeguard the territorial integrity of their homeland.

In fact, the message that the image seeks to impart, despite its relevance, has been not supported by the text. The text announces the capitulation of the Albanian forces after the death of the leader, while mentioning the reasons for this disgrace. By means of following a typical Marxist argumentation, next to the loss of the national leader, the text also refers to the role of religion and that of the exploiter classes. Again, pupils experience a divisive line between verbal and visual narrative. The image shows that the Albanian territory is impermeable, whereas the text unwillingly accepts the loss of the war. To somehow remedy the negative impression, the text promotes the picture of a never-ending wave of resistance against the Ottomans. This continual mobilization of the masses, according to the text, culminated during the years of the national awakening, at the end of the nineteenth century. To this first contradiction between the two narratives, a second one should be added that refers to the role

²⁷³ Prifti, *Socialist Albania*, 259.

²⁷⁴ Bernd J. Fischer, "The Second World War in Albania: History and Historical Agendas," in *Albanische Geschichte: Stand und Perspektiven der Forschung*, eds. Oliver Jens Schmitt and Eva Anne Frantz (München: Oldenbourg, 2009), 125.

women played in the national mobilization. From the text, we get the information that the Albanian women contributed equally in this eternal war against the invaders. Such a statement cannot be supported by the male-dominated image.

In terms of the narrative's evolution, the years of the Ottoman rule represent a period of decline for the national community, the end of an epoch that corresponds to that of the Middle Ages. However, the text has already announced the beginning of a new era. The entering of a new cycle, one might say, which is inaugurated with the national awakening at the close of the nineteenth century. Last, the resistance of the Albanians against the invaders always relied on the inner forces of the community. They never received help from abroad nor were they assisted by allies. Once again, the dogma of self-reliance is more than apparent in the text and the very last summary section of the chapter. Here, the warlike character of the Albanians and their innate ability of self-organization is praised.

5. National Renaissance (Late 19th century – Axis invasion 1939)

The beginning of a new era for the national community, already heralded in the previous chapter, was possible thanks to the continual mobilization of the people. This new cycle in the Albanian history was officially launched with the national awakening movement that took place at the end of the nineteenth century. It culminated with the proclamation of the Albanian state in 1912, before the national community experienced another period of decline and before the turbulent years of the Albanian monarchy, 1928-1939. The situation was aggravated with the Second World War and the Axis invasion in 1939. Each of the above-mentioned historical events will be addressed below.

5.1.Rebirth: National awakening movement

Let us begin with the period of the National Renaissance that took place at the end of the nineteenth century. During this period, the nation re-emerged from its ashes after the prolonged, compared to other Balkan states, Ottoman rule. The highlight of those years represents the establishment of the so-called “League of Prizren.”²⁷⁵ As an immediate reaction to the Treaty of San Stefano that decided on the partition of

²⁷⁵ Kristo Frashëri, *Lidhja Shqiptare e Prizrenit 1878-1881* (Tiranë: Shtëpia Botuese 8 Nëntori, 1979), 97; Vickers, *The Albanians*, 30.

Albanian territories among the Slavic nations,²⁷⁶ delegates from various Albanian districts convened and decided on the creation of an Organization for the Defense of the Rights of the Albanian People. From this meeting that took place on the 10th of June 1878 in the city of Prizren, today's Kosovo, a central committee was elected.²⁷⁷ Next, several provincial committees were established that sought to enroll men and raise an army.²⁷⁸ This signifies the very first common action of the Albanians in the direction of taking up arms in the form of a national awakening movement. This movement, initially supported by the Ottoman administration, marks the very beginning of a national idea growing among the Albanians. The League of Prizren became politically and militarily active in the coming years. The issue of the establishment of an independent Albanian state after these late developments was dynamically put on the agenda of international diplomacy.

As far as the history textbooks are concerned, this significant chapter of national history has been briefly mentioned. The early national awakening movement has been almost completely avoided, one might say. Visually speaking, there is no image dedicated to this highlight of the national community, and in the verbal communication very little information has been provided. The text refers to the eternal mobilization of the masses that started growing and steadily culminated during the years of the national awakening, at the end of the nineteenth century. The leaders of this mobilization are said to be a group of renowned patriots who wanted to liberate the homeland. Their work and fight, according to the text, is based both on the pen and on the weapon. It is through education that the nation will revive, argues the text, among other things.²⁷⁹ Such a short reference is at odds even with the content of the cover (Layout 1), where the National Renaissance period has already been included. The narrative thus skips this critical step for the community and deals directly with the establishment of the independent Albanian state in 1912, to which we will now turn.

5.2. Maturation – Establishment of the first independent Albanian state

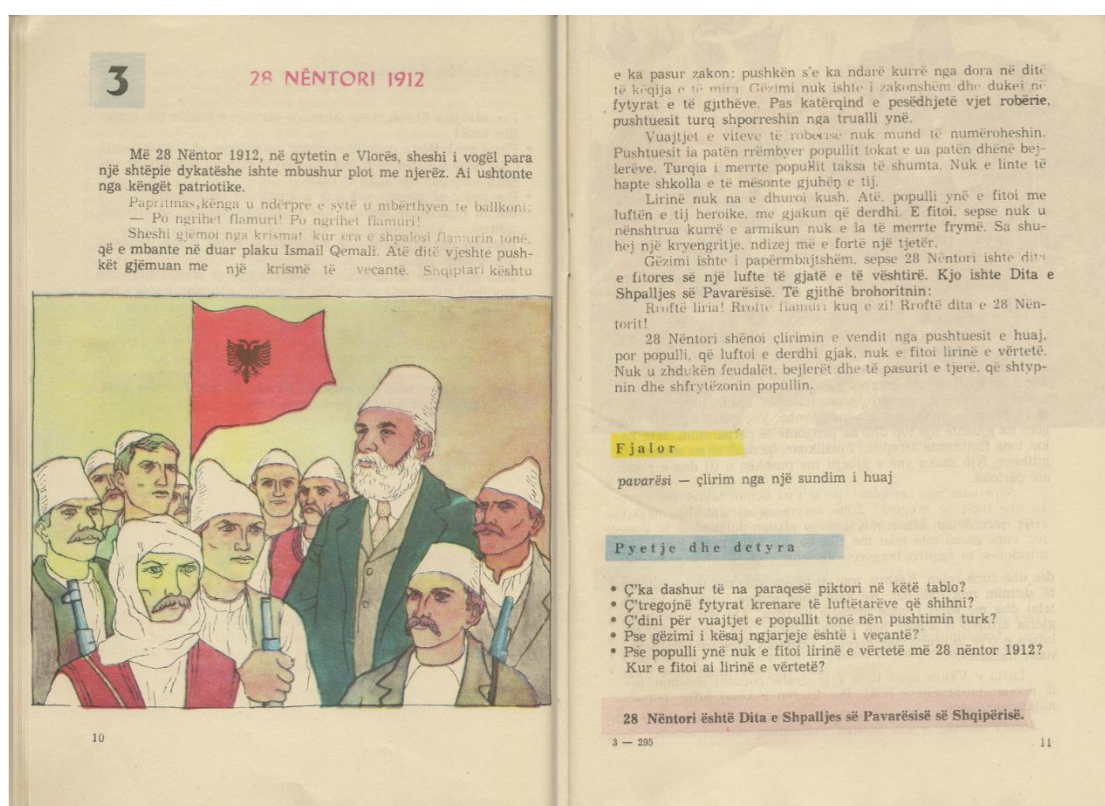
²⁷⁶ Stavro Skendi, *The Albanian National Awakening 1872-1992* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1967), 31.

²⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 37.

²⁷⁸ Frashëri, *Lidhja Shqiptare e Prizrenit, 1878–1881*, 93.

²⁷⁹ Minga et. al., *Të Njohim Historinë e Popullit Tonë* (1983), 8.

Starting with the title of the chapter, it commemorates the independence's proclamation date, the 28th of November 1912. The textbook's double page consists of text and an image referring to this paramount event on the left page (Layout 6). Furthermore, the image is positioned at the bottom of the page and is not followed by any other information or even a caption. Considering the structure of the layout and the placement of the image at the bottom of the left page, the visual communication is endowed with some additional information value. In social semiotic terms, the image is presented as the given, an already known part of information,²⁸⁰ while at the same time it gains the status of the real and more specific information.²⁸¹



Layout 6. Minga et. al., *Të Njohim Historinë e Popullit Tonë* (1981), 10-11.

Turning now to the inner frame of the image, it shows the national leader Ismail Qemali being surrounded by his countrymen. In the background, one might distinguish the Albanian national flag, which, at the same time, stands for the bigger and highest visual element of the composition. The leader is being depicted in the middle of a group of people. He is distinguished from them and this has been made

²⁸⁰ Van Leeuwen, "The Schoolbook as a Multimodal Text," 37.

²⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 40.

possible by several visual elements. It is not difficult to see that his size dominates the painting. Another flanking element is the green of his coat. Moreover, Qemali's height breaks the prevailing isocephaly of the composition. This visual detail thus makes the leader the focal point of the painting. His centrality is further supported by the spatial arrangement of the elements, in our case the participants, following the form of center and margin.²⁸² A similar visual pattern has been previously implemented in the case of the Middle Ages and the national hero Gjergj Kastrioti (Layout 4). The center is occupied by the leader, while the remaining participants are positioned around him. Considering their size placement in the frame of this composition, the people surrounding the leader might be considered as less significant, or at least subservient to him. The imposing figure of the unequivocal leader Ismail Qemali dominates this painting. He is promoted as the father of the first independent Albanian state. Concerning the people, they are all men of different ages and bear many similarities. One might even support that they are symmetrically distributed across the space, thus giving the impression of a strongly united group. In terms of representational meaning, this brings to light a conceptual structure, more specifically a classificational one²⁸³ that relates the represented participants to each other according to their common belonging to the same group or class. In our case, the numerous participants, including their leader, belong to the same national group, the Albanians, as the flag at the bottom subtly indicates.

In addition, this group has a leader to whom it is strongly connected. This notion of connection, or better said, dependence of the peripheral participants on the absolute protagonist, is visually provided through the adoption of a circular structure of the representation. The members of the national group are positioned in circles around a center, occupied by the leader Ismail Qemali. These circles are, at the same time, concentric with a strong reference to a common center, again none other than the leader. Last, it should be mentioned that next to the participants, the viewers appear at the same time well connected to the leader. This sense of involvement with the latter figure is visually expressed again in the central perspective of the painting and the empty space left in the front inner circles. In the absence of a direct eye connection, a visual axis between the protagonist and the viewers has thus been established.

²⁸² Kress and Van Leeuwen, *Reading Images*, 194-195.

²⁸³ *Ibid.*, 79.

The above discussed visual elements were all encountered in the depiction of the former national leader Gjergj Kastrioti (Layout 4). Nevertheless, what is new in this case is the gazes of the participants. First, they are not all directed towards the leader, and second, there is no notion of interaction between the depicted people. Concerning the gazes, they all reach out of the frame of the composition in different directions. By means of comparing the current image to the one used in the years 1972-1978 (Layout 5, Appendices section), the all-encompassing gazes of the participants represent the only difference.

Going a step further with the analysis and returning to the image used during the self-solution period, the gazes might be considered as vectors that generate a sense of action in the painting, or literally speaking, expanding out of the frame of it. That saying, a narrative structure arises at this point that speaks in favor of a kind of possible action, actors and receivers of a certain action. To the question regarding the kind of action the image generates, any easy response does not seem possible right now. The presence of the armed people in the first line might be correlated to a national struggle, or resistance, but this always remains a hypothesis. Within the visual composition, except for the flag, there is no other visual elements that might help the viewers to read its content. The image is missing a caption, and this poses further difficulties to understanding its content.

I will now continue with the analysis and move to the interactive meaning. The represented participants have been depicted quite close to the viewers.²⁸⁴ This vicinity allows the viewers, in this case the pupils, to clearly observe the expressions of the people shown. However, a direct eye-line communication between the two sides is missing. As has already been mentioned, the participants' gazes are directed outside the frame in different directions and none of them reaches the viewers. However, a closer look will quickly negate this first observation. One young man is to be found in the painting, positioned in the middle and the background of the painting, who frontally addresses the viewers in their eyes. Moreover, he seems the youngest in comparison to the other figures. By means of directly addressing the viewers, the pupils, he establishes an imaginary connection with them. This last detail justifies the

²⁸⁴ Ibid., 124.

characterization of the image as a demand image,²⁸⁵ with the young boy placed at the bottom, demanding or asking something from the pupils. Prior to leaving the visual communication, it should be added that the depicted people represent all regions of Albania. Furthermore, they mix together in the frame of the composition, thus showing that they are a remarkably harmonious national collective. This national group, united around its leader, seems additionally devoted to a task not yet defined.

After having addressed the image, let us turn to the text. It is perhaps here where several of the above-raised issues of the visual communication will find an answer. From a first reading, one gets the impression that almost all visual motifs seem to have been repeated. First to be mentioned is the war-like character of the Albanian people. According to the text, the main characteristic of the Albanians is that they never abandoned their weapons throughout the centuries. The country's independence, according to the text, is an achievement of the masses and of their perennial efforts. Such a formulation brings the notion of self-reliance to the forefront. In other words, it is the people's continual struggles and the inner forces of the community that brought this grandiose victory. Again, any kind of support or help provided from abroad is mentioned in the text. Furthermore, at the close of the chapter the text emphasizes that the 28th of November signifies the day of the liberation of the homeland from the invaders, even though it required a few more years until people were truly liberated from the domestic exploiter classes. In the very beginning, just above the image, the text describes the festive atmosphere and the considerable number of people who attended this historical event that took place in the small southern city of Vlorë. The text also does not fail to refer to the main protagonist Ismail Qemali, the man who raised the Albania flag and thus declaring the independence of the country. Not all details provided in the text appear in the image, but this is not to say that they contradict each other.

After having seen the text and image, I will attempt a first reading of the entire double spread. Together with the declaration of Albania's independence, the main topic of this layout refers to the resistance of the Albanian people that made the liberation of the country possible. In addition, this common action is guided by a capable leader. Going a step further, either in the text or in the image, a notion of continuation of this

²⁸⁵ Ibid., 117.

tradition in the present and future has been established. The presence of the weapons in the very first line might be translated as the act of safeguarding the new state of Albania and perpetuating the same behavior in the future. This is, in short, the central message the image contains, which is communicated directly to the pupils via the eye-line connection of the young boy at the bottom. He seems to make a straightforward appeal to the viewers-pupils to follow this example. In the text, the notion of the continuation of the armed resistance is provided through the reference to the limited status of freedom achieved in the present. It is as though the text is reminding the pupils that the attempts will continue until the day that the community gains real independence. Moreover, text and image add a further characteristic of this national movement, that being its autonomous character and the fact that it relies on the inner forces of the society. In addition, the motif of the armed people and their eternal mobilization are continually repeated in both modes of communication.

Last, let me come to the dedication of the people to their task and the frightening state of alert their faces and gazes permeate. Their gazes expand out of the frame and cover almost all possible directions. Every inch of the image's frame, which functions as an allegory of the country's borders, is being surveyed by its people. The image seems to argue that the people have an immediate answer to the potential danger coming across their borders, that being their weapons. All these remind one of the images discussed in the previous chapter (Layout 5). Concomitantly, one may discern the notion of vigilance that was equally as prevalent during the self-solation period. In this historical context, this state of fear, closeness and vigilance represents the only perspective from which the entire historical narrative and specific historical events are approached in textbooks. The declaration of the first independent Albanian state of course could not be an exception to this prevailing pattern of narrating the nation.

The proclamation of independence, as it has been mentioned above, represents a culmination phase in the evolution of the Albanian history. Referring to the narrative, it is the acme of the national awakening era, disregarding the fact that it did not survive long. In less than two years, the First World War began, and very soon foreign armies once again occupied the Albanian territory. Without providing much information concerning the war, the narrative reaches its end and focuses on the consequences it had for the people and the country. Following the war, national

independence did not exist in real terms. Several armies were stationed in Albania. Such a case was that of the Italian troops, which were still in possession of the southern city of Vlora. Again, this was a familiar situation for the national community that asked for their mobilization. The heroic struggle of the Albanians for the liberation of a part of their homeland against the serial invaders is the main topic of the next chapter (Layout 7). The text informs us that the Albanian people, coming from different districts, headed to Vlora in order to liberate this region.²⁸⁶ By means of showing unprecedented bravery, they conducted an unequal war against a bigger army and wrote one of the most glorious pages of their national history, argues the text. This historical event was highly praised by the socialist historiography. This was a brilliant episode that shows the heroic character of the Albanian nation, their dedication and unity against the invaders. According to the domestic historiography, this war further enriched the patriotic and anti-imperialist traditions of the Albanian people and represents one of the brightest pages of Albanian history.²⁸⁷

Contrary to the above approach, the non-Albanian scholarship does not put that much emphasis on the event. Quite the opposite, the heroic resistance shifts to formulations such as withdrawal of the Italian troops, or even evacuation. As Bernd Fischer puts it, given the difficult situation in which Italy found itself after the war the Italians decided not to remain in the country. They agreed to evacuate their last outpost, the city of Vlora, and concomitantly officially recognized the Albanian government. Next, Italy encouraged other states to follow its paradigm.²⁸⁸ The withdrawal of the Italian troops from the Albanian territory is a defining moment since it paved the way for the establishment of a sovereign Albanian state. Such a significant moment for the nation, according to Fischer, required the active involvement of the Albanian factor,²⁸⁹ and this is exactly how both pre- and post-war domestic historiography commemorates this event.

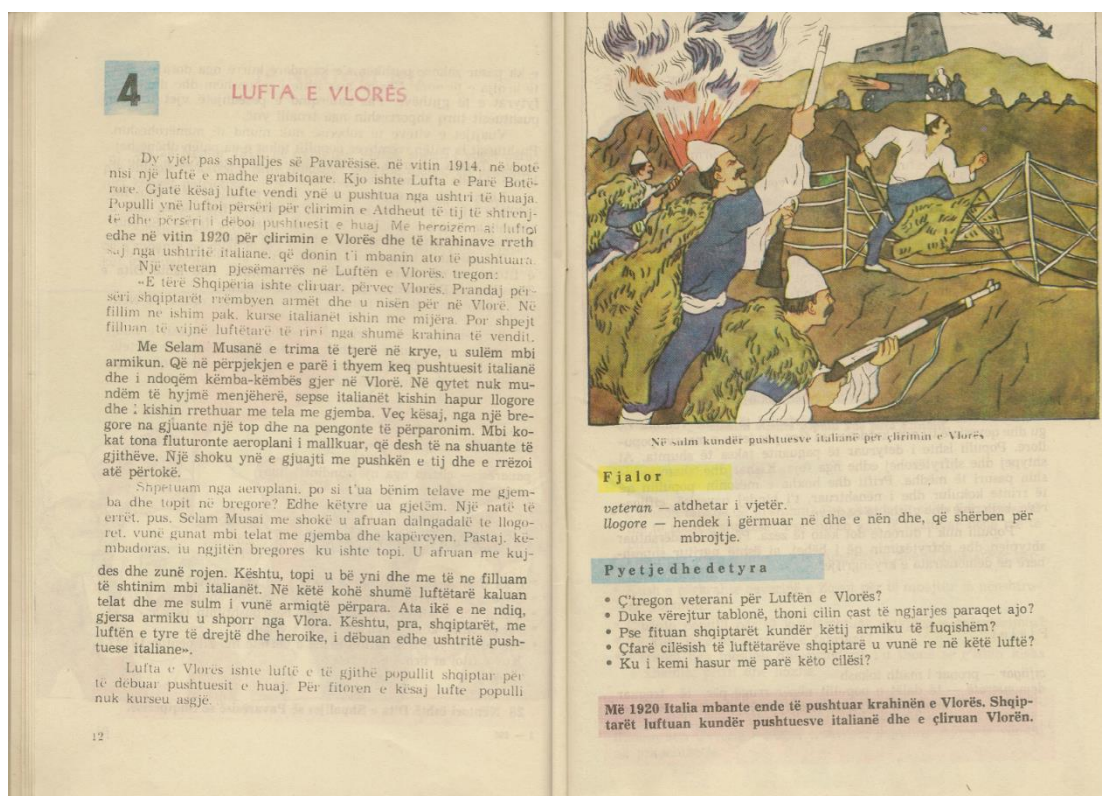
²⁸⁶ Minga et. al., *Të Njohim Historinë e Popullit Tonë* (1978), 12.

²⁸⁷ Akademia e Shkencave e RPS të Shqipërisë Instituti i Historisë, *Historia e Shqipërisë. Vëllim i III (1912-1944)* (Tiranë: 1984), 234.

²⁸⁸ Bernd J. Fischer, "Perceptions and Reality in Twentieth-Century Albanian Military Prowess," in *Albanian Identities. Myth and History*, eds. Stephanie Schwander-Sievers and Bernd J. Fischer (London: Hurst & Company, 2002), 136.

²⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 136.

Returning to the history textbooks and the national narrative for the third grade, this episode represents another critical moment of the National Renaissance period. Under the explicit title: “The war of Vlora,” the event appears in a single chapter. The double page layout includes textual and visual information (Layout 7), as we would expect. The analysis of this layout will begin with the content of the image. The text and the overall meaning of the double-spread will be addressed next.



Layout 7. Minga et. al., *Të Njohim Historinë e Popullit Tonë* (1978), 12-13.

The placement of the image in the upper section of the right page attracts the viewer's-pupil's attention and turns it automatically to the most eye-catching element. Concomitantly, the use of the double polarization within the frame of the layout, given and new, and top to bottom, accords to the image specific value. In terms of social semiotics, the image is provided as the new and crucial point of the message, while being presented at the same time as the idealized part of the information.²⁹⁰ Following the caption, the issue to which the reader must pay special attention is the offensive against the Italian troops stationed in the city of Vlora. The descriptive caption focuses on the action from the side of the Albanian people, which is easily

²⁹⁰ Van Leeuwen and Kress, "Critical Layout Analysis," 31.

visible also in the image itself. The image that accompanies the text in this chapter should be considered a simplified version of a renowned table of Hilmi Bani, which has been created for the needs of the textbook (Image 2, Appendices section). Apart from the action and the main actors within the frame of the image, one might discern the receivers of this action, the Italian army. They are the main opponents and are positioned on the opposite side. More than receivers, they can be considered as reactors since they respond to the attack.²⁹¹ By means of holding their position, a definitive difference between a regular army and a guerrilla group, the Italian troops seem to undertake a well-organized military counterattack involving artillery, land-based troops and aircraft forces. The difference is clear, but even clearer is the courage and will of the Albanian forces to attack the invaders. Disregarding the latter's poor equipment, they advance into the territory controlled by the Italians. Their movement is synchronized and follows the call, or instructions, of a main actor positioned at the bottom-left corner of the image. His size, central position and above all his gesture makes him the most distinguishable participant of the image.

In addition, the Albanian irregulars carry arms, which are directed towards the enemies. The outstretched arms should be considered vectors that in our case reveal a narrative structure. The same might also be supported for the positioning of the bodies of the participants. Captured while moving, they are shown in full action. The presence of several vectors that suggests action is also observed on the Italian side. However, their placement in the background hinders the dynamic of this action. The dark colors in which the Italian forces are depicted, in collaboration with the distance, makes them almost invisible. The dark color might be translated furthermore as the peril or the dark and ominous forces posed to the Albanian people. Hence, the main action that the image concentrates on regards the very successful attack of the few Albanian irregulars against the Italian army. Not only does their action dominate the frame of the image, but also the results of it are visible within the frame of the composition. One military aircraft, hit by the Albanian irregulars, crashes to earth. On the other side, the inefficiency of the Italian artillery is made visible as well. None of the shots can reach their target. The Albanian rebels, unharmed, enter the military zone in their attempt to take control of the very last enemy outpost. Bearing in mind

²⁹¹ Kress and Van Leeuwen, *Reading Images*, 67-68.

the commitment and zeal to their sublime duty to free the Albanian territory, as well as their extraordinary efficacy, we might assume the final outcome of this combat. The Albanians defeated the Italian army, the image tells us. The victory of the Albanian forces would signify the termination of the Italian occupation and the establishment of the sovereign national state. According to the information the image provides, in the aftermath of the First World War Albania was liberated due to the mobilization of the people. They waged war against the Italian army with their own efforts. The notion of self-reliance is once again the deciding factor of the serial victory. The image reiterates the mythical account of David and Goliath, where a bunch of poorly trained and badly equipped Albanian irregular forces managed to successfully face a stronger enemy. Lastly, it should be added that the image, for the first time, shows the Albanians involved in an offensive warfare situation. They are depicted moving dynamically against the enemies and entering a territory controlled by the Italian forces. Until now, a defensive type of warfare characterized most of the images, followed by a notion of vigilance permeating the faces of the participating people.

Since we referred to the depicted people, it should be mentioned that in almost all cases up until now the depicted figures are men. The only two exceptions are to be found on the cover (Layout 1) and the preface (Layout 3), where female characters were shown as well. Next to that, these figures show many commonalities in the manner in which they are depicted. One might say that they are the children of the same mother,²⁹² or the same painter, I would add. Ermir Hoxha, in his dissertation dealing with the development of visual arts during the socialist era, speaks in favor of an “army of stereotypical characters.”²⁹³ Their resemblance is obvious when one regards the portraits of the depicted people, their hairstyle, form and size of their bodies, attire, expressions or gestures. In the case of the images included in textbooks, such a claim holds true as well. These conventional male characters, involved in most cases in military actions, share at the same time some stereotypical traits. The most common is their mustaches as a symbol of virility among the Albanian male population. From this standard format of depiction, only the younger members and the leaders are excluded. Another exception represents the figure of the leaders. Instead of

²⁹² Ermir Hoxha, “Arti në Shqipëri 1945-1990” (PhD diss., University of Tirana, 2014), 31.

²⁹³ Hoxha, “Arti në Shqipëri 1945-1990,” 31.

mustaches, they are depicted as having beards. Both Gjergj Kastrioti, during the Middle Ages, and Ismail Qemali in the early twentieth century share this characteristic, which might be read as a sign of wisdom and maturity.

After having addressed the image, let us now turn to the text positioned on the left page. After a brief introduction to the situation both during and in the aftermath of the First World War, the text informs the pupils of the multiple invasions of the country. The Albanian territory, reassures the text, was liberated thanks to the heroic efforts of the people. The larger part of Albania was freed, with the exception of the city of Vlora, which was still occupied by the Italian troops.²⁹⁴ This engaged the whole Albanian nation in a novel mobilization, the so-called heroic “War of Vlora.” The war is recounted in the text by a veteran who participated in this historical event. His objective voice provides the readers with detailed information, also appearing in the image. He explains, among other things, how one person from the crowd managed to hit the aircraft with a single shot. The man also provides information about how the Albanian forces entered the fenced area controlled by the Italian army, and the way they managed to capture the cannon that was then used against the enemies. His recount lasts until the final domination of the Albanians and the expulsion of the Italian troops from the Albanian territory. The text ends by means of repeating the message foregrounded in the visual communication, thus the heroic attempt of the people to liberate their country from the invaders. Their involvement is considered crucial and, in addition, it had a national and self-reliant character. This should be considered to be the essence and the overall meaning of the layout. When the current layout is compared to the one appearing during the years 1972-1977 (Layout 6, Appendices section), not many changes are visible, either in the text or in the image. The image is the same with minor alterations, mainly referring to the use of colors. The only difference regards its position in the layout. In the previous editions, the image was positioned on the left page and presented as the given part of the information, followed by the text on the right. This is a general trend that the textbooks issued in these years share and by the end of the seventies had steadily changed.

5.3. Decline: Period of Albanian monarchy and Italian invasion

²⁹⁴ Minga et. al., *Të Njohim Historinë e Popullit Tonë* (1978), 12.

The glory days of national revival quickly came to an end and were followed by a novel period of fall. This era was turbulent for the community, according to the communist historiography, and corresponds to the years of Albanian monarchy.²⁹⁵ The main figure who dominated the political scene is Ahmed Zogu, a tribal chieftain from northern Albania. In the aftermath of Zogu's official rise to power in 1924, his main concern became the legitimization of his position and the bringing of a state of stability within the Albanian territory.²⁹⁶ The legitimization of his power and authority was successfully achieved a few years later in 1928. The Constituent Assembly proclaimed Albania a kingdom by offering to Zogu the throne under the title: "Zog I, The King of the Albanians."²⁹⁷ He reigned until 1939, the year in which Italian forces invaded Albania. In textbooks, the above-described events were narrated in two chapters to which I will next turn. Let us start with the fifth chapter that, from its title, reminds the pupils how difficult life was before the liberation (Layout 8).

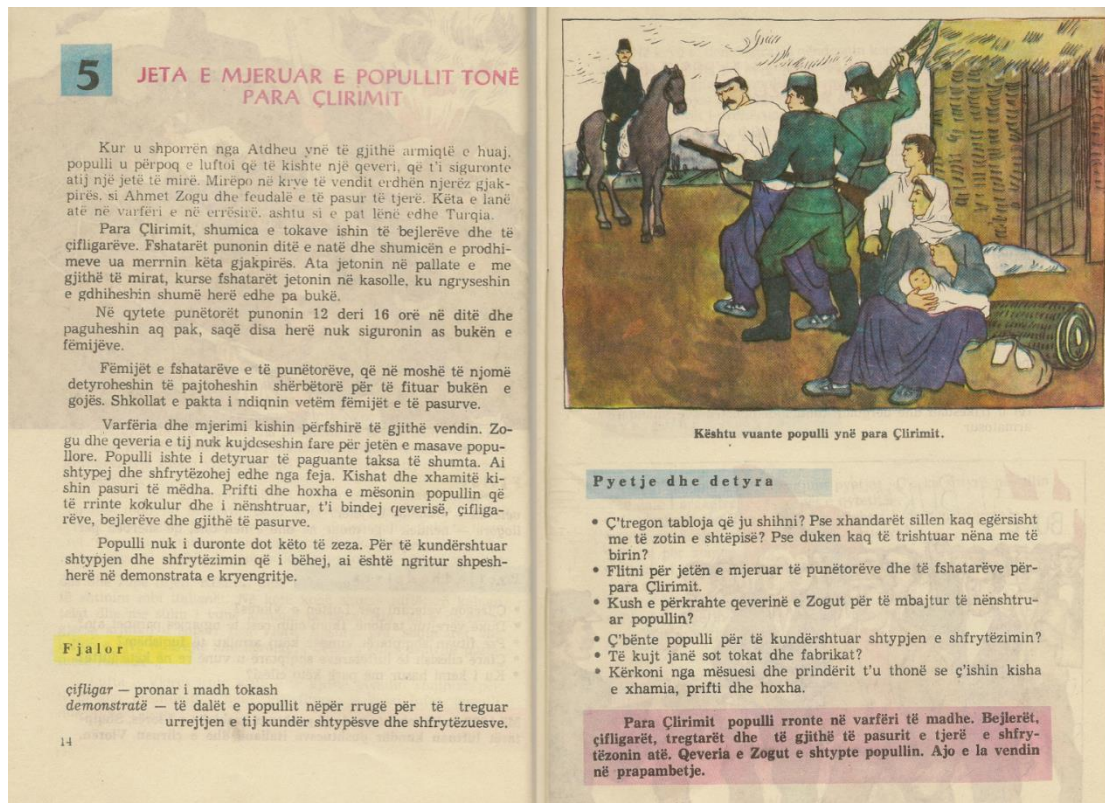
To begin with the image, it bears the long caption: "The sufferings of our people before the liberation." Following a pattern of visual representation, common until now, the image does not include the name of the creator or painter. This descriptive caption manages at a significant point to guide the reading of the image's content in one single direction, that of the negative legacy of the pre-war regime. Though unauthorized and perhaps created merely for the needs of the textbook, the current image is based on a renowned table of Sadik Kaceli (Image 3, Appendices section).²⁹⁸ Furthermore, a similar version of the same image appears in several versions throughout the history textbooks of the socialist era. In the current version (Layout 8), the confiscation of a farmer's house and property by the mercenary soldiers of Ahmed Zogu is foregrounded. An unpopular act of the preceding regime that makes more than apparent the nature of its governing.

²⁹⁵ Akademia e Shkencave, *Historia e Shqipërisë. Vëllim i III* (1984), 309-310.

²⁹⁶ Bernd J. Fischer, "King Zog, Albania's Interwar Dictator," in *Balkan Strongmen. Dictators and Authoritarian Rulers of Southeast Europe*, ed. Bernd J. Fischer (West Lafayette, Indiana: Purdue University Press, 2007), 32-33.

²⁹⁷ Fischer, "King Zog, Albania's Interwar Dictator," 40.

²⁹⁸ Dhimitër Grillo, *Historia e Shqipërisë për Klasen e 8-të* (Tiranë: Shtëpia Botuese e Librit Shkollor, 1988), 147.



Layout 8. Minga et. al., *Të Njohim Historinë e Popullit Tonë* (1983), 14-15.

Turning now to the inner layers of the image and the visual grammar, I will next examine its representational, interactive and compositional meta-functions. In space-based semiotic modes, such as paintings, the elements or participants are connected in a spatial relationship.²⁹⁹ Having this as a starting point, let us start from the representational meaning. What we have in this image is a narrative representation, being based on the presence of several vectors that connect the participants and their action within the framework of the composition.³⁰⁰ The first is a strong diagonal eye-line vector that connects the family members to each other. In this case, the vector reveals rather a kind of reactional process.³⁰¹ The rest of the family members react with anger at the violent removal of the farmer from his property. At the same time, the gaze of the farmer towards his family reveals his feeling of worry and concern. A second eye-line vector stems from a man positioned in the background. From his dress code and the fact that he possesses a horse, a symbol of economic status, one

²⁹⁹ Carey Jewitt and Rumiko Oyama, "Visual Meaning: A Social Semiotic Approach," in *Handbook of Visual Analysis*, eds. Theo van Leeuwen and Carey Jewitt (Los Angeles, London, New Delhi and Singapore: SAGE, 2001), 141.

³⁰⁰ Kress and Van Leeuwen, *Reading Images*, 59.

³⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 67.

might suggest that this man is a wealthy landowner. His attention is concentrated on the center of the painting, where the whole action is taking place. This latter vector creates the effect of involving him in this event as well, despite the fact that he is somehow depicted from a distance. Furthermore, there is a last vector formed by the arms or the guns of the soldiers, the main actors from whom the key action derives.³⁰² Their action can be translated as the forcible eviction of the farmer and his family from their cottage. The farmer seems to get arrested by the two armed policemen. The farmer represents the goal or the receiver of their action. The dynamic of this action is further stressed when one considers the bodies of the soldiers, which create an imaginative wall dividing the farmer from his family. Taking everything into consideration, it is as if the image is saying that the mercenary forces (actors) remove (action) the farmer and his family from their cottage with violence (receivers of the action). This action seems to have been ordered by the wealthy man sitting in background, who observes the whole scene with apathy and is shown waiting to take possession of the family's property.

Having already examined the representational, let us now address some of the interactive meaning. The distance of the depiction is the first thing that stands out. Depending on the circumstances, it can bring people or objects close or distance them from the viewer, thus implying the intimacy of the relationship.³⁰³ Within the framework of the composition, the farmer's family members have been positioned closer to the pupils-viewers. The landowner is positioned at a distance and is almost invisible. In the center, as it has already been mentioned, the main action develops. Distance plays a key role in this case. By positioning the wife and the son of the farmer closer to the viewers, the pupils could clearly distinguish the expressions and feel the irritation of the family members who remained back. Thus, they feel displeasure and hostility for the landowner, a stranger to the family, and the soldiers, who appear responsible for the unfair treatment of the farmer. At the same time, they feel a certain closeness and sympathy for the members of the poor family. Last, the angle of the depiction is significant. In the above image, the family members, including the farmer, are shown from a frontal angle, signifying that they are part of

³⁰² Ibid., 65.

³⁰³ Ibid., 124.

our world and something we, the viewers, are involved with.³⁰⁴ The soldiers' back view on the other hand detaches the pupils from them. The oblique angle in which the landowner is portrayed creates the same effect.

Referring to the compositional meaning, a center and margin structure has been implemented. The main action, the forcible removal of the farmer from his cottage, is positioned in the center of the image. This action is being concomitantly observed by the participants, the family members and the wealthy landowner. Regarding the framing of the composition, divisions prevail in the spatial organization of the image. They are created primarily in the visual gap between the farmer and the landowner. Another contrast is represented by the participants' attire. The modern black suit of the landowner, indicating western influence, is strongly opposed to the white shirt of the farmer and the traditional and backward orientalist dress code characterizing the family members. Moreover, the farmer and the landowner are shown opposed to each other, perhaps indicating the class antagonisms that prevailed in the Albanian society during that period. The final confrontation and liquidation of the existing order will soon come, the painting appears to say, and this is also heralded by some additional elements. The inclusion of the young boy in the picture is one of them. He is the same age as the pupils, something that helps enhance the latter's involvement and identification with this character. In the previous versions of the same picture (Layout 7 and 8, Appendices section), the boy was depicted crying, but now he seems courageous. One might also support that he is determined to take care of the family when his father is gone. He possibly has the thought to take revenge in the future for what is happening now to his father. Indirectly, this brings the hope that this situation is going to be terminated very soon. This interpretation is further supported by the determination also indicated in the mother's face and her gestures that the viewers are able to see. Being positioned quite close to the viewers, one can easily distinguish her face's expressions. Concerning the woman, the loss of her femininity should be also noticed, while at the same time the boy seems unexpectedly mature considering his age. Moreover, the little baby she holds in her arms is positioned even closer to the viewers, possibly denoting the new life. This new life, or beginning, must be considered the biggest source from which a sense of hope for the future derives. Simultaneously, it provides the reason why the young boy must fight against the

³⁰⁴ Ibid., 136-137.

existing order. This future is white and bright in comparison to the black and distant past of the community. Before leaving the image and its message, or messages, that it seeks to transmit to the pupils, we should refer to some additional observations. For instance, the dire economic and social situation at that time has been subtly depicted in the extremely poor living conditions of the family and in their few belongings. Last, the background of the table should be considered to be creating a multiplying effect. It could be interpreted as: what you see here is not an isolated case, but the prevailing canon in the entire Albanian territory.

Following the visual analysis, the layout in which the image is to be found will be examined next. The image occupies the right upper section of the double spread, thus signifying the idealized essence of information, which at the same time comes as something new to the pupils.³⁰⁵ It calls for their special attention and is presented as the generalized essence of the information, hence the page's most salient part.³⁰⁶ Furthermore, there is also a top down polarization that defines the text-image relation. The generalized information at the top is coupled by a more specific verbal message at the bottom of the right page. What is written in the lower section is the synopsis of the chapter, marked as usual in a pink frame. This latter effect enhances its visibility and makes it more attractive for the pupils. The summary at the end of the chapter restates in a few words what the students have experienced in the visual mode. Among other things in the box, the pupils could read that before the liberation the people were living under extremely poor conditions. The main responsibility for the poverty and exploitation of the people falls on the repressive classes and the government of Zogu, who left the country in backwardness.³⁰⁷ This statement seems diagonally connected to the title of the chapter. Provided in pink, the title simplifies even more effectively the core message reached in the painting and the concluding section. Taking the form of a slogan, the fifth chapter bears the title: "The miserable life of our people before the liberation." The essence of this sentence is further illuminated through several examples provided below in the narrative.³⁰⁸ Despite the gray, not to say dark, tone of the narrative, the text ends with positive information and a message of hope. In the very last sentence, pupils could read that the people, not

³⁰⁵ Van Leeuwen and Kress, "Critical Layout Analysis", 28-29.

³⁰⁶ Ibid., 30.

³⁰⁷ Minga et. al., *Të Njohim Historinë e Popullit Tonë (1983)*, 15.

³⁰⁸ Ibid., 14.

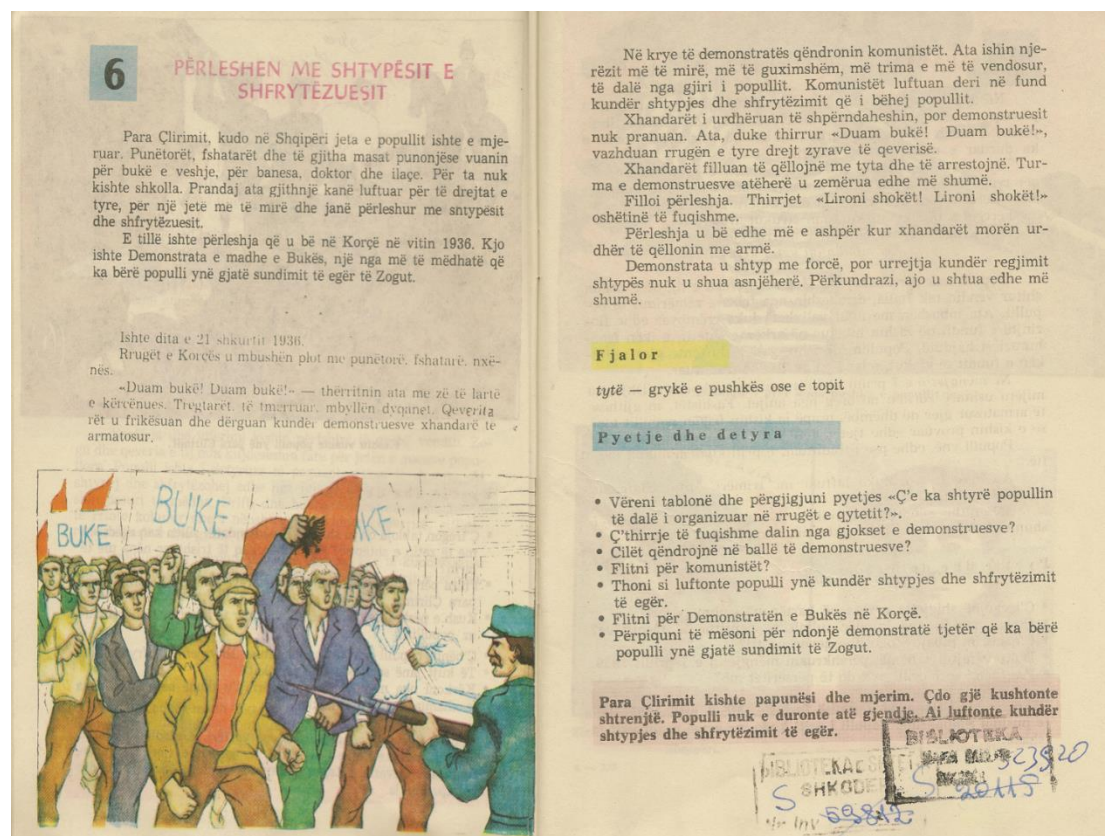
being able to stand this situation, began to demonstrate, while a wave of resistance grew among the population. This last sentence, in fact, has the function of the connector with the upcoming historical events. Concomitantly, it announces the change of this situation in the near future.

To sum up the multimodal meaning of the layout, both image and text foreground a key message. At the core of it stands the economic and social obscurantism and misery during the period that Ahmed Zogu was in power. This is how the preceding political order was described in the texts. It is precisely this multi-faceted nature of the message that increases its significance. In other words, it is if as the layout is inviting the pupils to concomitantly look, feel and read about the people's sufferings and the country's backwardness. They were caused by the anti-popular previous regime of Zogu and the exploiter classes that supported him, which nevertheless will be terminated very soon.

What was previously hinted as likely to occur becomes the topic of the following chapter. The very next historical event refers to the year 1936 and the so-called "Demonstration of bread" that took place in the southern city of Korça. This novel form of mostly social mobilization is part of the general wave of dissidence of the Albanian population against the previous regime of Ahmed Zogu. According to the verbal narrative, by the end of the thirties the people were no longer able to stand the dire social and economic situation prevailing in the country and began to openly express their opposition. They went on protests, strikes and even had violent clashes with the police throughout the Albanian territory.

The sixth chapter is dedicated to one of these clashes, which took place on the 21st of February 1936, between the people and police in the city of Korça. The chapter bears the explicit title: "The confrontation with the oppressors and the exploiters." As usual it includes text and is also accompanied by an image (Layout 9). Starting the analysis of this layout with the image, it visually depicts what the title and the verbal communication refer to. More specifically, it shows a large amount of people in a protest or perhaps a strike. The non-inclusion of a caption makes it difficult for the reader to clearly identify the historical event that has been visually depicted. Such information is only provided in the text. As it has been already mentioned, this episode refers to the people's revolt in the city of Korça held in early 1936. The image

appearing here seems to have been based on a photo focusing on the same demonstration (Image 4, Appendices section). It is positioned at the bottom of the left double-spread and is presented to the viewers as something familiar to them, some part of information they already know. At the same time, this information gains the status of the real and documentary evidence to the verbal and the ideal communication included in the upper section of the same page.³⁰⁹ In short, it appears as the objective and factual piece of information the layout contains.



Layout 9. Minga et. al., *Të Njohim Historinë e Popullit Tonë* (1983), 16-17.

Within the frame of the visual composition, the first thing to be noticed is the message of confrontation it conveys. On the one side, the large crowd is gathered on a street, whereas on the other is the figure of a policeman. Apart from the numerical difference, the two opposing sides are distinguished also in terms of their equipment. The people do not bear arms, whereas the policeman does. Attempting to prevent the movement of the crowd, he outstretches the weapon in the direction of the masses.

³⁰⁹ Van Leeuwen, "The Schoolbook as Multimodal Text," 40-41.

Concomitantly, the visual space between the two opposing sides should be considered to be a framing device that further divides the depicted participants from each other.

Moving now to the representational meaning, the outstretched weapon in the man's hands brings to the surface a narrative structure underlying the image. This turns him into the main actor of the image. His action, the expelling of the protesters, should be seen as the key action here, and the people as the receivers of it. However, this is not the only action the image contains. A second and perhaps more dynamic one develops within its frame. This derives from the other side and the people. They aggressively march in the direction of the policeman, and their gestures and faces portray anger and hostility. Their bodies, and more specifically their chests, oppose the outstretched weapon of the policeman. Their zealous and passionate movement is supported at the same time by their facial expressions. All these bring to the foreground the people's action, which taken together with their powerful appearance counterbalance the presence of the armed policeman. Their action, literally speaking, their movement, dominates the frame of the composition, whereas the man in uniform has been restricted to the right corner. He is positioned almost out of the frame of the composition and half of his body can't be seen. Perhaps this is a niche that shows his incapability to resist the dynamic of the masses. In short, it is as if the image is saying that the dynamic of the masses has forced the policeman back. Half of his body is already out of the frame of the image, and very soon, one can imagine, he will completely disappear and not stand in the peoples' way.

However, this notion of power, as far as the people's action is concerned, derives not merely from the above referenced details, but results primarily from the obliqueness of their depiction. When one considers the bodies of the people, they deviate from the axes of the basic framework, vertical and horizontal.³¹⁰ Vertically, the depicted demonstrators slightly tilt, or better said, fall towards the right. Their descending bodies are thus in motion. This is not the case with the static presence of the policeman. This last observation, except for action and dynamic, further emphasizes the notion of tension that the image conveys. The same obliqueness is also visible in the manner that the flags and slogans appear above the heads of the participants. As usual, the viewers can distinguish the national flag of Albania, to be found here in the

³¹⁰ Arnheim, *The Power of the Center*, 106-107.

first lines, next to the plain red flags in the background that might allude to the socialist revolution. In relation to the horizontal axis, the placement of the people within the frame of the composition is not in a straight horizontal line. Instead, they are positioned in a receding line,³¹¹ starting from a higher level or point and ending at a lower one. This sloping line, which might be considered to be a very dynamic vector in itself, is directed towards a vanishing point. This point is nothing else than the figure of the policeman, the main adversary and hindrance in their way. He should be defeated first to make the way free for the forward march of the masses.³¹² As in the previous cases, this information has been subtly hinted at. Next to this, the viewers also get the message of the final victory of the masses over the solitary policeman. The success of the people is quite near and is more than secured. Before ending the analysis of the image, a last detail concerning the interactive meaning and the angle of the representation of the participants should be mentioned. The masses are depicted at a frontal angle that enhances the involvement of the viewers with them, whereas the policeman is at an oblique angle, a sign of detachment.³¹³

In an overall consideration, the image appears to say that the fight against the oppressive regime gained momentum in this historical context. This is, in short, the coming-of-age of the national and social movement. The community, with such a dynamic and mature mobilization, appears capable of imposing its will against the oppressive state apparatus. In this concrete case, the state can be identified in the image of the policeman. The concomitant national and social emancipation has been visually provided in the flags that appear in the image. Whereas the flag appearing in the foreground is red and contains the national symbols of Albania, the other two in the background are plain red. In general, red is related to socialism and revolution. In this concrete case the plain red flags most likely signify the early socialist movement within the Albanian territory

After having addressed the visual communication, let us now turn to the text. In the text that expands on both pages, not much information is different. Almost everything that has been depicted in the image referred to the so-called “Demonstration of bread” could also be read in the text. The use of violence and arms by the police proved futile

³¹¹ Ibid., 107.

³¹² Holz, “Allegory and Iconography,” Press, 1993, 74.

³¹³ Kress & Van Leeuwen, *Reading Images*, 136.

and had the opposite effect, since more and more people joined the protest, the text informs us.³¹⁴ The main slogans for bread, appearing in the image, are also repeated in the text. What is new is the leading role that the communists had in this demonstration. The communists' leading position in this event is explicit in the verbal narrative, whereas in the image almost nothing points in this direction. Pupils also read that the "Demonstration of bread" was repulsed by force. Last, the text informs the pupils that the hate and resistance against the previous regime grew.

Following the visual and verbal analysis, let us now turn to the message the whole layout seeks to impart. Despite the existing differences, they both struggle to show the irreversibility of the historical process that wants Albania to leave aside the years of the repressive regime of Ahmed Zogu and make way for the arrival of the new social and political order. The arrival of this new-for-the-community, era has been visually depicted in the scheme of the many against the one, the image foregrounds. Furthermore, the image permeates a strong notion of action and progress towards the future, which at the same time has a metaphorical meaning. This future is secured thanks to the massive influx of the people, who give the impression of a river consisting of human bodies. Within its path and banks, its waters flow with an enormous rush and generate tremendous energy capable of destroying whatever it may encounter. Furthermore, the receding line that the depicted masses form might be further read as the course of the river itself, from its source in the mountains until it ends in the sea. This is the sea of socialism and communism, as both the verbal and visual narratives remind the pupils. Continuing in this line of thought, this river represents the early socialist and communist movement in Albania. Even though this novel page of the national history might be in its initial steps during the thirties, it appears to possess tremendous power. The notion of the newly arising epoch is also visible in the icon of the newly emancipated Albanian men. They do not follow the conventional and established stereotypical characters of the past. Traditional costumes or common features give way to the new attire and the young faces without mustaches.

Last, in the previous editions of the textbooks the positive message of the people's domination against the existing order and the entering of a new era has been visually

³¹⁴ Minga et. al., *Të Njohim Historinë e Popullit Tonë* (1983), 17.

depicted by using different means (Layout 9, Appendices section). In this case, instead of oblique, the composition appears monumental and it expands in both pages of the layout. The participants, in comparison to the previous image, seem numerous, a fact that makes them not easily beatable. Moreover, they join the group of demonstrators from all possible directions. They surround the few armed forces that stand in the middle and appear incapable of driving back the grandiose demonstration.

The period of decline, instead of withering away after the social movement and all the protests that took place in the country, instead saw a culmination phase with the beginning of the Second World War. On the 7th of April 1939, Italy launched an attack against Albania and within a couple of hours the capitulation of the country was decided. Organized military resistance did not exist except for a few clashes in the port of Durres.³¹⁵ There, a small contingent of the gendarmerie troops, led by the city's commander Abaz Kupa and the marine's sergeant Mujo Ulqinaku, managed in part to oppose the Italians.³¹⁶ The numerical difference and the poor training and equipment of the Albanians made the continuation of the armed resistance impossible. At the very last moment, King Zog and his family escaped from the southern borders into exile. From there he planned to organize the resistance against the invaders.³¹⁷ These are the most significant developments concerning the Italian invasion, which marked the entering of Albania into its rearmost period of decline. Such a development aggravated even more the already severe social, political and economic conditions prevailing at that time in the country. In history textbooks, the Italian invasion has been included in all editions and is commemorated as some of the darkest days for the nation.

³¹⁵ Fischer, *Albania at War*, 21-22.

³¹⁶ Duka, *Histori e Shqipërisë*, 209.

³¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 210.



Layout 10. Minga et. al., *Të Njohim Historinë e Popullit Tonë* (1984), 18-19.

Under the title “The enemy was received everywhere with war,” one of the most bellicose layouts of the textbook develops (Layout 10). The seventh chapter focuses on the attack of the Italian army against Albania by means of including both visual and verbal communication. One page is dedicated to each mode of communication. On the right page, the visual message that consists of three images is positioned, while on the left is the text. Right from the beginning, one has the impression that the visual part dominates the layout. This first impression is also supported by the layout’s structure. Coming as the new part of the information that the viewers still do not know, the visual communication is presented concomitantly as the crucial section of the page. In terms of social semiotics, it is where the latter viewers, in our case pupils, must pay special attention and where the issue at stake is to be found.³¹⁸ The main theme of the visual communication refers to the heroic resistance the people offered on the day that the Italian troops entered Albania.

Moreover, the right page makes use of a vertical polarization.³¹⁹ On the top stands the ideal information, the act of resistance, whereas at the bottom the viewers are

³¹⁸ Kress & Van Leeuwen, *Reading Images*, 181.

³¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 186-187.

provided with some kind of factual information referring to the military action and the photo of a sailor. The sailor shown is the above-discussed marine's sergeant Mujo Ulqinaku, who died on the same day after having fought heroically against the Italian army. On his left, the military action with the use of maps, vectors and colors is depicted. The vectors are realized in the black arrows that start at the Italian territory and end in the Albanian coasts. There are four arrows in total and show the concomitant attacks undertaken by fascist Italy on the 7th of April 1939 against the four main Albanian ports.³²⁰ Fascist Italy, as the black map showing the Apennine Peninsula denotes, is the actor and Albania is the recipient of this aggressive action. This notion of aggressivity is further accentuated by colors. The small pink Albanian territory is experiencing a large attack by the much bigger and ominous dark fascist Italy. In terms of colors' interpersonal function, the black color of the map and arrows pose a sense of growing danger and intimidation. Furthermore, this sense of intimidation grows when one considers the receiver of this action, the small, fragile, sensitive, or even immature Albanian state, following the interactive meaning of the pink color.³²¹ At the same time, and moving to the textual meaning, it could be supported that the different use of colors creates a division between the aggressive Italy and the harmless Albania,³²² which at the time being is to be found in peril.

The people instinctively reacted to the aggression, and this reaction is exactly the theme of the image at the top of the page. It is the ideal part of the information the page contains, and thus the essence of the information and its most salient part.³²³ The salience of the ideal part of the communication has also been indicated in its size. It is clearly larger compared to the two images positioned at the bottom of the page. Regarding the content, a man, again most likely the sergeant Mujo Ulqinaku, stands at the top of a fortification at the moment of the Italian invasion. He is shown attempting to protect his land. The actor makes use of a large weapon, which is directed towards the right and, one might suggest, against the non-depicted invaders. Furthermore, his weapon forms a vector, which reveals a narrative structure involving the current image and the left image at the bottom of the page. His weapon should be considered to be the answer to the massive Italian attack, shown previously. The caption, a

³²⁰ Bernd J. Fischer, *Albania at War*, 21

³²¹ Kress & Van Leeuwen, "Color as Semiotic Mode", 348.

³²² *Ibid.*, 350.

³²³ Kress & Van Leeuwen, *Reading Images*, 187.

duplication of the chapter's title, restates the reaction of the people to the invaders. All over the Albanian territory, they grabbed their weapons, the caption informs us. Last to be mentioned is the blurred background dramatically telling of the developments of this unfair military encounter.

Going a step further with the analysis of the visual communication, within the right page an unusual narrative involving all three images and the viewers develops. The national hero Mujo Ulqinaku, depicted in the bottom left image, offered heroic resistance to the attack of the Italian army. The bizarre color of the sky above the hero's head is the same color with which the Albanian territory is depicted. The use of the same color provides a solid frame that connects the two images and their meanings. It is as if the protagonist is fighting alone for the sublime cause of the territorial integrity of Albania. The very fact that he is shown alone is indicative of the poor, not to say nonexistent, military resistance on the Albanian side the day of the Italian invasion. As a result of this incompetence, the pupils can easily imagine that the Italian forces managed to conquer the country in the end. Returning to the protagonist Ulqinaku, the significance of his gesture grows when one considers the size of the image in the upper section of the page. It is the biggest visual element of the right page. His heroic action turns him into the icon of the national resistance. Moreover, he appears again at the bottom of the page and with his penetrating gaze directly addresses the viewers. Now we see a demand photo of the protagonist in black and white, who is directly communicating with the viewers and is asking something from the them.³²⁴ It could be suggested that he asks for the acknowledgment of his brave and courageous act. A second possibility might be that the absolute protagonist of the visual narrative makes a direct plea to the viewers and pupils for the continuation of his behavior into the present. Given the socio-historical context in which the textbook was issued, during the years of self-isolation, the second version seems more plausible. What is asked from the viewers-pupils is the emulation of the heroic resistance against the foreign invaders and domestic enemies at the time being. The period is critical and the Albanian socialist republic, the very last of this genre worldwide, is to be found in the middle of the concomitant imperialist and revisionist attacks. The people were asked to react by means of taking up arms and protecting their homeland against this aggressive upheaval that the

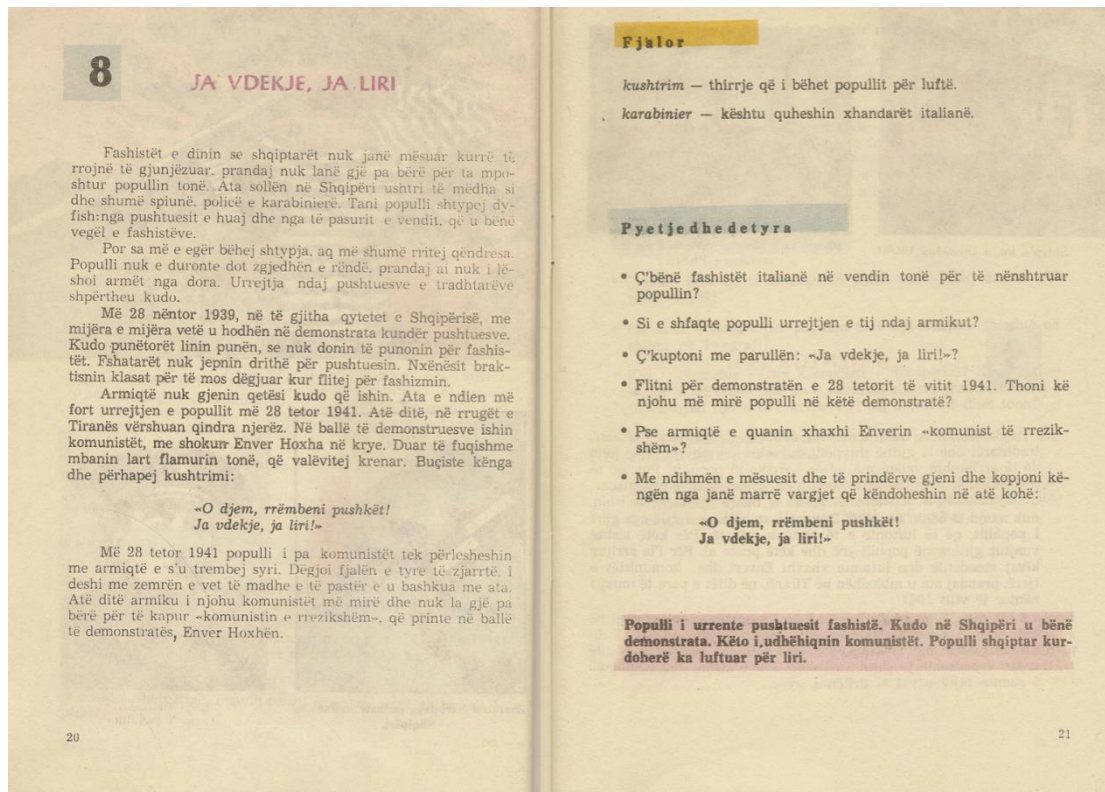
³²⁴ Ibid, 118.

country was experiencing at the close of the seventies and throughout the eighties. The pupils are also called to show a similar reaction, and this represents the core information that the visual communication contains. Going a step further, this is perhaps what the national hero is insistently asking from the latter. Prior to leaving the visual communication, it should be mentioned that in the previous generation of textbooks (1972-1977) the same images have been used with minor alterations in the image positioned on the top (Layout 10, Appendices section). Differences could be also observed in the placement of the visual communication in the layout. Initially the visual communication was placed on the left page, but beginning in the year 1978 it was moved to the right page. As has already been mentioned, this shift of the images' position is a trend of the late seventies and early eighties.

In the text and returning to the layout in use during the self-isolation period (Layout 10), the narrative follows a slightly different path. After having described the instinctive reaction of the Albanian people to the weapons on the day of the Italian invasion, the text focuses on the betrayal of the people by their own government. The pupils read, among other things, that the government of Ahmed Zogu responded negatively to the plea of the people for more arms and munitions. As if this were not enough, he and the members of his government abandoned the country during a time of crisis. Before leaving, they managed to empty the state coffers, continues the text. The mobilization of the people, despite its heroic character, did not prove strong enough to prevent the capitulation of Albania. This information should also be considered as the central message the text wants to convey, which on its own makes the need of new leadership even more urgent. The text appears to hint that what is needed above all, apart from the people's mobilization to arms, is the establishment of a revolutionary leadership that would lead the whole attempt and bring the community out of this prolonged era of decline. A leadership that in close collaboration with the people would pave the way to the new life and bring the people's perennial efforts for national and social emancipation to an end. In the second half, the text describes the day when the Italian forces invaded Albania, the heroic resistance of the people, in particular that of the hero Mujo Ulqinaku who fell on the same day. Last, the text does not avoid mentioning that, in the end and despite the heroic resistance, the country fell at the hands of the enemies.

Prior to entering a new cycle and serial revival of the national community, already heralded in the text, the narrative dedicates one additional chapter to the decline period. We will immediately turn to this chapter, after first summarizing the overall multimodal message the present chapter seeks to communicate. What we have after the analysis of the verbal and visual narrative is the very fact that they both describe the moment of the Italian invasion, the heroic resistance of the people and, last, the unavoidable development of the country's capitulation. Whereas the content of both accounts seems similar, one might distinguish a different perspective from which they narrate these events. The text, for instance, seems more preoccupied in making clear that the main person responsible for the country's disgrace is Ahmed Zogu and his government. Another argument the text puts forth represents the lack of a true leadership. The visual communication on the other hand stresses the heroic resistance through which it wishes to mobilize the pupils-viewers to follow the same path of behavior in the present and the future.

The capitulation of Albania and the entering of the community into the rearmost period of decline were followed by the armed resistance. As in the previous case of the Turkish occupation, the resistance against the Italian invaders was a continual process that grew throughout the years. In the following chapter, the narrative focuses on the early resistance, expressed mostly in the form of civil unrest. It provides the pupils with a historical framework of these developments, covering the years from 1939 to 1941. Under the title "Death or Freedom," this is the very first chapter that does not contain visual communication (Layout 11).



Layout 11. Minga et. al., *Të Njohim Historinë e Popullit Tonë* (1984), 20-21.

To begin with the first two paragraphs, the text informs the readers that in the aftermath of the invasion the people suffered under the double oppression. On the one side was the Italian authorities and on the other their domestic collaborators. However, together with the growing oppression and cruelties, continues the text, the resistance and the hatred against the occupiers and their collaborators also grew. The masses never laid down their arms, reassures the verbal narrative, while it refers to two concrete examples. The first demonstration took place in late November 1939 in all Albanian cities with the participation of thousands of people. Two years later, on the 28th of October 1941, the capital Tirana saw another large demonstration, where again thousands of people participated. The narrative praises the leading role of the communists and more specifically the contribution of the comrade Enver Hoxha in this latter event. More concretely, the pupils learn that Hoxha led the masses who united with the communists. This is the second dynamic appearance of the communists in the national narrative after the first encounter in the massive demonstrations in the year 1936. This event made them known to the Italian authorities, the verbal narrative informs us, who took all measures to arrest the dangerous communist Enver Hoxha. Last, in the summary section, the text turns again

to the demonstrations organized all over the Albanian territory and puts emphasis on the fact that they were led by the communists. Thus, the communists, according to the text, represent a dynamic factor and the leading force of the society in a period when the public unrest increased. It should be mentioned at this point that the demonstration in the capital took place just a few days before the establishment of the Communist Party of Albania.

Taking everything into consideration, the current chapter offers the link between the late years of decline and the rebirth of the community into the novel socialist era. As the text makes clear, this new era, expressed in terms of a new cycle that better describes the evolution of the narrative, will be dominated by the communists and its leader Enver Hoxha. The Communist Party of Albania and its leadership, although not yet established, prevail already as the deciding social agents who will guide the efforts of the people for national and social emancipation. Furthermore, the current chapter seems to prepare the stage for the establishment of the Communist Party of Albania that will finally fill the eternal gap of the revolutionary leadership.

Drawing to the end of the analysis, it should be stated that the current chapter and layout in the previous editions 1972-1977 was always accompanied by an image, or images. In these images, appearing in the appendices section, the action of the leader Enver Hoxha, perpetually shown at the head of the demonstrations, was praised (Layout 11, Appendices section), followed by the active role of the masses. Even manipulated photos were used to highlight the revolutionary activity of the leader on the day of the above-mentioned demonstration, held on the 28th of October 1941 in the capital Tirana. As one could easily see, the images and the text in this case are quite close to each other. A similar case in which the verbal and visual narratives are quite close in terms of content is represented in the textbook issued in 1978 (Layout 12).



Layout 12. Minga, et. al., *Të Njohim Historinë e Popullit Tonë* (1978), 20-21.

6. Socialist era (1941-1981)

6.1.Rebirth: Formation of the Communist Party, the National Liberation War

What was missing from the preceding historical periods, as we have seen, was a political leadership. This also seemed to be the case in the current context and the years of Italian invasion. What was thus needed was a leading force or party that would organize the resistance against the invaders. The conditions for such a development seemed ripe. The already existing workers' movement and the growing public unrest made things easier. On the 8th of November 1941 the Albanian Communist Party was established in the capital Tirana.³²⁵ The emergence of the party of the working class, according to its leader Enver Hoxha, represents a watershed in Albanian history. It guided the people's efforts in the struggle for the liberation of the homeland and later in the realization of the ideal of communism.³²⁶ As it is visible in

³²⁵ Enver Hoxha, *Kur Lindi Partia. Kujtime* (Tiranë: 8 Nëntori, 1981), 67.

³²⁶ Enver Hoxha, *Laying the Foundations of the New Albania* (Tiranë: 8 Nëntori Publishing House, 1984), 11-12.

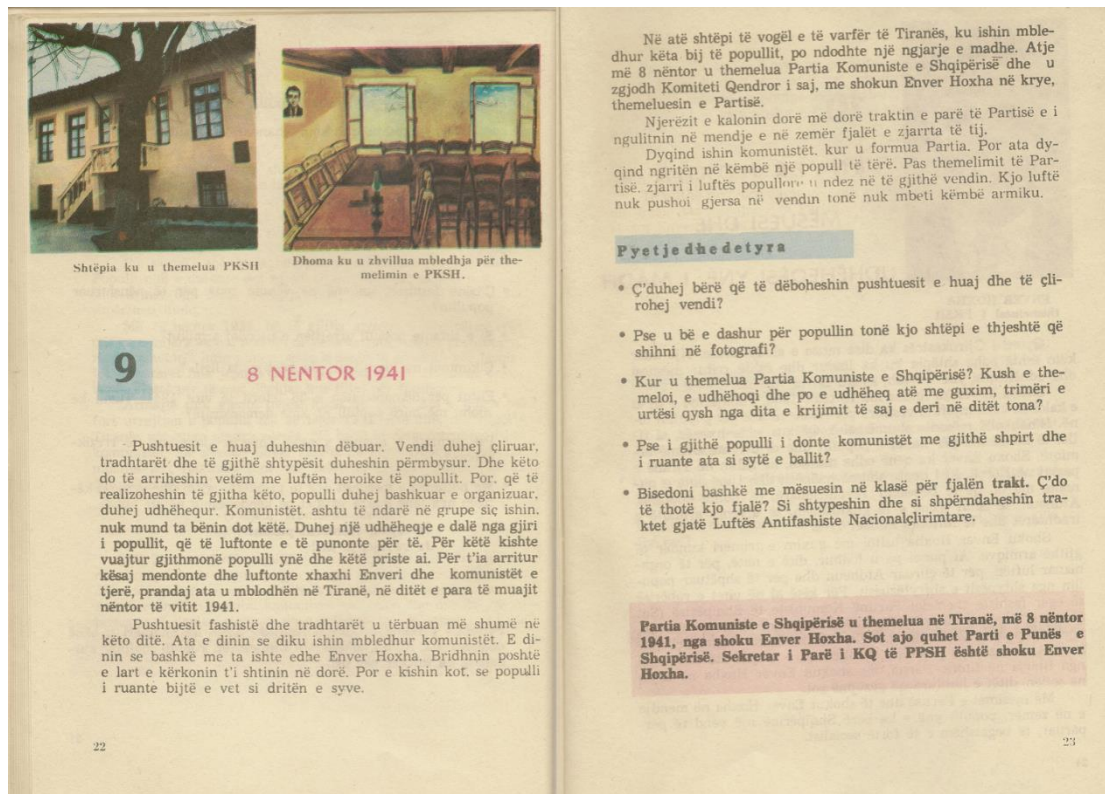
Hoxha's memoirs, the establishment of the Albanian Communist Party was primarily related to the successful organization of the National Liberation War. This is also mirrored in its political program. The Party's strategic goal was to fight for the national independence and for the people's democratic government in an Albania free from fascism.³²⁷ According to the official socialist historiography, to achieve the latter task the people had to be united and militarily organized in a single national liberation front irrespective of class, religion, region and political conviction.³²⁸ The armed uprising, led by the Communist Party of Albania, was stipulated as the main form of war against the invaders.³²⁹

Moreover, the establishment of the Communist Party and the conduction of the National Liberation War convey the message of the community's revival from a harsh period of decline. They refer to the political and military mobilization of the Albanian people that widely opened the path for the establishment of a novel social order. Both events will be addressed below in detail. Let us begin with the political act and the establishment of the Communist Party of Albania (Layout 13). I will refer first to the structure of the layout, then the analysis will focus on the visual and textual communication, and last, the overall meaning of the double spread will be addressed.

³²⁷ *Akademia e Shkencave, Historia e Shqipërisë. Vëllim i III (1984)*, 505.

³²⁸ *Ibid.*, 506.

³²⁹ *Ibid.*, 506.



Layout 13. Minga et. al., *Të Njohim Historinë e Popullit Tonë* (1983), 22-23.

The chapter dedicated to the establishment of the Communist Party is entitled “The 8th of November 1941.” It develops in both pages and includes visual and verbal information. The visual communication appears on the top of the left page, coming as the ideal and given or information that the reader already knows.³³⁰ Thus, the left page contains familiar information, and it might be supported that this represents the departure point of the message that further develops in the opposite page. This sense of familiarity is also mirrored in the title, which, without providing much information, refers to a self-evident and commonsense date. The date possibly is widely known among the readers-pupils and there is no need for additional comments or explanations. Furthermore, the images are supported by the text positioned at the bottom of the left page, which gains the status of factual information. The right page contains merely text, almost equally divided among the narrative, the questions’ section and the concluding remarks of the chapter.

Leaving aside for the moment the compositional frame of the layout, we will turn right away to the images and the idealized essence of the information. Before reaching

³³⁰ Kress and Van Leeuwen, *Reading Images*, 197.

their inner layers and content, it should be mentioned that the division of the left page results in the inclusion of the title in the upper section of the page. Thus, the title, commemorating the day the Communist Party of Albania was founded, except for ideal, also gains the status of the crucial part of information. The readers get two crucial messages from this upper-ideal section of the page. The first refers to the title that informs when the event happened, whereas the images provide the information as to where the event took place.

Divided into two parts, the location can be visually seen from a double perspective. Namely, one external look that shows the house through a photo taken from the distance, and one internal glimpse into the interior of the room by means of a painting. This division might be considered to be a further horizontal polarization within the upper section of the page that suggests a division among the given and the new part of visual information. Given and already known is the house, whereas new is the inner room. Following this latter observation, the inner room should be considered to be the crucial element of the visual section and, as a matter of fact, of the entire page. It appears as the main issue to which the pupils should pay special attention. However, the room is empty, and from the open windows one can just distinguish the blue sky. It is daytime and, judging from the blossoming leaves on the tree appearing outside of the window, one might suggest that it is also spring. Coming back to the inner room, the few depicted elements are a large red table in the form of an “L,” many chairs and a photo of the communist leader Enver Hoxha hanging on the wall to the left. Next to the large table, which dominates the composition, the second discernible element should be considered the photo of the leader. Its size and position within the frame of the image might not support its dynamic appearance. Nevertheless, when one addresses the photo in the frame of the overall visual communication, its central position easily stands out. Moreover, given the absence of other participants and the previously mentioned empty room, Hoxha’s figure increases in significance. He is indirectly promoted as the main protagonist in this national historical turn. In other words, Hoxha is the founder of the Communist Party of Albania and the absolute leader and, as such, only he has the privilege to be depicted. All the other historical figures attending the event are missing. Last, the image does not show the room at the moment when the Communist Party was established but, according to the caption, it is a glimpse into the interior during the

years of the socialist government of the country. The house, and more specifically this exact room, turned into a place of pilgrimage for the Albanian citizens and pupils. It was considered a sacred historical place, where pupils from all over the country flocked to visit during the socialist era. After having addressed the inner details, the issue concerning the main message of this painting is still open. Taking everything into consideration, it is as though the image was officially announcing the dawn of the bright luminous era, the spring of the national community. Concomitantly, it imparts to the pupils the key information referring to the one and only actor. This is no other than the communist leader Enver Hoxha.

Moving a step forward with the analysis of the visual communication, the painting and the message it contains is highly connected to the photo of the house that is placed on the left side. The two images appear strongly framed together. They perform as a pair in the frame of the page and not as two distinctive visual units. In fact, what the readers subconsciously do is try to identify the exact location of the room in the house. They will possibly identify the already familiar information, the house on the left, and then move on to the interior of the house. The reading might even start from the inner room and move next to the building. In both cases, several connective devices have been provided in order to make this movement from the inside to the outside of the building and vice-versa as natural as possible. The image of Hoxha standing in the middle of the page is one of these devices. It is followed by the oblique facade of the house and the relatively smaller, compared to the photo on the left, size of the painting showing the room where the Communist Party of Albania was established. The latter room thus gives the impression of being integrated into the larger building. A sense of obliqueness is also visible in the wall and the chairs positioned in the far left of the room. By means of elongating both inner wall and outer facade, these oblique lines converge at a certain point and create a right angle. One could say that this transforms the referred wall into an undivided component of the building, an interior, or even an exterior, wall. At the same time, this obliqueness, evident in both images, minimizes the dividing effect of the white space left between them.

Moreover, from the photo of the house on the left, some part of it is missing. When paying attention to the details, we realize that on the top right corner an additional

window could be discerned. This makes us think that the house continues towards the right and that the entire building has not been shown here. A different capture of the same house can be found in the appendices section (Image 5, Appendices section). In this shot, taken from a different angle and position, the missing part towards the right has been depicted. Such information can also be gathered from the painting showing two open windows. According to the painting, the room does indeed have two windows and this information has been depicted in the photo as well. In the version we have in the current layout, the second window towards the right has been slightly included, giving us the information that the house has two windows in each direction and on both floors. At this point, the question concerning the reason behind the choice of this photo arises. It shows the house from a specific angle and perspective and this needs some more investigation. A possible answer could be formulated from the placement of the images on the page. When one takes into consideration the placement of the images next to each other, it is as though the incomplete building in the left photo continues in the right image and painting. The house thus creates the illusory effect of overlapping the room, whereas the latter gives the impression of filling the missing part of the house's initial scheme. Hence, the two distinct images turn into one single unit and create a coherent visual whole that allows the viewers to focus concomitantly on the exterior and interior of the same building. The viewers can stand in the garden, and at the same time enter the room where the meeting for the establishment of the Communist Party was held. Since we referred above to the position of the images, the level of the right image should also be mentioned. It is placed parallel to the ground floor, and this perhaps imparts another message that helps the viewers identify the room in the building. It might be assumed that the depicted room is to be found somewhere on the same ground floor.

Turning now to the house on the left, the first thing that needs to be mentioned is the angle from which the photo has been taken. The low angle makes this relatively small house look imposing, yet at the same time the angle exalts its symbolic significance.³³¹ Furthermore, the unexpected oblique angle, which might cause the detachment of the viewers from what they see, must also be noted. However, this choice has a different function, as we have seen above, when it comes to the framing between the images and the overall structuring of the visual elements within the frame

³³¹ Kress and Van Leeuwen, *Reading Images*, 140-141.

of the page. The second observation turns our attention to the level of the shot and the positioning of the viewers. The photo is taken from the side and the right corner of the building. Additionally, the height of the shot is just above ground level. These two choices have the effect of placing the viewers-pupils closer and on the same level with the window where the historical event took place, therefore identifying the exact position where the Communist Party of Albania was founded. The photographer, in fact, facilitates this process and, whether we want it or not, manages to channel our gazes into one specific point, the window at the right-bottom. Had a different angle or level been implemented, the photo would never have had the same effect. This explains a lot about the inclusion of the same photo in all textbooks during the socialist era. Last, the clear blue sky, appearing at the top, comes as a feature that has already been shared and that further emphasizes the notion of the bright era for the national community that followed the establishment of the Communist Party.

After having defined the place, the protagonist and the joyful message in the visual mode, let us deal with the textual communication of the layout. Before it comes to the main event, the text first refers to the historical context and the need for a revolutionary leadership that would guide the people's efforts against the invaders. The crucial event is the meeting of the scattered communist groups for the establishment of the Communist Party of Albania. In general terms, the narrative follows the same line as the official socialist historiography by means of focusing merely on the action of one figure, the elected General Secretary of the Albanian Communist Party Enver Hoxha.³³² The leader's engagement is described in detail and is occasionally exaggerated. The most explicit example of the latter exaggerations concerns the information about his election in the post of the General Secretary of the newly founded party. It should be mentioned that this statement has been negated, even in Hoxha's memoirs recalling the same event. In the elections for the Provisional Central Committee, we read, a body of seven members was appointed. To ensure the unity of the new-established Party, argues Hoxha, it was decided not to have a leader or secretary.³³³ Returning to the history textbook and the text, it is written in the last paragraph that the struggle of the people gained impetus in the aftermath of the establishment of the Communist Party. The text ends with the concluding remarks of

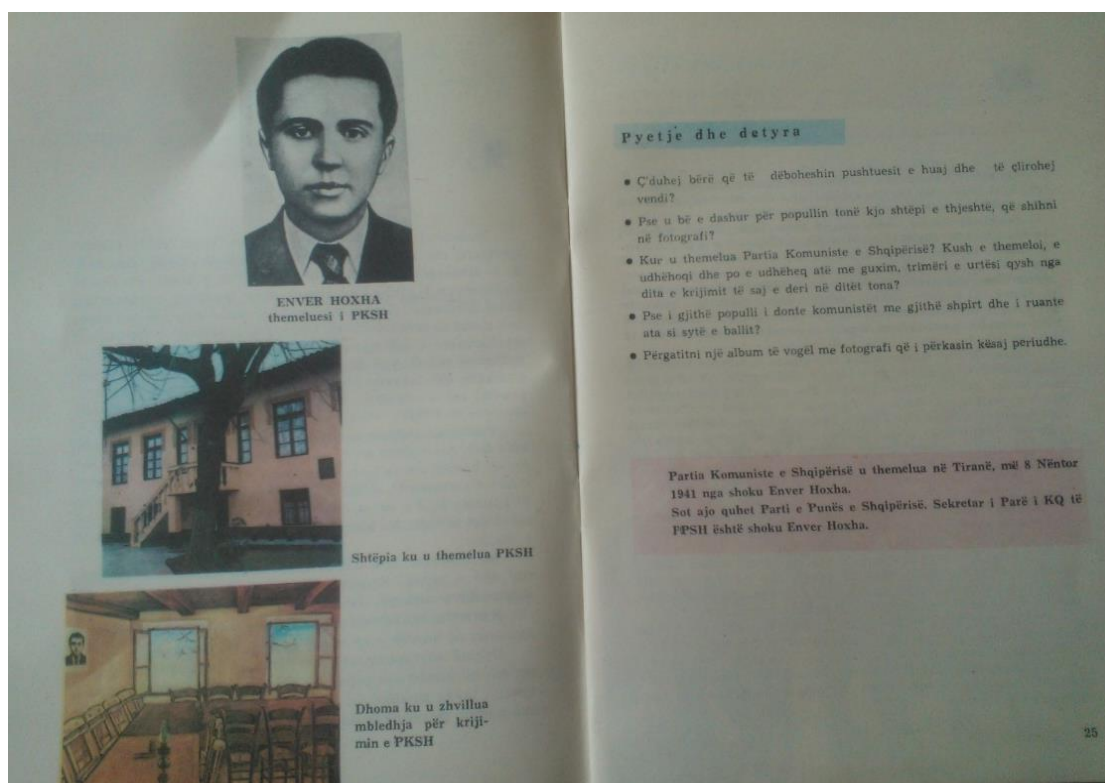
³³² Minga et. al., *Të Njohim Historinë e Popullit Tonë* (1983), 22-23

³³³ Hoxha, *Kur Lindi Partia*, 77.

the whole chapter, provided within a pink frame, which seems diagonally connected to the title and the visual representation on the opposite page. In addition to the grandiose historical event itself, the main actor and founder of the Communist Party Enver Hoxha stands out again in this succinct résumé. His contribution is considered pivotal, and his action dominates the summary of this chapter. At the same time, his current position as the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Albania, has been stressed.

Last, after having addressed the text and the content of the visual narrative, we might discern a different approach between the two modes. Much might be written in the text regarding the leader and his invaluable contribution to unite the scattered communist forces and establish the Communist Party of Albania, but when we refer to the images and the visual communication, his figure has only been indirectly referred to. Visually, his significant role in the above-mentioned developments has been only hinted at. At the same time, any kind of exaggeration regarding his heroic action is apparent in the images. Leaving aside the differences that might arise between the visual and verbal means of communication, I will attempt at this point to discuss the overall message that the current layout and chapter seek to impart to the pupils. In my opinion, the above-discussed layout contains, except for the date, the place and the main protagonist, more than anything else a metaphorical meaning. This regards the entering of the community into the luminous socialist era. In terms of the visual or textual mode, the layout is permeated with a hopeful message and announces the arrival of the nation's spring. Very soon this blossoming spring will give way to the warm summer, the images appear to argue. The text that accompanies the images follows the same line of argumentation. It considers the establishment of the Albanian Communist Party a milestone in the development of the national history, while it goes a step further and adds the impact that this mostly political act had in the military field and in the organization of the armed resistance. After the establishment of the party, concludes the text, the national liberation war entered a culmination phase. This is something new that could not be assumed from the images, giving more weight to the political act and the leader. Therefore, the arising of a new leadership provided, according to the text, this missing link between the political will and the military expression of it. Needless to say, the upcoming chapters turn to the war waged in the Albanian territory during the years 1941-1944.

Before addressing the years of the national resistance, I wish to remain for a while on the historical event of the establishment of the Communist Party of Albania. Below, I will refer to the textbook issued in 1978 (Layout 14), which seems to implement a slightly different visual narrative. At first glance, one might observe a more compatible narrative between the visual and textual. In this version, both modes seem to overlap each other and contain similar messages, at least as far as the role the leader played in this historical event. Without being able to discuss in detail the elements of the visual communication, I will refer in short to some observations that will allow us to read its content. Regarding the text, it is the same as the former layout (Layout 13) and, as one would expect, it focuses on the founder of the Communist Party of Albania Enver Hoxha and the impact that the founding of the Communist Party had on the organization of the armed resistance. Furthermore, in this version, the text does not appear to be in the same layout with the images, but it precedes the visual part. In the concluding remarks, included here, Hoxha is mentioned not only as the founder of the Party, but also appears as its present leader. He holds the post of the First Secretary of the Central Committee, the succinct summary informs us.



Layout 14. Minga, et. al., *Të Njohim Historinë e Popullit Tonë* (1978), 22-23.

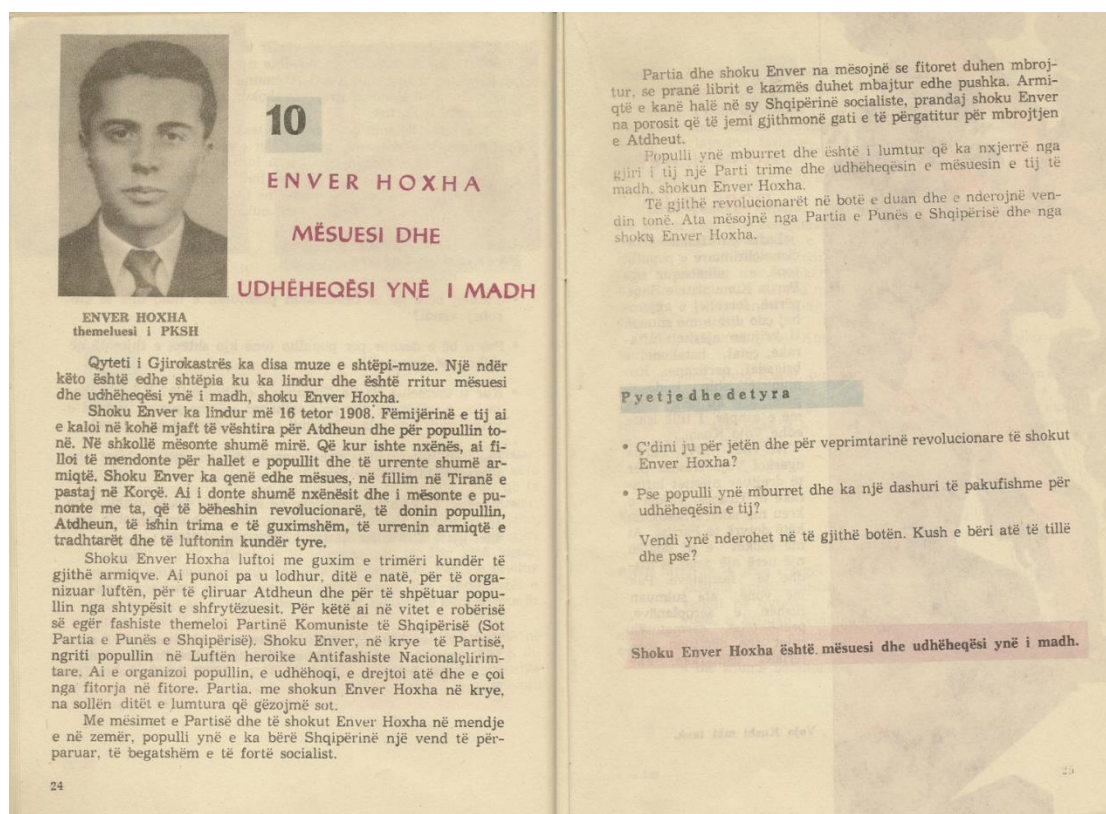
When one turns to the left of the page and the visual narrative, the figure of the leader seems to dominate the layout. He directly addresses the viewers at the top, while appearing again indirectly at the bottom. In the center of the page, the viewers-pupils can see the photo of the “Sacred House”, where the Communist Party of Albanian was established. By making use of a vertical triptych,³³⁴ the visual communication develops a narrative that focuses on the house. This is the “Mecca” of Albanian communism, we might observe, an icon surrounded with a holy aura that marks the entering into a bright revolutionary era.

However, to this first reading of the visual communication, a second seems possible as well. The dynamic appearance of the leader, already touched upon previously, downplays the importance of the house. The building moves out of the spotlight when compared to the absolute protagonist of this historical event, Enver Hoxha. He appears twice, and it is as if the layout is suggesting that this historical achievement was possible thanks to his attempts. In a top to bottom polarization, Hoxha appears as the ideal, and at the same time real, leader of the national group. His ideal appearance turns into a real figure at the bottom, depicted in a real environment. This is the room where the Communist Party of Albania was established. Hoxha’s figure thus dominates the visual communication and transforms into an icon that signifies the arrival of the new era for the homeland. Regarding the layout implemented in the year 1978, it should be mentioned that the same content and structure of visual communication was also used during the years 1972-1977 (Layout 12, Appendices section), with minor alterations in the text.

Prior to entering Albania’s wartime experience, the narrative dedicates a whole chapter to the communist leader Enver Hoxha. As it has already been mentioned in the previous chapter (Layout 13), Hoxha was indirectly mentioned as the one who managed to unite and bring the national community into the new era. This was the case with the visual communication. The text on the other hand took a clearer position in favor of Hoxha and his revolutionary mobilization during this critical period. In the verbal narrative, he was promoted as the main and sole actor and founder of the Communist Party of Albania. All these signs, or even clear indications, if we refer to the text, in the very next chapter took a definite form and became

³³⁴ Kress and Van Leeuwen, *Reading Images*, 201.

unequivocal (Layout 15). Enver Hoxha, announces the title from the beginning, is our teacher and great leader. This chapter, which alludes to hagiographies of the lives of saints, was first introduced in 1978 and, with minor alterations in the visual communication, remained in use until 1984. The layout, as one could observe, consists of text and a close-shot photo of the leader positioned at the top of the left double-spread.



Layout 15. Minga, et. al., *Të Njohim Historinë e Popullit Tonë* (1982), 24-25.

To begin the analysis with the image, the first thing that one observes is the close-up of Hoxha at a relatively young age. The immediate, second observation is the gaze of the protagonist, who looks directly at the viewers. According to the grammar of visual design, a visual communication has been established between the protagonist, in this case Hoxha, and the pupils. The photo is a clear-cut definition of a demand image.³³⁵ The gaze of Hoxha asks something from the viewers, which is not yet clear. It is significant to note at this point that this is the very first appearance of the communist leader in the national narrative. In the previous chapter (Layout 13) commemorating the establishment of the Communist Party of Albania, he was shown in a picture hung

³³⁵ Kress and Van Leeuwen, *Reading Images*, 118.

on the wall of the room where the event took place. The figure of Hoxha is found more often in the textbook issued in 1978 or in the earlier editions, but from the year 1979 onwards his appearance was restricted to one or maximum two images throughout the entire narrative. Furthermore, it happens that the former image is the same as the one we have in the current layout. The photo is now followed by a caption where one can read the name of the leader Enver Hoxha. Hoxha, referring always to the caption, is the founder of the Communist Party of Albania.

Continuing in the same line, the title of the tenth chapter makes it clear that Hoxha is not only the founder, but also primarily our teacher and great leader (Layout 15). The photo of Hoxha could support both characterizations. Judging from the dress code, he might indeed be a teacher, whereas his suit and overall appearance might also resemble that of a politician. In addition to what has been already mentioned, the position of the photo seems to play a crucial role. The photo of the leader occupies the top and right position of the left page, which might be read as the ideal and at the same time given and already known part of the information the layout seeks to transmit.³³⁶ Ideal, in the sense that what the pupils see is the figure of a legendary hero who, in a critical historical turn, alone managed to establish the Communist Party of Albania. This is a grandiose achievement, given the fact that the Communist Party would later manage to successfully unite and organize the masses during the resistance period. The figure of the leader, always considering his placement within the frame of the page, prevails as already known and commonsense to the pupils. Not only is he the founder, but Hoxha is also still the leader of the Party and the current First Secretary. As the head of the Party and of the Albanian state, the figure of Hoxha needs no further introductions.

After having referred to the image of the absolute protagonist of this chapter, let us see what the text has to add in this aspect. Following a similar line, the text that expands in both pages recounts Hoxha's biography from early childhood, his short career as a teacher, to his revolutionary activity. The text refers to, among other things, his contribution in the establishment of the Communist Party, the organization of the heroic National Liberation War during the Second World War and his invaluable role in the management of the post-war attempts to build socialism in the

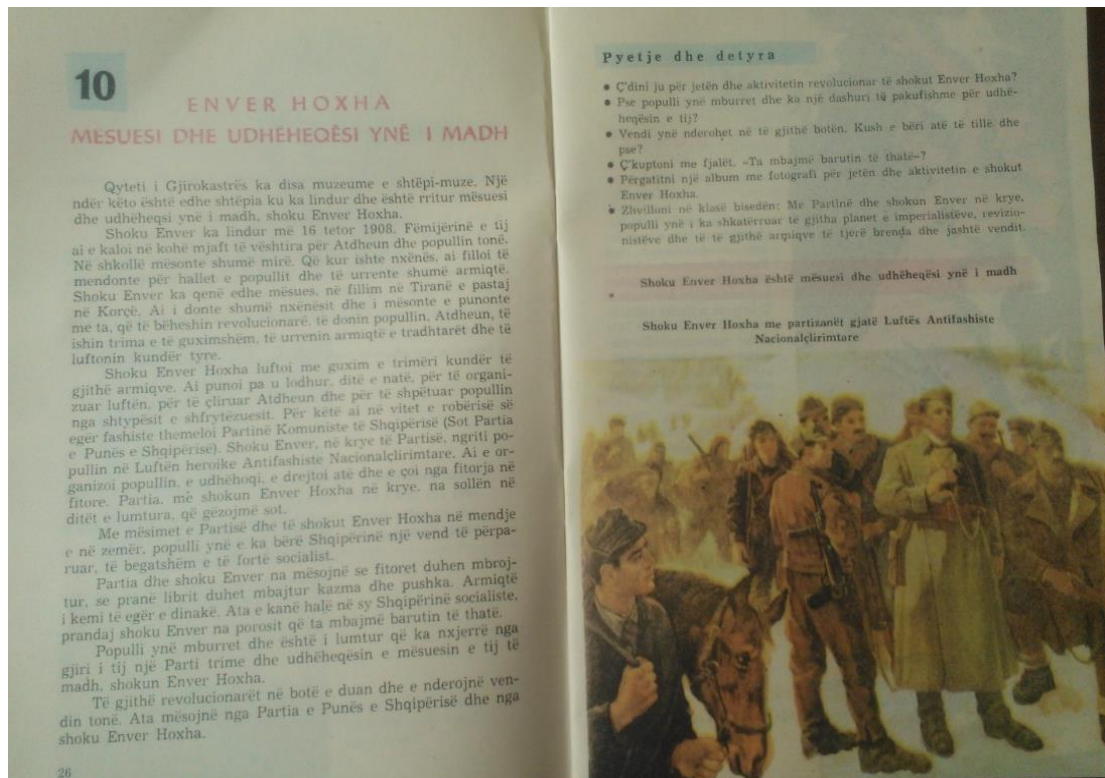
³³⁶ Ibid., 197.

country. Hoxha thus appears to be the main architect of the pre-war and post-war socialist Albania. From the second half of the text, and mostly on the right page, one might observe a change in the narrative's voice. Hoxha is not the sole protagonist, but his activity is coupled by that of the Party. On almost all occasions, he and the Communist Party, whose leadership he possesses, are mentioned to function as a pair. Together they made possible the glory days of the present, they provided the instructions for laying the foundations of the socialist society, and most significantly they teach the people that the revolutionary achievements must be protected at all costs.³³⁷ The text closes with the recognition that both the Party and its leader enjoy in the international arena, before it again states the current status of Hoxha as the teacher and leader of the nation in the summary section. Text and image, as we can observe, provide similar messages and work quite closely together, with the former text providing, as usual, more information.

The above-described tenth chapter (Layout 15), as has been already mentioned, was first introduced in 1978 and, with alterations in the visual communication, remained in use until 1984. The textbook issued and used during the school year 1978-1979 includes a different version, as far as the image is concerned (Layout 16). Always referring to the visual communication, what is stressed in this case is the cunning military strategist Enver Hoxha, shown during the war and surrounded by partisans. Contrary to the ideal representation of the political leader (Layout 15), here in this painting by Abdulla Cangonji,³³⁸ Hoxha appears as the real and absolute leader in the military field. According to the painting, the leader's contribution was significant in the direction of the whole military operation. He seems to have everything and everyone under his control, meanwhile he is most likely depicted revealing his plans and tactics in the battlefield.

³³⁷ Minga, et. al., *Të Njohim Historinë e Popullit Tonë* (1982), 24-25.

³³⁸ Hoxha, "Arti në Shqipëri 1945-1990," 193. The painting that bear the title "Enver Hoxha among the partisans" was created by Abdulla Cangonji between the years 1962-1963.



Layout 16. Minga, et. al., *Të Njohim Historinë e Popullit Tonë* (1978), 26-27.

After having referred in detail to the establishment of the Communist Party of Albania, which represents the political act, I will now turn to the military field and the armed struggle against the invaders. In the national narrative, the resistance during the Second World War represents the second act that marks the beginning of a novel era and the revival of the community after a period of decline. The leader, and even the house where the Communist Party of Albania was established, might be the symbols of this new era, but alone they cannot bring the above-stated community's fresh start. The leader's contribution is priceless, but what is even more useful appears to be the people's mobilization and the beginning of the utmost endeavor against the invaders. This would bring the liberation of homeland and would lay the foundations for the establishment of a new social and political order in the country. This is, in general terms, the line the national historical narrative adopts, and this is how the war begins. In the foreground we encounter the people, the real protagonists of the national resistance, and their mobilization for the cause of the national liberation. It goes without saying that the attempts of the people are always guided by the Communist Party of Albania, which after its grounding took the lead of the armed resistance.

Before addressing the national resistance and its representation in the narrative, a few introductory notes regarding the character of this war prove necessary. Guerrilla warfare was chosen as the most appropriate art of the war. Not being able to confront the enemies in open field, the tactic of hit and run was adopted. The few existing Albanian forces, controlled by the Communist Party, took the responsibility for fighting the foreign invaders.³³⁹ Furthermore, these military units, as the communist historiography explains, involved a force of 20 to 60 light-armed troops each.³⁴⁰ In addition to the military forces, also the people provided a great contribution to the armed resistance. Enver Hoxha, in his memoirs, acknowledged the crucial role that the masses had during the war.³⁴¹

Coming back to the narrative developing in the national history textbooks, it gives in raw lines and without many details the developments of the war. The narrative does not insist on specific dates and avoids providing the pupils with a strict historical framework of the latter developments. What is foregrounded, though, is the heroism shown on the side of the Albanian people and their will to even sacrifice their lives for the homeland. The first of this genre is the courageous act of Vojo Kushi, a young commander of the capital's guerrilla groups, who, in a confrontation with the Italian forces, fell heroically. According to the official socialist historiography, Vojo Kushi and his comrades Sadik Stavaleci and Xhorxhi Martini died fighting heroically against the fascist troops.³⁴² Even as their house was surrounded, they resisted until the munitions ran out.

The eleventh chapter has been dedicated to this heroic act of resistance and the reaction of Vojo Kushi, who, after having lost his fellow fighters and without having any munitions left, jumped onto the enemies' tank in his attempt to kill as many enemies as he could. As one would expect, the figure of Kushi became a legend during the socialist era, and as such it also entered the national history textbooks. Under the title "The communists never surrender" the next chapter is dedicated to the hero Kushi (Layout 17). Below, I will refer in short to the text that accompanies the

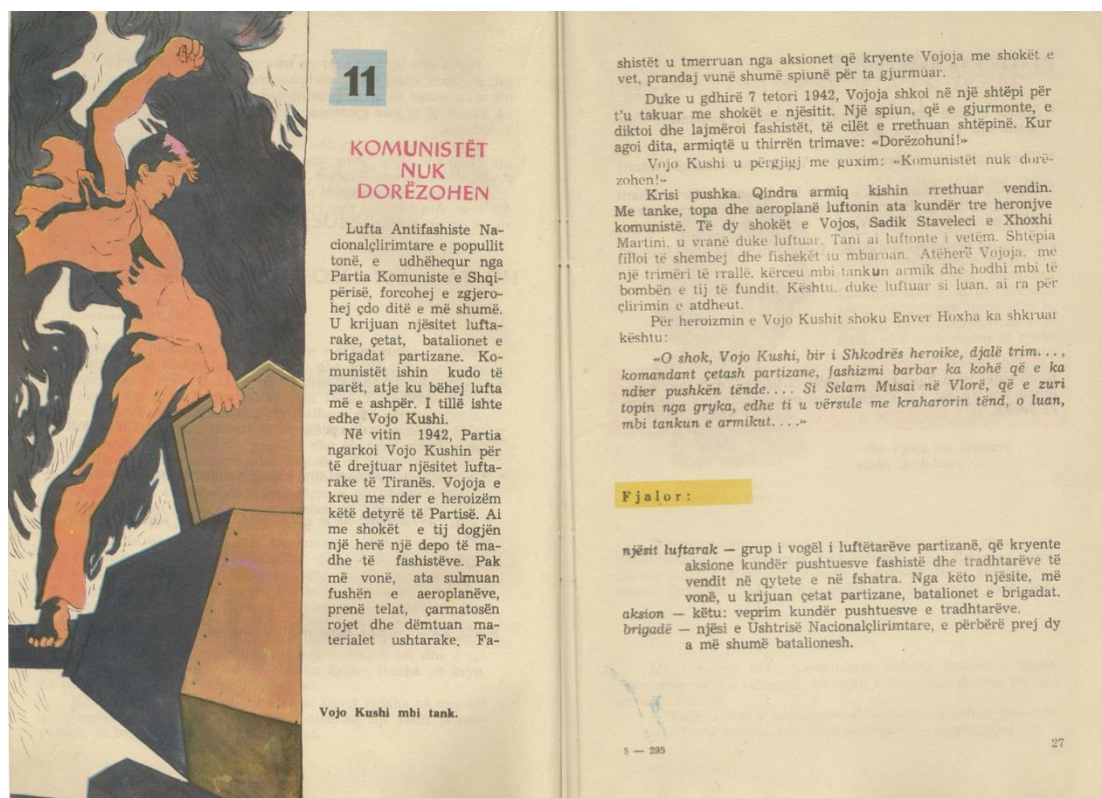
³³⁹ Duka, *Histori e Shqipërisë*, 217.

³⁴⁰ Akademia e Shkencave, *Historia e Shqipërisë. Vëllim i III* (1984), 511.

³⁴¹ Hoxha, *Laying the Foundations of the New Albania*, 10.

³⁴² *Ibid.*, 519.

large image of Kushi on the top of a tank. The analysis will next turn to the image, before touching upon the overall message of the layout.



Layout 17. Minga, et. al., *Të Njohim Historinë e Popullit Tonë* (1979), 26-27.

To begin with the verbal communication, it occupies the larger part of the double-spread. After explaining that the resistance, now guided by the Communist Party, steadily grew in the following years, the text informs the pupils of the establishment of the first partisan units and brigades.³⁴³ It continues with the activity of the young commander of the capital's guerrilla groups, Vojo Kushi, during the year 1942. The second page is dedicated entirely to the last act of our hero, where he and his comrades were encircled by the Italian army. The text informs us that instead of surrendering, and after the death of his fellow fighters, Kushi left the building and stormed the Italian troops. He jumped on the tank and threw his last grenade.³⁴⁴ The text ends with the acknowledgement of this heroic action by the communist leader Enver Hoxha. It needs to be mentioned at this point that the text avoids referring to the sure death of the hero after such an open confrontation with the enemies.

³⁴³ Minga, et. al., *Të Njohim Historinë e Popullit Tonë* (1979), 26.

³⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 27.

As far as the visual communication is concerned, the image positioned of the far left of the double-spread captures the hero at the exact moment of his last dramatic action, the minute he jumps onto the top of a heavy armored vehicle. It would have been impossible for Kushi to survive after such an exposure, but this is not significant in our case. What is important is his sacrifice. With his courageous behavior, his figure gains the status of immortality, at least for a while, explains the researcher Ermir Hoxha in his dissertation. According to his analysis, this is how the hero enters the collective memory.³⁴⁵ His martyrization act turns him into a myth, which in turn defies his physical death.³⁴⁶

At this point, it should be mentioned that the work of art is not the original table of Sali Shijaku created in 1969 but a reproduction of it. The original work of art can be accessed at the collection dedicated to socialist realist painting in the National Gallery (Image 6, Appendices section). From this version, several of the already simple compositional elements have been further minimized. Perhaps this should be regarded as an attempt to facilitate the reading of the message, or even messages, it contains. When comparing the image to the original painting, appearing in the appendices section, the differences are obvious. The key difference is the color differentiation that, in the case of the textbooks, is restricted to three or maximum four colors, whereas in the original version a more expanded and varied palette is used. The image used in textbooks, which interests us more, simplifies the dramatic message into the combat of a bare-chested and barefoot man against a powerful machine gun. His unusual fight, as the plain red color of his body indicates, is the utmost fight for the cause of socialism, or even the national liberation against a far better equipped enemy. Thus, the depicted hero Vojo Kushi transforms into the first martyr of the novel communist era, because the result of such a confrontation would not have allowed him to survive. At the same time, his red shirt should be read as the banner of the revolution. Furthermore, his monumental image appears dynamic and full of movement in comparison to the static representation of the tank. In this manner, his superhuman presence seems to triumph over the machine. Without excluding the interpretation of the hero as one of a mythical creature who defies the norms of

³⁴⁵ Hoxha, "Arti në Shqipëri 1945-1990," 23.

³⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 82.

human existence and reaction,³⁴⁷ I would rather connect Kushi to a Christian religious context. It is reminiscent of the well-known episode recalling Saint George killing the dragon. The vanquished dragon, positioned under the hero's feet, is in our case fascism and Saint George is personified in the figure of the young national hero Kushi.

Furthermore, the painting is being represented in dramatic tones, showing the hero during the war and giving his utmost attempt to annihilate the enemy. This sense explodes when considering the background from which fire and smoke come out. In such a menacing environment, also considering the presence of the tank, a triumphant human figure emerges. He appears immense and gives the impression of being able to overcome this difficult situation. Despite the openness of his body, even though we can detect some bones and flesh, the hero gives the impression of being unharmed as he extends himself over the machine. His gigantic presence is further accentuated through the low angle of the depiction³⁴⁸ and the vertical compositional structure that characterizes the painting.³⁴⁹ In this case, we have an excess of verticality, whose effect grows when we pay attention to the size and the placement of the image within the medium itself. In the layout, the image is portrayed in a form of a vertically oriented stretched rectangle, while positioned in the far left of the double page. The already stretched body and limbs of the main protagonist seem even bigger when combined with the format chosen for the layout. The same rectangular form of the representation and position within the double-spread was also adopted in the previous generation of textbooks 1972-1977 (Layout 13, Appendices section). Also similar is the content of the image showing the courageous act of the hero Vojo Kushi. I say similar and not identical, because there are slight differences in the use of colors. As far as the text that accompanies the visual communication is concerned, hardly any change could be observed. All in all, and returning to the current image (Layout 17), it wishes to inspire the viewers, while calling them to emulate the heroic action it foregrounds. Moreover, there are few chances for the pupils, being between eight and nine years old, to ignore or even reject the latter call. Furthermore, this call transforms

³⁴⁷ Ibid., 82.

³⁴⁸ Kress and Van Leeuwen, *Reading Images*, 140-141.

³⁴⁹ Maks Velo, *Grafika e Realizmit Socialist në Shqipëri* (Tiranë: Ermal, 2014), Introduction.

into an order they must obey. In this sense, the above-mentioned abuse of verticality plays a crucial role.³⁵⁰

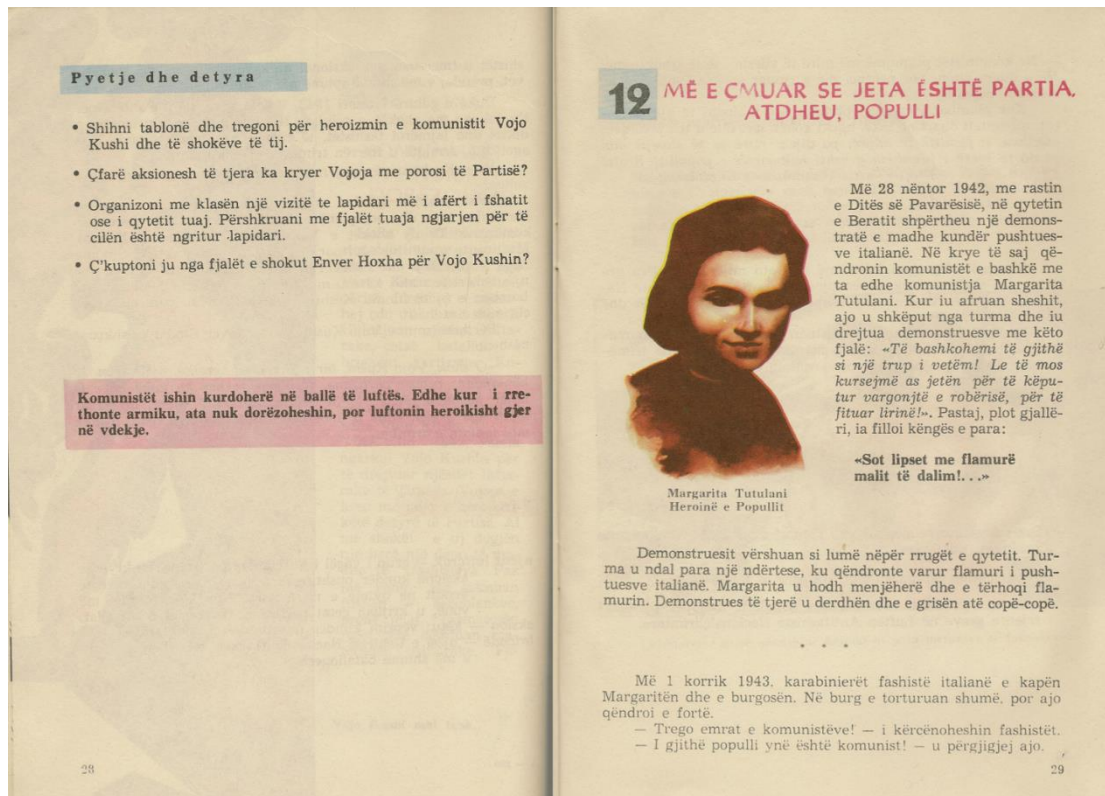
In an overall consideration of the message of the textual and visual communication, one might observe similar meanings, that of the heroization of the act of resistance against the invaders up to the point that the main protagonists sacrifice their own life. In our case, the act of giving their life for the cause of socialism and the liberation of the homeland has been captured in the figure of the hero Vojo Kushi. Both verbal and visual narrative extoll his courageous behavior that most likely will inspire the young pupils to act in a similar manner.

Moving a step further with the historical narrative, the women fought heroically next to the men during the National Liberation War. According to the following chapter, they contributed fully, and in several cases their involvement even cost them their life. Thousands of Albanian women, argues the text, fought side by side with their male colleagues.³⁵¹ The twelfth chapter discusses the example of the young communist woman Margarita Tutulani. The verbal communication focuses entirely on her revolutionary action and her heroic stance after she was arrested. During a communist-lead demonstration that took place in the city of Berat in late November 1942, the young Tutulani, who was to be found at the head of the masses, tore down an Italian flag. The following summer she was arrested by the Italian forces. Despite the torture that she was subjected to and the fact that she was faced with her physical demise, the heroine never collaborated with the invaders. According to the text, her last words in front of the firing squad were the following: “Long live the lijed Albania and the Communist Party of Albania.”³⁵² The narrative is accompanied by a blurred image of Tutulani bearing the name of the people’s heroine (Layout 18).

³⁵⁰ Velo, *Grafika e Realizmit Socialist*, Introduction.

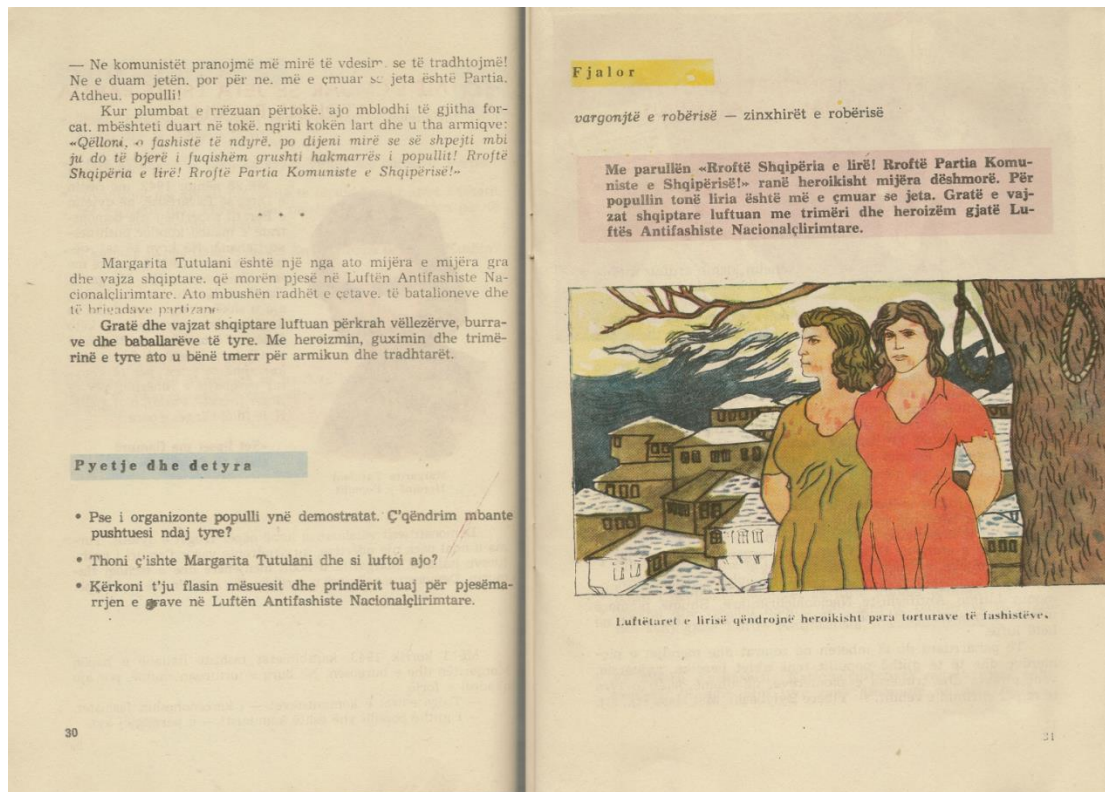
³⁵¹ Minga, et. al., *Të Njohim Historinë e Popullit Tonë* (1980), 30

³⁵² *Ibid.*, 30.



Layout 18. Minga, et. al., *Të Njohim Historinë e Popullit Tonë* (1980), 28-29.

Given the long shot and the low quality of the image, there are not many features one can distinguish. The only one that is somehow visible is the gaze of the depicted woman, which addresses the viewers, in our case the pupils. The direct gaze manages to establish a visual communication between the two sides. The image of Tutulani, a photo elaborated for the needs of the textbooks, not only addresses the pupils, but also most significantly seems to ask something from the latter. In a typical example of demand image, following the terminology of visual social semiotics, the depicted figure is most likely asking the pupils to emulate her courageous behavior. Except for the content and the message that the image seeks to impart, it is worthy to note at this point that the image of a woman is introduced for the first time in a male-dominated Albanian world. Visually speaking, this might be considered a turning point that in the very next double page has been coupled with another image showing the figures of two brave heroines (Layout 19).



Layout 19. Minga, et. al., *Të Njohim Historinë e Popullit Tonë* (1980), 30-31.

In this image, one can discern the figures of two women sentenced to hang, as the ropes behind their backs indicate. The signs of bruising on their similarly depicted bodies inform the pupils that they were beaten and tortured before they were brought to the place of execution. Nothing regarding their identities is mentioned, either in the caption or in the text. They remain anonymous and thus turn into the symbol of the contribution that thousands of Albanian women gave during the war. Without going into a detailed analysis of the image, it is not difficult to discern the dedication in their faces and bodies. Despite the fact that they were facing death, they appear convinced of the worth of their act. They gave their maximum contribution for the cause of the liberation of their homeland, and now they seem to bravely withstand torture in the hands of the enemies. In the caption that accompanies the image, they are mentioned as the fighters of freedom. There is no doubt that the two women will die very soon, but this is not crucial at this point. With their heroic act, and above all, brave attitude during their last moments, they were able to defy their death and gain eternal life, at least in the collective memory. This is perhaps the message the image seeks to stress.

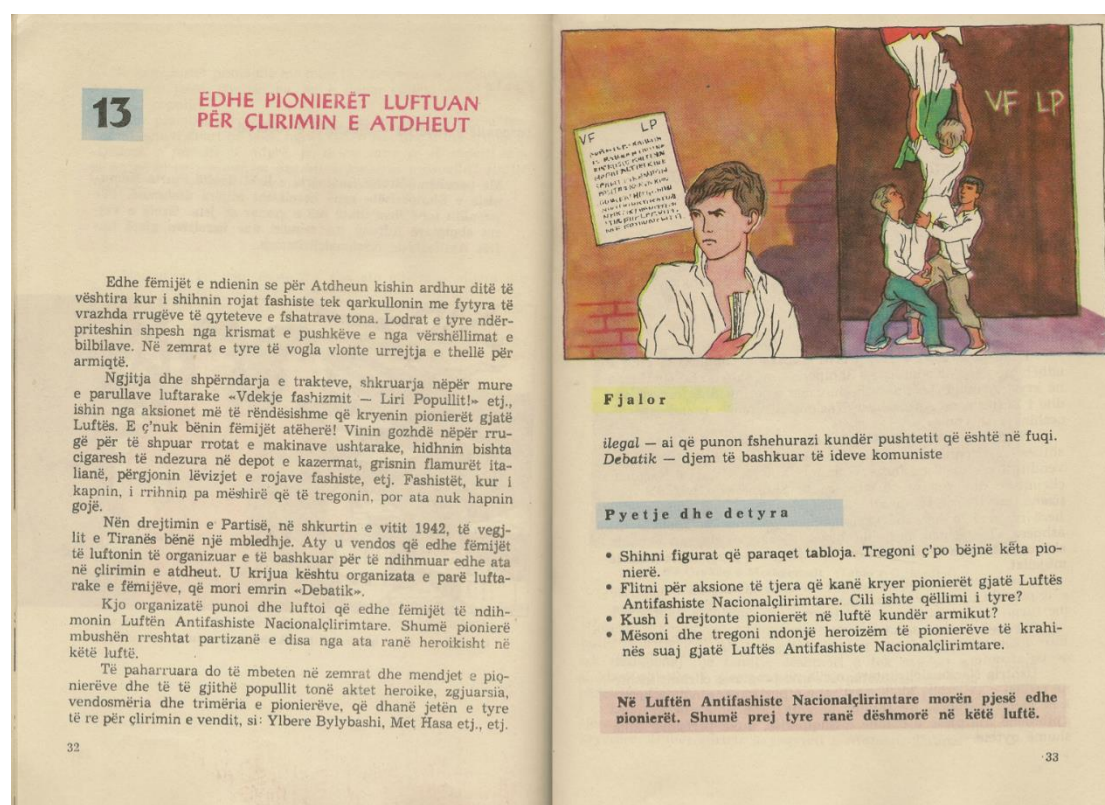
Together with the figures of the two women that dominate the frame of the painting, the next thing that the viewers observe is the menacing surroundings in which this event is taking place. This has been visually depicted in the black and gray color of the clouds or smoke coming from the outskirts of town. It should be added that the background helps the viewers to identify the city where the event is taking place. It is the southern city of Gjirokastra. Moreover, the ideal of the heroic sacrifice, the image foregrounds, could be related to the cause of the socialist revolution or that of the liberation of the country. The red dress of the protagonist positioned closest to the viewers stands out from the painting and at the same time it reminds us the above-discussed image of Vojo Kushi. Last, it should be mentioned that the image does not represent an original work of art. It has been inspired by the work of Lumturi Dhrami, which is entitled after the names of its protagonists “Bule Naipi and Persefoni Kokëdhima.” The original work of art, a linocut gravure created in 1969,³⁵³ has been included in the previous generation of textbooks and the early seventies. This version can be found in the appendices section (Layout 14, Appendices section).

After having addressed the text and image that deal with the women’s participation during the National Liberation War, one might distinguish the attempt that both narratives make to extoll the contribution and the sacrifice of the latter. It is as though the verbal and visual narratives, through the exaltation and glorification of these heroines and their acts, wish to inspire the pupils to emulate their behavior in the present and future. They represent the absolute role models who not only fought the invaders, but above all managed to heroically withstand the torture and the forced confessions after being arrested. They paid with their own life, not collaborating with the enemies, thus remaining true to their ideals and managing at the same time to gain eternal life.

Moving a step further with the national historical narrative, the children participated in the war as well, the title of the next chapter informs us. They undertook several courageous actions such as delivering the Communist Party’s tracts or writing slogans on the walls. According to the verbal narrative, the young pioneers sabotaged the invaders at every turn. Under the leadership of the newly established Communist Party in 1942, they held a meeting and decided upon the creation of a common front

³⁵³ *Artet Figurative në Republikën Popullore Socialiste të Shqipërisë* (Tiranë: Shtëpia Botuese Naim Frashëri, 1969), 55.

of the children that would help in the liberation of the country. In this meeting, the first children's organization, named "Debatik," was established.³⁵⁴ It is an acronym for "United Boys of Communist Ideas" and would function in the aftermath of the Second World War as the basis for the establishment of the pioneer's organization. Many of the pioneers entered the front lines of the war, and a couple of them fell heroically. The text concludes by naming some of the pioneers who gave their life during the war. While such information is provided by the text, the image on the opposite page focuses on one of these actions (Layout 20).



Layout 20. Minga, et. al., *Të Njohim Historinë e Popullit Tonë* (1983), 32-33.

The image shows four young boys between the ages of eight and nine years old tearing down an Italian flag. The act is dangerous and calls for precise movements and coverage. This latter is provided by one of the boys in the foreground who monitors the area while the rest quickly pull the Italian flag down. On the wall, which is to be found in the background of the image, a slogan appears. This slogan is written in the form of an abbreviation "VF LP." In Albanian these initial letters mean "Death

³⁵⁴ Minga, et. al., *Të Njohim Historinë e Popullit Tonë* (1983), 32-33.

to Fascism and Liberty to the People.” The same slogan is reiterated in the tract of the Communist Party hanging on the second wall closer to the viewers and where the solitary young boy is positioned. The boy’s main responsibility, to keep an eye on his friends, is not the only one he has undertaken. At the same time, he delivers the tracts of the Party that are hidden in his shirt. This latter action plays a significant role for the communication of the main theses of the Party to the population during the war. What else is significant is the unexpected maturity of the young boys, in particular the one positioned closer to the viewers. Last, it should be noted that the image does not bear any caption or any further information.

Leaving aside for a moment the content of the image and turning to the structure and the placement of the different elements within the frame of the layout, one can observe that the visual communication is positioned at the top of the right page. The text on the other hand occupies the entire left page and is given the status of the known and already familiar information. A horizontal polarization between the given information, in our case the text, and the new part of the information, the image, arises at this point. The image, furthermore, is presented as the ideal part of the information, given its placement on the top of the page, thus containing the crucial part of the message the entire double-spread contains.³⁵⁵ Furthermore, the placement of the image in the upper section of the right page manages to attract the pupils’ attention and turns it automatically to the most eye-catching element of the layout. This is also visible in the question’s section dealing first and foremost with the content of the image. At the same time, a vertical polarization is followed within the frame of the right page. At the top is to be found the idealized and essence of the information on which the children should focus, coupled by the bottom section, where text in the form of a summary of the whole chapter is to be found. Functioning as a separated caption, this résumé sentence restates what the pupils see and read in the image and the text accordingly. That saying, they learn in a concise form about the participation of the children in the resistance against the Italian invaders. The contribution and the courageous acts of the children are, in the end, the issue at stake on which this chapter focuses both verbally and visually.

³⁵⁵ Van Leeuwen and Kress, "Critical Layout Analysis," 31.

Prior to leaving this layout and moving to the following chapter, it makes sense to turn our attention once again to the image addressed here. When one focuses on its inner details, the image provides an innovative approach as far as the kind of established communication between the viewers-pupils and the depicted children is concerned. A direct contact has been achieved between the two sides, even though the gazes of the four protagonists are not directed towards the viewers. The pupils identify with the figures of the boys captured in this scene, and more specifically with the one positioned closer to them. In this manner, it is as though they take his position in the image and keep an eye on the area and their companions at the bottom. Thus, they enter the image and become part of the scene. Once they have entered the image, the pupils are asked to remain watchful and repeat the same gestures. The age of the pupils is consistent with that of the depicted figures, and this should be considered all but accidental.

Continuing in this line of thought, and going a step further with the above interpretation, the image should be considered a kind of interactive history viewing. Next to the empathy that it might cause, it reminds the pupils first and foremost of their active role in the present and their future adult life. In other words, the image foregrounds their duty as the forthcoming citizens of the People's Republic of Albania to continue this state of alarm and surveillance that the painting permeates. In fact, this is a call for the pupils to follow the path of the main protagonist in the present and future, by means of raising the level of the vigilance. When considering the historical context, then such an interpretation seems at least possible. As has been mentioned in several cases by now, in the years of Albania's self-isolation and during the militarization of the society and education, a state-of-siege mentality prevailed in the social sphere. Last, the same image, with a more complex color differentiation, was used during the years 1972-1977 (Layout 15, Appendices section). The position of the image within the layout's frame differs as well during the early seventies, whereas the content of the text is the same.

After having referred to the main protagonists of the National Liberation War, the Albanian people, the narrative turns next to the act itself, the war and the major developments in the battlefield during the years 1943-1944. These are the decisive years just before the liberation of the country, when the armed resistance reached a culmination phase. It is the final attempt to eradicate the enemies from the Albanian

territory and annihilate their domestic collaborators. The triumph of the people, under the leadership of the Communist Party, would afterwards bring the community into the above-heralded bright socialist era. Therefore, the national resistance, and more specifically the last two years of the war, turned into the most important topic of the narrative. The result of this utmost general offensive had a definite impact on the country's future social and political order. For the first time in the Albanian history, the people assumed power. From a general perspective, this is how the narrative refers to the end of the war within the Albanian territory. Initially, it focuses on the act of the resistance itself and the developments on the battlefield. The reference to the National Liberation War ends with the very last military action undertaken by the forces of the National Liberation Movement. This is no other than the struggle for the liberation of the capital Tirana that took place in November 1944. These latter developments, to which we will immediately turn, represent two deciding moments of the armed resistance.

To begin with the developments of the war referring to the critical period 1943-1944, they have been included in the fourteenth chapter. As usual, the chapter contains text and a large image. The image, a renowned table of Guri Madhi, bears the caption "The battle of Mezhgorani" (Layout 21). There is no doubt that the work of art, created by the artist in 1969,³⁵⁶ represents the crucial point of the layout and is at the same time its largest element. Furthermore, its size and position ask for the viewer's attention, whereas its main subject regards the peoples' utmost effort to liberate their country. Once it entered the textbooks, the painting remained throughout the years 1978-1984. The reason that might explain such a choice will be discussed below. Until now the images used came either in the form of simple sketches, or were reproductions, better said simplified versions, of well-known paintings that were created for the needs of the textbooks. Moreover, since its creation, the original table of Guri Madhi has been a point of reference for the depiction of the national resistance in Albania. The table turned into an icon portraying the people's epic resistance, shown in the most dramatic and dynamic tones.

³⁵⁶ The original work of art bears the title *The Battle of Mezhgorani*, oil on canvas, 270 cm x 210 cm. It was created in 1969 and is to be found at the National Gallery of Albania.

14 ZJARRI I LUFTËS DJEG ÇDO ARMIK E TRADHTAR

SHQIPËRIA NË PRAGUN E ÇLIRIMIT

Në çdo skaj të Shqipërisë bucieste e fortë pushka partizane dhe zjarri i luftës popullore digjte çdo armik e tradhtar.

Fashistët italianë u mundën e u dorëzuan, por vendin e tyre në Shqipëri e zënë armiq të tjerë edhe më të egër, fashistët (nazistët) gjermanë.

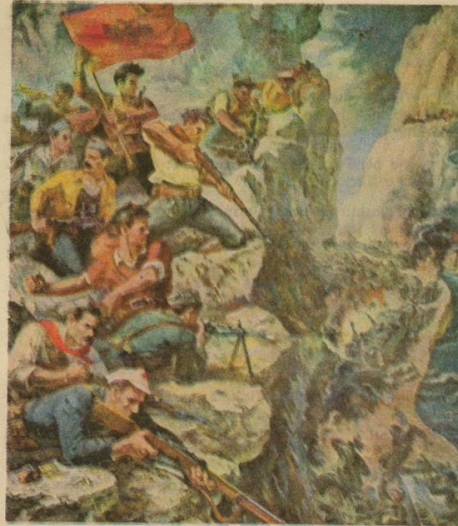
Edhe pushtuesit e rinj i pritë pushka e popullit, të cilin e udhëhoqte Partia Komuniste e Shqipërisë, me shokun Enver Hoxha në krye. Armiaqët po tmerrroheshin nga zgjerimi dhe forcimi çdo ditë i Luftës së Antifashiste Nacionalçlirimtare, prandaj përpigeshin ta shtypnin atë.

Në dimrin e viteve 1943-1944 dhe në qershor të vitit 1944 pushtuesit gjermanë së bashku me ballistët e tradhtarë të tjerë të vendit, u vërsulën me forca të shumta kundër Ushtrisë Nacionalçlirimtare dhe zonave të çliuara të Shqipërisë. Brigadat partizane, me lëvizje të shkathëta dhe të shpejta, i dilnin armikut herë në krah e herë në shpinë dhe e goditnin befasisht e me ashpërsi. Të tërbuar prej humbjeve, gjermanët digjnin e bënin shkrymb fshatra të tëra, vritnin fëmijë, gra e pleq, shkretinin të mbjellat.

Fashistët gjermanë deshën të thyenin qëndruesën e ushtrisë e të popullit tonë, por u dërrmuuan, u shpartalluan dhe u mbuluan me turp.

Nga këto luftime populli dhe Ushtria e tij Nacionalçlirimtare dolën më të fortë dhe u shtua besimi në fitoren e madhe që po afroonte.

Ushtria Nacionalçlirimtare, e cila në pragun e çlirimit kishte në radhët e saj rreth 70000 partizane e partizanë, e ndiqte armikun këmba-këmbës. Në shtator të vitit 1944 ishte çliruar përgjithmonë një pjesë e madhe e Shqipërisë, duke përfshirë edhe shumë qytete.



Në Grykën e Mezhoranit (Tablo e G. Madhit).

Në vendet e çliuara filloi menjëherë puna për rindërtimin. Njerëzit e këshillave nacionalçlirimtare i shihje kudo midis popullit: tek ngrihej një urë e shkatërruar a një shtëpi e djegur, tek ndihmohej një familje dëshmori a tek sajohej një dhomë si klasë shkolle. I gjeje duke ndarë partizanët në baza e duke përcjellë djemtë e vajzat vullnetare në brigadat partizane.

Lufta ende vazhdonte. Duheshin shpartalluar edhe forcat e tjera të mëdha armike, që ishin në disa zona e sidomos në qytetet kryesore. Duhej çliruar kryeqyteti i Atdheut, Tirana.

Layout 21. Minga, et. al., *Të Njohim Historinë e Popullit Tonë* (1980), 34-35.

Getting to the inner layers, in the above-shown painting a narrative structure develops.³⁵⁷ The presence of several vectors, mainly the outstretched arms and the weapons, which are all directed towards the bottom of the composition, bring to the surface a dynamic action. This action, the image focuses on, needs at the same time some actors and receivers of it, all to be seen within the frame of the painting. On the left and upper section of the image stand the people, or most likely the forces of the national liberation army, the actors. On the right and bottom, one can distinguish the enemies, who represent the receivers of the former's action. The division of the roles between the actors and the receivers is further supported by the differences in the sharpness and the size of the protagonists. The Albanian side has been clearly depicted and the represented figures are given in detail. Their herculean bodies, full of movement, are bathed in light, whereas mainly dark colors and blurred depictions make the opposite side almost invisible. Furthermore, the depiction of the enemies in large numbers at the bottom, together with the use of the dark colors, might permeate

³⁵⁷ Kress and Van Leeuwen, *Reading Images*, 59.

a sense of peril. However, the danger the enemies pose in this painting should be considered as relatively small, since the invaders seemed to have either been defeated, or will soon capitulate. Unable to reach the location of the Albanian partisans, positioned on the top of a mountain, they become an easy target for the latter. The Albanian irregulars, or even soldiers, considering the uniforms some of the participants wear, conduct a defensive war against a regular army. Judging from the historical context, it might be assumed that in this case the depicted forces at the bottom of the image belong to Italy. According to the caption, this historical event is the heroic battle of Mezhgorani. The battle lasted from the 1st to the 5th of July 1943,³⁵⁸ just before the capitulation of Italy in September of that same year. Furthermore, the Albanians, in addition to a defensive war, also wage a guerrilla operation, as the terrain implicitly suggests. Again, this is in line with the historical context, because the National Liberation Army has not yet been established. Such a historical development would follow a few days later, on the 10th of July 1943. The creation of the liberation army marked the beginning of the last period of the war, in the autumn-winter of 1943-1944.

By means of summarizing, what the viewers see is a guerrilla group, consisting of the members of the Albanian population and a few scattered armed forces, fighting against the Italian army. They fight for the national cause and the liberation of their homeland. The presence of the national flag leaves no questions about this. Their fight could be connected concomitantly with the cause of socialism. The red stars appearing in the participant's caps and the red scarves around their necks represent a noticeable sign supporting this second interpretation. Moreover, it is difficult for the viewers, in our case the pupils, to distinguish between the masses and the troops, all depicted in the form of a military unit during a battle. When one pays attention to the painting and the Albanian side, distinguished figures of soldiers shown in military uniforms fighting side by side with others who resemble common people can be seen. The latter might not wear uniforms, but appear armed and concentrated on their target, the enemy's caravan at the bottom. The same also holds true for their more trained colleagues. All, except for the young trumpeter in the background, are directed towards the invaders. He is shown most likely calling for support and more forces to

³⁵⁸Akademia e Shkencave, *Historia e Shqipërisë. Vëllim i III* (1984), 538.

join the first lines. His presence functions at the same time as a morale booster in this struggle's critical moment.

Without insisting much on the details of the painting, let us now turn to the core theme of the representation. The dramatic effort of a couple of guerrillas, and the few existing military forces to resist a far bigger army could be a first reading of the image. This rests at the heart of the visual narrative, which in our case has been provided in explosive tones. War scenes might have been encountered on several occasions until now, but this is the most passionate visual account unveiling in front of the pupils' eyes. The resistance pathos, as the colors in the painting of Guri Madhi indicate, is to be found at a culmination point. This is the decisive moment during which the people, for the first time in Albanian history, got the upper hand. Visually speaking, the enemies seem trapped in a narrow passage, while being hit from both sides of the mountain. Referring in short to the interactive meaning, the distance and angle of the depiction play a key role in this painting. The Albanian forces are positioned quite close to the viewers, who stand at the same level with the latter protagonists. This suggests a kind of involvement and connection between the two sides. The viewers-pupils could observe from a short distance the dramatic attempts of the Albanians to protect their homeland from the Italian invaders. They feel a kind of admiration for the Albanian super-human figures, who appear furthermore as part of their world. On the other hand, the distance and the high angle from which the Italian army has been shown makes them appear as strangers, even powerless and insignificant.³⁵⁹ Moreover, the different level of the depiction between the Albanians and the Italian troops functions as a compositional framing device. It disconnects the main visual elements of the painting, the supreme Albanian forces and the powerless Italian army.

What remains after the analysis of the painting is the undistinguished motif of people-soldiers that holds true for the years of national resistance. Such a representation is encountered for the very first time, and it should be considered all but a matter of coincidence. The painter Guri Madhi, one of the leading artists in Albania during the socialist period, commemorates not only the war itself, but manages to bring the real protagonists of this achievement to the center of attention through the above discussed

³⁵⁹ Kress and Van Leeuwen, *Reading Images*, 140-141.

work of art. These are the masses, the Albanian people and citizens who in this concrete historical context have transformed into a reliable army. Together with the existing military forces, the image informs us, they annihilated the enemies and liberated the country, thus making way for the upcoming socialist revolution. The powerful figure of the citizen-soldier, a symbol of the self-isolation era, first enters the history textbooks' layouts with the painting of Guri Madhi, although figures of armed participants were not unusual up to this point. In fact, in almost all cases the depicted people bore arms. The weapons, as it has perhaps already been mentioned, thus turn into a genuine characteristic of the Albanians, but this is not the sole or, at the same time, crucial meaning here. Next to the arms, which are of course necessary for the conduction of the war, what prevails in this painting is the notion of unity and cohesion among the Albanian partisan forces. They all appear concentrated on their target during the climax of their military engagement. Their exuberant bodies follow disciplined movements in the restricted place reserved for them. They hold their positions, and this makes them efficient. Usually such discipline characterizes military units. Given that, it would not be an exaggeration to argue at this point that the Albanian irregulars and the few existing trained soldiers both give the impression of being a perfectly synchronized military unit.

An additional element to be observed is the dynamism and vigorousness of the representation, never encountered up to this point. It leaves no doubt about the outcome of this confrontation. All the power and energy, the image transmits, has been gathered on the Albanian side. In case we previously named the layout depicting the Italian invasion the most bellicose double page, we must reconsider this claim in favor of the current layout. It depicts all but the war itself, by means of paying special attention to the protagonists of it, which are the people. Second and more significant, the act of protecting the homeland against the foreign invaders has been depicted at its zenith. With the National Liberation War, pupils have reached the highest point of the national historical account. The most decisive episode, one might support, that brought the national and social emancipation of the Albanian people even closer.

Proceeding with the visual analysis, the above-discussed painting of Guri Madhi represents not only the first and unique original work of art the textbooks contain, but also one of the largest images considering the entire narrative. The size comes as an additional reminder of the importance of the National Liberation War. It is the year

zero of the national account, which is now divided into two large periods, the pre- and post-war years. This is how national history textbooks refer to the national resistance. In the domestic socialist historiography, the war holds as well for the biggest achievement of the masses, through which they won full freedom, national independence and became masters of their own fate.³⁶⁰ In his memoirs, the First Secretary of the Communist Party Enver Hoxha goes a step further and tells us that the key to success during the wartime period lay in the monolithic unity between the people and the Communist Party.³⁶¹ At the same time, the significance of the national resistance has not escaped the attention of foreign historiography. Citing the words of Bernd Fischer, rarely has an event so dominated a national psyche for such an extended period.³⁶² On the subject of the national resistance, a cult was built that reached a culmination point during the late seventies and throughout the eighties.

Leaving the painting for the moment, I will refer next to the text. The chapter starts with a clear message right from the title: “The fire of the war burns every enemy and traitor.” It is followed by a subtitle: “Albania at the dawn of the liberation.” Through these direct claims, the layout provides the pupils with the information concerning the opposing sides and the result of the war, the triumph over the invaders and their domestic collaborators. The people’s triumph against the enemies and their domestic collaborators, according to the text, was guided by the Communist Party and its leader Enver Hoxha.³⁶³ The narrative continues with a detailed chronicle covering the hostilities from September 1943 to September 1944. This is the last and most decisive year regarding the war that begins with the capitulation of Italy. The text continues with the German invasion and the successful resistance of the forces of the National Liberation Movement during the winter of 1943-1944, which allowed the latter forces to liberate almost the entire Albanian territory by September 1944. This is, in short, the historical context provided in the verbal communication. The text ends with some practical information referring to the numbers of the Albanian partisans and their contribution in the reconstruction of the liberated areas. The last paragraph reminds

³⁶⁰ *Epopeja e Luftës Antifashiste Nacionalçlirimtare e Popullit Shqiptar 1939-1944* (Tiranë: Shtëpia Botuese 8 Nëntori, 1980), Introduction.

³⁶¹ Hoxha, *Laying the Foundations of the New Albania*, Introduction.

³⁶² Fischer, “The Second World War in Albania,” 119.

³⁶³ Minga, et. al., *Të Njohim Historinë e Popullit Tonë* (1980), 34.

the pupils that the war has not yet come to an end. A few regions, including the capital Tirana, were still under occupation and had to be liberated.

After having discussed the information of the verbal narrative, and when comparing it to the visual narrative, the impression is given that they follow different paths. Whereas the image focuses on one single heroic episode, the text provides a more extended frame of historical developments. Furthermore, the difference becomes even bigger when one observes that not a single word from the text refers to the historical event extolled in the table. The difference turns into a chasm when one turns to the historical context each mode of communication covers or displays. The glorious battle of Mezhgorani that took place in early July 1943, foregrounded in the painting of Guri Madhi, has not been included in the text. As has been already mentioned, the text begins its account from September of the same year. Last, according to the text, the national resistance was conducted on a double front against the external invaders on one side and their internal collaborators on the other. From the image, such a double resistance front is difficult to be observed, where solely the Italian army has been depicted. The sole possibility to discern a common approach between the text and the image rests on a sentence explaining the sort of the guerrilla counter-attacks the partisan brigades undertook against the German and collaborator forces.

In the aftermath of the visual and verbal analysis and given the fact of the different information they contain, the question is raised concerning the implementation of such an image in a non-compatible layout. Second, the introduction of the painting for the first time in 1978 asks for some more investigation. It should be mentioned at this point that the image entered the layouts approximately ten years after its creation. In the previous generation of textbooks from 1972 to 1977, the painting of Guri Madhi was not included. This draws our attention to its inner layers and the message that might have proved useful for the existing socio-historical context, which was the end of the seventies and beginning of the eighties. The work of art is regarded as the icon of the National Liberation War and conveys an entire myth, most significant of this genre, by visual means. It is the myth of the heroic national resistance, which is coupled with the courage, the pathos and the unprecedented unity reached among participants in the nation's ultimate struggle. The triumph of the Albanian partisans, subtly announced by the image as well, resulted in the national and social emancipation of the community. All this information was captured in one single

image. The myth of the national resistance, as it was promoted through the painting of Guri Madhi, might also be a solution for the time being. It connects the absolute highlight of the nation to what must be done in the conditions of current imperialist and revisionist encirclement. To the growing dangers imposed to the homeland and socialism, the masses must again resist by taking up arms. Following the paradigm of their forefathers and, above all, the recent triumphant war, it seems as though the image is making a direct call for the viewers-pupils to emulate their stance. This in turn should be considered to be the main function of the table of Guri Madhi. The national resistance, an obsession of the communist leadership, became, one might say, a novel religion in the country and more specifically in the textbooks, which interests us more. This new religion asked for its own symbols and icons. As such, the table of Guri Madhi was introduced in the national history textbooks for the third grade during the self-isolation period. Hundreds of tables dedicated to the national resistance were produced in Albania, but none could reach the core theme of the national resistance and approach it from the perspective of its main protagonists, the people.

Last, I come to the first question and the inclusion of the image in the concrete layout. It might not correspond to what the verbal text says, but alone it is strong enough to carry the main message of the double-spread and that of the whole narrative. The resistance against the occupiers and the domestic traitors represents a present-day critical issue. More than paying homage, the image seems to have been introduced with the aim of having the children emulate the behavior of the depicted actors here and now. Any other chapter would have been better for this work of art than the one in which it appears. As the mobilization of the enemies grows, the force and the dynamic of the people's response also rapidly grows, the whole layout appears to say. This reminds us a lot of the rhetoric of the Communist Party in the years of the precipitation of the encirclement theory during the eighties. During the seventies, the same chapter referring to the situation before the liberation of the country contains a similar text but a totally different visual narrative (Layout 16, Appendices section). Again, an original painting created by Abdulla Cangonji shows a fragment of the winter offensive of the forces of the National Liberation Army. From this visual composition, the communist leader Enver Hoxha clearly stands out, since he is positioned at the helm of the partisans. He is depicted revealing his strategy in the

battlefield, whereas a map at the bottom shows the military operations in the Albanian territory.

Tracing the line of the national narrative and moving towards the end of the armed resistance, we encounter another defining moment that refers to the struggle for the liberation of the capital Tirana. This historic event is seen by the official socialist historiography as the absolute paradigm of heroism and the triumph of strategy.³⁶⁴ This is also how its protagonists describe the same event in their memoirs. For instance, the legendary commander of the First Partisan Assault Division Mehmet and later prime minister of the country, Shehu, recounts the nineteen days that the battle lasted for the liberation of the capital as the greatest epic of the people and the partisans. Together, continues Shehu, they defeated the Germans, who suffered great casualties.³⁶⁵ Later studies provide quite a different picture and interpretation, which tends to minimize the echo of this historical event and the role played by the partisans. The historian Bernd Fischer puts forward the thesis that the battle took place when the vast majority of the German troops had already withdrawn from Albania.³⁶⁶ In his classic book, dedicated to the National Liberation War in Albania, Fischer goes a step further and supports the following:

In the midst of the often unimpeded withdrawal Hoxha, determined to launch a final assault on Tirana, almost as if he felt it necessary to get in a few shots before all the German forces had gone.³⁶⁷

Regarding the overall contribution of the partisans and the communist-lead National Liberation Army, Fischer holds the same view. Even though he acknowledges their role in the resistance against the Axis powers, he argues that the partisan army could by no means have caused extensive damage to the latter, much less defeat the Germans.³⁶⁸

³⁶⁴ Akademia e Shkencave, *Historia e Shqipërisë. Vëllim i III* (1984), 627.

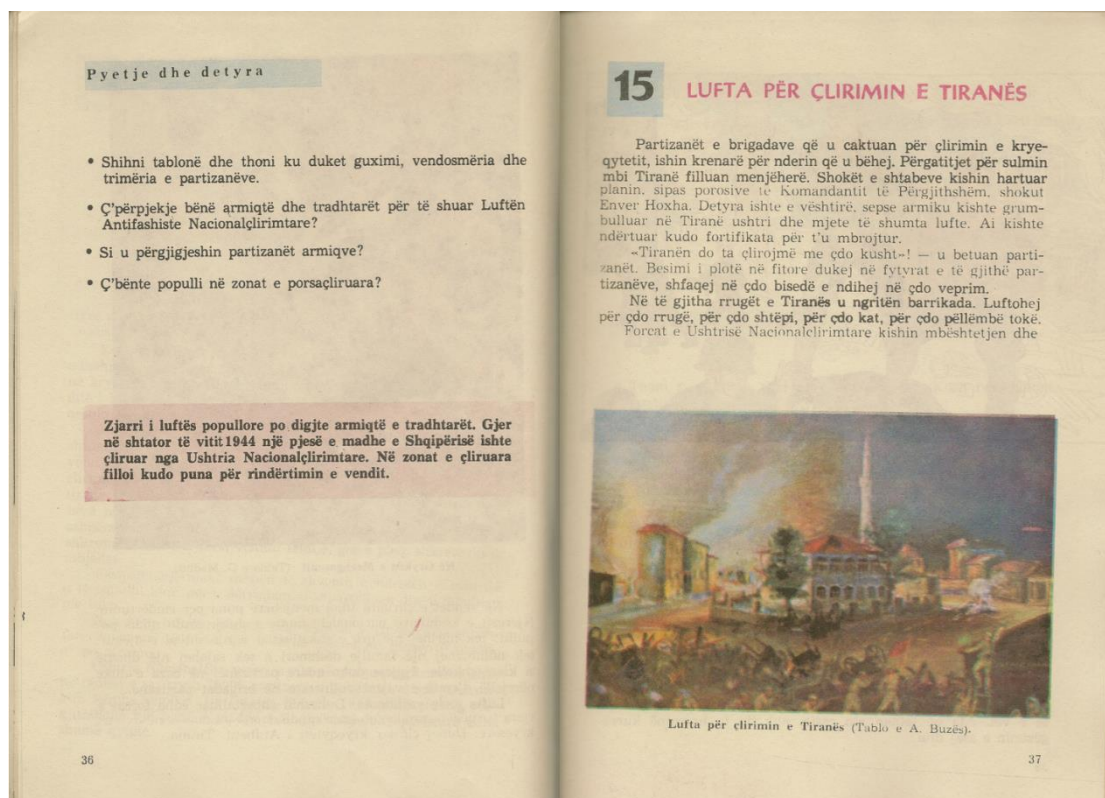
³⁶⁵ Mehmet Shehu, *Lufta për Çlirimin e Tiranës* (Tiranë: Naim Frashëri, 1966), 72.

³⁶⁶ Fischer, "The Second World War in Albania," 122.

³⁶⁷ Fischer, *Albania at War*, 235.

³⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 265.

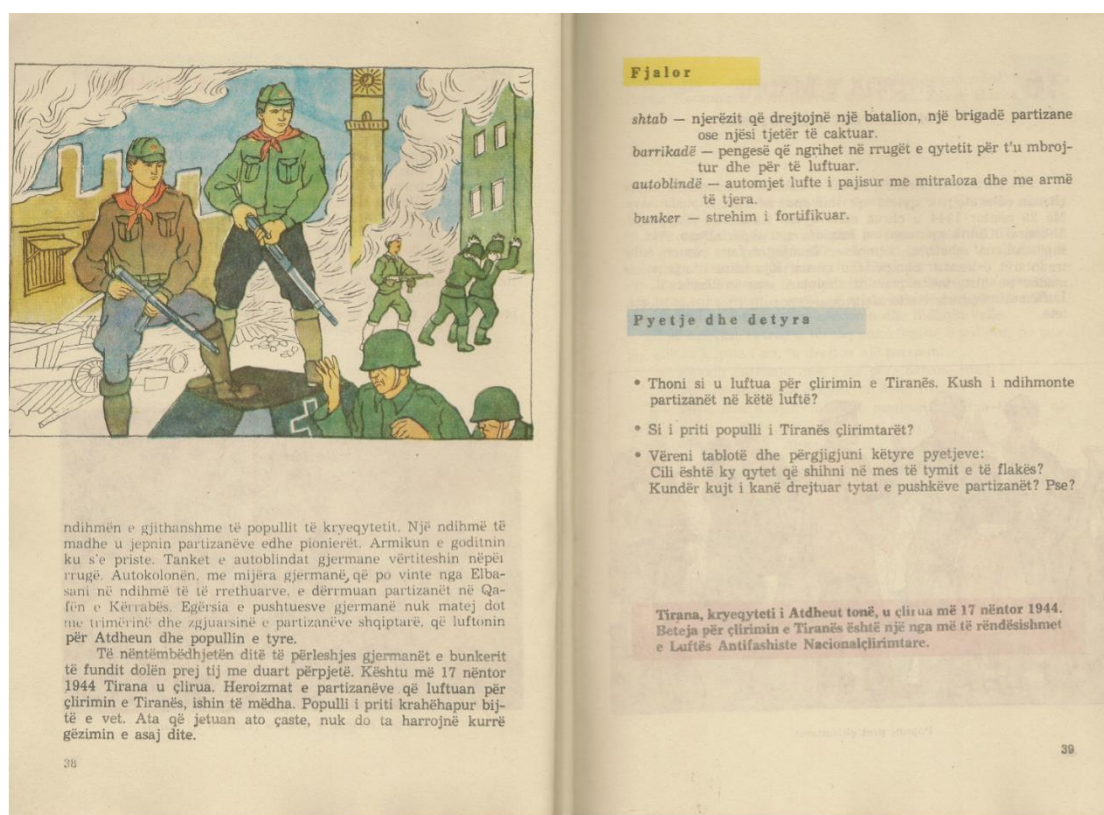
Before we go further into the historiography, let us turn to the history textbooks and see how this historical event has been covered in the educational media. As usual, both verbal and visual communication referring to this very last act of the war will be addressed. I will refer next to the fifteenth chapter of the national narrative, entitled “The war for the liberation of Tirana.” To begin with the visual representation, two images have been dedicated to the struggle for the capital. The images, which appear in two different layouts, focus on the hostilities taking place in the capital. The first is an original painting of Abdurrahim Buza, named after the chapter’s title, according to its caption (Layout 22). The painting shows the burning city from a distance and a few partisan forces fighting behind the barricades. Given the low quality of the painting included here, not many details could be discerned. The only detail that the readers could identify is where the military action is taking place, somewhere near the central square of the capital.



Layout 22. Minga, et. al., *Të Njohim Historinë e Popullit Tonë* (1981), 36-37.

Going a step further, let us move on to the second image and the following layout, which is still part of the same chapter. According to its placement in the page, it is presented as the idealized and generalized essence of the information, its ideologically

most salient part.³⁶⁹ Contrary to above-addressed painting, the second image bears no caption. It follows the common pattern of a simple sketch, created most likely for the needs of the current chapter (Layout 23). The place is again the heart of the still-burning capital Tirana. The clock tower at the bottom brings this information to the viewers. Furthermore, the image depicts the last moments of the war during the retreat of the few remaining German troops. The capitulation and defeat of the German army has been visually captured in the figures of four soldiers who surrender to their armed opponents. In short, this is the central act that this rather simple representation foregrounds.



Layout 23. Minga, et. al., *Të Njohim Historinë e Popullit Tonë* (1981), 38-39.

Before addressing the verbal communication, let us zoom in on the figures that appear in this image. The size and the sharpness of the Albanian partisan forces appearing in the foreground make them conspicuous. Furthermore, the two men, who stand on the top of the German tank, are shown from a low angle, which further stresses their presence.³⁷⁰ They look imposing and powerful compared to the frightened Wehrmacht

³⁶⁹ Kress and Van Leeuwen, *Reading Images*, 187.

³⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 140-141.

soldiers. The Germans are ushered out by force and most likely will be taken into captivity, as the image in the background suggests. Here, the depiction of the defeated German forces hides another detail. Next to their identic representation, one might observe that no facial characteristics are shown. This is not the case with the Albanian troops, whose unharmed bodies and faces are more than visible. They are the absolute protagonists and positive actors that the pupils identify with, whereas the Germans embody in this case the negative characters and the evil forces.

Leaving aside for a moment the images, I will turn next to the content of the text. In the verbal narrative, the battle of Tirana gains the status of a monumental historical event. The battle for the liberation of the capital is considered by the text to be one of the most significant during the period of the National Liberation War. In the first part, pupils read about the preparations of the partisans, their dedication and most of all the support they had from the people of the capital and the young pioneers.³⁷¹ The plan for the liberation of the capital, learn the pupils, belonged to the commander-in-chief of the National Liberation Army Enver Hoxha.³⁷² The narrative continues in the second part with the description of the hostilities until the day of the capitulation of the German troops on the 17th of November 1944. The merits, of course, for this achievement go to the partisans and the unprecedented heroism they showed during the nineteen days that the war lasted. This concluding message insists that the contribution of the partisans was the deciding factor in the struggle for the liberation of the capital, and at the same time seems quite close to the content of the visual communication discussed above. Last, in a comparison of the current chapter to the one implemented during the years 1972-1977 (Layout 17, Appendices section), one might observe almost the same verbal narrative. Concerning the visual communication, the images chosen, as well as their position, undergo several changes in the course of the decades.

Drawing towards the end of the war, the next chapter refers to the liberation of the entire country on the 29th of November 1944. It commemorates the great victory of the people, and the return of the triumphant partisans to the capital Tirana, according to the title and subtitle (Layout 24). This is the crowning moment after more than five

³⁷¹ Minga, et. al., *Të Njohim Historinë e Popullit Tonë* (1981), 37-38.

³⁷² It should be mentioned at this point that Enver Hoxha in this historical context holds the post of the political commissar of the newly established army. Contrary to what the textbook supports, the general commander is Spiro Moisiu.

years of armed resistance. As usual, the chapter consists of text and an image, which captures the exact moment of the partisans' entrance and their encounter with the people and their close relatives in the main square of the capital. The clock tower and the mosque of Et'hem Bey appearing at the bottom indicate the location. Apart from the content of the image, the text will be addressed in this section as well. The kind of information each mode contains, the overall meaning of the layout and the interplay between visual and verbal communication is the center of attention of the analysis that follows below.



Layout 24. Minga, et. al., *Të Njohim Historinë e Popullit Tonë* (1979), 40-41.

To begin with the image, which is positioned at the bottom of the left page, it is, as usual, a simple sketch created for the needs of the narrative. Judging from the surroundings, the participants and the main theme, the above sketch was probably inspired by the painting of Bukurosh Sejдини “The liberation of Tirana” (Image 7, Appendices section). In this fairly uncomplicated image, a joyful atmosphere dominates. The image is accompanied by a caption that reads: “The people receiving the liberators.” People and soldiers are depicted celebrating the liberation of the country. Each of them is occupied with his or her close relatives and friends. In the background, more people are shown celebrating. They raise red flags and other items,

whereas their activities also include traditional dances. The sky, despite its awkward plain white color, is clear. This indicates that the ominous days of the war are definitely gone. In the right bottom corner, a wheel from a heavily damaged cart is shown, reminding the viewers of the hardships of the wartime years. This is more or less what the pupils see at first glance.

Getting into the inner details, the image does not seem to be as simple as we thought in the beginning. In fact, it makes use of cinematic techniques to divide the concomitant actions taking place within its frame. Considering the placement of the participants in the frame of the picture, there are first and secondary actions. Forgetting for the moment the image and the layout on which it is depicted and considering it as the very last scene of a dramatic film, we are in the position to focus on the main action taking place in the foreground. There are five people who are depicted slightly larger in comparison to the rest. This is another element that distinguishes them from the other participants. Being closer to the viewer, they again ask for their attention. Moreover, in this inner circle there are two armed soldiers, an older man, a woman and a young boy. Their gestures and gazes reveal a narrative structure that will be explained right after the five protagonists are identified. The senior couple seems to be the parents of one of the soldiers and the young boy is perhaps their grandson. There is a certain familiarity in the way these four people see and touch each other that speaks in favor of this interpretation. Referring solely to the gaze, the potential parents and grandson are all directed to the soldier wearing a green uniform. Thus, the soldier in green becomes the center of the attention, which his colleague is left out of for the moment. The parents and the son see the soldier with a sense of admiration. Furthermore, the son touches his father-hero in a gesture that could be read as trying to understand whether he is real or not. At the same time, the young boy is connected to his grandfather. The hand of the old man lies over the young boy's shoulder. Thus, the young boy stands in the middle of two generations and feels a certain fascination for his father. These three are the protagonists who monopolize in each case the male-dominated scene. Among these three figures, the key message that the image contains is developed. Inevitably the figure of the woman moves out of focus.

Let us turn for a moment to the boy attending this historical event. Apart from his age, which coincides with that of the pupils, he manages to be discerned through the colors

of his attire. His white shirt and blue trousers make him apparent, in comparison to the other people who are to be found in this circular frame. His placement, slightly entering the circle that has been formed by the other four participants, is also indicative of his central position. He seems to be the main protagonist in this case, perhaps leaving behind him the impressive figure of his father and his senior grandfather. This latter interpretation seems to gain ground when taking into consideration the above-referenced age of the child and the connection established between him and the viewers-pupils. Being the same age as the latter pupils, they most likely identify with the figure of the depicted young boy and consequently even take his position in the image. In this manner, they directly enter this scene that is developing in front of their eyes and become part of the action. They gaze in awe at the partisan, and at the same time are able to touch him. From the historical narrative, we have already moved to cinematic viewing, which considering the latest observations, also becomes interactive. It gives the viewers an opportunity to not only participate in the action, but also to mainly interact with the figures shown. Through their involvement in this historical event, pupils are asked to get closer to the main protagonists shown and emulate their heroic stance and behavior. They should continue the successful act of resistance against the invaders in the present conditions of self-isolation. Last, this seems to be the central message the image seeks to communicate to the pupils.

Before ending the visual analysis, the inclusion of the women in the image should be noted. They are shown either as members of the army or have been depicted in the traditional roles of mother and housewife. An additional observation concerns the almost equal depiction of the partisans. Whereas the clear majority of them wear uniforms, there are still others who do not. Possibly this should be regarded as a subtle method to show in practice that the National Liberation Army is a people's army established during the war and is based first and foremost on the masses, the Albanian people.³⁷³ They voluntarily entered the first lines of the war and contributed their most to the sublime national and social emancipation of the country. The remarkable success achieved during the war was based on this monolithic unity between the people and the communist-led liberation army. Born from the people, this army returned to the latter to celebrate together with them. From this festive

³⁷³ Enver Hoxha, *Vepra 2* (Tiranë: Shtëpia Botuese Naim Frashëri, 1968), 413-414.

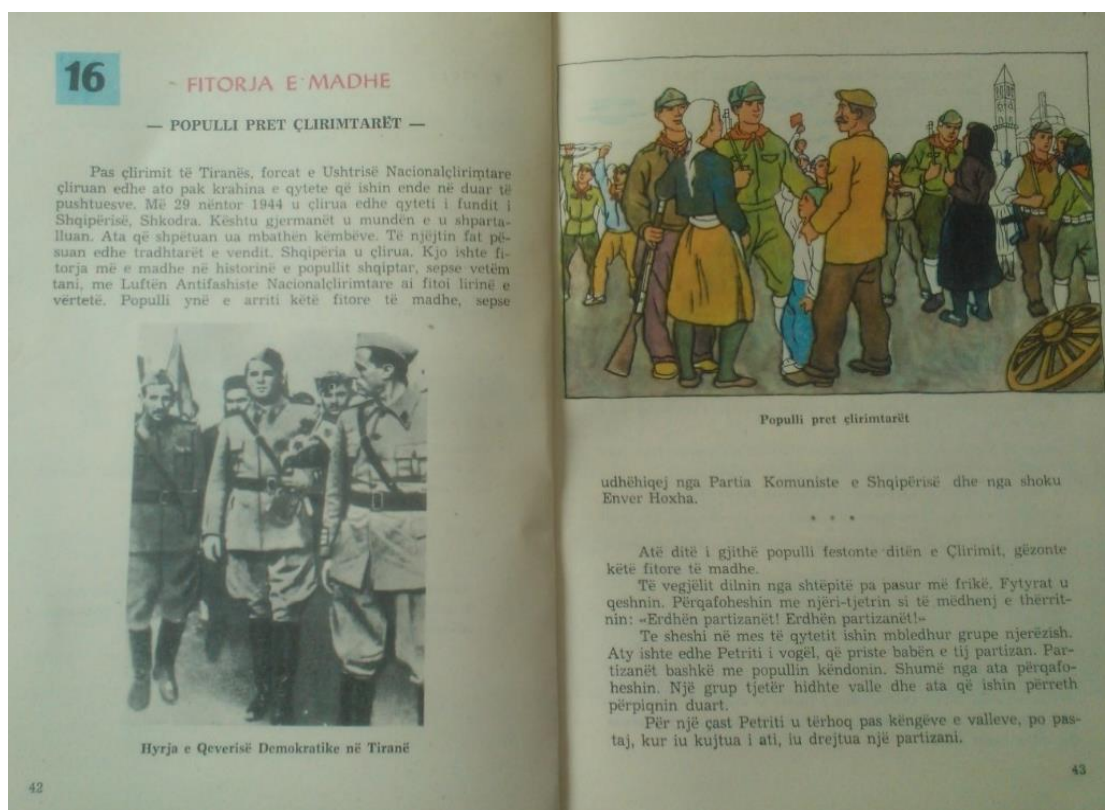
atmosphere, the youngest members of the community and the future soldiers have not been excluded. On the contrary, they stand close to those who gave their utmost during the war. The young boy appears as their follower. Having his idols in front of his eyes, he will learn the art of war firsthand. By means of recognition, admiration or emulation, he and the pupils attending the third grade will be introduced to the tradition of the war and resistance deeply rooted in the Albanian psyche. This tradition passes from generation to generation as the figures of the senior grandfather and the relatively young father suggest. This also holds true for the present and the pupils-viewers. Through their connection to the depicted young boy, they should get involved in the current war the country is conducting against the imperialist and revisionist encirclement. This latter should be considered to be the key message the image seeks to impart. In fact, it is a visual call for the pupils to continue this tradition of war into the present and future.

Leaving aside for the moment the visual narrative and turning to the text we see that it is closely connected to the image. The larger part of it explains the image and focuses on the encounter of a young boy with his father-partisan in the main square of the capital. Concomitantly, in the initial section the text makes it apparent that, for the first time, the people won their real independence and it informs the pupils of the last military actions in the Albanian territory. This was made possible, according to the text, by the contribution of the Communist Party and its leader Enver Hoxha.³⁷⁴ Therefore, the merits go exclusively to the Party as the leading force of the national resistance. Again, a divisive line might be observed between the visual and textual narrative. The image supports the version of the contribution of the people who massively entered the liberation army and gave their maximum, whereas the text sees the Communist Party and its leader as the cornerstone of this achievement.

To have a common approach between visual and verbal communication, one must turn to the previous generations of textbooks and the years from 1972 to 1977 (Layout 18, Appendices section). There, pupils can trace the late developments of the war and learn about the leading force of the national resistance, the Communist leadership, both in the text and in the accompanying visual communication. The same is also true for the text issued in 1978. In the chapter referring to the day of the liberation (Layout

³⁷⁴ Minga, et. al., *Të Njohim Historinë e Popullit Tonë* (1979), 41

25), an additional photo has been included showing the leaders of the National Liberation Army triumphantly entering the capital. This retouched photo, focusing mostly on the leader Enver Hoxha, leaves no doubts about the invaluable contribution of the Communist Party. It is as if the photo were saying that, thanks to the Party and its leader Enver Hoxha, the liberation of homeland was possible. This is exactly how this superb achievement has been referred to in the text.



Layout 25. Minga, et. al., *Të Njohim Historinë e Popullit Tonë* (1978), 40-41.

In an overall consideration of the years concerning the beginning, evolution and end of the national resistance, it should be mentioned that during the self-isolation era the war was narrated from the perspective of its participants, in our case the Albanian people. The main protagonists seem to be the Albanian population. They are depicted at the helm and it is primarily their contribution that brought the heroic victory. At least this is the case as far as the images regard. When one pays attention to the text, along with the masses, the role of the Communist Party and its leader Enver Hoxha has been extolled in every single chapter. In some cases, the text gives the impression that if it weren't for the leader, the national resistance would have shattered.

The second characteristic refers to the self-reliant character of this total mobilization of the people during the war. The liberation of the country relied on the unity and the self-organization of the Albanian people, Hoxha declares on several occasions in his memoirs,³⁷⁵ and this exactly is what we observed in the textbooks. The dogma of relying on the community's own power and forces dominates the visual and verbal narrative that refers to the war years and leaves no room for other interpretations. Another decisive factor that led to the historic triumph was the role the Communist Party played. According to the socialist sources, the newly established Party and above all its leader Enver Hoxha guided the efforts of the people during the National Liberation War.³⁷⁶ The latter role of the Party's leadership, as we have already mentioned, is to be seen mostly in the text. As a result, the over-promotion of the inner forces minimizes, not say eliminates, from the historical narrative the external factor, which is very stressed in the non-communist historiography. Nothing is written or shown except for the Albanian forces resisting the invaders and their domestic collaborators. The close relations between Albania and Yugoslavia during the war is silenced.³⁷⁷ Nothing is mentioned concerning the assistance provided by the Yugoslav emissaries in the form of political and military guidance.³⁷⁸ The same silence also characterizes the Allied, and above all the British, involvement during the years 1943-1944. The British aid offered material and moral backing to the communist-lead partisan forces at a critical turn of the war.³⁷⁹

It goes without saying that the non-communist resistance groups, such as Balli Kombëtar or Legality movement, are mentioned as collaborationists and traitors to their own people. The narrative, therefore, is monopolized by the action of the communists, the more active and effective resistance group during the war. By following such an account, the perception of a complex and very fragmented resistance movement is smoothed.³⁸⁰ On the one side are the people and the Communist Party, whereas on the other are the domestic ruling elites who collaborate with the Axis powers. First, this is an oversimplified picture of the armed struggle the

³⁷⁵ Enver Hoxha, *Vepra 3* (Tiranë: Shtëpia Botuese Naim Frashëri, 1968), 3.

³⁷⁶ Akademia e Shkencave, *Historia e Shqipërisë. Vëllim i III* (1984), 641-642.

³⁷⁷ Pipa, *Albanian Stalinism*, 15.

³⁷⁸ Prifti, *Socialist Albania*, 13-14; Biberaj, *Albania: A Socialist Mawerick*, 18.

³⁷⁹ Vickers, *The Albanians*, 154; Fischer, *Albania at War*, 266-267.

³⁸⁰ Bernd J. Fischer, "Resistance in Albania During the Second World War: Partisans, Nationalists and the S.O.E.," *East European Quaterly* 25, no. 1 (1991): 21

textbooks promote. Second, such a thesis merely holds true for the late years of the war, 1943-1944, during which the nationalist forces began to collaborate with the occupying forces. Given the incapacity of the non-communist elements to resist the invaders and the attacks of the growing communist forces, they turned to the Germans, argues the historian Bernd Fischer. Following an initial period of inactivity, Balli Kombëtar ordered the cessation of hostilities against the Germans in the autumn of 1943.³⁸¹ The same path towards collaboration was followed by the leader of the Legality movement Abaz Kupa and the northern chieftains in the summer of 1944.³⁸²

6.2. Maturation: Construction of the socialist order and state

With the victory reached against the Axis powers, the Albanians wrote one of the most luminous pages of their national history. Following the textbook's narrative, the national community not only revived from a period of decline but also emerged triumphant over a much stronger opponent. Such a development widely opened the path for the establishment of the socialist order and society in the post-war era. The attempts for the reconstruction of the war-torn country on a socialist basis began right after the communists assumed power. The process of laying the foundations of the social, political and economic basis of socialism in Albania, on which the analysis will next focus, proved a challenging task. This posed huge difficulty, because of the negative impact the war had on the country. The damages caused in the economic sector were heavy. Infrastructure, industry, agriculture and communications were affected. Cities, towns, ports, bridges and mines were damaged.³⁸³ Albania also suffered extensive casualties, circa 28,000 dead according to the socialist sources.³⁸⁴ This rate is quite high when compared to the population of this small country.

Thus began the efforts for the establishment of the socialist society and state in the Albanian territory under these conditions. This period that began right after the war should be considered the maturation phase during which deep socio-economic transformations occurred. In this section, the arduous task of the country's reconstruction on a socialist basis in the aftermath of the Second World War will be traced. The people's eternal wandering appears to have entered its last and final stage.

³⁸¹ Fischer, "Resistance in Albania," 32-33.

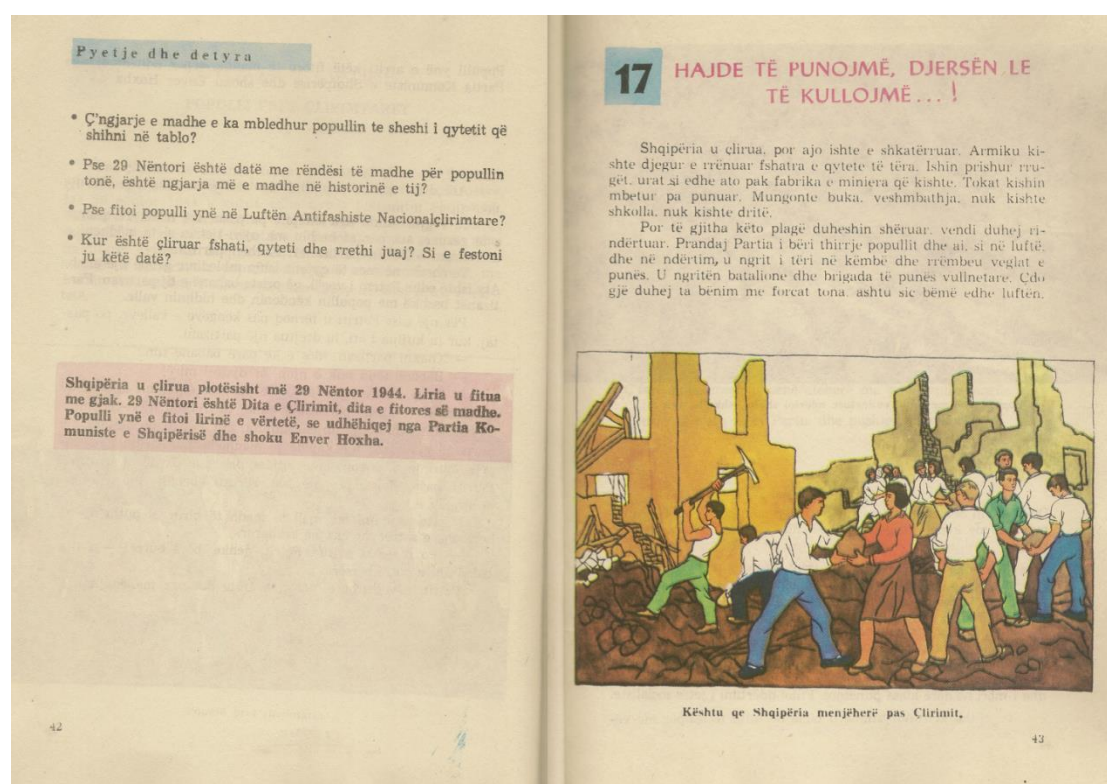
³⁸² *Ibid.*, 34.

³⁸³ Pollo and Puto, *The History of Albania*, 247.

³⁸⁴ Akademia e Shkencave, *Historia e Shqipërisë. Vëllim i III* (1984), 640.

The caravan has reached its destination, the “Promised Land” of socialism, one might support. Following this argumentation, the perennial drama around which the national narrative has been structured seems to draw steadily to an end. However, this socialist land first has to be built, and it is to these first efforts I will immediately turn.

The first thing that one could observe regarding this nation’s novel era is the promotion of the people as the sole social actors. The masses come thus into the foreground and appear to have taken the situation into their hands. At least this holds true for the visual communication. As in the case of the armed resistance, they represent the main protagonists who undertook the task of reconstructing their homeland. Being the only ones responsible for the fate of their own lives and country, the masses, as usual led by the Party, are those social agents who will build the present and future of the community, and this is exactly how the seventeenth chapter starts (Layout 26). It begins with the title calling for the people to contribute in this direction. The chapter is entitled: “Come to work, let us give our sweat...!”



Layout 26. Minga, et. al., *Të Njohim Historinë e Popullit Tonë* (1982), 42-43.

To the call for the people’s mobilization, asked straightforwardly from the title, the image positioned at the bottom of the right page replies positively. The latter shows a group of people in front of city ruins, working to repair the heavy damage that the war

left behind. Considering the placement of the image, the pupils get the additional message that this is the real part of the information the page contains,³⁸⁵ something that happened in the way it has been depicted here. The image, furthermore, gains a factual status when compared to the emotional call and the ideal information, as the text and the title on the top maintain. It is accompanied by a caption where one could read: “This was the situation in Albania right after the liberation.” This descriptive caption draws attention to the immediate reaction of the people once the war was over. They all gave their contribution, as we can see, to help in the reconstruction of the country.

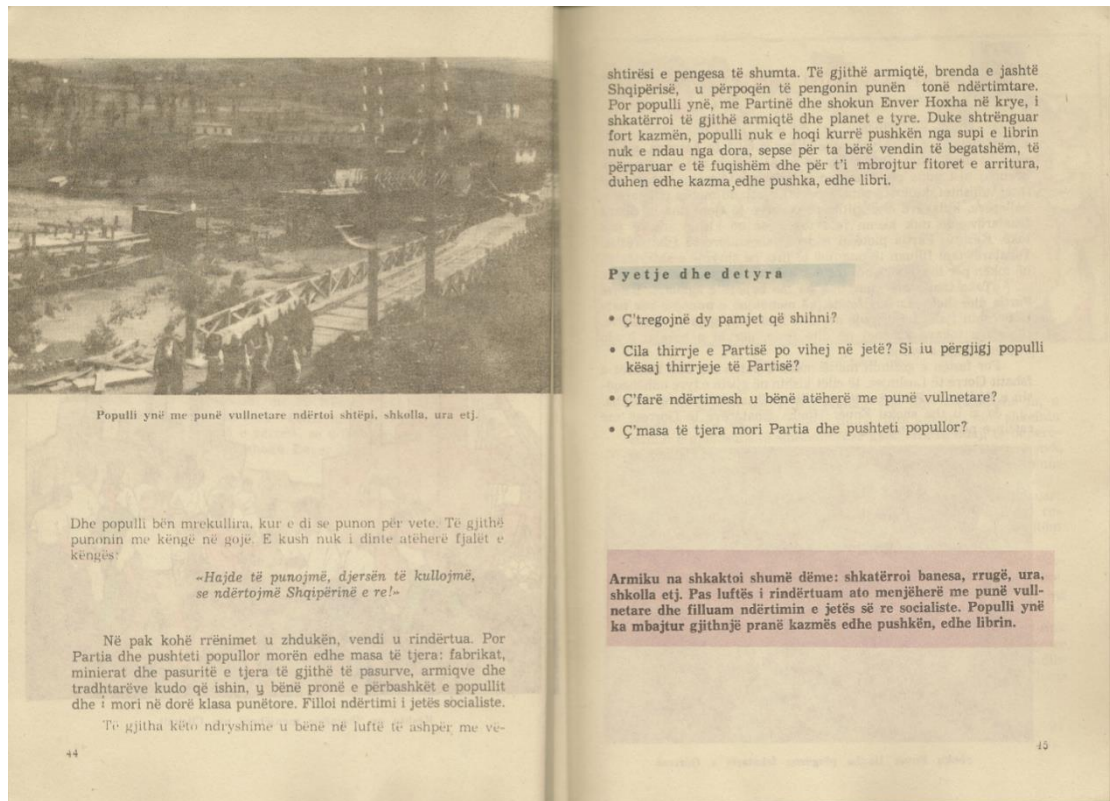
Getting to the inner details of the image, what the pupils are able to see in the background is the remnants of a city. Due to the heavily damaged buildings, this city cannot be easily identified. Perhaps the capital Tirana is depicted, but again this is nothing more than speculation. The block of the apartments, almost leveled to the ground, might indirectly provide this information. It was impossible that such buildings existed at that time in other Albanian cities. Furthermore, a group of young people, literally speaking, stands above these ruins and in a self-organized and perfectly synchronized action removes the war remains and cleans the territory. The vast majority of the people involved in this action are young men. Next to the predominately male population, at least two feminine figures can be seen in this sketch-painting. One woman appears in the background, while the second is in the very first line of the representation. She wears a red shirt that makes her explicitly visible and, together with a young man, is positioned quite close to the viewers. These two latter participants stand in the center of the image and, at some point, help in keeping the balance between the dominating men and the marginalized women figures. In addition, her appearance in the forefront could mean that men and women equally contributed to the reconstruction of the country. Her red shirt, a color allegory connected with the socialist revolution Albanian society was experiencing,³⁸⁶ is reminiscent of several national heroes and heroines encountered in the past. In any case, the red color catches the viewer’s attention and, as a matter of fact, turns the woman into the central figure of this representation.

³⁸⁵ Kress and Van Leeuwen, *Reading Images*, 186-187.

³⁸⁶ Holz, “Allegory and Iconography”, 74-75.

One last characteristic concerning the people is their depiction, intact and the unharmed. They appear healthy, robust and well-built, and any sign of the difficult wartimes experience is evident neither on their bodies and faces nor on the pristine condition of their attire. Their appearance is more controversial when considering the historical context and the heavy damages of the surroundings. They seem to not properly fit in to the current image and its content and give the impression of being introduced from a different epoch, or even context. Another possible interpretation could be that in the frame of this image, the pupils experience the arising of a novel type of the post-war Albanian man. Being more concrete, this novel type, the characteristics of whom will be described below, represents the third metamorphosis of the Albanian people in the course of the centuries. Furthermore, the image of this “New Man” in the textbooks’ pages has been integrated into a novel form of harmonious civic collectivity, which for the first time includes women. The Albanian people resemble a uniformed formation of powerful and dedicated individuals who form a consistent whole. Their individuality seems to have been replaced by the identic depiction of their bodies and their equally modern clothes. The colors of the latter are mostly bright, perhaps symbolizing the forthcoming bright and luminous era in which the national community has already entered. Last, this novel harmonious national collectivity for the first time is not involved in war or demonstrations but instead has been captured while working. Work is therefore the image’s center of attention and is what is needed at the dawn of the socialist era in Albania.

The above-referred results of the work and the overall mobilization of the population very soon bore fruits. The results of this work are shown in the very next layout, which belongs to the same chapter (Layout 27). In this double spread, a photograph showing the infrastructure built after the war stands out. A bridge under construction and a main public road can be discerned from the photo. In the background, a few houses appear. The descriptive caption confirms the above observations and states the following: “The voluntary work of our people made possible the construction of new buildings, houses, schools, bridges etc.” Aside from naming the key developments that were possible thanks to the people’s contribution, the caption brings to the fore the character of their involvement. Everything, argues the caption, was based on voluntary and unpaid work, something that also holds true for the previous image



Layout 27. Minga, et. al., *Të Njohim Historinë e Popullit Tonë* (1982), 44-45

Leaving for the moment the image and focusing on the verbal communication, the text initially provides the viewers with the post-war, difficult conditions prevailing in the country. The extremely urgent situation asked for the people's mobilization, and this is what happened the day following the liberation. Next, the text continues with the general mobilization and the establishment of brigades of voluntary workers, following the call of the Communist Party, to cope with the heavy damages.³⁸⁷ We read that the work in these groups was self-administered and self-organized, as was also the case with the liberation war. The whole enterprise relied exclusively on the internal factor, which were the Albanian people. In the following layout, the text continues with the splendid achievements reached within a brief period and the urgent measures taken by the communist government, such as the nationalization of all industry branches and mines and the confiscation of large properties.³⁸⁸ Now everything belongs to the people and the working class, reassures the text, and through these steps that were quickly undertaken the construction of the socialist life

³⁸⁷ Minga, et. al., *Të Njohim Historinë e Popullit Tonë* (1982), 43.

³⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 44.

began in the country. Another piece of information, deriving from the verbal narrative, refers to the whole attempt that was conducted under conditions of severe pressure caused by the domestic and foreign enemies.³⁸⁹ Nevertheless, the people, led by the Party and the leader Enver Hoxha, annihilated all their plans. On the last page, the text states the main means the people will use throughout the entire socialist era. These elements, one might say prematurely given in this chapter, are the pickaxe, the weapon and the book. With the exception of the pickaxe, the other two means do not appear in the visual communication. It is as if in this case the narrative is occupying a niche at the beginning, and in a way giving an outline of what should be expected. Before referring to the overall meaning as it has developed in the text and the images, it should be added that the pickaxe, the weapon and the book were first encountered on the front and back cover (Layout 1).

In an overall evaluation of the visual and verbal communication, a common line seems to have been adopted as far as the information they seek to transmit to the pupils. In short, they both describe the extremely difficult conditions prevailing during the post-war era, the voluntary mobilization of the masses to reconstruct the homeland on a socialist basis, and last, the very impressive results achieved. Despite the common approach, significant differences arise regarding the role of the Communist Party and its leader Enver Hoxha in the two modes of communication. The text supports the version that wants the communist leadership at the head of the entire mobilization, something that is not to be seen in the images. Here the absolute protagonists are the Albanian people. Another different position could be discerned in the frightening conditions of entanglement under which the efforts of the population to reconstruct the country took place. These severe difficulties were posed, according to the text, by the external and the internal enemies. Such information, of course, is not supported by the images and represents a late addition to the text. In the previous generation of textbooks, the same chapter (Layout 19, Appendices section) does not contain any reference to encirclement of the country by external or internal enemies.

Once the communists came into power, one of their first priorities became the carrying out of the land reform. In August 1945, almost a year before the proclamation of the People's Republic, the provisional democratic government passed

³⁸⁹ Ibid., 44-45.

the law on agrarian reform.³⁹⁰ It is the first intervention in the economic sector with which the building of the socialist economy officially began. Forests and pasturelands were nationalized, and large estates expropriated without compensation for landowners who had other sources of income.³⁹¹ Those dependent on farming and who used modern machinery could have no more than 40 hectares of land. Religious institutions and landowners using different means of cultivation were restricted to 20 hectares. The land was redistributed on the principle that it belongs to whoever works it. In this sense, landless peasants received a maximum of five hectares per family.³⁹² The agrarian reform was celebrated as a historical achievement by the communist leadership. According to the socialist leader Enver Hoxha, the reform brought colossal transformations that opened the way to the socialist relations of production in the countryside.³⁹³ The non-communist historiography, on the other hand, sees a carefully planned strategy on the government's side behind this first movement, which is to gain the support of the peasants, and therefore strengthening its position in the interior. At the same time, it succeeded in eliminating the pre-war economic and political elite. Furthermore, the law on the agrarian reform proved moderate when one takes into consideration the character of the ownership. The land was distributed among the peasants under the condition that it could not be sold, bought or rented.³⁹⁴

Returning to the textbooks and leaving domestic sources and foreign historiography aside for the moment, the land reform is the topic of the next chapter. Under the title "The land is ours," the narrative refers to the agrarian reform (Layout 28).

³⁹⁰ O'Donnell, *A Coming-of-Age*, 157.

³⁹¹ Nicholas C. Pano, *The People's Republic of Albania* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins Press, 1968), 61.

³⁹² Pollo and Puto, *The History of Albania*, 248.

³⁹³ Hoxha, *Laying the Foundations of the New Albania*, 539.

³⁹⁴ Prifti, *Socialist Albania*, 65; Skendi, ed., *Albania*, 160.

Menjëherë pas Clirimit, Partia mori masa për të shpëtuar edhe fshatarin nga shtypja dhe shfrytëzimi i të pasurve, që kishin në dorë tokat. Partia tha se toka i takon atij që e punon, prandaj nisi puna për zbatimin e Reformës Agrare. Tokat, vreshtat, ullishtet, kullotat, tufat e bagëti etj., iu morën ciftigjërësve, bejlerëve, kulakëve dhe gjithë të pasurve të tjerë dhe iu dhanë fshatarëve që nuk kishin fare tokë, ose që kishin shumë pak tokë. Kështu, Partia plotësoi ëndrrën shekullore të fshatarësisë. Fshatarët tani filluan të punojnë të lirë, pa shtypje e shfrytëzim, në tokën për të cilën kishin luftuar e derdhur gjak brez pas brezi.

«Toka tani është jona, nuk ka më bejlerë e agallarë. Rroftë Partia dhe shoku Enver Hoxha, që mendojnë e punojnë për ne!» Këto ishin fjalët që dëgjoje ato ditë kudo nga goja e fshatarëve. Ndarja e tokave kthehej në ditë feste, gëzimi e hareje. Kudo buçiste kënga e vallja.

Por festën e gëzimin më të madh e patën ato ditë banorët e fshatit Gorre të Lushnjes, të cilët kishin në gjirin e tyre udhëheqësin e dashur të Partisë e të popullit tonë, shokun Enver Hoxha.

Ja si u tha shoku Enver Hoxha fshatarëve të Gorresë me rastin e ndarjes së tokave:



Shoku Enver Hoxha përgëzon fshatarët e Gorresë.



Tani këto janë tokat tona.

«... Shekuj me radhë populli ynë dhe veçanërisht ju, o fshatarë, keni hequr të zezat e ullirit. Mbi kurrizin tonë shkëlqin çizmet e gjakosura të sundimtarëve gjakatarë të huaj, të bejlerëve feudale, që kurrë nuk na lanë të gëzonim pak liri, kurrë nuk na lanë të ngrinim krye. Ata ishin shushunjat, që na pinin gjakun.

«... Ju, o shokë fshatarë, kurrë s'keni pushuar së luftuari për t'ia arritur kësaj dite të madhe... Dhe kjo ditë është rezultati i përpjekjeve tona. U vramë e u premë, por ia arritëm kësaj dite të madhe...»

Me të marrë tokat, fshatarët, duke zbatuar mësimet e Partisë, filluan të bashkohen dhe të krijojnë kooperativa bujqësore. Kooperativa e parë u ngrit në fshatin Krutje të Lushnjes, në vitin 1946.

Armiqtë e ndryshëm, ciftigjërës, bejlerët dhe kulakët, nuk lanë gjë pa bërë për të penguar zbatimin e reformës Agrare dhe ngritjen e kooperativave bujqësore. Por fshatarët, të ndihmuar nga klasa punëtore, nën udhëheqjen e Partisë, u dhanë dënimin e merituar këtyre armiqtë.

Layout 28. Minga, et. al., *Të Njohim Historinë e Popullit Tonë* (1983), 46-47.

The act of providing the peasants with land is covered in both the visual and textual communication. A second immediate observation refers to the inclusion of two images, almost equal in size, depicting the very first measures the provisional government took right after the end of the war. The fact that two images have been implemented in this layout is perhaps an indicator of the significance of this measure. Two images within the same double spread have been encountered in few cases until now. Furthermore, the images seem connected to each other, but this should not preoccupy us for the moment. We will come later to this preliminary observation after having analyzed their content and the verbal communication.

Let's start the analysis of the visual part from the photograph positioned at the bottom of the left page. Coming as the given and real part of the information,³⁹⁵ in terms of social semiotics, the image depicts the communist leader Enver Hoxha in the middle of a group of people. According to the caption, Hoxha is shown while congratulating one happy peasant for having acquired his allotment. The caption also provides the

³⁹⁵ Kress and Van Leeuwen, *Reading Images*, 197.

information referring to the place where such a ceremony took place. The village of Gorre had this privilege of getting the ownership certificates directly from the hands of the communist leader Enver Hoxha. He wears a military uniform showing, or even better implying, that not many years have passed since the end the war. The war, still fresh in people's memory, is recalled in this case through the figure of the political commissar of the National Liberation Army Enver Hoxha. He represents the Communist Party of Albania, the leading force of the National Liberation Movement and the provisional government, the sole legal authority of the liberated country. Hoxha holds the post of the first secretary of the Party and is at the same time the head of the state. Under this double role and function, he comes to meet with the people. Hence, the war and the Communist Party, both evoked by the figure of the military and political leader Hoxha, appear as the guarantees of the post-war Albanian society and the joyful atmosphere dominating the photo. Cheerful and happy faces have been captured in the frame of this black and white photo. What makes these people happy has already been said in the title of the chapter. It is the implementation of the agrarian reform and the redistribution of the land to the peasants.

After these initial remarks, I will next go into further details of the photo and describe its representational, interactive and compositional meaning. To begin with the representational meaning, a narrative structure is visible once the viewers address the two main figures, the leader and the peasant. A vector formed by their arms and hands connects the two men positioned in the foreground. Their mutual gazes should be considered to be another additional vector. The presence of these vectors thus reveals to the viewers-pupils the information referring to the actor and the receiver of a certain action.³⁹⁶ The action, already known, is the distribution of the land to the peasants by way of providing the latter with the ownership certificates. The main actor from whom the vector emanates seems to be Hoxha and the receiver of it the peasant on the right. The opposite might be supported as well, when one takes into consideration that the vector is bi-directional. Hence, the peasant's arms and hands also form a vector that shows the direction of the action starting from him and ending at the leader, the receiver. However, this interpretation proves to be not that plausible due to the inferior appearance of the peasant. His inferiority has been visually given through the smaller size of his body compared to that of Hoxha. The second mean

³⁹⁶ Ibid., 59-60.

used is the position and the gesture of his body the moment the photo was captured. In an act of expressing his thankfulness, he slightly bends in front of the imposing Hoxha's physique. Such a gesture clearly shows who has the upper hand in this fragment. He is no other than the communist leader Enver Hoxha, who in the name of the actual provisional government, gives back to the people what the previous governments forcibly seized. This last detail might also explain a lot with regard to the inclusion of this concrete photo in history textbooks throughout the socialist era. A third element that shows the clear dominance of Hoxha is the dynamic downward diagonal eye line vector starting from him and ending at the peasant. Accordingly, when we address the eye line vector that starts from the peasant and reaches the leader, we realize its upward directionality and a lack of power. His gaze is a mix of admiration and thankfulness, one might observe. Again, this is a notion of visually supported inferiority, which increases when considered in the frame of the interactive meaning. To put it simply, the young, tall Hoxha looks down on the older man standing in front of him. The low angle of the depiction implemented in Hoxha's case has the effect of increasing his symbolic power over the latter man. Hoxha's power is not restricted, though, merely within the frame of the photo. It expands also over the viewers-pupils, who see the leader from a much lower angle.

Since we referred to the interactive meta-function, it should be mentioned that together with the angle, the distance of the depiction also plays a crucial role.³⁹⁷ It brings the leader and the peasant closer to the viewers. The key action of the image develops between these two figures. For the first time in the Albanian history, a revolutionary leadership recognizes the right of the people to own land. Were this not enough, a memorable ceremony was organized to officially provide the owners with the certificates of ownership. According to the image, this ceremony was personally attended by the head of the provisory government Enver Hoxha and lot of people, another sign of the popularity of this measure. The latter people are all depicted behind the two men in the foreground, who are shaking hands. In short, it is as though the photo, and more specifically the latter gesture, is insisting on the pattern of the close collaboration between the people and the Communist Party, now the sole authority in Albania. Such cooperation has been successfully implemented during the war and seems more than useful under the present conditions. Taking into

³⁹⁷ Ibid., 124-125.

consideration the above, a possible reading of the image would be the following: together, people and the Party fought and liberated the country, and together they also enter the post-war era.

This notion of close cooperation, though, is better provided in the compositional meaning of the image, to which I will now turn. People and Party, the latter given here visually through the image of its leader, appear united and this sense of unity is introduced first and foremost through the spatial arrangement of the composition in the form of center and margin.³⁹⁸ In our case, the central figure of the composition, the leader, is surrounded by the people, the margins, who appear fully connected to him. An additional visual element that stresses this notion of unity is the handshaking. The gesture of Hoxha touching the peasant's shoulder is a similar symbol. This latter gesture should be seen at the same time as a framing device that connects the two central figures. The first representing the head of the provisional government and the Communist Party, and the second the Albanian people. Therefore, the two sides appear connected in a strong bond at the dawn of the socialist era. Perhaps this is the entire meaning of this photo. Last, it should be mentioned that as far as the compositional meaning regards, the leader continues to stand out in several aspects. His size and sharpness make him the most conspicuous figure of the photo. He is the one who stands alone for the biggest achievement of the recent past, he represents the guarantor of the present, and above all shows the path the united community must follow in the future.

Moving to the opposite page, another image focuses on distribution of land. The image included here seems once again to have been inspired by a renowned painting, in this case belonging to Abdulla Cangonji (Image 8, Appendices section). Many people have been depicted in the frame of this simple sketch painting, who, as in the previous case, appear happy. The atmosphere is festive. Musical instruments and dancing people are shown in the left corner. In the center, one might observe the main action of the painting, the measurement of an agricultural area that will later be provided to the people. One happy peasant has already received his allotment on the right-bottom corner and appears with an ownership certificate in his hands. His

³⁹⁸ Ibid., 194-195.

potential wife and child look happy and gaze at him. In the caption one could read: “Now these lands belong to us.”

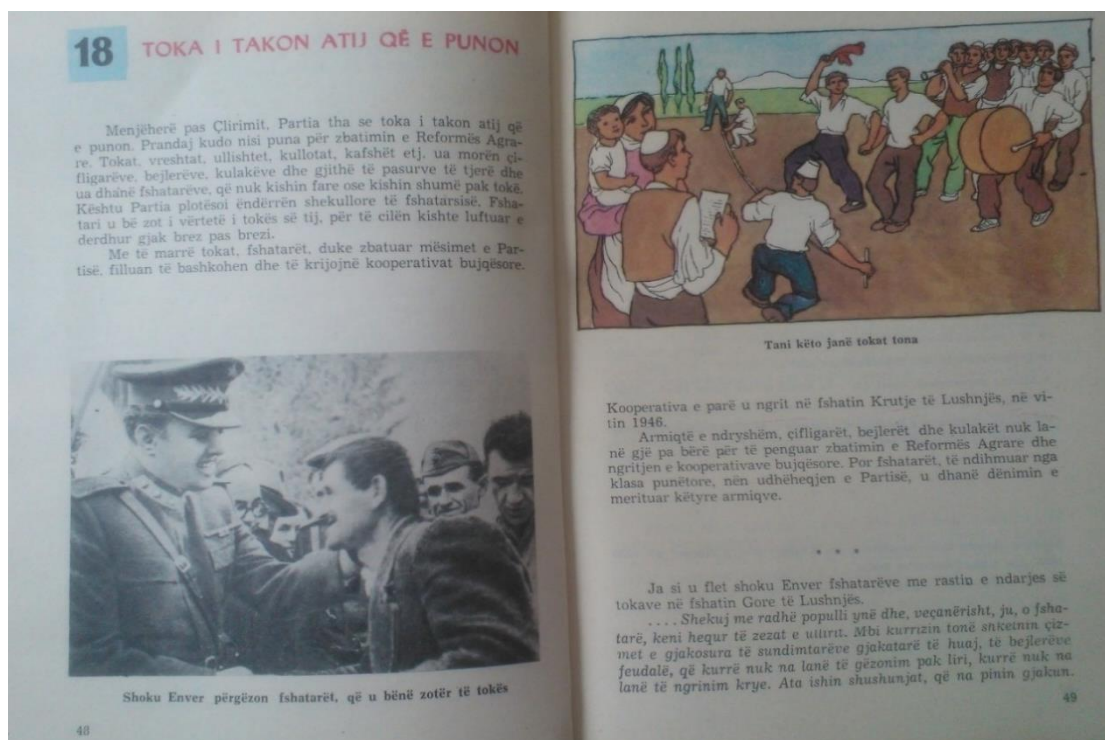
Considering the placement of the image within the double page, it occupies the top of the right page. This means that it is presented as the ideal and at the same time new part of the information. The ideal in terms of visual social semiotics holds for the idealized or generalized essence of the information, therefore, its ideologically most salient part, possibly supported by its real counterpart appearing at the bottom of the page and the text. For the moment, what we have as the real and already known information is the photo appearing at the bottom of the opposite page. The new on the opposite page holds for something not yet known to the reader, and as a result something on which we are asked to focus. Following this interpretation, we are asked to focus on the image placed at the top of the right page showing the people celebrating this historical achievement.

Going a step further with the layout structure and before entering the content of this second image, the fulfillment of this perennial dream was possible thanks to the contribution of the Party and its leader Enver Hoxha. Hoxha supplied the people with land. He provided them with the certificates of ownership, something that has been documented in the photo positioned at the bottom of the left page. When considering the framing of the double spread, this real photo focusing on Hoxha’s action seems diagonally connected to the ideal section showing the people’s reaction at the top of the opposite page. A visual axis has been formed between the two images and is based on the action-reaction relationship. The measures taken right after the end of the war caused much joy among the population. Music and dancing accompany the very first implementation of the land’s reform in a painting, where the absolute protagonists are the people. This is the outcome of this very first intervention of the provisional Albanian government, according to the images. The people celebrate this historical event guaranteed by the Party, its leader, and above all the recent successful war, as the military uniform of Enver Hoxha subtly reminds us.

When we compare the placement of the elements in the frame of the layout to the one of the previous period 1972-1977 (Layout 20, Appendices section), we realize that the above-discussed diagonal connection of the images is a development of the late years. Initially the visual communication was all positioned on the left page in an ideal and

real polarization. Together with the layout's structure, alterations could also be observed in the painting itself. The photo on the other hand, showing the ceremony that took place in the village of Gorre, remained untouched. Below, I will turn to the content of the painting implemented during the seventies (Layout 20, Appendices section), and briefly address the changes it underwent over the years. Let us start with the compositional meaning. The participants are positioned along the dimensions of the center and margin. The central action the composition refers to is the measure of land. Three men are shown measuring a piece of land with the help of some instruments. They are surrounded on both sides by people and a young boy is positioned quite close to them. Up to this point, no substantial change could be observed. The only difference, when compared to the image implemented during the eighties (Layout 28), discussed above, is the figure of a young boy positioned quite close to the central action. Another difference could be observed in the use of color and placement in space of the remaining participants.

In the following years and more concretely in 1978, the painting experienced the first significant shift (Layout 29). The figure of the young boy positioned in the center of the image was removed. Another change regards the depiction of the people on both sides, who look different in this version.



Layout 29. Minga, et. al., *Të Njohim Historinë e Popullit Tonë* (1978), 48-49.

Let us focus on these changes and begin with the three participants in the left corner. They appear to have turned slightly towards the viewers, who are now able to distinguish their expressions. The second and most notable change turns our attention to the people shown in the upper-right corner. In the current image (Layout 29), which was used solely during the year 1978, they appear as a large and dynamic compact group playing musical instruments, singing and dancing. Their powerful appearance has been made possible due to the use of a conceptual representation, more concretely a classificational structure that relates the depicted participants to each other according to their common belonging to the same group, or class.³⁹⁹ Similarly depicted and arranged symmetrically in space, the people form a solid group, the members of which are strongly connected to each other. This powerful group of people and citizens, consisting exclusively of young men, more resembles an army, or, one might add, a military unit. Furthermore, this group is larger when compared to the three figures standing on the opposite side. Their placement in space hides one more detail. They are placed in a downward diagonal line. Furthermore, their tilted bodies enhance this notion of obliqueness, which form a very dynamic diagonal vector directed towards the left of the page. With the exception of the first three or four participants who are dancing and playing musical instruments, the remaining figures are immobile, positioned behind them. However, the latter participants, who are positioned in the background, give the impression of moving in the frame of the image. This is a kind of visual manipulation that generates movement and does not exist in real terms. Taken together, it is as though the group of the celebrating people is marching towards the left of the image. The direction of this march has been visually provided by the diagonal vector that points to the left corner, or even outside the frame of the image. Always standing there are the three figures, who might be considered to be members of the same family: father, mother and their little baby.

Remaining for a while on the image and the structuring of the elements within its frame, in our case the depicted participants, their placement soon proved dysfunctional and underwent a novel change. In the textbook issued in 1979, the family members moved to the right-bottom corner, whereas the group of people moved to the opposite left-top corner. This was the definite format of the image that has never changed since then (Layout 28). The above-discussed march of the people-

³⁹⁹ Ibid., 79.

soldiers is in this version directed towards the right corner, or it might even expand out of the frame of the image. In terms of socialist realism, the people's orientation towards the right signifies the future. The meaning in this case would be a powerful march forward into the new socialist era. An additional feature of this march is the sense of collectivity it brings to the fore, which is opposed to the individual representation of the peasant and his family on the opposite side. Last, it should be mentioned that except for the image that has remained the same since then, the structure of the layout did not experience any further amendments during the years 1979-1984.

After having traced the evolution of the visual communication and the layout's structure, I will come back to the double-spread in use from 1979 to 1984 (Layout 28). The analysis will focus next on the image positioned at the top of the right page and discuss its compositional, interactive and representational meaning. To begin with the compositional structure, the participants seem divided into two groups or camps. Such a division is possible thanks to the presence of several framing devices. The first visual device represents the empty space left between the large celebrating group of people and the family members, and the second is the instrument the men use to measure the land that creates a similar divisive line. In terms of interactive meaning, the distance from which the two divided groups are depicted plays a key role here. The viewers-pupils are asked to focus more on the figure of the peasant and his family. They are positioned closer to the viewers and ask for their attention. We will now zoom in on the peasant and his family, who are positioned in the right corner, and discuss a few more inner details. Let us start from the figure of the young peasant who has turned his back to the viewers and holds a document in his hands. This document is most likely a legal title of ownership that gives him the right to possess a piece of land that the members of the commission have just provided him. The first thing that we observe is his very young age and, at the same time, his height. His figure resembles more a young adolescent rather than a man. While he holds the extremely valuable document in his left hand, he embraces his potential wife and child with his right arm. They both have visual contact with him. The young boy, on the other hand, does not see them. He has turned to the opposite side and gazes at the group of celebrating people. The term of potential wife and child has been preferred at this point because of his young age and his short stature, which seems controversial

when compared to the figure of the woman standing next to him. She looks older and is taller compared to the boy. Therefore, it is more likely that she is his mother and not his wife. The child she holds in her arms is perhaps his sibling.

The above interpretation opens a new perspective concerning the reading of the central message of the image. At the same time, this makes us think that the three participants have already been encountered at a previous episode of the national community. Indeed, the three figures appeared in a previous chapter referring to the miserable situation in the country during the pre-war period (Layout 8). In this chapter, both verbal and visual communication focused on the violent act of confiscation of the people's property by the mercenary troops of Ahmet Zogu. There, the same three figures appeared, the young boy and his mother holding a baby. The message in this case was more than apparent: the previous government of Zogu confiscated their land and violently removed their father and husband from the cottage. Anger and dedication permeated the faces of the young boy and the masculine mother's figure. What was more significant in this previous image was the arising of the young boy to the position of the protector of the family after the violent removal of his father. This brought, as we observed above, the hopeful message of life's continuation, while heralding the imminent end of the existing social and political order.

Nowadays, and coming back to the current layout (Layout 28), the situation in the country seems to have undergone a radical change. In the aftermath of a successful war and given that a new government has come into power, the land has been given back to the peasants. They suffered during the past. In the present, though, they are guaranteed their right to possess land and property. Together with the deep reforms in the social and political domains, the three protagonists referred to above have changed as well. The last time they were encountered was at the close the 1930s. Five years have passed, which is visible in their bodies and faces. The little boy grew and became almost an adult, whereas the same happened with his mother and sibling. The mother appears relatively older, and the baby is now a toddler. This latter remark allows the viewers to make a direct connection between the two layouts and images. What was heralded in the previous years now comes true. The land has been distributed to the same people and this is a fact. However, this alone is not the issue at stake in this case. What is more significant in my opinion is the kind of the

communication established between the past and the present of the community. In fact, such a connection includes a concomitant comparison with the past. In other words, the viewers and pupils are familiar with the scene and the depicted characters, and immediately compare the two eras. This is done automatically and most likely at a subconscious level, as we can imagine, with the aim to stress the value of the current communist government.

Remaining for a while on the three figures, significant shifts could be also observed when compared to the earlier version of the same image. For instance, in the current version the ownership's title goes directly into the hands of the young boy instead of his father's. The figure of the father and husband has been removed from the later revisions (Layout 28 and 29), and this represents a crucial differentiation in the content of the image. Perhaps his presence posed further difficulties in the attempt to connect the two images and periods. By means of taking into consideration this last visual detail, it is as if the image were continuing from the previous scene where the same three protagonists were left (Layout 8). It informs the pupils that the years have passed, and that the young boy has almost become a man. He has taken responsibility for his family. The father, who was taken away by the Zogu forces, perhaps is too old or died in prison. His fate is unclear, but this is not that crucial here. The visual account has now been built around the young boy's figure, now the key actor. By making use of cinematic techniques, such as the flashback narrative, it constructs a bridge with the ominous past to accentuate the value of the prosperous present. Seen from a general perspective, the historical narrative here again turns into cinematic viewing from where the pupils experience the historical process of the national community. In this historical process, it all turned out for the best. The luminosity of this new era has been visually given in the use of bright colors.

Returning to the family members, when one pays attention to the expression on the mother's face, they reveal, apart from satisfaction, a mix of expectancy and concern. She has turned to the young boy and smiles with pleasure, and the same holds true for the little child. The eye-line connection brings to the surface a narrative structure. Prior to entering the representational meaning of the image, the boy's gaze should be also mentioned, which is directed towards the group of people on the opposite side. This forms a second narrative asking for further explanation. To explain the latter observations, we should examine in detail these two narrative structures that came to

the fore. They might provide some information regarding the action, the actors and the receivers of it.

To begin with the first narrative structure developing among the family members, the main actors from whom the vector emanates seem to be the mother and the child and the receiver is the young boy. He, on the other hand, does not look at them but has turned to the group of celebrating people. Despite the fact he does not have visual contact with his mother and sibling, he embraces them. This results in a second vector that reverses the roles and makes him the main actor. His gesture might be translated as an attempt to reassure the preoccupied mother, in a way saying to her that from now on everything will be better. There is also another detail that makes him the key figure of the painting. He firmly holds the certificate of ownership in his hands, the most precious achievement of the present. The present already looks different after such a development, although our protagonist seems to be preoccupied by the future. To put it differently, after having received the land, what is he supposed to do with it? This also seems to be the main preoccupation of the mother, who turns to her son, now the family's decision-maker, for a response. This is also perhaps the chief question the whole image foregrounds. He appears to have a solution to this critical issue. He takes the family members by the hand and shows them the way to the very next day. This path passes from the opposite side, where the people stand. His eye line-vector brings us this latter information, which on its own generates further questions. How are the family members supposed to react once they have acquired their piece of land and property? Should they undertake an individual or family-scale farming or is it more profitable to join the people and enter a collective enterprise? Moreover, what is the meaning of getting on the other side in terms of agricultural production and why should they undertake this step? Does this novel and dynamic collective offer something more to the family that they cannot achieve on their own? What makes these people happy, whereas the members of the family seem concerned?

All these questions might be answered merely if we return to the compositional meaning and the division between the two camps that the image suggests. We should take also into consideration the symbolic meanings implemented in this case. Before entering these symbolisms, we should mention that the collective enterprise and the dynamic of the group makes it attractive to the young boy. A few lines above, we observed that the two groups, on the one hand the celebrating people, and on the other

the family members, are disconnected from each other. On the one side stand a large group of people, while on the other a young peasant with his mother and sibling. A notion of contrast and polarization is visible between the collective group and the individual of the representation. However, this sense of conflict was gradually minimized and substituted by the expressed desire of the peasant to join the group. Up to this point, all the observations are derived solely from the visual communication and the analysis of its parts. To be able to perceive the intended meaning, we must leave aside for a while the image and focus on some concepts that came to the surface, among others collectivity and individuality. Both concepts, approached from the perspective of political philosophy, stand for different socio-economic systems. The latter represents capitalism, a system of private ownership in which the means of production, property and distribution of wealth is controlled by private individuals. The first is socialism, where social ownership is the principal doctrine. The state and the community, consisting of workers or peasants, are in charge of the means of production. From the above, a collective form of social, economic and political organization of the society results. Such a collective model of administration is at odds with the individualistic paradigm that capitalism sets forth. The same division between the capitalist and socialist system seems to be the main theme when we return to the image. The Albanian society stands at the crossroads, the image appears to say. The country will either follow the dynamic path of socialism or will remain in the pre-war state of affairs and capitalism. The image, therefore, foregrounds a dilemma. To put it in the context of agriculture and land ownership, it can be reformulated into the following: should the peasants choose the private ownership, or should they go for the option of collectivization? To this question, the young boy is called to take a definite position. Both options appear reasonable, but the act of joining of the group seems much more appealing to the boy. The notion of private profit cannot compensate the feeling of common ownership, solidarity, fellowship and equality that the opposite system promises. Therefore, the crossing of the borderline prevails as a necessity, not only for the present but mostly concerning the future. Second and more significant, the decision is presented as the people's will. According to the image, it is the farmer's initiative to become a member of the group and enter the agriculture cooperatives. In addition, the collectivization of agriculture is, in any case, opposed by the peasants. On the contrary, it appears as a voluntary process and an adequate measure for the establishment of the socialist order in the countryside.

Moving a step further with the analysis of the layout, I will refer at this point to the verbal communication. The text follows the visual narrative and restates what the pupils have already experienced in the above-discussed images. It informs them of the confiscation of large estates and the redistribution of land based on the principle, “The land belongs to whoever works it,” which is at the same time the title of the current chapter. The Party, continues the text, fulfilled the eternal dream of the peasantry through the implementation of the land reform. Before moving to the opposite page, the text describes the ceremony organized in a small village in southern Albania and attended by the communist leader Enver Hoxha. In a historical meeting, he awarded the land certificates to the joyful locals, the text informs us. The main actor in this first section is the Party, which, through its leader, distributed the land to the people. He also delivered a historical speech, the content of which is quoted on the right page. Among other things, Hoxha stressed the contribution of the peasants and connected the present achievement with the wars they conducted throughout the centuries. The content of this historical speech remained untouched through the years except for one single section. In the current layout (Layout 28), the concluding message of Hoxha to the peasants was erased. Here we find the following information:

This land belongs merely to you and will be yours forever. ... I and the council of ministers congratulate you for the land you acquired. We wish you to long live and enjoy it in years. Long live the Albanian peasants.⁴⁰⁰

In the current edition issued during the self-isolation era (Layout 28), the above-stated missing part of the speech has been filled by a short reference to the very next day following the reform. According to the verbal narrative, the farmers, following the suggestion of the Party, united and established the first agricultural cooperatives in the countryside.⁴⁰¹ The difficulties posed by the pre-war landowners could not prevent the implementation of the reform and the collectivization of the agricultural sector, concludes the text. This seems to be the heart of the verbal communication that is provided in two steps. First, the redistribution of land to the landless peasantry is mentioned, followed next by the gradual transformation towards the collectivization

⁴⁰⁰ Minga et.al, *Të Njohim Historinë e Popullit Tonë* (1976), 35.

⁴⁰¹ Minga, et. al., *Të Njohim Historinë e Popullit Tonë* (1983), 47.

of property. Compared to the visual narrative, there are not many differences. The key message in both modes is the collectivization of agriculture right after the land reform in 1945. This made way for the socialist developments in the countryside. In case we reached this information in the image through the gaze of the young peasant indirectly, in the text it is clearly stated. What followed the reform was the collectivization of the land. The first agriculture cooperative was established in 1946 in the village of Krutje, the text informs us.⁴⁰²

After having analyzed the visual, verbal and compositional structure of the layout, it would be useful to add some comments concerning its overall multimodal message. Given the long analysis, this section will attempt to reassemble the most crucial observations in a few sentences. First to be mentioned is the constant evolution of the three elements, visual, verbal, as well as the structure of the layout. They were all submitted to alterations through the years until they reached a definite form in the early eighties. Moreover, when considering their placement, size and conspicuousness, the visual communication seems to take the lead in this layout. The leading position of the visual communication has been furthermore crystallized in the question section. The first two questions turn exclusively to the content of the images. The visual narrative consists of two images, in which the implementation of the land reform and the process of collectivization of agriculture in Albania is shown in detail. The most significant aspect concerning the visual communication is the fact that the people's autonomous decision to create the agricultural cooperatives is stressed. It was not a spontaneous decision, the painting tells us, but it was based on the grounds of a better and more prosperous future. The text, serving as a commentary narrative to the dominating visual one, repeats the same message. Only a few alterations might be observed between the two narratives. For example, the text fails to emphasize the self-character of the decision and refers to the Party's involvement in this historical decision. According to the verbal communication, the people acted by means of putting into practice the Party's directives.

In an overall consideration of the meaning, both modes mirror the Party's cautious line regarding the agricultural economy. In fact, they precisely document the measures taken by the provisional government to put agriculture under the state's firm

⁴⁰² Ibid., 47.

control. This meant the nationalization of the land and collectivization of agriculture. These measures, however, were unpopular among the peasantry,⁴⁰³ and the government needed their support to remain in power during this critical period.⁴⁰⁴ Instead of the policy of immediate nationalization, a gradualist approach was adopted.⁴⁰⁵ The first step was the promulgation of the land reform in 1945, through which the largest part of the land was nationalized and distributed among the peasants. Large estates did not exist anymore, and the rival class of landowners was thus vanquished. In this sense, the first aim was already achieved. The pre-war economic and political elites were eliminated. Thus, the government managed to gain the full support of the peasantry. The second step saw the beginning of the collectivization of agriculture. In 1946, the first agricultural cooperative in the country was established. Again, this measure was gradually introduced, and anyone could foresee the total collectivization of land that would be achieved in the sixties. By 1960, more than 86 percent of the country's agriculture was collectivized.⁴⁰⁶

The way the communist leadership chose to deal with the transformation of the agricultural sector of the economy shows, according to Peter Prifti, a strategy based on persuasion and education of peasantry, supplemented by the use of force when needed.⁴⁰⁷ In textbooks, such a need for pressure from above was not visible. The masses either autonomously decided to build the socialist order in the countryside, according to the image, or followed the suggestion of the Party, as the text informed us. In the first case, we have a voluntary process, which in the text was substituted by a movement engineered by the Party. Despite their contradictory content, both interpretations move to the background when the impressive achievement is considered. The collectivization of land brought the community a step further to what we have previously referred to as laying the foundations of the socialist society.

Before ending this chapter, it would be useful to refer in short to the title and its transformations over the years. It shifted from "The land belongs to whoever works it" throughout the seventies (Layout 20, Appendices section), to "The land is ours" (Layout 28). The title represents the best example to document the development of the

⁴⁰³ Hall, *Albania and the Albanians*, 122.

⁴⁰⁴ Pano, *The People's Republic of Albania*, 60-61.

⁴⁰⁵ Prifti, *Socialist Albania*, 65.

⁴⁰⁶ *Ibid*, 66.

⁴⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 65.

layout and the ideological message it carries. During the seventies, the message was restricted merely to the distribution of land to the people and their families. By the end of the seventies and until the early eighties, the collectivization process that agriculture underwent right after the war was introduced in the text and images. This shift, however, was not mirrored in the title, which continued under the old motto. From 1982 onwards, title, text and images were all supporting the same argument. They brought to the foreground the collectivization of agriculture in Albania. The title underlines the very fact that the land does not belong to the individuals but is part of the community, which is now in charge of the means of production in the countryside.

Last, we will address the summary of the whole chapter given in a single sentence. In this concluding sentence pupils could read: “The land reform successfully ended in 1946 and provided the peasantry with land.”⁴⁰⁸ Despite the validity of this sentence, it does not correspond to the entire message of the chapter, focusing first and foremost on the collectivization of agriculture. The distribution of land was merely the very first measure in a series of interventions that allowed the nationalization of land and its gradual placement under the state’s control. In this case, it seems as though the chapter is making its last attempt to persuade the pupils that the land was distributed among the people and it remained once and forever in their hands. In fact, the land was divided and given to the people initially, only to return to the state later. This was steadily achieved through the collectivization of agriculture and the establishment of the cooperatives and the state farms. The creation of the socialist state property began in the year 1946.

The path towards the construction of socialism passed through major interventions in key sectors of economy. In the post-war years, the Albanian government adopted a model of central-planning and gave priority to heavy industry.⁴⁰⁹ The control of the national economy according to a unique state plan was adopted from the Soviet Union, asserts the communist historiography.⁴¹⁰ However, such a model had to be implemented in the Albanian country, where primitive conditions characterized the agricultural and industrial sector. The poor road system should be added to these inherited conditions. Roads were either in primitive conditions or completely

⁴⁰⁸ Minga, et. al., *Të Njohim Historinë e Popullit Tonë* (1983), 48.

⁴⁰⁹ Biberaj, *Albania: A Socialist Maverick*, 68.

⁴¹⁰ Pollo and Puto, *The History of Albania*, 251-252.

lacking.⁴¹¹ The war also caused severe damage to the existing network of highways, constructed in large part in the years 1920-1943 by the Albanian and the Italian governments.⁴¹² Furthermore, Albania was the only country in Europe without rail service. Such a situation posed a further challenge for the current socialist leadership. From the very first months, the destroyed bridges and means of communications were reconstructed, and new roads were opened throughout the Albanian territory.⁴¹³ In the year 1947, the first national railway line was inaugurated. The rail network would later expand towards the north and south, in an effort the communist leadership made to connect both urban and industrial centers of the country.

Following these first introductory notes, let us turn to the textbooks and see how they refer to the critical issue of construction, or, better said, reconstruction, of the infrastructure during the post-war period. Under the title “The youth in the first line of work,” the narrative introduces the pupils to the new chapter. The title is supported by a subtitle that makes the topic clear and reads “The first railway.” Taken together, both title and subtitle inform the pupils of the main actors and the result of their action right from the very beginning of the chapter. The protagonists are the young Albanians, who contributed in the construction of the first railway in Albania, the result of their action. This compact narrative pattern, implemented in the very beginning, has also been adopted by the rest of the chapter, be it in text or images.

To begin with the verbal communication, the initial paragraph informs the readers that the new task was undertaken exclusively by the youth. In addition, they voluntarily joined the labor brigades for the building of the new railway in Albania. The enthusiasm and joyful atmosphere escalated during their departure. They worked under harsh conditions and against the enemies’ plans, while never abandoning their position, continues the text.⁴¹⁴ As a result of their work and sacrifices, on the 8th of November 1947 the first railway line was inaugurated. The line connected the cities of Durrës and Peqin. On the inauguration day, the leader Enver Hoxha was present. He was received with applause by thousands of people. The text continues in the second part with the youth’s contribution, which not restricted solely to the construction of the railway. They were also involved in numerous state projects. The Albanian youth,

⁴¹¹ Ibid., 151.

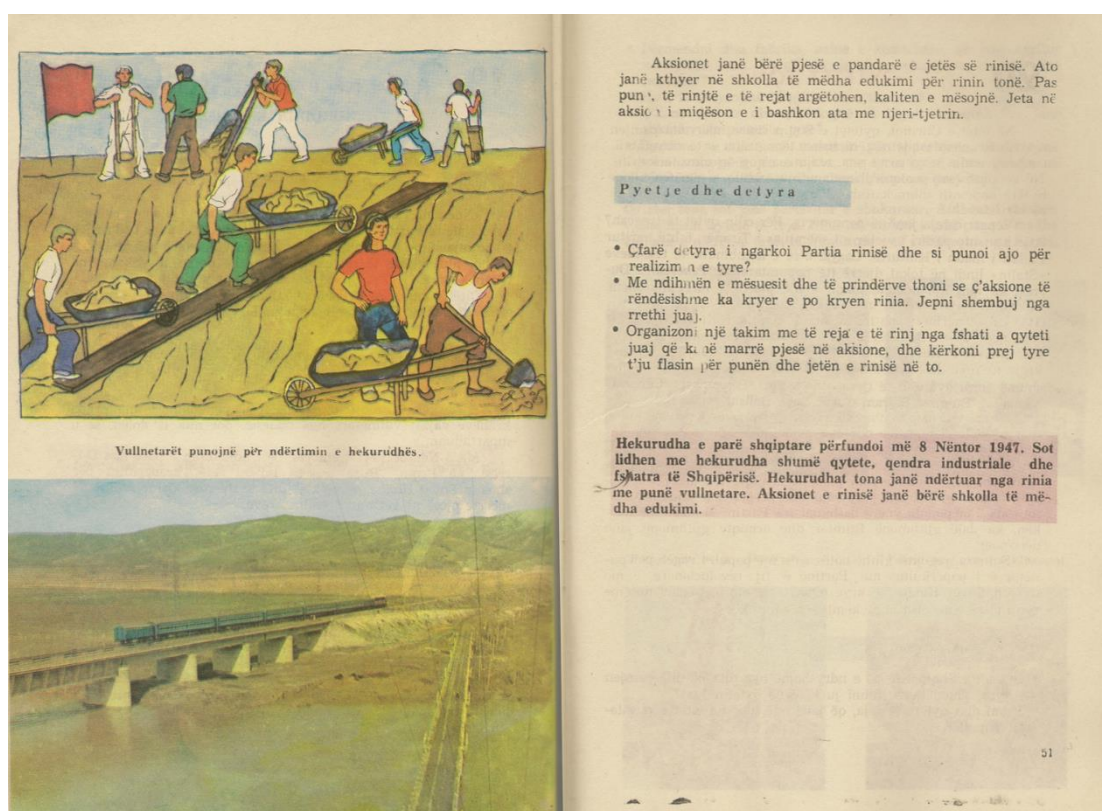
⁴¹² Skendi, ed., *Albania*, 240-242.

⁴¹³ Pollo and Puto, *The History of Albania*, 249.

⁴¹⁴ Minga, et. al., *Të Njohim Historinë e Popullit Tonë* (1982), 49.

according to the text, represent the deciding factor that helped in the construction of the socio-economic basis of socialism in the country. These voluntary actions, concludes the text, became a permanent character and were transformed into large educational and socialization centers for the young people.⁴¹⁵

The youth's mobilization in the post-war years has been praised in the visual communication as well (Layout 30). With the inclusion of two images, the youth's mobilization on top and the results of their action at the bottom is concomitantly shown. Again, one can discern the common pattern of action and result in the visual narrative, already addressed in the text and the chapter's title.



Layout 30. Minga, et. al., *Të Njohim Historinë e Popullit Tonë* (1982), 50-51.

Prior to dealing with the content of the images, let us focus on the arrangement of the visual and verbal elements within the frame of the layout. In this double spread, a given and new polarization has been chosen. The visual elements constitute the given part, which is presented as something familiar to the reader. On the opposite page comes the second part of the text, the question section and the summary paragraph in a pale pink frame. On its own, the visual part is further divided into two parts and

⁴¹⁵ Ibid., 51.

follows a top and bottom polarization. At the top, a painting shows the youth in action, whereas at the bottom a photo depicts their achievements. The first railway line and a modern highway are captured in this frame. The photo selected here, perhaps wanting to further stress the complicated nature of the achievement, focuses on a segment built over a river that includes two large bridges. This is the present-day Albania, the photo tells us, which at the same time comes as the real part of the information. This is to be assumed not only from the use of a photo that documents the developments in the transportation's infrastructure, but more from the position of the latter at the bottom of the page. Referring to the theory of visual social semiotics, the elements placed in the lower section should be considered to be the real part, providing to the reader specific information and more down to earth information.⁴¹⁶ To this specific information a more ideal is opposed at the top. There, the mass mobilization of the young Albanians, presented as the idealized and generalized essence of the information, is depicted.⁴¹⁷ Hereby, this section takes the leading role of the whole layout and turns into its most salient part. Ideal and real, following the page's structure, are clearly divided and at the same time connected to each other. This connection is made possible by the caption of the painting, which is positioned in the center of the left page. It has the function of the mediator between the ideal and factual information, where one could read: "The volunteers work for the construction of the railway." The ideal message on top, structured around the theme of work, is therefore connected to the real at the bottom and to the results of their work. The contemporary rail and highway roads constructed in the country during the first years of the socialist rule are to be seen. Following the latter observations, a vertical triptych representational structure emerges.⁴¹⁸ Such a structure tells the readers-pupils, in the best way, that it was only the work of the young people that made the modernization of the country possible. The significance of the message increases when one considers the fact that it has been repeated in the verbal communication.

Going into the inner details of the images, there are not many differences in comparison to the previous generation of textbooks (Layout 21, Appendices section). The only change is the introduction of a female figure in the male-dominated painting. She is positioned almost in the forefront and wears a red T-shirt that makes her

⁴¹⁶ Kress and Van Leeuwen, *Reading Images*, 186-187.

⁴¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 187.

⁴¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 198.

conspicuous. It is interesting to note that except for her hair she does not possess any other characteristic that would allude to her being a woman. Quite the opposite, she resembles more a young man who equally contributes in building the basis of socialism in the country. Moreover, a notion of passiveness might be assumed from the fact that she is the only participant not working, whereas all the rest are involved in some kind of activity. She is more posing for the viewers rather than working hard. Despite this latter observation, she plays a significant role in this painting. Her gaze, directed towards the right and expanding out of the frame, forms a vector that might be interpreted as a vector showing the community's future. This future is socialism, as the red flag at the top of the composition reminds us, which passes through the present construction of its materialist basis. The path the people must follow does not seem easy, but it appears in any case achievable. The collective character of their effort provides a guarantee in this direction. The first results of their work are already visible at the bottom of the page, where a modern highway and railway are depicted. These are extraordinary achievements for a small and backward country in such a brief period, but this is only the beginning, the image appears to say. What has been shown here is merely the initial stage of an ongoing process that will continue and more likely will culminate in the future. This notion of continuous progress is visualized in the diagonal vectors formed by both highway and railway lines. They start from the background, cross the entire the photo diagonally and expand somewhere out of its frame. Such an expansion out of the photo's frame symbolizes the future progress and is a common characteristic of the socialist realist painting that has been encountered in several examples above.

Prior to dealing with the overall meaning, the summary section on the opposite side will be briefly addressed. Once again, the contribution of the youth in the construction of the first national railway and the voluntary character of their mobilization has been mentioned. Another significant detail, well hidden behind this spirit of voluntarism, is the very fact that the reconstruction of Albania on a socialist basis was achieved not without foreign aid. In fact, the establishment of the socialist order in the country was fully dependent on external allies. This external contribution, though, does not appear in the texts. They insist rather on the domestic factor and voluntary work. Here, the message of the entire chapter should be seen as a hymn to voluntarism and the domestic factor that solely contributed to the reconstruction the homeland. By means

of bringing to the forefront the people's contribution, the narrative manages to overshadow, not to say completely abolish, the external factor. This represents the official communist version, which we have seen implemented in the textbooks as well. According to the Albanian historians Stefanaq Pollo and Arben Puto, voluntary and unpaid work played a crucial role in the reconstruction of the country in the first years following the war.⁴¹⁹ Furthermore, this strenuous task would never have been achieved were it not for the economic assistance coming from abroad. The historian Elez Biberaj argues that Albania has a long history of dependence on foreign assistance that continued in the post-war era. The continuous alliances with Yugoslavia, the Soviet Union and China between the years 1945-1978 provided the Albanian government with the needed economic support that allowed them to pursue a policy of heavy industrialization and self-reliance in most sectors of economy.⁴²⁰ According to Miranda Vickers, in the critical year of 1946, Belgrade granted to Albania the needed economic assistance and food supply.⁴²¹ It is of significance to note that Yugoslavia also provided the rails and engines for the first railway in the country.⁴²² The financial aid coming from the United Nations for the Relief and Rehabilitation Administration program was also significant for the survival of the Albanian economy in the first two years following the war. Nicholas Pano estimates the total amount to be 26 million US dollars.⁴²³

Let me insist somehow more on the issue of the voluntary work that is excessively emphasized in this chapter. We have seen and read that it was the youth's mobilization that mainly contributed to the rebuilding of the infrastructure, roads and railway that were destroyed from the war. To put it simply, they voluntarily undertook all the work and, relying on a collective basis, succeeded in very short time to fulfill this challenging task. Contrary to what the texts support, the historian Stavro Skendi informs us that all road construction in the country was done by penal or voluntary compulsory labor.⁴²⁴ In the first line, the political prisoners were to be found, who were mostly used for the building or repairing of the damaged roads. Also significant, according to Skendi, was the contribution of the youth, who formed the labor

⁴¹⁹ Pollo and Puto, *The History of Albania*, 249.

⁴²⁰ Biberaj, *Albania: A Socialist Maverick*, 67-68.

⁴²¹ Vickers, *The Albanians*, 167.

⁴²² *Ibid.*, 167.

⁴²³ Pano, *The People's Republic of Albania*, 72.

⁴²⁴ Skendi, ed., *Albania*, 244.

brigades. A similar position about the unpaid services of young people and political prisoners is also supported by Anton Logoreci.⁴²⁵ Hence, what is primarily contested by modern historiography is the voluntary character of the youth's mobilization and work. In fact, this kind of voluntarism, the texts say, had a compulsory character and was not exactly the people's will.

Going a step further, the construction of the economic basis of socialism continued unabated in the Albanian territory during the early post-war years. In the following two chapters, the historical narrative focuses on these significant developments. The first chapter turns to the construction of the socio-economic basis of socialism in the urban centers, and the second concentrates on the developments in the countryside. To begin with the urban centers, let us first address the twentieth chapter (Layout 31). This double-page layout, which at the same time represents a whole chapter on its own, bears the title: "Our cities." The left page consists of text and the right seems to be dominated by the visual communication. A collage of four photos showing several Albanian cities is accompanied by the summary of the whole chapter placed above them. Referring to the theory of visual social semiotics, the text represents the given part of the information and the images represent the new. The new part is something not yet known to the readers, and therefore it asks for their attention. Concomitantly, these photos are positioned at the bottom of the page and thus gain the status of factual information. They provide documentary evidence concerning the radical transformations in the Albanian cities during the post-war years. I will initially address the content of the images prior to dealing with the verbal and multimodal message of the layout.

⁴²⁵ Anton Logoreci, *The Albanians. Europe's Forgotten Survivors* (London: Gollancz, 1977), 146.

Në vitet e Clirimit, qytetet e Shqipërisë e ndërruan pamjen e tyre. Rrugicat e vjetra tërë baltë, të ngushta e të shtrembra, ua lanë vendin rrugëve të reja, të shtruara, të gjera e tërë drifto. Në vendin e shtëpive përdhese, me mure balte, u ngritën blloqe të tëra banesash shumëkatëshe. Parku, lulishte, vende lojërash të zë svri kudo.

Veprat e reja janë të panumërta. Për cilin qytet të tregosh? Atje ku ishte pazari i vjetër e i shëmtuar i Tiranës, është ngritur Pallati i madh i Kulturës. Lagjja e re e kombinatit të tekstileve «Stalin» lindi në tokat djerrë (të papunuara) të Yzberishit. Durrësi ka tani një port të madh e një plazh të mrekullueshëm. Bulvardi i Portokalleve në Vlorë të mahnit me bukurinë e tij. Atje ku sot ngrihet zona industriale e qytetit të Korçës, më parë kanë qenë dy-tri punishte hekurxhinjsh. Fieri, Lushnja, Peshkopia, Burreli. Permeti e shumë qytete të tjera pothuajse u ngritën krejt të reja. Pas Clirimit, hartës së Atdheut iu situan edhe shumë emra qytetesh të tjera, si: Maliqi, Përrenjasi, Cërriku, Memaliaj, Bulqiza, Bajram Curri, Laçi, Ballshi etj.

Uzina, fabrika, kombinat e shumë vepra të tjera janë ndërtuar në qytetet tona me punën e palodhur e krijuese të punëtorëve tanë duarartë. Të gjitha këto janë arritur duke u mbështetur në forcat tona dhe në luftë për të kapërcyer pengesat e vështirësitë dhe për të shkatërruar planet e armiqve të Partisë e të popullit tonë, të cilët janë përpjekur dhe përpigën të zhdukin fitoret tona. Por populli ynë, i bashkuar me Partinë si mishi me kockën, ka dalë gjithmonë fitimtar dhe armiqet gjithmonë janë dërruar.

Sot ne i tregojmë gjithë botës, se si një popull i vogël, por punëtor e i papërkulur, me Partinë e tij revolucionare e me shokun Enver Hoxha në krye, ndërton e mbron socializmin në syrin pishë e me gishtin në këmbëzën e pushkës.

PËVETJE DHE DETYRA

- Qytetet e Shqipërisë po e ndryshojnë nga dita në ditë pamjen e tyre. Thoni ku e shihni ju këtë në qytetin tuaj?
- Thoni disa qytete të reja, që janë ndërtuar në vitet e pushtetit popullor.

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- Përmendni disa fabrika, uzina e kombinat, që janë ngritur në qytetet tona. Po në qytetin dhe rrethin tuaj ç'vepra janë ndërtuar?
- Kuft ia detyrojmë të gjitha këto të mira?
- Ç'k. në dashur dhe ç'kërkojnë të bëjnë armiqet? Pse janë shkatërruar planet e tyre?
- Bisedoni në klase me mesuesin për shprehjen: «ndërtojmë socializmin në gojën e ujkut, me syrin pishë e me gishtin në këmbëzën e pushkës» dhe thoni ç'kuptoni prej saj.

Qytetet tona sot janë përtëritur e zbukuruar. Atdheut i shtohen vazhdimisht qytete të reja. Këto ndryshime i solli puna e madhe krijuese e njerëzve tanë, të frymëzuar e të udhëhequr nga Partia.



Pamje nga zona industriale e qytetit të Fierit.

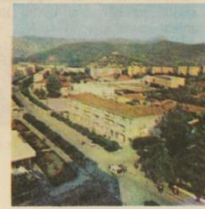


Pamje nga qyteti i Korçës.

Pamje nga porti i Durrësit.



Pamje nga qyteti i Elbasanit.



Layout 31. Minga, et. al., *Të Njohim Historinë e Popullit Tonë* (1982), 52-53.

Going from left to right, the cities of Fieri and Korça appear on top, followed at the bottom by the port of Durrës and the city of Elbasan. All four cities represent important industrial centers of the developing Albanian economy. The first thing one observes when entering this visual section is the modern infrastructure and the remarkable urban planning. It includes buildings, roads, public areas and a contemporary port, next to the impressive industrial plant shown at the top left. This is the novel face of the Albanian urban centers, says the visual communication in short. Another element supporting this notion of prosperity and bright present is the blue sky. It is common in all four photos and possibly has a metaphorical meaning in this case. From these somehow equal photos, the one positioned on the top-left, focusing on the city of Fieri's industrial zone, seems to stand out. Not only does the large industrial facilities make a direct claim of their superiority in the Albanian economic landscape, but also the size of the photo reveals such information. When compared to the other photos, this one seems to have been slightly extended both horizontally and vertically. Thus, it is the larger visual element, and its size should not be considered a coincidence. The larger size of this photo seeks to possibly transmit some deeper

message, which will be discussed after a few details on the industrial zone of the southern city of Fieri are provided.

During the socialist era, the city of Fieri became one of the key industrial centers of Albania where the biggest energy-chemical plant was constructed. The chemical fertilizer plant was built during the Third Five Year Plan⁴²⁶ and is the one foregrounded in the above-discussed photo. The enormous thermocentral power station stands out from the photo's frame. It was constructed with the aim of supplying the other industry branches with electrical energy. The other cities shown also contain large industrial plants. However, they are not depicted in this case.

Following these brief introductory notes, let us return to the question raised a few lines above that is related to the size of the top-left photo and its potential meaning. It is as though the size is an indicator of significance. The bigger the frame of the photo, the more importance it gains over the remaining three equally sized photos. Thus, the theme of industrialization moves to the forefront and overshadows the efforts made in other economic or social sectors. To put it simply, in the process of modernization of the urban centers, the priority has been given to the development of industry. More specifically, the weight is put on heavy industry, which is seen as the deciding factor in the profound economic and social transformations of the Albanian urban centers. The industrialization that the country saw after the war brought major changes and more progress, all of which are visible in the other three photos. New cities were established, or, as the visual mode informs us here, existing cities were further expanded. Their infrastructure was modernized in the meantime. Without this shift towards the socialist industrialization and, more specifically, heavy industry that the layout appears to support, none of the latter achievements would have been realized. Furthermore, it is significant to note that the establishment of the new socialist socio-economic order in the cities appears to have been achieved with success. Judging from the photos appearing here, the pupils conclude that this is not a process still underway. On the contrary, it permeates a notion of completeness that wants this task, significant for the community, to belong to the past. Such an interpretation is also consistent with the historical context and the deep socio-historical transformations that took place during the first post-war decades. In particular, the radical

⁴²⁶ Prifti, *Socialist Albania*, 58-59.

industrialization policy that the Albanian leadership adopted after the war.⁴²⁷ The establishment of a multi-branched industry was thought to lead the country onto the verge of economic self-reliance. During the years 1950-1975, heavy industry was given priority and its development was considered closely related to the economic modernization of the country.⁴²⁸

After having discussed the message structured through the images, let us now address the verbal communication placed on the left page. In the first two paragraphs, the text informs the pupils of the radical changes the cities underwent in the post-war era. Mostly affected were infrastructure, construction sector, transportation and urban planning. During the same period, new urban centers were established and some of them are named in the text. Industries, factories, plants and other industrial projects were constructed during the years of the communist government in our cities, the text maintains. These achievements came because of the people's work and the fact that they worked in close collaboration with the Communist Party of Albania. The plans, according to the text, were fulfilled in spite of the hindrances that the enemies posed. The dogma of relying on the inner forces of society comes once again dynamically to the fore, next to the primary message of the completion of the socio-economic basis of socialism in the cities. Socialism in Albania has been strongly related to heavy industry, and it is here where the main weight of the verbal communication lies. The entire task of the industrialization of the country was achieved thanks to the contribution of the people, who, in strong collaboration with the Communist Party of Albania, annihilated the plans of the enemies, reassures the text.⁴²⁹ This pattern of close collaboration between the people and their leadership, inaugurated during the years of the national resistance, also proved useful in the post-war period. With the people, the Party and above all our leader Enver Hoxha at the helm, concludes the text, we construct and protect socialism, while remaining always vigilant.⁴³⁰

To this last section, added from the year 1978 and on, we should add a few remarks. First, the text subtly communicates the information regarding the transition from the phase of constructing the socio-economic basis of socialism to that of the final consolidation of the socialist order in the country. Secondly, it builds a bridge that

⁴²⁷ Biberaj, *Albania: A Socialist Maverick*, 68.

⁴²⁸ Prifti, *Socialist Albania*, 55.

⁴²⁹ Minga, et. al., *Të Njohim Historinë e Popullit Tonë* (1982), 52.

⁴³⁰ *Ibid.*, 52.

connects the community's recent past to the present conditions in which the pupils live. At the same time, the text provides information referring to the ongoing process of socialist revolution in Albania. In this brief section, it manages to provide a very precise insight into the socio-historical context. The current stage of the revolution, unique and genuine worldwide, saw an unprecedented wave of internal and external opposition, according to the text. Albania and the socialist revolution, in terms of the self-isolationist dogma, were both encircled by the imperialist and revisionist superpowers abroad and the class enemies within the Albanian territory.⁴³¹ However, the people, together with the Communist Party, broke this imposed blockade and triumphantly continued on the revolutionary path. This is the official line suggested by the communist leadership, which has been adopted in the textbooks and in this concluding paragraph as well. The text, overall, is in favor of the further continuation of the efforts to consolidate and safeguard socialism, and it also calls for the pupils to enter this collective enterprise. Following the example of the Albanian people, pupils are asked to contribute equally in the construction and protection of socialism.

Last, we will discuss the overall multimodal message as it has been formulated in both the visual and verbal communication. There's no doubt that the issue of urban industrialization represents the central topic that this chapter and layout deals with. Furthermore, the development of industry, or to put it more precisely, heavy industry, has been directly connected with the modernization of Albanian cities and the establishment of new industrial urban centers. The entire attempt was successful due to the peoples' work and contribution, of course always in strong collaboration with the socialist leadership. This latter interpretation was provided solely in the text and perhaps here is the main difference with the visual counterpart. The dogma of self-reliance, often encountered in former chapters, represents here an additional remark that is not to be seen in the visual communication. The ideal of relying on the inner forces of the community is also missing from the previous generation of textbooks (Layout 22, Appendices section).

After the first condition, referring to the socialist industrialization in the cities, has been met, the narrative turns immediately to the second and the developments in the countryside. The main concern in this front regarded the revolutionization of the

⁴³¹ Fischer, "The Second World War in Albania,"125

countryside. Such a task, as it has been already been mentioned in the introductory section, remained closely related to the collectivization of agriculture. Collectivization is perceived by the communist leadership as the necessary path that must be followed in order to change the socioeconomic relations and establish the new socialist order in the villages. In comparison to the urban centers and the radical industrialization policy pursued, the revolution in the countryside required more time and energy. As it has already been mentioned, the communist government chose a gradual but continuous approach that led, by the end of sixties, to the entire collectivization of the agricultural sector. Without insisting on many details, I will next discuss the most significant steps in the implementation of this policy.

As far as the collectivization of agriculture is concerned, the first measure should be considered the agrarian reform in 1945, which, together with the redistribution of land, brought the establishment of the first agricultural cooperatives by its completion in 1946. In the following five years, the government instituted a new and more radical line in an attempt to force collectivization in the countryside. The poor results of this first campaign and the opposition encountered on the side of the peasants obliged the latter to abandon the hard line. During the years 1951-1955, the government adopted a lighter and gradual plan so as to bring the agriculture sector under the state's control.⁴³² These are the years during which the First Five Year Central Plan was implemented, and the bigger part of agriculture still remained in the hands of the private farmers. According to the data offered by the historian Peter Prifti, more than 87 percent of the total agricultural produce belonged at that time to the private sector.⁴³³ These figures changed dramatically in the Second Five Year Plan in favor of the collectivized farms. The path towards total collectivization had just started. After a directive issued in 1955, the rapid collectivization wave was inaugurated, which saw a first culmination in 1960. By then, over 86 percent of the agricultural land, including lowland and highland, was collectivized.⁴³⁴ This new wave was followed by considerable progress and modernization of the agricultural production. It included soil improvement by means of expanding the cultivable land and opening irrigation canals, integration of new farm techniques and mechanization and use of fertilizers.⁴³⁵

⁴³² Skendi, ed., *Albania*, 160-161.

⁴³³ Prifti, *Socialist Albania*, 66.

⁴³⁴ Hall, *Albania and the Albanians*, 121.

⁴³⁵ Biberaj, *Albania: A Socialist Maverick*, 69.

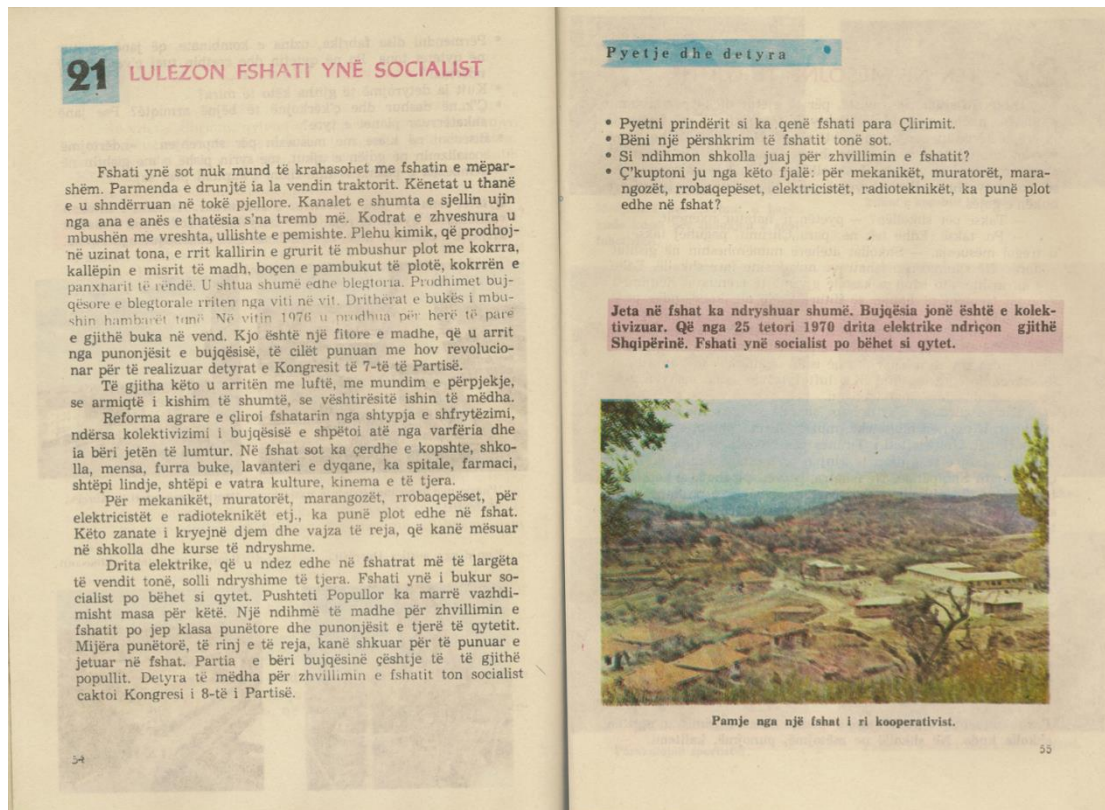
The now enlarged agriculture sector consisted of state and collective farms and cooperatives. After 1959, the cooperatives either merged or joined the previous two larger collective enterprises.⁴³⁶ The second culmination phase is the Fourth Five Year Plan and the years from 1966 to 1970, marked by the complete collectivization of agriculture. By 1970, the state possessed 100 percent of the land, whereas private ownership was completely extinct.⁴³⁷ Such radical changes in the countryside, as we could discern, came, firstly, after a period of more than two decades, and secondly were imposed by the government on the resisting peasants. Nevertheless, this version does not seem plausible enough for the communist historiography that wants the process of collectivization to have been broadly embraced by the people in the countryside.⁴³⁸

Whether it enjoyed the wide support of the peasants or not, the collectivization of agriculture in Albania reached a complete status that was never achieved in any other country of the Eastern Bloc. With this latter observation, I leave for the moment the historiography and return to the textbooks. In the following chapter, the laying of the foundations of the socialist order in the countryside will be addressed. To begin with the title, it brings from the very beginning the definitive of a process already finished in the past. The chapter bears the title “Our socialist village flourishes.” The use of the present tense might inform the pupils about the progress of the socialist village at the time being, but at the same time it takes for granted the very fact that this specific type of village first exists. Thus, no further questions can be raised at this point. Perhaps the only comment might turn to the character of this socialist village. The pupils might even ask what the meaning of a socialist village is, or what are the differences compared to other types of villages. The answers to the above questions will be provided in the text or the visual communication (Layout 32).

⁴³⁶ Prifti, *Socialist Albania*, 66.

⁴³⁷ *Ibid.*, 66.

⁴³⁸ Pollo and Puto, *The History of Albania*, 268.



Layout 32. Minga, et. al., *Të Njohim Historinë e Popullit Tonë* (1982), 54-55.

I will start the analysis from the placement of the elements in the layout, then move to the visual part, and last address the text and the overall multimodal message the layout contains. As it is visible, the double-spread follows a given and new polarization. The text is positioned on the left page, followed on the right page by an image that is accompanied on top by the concluding remarks of the chapter. Referring to the theory of visual social semiotics, the elements positioned on the left is information already known to the reader and on the opposite left page the message is new and not yet known. This latter is the crucial point of the message on which the readers are called to focus first. In our case, the novel information is communicated for the most part visually. The photo positioned at the bottom of the right page dominates the frame of the double spread. It represents, at the same time, the latter's biggest element, which has been followed by some text on top. Also here is a second form of polarization between the real-visual part and the ideal-textual counterpart. Regarding its placement, the photo is conceived as something real, better said as a documentation of the developments that the countryside saw during the socialist era. When one focuses on the inner details of this documentary information, one can see quite a small village in a mountainous terrain. The only information derived from the

caption is that this is the image of the novel cooperative village. Furthermore, the caption, having the function of a verbal teaser, calls for the pupils to gain an insight into this novel type village, which is to be found in the Albanian territory. However, the long shot and the relatively poor quality of the photo make this attempt somehow difficult. What the pupils see, except for the private houses, is a central street that crosses the village, cultivated land almost everywhere, and a few public buildings mostly on the right side. In the background the sky is as usual clear and blue. The only sign of the socialist character of this village are perhaps these latter communal buildings. One might suggest that these buildings resemble collective centers, or stations for the collection of the harvest, agricultural and dairy products and livestock. Even more, the building shown on the right of the photo might be considered a small-scale Machine Tractor Station, where agricultural equipment and machinery were stationed. Some other buildings might also function as schools or houses of culture for example. In addition, it should be mentioned that there is no indication of existing private plots. The photo focuses rather on the social ownership of the land and the agricultural means of production, and this regards the key information it foregrounds. Another crucial point is the prosperity of this present life in the countryside and the progress achieved in the post-war era, which is visually provided through the element of the clear blue sky. It is a common reference in almost all the images, be it photos or paintings, since the beginning of the socialist era.

Leaving the image aside for the moment, let us turn to the text and the opposite page, where the notion of this flourishing life in the contemporary countryside becomes even more concrete. Several examples are provided that persuade the readers of the radical changes made in these post-war years. Nothing resembles the village of the past, reassures the text, and continues by naming, one by one, these modern achievements: Mechanization of agriculture, irrigation projects that increased the arable land and the quality of the soil, use of domestic fertilizers produced in the country, increase of the livestock and the bread grains. The text explains that one of the biggest achievements of agriculture was in the year 1976 when Albania was completely self-sufficient in food production. The problem of unemployment for many professions was solved in the villages. Another significant accomplishment achieved during the years of the socialist government, explains the text, was the electrification of the rural areas. All these achievements were possible, continues the

text, thanks to the work of the masses who permanently fought against numerous enemies. Another crucial factor that contributed to a great extent, according to the text, was the implementation of the agrarian reform and the collectivization of agriculture.⁴³⁹ Furthermore, the character of the socialist village was transformed and modernized during the socialist era. They now contain schools, kindergartens, hospitals, culture centers and cinemas, among other things. Our villages more resemble cities, concludes the text, where thousands of people have moved to live and work.

After having addressed both text and image let us turn to the overall message of this layout. The crucial message in both modes concerns the establishment of the economic basis of socialism in the countryside and the collectivization of agriculture that counts as the main prerequisite for the prosperity of the present life. When it comes to the relation between the two modes, it seems as though the text were taking the upper hand in this layout. The verbal narrative explains in detail the achievements reached in the countryside, whereas the visual communication fails to promote a whole picture of the developments. This is not to say that they follow two different approaches or paths, but they simply do not provide the same volume of information. In case we would like to have a more compatible version between visual and verbal narrative, we should turn to the previous editions of textbooks (Layout 23, Appendices section). In this layout, most of the developments referred to in the text have been visually depicted as well.

Going a step further with the analysis and returning to the layout implemented during the self-isolation period (1978-1984), in its frame there is no room for failures but merely successes and achievements. The plans that failed in the agricultural sector have been not included here. A constant problem, for instance, was the shortage in food production since the liberation of the country.⁴⁴⁰ The aim of self-reliance in bread grains proved an arduous task to be fulfilled. Therefore, the communist leadership had no other choice than to import the needed bread cereals and other food from Albania's allies through the years. During the fifties, the Soviet Union provided Albania with wheat and corn to meet the growing needs of the population.⁴⁴¹ This

⁴³⁹ Minga, et. al., *Të Njohim Historinë e Popullit Tonë* (1982), 54.

⁴⁴⁰ Prifti, *Socialist Albania*, 68-69.

⁴⁴¹ Skendi, ed., *Albania*, 167.

situation remained stable until the mid-seventies and 1976, also mentioned in the text, the year when the country was self-sufficient in bread grains for the first time. Last, mostly in the verbal narrative, one can once again discern the self-reliant and isolationist dogma. This insists that the process of building the socialist order in the countryside relied explicitly on the masses and their mobilization. Furthermore, the people as usual acted in close collaboration with the Communist Party and its leadership. Together they annihilated the attempts of several enemies who wanted to hinder the significant transformation in the countryside.

Before ending this section, it should be also mentioned that what the pupils have experienced in these two chapters is the construction of the economic basis of socialism, both in the cities and the countryside. The narrative, whether we refer to the textual or to the visual one, proudly announces the establishment of the socio-economic basis of socialism in the Albanian territory. This excellent achievement for Albania ended, according to the official historiography, in 1960.⁴⁴² This is a turning point in the post-war history, accomplished in the aftermath of the successful completion of the Second Five Year Plan (1956-1960). Better expressed, this is the transformation of Albania from a backward and war-destroyed country into a modern industrial and agricultural economy.⁴⁴³ However, in national history textbooks, this process needed some more time and was accomplished by the mid to late sixties. Several of the achievements mentioned in textbooks were reached during the Third and Fourth Five Year Plans (1961-1970), in some cases even later. By means of always focusing on the historical narrative, the establishment of the socio-economic basis of socialism, both in the cities and in the countryside, signifies the end of a maturation phase of the socialist era. The successful establishment of the socialist order in Albanian was followed by a final stage of developments that want the intensification of the efforts for the full consolidation and safeguarding of socialism in the country. The further construction and the protection of the former achievements will be the main preoccupation in this final stage of the revolution.

Before referring to this ultimate turn of national history, let us first collect a few notes on the previous maturation period. What remains after the analysis of these post-war years is, first, the scheme of action and result that guides the historical narrative. It

⁴⁴² Pollo and Puto, *The History of Albania*, 274.

⁴⁴³ Kristo Frashëri, *The History of Albania (A Brief Survey)* (Tiranë: 1964), 342.

precedes the work of the masses that, in quite a short time, bore fruits. This scheme holds true both for the whole spectrum of the narrative covering these first decades after the war and for each chapter on its own. Altogether, the narrative covers the years during which Albania transformed from a backward and war-destroyed country into an industrial and agricultural economy. Such an achievement came as a result of the people's involvement. They always remained connected to the Communist Party and the leader Enver Hoxha, who prevails as the orchestrator of the entire collective enterprise.

Since we referred to the masses primarily involved in this enterprise, let me insist for a while on the people's depiction in this historical context. The image of the Albanian people has changed in this historical context and is given through a collective perspective. All members of the community harmoniously collaborate and contribute equally in laying the foundations of the socialist society. The young generation prevails as the main social actor in this historical context, in which the women have been included as well. A second observation turns to the dynamic and self-reliant character of the attempt to reconstruct the country on a socialist basis. In the text, the self-reliant character of the people's mobilization has been further prompted next to the notion of the domestic and foreign entanglement. The self-reliant and isolationist dogma has dominated the historical narrative since 1978, thus coming to terms with the new ideological agenda adopted.

The last observation turns to the central issue: the building of the economic basis of socialism within the Albanian territory, which means, first and foremost, the industrialization of urban centers and the collectivization of agriculture. These both represent the main prerequisites for the modernization of the Albanian economy and other aspects of the socialist life. The term of modernization represents the prosperity of the present life, examples of which are given in abundance either in the images or in the text. Referring briefly to the images, the use of many photos functioning as the evidence for the progress achieved is visible. Of a total of eleven images, only three of them are paintings and the rest are photos. Here it should also be added that the common element of the clear blue sky, present in almost all the images, points perhaps to the same flourishing post-war years.

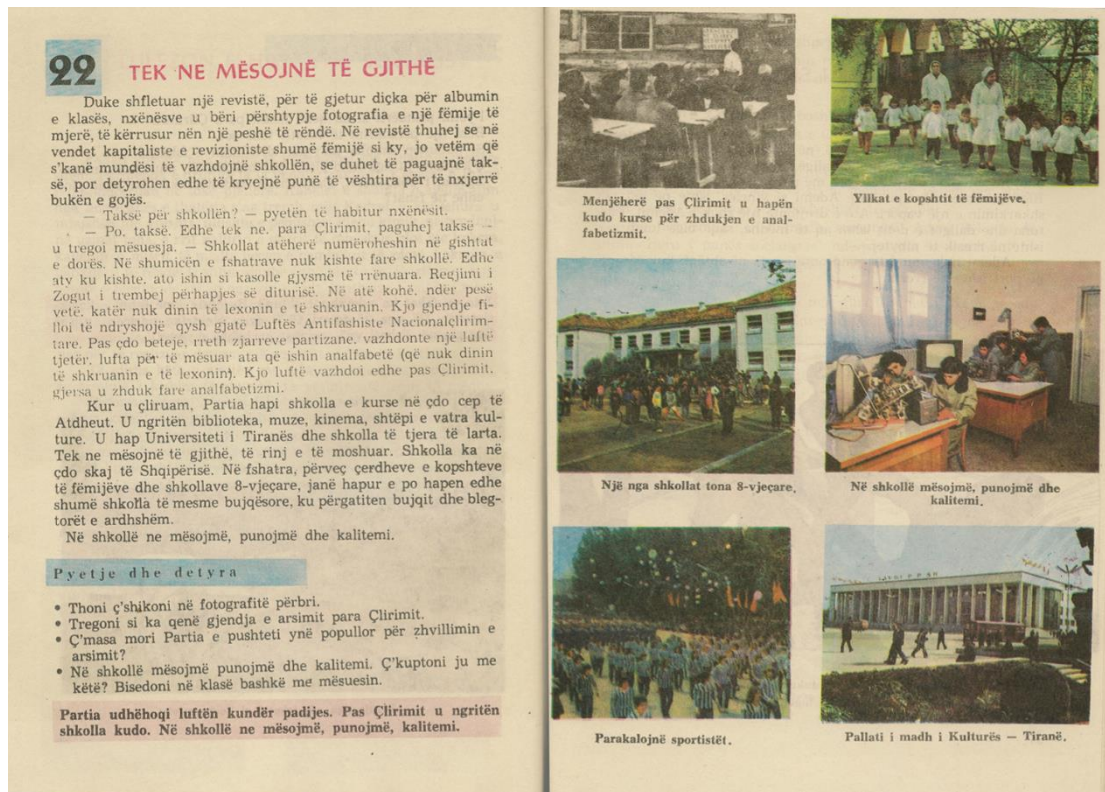
Last, let me refer once again to the structure of this narrative and more specifically to the historical line covering the years during which were laid the foundations of the socialist order and society. This is more likely an achievement-lead historical narrative instead of a rigid evolutionist chronological timeline. The narrative follows the most significant developments in the cities and the villages, not always in a straight developing line. The account is long and expands from the very first years following the war to the sixties, or even in some cases the seventies.

6.3.Culmination: Full construction of socialism, creation of the “New Man”

After having thoroughly referred to the political, military, social and economic buildup of the socialist order in Albania, the narrative continues next with the ideological aspects of this ongoing revolutionary process. Chronologically speaking, the community has just stepped into the rearmost stage of the socialist revolution that had officially begun by the mid-sixties. In this penultimate stage of developments, the efforts for the consolidation of socialism in the Albanian territory intensified. Along with the social and economic priorities, the Albanian leadership in this historical turn focused primarily on the cultivation of a socialist mentality among the Albanian population. Such a challenging task first required the education of the masses with the socialist principles. In the domestic sources and historiography, this process of socialist upbringing of the citizens has often been described in terms of creating, even forming, the “New Man.” It is precisely on this “New Individual” that the narrative in the next three chapters will concentrate. The process of molding this individual with a novel world outlook and socialist moral is lifelong, according to the textbooks. It begins in schools and is later continued in the socialist work market and during the physical and military training all Albanian citizens receive. In texts, a chapter has been dedicated to each of the above-mentioned stations in the life of the Albanians, to which we will now turn.

6.3.1. Education

Chapter 22 of the national narrative focuses on education. It contains text and images all included in the same layout (Layout 33). The chapter bears the explicit title: “To us all people learn.”



Layout 33. Minga, et. al., *Të Njohim Historinë e Popullit Tonë* (1984), 56-57.

I will begin the analysis with the compositional framework and the placement of the elements within the double-spread. A vertical polarization has been chosen in this case between text and image.⁴⁴⁴ The text is positioned on the left page and is presented as the given part of the information and as something familiar to the pupils. The visual communication on the other hand appears on the right page and comes as the new and still not known part of the information. It is in the new part of information, thus the images, where the crucial part of the message is to be found and where the pupils should pay special attention. Furthermore, the visual communication consists of six photos showing the educational developments in the years of the socialist Albania. The large number of images on a single page, unusual until now, manages to attract the viewers' gaze.

After having addressed the structure of the layout, let us turn to the text, the already known and familiar part of the information. On the left page there is the title of the chapter, the main verbal narrative, the questions, and as usual it closes with a short concluding section. As far as the title is concerned, it immediately offers the

⁴⁴⁴ Kress and Van Leeuwen, *Reading Images*, 180-181.

information about the compulsory and collective character of the school system in which all Albanian citizens, without exception, participate. The chapter is entitled “To us all people learn.” In other words, in Albania, according to the title, all enjoy the right to attend school. This was not the case in the country before liberation. Not even in other countries of the capitalist or revisionist camp could all pupils attend school, the text informs us. They were obliged to work from a very early age and also had to pay high fees. Education was a privilege of the upper classes, says, among others, the text.⁴⁴⁵ Moreover, in Albania during the previous regime of Ahmed Zogu, the number of schools was restricted, and a big part of the population was illiterate. The text refers next to the literacy courses and the struggle against analphabetism during and after the war. In the last paragraph, the narrative names all achievements in the educational field accomplished during the socialist era, such as the building of schools, libraries, museums, cinemas, houses or palaces of culture all over the Albanian territory.⁴⁴⁶ The establishment of the first Albanian university in the capital Tirana and many other higher institutes is considered by the text to be a special achievement. In our country, all are eligible to attend schools of all levels, reiterates the text. Due to the efforts of the Communist Party, schools were established on every corner of the Socialist Republic. Concerning the countryside, next to the kindergartens and eight-year schools, secondary agricultural schools were established as well. Last, the text emphasizes that in our schools we learn, work and train. This is a direct reference to the revolutionary triptych, introduced in education during the stage of full construction of socialism. It is in this short phrase where the key message of the text is most likely to be found. It crystallizes the multi-faceted character of the newly established socialist education system. It provides the pupils with theoretical knowledge, prepares them for the work market, and makes them fit for the sublime task of safeguarding the homeland. It goes without saying that in comparison to the former pre-war period or other foreign countries, the current socialist system of education proves superior. This is, all in all, how the text refers to the socialist post-war educational system.

Leaving aside for the moment the verbal communication and turning to the visual part, pupils could observe six photos that are followed by captions. They occupy the

⁴⁴⁵ Minga, et. al., *Të Njohim Historinë e Popullit Tonë* (1984), 56.

⁴⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 56.

entire frame of the right page and ask for the pupils'-viewers' attention. Perhaps the six photos provide an extended picture of Albania's post-war educational system. Before going any further with a hypothesis, let us address these images one by one, starting from the top and moving towards the bottom. The first image, positioned in the upper left section, shows a literacy course in the aftermath of the liberation of Albania. The caption that accompanies it underlines that such classes opened all over the Albanian territory. The representation is in black and white, which is possibly a subtle means of making clear to the viewers that this is the first in a series of developments that will be depicted in the visual narrative. At the same time, the black and white of the photo contrasts with the other, colored, photos. Next to this photo and being still in the same horizontal line, pupils see a group of little children accompanied by two educators. Most likely this is a kindergarten.

Moving further, in the second horizontal line a group of pupils in front of a school building appear. The shot is long and does not allow many details to be seen. The caption informs us that this is an eight-year compulsory school. Next to this image, on its right, another photo focuses on the interior of a class, which most likely shows a secondary school. This information could be assumed from the age of the pupils depicted who, compared to the children in the preceding photo, are older. The distance and the quality of the analysis allow us to address the kind of activity they are involved in. They are shown working in an electrical or technological laboratory under the supervision of one instructor. On the tables, one might observe televisions and radios produced in Albania. There might be two possibilities here. One is that the photo concentrates on a group of pupils during their year of productive work at the radio and television plant in the city of Durrës. We are in the position to define the city because merely one such specialized industrial plant existed in the country. The gaining of experience and training in production after the completion of the school years became obligatory for all students who wished to enroll in higher institutes by the end of the sixties. The second possibility is that the photo is showing a glimpse into one of the many general or vocational secondary schools in the country. Keeping in mind the cornerstone of the socialist education, which is education in work and for

work, inaugurated with the second educational reform in 1963,⁴⁴⁷ this second interpretation appears more plausible.

Remaining for a while on this photo, if we accept that it focuses on a classroom or school laboratory, then this capture provides evidence of the technical orientation of the Albanian educational system. Schools appear equipped with working rooms, laboratories and technical equipment where students, except for learning and teaching, are also offered the possibility for highly specialized training in several branches of the growing economy. The discussed photo documents in the best way the novel orientation towards polytechnic education. In this historical context, as the image appears to support, schools were transformed into places where students could learn and concomitantly work. Even the former interpretation could be supported following the analysis, but this seems to not be the crucial issue at this photo. The key topic foregrounded in this image is rather the connection of school with productive work and the weight put on vocational education. Such a turn of the educational system was supposed to play a crucial role in training the forthcoming workers and technical cadres. As far as the caption regards, one can read: In school we learn, work and train. This a clear-cut repetition of the new revolutionary triptych entering education by the end of the sixties, which brings perhaps more information in comparison to the image itself. Next to the issue of productive work, the caption also refers to the theoretical preparation of the pupils and their physical and military training.

Going a step further with the visual communication, the first photo positioned at the left bottom of the page shows, according to its caption, sportsmen during a parade. Nothing is mentioned concerning the place where such an event took place. By paying attention to the details, one can see that it resembles one of the main boulevards of the capital Tirana. Such massive festive parades were organized in Tirana on several occasions, including the international workers day, the establishment of the Communist Party, the liberation of the country and the successful accomplishment of the Five Years Plans or the Party Congresses. The distance, the angle and the low quality of this photo do not help the readers observe many details. They are merely able to distinguish a group of people wearing uniforms. The color of the uniform perhaps belongs to that of the sport club Tirana, which is one of the three sport clubs

⁴⁴⁷ Thomas, "Communist Education," 112.

located in the capital. The age of the participants is difficult to define as well. One could support that they might be either students who attend secondary education, or even at a university level. This latter option leaves the possibility open for the discussed photo to be a fragment of the so-called “Albanian Spartakiads.” In these massive domestic sport events, organized every five years, hundreds of thousands of people participated. Among them, pupils and students took part as well. Whatever occasion this might be, the image focuses on the physical training of the youth or adult Albanian population. Physical, together with military, training, as has been already mentioned, represent the third and perhaps most significant aspect of education. In this photo, the focus is on sports and physical education, but one might add that the military aspect is still existent and could be easily assumed from the military formations of the protagonists. They allude to a marching military unit performing under strict movements and discipline.

Referring to the last photo at the right-bottom of the page, it focuses on the Palace of Culture, again located in the capital Tirana. The large building constructed in 1966 stands out, despite the long distance of the shot and its placement in the background. Furthermore, the structure resembles those of ancient Greek temples, which are to be found throughout the modern Albanian socialist landscape. For the small socialist country, this is considered the temple of culture that houses the National Library and the National Theater of Opera and Ballet. The caption that accompanies the image focuses on the grandiose building and does not offer any comment on the people shown in the central public square of Skanderbeg. Their silhouettes are almost invisible and seem microscopic compared to the monumental building. This latter choice asks for further information, which will be provided at a later stage of the visual analysis.

To summarize, the visual communication provides an overview of the most significant achievements in the fields of education and culture. Better said, this is a visual account that begins with the early post-war years and ends with the most current developments. This represents merely a very first attempt to read the content of the visual communication. At the same time, this first addressing of the visual elements brought to the fore further significant issues. To mention them here, they are the uniformed and collective depiction of the participants, or the long distance and the oblique angle from which the photos were captured. Furthermore, the placement of

the images within the frame of the page asks for more explanations. Below, I will attempt to discuss each of the issues raised above and provide some more information.

Let us begin with the placement of the visual elements. The right page consists of six photos divided into two vertical columns of three. It looks as though a given and new polarization were implemented in this case. The first vertical column on the left is the given part of the information, whereas the second, placed on the far right, represents the new, still unknown, and crucial point of the information. Thus, it is in this far right of the page where the main visual message develops, which, at the same time, asks for the readers' -pupils' attention. This interpretation is also supported by the size of the images. Those positioned in the right column are slightly larger in comparison to the ones on the left. This should be regarded as an additional indication that makes this section the more eye-catching of the visual communication. Moreover, this new section is structured around its own center, which is the photo in the second line focusing on the interior of a secondary school in Albania. From this vertical triptych, one may discern a simple and symmetrical margin-center-margin structure.⁴⁴⁸ The two margin photos, placed on top and on the bottom, are depicted from the distance, whereas a short shot has been chosen in the case of the central photo. This central photo, at its very core, shows young students during their training in a school or in a work enterprise. Considering the age, it is likely that they attend secondary education. The sharpness and good quality of the analysis allows us to understand more of the inner details and, first and foremost, its protagonists, the pupils. By means of choosing a relatively short distance, it seems as if the viewers are coming closer to the participants, and in a way getting involved with them. This could not be said of the participants shown in the top and bottom photos, who are hardly visible and appear rather as strangers and distant figures. In this central photo, the key message of the visual, and as a matter of fact of the whole chapter, is to be found. This message is none other than vocational education. What has been foregrounded in this case is the new polytechnical character of education that connects learning with productive work. All these have been ideally captured in the figures of the working students, either in an enterprise or in a laboratory within their school environment.

⁴⁴⁸ Kress and Van Leeuwen, *Reading Images*, 198-199.

Going a step further with the analysis, it is significant to note that higher education, referred to in the text, has been not included in this visual panorama of Albania's post-war educational system. This is not to say that the establishment of the University of Tirana in 1957, followed later by other faculties and institutes, represents a small-scale achievement. Quite the opposite, this is a turning point in the history of Albanian post-war education that was supposed to end the dependence of the country on its foreign allies and their higher qualified personnel. In case the establishment of the first higher institution in the country is considered a grandiose achievement of the socialist era, then the question is posed, why has this not been depicted in the visual communication? At first glance, the non-inclusion of any of the higher institutions established in the country after the war seems at the very least controversial. However, when considering the emphasis put on vocational and technical education in the visual part, offered mostly in the secondary education, the latter choice seems more than reasonable. The decision to show some of the new faculties, or even the leading university institution in the country, that of Tirana, would have challenged the established order of the right page. It could have even relocated the focal point coming as the biggest achievement of the socialist era in the field of education, and this, of course, is not what the visual communication wishes to communicate to the viewers-pupils.

Going a step further with the analysis of the visual narrative as it has been structured in the frame of this page, the non-depiction of the recently established higher education is even more clear when one focuses on the people, the real protagonists here. By means of concentrating merely on them, a new arrangement of the photos might be suggested, which is again divided into three horizontal lines. In the first horizontal line, positioned on top, the early years in education have been covered. This holds true both for the very young pupils of a kindergarten and the adults who attend the literacy courses. These courses represent the gate to education for the illiterate citizenry. In the second horizontal line, the eight-year obligatory and secondary education have been depicted, while in the third section the focus is on adult life that comes after the completion of education. In this visual passage through the diverse levels of the educational system, higher education is again missing. This omission should be considered all but a matter of chance. In my attempt to read the message as it has been structured in this part of the communication, it is as if the

images were further stressing the significance of the eighth-year, but mostly secondary, education. Being more concrete, vocational secondary education prevails in the visual communication as the cornerstone of the entire educational system. It is where the young Albanians obtain the needed technical or professional knowledge and are trained for work and life. This is better achieved through the involvement of the young students in productive labor, either within the school environment or outside of it in the industrial and agricultural enterprises. The connection of secondary education with production is, all in all, the theme foregrounded in the visual communication. It is followed by the raising of the theoretical and cultural level of the pupils and the entire population, where the critical aspect of physical and military training is always present.

Since I referred to the people in the above paragraph, let me insist somehow more on their depiction and offer a more systematic analysis. The first thing that captures one's attention is the collective representations that characterize almost all the photos. The people, whether young or adult, all belong to a collective, or better said are always shown as part of large groups. The second feature that better describes these collectivities is uniformity that holds true for each individual depicted here. They tend to look similar, and this notion is further stressed by the uniforms that most of the participants wear. From early childhood to the school years and later adult life, people wear uniforms and prevail as homogenized formations of people. The example of the pupils in kindergarten, those in secondary school and the group of the sportsmen marching on one of the boulevards of the capital prove such a claim. Whenever people do not wear uniforms, this notion of homogeneity has been achieved through the long shots and the distance from which the photos were taken. This latter has the effect of minimizing or completely erasing the individual traits of the people shown and turning them into anonymous members of homogenous groups. These groups, being a solid formation of members who are not distinguished from each other, are the only thing that the viewers are able to see. Here is where the photos showing a literacy course at the top, the image of the pupils of an eight-year school in the second horizontal line and, last, the image of the Albanian citizens walking in the central square Skanderbeg at the right-bottom belong. The very last example is an extreme case, where the dark and blurry silhouettes of different people all look the same. Therefore, the people in the socialist republic of Albania, according to the images, are

always shown as part of large collectivities. The individual cannot exist outside of these groups and is never shown. It is as though the page were announcing the end of individuality in favor of the large and uniformed formations of people at school, work or in everyday life. This is the only valid and legitimized social pattern of representation of the Albanian citizens.

Furthermore, when considering the depiction of the people, their relation to the viewers should not go unmentioned. According to Theo van Leeuwen, there are three crucial variables that help in clarifying this connection: social distance, social relation and social interaction.⁴⁴⁹ The issue of social distance has already been addressed above. The long distance from which the photos were captured separates the viewers from the people depicted. There is only one exception: the right photo in the second horizontal line that brings the depicted students, who most likely attend secondary education, somewhat closer to the viewers-pupils. Furthermore, the individuals shown appear as strangers and this sense of distanciation stems mostly from the very fact that no kind of interaction has been established between the viewers and the depicted participants. In each case, these distant figures are shown from the side and none of them gaze directly at the viewers. The angle of the depiction also plays a crucial role as far as the social relation between the viewers and the people shown in the photos regards. A high angle has again been chosen in each case, with the viewers, literally speaking, gazing at the participants from above. The individuals shown stand on a lower level and are represented as objects under scrutiny. Such a choice stresses the symbolic power of the viewers over the represented participants, who tend to look inferior and powerless.⁴⁵⁰

Following these more specific observations concerning the depiction of the people, let us draw some preliminary conclusions. Before doing so, we should answer a couple of questions that arise at this point. The first question is the reason that might have caused such a uniformed depiction of the people, almost always shown from the distance and positioned on a low level. A second question refers to the intentional or unintentional inclusion of the images shown in this layout. Let us first address the

⁴⁴⁹ Theo van Leeuwen, "Visual Racism," in *The Semiotics of Racism. Approaches in Critical Discourse Analysis*, eds. Martin Reisigl and Ruth Wodak (Vienna: Passagen Verlag, 2000), 336.

⁴⁵⁰ Van Leeuwen, "Visual Racism," 339.

issue of the choice of the photos. To argue that the images appearing here have been randomly chosen seems quite a simplistic and naive explanation, let alone the fact that the photos are positioned according to a strict plan in the frame of the page so as to produce a certain meaning. Since the very first appearance of this page in the textbook issued in 1973, it has never changed. Any of the visual components that it consists of were neither removed nor did they shift position. The only notable change that came throughout the decades is the moving of the visual narrative from the left page, where it was placed in the previous generation of textbooks from 1972 to 1977 (Layout 24, Appendices Section), to the right double page and the current layout.

Turning now to the issue of the uniformed depiction of the individuals in large homogenous groups, it is as if the visual communication were trying to come to terms with the rest of the chapter, that saying the title and the text. In the text, the idea of education of the masses in which all people are eligible to participate has been primarily developed. In the same manner, the photos, through the depiction of the people in large and homogenous groups, subtly remind the viewers of the all-embracing character of the newly established socialist educational system. At the same time, the visual communication does not fail to mention that the present socialist education system combines theoretical knowledge, professional preparation and physical and military training. In case the appearance of the people in large uniformed groups signifies the inclusion of all people in the educational system, how then should the issues of distance and angle of the depiction be interpreted? As it has been already observed, these two choices make them look distanced, disempowered and simply as objects under scrutiny. It is my impression that the visual communication through the latter visual choices indirectly reveals the vision that the communist leadership has for education, the people who attend it and the Albanian society in general. The education of the people in the socialist republic is a massive phenomenon, as we have seen, that takes care of every individual. However, these individuals exist as though they are part of a group or collectivity. Concerning the society, the visual narrative sees it as a uniformed formation of individuals. This kind of uniformity has been cultivated, as the images suggest, first and foremost in the school environment from their early years and until their adult life. From the above, one might assume that education plays a crucial role in this process of social engineering. There are good chances that in this layout the function of education in the People's Socialist Republic of Albania has

been revealed. Education seeks to impose uniformity upon the young members of the society. In other words, it conducts an open fight against the individual with its specific traits and characteristics by means of promoting a novel collective identity. This new identity is promoted under the guise of equality and egalitarianism, but, at its core, it forges conformity and imposes further restrictions on the individuals. Uniformity is in any case a synonym of conformity, and this is what the communist leadership seemingly aims at, the creation of individuals who will comply with the rules and the orders of the state and the Party. All in all, the new prototype of the “Communist Man” that the Albanian leadership wishes to create has been visualized in the very last photo, positioned at the right bottom of the page. He or she, an almost invisible silhouette lacking any sign of existence, wanders in the streets of the capital. Considering that they do not possess any kind of specific characteristics, they more resemble ghosts rather than human beings. Concomitantly, one might support that they allude rather to human miniatures, seem quite weak, and give the impression of a group that is controlled and observed from the distance.

Last, the analysis will close with a reference to the overall multimodal message of the layout. Verbal and visual communication contain similar meanings. In short, they provide pupils with the developments in the educational field during the socialist era, the main achievements, and insist on the three fundamental components: learning, productive work and physical and military training. Whether one refers to the text or the images, the idea that education provides the youth and tomorrow’s citizens with theoretical and technical knowledge is foregrounded. At the same time, education offers physical and military training, much needed for their integration of the pupils into the novel socialist society. Despite the similarities, a few differences between the modes might be observed as well. The first has already been discussed and regards the issue of higher education. Whereas in the text the establishment of higher education has been highly praised, in the visual communication it has been completely avoided. The second difference turns to the pivotal role the Communist Party of Albania had in the modernization of the education system during the post-war era. The text supports that the socialist education system is an achievement of the Party, whereas such an approach is not visible from the images.

6.3.2. Productive work

The fight for the creation of the “New Man” with a novel socialist mentality also continues during the people’s adult life and in particular in their work environment. After the reference to education, the narrative turns to labor, the next station in the life of the individuals. The cultivation of the novel socialist mentality, a process that had already started in the schools, would intensify by the time the people entered the socialist work market and got involved in the socialist production. Following the domestic sources, work is the best anvil for forging the new socialist mentality.⁴⁵¹ What is crucial here is the forging of a new attitude towards work and social property on the basis that everyone must be ready to work and contribute wherever the homeland needs him or her. Another critical issue regards the promotion of the general instead of the personal interest among the working class. This would definitely help protect communal ownership.⁴⁵² Terms and concepts such as solidarity, devotion, sacrifice and achievement of collective goals become predominant and are considered by the communist leadership as the prerequisites for the triumph of the socialist revolution, now underway. To achieve these latter tasks, the Albanian leadership announced a large campaign against capitalist and pro-capitalist attitudes towards work. This campaign, which officially began by the mid-sixties, concentrated on intellectualism, bureaucracy and division between mental and manual labor. Following this brief introduction concerning the education of the people in work and through work, I will next turn to the textbooks and see how this topic has been described in the national historical narrative.

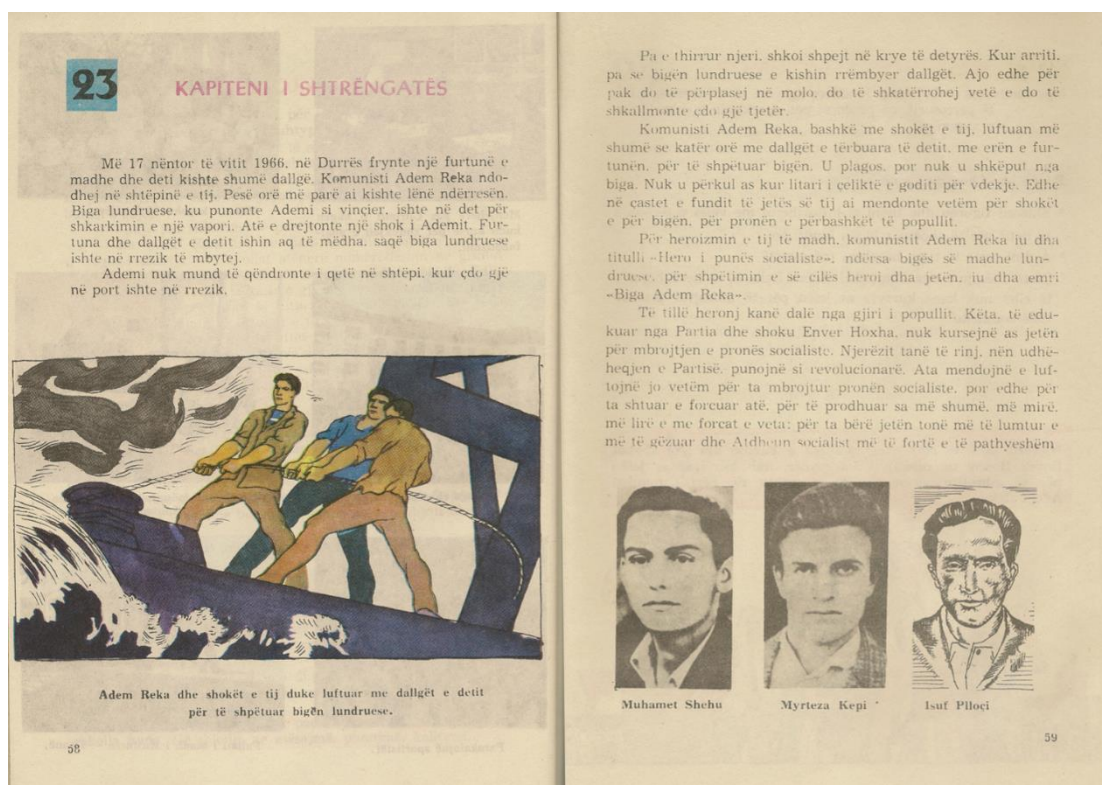
To begin with some general observations, the second element of the revolutionary triptych, productive work, or simply labor, has been divided in history textbooks into two chapters. In the following two chapters, pupils were introduced to the world of work through a handful of examples of heroes of the socialist work. They are mainly workers and volunteers who enjoyed a highly esteemed status in the socialist republic. These workers and volunteers gave their life for the construction and further consolidation of socialism and the homeland. These figures of dedicated workers and predominantly young volunteers were widely promoted in the social sphere. They formed a new heroes’ pantheon, around which a cult was cultivated. In texts, the same

⁴⁵¹ Pollo and Puto, *The History of Albania*, 277.

⁴⁵² Prifti, *Socialist Albania*, 147.

heroes' pantheon also includes women. As we will next see, women contributed equally with men in the sublime task of the socialist revolution. Below, we will refer in detail to these absolute positive symbols and the manner in which they are encountered, both in the verbal and visual communication.

Let us start from Chapter 23, which bears the title: "The captain of the storm" (Layout 34). It is entirely dedicated to an incident that took place in the port of Durres on the 17th of November 1966.



Layout 34. Minga, et. al., *Të Njohim Historinë e Popullit Tonë* (1981), 58-59.

In this event, the main protagonist, according to the text, is the dockworker Adem Reka, who risked and lost his life to protect the collective socialist property. The incident was caused because of a storm that hit the harbor. Many ships and the floating dock were hit by the storm and the massive waves. The dock, which has the function of loading and unloading big ships, explains the text, was uncontrollable and posed a serious danger to the inner harbor. The situation was considered highly critical. The dockworker Adem Reka, who in the meantime was at home, started in the direction of the port. Nobody asked him to do so, but he felt obliged to help his colleagues and protect collective socialist property. Together with his colleagues, the

text informs us, our protagonist fought tirelessly to bring the floating dock under control. Even when he was dealt a blow that would eventually cause his demise, he never gave up.⁴⁵³ In recognition of his heroic act he was posthumously awarded the title of the hero of the socialist work, and the floating dock was named after him. The verbal narrative ends by means of calling the pupils' attention to the fact that the case of Reka was not an isolated one. Several heroes have sacrificed their life safeguarding and further expanding socialist property. These true revolutionaries were educated by the Party and the leader Enver Hoxha.⁴⁵⁴ In their attempt to increase and protect the common socialist ownership, they always relied on their own powers and forces, declares the text. Their contribution is considered highly significant in terms of both reaching the glory days in which the people are currently living, as well as the further consolidation of the impregnable socialist homeland, concludes the text. It goes without saying that this last section represents an addition of the late years of self-isolation. Here, the readers-pupils can easily observe the leading concept of self-reliance, next to the equally significant task of protecting, at all costs, the socialist homeland. In the previous generation of textbooks, the text concentrates solely on the incident and the heroic stance of the socialist workers, who gave their own lives to protect the common property (Layout 25, Appendices section).

Leaving aside for the moment the text and turning to the images, in the visual communication the focus is on the above-described event. On the left page, a painting captures the dockworkers during their dramatic attempt to save the dock, followed by the close-shot photos of three male figures at the bottom of the right page. The viewers see the event on the left page from a low angle, which perhaps makes the almost identical bodies of the depicted protagonists more impressive. The drama of the scene grows when one considers the surroundings. Huge waves have almost swallowed the floating dock, which is about to sink. The same holds true for the sky. Ominous black clouds are shown, and the stark wind seems to pose serious difficulties to the three men trying control the dock and bring it to a safer place. The image is followed by a large descriptive caption once again stressing Adem Reka's and his colleagues' efforts to protect the collective socialist property.

⁴⁵³Minga, et. al., *Të Njohim Historinë e Popullit Tonë* (1981), 59.

⁴⁵⁴Ibid., 59.

Turning to the right page, three closely shot photos, perhaps of the above-mentioned protagonists, are shown. From this view, pupils could identify these figures. The placement of the visual elements at the bottom of both pages suggests a possible connection between them. Furthermore, a given and new polarization has been implemented in this double page layout.⁴⁵⁵ Given and already known to the viewers is the incident at the port of Durres, in other words, the act itself. New on the other hand are the actors and main protagonists, whose names could be read in the captions accompanying the photos. It is in this section of the right page where pupils are most likely asked to concentrate. The close shot and the very fact that the three men shown gaze directly at the viewers suggest a kind of involvement between the two sides. Going a step further, when one pays attention to the names appearing below each photo, one could see that none of the captions refer to the hero, Adem Reka. Such information puts into question the above hypothesis about the connection of the images in the frame of the present layout. The photos of the three men depicted on the right page do not belong to the heroes of Durres. They are some other heroes of the socialist work about whom no information has been provided in the frame of this chapter. To get more information concerning these enigmatic figures, we should turn to the previous editions, which are the years before 1978, where a whole chapter has been dedicated to them. This chapter, which has been included in the appendices section (Layout 26, Appendices section) focuses on a similar incident and the immediate reaction of the workers. In this concrete case, a fire that broke out in a forest and threatened a large area. The workers, in their superhuman attempt to extinguish the flames and protect the collective property, lost their life.

To return to the current layout and the textbook published in 1981, the reason that might have caused the inclusion of these three men in a chapter that does not dedicate a single word to them is still unclear. At the same time, one might even ask about their role and function in a non-compatible chapter layout. To be able to answer these questions, the key message of the chapter should first be discussed, as it results from the analysis of both modes of communication. In this direction, the concluding section helps significantly. In one single sentence, it encapsulates the heroism of the youth who, as usual by means of following the teachings of the Party and its leader Enver Hoxha, gave their own life to safeguard and protect the collective socialist ownership.

⁴⁵⁵ Kress and Van Leeuwen, *Reading Images*, 180-181.

Several examples have been mentioned or shown of people who gave their life for the same cause. These are the modern heroes of the socialist work who most likely function as role models for the pupils. The pupils are called to follow their heroic stance and steps. This call is direct and, above all, achieved by means of bringing both sides into communication, the pupils and the heroes-workers. Through the implementation of the demand images⁴⁵⁶ positioned at the bottom of the right page, the depicted three heroes directly address the viewers-pupils and ask them to follow in their footsteps. Last, this should be the reason that explains their inclusion in a non-compatible layout.

Going further with the analysis, but still remaining on the theme of productive work, the second chapter refers to another hero of the socialist work, the fifteen-year old girl Shkurte Vata. She was a volunteer in a youth brigade and died in an accident in 1967 while working for the construction of the railroad that connected the cities of Rrogozhina and Fieri.⁴⁵⁷ Right after her death, she turned into a martyr of the revolution.⁴⁵⁸ Shkurte Vata incarnated the symbol of the emancipated woman and youth, and as such was widely promoted in the Albanian socialist society. She was posthumously proclaimed a member of the Communist Party of Albania. Moreover, a memorial was built at the place where she fell. The statue erected in the honor of Shkurte Vata was a work of the sculptor Mumtaz Dhrami.⁴⁵⁹

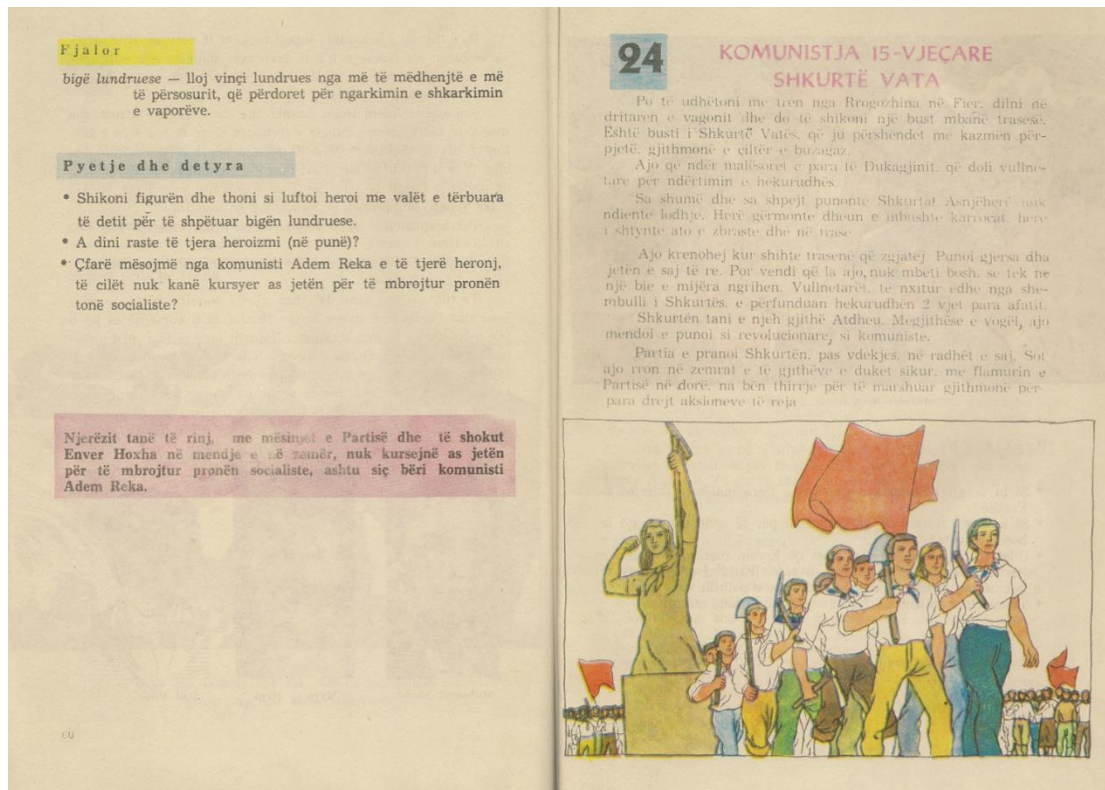
In the aftermath of this short introduction, let us turn to the textbooks and see how they refer to the figure of the young socialist heroine Shkurte Vata (Layout 35).

⁴⁵⁶ Kress and Van Leeuwen, *Reading Images*, 117-118.

⁴⁵⁷ Prifti, *Socialist Albania*, 106.

⁴⁵⁸ Konstantinos Giakoumis, Christopher Lockwood and Trudy Anderson, "The Making of the Socialist Martyr: Pjetër Llesh Doda and White Roads," *New Russian Cinema: KinoKultura Special Issue 16* (2016), accessed 25 July, 2016 http://www.kinokultura.com/specials/16/giakoumis_lockwood_anderson.shtml.

⁴⁵⁹ Hoxha, *Arti ne Shqipëri 1945-1990*, 94.



Layout 35. Minga, et. al., *Të Njohim Historinë e Popullit Tonë* (1984), 60-61.

To begin the analysis with some general observations, the current chapter named after the heroine consists of text, which is to be found entirely in the right page, and two images. The first image appears in the present layout (Layout 35). The second follows in the next double-spread and it will be addressed next (Layout 36). The present layout, and more specifically the right page, seems to have been divided according to a top and down polarization. The text that comes as the ideal part of the information is placed on top, and is thus the most ideologically salient part. At the bottom, the image should be considered to be the real part and the section where more specific information is to be found. Let us start the analysis from the text and the idealized essence of the information that begins with the name of the fifteen-year-old, Shkurte Vata. In the title, the protagonist of this chapter is also considered a de facto communist. After a short reference to the statue of Shkurte in the first paragraph, the verbal narrative informs the readers of the revolutionary worker Shkurte, the first among the women of her region to join a volunteer brigade. Her contribution and self-sacrifice are an exemplar for thousands of young volunteers who, after her death, undertook the task of constructing the railway. She became a symbol and a source of inspiration for those who came after her. As a result, the project was finished a good

two years in advance. The Communist Party of Albania, concludes the text, in an act of recognizing her contribution, accepted Shkurte posthumously as a member. In the very last sentence, the pupils read, the image of Shkurte lives today in our hearts and calls us to march forwards towards new actions.

The verbal call to further accomplish future actions, encountered in the very last sentence, comes by visual means in the image that accompanies the text. What the pupils-viewers see at first glance is a group of marching young people in the foreground, and slightly behind them is a large statue, which most likely represents the young Shkurte Vata. Red flags appear above the peoples' heads, both in the foreground and the background. In the background, the pupils can observe more people. Judging from the flux of these people, the impression is given that the entire Albanian population has been included in this single image.

To these initial observations, a more systematic analysis of the visual communication should be offered. Such an analysis will be structured according to the lines of representational, interactive and compositional meaning. To begin with the representational meaning, a narrative structure is first visible through the presence of a vector. A strong upward diagonal vector rises from the placement of the bodies of the depicted participants in the foreground. Within the frame of the composition, they are arranged not in a straight, but in a diagonal, line, while captured in a pose of movement. An oblique line, which comes as a supportive vector to the former one, is also formed by the slightly tilted arms and bodies of the depicted youth. Their gazes, all directed towards a certain point outside of the painting, should be considered a third vector. These three vectors, except for revealing to the viewers the information referring to the main actors, simultaneously bring a notion of action and movement. This movement, following the direction of the bodies and their gazes, is directed towards the right and most likely continues out of the frame of the painting. The marching youth can safely be considered the main actors of this image, also due to the fact that they hold in their hands means and tools. Shovels and pickaxes appear in their hands, and this represents another indication that supports their role as actors, or doers.

Until now we might have defined the actors, foregrounded in this image, but nothing has been mentioned regarding the action itself, or even the receivers of it. Their march

might be interpreted as the dynamic mobilization of the youth in the direction of further constructing and developing the socialist homeland. Their movement might be considered at the same time a march forwards towards future tasks and actions, a holistic mobilization of the people in the present, which gains a future perspective. The notion of progress is always present in this scheme. Visually, this information has been provided primarily by means of the people's bodies and mostly their gazes directed outside the frame of the painting. Their gazes could be interpreted as looking into the socialist future.⁴⁶⁰ Secondly, this movement from "is" to "will be," to borrow a term from Wolfgang Holz, is achieved thanks to the diagonal structure in which the people are depicted, and which implies a movement upwards and forwards.⁴⁶¹ It is as if the image is suggesting that the young Albanians have undertaken the task of bringing the socialist revolution a step further, and that this massive mobilization will also continue in the future. Even the means and tools to achieve these laudable aims have been provided. The people are equipped with shovels and pickaxes for waging the struggle in the present and the future. In this strong synchronized attempt, all give their contribution, men and women alike. It is not a matter of chance, for example, that at the head of this massive mobilization a figure of a woman is to be found. They all fight for the same cause of revolution and homeland. Again, this latter information derives from the visual communication and the red flags. They are to be found both in the forefront and in the background. The red color of the flag might have a double connotation. On the one hand, it denotes the color of the Albanian national flag, while on the other it is connected to the socialist revolution and socialism in general.

Since we referred to the actors and the action in detail, we should now turn to the receivers of this action or even the results of it. Neither the results of this collective and dynamic mobilization of the youth Albanians nor the receivers of it have been included in the image. They are both out of the frame of the composition and cannot be seen by the viewers. Such a choice, except for making the action non-transactional, asks more for the viewer's attention to the revolutionary process itself. Every individual and the entire society appear to have been involved in this revolution and this is made clear to the viewers-pupils. The pupils seem to have been engulfed in the

⁴⁶⁰ Jan Plamper, *The Stalin Cult: A study in the Alchemy of Power* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012), 105.

⁴⁶¹ Holz, "Allegory and Iconography," 74.

same process in an equivalent manner, the success of which pretty much depends also on their future contribution.

Going a step further, let us now focus more on the revolutionary process embracing the Albanian society as it has been captured in this image. Such a process seems to have intensified after the death of Shkurte Vata. She immediately turned into a symbol of the revolution and self-sacrifice. Since her demise, the revolutionary process has gained momentum while experiencing a rebirth, the image appears to say. This rebirth has been made visible first and foremost in the figures of the young people standing in the foreground. They are depicted quite a bit larger, more dedicated and positioned in an upward diagonal position that automatically provides them with more strength. They are, of course, still connected to the masses in the background but have now gained a monumental status comparable to that of the heroine Shkurte Vata. Numerous young people, following her paradigm, took up the means and tools and undertook the arduous task of bringing the socialist revolution, already underway, towards its completion. They appear devoted to their new tasks, which are to be achieved merely through hard work. They seem to voluntarily take this path and, at the same time, to hold the needed tools firmly in their hands. Work is the key that will open the doors of the socialist, and eventually communist, paradise, the image suggests for the moment. The path seemed secured and the conditions ripe for the success of this passage. According to the image, everything goes according to plan, the socialist order has been successfully consolidated and very soon the national community will step into the communist wonderland.

Leaving aside for the moment the narrative structure, let us now turn to the conceptual representation, which depicts the participants in terms of their more generalized and stable essence, such as class, meaning or structure.⁴⁶² Thus, not only doing something, as we have already seen previously, but also being something, belonging to a group or collective, meaning something and having certain features.⁴⁶³ When we refer to the conceptual representation, the initial feeling that the revolutionary process embracing Albania will reach success is more than obvious. The consolidation of socialism within the Albanian territory should be considered secured. This is the sublime task that holds the young Albanians together, and in the image, is achieved through the

⁴⁶² Kress and Van Leeuwen, *Reading Images*, 79.

⁴⁶³ Jewitt and Oyama, "Visual Meaning," 141.

implementation of several classificational processes. According to Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen, the classificational processes relate the participants to each other.⁴⁶⁴ Numerous means are used in the case of our image, ranging from the symmetrical distribution of the people across the painting, equal depiction and size, and the same orientation in space. This holds true both for the participants depicted in the center of the image and those positioned in the background. In addition, they all wear the same attire: trousers in different colors, white blouses and scarfs. Women are not excluded from this unified pattern, and the shovels and pickaxes they hold represent another classificational device. These all push the viewers-pupils to consider the represented participants as belonging to the same group or class who, except for sharing similar characteristics, have above all a common aim. Furthermore, their symmetrical distribution in space, taken together with the synchronized march towards the right of the image, make them look like a regular military unit. This awkward army, or to put it better each and every soldier in it, might not hold arms in his or her hands but instead shovels and pickaxes. These are the required means that will make the final consolidation of socialism possible and will make way for the arrival of the novel communist society. The attempts cannot fail at this culmination stage, but merely continue in the direction of accomplishing new tasks. Moreover, the soldiers of the socialist work are firmly connected to each other, appearing eager and devoted to their sublime task. All these reassure the viewers of the impregnable continuation of the march shown in the foreground. The workers-soldiers, at least those depicted in the foreground, share a common vision and appear unbeaten. The divisive line between them and the masses shown in the background is the statue of Shkurte Vata. Her positive symbol of the socialist work functions here as a source of inspiration for thousands of young workers and volunteers. After her loss nothing remained the same, the image appears to support. The Albanian society, and more specifically its young members, undertook the building of the public works, while further contributing to the consolidation of the economic basis of socialism in the country. Their dedication, pathos and zeal, as the image clearly shows, exceeds, thus making the accomplishment of all tasks easier.

Before leaving the representational and entering the interactive meaning it should be added that the representation of the youth in the form of a strong and powerful

⁴⁶⁴ Kress and Van Leeuwen, *Reading Images*, 79.

military unit is a development of the later years. That saying, the image was submitted for alterations by the end of the seventies. The form that is to be found in the current layout was first introduced in the textbook of 1978. The image remained unaltered until 1984. Starting the very next year, the subject of history was not taught anymore and was removed from primary school. When the image is compared to the one used in the previous editions and the years from 1972 to 1977 (Layout 27, Appendices section) the differences are clear. In these early years the heroine is part of the masses, one might support. Thanks to her act of self-sacrifice, she turned into a symbol of the socialist work and, as such, her giant figure appears above the people's heads. Despite her loss, she might be still considered a living person closely connected to the people. It is simply her grandiose act that distinguishes her, because she is still living among them. Summing up, she is depicted as the living idol of the socialist work. Regarding the masses, they might be numerous, but they give the impression of being static and not generating that much power.

Returning to above image implemented during the years of Albania's self-isolation (Layout 35), the heroine Shkurte Vata has been depicted by a statue. The existence of a pedestal leaves no doubt about this. The statue could be the one that was erected at the place where she fell. She is no longer a living person. Her monumental presence draws a divisive line in the history of post-war Albania. By means of sticking to the image, one might say that the Albanian history is divided into two epochs, before and after Shkurte's death. More than a normal citizen, she prevails as a martyr of the socialist work. With her example, she became a source of inspiration for the workers, the larger masses and the Albanian youth. Concomitantly, she contributed to the revolutionary process, which, as we have already observed, reached a culmination point in the aftermath of her death. Always referring to the image, the people, and more specifically, the young workers and volunteers took up the tools and means of the revolution. In an act of unprecedented military discipline, they allude more to the soldiers of an army shown while marching forwards. The term soldier best describes their appearance in this post-Shkurte era.

Moving a step further with the analysis, the question is raised concerning the depiction of the people in the form of a military unit in the years from 1978 to 1984. They more resemble soldiers rather than citizens. To put it simply, why has such a depiction been preferred, instead of the one showing the people in large masses? To

be able to respond to this question, one must focus on the social and historical context in which the textbooks were published. These are the years of Albania's self-isolation during which the country was experiencing an unprecedented attack coming from her enemies, both within and outside the national borders.⁴⁶⁵ Under these critical circumstances, the Albanian leadership, the one in charge of having invented and orchestrated the whole state-of-siege theory,⁴⁶⁶ turned to the masses and asked them to wage a united war against every potential enemy, an overall mobilization that would prevent the fall of the last outpost of socialism in the world, according to the official line. However, such a war primarily needed the creation of the soldiers and of a reliable army, all given in the frame of this image. They do not take up arms to fight the revisionist and the capitalist invaders and their domestic collaborators, but merely shovels and pickaxes. This is another form of urged resistance among the population that first aims to secure the conditions of economic self-reliance in the interior. Better said, it is as though the image were saying that in conditions of imposed international economic, political and military blockade, the country will rely on its own domestic resources and above all on its own people. The first priority is to secure economic independence. This task, always referring to the image, is something the young people have voluntarily undertaken. They seem dedicated to bringing Albania to the verge of economic self-sufficiency, which is, in addition, highly connected with the existence of the Albanian socialist state and revolution.

After having referred to the militaristic depiction of the people, the second feature that captures one's attention is the uniformed depiction of the latter. When we focus on the youth depicted in the forefront, what we see are similar bodies full of energy. The size and height of their physique is astonishingly equal. Men and women do not differ at all and it took us quite a long time to realize that a woman is to be found at the helm of this military unit. Her femininity has been minimized, and only after zooming in on the image could we be sure about her sex. Slight differences between the male and female figures might exist merely in their facial characteristics or hair. However, these are covered by the almost identical attire they all wear that allude to working uniforms, the direction of their bodies and their gazes all pointing out of the image's frame, and the means and tools they all carry. Another crucial factor is the

⁴⁶⁵ Prifti, *Socialist Albania*, 259.

⁴⁶⁶ Fischer, "The Second World War in Albania," 125

synchronized movement in which they have been captured and which turns them into a homogeneous group. This notion of uniformity, also encountered in previous layouts, is taken to the extreme when we pay attention to the masses depicted in the background. They all tend to look similar, having the same body stature, same height and same attire. Specific individual characteristics are difficult to be discerned due to the distance from which these people have been depicted. In an early attempt to read the message behind the uniformed collective depiction of the members who make up this army of workers, we might say that it communicates to the viewers-pupils the asphyxiating environment in which the people are called to live and work. Uniformity is preferred instead of individuality. The group, in our case the entire Albanian nation, is defined as a uniformed formation of people who work, move and have common objectives to fulfill. In this social framework, there is no room for individual traits, behavior or stances. All forces have been channeled into one single direction: the successful completion of the socialist state and society.

Leaving aside for the moment the representational and entering the realm of interactive meaning there are a few elements that need to be addressed. What will preoccupy us at this level is mainly the relation between the viewers and the represented participants. To describe this connection, imaginary or not, between the two parts, Kress and Van Leeuwen have developed a tool that takes into consideration several factors, such as the distance and the angle of the depiction or even the gaze of the people depicted. These elements can bring to light much information which is not visible at first sight. Let us begin with the gaze and gesture that perhaps best give this notion of contact between the participants and the viewers, in our case the pupils of the third class. When we focus on the youth positioned in the foreground and depicted in the form of a military unit, we observe that no connection has been established with the viewers. The young people gaze towards the right and out of the frame of the image, whereas the pupils stand most likely in front of them. However, when one turns to the statue of the heroine Shkurte Vata, she gazes frontally at the viewers. Furthermore, in her raised left hand she holds a pickaxe and with her right clenched fist salutes the viewers. Both her gaze and gesture bring Shkurte in direct contact with the pupils and thus turns the image into a demand image.⁴⁶⁷ She asks something from the viewers. It seems to be an appeal to mobilize the viewers and pupils. They are

⁴⁶⁷ Kress and Van Leeuwen, *Reading Images*, 1117-1118.

asked to enter the overall attempt to bring the socialist homeland and revolution a step forward. The aim is thus the future, and there is no better candidate to undertake this challenging task except the pupils. To put it simply, the pupils are demanded to imitate the same behavior of the depicted figures and take their position in the same ongoing revolutionary process. More concretely, the raised hand of Shkurte Vata, holding a pickaxe, makes this demand mandatory due to the fact that the heroine addresses directly the viewers in the eye.⁴⁶⁸ In other words, each and every pupil has been included in this individual call and is reminded of his or her duty to enter the revolutionary process and join the group.

The second dimension refers to the distance from which the depicted participants are shown. In our case, a relatively close frame has been chosen that brings the represented participants close to the pupils. The pupils are almost able to touch their idols. Slightly behind them is the statue of the heroine Shkurte Vata. In case we accept that the group of young workers, or volunteers, is marching in a street or a boulevard, then the pupils gaze at them from the sidewalk. They are quite close, and the two parts establish a certain social relation and interact with each other. However, this kind of involvement derives only from the side of the pupils who gaze at the group of marching people. Regarding the foregrounded Albanian youth, they do not interact with the pupils, since their gazes are directed out of the frame of the composition. According to Kress and Van Leeuwen, there is an additional element that somehow detaches the people from the pupils, and this is the oblique angle of the depiction.⁴⁶⁹ Despite the fact that the angle is not that extreme, the marching people are to be seen from the side and thus considered by the viewers as strangers who are not part of their world. Therefore, one might support that the angle from which the people are depicted generates detachment instead of involvement between the viewers and the shown participants. Furthermore, this choice does not support what has been discussed above concerning the visual call for the viewers to enter the first line of the revolution. How could the viewers-pupils enter a collective attempt that is considered strange and not belonging to their world? This is at least controversial, and as such, one would expect to have the opposite results. Nevertheless, the pupils seem to accept

⁴⁶⁸ Ibid., 118.

⁴⁶⁹ Kress and Van Leeuwen, *Reading Images*, 136.

the invitation, better said call, and enter the revolutionary process happening before their very eyes. Visually speaking, such information has been provided through the low angle of the youth's and the heroine's depiction. Such a choice makes them look imposing and powerful in the pupils' eyes. Moreover, as far as the young protagonists regards, their healthy bodies, monumental and full of energy, retain a certain charm that attracts the viewers. The combination of power and charm makes them irresistible to the viewers. They gaze in awe at the living and the fallen socialist workers, the absolute positive examples, and subconsciously come to imitate the same behavior. They naturally seem to follow their idols and to enter into the first line of the revolution.

In the aftermath of the interactive message, we will refer last to the compositional meaning of the image. To begin with the placement of the elements within the frame of the painting, it seems as though a given and new polarization have been implemented.⁴⁷⁰ Given and already known to the viewers is the figure of the heroine Shkurte Vata, and new are the people placed in the forefront. According to the theory of visual social semiotics, the novel information is something to which the viewers must pay special attention and is the central issue. In our case, this place has been occupied by the Albanian youth who are depicted in the form of the military unit. This represents the core information brought to the foreground. The very fact that the soldiers of this army come in the forefront, together with their dynamic diagonal upward position, also turn them into the most salient element of the painting. Given their presence and role in this culmination stage of the revolution, they dominate the painting and become the absolute idols for the young pupils. Last, I will refer in short to the placement of the elements, or better said participants, in the frame of this image. Aside from the given and new polarization discussed above, an additional division among the participants is visible. They seem divided into two large groups, the masses shown in the background and the strongly united group appearing in the foreground. The watershed that separates the latter from the former is the statue of Shkurte Vata. Her death, according to the image, is a turning point that marked the developments of the socialist revolution in the country. The division is made even clearer by the different size and formations of the represented participants on each side.

⁴⁷⁰ Ibid. 180-181.

Gradually drawing to the end of the visual analysis, there are some messages that came to the fore after having described the representational, interactive and compositional meaning of the painting. The first that stands out is the unanimous and dynamic mobilization of the Albanian youth for the cause of further consolidation of the socialist homeland. This large movement, which manages to allure the viewers-pupils, reached its zenith by the mid-sixties, and more specifically, after the fall of the young socialist worker Shkurte Vata. Second, it is apparent that, in this context, there is no space for the individual who comes into being as soon as he or she enters the collective enterprise of further consolidating the socialist homeland. The third and most significant message that the image brings is a call directed towards the pupils who are tomorrow's workers and revolutionaries. This call, though, is highly individual and directly permeates every pupil through the figure of Shkurte Vata. Hence, an imaginary connection has been established that asks the pupils to follow the paradigm of the workers foregrounded or even that of the heroine herself. As their successors, the pupils should enter the first lines of the revolution and offer their contribution. They are called to get involved in the productive work, through which the final victory of the revolution will be secured. Concomitantly, through their involvement in the ongoing socialist revolution, the process of forming the "New Man" with a novel mentality and socialist characteristics will be continued. All in all, this is nothing more than the visualization of the call that the text addresses towards the pupils in the last paragraph. The repetition of the same call by visual means connects the two narratives and brings them closer in terms of content.

Last, I will refer shortly to the second image that has been included in the following layout but is still part of the same chapter (Layout 36). The questions and the summary of the whole chapter are also to be found in this layout. In this painting, the figure of a young man walking in a mountainous terrain is shown. From the caption the pupils learn that he is a teacher who happens to also be a hero of the socialist work. This information has also been visually provided by the book and dossier the he holds in his hands. No other information can be found in the chapter that is related to this enigmatic hero. Only two last questions draw the attention of the pupils to him. The first asks the names of other heroes and their contribution. The pupils in this case are also required to recall knowledge or information coming from other subjects. The

second question deals directly with the content of the images appearing in this chapter and asks the pupils to describe their content and protagonists.

25 I GJITHË POPULLI USHTAR

— Partizanët! Partizanët! Shikoji Arben!
 Arbeni u ngrit në majë të gishtave për të parë edhe më mirë. Partizanët parakalonin, duke përshëndetur me grushtet përpjetë. Kudo shpërthyen të papërmbajtura brohoritjet: «Parti e Punës! Parti e Punës!», «Enver Hoxha, Enver Hoxha!», «Parti, Enver — jemi gati kurdoherë!».

Besniku i beri me dorë Arbenin.
 — E shikon atë partizanin në treshitën e parë? — e pyeti.
 — Ajo është teta Drita.
 Kur u afrua, ajo i buzëqeshi Besnikut. Arbeni shikoi gjoksin e saj dhe numëroi 3.4.5 dekorata. Dy shokët nuk patën kohë të numërojnë rreshtat e partizaneve, sepse pas tyre erdhën anëtarët e cetave vullnetare: nxënësit e studentët si dhe togat e ushtarëve të veshur me rroba të blerta, që parakalonin me armë shtrënguar e syrin pishë.
 Kur mbaroi parakalimi, ata u përpoqën të përfytyronin gjësimin e rëndë të topave dhe gjuajtjen e përpiktë të raketave, ushtimën e tankeve dhe të aeroplanëve reaktivë që panë.
 — I gjithë populli tek ne është ushtar. Armiqtë s'guxojnë të prekin qoftë edhe një pëlëmbë tokë të vendit tonë, — thanë të dy me një gojë dhe vazhduan rrugën tërë gaz.
 Ata e dinë se në Shqipërinë tonë socialiste i gjithë populli stërvitet e përgatitet për të qenë kurdoherë i gatshëm për mbrojtjen e Atdheut. Të gjithë zbatojnë mësimin e Partisë «Mbrojtja e Atdheut është detyrë mbi detyrat».

Pyetje dhe detyra

- Si iu përgjigj Shkurta me shoqet e tjera malësore thirrjes së Partisë?
- Si e tregoi rinia jonë gatishmërinë për të zënë vendin që la bosh Shkurta?
- Cilët të rinj të tjerë, me aktet që kryen, merituan titullin e heroit? Mësoni për heroizmin e tyre. (Kujtoni ç'keni mësuar për heronjtë edhe në edukatën morale e politike e në këndim).
- Thoni çfarë shikoni në figurat që keni në këtë mësim.

Partia i ka besuar rinisë shumë aksione. Kjo i ka kryer ato me guxim e heroizëm. Një shembull i tillë heroizmi ishte Shkurtë Vata, nga Dukagjini.

Pyetje dhe detyra

- Vëreni figurat dhe përshkruani çfarë panë Besniku me Arbenin.
- Pse Besniku dhe Arbeni thanë: «Armiqtë s'guxojnë të prekin qoftë edhe një pëlëmbë tokë të vendit tonë?»
- Ç'kuptoni me shprehjen: «I gjithë populli ushtar»? Zhvillonini për këtë një bisedë në klasë, së bashku me mësuesin dhe jepni shembuj nga qyteti dhe fshati juaj.
- Ç'tregojnë dekoratat që kishte në gjoks teta Drita?

Shqipërinë e mbron i gjithë populli ushtar, i udhëhequr nga Partia e Punës e Shqipërisë, me shokun Enver Hoxha në krye.

Layout 36. Minga, et. al., *Të Njohim Historinë e Popullit Tonë* (1983), 62-63.

To the question that might arise of why the visual communication chooses to show someone not mentioned at all in the text, merely a few speculations could be added. Possibly the teacher, who also appears in the previous editions (Layout 27, Appendices section), has been included solely for quantitative reasons. The narrative more likely shows so many heroes of the socialist work in an attempt to convince the pupils to follow in their footsteps. Together with the expansion of the new heroes' pantheon, the chapter seeks to equally depict manual and mental labor.

6.3.3. Safeguarding the socialist homeland

The process of tempering the “New Man” with a socialist conscience and moral, as it has already been mentioned, is life-long. After the work market, it also takes place in the frame of the physical and military training. Physical and military training dynamically entered the Albanian society in the late sixties. In the aftermath of Albania's withdrawal from the Warsaw Pact in 1968, the orientation of the socialist leadership was eminently clear: it had to make its citizens fit for the protection of the

socialist revolution and homeland. Training the population in weaponry thus gained priority in this historical context. The example Czechoslovakia's invasion was still fresh and seems to have urged this reaction of the Albanian authorities. In case of a similar invasion of Albania by the Warsaw Pact troops, the small socialist republic had to be fully prepared.

Concerning education, physical and military training were considered significant and became obligatory during the same years.⁴⁷¹ According to the researcher Sotir Temo, physical and military education signified a rounded education that prepares the youth for work and defense of the socialist homeland.⁴⁷² More specifically, in 1968, a novel scheme for training young pupils with weapons was introduced. Boys and girls attending compulsory or secondary education received a month of military training based on the theory and practice of partisan or guerrilla warfare.⁴⁷³ Military training in school was performed in close collaboration with the armed forces, according to a plan the communist leadership developed for the safeguarding of the national independence. In his report to the Sixth Congress of the Party of Labor, the First Secretary Enver Hoxha drew attention to the implementation of school programs oriented towards the military preparation of young Albanians.⁴⁷⁴ The training of the population with weapons was not restricted solely to the school years but continued throughout their adult life. By the end of the sixties, it was obligatory for all citizens. By law, they had to spend one month each year in military training. The objective was to prepare the population to fight for the homeland and the revolution in case of an emergency. In the late seventies and throughout the eighties, a period during which Albania was experiencing an unprecedented state of siege,⁴⁷⁵ military training at school and in society intensified and took a permanent character. With regard to the educational system, during this period numerous school programs were implemented for better preparation of the young pupils in the use of weapons.⁴⁷⁶ The significance that military training enjoyed in this historical turn is to be mirrored also in the decisions of the Eighth Congress of the Party of Labor, held in 1982, that asked for

⁴⁷¹ Hall, *Albania and the Albanians*, 74.

⁴⁷² Temo, *Education in the People's Socialist Republic of Albania*, 44.

⁴⁷³ Logoreci, *The Albanians*, 170--171.

⁴⁷⁴ Enver Hoxha, *Për Arsimin dhe Edukatën*, 601.

⁴⁷⁵ Prifti, *Socialist Albania*, 259.

⁴⁷⁶ Bowers, "Stalinism in Albania," 450.

the continual increase in the quality of pupils' and students' military preparation.⁴⁷⁷ Furthermore, the same congress called attention to the strengthening of vigilance and preparedness for war among the pupils.⁴⁷⁸ By means of putting into practice the Marxist-Leninist principle of arming the people, the Albanian leadership made every possible attempt to train the latter militarily. Be they young people or adults, all had to be ready for the protection of the socialist homeland.

After these introductory notes on physical and military training and the significance it gained in the social and educational sphere, let us now focus on the textbooks and see how they refer to the same topic. To fulfill the needs of the multimodal analysis, the textbook issued in 1978 has been chosen (Layout 37). In this version, image and text have been included in the same double-spread layout. I will begin the analysis with the compositional structure of the layout and the placement of the elements in its frame. Second, the verbal narrative will be addressed and will be followed by the visual communication. Last comes the overall multimodal message this layout foregrounds. It should be made clear at this point that the content of this double spread remained unaltered during the years 1978-1984. The only change in the following editions was the position of the verbal and visual elements.

⁴⁷⁷ "Përgatitje Ushtarake me Cilësi e Nxënësve dhe e Studenteve," *Mësuesi*, April 3, 1985.

⁴⁷⁸ "Përgatitje Ushtarake", *Mësuesi*. April 3, 1985.

— Partizanët! Partizanët! Shikoj Arben!
Arbeni u ngrit në majë të gishtave për të parë edhe më mirë. Partizanët parakalonin, duke përshëndetur me grushtet përpjetë. Kudo shpërthyen të papërbajtura brohoritjet: «Parti e Punës! Parti e Punës!», «Enver Hoxha, Enver Hoxha!», «Parti, Enver — jemi gati kurdoherë!».

Besniku i beri me dorë Arbenit.
— E shikon atë partizanen në rrushin e parë? — e pyeti.
— Ajo është teta Drita.

Kur u afrua, ajo i buzëqeshi Besnikut. Arbeni shikoi gjoksin e saj dhe numëroi 3.4.5 dekorata. Dy shokët nuk patën kohë të numërojnë rrushat e partizanëve, sepse pas tyre erdhën anëtarët e çetave vullnetare: nxënësit e studentët si dhe togat e ushtarëve të veshur me rroba të blerta, që parakalonin me armë shtrënguar e syrin pishë.

Kur mbaroi parakalimi, ata u përpoqën të përfytyronin gjësimin e rëndë të topave dhe gjuajtjen e përpiktë të raketave, ushtrimin e tankeve dhe të aeroplanëve reaktivë që panë.

— I gjithë populli tek ne është ushtar. Armiqet s'guxojnë të prekin qoftë edhe një pëlëmbë tokë të vendit tonë, — thanë të dy me një gojë dhe vazhduan rrugën tërë gaz.

Ata e dinë se në Shqipërinë tonë socialiste i gjithë populli stërvitet e përgatitet për të qenë kurdoherë i gatshëm për mbrojtjen e Atdheut. Të gjithë zbatojnë mësimin e Partisë «Mbrojtja e Atdheut është detyrë mbi detyrat».

Pyetje dhe detyra

- Vëreni figurat dhe përshkruani çfarë panë Besniku me Arbenin.
- Pse Besniku dhe Arbeni thanë: «Armiqet s'guxojnë të prekin qoftë edhe një pëlëmbë tokë të vendit tonë?»
- Ç'kuptoni me shprehjen: «I gjithë populli ushtar»? Zhvilloni për këtë një bisedë në klasë, së bashku me mësuesin dhe jepni shembuj nga qyteti dhe fshati juaj.
- Ç'tregojnë dekoratat që kishte në gjoks teta Drita?

Shqipërinë e mbrojnë i gjithë populli ushtar, i udhëhequr nga Partia e Punës e Shqipërisë, me shokun Enver Hoxha në krye.



Layout 37. Minga, et. al., *Të Njohim Historinë e Popullit Tonë* (1978), 66-67.

When the viewers-pupils turn to this layout, the first thing that catches their attention is the visual communication positioned on the right page. A whole page depiction stands out, which, referring to the theory of critical layout analysis, comes as the new part of the information. New, according to Kress and Van Leeuwen, has the meaning of the crucial message and therefore where the reader must pay special attention.⁴⁷⁹ It is a large representation, mainly showing the people at arms and apparently focusing on the military strength of Albania. Next to the many human figures who appear in this whole page visual representation, the weapons also take the lead in this interesting amalgam of different genres of visual art. The page consists of photos, paintings and a collage on top. On the opposite page, the verbal narrative is presented as the given part and as something the readers already know and consider familiar. In other words, it is as though the layout were calling the viewers to concentrate on the visual communication, which is presented as something new, not yet known. Considering the content of the visual communication, one should say that right in front of the pupils' eyes, one of the most militaristic layouts of the entire narrative

⁴⁷⁹ Kress and Van Leeuwen, "Critical Layout Analysis", 27.

opens. Militaristic depictions have been encountered in several cases in the national narrative by now, but these should be considered as relatively moderate in comparison to the current layout.

Going a step further, the announced line of the analysis will not be followed. Instead of the verbal, I will start from the visual part of the information, the most eye-catching part of the current layout. Let us begin with a short description of what the viewers-pupils see once they enter the visual narrative. In the center, numerous heavily armored fighting vehicles maneuver down the central boulevards of the capital Tirana. It is possible to know that the foregrounded military parade takes place in the capital because of the governmental buildings appearing at the bottom of the photo. Right above the tanks stand three giant human figures. They pose with their arms grasped, gazing out of the page's frame in an act of showing their vigilance and state of preparedness. From their attire, the readers get the information that the two men and the woman belong to the people's militia. As has already been mentioned above, in the late sixties the Albanian leadership put into practice the Marxist-Leninist dogma of arming the people. All citizens received one month of military training each year to be able to protect their homeland and revolution. It seems as though this upper section of the visual communication were focusing precisely on this type of arms training. It should be added, though, that the man positioned in the center resembles more a regular soldier. He wears a military uniform and helmet, whereas his civilian colleagues on both sides do not. Above the three figures, one might observe the sea and discern a coastal patrol boat. At the top, the sky and five aircraft of the Albanian air force appear. Turning to the bottom, there are three images of two young women on the far left, possibly captured during their annual military training. Considering their age, one can suggest that they are either pupils or students. In the center and far right bottom, fragments from perhaps the same parade have been shown. An artillery subunit of armored personnel carriers appears in the central photo, and on the far right the pupils could distinguish the head of the military parade and the flag carriers in front of a governmental building.

Following these initial observations, the structuring of the visual elements within the frame of the page will be addressed next. They seem divided into three or more horizontal sections that possibly help in terms of better reading the content. To begin from top to bottom, a first divisive line is formed in the horizon, dividing the sky from

the sea. A second one starts right below the people's figures and divides the water from earth. In this third horizontal section, numerous armed fighting vehicles are seen in the central boulevards of the capital Tirana. A third and last division is suggested by the white space between the third and the fourth section of the narrative appearing at the bottom. In this last section, the narrative continues to focus on the land forces. Following the partitioning of the visual narrative into four autonomous horizontal sections, a new perspective has opened from which the viewers can approach and read its content. Instead of a perplexing visual structure, including numerous participants, even more armored vehicles, aircraft and coastal ships, what we see now is a well-structured narrative established along the lines of the country's armed forces. The three basic military branches, air force, navy and army, appear one after the other. The human presence has not been excluded from this militaristic representation. The people are shown either as soldiers, civilians at arms, or pupils and students, again during their military training. Thus, they have something in common, prevailing as members of the same army, be it regular or expressed in terms of people's militia.

When we address the visual communication from the above perspective, we immediately realize that there is a sense of missing balance in the depiction of the armed forces. One half of the page is dedicated to the land forces, whereas the other half is divided between the marine and air forces. Sections three and four focus completely on the land forces that have been shown in four images, hence making clear to the viewers the dominance of the Albanian land forces in comparison to the two other branches of the Albanian army. The latter prevalence is also stressed through the numerous armored fighting vehicles and people depicted within the frame of those four images. It is as though the visual communication were putting the weight on the land army in this page and asking at the same time that the readers accept it as such. However, when we enter the inner details, we come to realize that the two horizontal sections dedicated to the Albanian land army in the lower section of the page are disconnected from each other. They are divided by a white line or space that is apparently a divisive line, and perhaps is the only disconnecting device existing on the whole page. When one turns to the upper horizontal sections, thus navy and air forces, the divisive lines seem to be not that strong. Quite the opposite, they are undermined in some cases, thus pushing the viewers to consider the two upper horizontal sections as belonging together. The line the horizon forms in the

background between the sky and sea doesn't prove strong enough to separate these two visual sections, let alone the fact that the figures of the three people challenge this division by means of breaking it with their heads. These two upper parts appear more to collaborate with each other in the form of the natural continuation of the sea into the sky in the distant horizon. To the latter visual section, the photo showing the tanks during a military parade, positioned relatively in the center should be also added. When we turn to this part of the visual composition, we see that the divisive line on its top has been undermined both from the left and right. In an unrealistic depiction, the sea and reeds encroach on the Albanian capital. Literally speaking, the reeds grow in the streets and the boulevards of Tirana next to the armored vehicles. This expansion of the sea into the city might be considered as peculiar and strange on the one hand, but on the other it has the function of connecting this part of the visual composition to the two above it. In this manner, the first three horizontal sections turn into a solid visual unit. In this compact structure, one can still see all three branches of the armed forces: air force, navy and army. The monumental figures of the three citizens-soldiers on the top of that are distinguished. One might add that they also represent the central elements of this upper section, which appears clearly divided from the three images appearing at the bottom. What results at the end is a top and bottom polarization of the page. The elements positioned on top are the ideal, and those at the bottom gain the status of the real part of the information. When a layout makes use of this kind of polarization, the ideal, according the Kress and Van Leeuwen, is presented as the idealized or generalized essence of the information and is factually the ideologically most significant part.⁴⁸⁰ The real, on the other hand, contains more specific information and details. Usually, continue Kress and Van Leeuwen, at the bottom, more down to earth information such as photographs, maps and statistics providing documentary evidence or more practical information including consequences and directions for action is to be found.⁴⁸¹

After having referred to the placement of the visual elements within the frame of the page and their division in two distinct zones, ideal and real, I will next consider the inner details of each part and attempt to read their content. To begin with the larger section, the ideal part, all three branches of the Albanian army, one next to the other,

⁴⁸⁰ Kress and Van Leeuwen, "Critical Layout Analysis", 28.

⁴⁸¹ Ibid., 28-29.

are shown. Albania, as a sovereign state, possesses a modern army, this part of the visual narrative informs us, that seems more than capable of defending the territorial integrity of the People's Socialist Republic. Moreover, the high operational preparedness of the civilians and soldiers appears in this context as a guarantee for preserving the current political order and socialist state, as well as some of the governmental buildings or institutions shown in this framework. In the third horizontal section and in the background, one might discern the building of the Albanian Parliament, the former People's Assembly. The People's Assembly, according to Article 66 of the Albanian Constitution, is the supreme organ of state power.⁴⁸²

Since we referred to the people represented here, it should be mentioned that the three represented figures, placed relatively in the center and foreground, definitely stand out from the frame of this ideal section. Their imposing size turns them into the largest visual elements that attract the viewer's attention. To this, the closeness of the shot and the low angle of the depiction should be added. The first choice brings them closer to the viewers, and the second provides them with more power. Furthermore, above their heads a halo and a star appear. The star is white and not entirely depicted, but it could be still considered a communist symbol, which is to be found both in the Albanian national flag and the coat of arms. The halo on the other hand, is more related to a religious context, usually shown around the head of a holy person or saint. In our case, the figures are given a sense of holiness and sanctity as well, which one would assume derives from the very fact of their contribution. They represent the guards of the Socialist Republic and as such are the absolute modern heroes-saviors, or saints, to put it in religious terms. According to the image, they enjoy a divine, or semi-divine, existence, something that could be understood from their representation in this section. They are brought into this frame of the visual communication by means of a photo collage, still visible around their figures. However, the use of the simple collage technique, a sign of sloppiness one might say, is not the most significant in this case. The crucial information here is that the three people stand, literally speaking, above a suffocating militaristic state or society. They seem to not

⁴⁸² Andersen, "The Albanian Constitution of 1976," accessed 18 August, 2016, <http://bjoerna.dk/dokumentation/Albanian-Constitution-1976.htm#Chapter%20I%20The%20Supreme%20Organs%20of%20the%20State%20Power> .

adhere to any law of gravity and stand somewhere between earth, sea and sky. Their immense busts emerge from the water, while always remaining connected with the earth and the sky. The viewers-pupils could easily imagine that the feet of the foregrounded figures, not shown here, touch the earth. At the same time, their heads, as one could easily observe, reach the horizon in the background. From the position they occupy, they gain some extraordinary features that cannot be found among normal people, and are concomitantly able to surveil the entire Albanian territory and borders. In this case, the borders correspond to the frame of the page, out of which the gaze of our protagonists expands. They are the present-day gods living on top of the socialist Albanian cosmos. In case we want to be more precise, their representation alludes to the god of war Ares, one of the twelve immortals who dwelled upon Mount Olympus. Thus, next to their idealized and holy depiction one might add the mythical aspects that come to the fore. They are above all mythical figures who do not have much in common with normal human beings. Continuing in this line of thought, the position they occupy, their size and above all their gesture turns them into the symbols or, better said, the icons of the “New Socialist Man” that the Albanian leadership seeks to create. As warlike mythical figures, in a narrative dominated by the notion of war, the two men and the woman prevail as the absolute positive role models posing in front of the pupils’ eyes. They pose as behavioral archetypes that are to be emulated by the pupils. As contemporary deities, they are even supposed to be worshiped by the young pupils and viewers. Through this act of honoring them, the visual narrative seems to seek the establishment of a direct communication between the gods and the worshipers, which might invoke the same pattern of behavior to the worshipers.

Going a step further with the analysis, in their attempt to protect homeland, the above-discussed civilians and soldiers do not appear alone. They are assisted by military aircraft, coast guard and artillery. The artillery unit is large and is perhaps the sole element that can challenge the dominance of the people within the frame of this ideal section. One might support that the armored vehicles represent the most salient element and occupy the center here. Their size and their considerable number give credit to this interpretation. Nevertheless, they cannot reach the impressive status of the above-mentioned present-day living gods. The tanks, despite the sense of power and dominance they might generate, always remain stuck in the realm of the real. On

the other hand, the people-soldiers move freely between their real existence and their idealistic depiction. Second, the very fact that the three figures are positioned in the center speaks in favor of them. As the ideal, and, at the same time real, prototypes of an existing militarized society, they take the lead at this point and prevail as its best representatives. The visual climax of power that this ideal section suggests is to be filled by the aircraft, coastal boats or even the tanks, all positioned around the three figures. Hence, a center and margin visual structure arises at this point that calls for the viewers to approach it as such. The center is captured by the three figures of civilians and soldier who incarnate the novel type of the socialist man. They are vigilant, with their weapons in their hands, and have at the same time an inspirational effect on the young generations. In their attempt to fulfill the ambitious task of safeguarding their socialist homeland, the three sublime figures are assisted by the Albanian army, navy and air force, all having an ancillary role and being positioned around them. All in all, this latter seems to be the foregrounded aim that the current part of the information seeks to achieve. In short, the pupils and future citizens are expected to become inspired by the grandiose presence and contribution of the depicted figures, and perpetuate the same behavior.

Before leaving this ideal part of visual communication, filled with plenty of real references, let us focus once again on the figures of the three citizens-soldiers, the absolute protagonists of this ideal section, and address a few more issues. The three monumental figures are positioned in a line, one next to the other. A woman is positioned in the foreground and nearer to the readers. She is shown holding a weapon and appears devoted to her task, as do her male colleagues. Second is the depiction of the people in terms of soldiers in a suffocating militaristic context. Both choices seem reasonable when considering the socio-historical context in which the textbooks were issued. I will refer next to the developments in the late seventies and early eighties. Following the official isolationist dogma, in this historical turn Albania found itself under a state-of-siege that was imposed by the country's external and internal enemies. To the created conditions, the Albanian leadership reacted immediately by means of waging a concomitant struggle against modern revisionism and imperialism on the one hand and their internal collaborators on the other. To be able to conduct this war and tear down the external blockade, which was rather a fruit of conspiracy theories and never existed in real terms, the country needed a reliable army. The army

is created, at least in this specific layout, and consists of the whole Albanian nation, including civilians and regular soldiers. More significant is the very fact that in this army women are included as well. Except for the inner front cover (Layout 2), women are shown for the first time carrying weapons and equally contributing in the protection of the socialist homeland. In the national narrative and as far as the significant issue of war is concerned, men had the upper hand in all cases until now. However, this prevailing centuries-long pattern of visual representation seems to have changed once and for all. During this culminating stage of further building and protecting the socialist revolution and homeland, the position of the woman in the Albanian society was much improved, the layout appears to say. The large campaign for the emancipation of women and their equal treatment in the Albanian society began a few years earlier with the Ideological and Cultural Revolution. In textbooks and returning to the issue of military training, they are treated equally as their male co-soldiers in the paramount task of protecting the homeland, and from this position they bear arms as well. In addition, they were eligible to get education and enter the work market and production, as we have seen in the last two chapters. In both cases, and referring to what we have observed during this late socialist period, women did not perform in an auxiliary role. On the contrary, women were seen in the forefront and they attracted the viewers' gazes, something the current layout does as well. They are considered the novel symbols of the socialist revolution and from this position they pose in the foreground bearing arms, a symbol of masculinity in the Albanian society. Last, when one pays attention to the woman depicted in the current visual communication (Layout 37), her female attributes seem to have been minimized. Instead, she has a strong physique that permeates a sense of masculine power, wide shoulders, short hair and a muscular silhouette. To these it should be added the almost non-existent breast, which is far from the romantic icon of women.

Moving to the bottom and the real part of the information, the pupils observe three smaller photos. Despite the clear division between the top-ideal and the current bottom-real, the photos included here carry on in the same visual theme, the militaristic depiction of the Albanian society. All three images focus either on the armed people or show the armed forces of the country. To begin from left to right, in the first image one might observe two young women in military uniforms. Judging from their age, as we have already observed, they could be either pupils or students

captured during their military training. The photo positioned in the center shows a large convoy of armored personnel carriers maneuvering down the Albanian capital. The last photo depicts the flag carriers, most likely belonging to the same military march. Furthermore, the last two photos have been captured from a distance, while in the first case a closer depiction has been chosen. The second observation turns to the size of the photos. The first from the left appears slightly larger in comparison to the other two photos, thus making it the most salient visual element of this real section. In this photo, the military training of the population that entered education in 1968 has been foregrounded. The photo concentrates on two young pupils. This is the image that not only captures the viewers-pupils attention, but it manages to bring them closer to what they see. In this direction, the age of the depicted figures and the distance from which they are shown seems to contribute as well. This focal point, as in the above-addressed ideal section, has been structured around the notion of raising the vigilance of the young Albanians and getting them ready to fight for the cause of socialism and homeland. This military preparedness, according to the photo, will be achieved merely by means of training the youth in weaponry. Two girls in military uniforms, and not boys, have been chosen. It is as though, once again, the visual communication is stressing the emancipation of the women's position in the Albanian society, which in this concrete case came through their involvement in the military training from the school or university years. After the depiction of the citizens and the entire society in a military fervor in the ideal section, the real part concentrates once again on the youth's military preparation. Such a process takes place during their school or university years, the photo placed at the left-bottom of the page informs us. Referring to its position in the visual compositional framework, military training appears as a fact and one of the cardinal aspects of modern socialist education. Furthermore, this photo not only plays the role of the documentary evidence, but above all it seems to have a practical function. Being the central image of this real section, it asks the viewers-pupils to concentrate on it and concomitantly repeat the same action. Hence, take up arms and get ready for the defense of the socialist homeland. In case this reaction was expected, or even wished, in the above ideal section, in the current photo and the real part of the visual communication it is directly asked.

Going a step further with the analysis, such an interpretation that wants people, civilians, soldiers, pupils or students, and above all, the viewers to always be ready with weapons in hand seems to gain ground when one considers the social and historical context. The textbook, published in 1978, and more concretely the visual communication discussed here remained in use until 1984. As we have already mentioned, during this period Albania entered a long isolation phase. To safeguard its borders and recent achievements that were put at risk after such a development, the country had to conduct a difficult war against all possible enemies in the interior and primarily those coming from the exterior. Albania was thus in need of a reliable army that, in the frame of the visual communication, seems to have been successfully created with the inclusion of the entire population, including the young Albanians as well. They receive military training, should stay alert and be ready to protect the socialist homeland at every turn. To this all-inclusive mobilization characterizing the Albanian society, the viewers, in this concrete case the pupils of the third grade, have been included. Their inclusion, as we have already explained, was achieved indirectly and through the two young girls in uniforms at the bottom of the page. The pupils identify themselves with the two figures and most likely come to reiterate the same behavior. That saying, take up arms and get ready for the protection of the socialist revolution and the homeland. When one compares the current version of visual communication to the one published during the years 1972-1977 (Layout 28, Appendices section), one can easily discern that the two figures represent a recent addition. The two young girls replace the numerous military units and formations at the left bottom of the page. Their introduction additionally breaks the suffocating militaristic atmosphere that is praised by the different units of the Albanian army. At the same time, they manage to shift the center of attention from the armed forces to the Albanian citizens, be they soldiers, civilians and pupils or students. It should be mentioned at this point that it is the human figures and not the heavy armored vehicles and the modern coast patrol boats or aircrafts that are the center of attention of both the ideal and real section of the visual communication.

Remaining still at the bottom of the page, the content of the image positioned at the far right experienced alterations as well. In the version that appeared in history textbooks from 1978 to 1984, discussed here, the image focuses on a small formation of soldiers, most likely at the helm of the same military march and holding the

Albanian national flag. It is as though it were explaining, in this last image, why the pupils and the entire population that have been included in the other images should stay alert. The reason is no other than the protection of the homeland, visually depicted in the national flag. In this challenging task, they are assisted by the land forces, more specifically, the artillery unit. These forces occupy the spatial center and act as a mediator between the given photo of the armed girls on the bottom left, and the new information on the bottom right of the page that focuses on the national flag. Thus, a horizontal polarization arises at this point, reminding us of the crucial role that the Albanian armed forces, in this concrete case the land forces, have in protecting the homeland. The Albanian army might have lost much of the glamor it enjoyed in the previous editions, but it is always there as a guarantor of the present and future existence of the People's Socialist Republic of Albania.

After this long and in some cases even difficult analysis, what has been visually communicated to the pupils in short is the sense that the socialist homeland is secured. This notion of security does not derive from the presence of the arms, weapons, armored vehicles, aircraft and coastal boats, but it is mostly generated by the human factor. Whether in the ideal or in the real part of the visual communication, as it has already mentioned, human presence is made more than visible. People are brought into the foreground or closer to the viewers and, with their weapons in hand, remain alert and always ready to fight the enemies. In this astonishing mobilization of the Albanian population, all appear to get involved: civilians, soldiers, pupils and students alike. Women are not excluded from this sublime national task, something that also holds true for the young pupils of the third grade. In an overall consideration of the visual communication, the Albanian country and state appear as a solid and fortified fortress that seems difficult to conquer. The national borders that correspond to the frame of the page are safeguarded by its people. Their patrol over the Albanian territory is additionally supported by the modern air, navy and land forces. All possible directions have been covered in this representation. Visually speaking, this is achieved with the use of vectors. These vectors are formed by several visual means, including, among other things, the weapons and the gazes of the protagonists, the patrol of the aircraft and coastal boats, the tank's prominent guns, the firearms the young girls are trained with, the second convoy of armored vehicles at the center-bottom of the page, and last, the march of the people in the bottom right image. The

presence of these strong vectors, directed in all four cardinal directions of the compass, reveals a narrative structure underlying the visual communication. According to this finding, the vectors not only generate action, they also inform the viewers regarding the actor, actors in our case, and the receivers of the above-stated action. The main actors from whom these vectors emanate are the human figures. On the people's side are both civilians and regular soldiers. Next to the human presence, the viewers can distinguish small arms, combat vehicles and artillery, aircraft, watercraft and manned transport vehicles, all belonging to the Albanian army and revealing the country's military strength. Both people and arms should be considered to be the main actors that appear absolutely prepared in case of an emergency. Their action, or better said the results of it, expands out of the frame of the page and are not visible. As a visual allegory of the country's borders, there might be potential enemies right at the gates of the socialist republic. At the same time, in the inner page and inside the borders, the entire population, together with the armed forces, remains vigilant. They appear fully prepared for attacking and annihilating the enemies, thus revealing the action and the receivers of it. The non-depiction of the potential enemies tells us in principle two things: first, it shows that the all-encirclement theory is not real, and second, it concomitantly intensifies the notion of threat and danger posed to the country. In other words, the invisible enemies lurking outside of our nation could be anywhere. It is exactly their omnipresence that gives them the chance to attack at any moment and from all four cardinal points of the compass. This seems to have alarmed the entire Albanian population and army.

Continuing with this line of thought, and insisting somehow more on the people's representation, civilians stand side by side with the soldiers, making it not always easy for the viewers-pupils to distinguish between them. All wear uniforms, already bear arms or receive arms training, and appear concentrated on the same task, the protection of the homeland at all costs. An equal pattern of behavior is also followed by the figures of the two young students positioned at the bottom of the page. This visual choice, which negates the people's existence in terms of their citizenship, but exclusively stresses their military aspects, is achieved through the implementation of classificational processes. These processes relate, according to Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen, the participants to each other and unite different people, as they

have something in common or belong to the same class.⁴⁸³ In our case, the uniforms that all the people wear push the viewers-pupils to consider the represented participants as belonging to the same group or class. They are defined in terms of an army, or better said, as the soldiers of it. What results from this representation of the people is the militarization the Albanian society, appearing here as a fact. This was a process the Albanian society successfully underwent to cope with the current critical conditions. The entire Albanian population is perceived here in terms of an army, which together with the armed forces and the regular soldiers, contribute to the protection of the socialist homeland. They all remain alert, are well trained and always ready to enter the war against every possible enemy. The preservation of the homeland from falling into the enemies' hands prevails in this concrete case as the duty of each and every Albanian in the present, and is connected at the same time with the future existence and is a prerequisite of it. Visually speaking, this notion of future perspective is given through the direction of most of the vectors towards the right of the page.

Leaving aside the visual communication, let us move to the opposite page and the verbal communication. The ideal of people-soldiers, foregrounded in the visual part, is made apparent in the text right from the title. The title-motto reads: "The whole nation an army" and reiterates the militarization process mentioned above. After the description of an impressive military parade attended by two young children, the narrative returns to the core message and the transformation of the entire Albanian population into an army with the aim of protecting and safeguarding the homeland against invaders. Verbal and visual communication collaborate closely together, with the text continuing in the same line and insisting on this transformation process of the citizens into a reliable army. Our people, concludes the text, receive military training, remain vigilant and appear always ready for safeguarding the homeland at all costs.⁴⁸⁴ The text ends with the summary section, where the protection of the country is said to have been guaranteed by its citizens-soldiers. Last, they are led by the Party of Labor of Albania and its leader Enver Hoxha, something that is not to be seen in the visual communication.

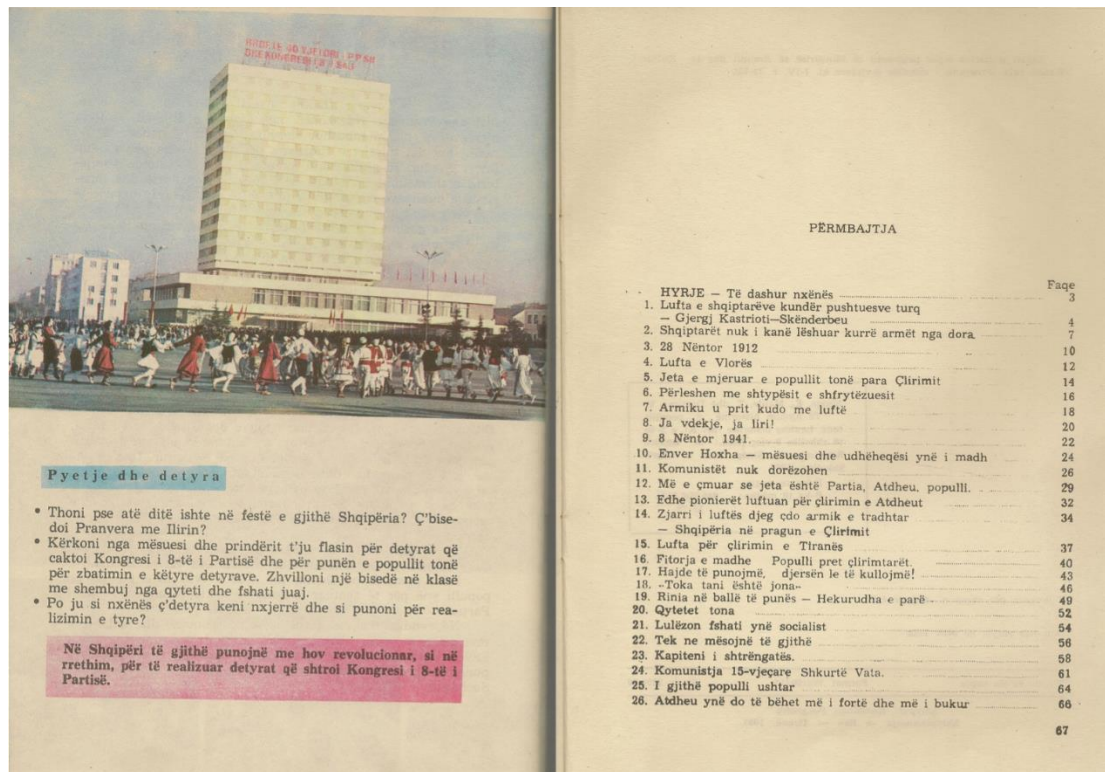
7. Epilogue

⁴⁸³ Kress and Van Leeuwen, *Reading Images*, 79.

⁴⁸⁴ Minga, et. al., *Të Njohim Historinë e Popullit Tonë* (1978), 66.

After the establishment and preservation of the socialist order, the national narrative comes steadily to an end. The destination, the “Promised Land” of socialism, has been reached and the gates of communism have been widely opened. Together with this grandiose achievement, pupils also witnessed the process of tempering the “New Man,” the guarantor of the present and future. After being educated in the socialist schools, men and women enter the work market, get involved in the protection of the revolution and homeland, and remain, as we have seen, under a permanent state of vigilance. Concerning the narrative, structured according to repetitive cycles, we now stand just before the close of the very last cycle, that of socialism. It was preceded by the Middle Ages and the National Renaissance, prior to the eternal drama culminated in the years of the socialist redemption. In every sense, this is a compact storytelling that is also accompanied by an introductory section and a concluding chapter. This chapter, one might say, has the function of an epilogue to the entire national narrative. Even though it might still be considered part of the socialist era, this last chapter seems rather a solitary unit that will be addressed on its own.

As usual, it consists of verbal and visual communication and bears the promising title: “Our homeland will become stronger and more beautiful.” In the textbook issued in 1983, appearing below, the two modes are divided into two different layouts. For the needs of the analysis, only the one focusing on the visual communication has been included here (Layout 38). I will begin from this part of the communication, continue next with the text, and finally address the overall message of this concluding chapter.



Layout 38. Minga, et. al., *Të Njohim Historinë e Popullit Tonë* (1983), 66-67.

After having read the text, appearing in the previous layout, the pupils enter this very last double page. What they see is a large photo positioned on the top left page, which is followed at the bottom by the questions and a summary of the whole chapter. On the opposite page, one can distinguish the table of contents given through a detailed list of chapters. The image, according to its position within the frame of this double-spread, is presented as the given part of the information. At the same time, a vertical polarization has been followed, with the image occupying the top of the page and thus gaining the status of the ideal information. Given in the sense that it shows information that the pupils are already familiar with, while ideal has the meaning of the ideologically most salient part of the message. Thus, the photo takes the lead in this layout. To address the message or messages included in this image, one should enter its inner details. Regarding this concluding chapter, it should be made clear that it first entered the textbooks in 1978.

To begin with the content of the photo, it captures the festive atmosphere in the streets of the capital Tirana. People wearing national costumes are shown dancing in the central square. Furthermore, a long wide boulevard full of people is visible. On its right side, a block of modern buildings is shown. From the position these buildings

occupy in the photo's frame, a diagonal line has been formed that starts from the bottom, reaches the foreground and, one could say, expands out of the frame of this photo. When paying attention to the details, this diagonal line has, in addition, an upward direction that culminates at the forefront and the highest building depicted here. I will leave aside for the moment this upward diagonal line and later explain its function. I will restrict myself for the moment in saying that this vector seems very dynamic and shows a tendency to continue out of the photo's frame. Staying on the inner frame of the image, an imposing building stands in the forefront, which in terms of spatial dimension occupies the image's central position. This building is Hotel Tirana, the highest building in the country, constructed in 1979. Considering its size and placement in the frame of this photo, Hotel Tirana is without doubt the center of attention and attracts the viewers' gazes. In addition, it prevails as the most salient visual element of this image, which is made to look even more grandiose due to the low angle of the shot. A different angle would not have generated the same effect. On the top of the hotel the pupils could read: "Long live the 40th Anniversary and the Eighth Congress of the Party of Labor of Albania." Another significant visual element to be mentioned is the clear blue sky above the Albanian capital that dominates the frame of this photo. The blue sky represents a common feature of almost all images or photos of the post-war era. Given the frequency of its appearance, one might suggest that it has a metaphorical meaning referring to the prosperous and bright new socialist life.

Remaining for a while on the content of this visual part, I find it necessary to focus on the representation of the people. The long shot that has been chosen makes them look microscopic. In comparison to the eye-catching buildings, their bodies seem small and insignificant. At the same time, the long shot may put the viewers at a distance from the depicted people. For sure they do not enter into communication and this sense of distance between viewers-pupils and depicted participants increases when one pays attention to the angle of the depiction. In most cases, the Albanian citizens are shown from the side, or only their backs are visible. Moreover, the large number of participants attending this jubilee and the notion of uniformity characterizing them should be added. This latter sense of uniformity is primarily visible in the traditional costumes they wear. The people resemble a solid national group that performs the same activities. From this group, individual traits and characteristics are difficult to be

discerned, and what remains is solely the pathos and massiveness as they enter the celebrations. After having encountered the same national group attending education, working for the further consolidation of the socialist order, and massively safeguarding their homeland, pupils now see them participating in massive manifestations and celebrations.

Putting all the above-discussed visual elements together, I will make a first attempt to read the content of this photo. This is the people's fest celebrating, as the slogan on the top of the large building makes clear, the 40th anniversary and the Eighth Congress of the Party of Labor held in 1981. Both events are significant enough to bring thousands of citizens out to the streets of the capital. A cheerful atmosphere prevails everywhere. The scene of jubilation is supplemented by the picture of the capital Tirana, a city with modern infrastructure and remarkable urban planning. The photo focuses on the large buildings, boulevards and public areas all built in the years that followed the Second World War. The image thus functions as evidence of the radical transformations that have occurred in these forty years of socialist government. In other words, a history of successes and achievements highly connected with the Party of Labor of Albania and the central planning of economy. These are the main grounds that made the prosperous life of the present possible, supports the image in short. In addition, these successes that the image foregrounds do not hold merely for the present but also seem to expand primarily into the future. The information concerning the future progress derives from the upward diagonal vector mentioned beforehand. This dynamic vector is to be seen in the long line that the modern buildings standing next to each other form. Second, such a dynamic vector is directed towards the right and vanishes out the frame of the photo, indicating a notion of progress that does not necessarily stop at the impressive building of hotel Tirana. Quite the opposite, it continues out of the frame of the photo, showing the present, and reaches into the future that is meant to come next. To put it simply, what we see in this photo is not only the progress achieved during the forty years of socialism, but above all the promise that the country will continue to develop in the coming years.

The promise of future progress, foregrounded visually in the latter photo, was first encountered in the verbal communication and the chapter's title. Prior to addressing the lower part of the page and the summary section, let us turn to the text, which is to be found in the previous layout. The text begins with the large celebrations held in the

center of the capital on the occasion of the 40th anniversary and the Eighth Congress of the Party of Labor. Also participating in the celebrations were two young pioneers, Iliri and Pranvera, who together with the people, enthusiastically praised the names of the leader Ever Hoxha and the Party. Furthermore, the text informs us that the young girl, Pranvera, first heard about the significance of the Party's Eighth Congress in school.⁴⁸⁵ Her teacher held a speech extolling this great historical event. The congress confirmed the right revolutionary path that the Party and the people took, the teacher mentioned, among other things. She also drew attention to the achievements reached in the frame of the last Five Year Economic Plan in terms of further building socialism and safeguarding the homeland. All tasks were accomplished and the aggressive plans of the internal or external enemies were annihilated, continues the text.⁴⁸⁶ After Pranvera, the young boy Iliri added a few words he heard from his father. He refers to the novel obligations and duties the congress brought to the fore. In the meantime, our socialist homeland will be fortified and flourish, and our life will become even more joyful and happy, continues the young boy. All these will be achieved merely by means of relying on our own forces and working against the aggressive plans of the imperialist and revisionist enemies, he makes clear. After this short conversation, both children left the central square and continued praising the names of the leader and the Party. In the last paragraph, the text points to the revolutionary zeal with which the Albanian people accomplish the tasks given by the Eighth Congress and the Albanian leadership. In an astonishing uniformity, they all learn, work and receive military training following the lessons of the Party and its leader. The same behavior, the narrative tells us in the very last sentence, is reiterated by the young pioneers, the forthcoming workers and soldiers of our People's Socialist Republic.⁴⁸⁷

In case we want to shortly reformulate the meaning, this is primarily a hymn to isolationist and self-reliance dogma that praises the content of the verbal communication. In raw lines, the text provides a report of the successes achieved during the last five years of socialist government. Furthermore, the notion of the joyful socialist life in the present and its continuation in the close future dominates the

⁴⁸⁵ Minga, et. al., *Të Njohim Historinë e Popullit Tonë* (1983), 65.

⁴⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 65.

⁴⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 65.

verbal narrative. The further continuation of the socialist revolution in the country appears as a fact relying on the continual efforts of the people and the current political leadership. To this uniformed social and ethnic collectivity, the two young pioneers have been included as the forthcoming workers and soldiers. Their inclusion provides the guarantee of future progress and the continuation of the socialist revolution in the following years. Taking everything together, this should be considered the key message that the text and image seek to communicate. With the pioneers', and as a matter of fact the viewers-pupils, integration into the revolutionary process, not only does the current chapter close, but also concomitantly the entire national narrative. The message is positive and comes as a confirmation of the latter's content. As a reminder, the main aim of the national account was to get the young pioneers, as well as the pupils attending the third grade, involved in the collective enterprise of further building and protecting the socialist homeland. This was the suggested path they had to take after having learned about the fights and sacrifices of the Albanian nation in the course of the millennia and during the present days of socialism. Through their active involvement and contribution, the economic and political existence of the only remaining socialist state worldwide would be secured. In this concluding chapter, the pupils' involvement has been secured in the most natural manner. Following a role-model method, they emulate their idols and come to reiterate the same behavior. That saying, they will become the next workers and soldiers of the People's Socialist Republic. The reference to the work and the art of war should not be considered as one of chance. Quite the opposite, it points to the two main priorities set by the communist leadership, that saying: the achievement of the economic autarky and the preservation of the national independence.

Moving towards the last section of the analysis and the overall message, as it derives from both visual and verbal communication, the focal point rests on the prosperous socialist life and the achievements of this period. In addition, these present achievements gain a future perspective, and this is common in both narratives. Referring to the image, the key factors that will guide the country to present and future successes are the Party of Labor and the central planning of economy. The text on the other hand seems to support rather the idea of the people's mobilization. At this point, a different approach of the two modes of communication is visible. Taken together though, the people and the Party seem to closely collaborate and this seems

to be the best guarantee for the community's future. The young pupils who attend the third grade are always called to enter this scheme as the forthcoming workers and soldiers of the revolution. This is another common point of reference that derives from both text and visual communication.

Part III – Results

Findings

The visual and multimodal analysis of the third grade national narrative brought to light some crucial findings that will be summarized in this chapter. Remaining consistent with the aims set at the beginning, I will refer first to the structure, content and evolution of the national narrative, while discussing next the findings concerning ideology and its function in the educational media.

Let me start with the former and the national narrative. In terms of structure, instead of a linear, a circular evolutionist approach has been followed. The circularity of this storytelling derives from the fact that history is assumed to develop according to great repetitive cycles. There are three main cycles, more precisely periods, that define the content of this storytelling, namely Middle Ages, National Renaissance and Socialist era. The historical process passes through these three inner cycles of the national narrative as they follow one another in due course. Furthermore, in the frame of each of them, pupils might always distinguish a beginning, a maturation stage, and a concluding phase of developments. In other words, this means that they encounter an initial stage of birth of the national community, a maturation stage when a national state was consolidated, and a decline period when the community suffered under foreign occupation or domestic anti-popular regimes. The stages of birth, maturation and decline are followed by that of rebirth, further maturation and a new decline of the national community in the next period. This is how process and development are possible through recurring cycles that share the same inner structure and repeat themselves in the course of the centuries. Two further features of this narrative need to be mentioned at this point. First is the continual resistance of the national group against the invaders during the decline years that manages to fill the gap between the end and the beginning of a new era. A further characteristic regards the very fact that every single period, or cycle, in its initial phase is marked by a successful warfare that clears the way for the construction or reconstruction of a national state in the aftermath of it. Worth mentioning here is the triumphant armed struggle against the Ottoman Empire in the fifteenth century, the mobilization against the neighboring countries and the territorial partition by the end of the nineteenth century, and of course the legendary National Liberation War against the Italian and German occupiers during the Second World War.

Remaining always to the structure, the second characteristic worthy of attention is that this national account stages a culminating perennial drama. At its core, this regards

the wandering of the national community from the early Middle Ages towards the “Promised Land” of socialism and eventually communism, the destination. At the point where we now stand, we are in the position to declare that this task has been fully achieved. The group has entered the socialist land that had first been fully established thanks to the efforts and work of the masses and the revolutionary Albanian leadership. Together with the consolidation of the socialist order and state, the molding of the “New Communist Man” was achieved. Moreover, from the triple periodization of the narrative, Middle Ages, National Renaissance and Socialist period, the latter socialist era takes the lion’s share in textbooks. Two thirds of the narrative is dedicated to it. From a total of twenty-six chapters, merely eight refer to the Middle Ages and the National Renaissance.

Going a step further with the findings that this dissertation made possible, I will refer next to the content of the national narrative by means of gathering the key elements that it consists of. The first to be mentioned is the mobilization of the people, a recurrent theme that dominates the content of texts. Given in the form of an eternal resistance, or permanent war, it takes on a national character that reaches its zenith in the National Liberation War and the socialist period. The issue at stake always remained the consolidation and protection of the homeland, next to that of the socialist order in the late years. This primarily national mobilization took on a social character in the frame of the twentieth century. To be mentioned here are the social mobilizations during the Ahmet Zogu’s era, and even the struggle for the establishment of the socialist order and society in the post-war era.

Moving further, the second element that praises the content of the national narrative is the notion of self-organization of the national community through the centuries. The self-reliance dogma, a top priority during the self-isolation period, does not hold merely for the present conditions, but it has also been integrated in the past. Following history texts, the Albanians have always relied on their own forces and never received any kind of economic or military aid from abroad. Such a tradition in the past and present is considered exemplary and is strong enough to show the path that the community should follow in the future. In other words, the Albanian people, including pupils as well, are called to resist the growing external danger and protect their homeland and socialism by means of relying solely on their own power and resources. The external factor ceases to exist from this schema, which extolls the

people's work and contribution. The close collaboration of the masses with their enlightened leadership has always played a crucial role here.

The third element worthy of attention, deriving from the national account, regards the notion of fear that is cultivated among the members of the society. Again, this manufactured notion of fear stems from the eternal risk the homeland runs of getting conquered by external aggressors. In textbooks issued during the self-isolation period, the latter masses, including the pupils, experienced overall an unprecedented notion of threat. They were asked to remain vigilant with weapons in hand and safeguard socialism and the homeland from falling into the enemies' hands. Moreover, they were asked to prepare for war, which the entire population had to wage. Prior to entering the war though, the country had to first secure the economic basis and be self-sufficient. The task of economic independence again would be reached by means of relying on the domestic resources and, above all, on the masses. The Albanian people were thus asked to enter the production and work market and contribute to the economic wellbeing of their homeland. To reformulate this all-embracing call that the narrative addresses towards every member of the community, they must work and give their contribution whenever and wherever the homeland needs them.

The notion of future prosperity and progress is the fourth and last element of this storytelling and is the result of the previous three elements. The massive mobilization of all citizens under the guidance of the legendary Communist Party represents the best guarantee for the protection of the Albanian socialist castle. Not only will the last remaining outpost of socialism worldwide remain unconquered, but it will further develop in the future, as both visual and verbal communication tell us in the concluding chapters. Pupils have been included in this revolutionary process, as tomorrow's workers and soldiers, and from this position they ensure the continuation of the socialist path that itself appears related to brighter achievements.

In this concluding section, I have referred in several cases to the people or masses shown. Now is the right moment to shed some more light in this direction and on the visual representation of the individuals in the frame of this narrative. To begin with the socialist period, they prevail as a harmonious civic collectivity consisting of powerful and dedicated individuals. Furthermore, they appear to massively contribute to the building, further developing and protection of socialism and the homeland. Next to the collective and massive representation, the second feature that best describes this compact group is uniformity. They are depicted in most cases equally,

at least this holds true for the bodies of the depicted people. The only difference is visible in the facial characteristics or hair. This sense of uniformity grows when one considers the almost equal attire and the uniforms that they wear either in school, at work, or in parades they participate in during the socialist era. The same collective perspective has been also adopted for the years of the National Liberation War and the two previous historical periods that the national narrative consists of, which are the Middle Ages and the National Liberation War. An army of conventional and stereotypical figures has been shown during the Middle Ages. They are mainly men who are involved in military activities. Concerning the years of the National Renaissance, the image of the male collectivity was preserved together with their equal representation. Women only seldomly appear. Only once has the figure of a woman been shown in the role of the mother. Women entered history textbooks massively with the National Liberation War and gained a permanent position throughout the socialist era. Considering the narrative's content, women turned into the protagonists of this revolutionary process that the Albanian society saw during the second half of the twentieth century. In most of the cases, figures of women posed in the forefront. The images zoomed in on them, as they were shown in the first line of work, or during their military training. They might have gained a dynamic position in the narrative, but this has been done at the expense of their feminine nature. The image of women in textbooks is restricted to a strong and in some cases muscular physique, which is far from the idealistic depiction of the small and delicate female body.

Before ending the observations on the people's representation in the frame of the national narrative, let me insist a bit more on two concepts that came to the fore through the analysis of the visual communication. The first is uniformity and the second is collectivity. To begin with the latter term, whenever people are depicted, they are shown as part of a group or a large collective, acting or performing the same activities. There are only a few exceptions of individuals not following this established pattern of representation. These are the examples of the national heroes - martyrs who gave their life during the Second World War, or later the cases of the heroes of the socialist work. The image of the socialist leader Enver Hoxha belongs here as well, who in most cases is shown alone. This visual pattern of collective representation is not restricted solely to the socialist era but is also to be found in the previous historical periods. People appear in large groups, and it seems as though

there is not much room for the individual, or individuals, who cannot exist out of the frame of the collective. The integration of the former individuals into the collective group intensifies with the socialist period. More specifically, such a pattern of visual representation became prevalent during the years of laying the foundations of the socialist society. By then the individual appears defeated and his or her position seems to have been replaced by a novel “collective person,” to borrow a term from Hans Maier.⁴⁸⁸ This relatively young collective person takes the upper hand in the years of complete construction of socialism and monopolizes the visual communication. Thus, the individual existence turned into a mass existence, from which the single members remain out of the focus. What are promoted are rather the communal and synchronized acts of the people next to their massive participation in the revolutionary process. Furthermore, the Albanian society during these critical years resembles rather a homogenized group or collective, the members of which all perform equal activities, all with the same intensity. They all attend school, work, undertake military training, remain vigilant or even massively celebrate. Nothing else matters in the life of the modern Albanians except for their engagement in further developing and preserving the existing social and political order at all costs. All forces have been channeled into this one single direction. This collective task covers all aspects of individuals’ social life and leaves no room for personal choices, preferences, behavior or stances, which are all considered unacceptable.

The second characteristic of this perennial group is the uniformity of its members. Whether one refers to the paintings or the photos included in the national narrative, the individuals shown tend to look alike, and their figures bear strong similarities to each other. Several means were mentioned above that help to promote this uniformed picture for the members of the national group, such as the arms they carry throughout the centuries, for instance. Next to the arms and weapons, a genuine characteristic of the Albanian people, the book and pickaxe, always accompanies the Albanian citizens during the late years of socialism. The stronger symbol though, promoting this notion of uniformity among the Albanian population, remained their uniforms. From the early school years and until their entrance in the work market and social life, the depicted participants wear uniforms in most cases. Whenever they do not wear

⁴⁸⁸ Hans Maier, "Political Religions and their Images: Soviet communism, Italian Fascism and German National Socialism," *Journal of Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions* 7, no.3 (2006):275.

uniforms, this sense of uniformity has been achieved through their equal depiction, or attire. Again, individuality together with its personal traits and characteristics is menaced, not to say completely extinct. A homogenous group has captured its position, or a harmonious collectivity one might say, consisting of powerful and dedicated individuals. Going a step further with the findings referring to the people's representation in the national narrative, the homogenous national group has been previously characterized as powerful, while it was said that it consists of dedicated individuals. Without being able to negate the dedication of the people, their dynamic appearance could have been misleading. According to the latest findings, the very loss of the individual in favor of a collective and uniformed existence weakened the people's position. All their collective existence has been structured explicitly around one single objective, the continual revolution and the preservation of the existing order. Furthermore, these goals are far from being self-determined. In fact, these collective tasks, together with the people themselves, are controlled and administered by the communist leadership. All in all, the individuals, appearing in the frame of this national narrative, remind us that clones are created for the needs of the revolutionary process. To put it better, an army of exact multiple copies heartily dedicated to the perennial cause of the revolution and homeland. A strong discipline characterizes these figures from the very early centuries and up until the late socialist years. They obey the rules, or the code of behavior prescribed for them, and usually such kind of obedience is encountered among soldiers and not civilians.

In several examples throughout the narrative, the characterization of the people as soldiers was preferred to best describe their appearance. During the socialist period, except for the weapons they held, the military uniforms they wore, and the military parades in which they participated, people appeared mostly in groups that only resembled military units. In several occasions they were shown while marching forward. In other cases, they were vigilant, with arms in hands. The weapons, as has been already mentioned, represent a genuine characteristic of the Albanian nation for centuries that dominates both verbal and visual communication. Taking everything into consideration, the Albanian people in the frame of this national narrative are defined in terms of an army, or as the soldiers of it, and this represents their third permanent feature. Either as civilians at arms or as regular soldiers, they have one single task, safeguarding the homeland and socialism from falling into the enemies' hands. Moreover, not a single individual has been excluded from this all-embracing

collective obligation. Even the pupils, as it has been observed in several cases, were permanently called to contribute in this direction. In fact, the narrative closes by means of making a direct plea to the pupils to enter the revolutionary process and follow the paradigm of the previous generation. In other words, they are asked to become the next workers and the soldiers of the People's Socialist Republic of Albania. In addition, the ideal icon of worker-soldier, appearing in the textbooks of the self-isolation period, illustrates in the best manner the militarization process that the Albanian society underwent. Despite its existence in the previous generations of textbooks, this militarization process marks the content of the national narrative issued during the years of Albania's isolation. Such a structural change is also visible in the language used. Terms such as self-reliance, military training, continual vigilance, invaders, state-of-siege or peril were more often implemented. These terms came to the forefront and defined the content of textbooks during this period, one might say. On the one hand, the masses had to work, on the other they are urged to remain vigilant with weapons in hand and fight the external and internal enemies. The fall of the last outpost of socialism worldwide could have been prevented merely by means of an overall mobilization of the population, including the pupils as well. In conditions of imperialist and revisionist encirclement, Albania had to rely on inner resources, and above all on its own people. They appear as the guarantee for the preservation of the solely genuine socialist state in the present and future.

When one considers these key components that constitute the national narrative in a socio-historical framework, the influence of the latter developments over the content of the narrative is apparent. The isolation from the rest of the world and the new dogma of reliance on the country's own forces that officially began in 1978 brought into being the state-of-siege mentality that chafed all sectors of social life. According to this, Albania represents the vanguard of socialism worldwide and is attacked by external and internal enemies. In these critical conditions, the Albanian citizens were asked to remain vigilant and resist the invaders. Education is a public institution where one can easily trace these changes first-hand, something that holds primarily true for the educational media. History textbooks, and more specifically the national narrative for the third grade that was addressed above, mirror in the best manner this new ideological agenda. To put it clearly, this new agenda defines the content of the latter media issued during the period of self-isolation, something that was not to be seen in the previous generation of textbooks. This represents at the same time a

significant indicator of the evolution of the national narrative itself during the late period of socialism. In conditions of external imperialist and revisionist blockade, the narrative makes a similar plea to the viewers-pupils for action. This action could be described as a common mobilization to further construct and consolidate the socialist order in the present and future. The safeguarding of the socialist homeland is a crucial task that the pupils are permanently asked to fulfill as well. In short, this notion of manufactured foreign entanglement, together with the absolute need of pupils' involvement in the collective enterprise of further consolidating and safeguarding the socialist homeland, represents the backbone of the narrative during the self-isolation period. This should be considered concomitantly the key ideological message that the national account seeks to pass to the young generation. What is splendid and worth mentioning is the dynamic with which the wider social and political discourse permeated the educational media, as well as its performance in the levels of both the visual and verbal communication. A form of social schizophrenia, one might argue, guided by the notion of fear that the already established socialist order in Albania will fall into the hands of the enemies is what history textbooks foreground. Coming in the form of a discourse that derives from the larger social field and the inner political developments, it becomes prevalent by the late seventies and early eighties and becomes the sole perspective which pupils are asked to have and interpret the world they live in.

Prior to leaving the main findings that this dissertation made possible, I wish to remain for a while on the layouts and their multimodal character. I am interested here in the relation between the verbal and visual communication that depends mostly on the content that both modes contain. From a general perspective, the content of verbal follows that of visual communication and vice-versa. The messages that the images carry are supported in most cases by that of the text. The same holds true for the meanings of verbal communication that are depicted visually as well. To this uniformed picture of verbal and visual communication being quite similar in terms of their content, several examples that do not follow this pattern of mutual collaboration should be added. Throughout the national narrative there are more than a few chapters where a divisive line, and in some cases even contradictory messages, have been observed between what the text says and what is depicted in the image, or images. Clashes and ruptures in the meaning that each mode produces are not seldom. It is also usual for each mode of communication to focus on different aspects of

information, as is the case of the Second World War and the contribution of the Communist Party. The role the Communist Party played is perhaps the most eye-catching example. In the text, the role of the Party is exalted, whereas from the images the pupils get the impression that it was rather the people's contribution and sacrifice that brought the victory. Pupils might also observe different versions as far as the self-reliance dogma is concerned, as well as the role of women in Albanian history.

Another crucial observation regards the prominent position of the images in the textbooks' layouts issued by the late seventies and throughout the eighties. There is a tendency to shift the position of most of the images from the left to the right page. According to Kress and Van Leeuwen, the horizontal polarization between right-given and left-new works in favor of the latter. Images and visual communication are the most conspicuous elements, and this is primarily visible in their size. They represent the bigger elements and the information at issue. At the same time, their salience might influence the reading of the layouts. This normally begins with the elements that first attract attention, thus the images, then move next to the less obvious and lastly to the text. This observation, referring to the leading position of the visual communication within the double spread, is also supported by the questions each chapter contains. In their clear majority, the initial questions turn first to the content of the images, and the information contained in the text is addressed next. As regarding the verbal communication, this is relatively big and divided in textual chunks, or, better said, paragraphs of single columns. Even though the language is simple and its structure not necessarily complex, one might say that the texts lack attractiveness. Perhaps the only attractive part regarding the verbal communication represents the summary sections at the end of each chapter. Highlighted in a pink pale frame, they provide in a succinct manner the most significant information no one could miss.

Discussion

This is the first study to make textbooks issued in Albania during the socialist era an explicit subject of investigation. Another novelty regards the very fact that it managed to grasp the highly controversial concept of ideology in a concrete field, that of national history textbooks. Remaining consistent with the aims set at the beginning, this dissertation concentrated primarily on the function of ideology within the frame of the national narrative, while closely examining the latter's account structure,

content and evolution through the years. After a concise restating of the central findings, I next will attempt to discuss them in the light of existing literature and relevant academic debates.

Regarding the national narrative, it covers the drama of the Albanian people towards the “Promised Land” of socialism and eventually communism. This storytelling that goes back to the Middle Ages, instead of linear, was found to follow a circular timeline structured around the ideal of recurring cycles or historical periods. Thus, what we have is a circular and repetitive understanding of time and past. In terms of content, it was interesting to note the domination of the narrative by a handful of topics, such as that of the eternal mobilization of the community against the invaders, its self-organization throughout the centuries, the notion of eternal fear and vigilance, and, last, an omnipresent notion of prosperity and future progress. Whereas the above monopolize the visual and verbal narrative, there are issues that could not be seen at first glance. For instance, the overpromotion of a collective and mass existence. The uniformity of the members of the Albanian society is an additional feature deriving from the historical account. Next to the collective and uniformed existence there is a third characteristic that the members of the Albanian community share. In history textbooks issued during the self-isolation period they allude more to soldiers and less to civilians. Such an ideal depiction of the individuals in terms of an army unit points to another crucial finding of this study. This regards the militarization of the Albanian society that intensified during the self-isolation period. Leaving aside for the moment the issues of structure and content, let me shortly refer next to the evolution of the national narrative. When the above-mentioned findings referring to the content are compared to those of the previous generation (1972-1977), a lot of differences are visible. The militarization process for example, which has chafed the Albanian society in all its facets, is a late addition to the content of national history. It is followed by the overpromotion of the ideal of a self-organized national resistance against the enemies that lasted for centuries and the notion of fear and continual vigilance that the textbooks cultivate. Such changes in the content of the narrative should be considered a fruit of the socio-historical developments and the novel ideological agenda the communist leadership adopted during the same period. Such an ideological discourse can be fully traced in the national narrative, and this is another essential contribution this dissertation has confirmed through the analysis of both verbal and visual communication.

After having summarized the key findings of this study, let me start the discussion from the issue of ideology in history textbooks. Here, I primarily wish to identify ideology's presence and function in the national historical narrative. Before doing so, it proves useful to again give a short reference to the concept and its definition. Ideology has been understood in post-structuralist terms as a discourse seeking to achieve social cohesion in an imaginary manner. To achieve this task of unity, it makes use of several ancillary concepts. Among other things, myth plays a considerable role in that it provides a credible solution, as Laclau suggests, after a structural dislocation has occurred. It seeks to re-establish the lost social closure by means of forming a novel objectivity, or as Laclau calls it, a novel "mythical space." In this territory, the scattered elements of the previous discursive space come together. By the time the novel "mythical space" has replaced the previous one it has become hegemonic. As far as it manages to prevail as a credible solution, myth turns into an imaginary horizon.

Having this as a theoretical basis and returning to the textbooks, this discourse was reconstructed after 1978, together with the revision of the content of the national narrative. The very core of the ideological discourse now hinged on the double pole of foreign entanglement and self-reliance in the interior. The unique socialist state found itself under attack, which to a considerable extent explains its closure within its borders. This state-of-siege was supported in textbooks by a general sense of alarm, fear and preparation for war. In conditions of foreign encirclement, the reaction that history textbooks suggest regarded united mobilization to arms and working tools. The Albanians, to whom the pupils belong as well, are asked to resist by means of giving their contribution in the direction of further building and protecting their socialist homeland that, momentarily, is in peril. Here is the key myth that is to be found at the heart of the new ideological discourse during the self-isolation period. In short, they are called to emulate their fathers' and forefathers' stance during the past. The entire attempt had to rely on the inner powers of the society and its members and, from this, collective mobilization no one could escape. Pupils are continually asked to join this national project and give their contribution. Through the foregrounding of this common engagement of pupils, the textbooks succeeded in building a "mythical space" that might or might not correspond to reality, but it manages to bring the youngest members of the community closer and strengthen the level of social

cohesion. They represent the future workers and soldiers of the socialist homeland. The mobilization against the imaginary invaders has been brought to the forefront in the textbooks issued during the self-isolation period. It intensified to such a level that it covered all aspects of social life, thus creating a dominant new ideological discourse that replaced the previous one. A new order, one might support, was introduced and articulated, which seems superior in that it carries a positive message. Its superiority derives from the fact that it addresses issues of the present and it expands also into the future. It promises a better present, an ideal future society, in our case communism, and it presupposes that these better days will come in the case that all people, including the pupils, help in this direction. What we have found out in texts is a form of “future fullness,” the myth of the common mobilization against the external invaders can offer that fascinates the participants. Myth has, in this sense, successfully transformed into a collective imaginary horizon most of the participants identify with.

Going a step further, another critical function of ideology in textbooks regards the legitimization of power. This is strongly related to the mobilization of the pupils, which comes as a prerequisite for the preservation of the existing social and political order in the present and future. In this order, an exceptional position occupies the Party of Labor of Albania as the guiding power and its infallible leader Enver Hoxha. The socialist leader incarnates the most capable political figure to govern the country. As long as the preservation of the People’s Socialist Republic of Albania has been guaranteed, the power and authority of the socialist leadership would remain intact.

From the above discussion of ideology’s performance within the national history textbooks, some significant conclusions might be drawn. First, ideology seems deeply rooted in communicative and articulatory practices. Second, they are anything but dull, they keep the students’ interests, and, are not, as many scholars tend to believe, imposed on the pupils. Concomitantly, ideology is not *per se* political, in the sense of propaganda that is transmitted to the pupils mostly through the social subjects.⁴⁸⁹ Another key concept widely used to describe the dissemination of the communist doctrine among the pupils is that of indoctrination.⁴⁹⁰ The integration of the Marxist-Leninist ideology in the educational sector has been described by others as an

⁴⁸⁹ Sadikaj and Shahu, “Fakti dhe Interpretimi Propagandistik,” 80.

⁴⁹⁰ Thomas, *Education for Communism*, 62; Thomas, “Curriculum of the Elementary School in Albania,” 566; Kambo, “Fillimet e Riorganizimit,” 111

ideological axis that permeated the content of all subjects.⁴⁹¹ Among the domestic socialist scholars, the same ideological axis has been parallelized with a recognizable red thread permeating the entire educational work, including teaching, methodology and content.⁴⁹² Contra to these more or less uniformed positions that simplify the function of ideology as the process of forging to the pupils a set of political ideas or official state's doctrine from top to bottom, I argue for a more subtle, complex and even vivid manner ideology performed within the educational media. At least this holds true for the content of the third grade's national history textbooks addressed in this dissertation. The easy and uncomplicated comparison of ideology with a propaganda machine, run and fully coordinated by the Albanian leadership, seems at least an oversimplification that does not correspond to what I have seen and read in texts. This latter should be my second observation regarding the function of ideology in texts. Ideology foregrounds a rather convincing argument through which it aims to persuade, or, better said, fascinate and finally mobilize the pupils towards action. This argument is offered in the form of a whole discourse that primarily seeks to allure pupils, the future workers and soldiers of the socialist and eventually communist society. In the center of it stands the notion of a common engagement to further consolidate and protect the socialist order from the current enemies standing at the gates of the People's Socialist Republic. This represents the leading myth through which the historical narrative wishes to establish a sense of imaginary unity among the members of the inner groups, in this case the pupils. Such an imaginary schema against some imaginary invaders seems very well orchestrated and capable of establishing an imaginary bond among the pupils.

In my attempt to identify the ideological discourse and describe its function within the national history textbooks, I relied on the adjacent concept of myth. Myth, a cardinal element in the process of identity formation, represents at the same time one of the tasks this study has set forth to investigate. So far, significant attempts have been made that address the role of myth in Albanian historiography, politics and social sphere. In the pioneering volume on *Albanian Identities: Myth and History*, international and Albanian scholars choose the path of deconstruction of prevalent

⁴⁹¹ Kambo, "Tendecioziteti Marxist-Leninist," 205.

⁴⁹² Beqja, "Forcimi i Edukimit Ideopolitik," 20; Dedja, "Drejt Krijimit të Pedagogjisë Socialiste," 20.

political or historiographical myths about Albania's past and present.⁴⁹³ Specific myths and mythical narratives in general are challenged in this work. Lately the topic of myth has been tackled in the textbooks of Albanian speaking regions of the Balkan region. Myth's capacities and mythical territories became the field of the study for many scholars in the volume *Myth and Mythical Spaces: Conditions and Challenges for History Textbooks in Albania and South-Eastern Europe*.⁴⁹⁴

Guided by the main principle of the functionalist approach to understanding myth in the context it performs,⁴⁹⁵ a direct confrontation course has been intentionally avoided. It is not the lack of will or force that prevented me from entering the path of deconstruction or demythologization.⁴⁹⁶ I consider it crucial to get to know myth, its key elements and the manner in which it performs before any attempt against it is undertaken. This is, in short, the perspective from which I enter the recent debate on myth. The focus lies rather on the investigation of the ubiquitous nature of myth and, above all, its function within the frame of the national narrative. The present work wishes to add another contribution to the growing body of literature that seeks to shed light on the "mythmaking manufacture" of the late socialist era in Albania, as this latter has been established in history textbooks. Certain national myths and above all the so-called "mythical spaces," built in to the educational media, gained specific attention in this research. Furthermore, myths and "mythical spaces" construed in textbooks are of specific significance since they have a long-lasting influence on the behavior of their receivers, in our case pupils, while accompanying them even into their adult life. To this it should be added that myths are crucial tools that help in the process of nation-building. According to Anthony Smith, to turn a horde of people into a nation and build a sense of belonging and identity, what is needed is a symbolic framework that myths and mythologies of the past generously offer.⁴⁹⁷

⁴⁹³ Stephanie Schwander-Sievers and Bernd J. Fischer, eds., *Albanian Identities. Myth and History* (London: Hurst & Company, 2002).

⁴⁹⁴ Claudia Lichnofsky, Enriketa Pandeljmoni and Darko Stojanov, eds., *Myth and Mythical Spaces: Conditions and Challenges for History Textbooks in Albania and South-Eastern Europe* (Göttingen: V & R unipress, 2017).

⁴⁹⁵ Pål Kolstø, "Introduction: Assessing the Role of Historical Myths in Modern Society," in *Myth and Boundaries in South-Eastern Europe*, ed. Pål Kolstø (London: Hurst & Company, 2005), 2-3.

⁴⁹⁶ Kolstø, "Introduction: Assessing the Role of Historical Myths," 2.

⁴⁹⁷ Anthony D. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (New York: Basil Blackwell, 1986), 200-201.

By means of entering the mythical territory in textbooks, I found out that such a “mythical space” is anchored to the centripetal myth of self-reliant mobilization of the masses to consolidate and safeguard the socialist homeland against invaders standing at the gates. Furthermore, consistent with the findings derived from previous research that stress the intensification of myth during the late seventies, this study equally proved an increase of myth in textbooks. Several flourishing national myths coming from the social sphere found a place in the national narrative, and it would not be an exaggeration to argue that they define the latter’s content. The myth of foreign entanglement should be mentioned here,⁴⁹⁸ which is followed by the continual resistance of the people throughout the centuries.⁴⁹⁹ A unified perception of the eternal community in ethnic and cultural terms has been promoted in textbooks, which is quite similar to what Noel Malcolm calls myth of ethnic homogeneity and cultural purity.⁵⁰⁰ A mythical aura also shines around the Communist Party, mostly Enver Hoxha, thus coming to terms with already existing studies focusing on the socialist leader.⁵⁰¹ In the case of the leader in textbooks, the myth has been formulated around the extraordinary military and political capabilities of Hoxha, while it has also been followed by a Messianic discourse. The myth of the leader escalates in the textbook issued in 1978 and those published from 1972 to 1977. To the above, the myth of the “New Communist Man” should be added, as well as that of the emancipated Albanian women who are promoted in texts.

⁴⁹⁸ Fischer, “The Second World War in Albania,” 121.

⁴⁹⁹ Noel Malcolm, “Myths of Albanian National Identity: Some Key Elements, as Expressed in the Works of Albanian Writers in America in the Early Twentieth Century,” in *Albanian Identities. Myth and History*, eds. Stephanie Schwander-Sievers and Bernd J. Fischer (London: Hurst & Company, 2002), 81.

⁵⁰⁰ Malcolm, “Myths of Albanian National Identity,” 79-80.

⁵⁰¹ M. J. Alex Standish, “Enver Hoxha’s Role in the Development of Socialist Albanian Myths,” in *Albanian Identities. Myth and History*, eds. Stephanie Schwander-Sievers and Bernd J. Fischer (London: Hurst & Company, 2002), 116-117; Egin Ceka, “Muzeu Kombëtar dhe Muzeu i Skenderbeut si Institucione të Religjionit Civil Shqiptar të Komunizmit,” *Përpyjekja* 21 (2005), 122; Vuka, “The Visual Construction of the Myth,” 80; Denis Vuka, “Portrayals of the National Resistance during the Second World War in History Textbooks: A Critical Layout Analysis,” *Myth and Mythical Spaces: Conditions and Challenges for History Textbooks in Albania and South-Eastern Europe*, eds. Claudia Lichnofsky, Enriketa Pandelejmoni and Darko Stojanov (Göttingen: V & R unipress, 2017), 73; Enriketa Pandelejmoni, “Myth of a Leader: Enver Hoxha’s Role during the Second World War in Contemporary Albanian History Textbooks,” in *Myths and Mythical Spaces: Conditions and Challenges for History Textbooks in Albania and South-Eastern Europe*, eds. Claudia Lichnofsky, Enriketa Pandelejmoni and Darko Stojanov (Göttingen: V & R unipress, 2017), 138.

Several aspects of myth that concern its operation in the frame of history textbooks are to be traced in contemporary literature. The achievement of unity, for instance, relies, according to Schöpflin, on the acceptance of the content of myth among the members of the group.⁵⁰² Considering the young age of the pupils, between eight and nine years old, and the way they are asked to enter the national mobilization, there are good chances that they will accept this centripetal myth. They are in no way pressured to react in this manner. Quite the opposite, they appear to voluntarily enter this common enterprise. Their involvement, one might argue, is the expected reaction after having seen and read about the previous generations throughout the narrative. It is as though the national history textbooks are taking the pupils by the hand and, in quite a natural manner that perhaps reminds them of parental behavior, showing them the proper path they must take. What is achieved by means of acceptance is accomplished, in George's Sorel terms, through action. It is action that is the very crucial aspect of myth, according to Sorel. Myth is successful insofar as it brings people to act, while their involvement is secured through the guaranteeing of the final victory of their cause.⁵⁰³ In textbooks, this action is justified on the grounds of consolidating the socialist society and in a later step, reaching the final stage of communism, of which the pupils will be part. As members of this eternal attempt, they will gain all the rights to enjoy the fruits of their efforts. This is exactly the guarantee that they need in order to become involved.

Moreover, the issue of evolution of the central myth lying at the heart of the ideological discourse can again be mirrored in contemporary literature. One of the crucial features of myth is its ability to change according to the present needs and the changing circumstances. In short, myth can adapt to the social and historical context in which it appears. Myth is produced and reproduced according to the present needs of a certain social group and the specific socio-historical conditions, argue Henry Tudor and Christopher Flood.⁵⁰⁴ Quite similar to these theses, Chiara Bottici sees political myth as a narrative continually revised so as to come to terms with the present conditions and needs, while coagulating significance among the members who share it.⁵⁰⁵ Individuals get emotionally involved in this narrative and take part in the

⁵⁰² Schöpflin, "The Functions of Myth and a Taxonomy of Myths", 20

⁵⁰³ Sorel, *Reflections on Violence*, 20.

⁵⁰⁴ Tudor, *Political Myth*, 372; Flood, *Political Myth*, 43-44.

⁵⁰⁵ Bottici, *A Philosophy of Political Myth*, 179.

action, argues Bottici, among others. The philosopher supports the indispensability of political myth on the basis that it fulfills a basic human need, that of living in a world less indifferent to us.⁵⁰⁶ In the case of the national history textbooks, it has been shown that pupils' indifference was avoided through the promotion of action, previously mentioned as mobilization, to further consolidate the socialist order and safeguard by all means the socialist homeland. It is the notion of fear that the terrestrial paradise will be lost once and forever that cements the will of the pupils to provide their contribution. This dominating notion of fear, caused by an imaginary thread coming out of the borders of the socialist republic, is a later addition to the textbooks and the national narrative. It is right here where the heart of the novel ideological discourse beats. In the form in which it has been discussed here, it first entered the narrative with such a dynamic in 1978 and remained untouched until the year 1984.

By discussing myth within the national narrative, it became obvious that myth occupies a central position, not to say it dominates its content. Several grounding myths were found to have jumped from their wider social and political sphere into history textbooks. Even the central myth of common mobilization to build and protect socialism and homeland against the external enemies represents a similar case. Considering the above, the question is posed concerning the mythical character of the narrative. Thus, is now the right moment to put forward the next argument that supports the characterization of the national historical narrative to be, overall, a mythical one? The answer to this question is yes. However, the mythicization of this account does not necessarily derive from the fact that within its frame several national myths could be traced. It is rather its structure and dramatic character that allows such a claim. With this, I return to two other key findings that this dissertation made possible and discuss them more properly. Let me start from the issue of the dramatic character, which supports that the national narrative of the third grade stages a culminating perennial drama. This drama, which goes back to the Middle Ages, has been structured very well in the textbooks' pages and covers the eternal wandering of the Albanian people towards the "Promised Land" of socialism and eventually communism. Another feature of this storytelling is that it adopts a circular, instead of a linear, historical timeline. As has been shown, this circular timeline is structured

⁵⁰⁶ Ibid., 200.

around the ideal of recurring cycles or historical periods, namely Middle Ages, National Renaissance and the socialist era. In each of the three periods, pupils might distinguish a similar inner structure of birth, maturation and decline of the community. These developments are followed by a stage of rebirth, further maturation and a new decline in the next historical turn. Following the above observations, on the one hand the circular pattern of time and on the other the dramatic character of the national narrative, one might speak of a mythical, as opposed to historical, narrative. The main difference between myth and history lies, according to Fontaine, in the manner in which their narratives are structured. Whereas time in history follows a linear development, circularity and repetitions prevail in myth.⁵⁰⁷ Accordingly, the findings concerning the dramatic form of the narrative are supported in the works of Tudor and Bottici.⁵⁰⁸

I argue for a national mythologem, which represents the *novum* that this dissertation project brought. Both its dramatic character and circular development of time allow for such a formulation. To support that the national narrative is a mythical instead of historical one is not only something new but is primarily at odds with previous research on Albanian history. What I primarily oppose here is the idea of continuous progress according to a strictly linear concept of time. Artan Puto first supported the idea of linear development in how the history of the Albanian community is compiled and narrated.⁵⁰⁹ Guided by the rhetoric of romantic nationalism, argues Puto, the intellectuals of the late nineteenth century saw the Albanian nation as a living organism that had to obey the same laws of nature. Following Anthony Smith and his well-known periodization about ethnic mythologies,⁵¹⁰ Puto identifies the stages of birth, growth, maturation and decline and rebirth in the life of Albanian community.⁵¹¹ The period of decline, according to Puto, corresponds to that of Ottoman occupation, and it is followed by the National Renaissance that signals the rebirth of the nation. The socialist historiography also developed an equivalent linear schema, according to Oliver Schmitt. Schmitt supports that the Albanian historians divided the national account into major thematic blocks, namely Ancient Illyria, the

⁵⁰⁷ Fontaine, "Myth and History," 13-14.

⁵⁰⁸ Tudor, *Political Myth*, 137; Bottici, *A Philosophy of Political Myth*, 196.

⁵⁰⁹ Artan Puto, "Fryma Romantike dhe Nacionaliste në Debatin për "Identitetin Shqiptar"," *Përpyjekja* 23 (2006), 15.

⁵¹⁰ Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*, 179.

⁵¹¹ Artan Puto, "Fryma Romantike dhe Nacionaliste," 15.

Middle Ages focusing mostly on the resistance to the Ottoman Empire, Ottoman rule, the “National Renaissance” and contemporary history characterized by the attempts to build a national state in the twentieth century.⁵¹² The position regarding the linear version of development from the Illyrians to the socialist era, implemented by the socialist historiography, is also shared by Peter Bartl.⁵¹³ Such an account, one which exalts at least four glory moments of the past, the Illyrian battles, the resistance against the Ottoman Empire, the National Awakening (National Renaissance) movement and the National Liberation War against the Axis powers, purports a teleological process.⁵¹⁴

To the above, I suggest a storytelling that goes through recurring cycles and constant repetitions, at least this is the case with the textbooks of the third grade. It is exactly through these repetitions that progress is achieved. As the empirical research showed, the ever-returning cycles produce a spiral form of narrative and time. For instance, the period of decline, which in the linear format is identified solely in the years of the Ottoman yoke, in the cyclical version of textbooks appears in at least two more cases, or better said, cycles. To be mentioned here are the fall of the community under the regime of Ahmet Zogu and the Axis invasion. Similar is the argument about the revival of the community, which in the national account of the third grade is experienced more than once. Moreover, the narrative in textbooks might not be linear, but we must acknowledge that it remains teleological. This national storytelling draws merely to a single end, that of socialism. With these findings, I even question my previous work referring to national history textbooks. By means of acknowledging the very fact that history texts represent the offspring of national historiography, I took for granted a linear version of the national narrative.⁵¹⁵ Through the analysis of the

⁵¹² Oliver Jens Schmitt, “‘Die Monade des Balkans’: Die Albaner im Mittelalter,” in *Albanische Geschichte: Stand und Perspektiven der Forschung*, eds. Oliver Jens Schmitt and Eva Anne Frantz (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2009), 65–66.

⁵¹³ Peter Bartl, “Begegnungen mit der Albanischen Geschichte,” in *Albanische Geschichte: Stand und Perspektiven der Forschung*, eds. Oliver Jens Schmitt and Eva Anne Frantz (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2009), 259.

⁵¹⁴ Schmitt, *Die Albaner*, 18; Michael Schmidt-Neke, “Zwischen Kaltem Krieg und Teleologie: Das Kommunistische Albanien als Objekt der Zeitgeschichtsforschung.” In *Albanische Geschichte: Stand und Perspektiven der Forschung*, eds. Oliver Jens Schmitt and Eva Anne Frantz (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2009), 136.

⁵¹⁵ Denis Vuka, “History Teaching in Albania Following the Educational Reform of 2008,” *Journal of Educational Media, Memory, and Society* 7, no. 1 (2015): 120; Vuka, “The Visual Construction of the Myth,” 69.

narrative here a different version is offered. It now remains to be proved if it has also been adopted in the case of the fourth and eighth grade, where national history was taught, or if the cyclical pattern of time remained in use during the post-socialist era and the textbooks issued by then. For the moment, the research conducted on the textbooks of the above grades, issued in the early nineties, tend to support a rather linear historical development from the ancient Illyrians to the socialist era.⁵¹⁶

After having addressed the performance of ideology and myth in the national narrative, let me turn to another crucial finding this study made possible. This concerns the representation of the individuals. Judging from the history textbooks, issued during the late years of socialism, people appear solely as part of large collectivities or groups having one sole will. They were shown or mentioned performing the same activities, and, astonishingly, with the same pathos and zeal. These massive groups give the impression of being uniformed and homogenized. What we observed above is that the individuals tend to look alike. Equal bodies and similar attire promote a notion of uniformity among the members of the national community. Such a pattern of representation does not hold merely for the present, but it prevails also in the community's past.

To the question that arises at this point concerning the collective and uniformed depiction of the people, a response seems all but easy. A first answer might be formulated around the argument of effective control of the individuals. The task of control for any kind of authority seems much easier to be achieved through the establishment of large collectivities or groups, in which individuals unavoidably merge with the collective corpus and their behavior is fully regulated. In textbooks, such a hypothesis holds primarily true. People prevail as members of big groups or collectivities, be they pupils, students, workers, and soldiers or simply citizens. They perform equal activities and unanimously comply with the directives of the Albanian leadership, restricted to the further consolidation and protection of the socialist revolution and homeland. During the past, they were called again to remain watchful and safeguard the homeland from falling into the enemies' hands. Returning to the present and the socialist era, there is no negation on the people's side to sacrifice even

⁵¹⁶ Αδελαιΐς Ισμουρλιάδου, «Η Ιστορική Πορεία και η Εθνική Ταυτότητα των Αλβανών στα Σχολικά Βιβλία Τους,» στο *Σχολικά Εγχειρίδια Βαλκανικών Χωρών. Πρακτικά Ημερίδας (17 Μαΐου 1994)* (Θεσσαλονίκη: Εκδοτικός Οίκος Αδελφών Κυριακίδη, 1995), 135-142.

their life for the cause of socialism and the homeland. On the contrary, they are shown entering this collective mobilization, headed by Party of Labor and the leader Enver Hoxha, with great enthusiasm.

Moreover, the issue of control over the society and each of its members, together with the promotion of a mass existence, makes us think of the possibility of a totalitarian discourse underlying the national narrative. The totalitarian discourse is primarily visible in the role of the Party of Labor and its charismatic leader. In close collaboration, they head the caravan by means of orchestrating every aspect of private and public life in one single direction, the collective mobilization for the consolidation and protection of the socialist homeland. Such an organization of the private and public sphere and, above all, the individuals' lives from top to bottom not only minimizes the free room in which the citizens could move, but primarily reveals the subordination of the latter citizens to the former socialist leadership. Another highlight of this unified mobilization during the socialist era represents the involvement of the masses in a sublime social project called "Ideological Revolution." Again, this is headed by the infallible duo Party and leader. It aimed to create the "New Communist Man" who would be fully dedicated to socialism and the homeland. Here is its entire investment for the present and future. He or she, given the emancipation of the Albanian women in the meantime, represents the best guarantee for the preservation of the existing order, and the legitimation of the Communist Party in power. This latter refers to the major goal of the totalitarian discourse, fully expanding in the textbooks' pages.

What has been encountered in the national narrative, described in terms of subordination, or better said domination, of the private and public sphere by a sublime authority that dictates the room and the movement of the individuals is quite close to classical definitions of totalitarianism. Emilio Gentile argues that the quintessence of totalitarianism regards the act of conquering society by a single-party regime. The invasion of every aspect of public and private lives of the governed is possible, in Gentile's terms, through the subjugation, integration and homogenization of the ruled on the basis of the totally political nature of existence.⁵¹⁷ Even the creation of a "New Man," who would better fit to the novel order or society, represents one of the principal tasks of totalitarian regimes. This "New Man," explains Gentile, is fully

⁵¹⁷ Emilio Gentile, *Politics as Religion*, trans. George Staunton (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2006), 46.

dedicated to the realizations of the tasks set by a supreme order, in this case a totalitarian party.⁵¹⁸ The very fact that in a totalitarian society everything is prescribed from the state, or better said from the Party, makes it difficult to distinguish the borders between these two. Gentile makes this more apparent when he speaks in favor of the integration of the society into the state.⁵¹⁹ This lack of distinction between state and society lies at the heart of totalitarianism, even for Claude Lefort. In Lefort's formulation, a single type party with an all-embracing character plays a key role. Its aim is to act under the impulse of a single will and to leave nothing out of its control.⁵²⁰ This omnipresent political body, which possesses absolute knowledge, did not merely enter the public sphere and organize the society for which it was responsible, but primarily instituted a novel model of a society without divisions in terms of class or strata, one where all individuals are absorbed in constructing socialism.⁵²¹ In short, the very idea of the totalitarian system is structured, according to Lefort, around the process of identification between power and society, the process of homogenizing the social space and the process of enclosing both society and power, all linked together.⁵²² Other representations of totalitarianism regard the image of the People-as-One, the proliferation of organizations in the social sphere, the idea of the creation of "New Man" and "Novel Society," and lastly, the appearance of the socialist plan. The above, concludes Lefort, discloses the logic that lies behind totalitarianism, the dissolvment of the subject into an "us," the agglomeration and melting of these various forms of "us" into the communist "us."⁵²³

The present findings concerning the totalitarian picture of the Albanian society and the homogenized social space that the textbooks reveal appear at first glance in line with previous research in the field. Most of the post-socialist scholars, though, tend to emphasize the totalitarian aspects of the socialist school,⁵²⁴ or stress the repressive character of education, which at the end is nothing more than a vehicle in the hands of the totalitarian state.⁵²⁵ According to other researchers, school during the socialist era

⁵¹⁸ Gentile, *Politics as Religion*, 46.

⁵¹⁹ Emilio Gentile, "Fascism and the Italian Road to Totalitarianism," *Constellation* 1, no. 3 (2008): 293.

⁵²⁰ Lefort, *The Political Forms of Modern Society*, 283-284.

⁵²¹ *Ibid.*, 284.

⁵²² *Ibid.*, 286.

⁵²³ *Ibid.*, 290.

⁵²⁴ Kambo, "Shkolla Shqiptare," 143.

⁵²⁵ Mullahi and Dhimitri, "Education Issues in Totalitarian State," 4104-4105.

had the aim of creating the proper citizens who would fit to this totalitarian system.⁵²⁶ There is a tendency towards easy generalizations that want all involved actors and the entire socialist school system to be under total control, pressure, while experiencing an unprecedented lack of democracy.⁵²⁷ First, such arguments are not shared, and second, they could not be supported from the current study. Let alone that its character, focusing on the content and not on the impact the media had over the pupils, does not allow for further generalizations. I can only speak of the text and its receivers, the pupils. Thus, keeping the findings within the context of their source, that saying textbooks, it is true that a totalitarian pneuma over the Albanian society is apparent. The very expression of it is to be seen in the common call to resist the invaders, holding in one hand the weapon, and in the other the pickaxe. This is, according to the text, the highest ideal and what solely matters in the life of the young generation, something of course dictated from the socialist leadership. If the pupils will do so is a matter of long discussion. Above, I supported that there are good reasons that they will go all the way and give their contribution. The well-structured national narrative and the mythical meditation speak in favor of this. This is not to say, though, that all pupils reacted in the same manner or came to willingly accept the narrative's content.

The issue of totalitarian discourse underlying the national narrative is not something that could be easily identified once one opens the textbooks' pages. Quite the opposite, it remains well hidden and requires systematic observation of both visual and verbal communication. In the case that the totalitarian claims over the Albanian society and each of its members are somehow hidden, this is not the case with nationalism, which comes undisguised to the forefront. As a reminder, in texts the supreme call directed towards the pupils regarded the loss of the socialist homeland. This was supposed to mobilize them in the present and the future. This was also the case regarding the community's past, as Albania again experienced a permanent threat. Another indication of nationalism regards the homage that textbooks pay to national heroes and political figures of the nation, including the legendary leaders Gjergj Kastrioti-Skanderbeg and Ismail Qemali. The former led the successful resistance against the Ottoman Empire in the Middle Ages, whereas the latter was

⁵²⁶ Sota, "Educational Phenomena in Albania," 35.

⁵²⁷ Mullahi and Dhimitri, "Education Issues in Totalitarian State," 4104.

responsible for the proclamation of the first independent Albanian state in 1912. Not to forget the current leader Enver Hoxha. He is celebrated in textbooks as a political and military genius and is to be found at the helm of the national attempt for the further consolidation and preservation of the socialist homeland. Other milestones in the national calendar that were equally extolled for their patriotism are the War of Vlorë in 1920 and of course the National Liberation War during the Second World War. The national resistance against the Axis powers represents the most brilliant act of resistance in centuries. A mythical aura surrounded this historical event in textbooks. In fact, this heroic episode turned into a foundational myth of the national account. The ethnocentric perspective from which the nation has been narrated is also to be seen from the above-mentioned continual struggles for national emancipation of the community. During the interwar period and the socialist era, the mobilization also took on a social character. The people in this context began their attempts for the construction of a new social and political order, socialism. To the above, it should be added that the nationalistic rhetoric in the narrative is mainly introverted and phobic. Fear that the homeland will fall into the enemies' hands plays the key role here. The list of enemies is long: imperialists, revisionists, neighbors and class enemies in the interior, to name but a few. Furthermore, textbooks incite patriotic feelings, while cultivating some kind of pride of being Albanian. This latter is built around the notion of warlike character of the Albanian people and the resistance they offered to the invaders throughout the centuries. Judging from the above, the pupils, in their first encounter with national history, learn about a glorious past and a marvelous present. Furthermore, they primarily learn to love their country and their countrymen. Their country has run, and is still running, the risk of being conquered by external enemies. Thus, they come to know their own obligations. They should protect and contribute with their work to the well-being of their country and the current socialist order.

The sense of belonging to a group that experiences a perennial threat influences without a doubt the process of identity formation. In textbooks, where this process mainly takes place, a largely nationalistic identity seems to have been shaped, although without irredentist claims. Such a collective identity based on fear and isolation is afflicted by phobic syndromes. Pupils learn almost nothing about their neighboring countries, but they solely learn the danger that they pose to the People's Socialist Republic. The map of Albania used in the textbooks to introduce the pupils

to the history of their country (Layout 2) is out of geographical context, which is indicative of the utopian isolationist dogma that prevails in the texts. Albania and its people give the impression of having retreated within their borders, which appear hermetically closed for its citizens. They live under a paranoiac state of alarm caused by the supposed foreign encroachments that menace the independence of their country. This ubiquitous notion of fear and persistent peril defines the lives of the individuals, including that of the pupils.

The findings of this dissertation thus support previous studies showing that nationalism was a leading motive in the Albanian policymaking during the socialist era⁵²⁸ and an instrument that strengthened the Party's authority.⁵²⁹ This introverted form of nationalism, full of isolationism and xenophobic elements that was cultivated in texts, is a further contribution to a long line of previous studies that pointed in the same direction. Several scholars speak of isolationist state-of-siege nationalism,⁵³⁰ even extreme nationalism,⁵³¹ while others stressed some of its peculiar features such as xenophobia, isolationism and paranoia.⁵³² Socialist ideology has been described by others in terms of Marxist-nationalism⁵³³ or nationalist-communism,⁵³⁴ but definitely one that did not follow an irredentist agenda.⁵³⁵ Similar findings also support the

⁵²⁸ Prifti, *Socialist Albania*, 24; Stephanie Shwandner-Sievers, "Jungfrauen und Elefanten im Porzellanladen: Zur Internationalen Herausforderung der Albanischen Ethnologie im Postsozialismus," in *Albanische Geschichte: Stand und Perspektiven der Forschung*, eds. Oliver Jens Schmitt and Eva Anne Frantz (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2009), 194; Egin Ceka, "Grundzüge der Albanischen Nationalen Identität vom Sozialismus bis Heute," in *Postsozialismus: Hinterlassenschaft des Staatsozialismus und die Neuen Kapitalismen in Europa*, ed. Dieter Segert (Wien: Braumüller Verlag, 2007), 108; Artan Puto and Mimoza Dhima, "The Cult of Personality: King Zog I and Enver Hoxha," *International Journal of Social and Educational Innovation (IJSEIro)* 3, no. 5 (2016), 63.

⁵²⁹ Enis Sulstarova, *Ligjërimi Nacionalist në Shqipëri dhe Studime të Tjera* (Tiranë: Pika pa Sipërfaqe, 2015), 61.

⁵³⁰ Fischer, "The Second World War in Albania," 142

⁵³¹ Bernd J Fischer, "Enver Hoxha and the Stalinist Dictatorship in Albania," in *Balkan Strongmen. Dictators and Authoritarian Rulers of Southeast Europe*, ed. Bernd J. Fischer (West Lafayette, Indiana: Purdue University Press, 2007), 251.

⁵³² Pipa, *Albanian Stalinism*," 121; Schmitt, *Die Albaner*, 173; Cecilie Endresen, *Is the Albanian's religion really «Albanianism»? Religion and Nation according to Muslim and Christian Leaders in Albania* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2012), 62.

⁵³³ Fischer, "The Second World War in Albania," 122.

⁵³⁴ Fatos Lubonja, "Between the Glory of a Virtual World and the Misery of a Real World," in *Albanian Identities. Myth and History*, eds. Stephanie Schwander-Sievers and Bernd J. Fischer (London: Hurst & Company, 2002), 96.

⁵³⁵ Fischer, "The Second World War in Albania," 122; Sulstarova, *Ligjërimi Nacionalist në Shqipëri*, 82.

current research. The long path towards the “Promised Land” of socialism and eventually communism is an account dedicated in the first line to the attempts for national and, by the twentieth century, social emancipation of the community as well. This kind of dual perspective from which the nation has been narrated is primarily visible in the call for the preservation of the socialist homeland. In visual terms, socialism and national idea are also to be traced in the red color, widely used throughout the narrative. In general, the color red has been related with socialism and revolution, while at the same time is the main color of the Albanian national flag. Since I referred to the flags, it should be mentioned that those included in the narrative’s frame are either plain red or red with national symbols. The latter one represents the official national flag of Albania that appears, in several cases, side by side with the former plain red flags of the socialist movement (Layout 1 and 9). This represents another sign showing the vicinity of class and national perspectives in narrating the nation. Concerning the issue of irredentism, there are no statements in texts that support the restoration of territories or of Albanians living outside the borders of the current state. The attempts, as has been already mentioned, concentrate within the borders, while references to ethnic Albania have simply been avoided. The contribution of this thesis in several academic debates has been made clear in this section, including history, ideology, myth and identity formation. However, this work focuses primarily on textbooks and their content, and it is right here where I wish to stay for a while. Let me explain at this point what brings this dissertation to the field of schoolbook research. If textbooks are understood as mirrors of a certain society and its values,⁵³⁶ then it is through the analysis of the media issued during the late years of socialism that a significant step has been made in getting to know the isolated Albanian socialist society. Textbooks, more specifically national history textbooks addressed here, represent the window to the Albanian cosmos in one of the most quixotic turns of its modern history. A period for which not much information can be received from other sources and of which there is a general lack of knowledge. They inform us of the core elements that the largely isolated Albanian society consisted of in the late seventies and throughout the eighties such as ideas, values, traditions, practices, tasks, norms and visions that praise the life of the individuals, in this concrete case the pupils and future Albanian citizens.

⁵³⁶ Koulouri, “Introduction,” 31; Schissler, “Navigating a Globalizing World,” 205; Pingel, *UNESCO Guidebook*, 7; Lässig, “Textbooks and Beyond,” 2.

Ideology could, of course, be added to the above list as a key element that textbooks contain and seek to transmit to the pupils. Taking everything into consideration, the contribution of this dissertation could, in short, be described as the visualization of ideology. Ideology, taken as a discourse seeking social cohesion, has been furthermore liberated from a negative background that wants it to be a synonym to indoctrination. Instead, it is its complex and imaginary essence that has been primarily traced not only in the visual but also in the verbal communication. Such an understanding of ideology represents one of the novelties of this dissertation project, which opposes the international post-socialist scholarship and its burden on politics and propaganda permeated through the subject of history.⁵³⁷ The enrichment of the current discussion on textbook research with the concept of political myth should be seen as another contribution of this thesis. Myths, national mythologies and “mythical spaces” have been all addressed here. The attempt to enter the mythical territory, as it has been established, within the frame of the national history texts builds upon previous work that tackles myth in Albanian textbooks.⁵³⁸ The present research wishes to continue this recent path in the study of myth and open the perspective by means of investigating its visual appearance in the educational media.

Going a step further with the input of this study, it sheds light on one of the lesser-known socialist republics, while integrating Albania into the wider debate on schoolbook research. Such a field of research has a long tradition in countries belonging to the former communist bloc. From this encounter with different examples of socialism and educational practices, the current research has much to gain. A confrontation with different paradigms of socialist educational systems and, above all, educational media issued elsewhere might help in the better understanding of the Albanian case and its particularities. Additionally, the implementation of the social semiotic visual and multimodal tools of investigation made the reading of the ideological messages that the layouts contain possible. The visually and multimodally articulated ideologies are seldom investigated in textbooks issued in other former socialist republics.⁵³⁹ Usually the recent research remains faithful to the text and its

⁵³⁷ Wojdon, “The Impact of Communist Rule,” 63; Rodden, *Textbooks Reds*, 111.

⁵³⁸ Lichnofsky et. al., eds., *Myth and Mythical Spaces* (2017).

⁵³⁹ Makarewitsch and Bezrogow, “The Evolution of the Elementary Reading Textbook Cover,” 155-171; Kahlcke, “Wie mit Bildern Geschichte gemacht wird,” 86-109.

content. The text has not been neglected, of course, but the focal point of this dissertation became the illustrations and the visual narrative.

The analysis of the content of the visual resources is mostly what this study did. In dealing with the images, crucial findings came to the fore regarding their content and function in textbooks. First, the use of the social semiotic analytical tools helped in the identification of the ideological positions contained in the pictures. Second, it revealed the dominant position the illustrations enjoyed in the history textbooks issued during the late years of socialism. It is in the images where the message is to be found, with the text providing further explanations or simply extending the visually expressed meanings. Thus, the function of the images in Albanian history textbooks issued during the late seventies is far from being simply visual underpinnings of verbal arguments.⁵⁴⁰ Quite the opposite, it was found that images take the lead in the double-spread multimodal ensembles. These findings come as a confirmation of what Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen argue about the non-decorative and illustrative function of the images in texts.⁵⁴¹ In the mostly visual textbooks' layouts, asserts Van Leeuwen, illustrations play an important role. They do not contain merely what the text says but might even contradict the images' content.⁵⁴² This has also been proven by the current study. Images and text do not always follow each other closely. Ruptures, clashes and contradictions between what the texts say and what the images show are not few. With this, I come to the third issue that refers to the relation, better said the interplay, between verbal and visual communication. Even though for the larger part of the narrative the meanings expressed by visual and verbal means of communication remain quite close to each other, the observed clashes and different focus tell us that these two main modes interrelate in quite different manners. These findings are consistent with what Theo van Leeuwen and Gunther Kress argue about the interplay between the visually and verbally articulated meanings. They might double, complement and extend, or even contradict each other.⁵⁴³ Such an observation opens a new perspective for the forthcoming research on Albanian textbooks' content. At the same time, it raises many questions concerning the intentionality or not of the

⁵⁴⁰ Bezemer and Kress, "Changing Text," 11.

⁵⁴¹ Kress and Van Leeuwen, "Structures of Visual Representation", 92; Van Leeuwen, "Schoolbook as a Multimodal Text," 35.

⁵⁴² Van Leeuwen, "The Schoolbook as Multimodal Text," 35.

⁵⁴³ Van Leeuwen and Kress, "Critical Layout Analysis," 25; Kress and Van Leeuwen, "Front Pages," 187.

above choices. Another crucial aspect regards the different actors and institutions involved in the process of defining proper knowledge and producing textbooks.⁵⁴⁴ All these important issues should be taken into consideration by anyone who wishes to enter the field of Albanian textbooks in the future.

Despite the ambition to conduct research without flaws, I must acknowledge at the end that this was simply not possible. The current study could not maintain to have done everything right. It suffers from several limitations that will be addressed right away. First to be mentioned is the restricted historical frame of the analysis. More than a decade of textbooks issued during the late socialist period were addressed. This does not seem enough when it comes to issues of representativeness of the sample chosen. Future research should widen the scope of investigation through the inclusion of texts during the almost five decades of socialism and even those published during the post-socialist era. Even the fourth and eighth grade national history textbooks could be addressed by future research. Such a widening would prove a useful yardstick for the evaluation of several of the findings that the current dissertation made possible. In particular, the expansion towards the post-socialist era and textbooks issued by that time might provide significant new insights on core concepts addressed here. Issues such as myth, ideology or identity formation after the fall of socialism open a new territory for textbook research in Albania. They are not, as many consider, the exclusive property of authoritarian, and I might add socialist, states. However, one might encounter these core concepts in any given modern society. They all influence the process of nation-building and of course are to be found in textbooks around the globe. The transitory stage that the country entered in the early nineties offers a splendid ground for comparative approaches in educational media. In this new context, still praised by the unavoidable presence of the old system, the shifts or continuations of paradigms could be traced. Going a step further, another limitation of the current dissertation regards its methodological approach and the sole use of the social semiotic visual and multimodal approach. Concerning images, there are many traditions in the visual arts, including iconology or iconography, that could have been used as primary or corroborative analytical means to read the illustrations' content. Regarding the multimodal approach, it is true that all

⁵⁴⁴ Steffen Sammler, Felicitas Macgilchrist, Lars Müller and Marcus Otto, *Textbook Production in a Hybrid Age: Contemporary and Historical Perspectives on Producing Textbooks and Digital Educational Media*. Eckert. Dossiers 6 (2016), 10-11.

modes of communication were addressed in this study, but it is also true that some of them were not studied in depth. Different affordances and logics to express meanings, different modes of communication possess, require different approaches. The analysis of the verbal communication, for instance, remained somehow descriptive. Several methods do exist that could have contributed to a better critical analysis of the text. Another crucial perspective missing from this dissertation is that of gender. The role and the depiction of women in the national account could be included as a new a topic of investigation. The emancipation of women in textbooks is an additional topic that should be tackled in future attempts.

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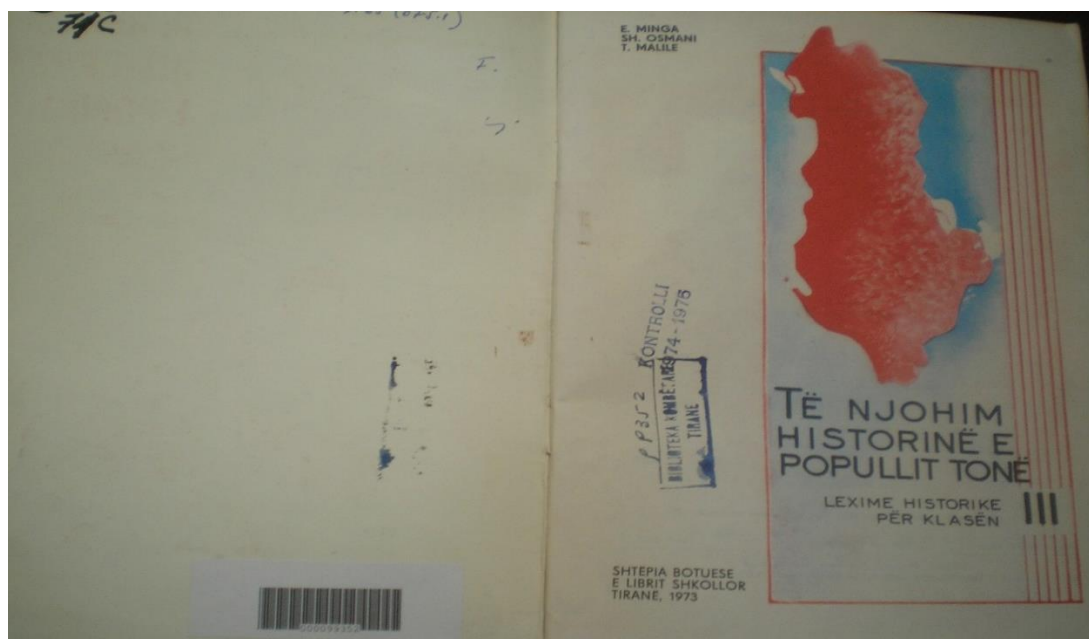
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Appendices section

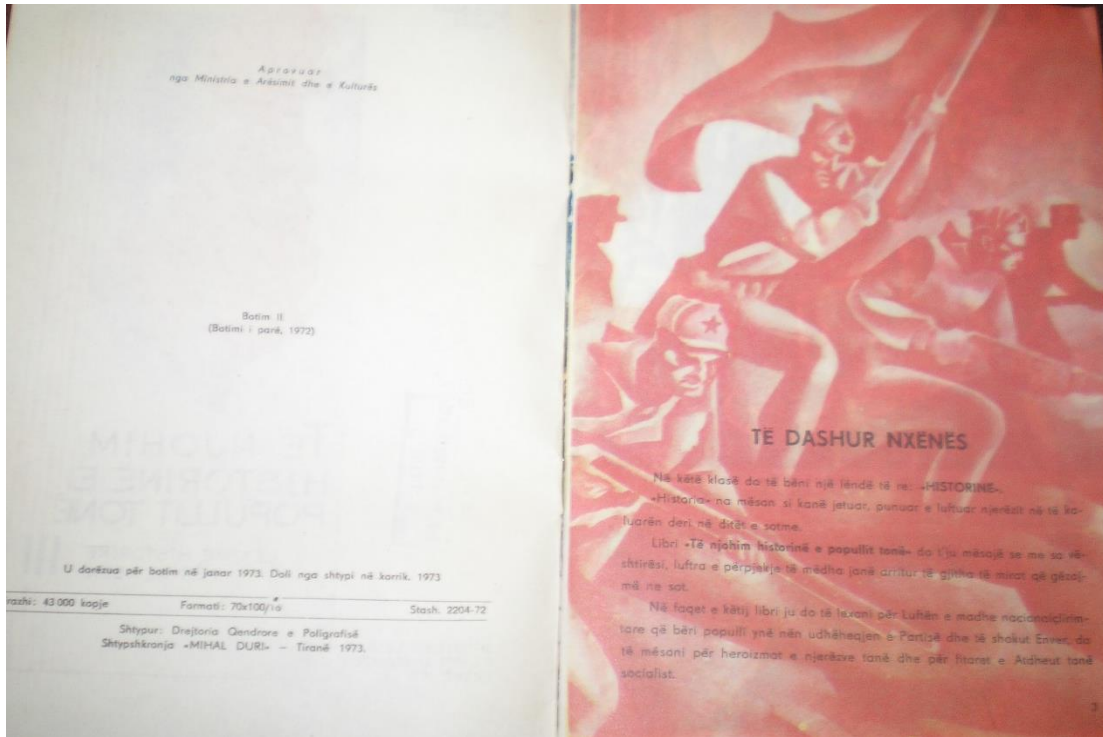
Textbooks' Layouts (1972-1977)



Layout 1. Elsa Minga, Shefqet Osmani and Tefta Malile, *Të Njohim Historinë e Popullit Tonë. Lexime Historike për Klasën e 3-të të Shkollës 8-Vjeçare* (Tiranë: Shtëpia Botuese e Librit Shkollor, 1975), Front and back cover.



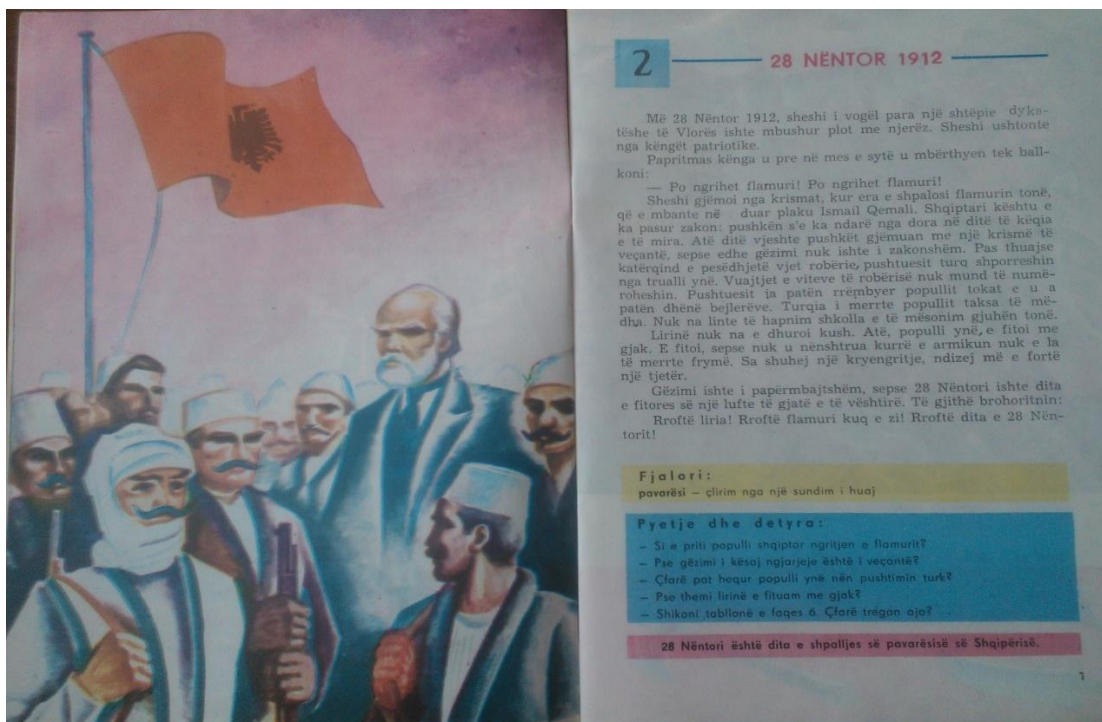
Layout 2. Minga, Osmani and Malile, *Të Njohim Historinë e Popullit Tonë* (1973), Inner cover.



Layout 3. Minga, et. al., *Të Njohim Historinë e Popullit Tonë* (1973), Introduction.



Layout 4. Minga, et. al., *Të Njohim Historinë e Popullit Tonë* (1974), 4-5.



2 ————— **28 NËNTOR 1912** —————

Më 28 Nëntor 1912, sheshi i vogël para një shtëpie dykateshe të Vlorës ishte mbushur plot me njerëz. Sheshi ushonte nga këngët patriotike.

Papritmas kënga u pre në mes e sytë u mbërthyen tek ballkoni:

— Po ngrihet flamuri! Po ngrihet flamuri!
Sheshi gjëmoi nga krismat, kur era e shpalosi flamurin tonë, që e mbante në duar plaku Ismail Qemali. Shqiptari këshu e ka pasur zakon: pushkën s'e ka ndarë nga dora në ditë të keqja e të mira. Atë ditë vjeshtë pushkët gjëmtuan me një krismë të veçantë, sepse edhe gjëzimi nuk ishte i zakonshëm. Pas thuasje katërqind e pesëdhjetë vjet robërie, pushtuesit turq shporreshin nga trualli ynë. Vuajtjet e viteve të robërisë nuk mund të numëroheshin. Pushtuesit ia patën rrepyer popullit tokat e u hapat dhënë bejlerëve. Turqia i merrte popullit taksa të mëdha. Nuk na linte të hapnim shkollat e të mësonim gjuhën tonë.

Lirinë nuk na e dhuroi kush. Atë, populli ynë, e fitoi me gjak. E fitoi, sepse nuk u nënshtrova kurrë e armikun nuk e la të merrte frymë. Sa shuhej një kryengritje, ndizej më e fortë një tjetër.

Gëzimi ishte i papërmbyshëm, sepse 28 Nëntori ishte dita e fitores së një lufte të gjatë e të vështirë. Të gjithë brohoritnin:

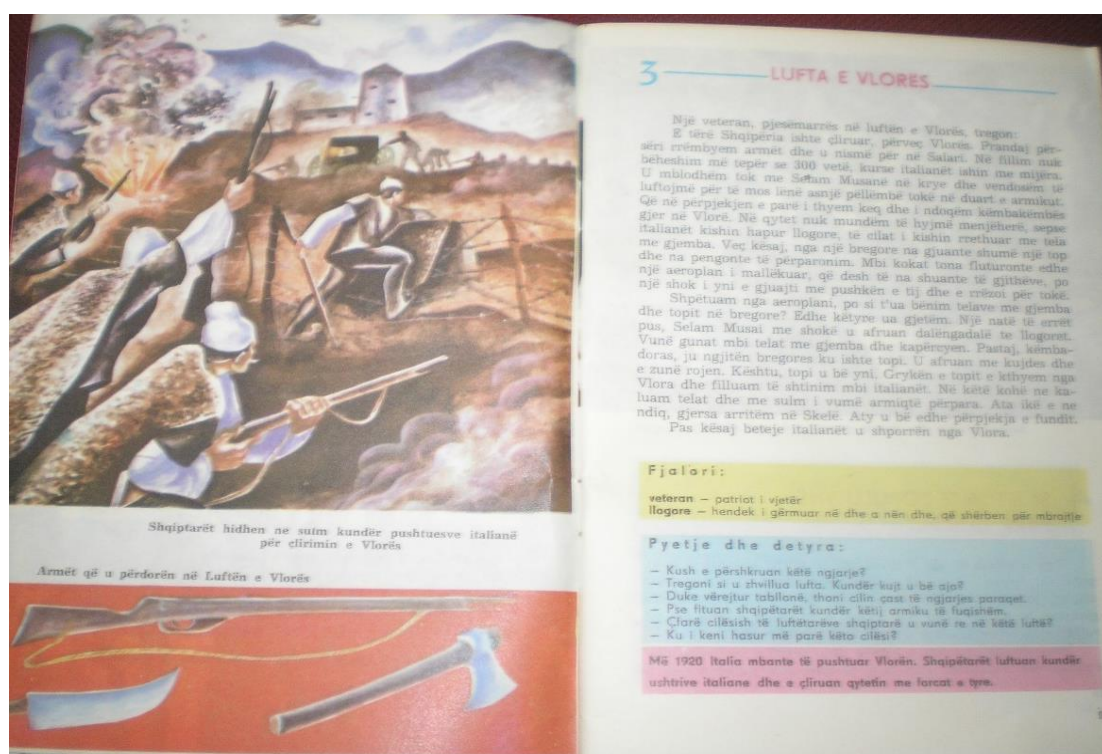
Rroftë liria! Rroftë flamuri kuq e zi! Rroftë dita e 28 Nëntorit!

Fjalori:
pavarësi — çlirim nga një sundim i huaj

- Pyetje dhe detyra:**
- Si e priti populli shqiptar ngritjen e flamurit?
 - Pse gëzimi i kësaj ngjarjeje është i veçantë?
 - Çfarë pat hequr populli ynë nën pushtimin turk?
 - Pse themi lirinë e fituam me gjak?
 - Shikoni tablionë e faqes 6. Çfarë tregon ajo?

28 Nëntori është dita e shpalljes së pavarësisë së Shqipërisë.

Layout 5. Minga, et. al., *Të Njohim Historinë e Popullit Tonë* (1975), 6-7.



3 ————— **LUFTA E VLORËS** —————

Një veteran, pjesëmarrës në luftën e Vlorës, tregon: E ërë Shqipëria ishte çliruar, përvec Vlorës. Prandaj për shtetërimin armët dhe u nisam për në Saloni. Në fillim nuk beheshim me tepër se 300 vetë, kurse italianët ishin me mijëra. U mbledhëm tok me Selam Musanë në krye dhe vendosëm të luftojmë për të mos lënë asnjë pëllëmbë tokë në duart e armikut. Që në përpjekjen e parë i thyem këq dhe i ndoqëm këmbalëmbës gjër në Vlorë. Në qytet nuk mundem të hyjmë menjshëri, sepse italianët kishin hapur llogore, të cilat i kishin rrethuar me tela me gjemba. Vec kësaj, nga një bregore na gjuante shumë një top dhe na pengonte të përparonim. Mbi kokat tona fluturonte edhe një aeroplan i mallëkuar që dësh të na shquante për tokë.

Shpëtuam nga aeroplani, po si t'ua bënim telave me gjemba dhe topit në bregore? Edhe këtyre ua gjetëm. Një natë të errët pas, Selam Musai me shokë u afruan dalëngadalë te llogoret. Vënë gjinat mbi telat me gjemba dhe kapërcyen. Pastaj, këmbadorat, ju ngjiten bregores ku ishte topi. U afruan me kujdes dhe e zunë rojen. Kështu, topi u bë ynë. Krykën e topit e këtyem nga Vlorë dhe filluam të shtinin mbi italianët. Në këtë kohë ne kaluam telat dhe me sulm i shumë armiqë përpara. Ata ikën e me ndiq, gjersa arritëm në Skelë. Aty u bë edhe përpjekja e fundit. Pas kësaj beteje italianët u shporën nga Vlorë.

Fjalori:
veteran — patriot i vjetër
llogore — hendek i gërmuar në dhe a nën dhe, që shërben për mbrojtje

- Pyetje dhe detyra:**
- Kush e përshkruan këtë ngjarje?
 - Tregoni si u zhvillua lufta. Kundër kujt u bë ajo?
 - Duke vërejtur tablionë, shani cilin çast të ngjarjes paraqet.
 - Pse fituan shqiptarët kundër kësaj armiku të fuqishëm.
 - Çfarë cilësish të luftëtarëve shqiptarë u vunë re në këtë luftë?
 - Ku i kenë hasur më parë këto cilësi?

Më 1920 Italia mbante të pushtuar Vlorën. Shqiptarët luftuan kundër ushtrive italiane dhe e çliruan qytetin me forcat e tyre.

Layout 6. Minga, et. al., *Të Njohim Historinë e Popullit Tonë* (1973), 8-9.



4 — SI JETONTE POPULLI YNË PARA ÇLIRIMIT

Kur u shporrën nga Atdheu ynë të gjithë armiqtë e huaj, populli u përpoq e luftoi që të kishte një qeveri që të mendonte për të e t'i siguronte atij një jetë të mirë. Mirëpo, me gjithë përpjekjet e luftën e madhe që u bë, në krye të qeverisë erdhën njëzë gjakpirës si Ahmet Zogu dhe shokët e tij. Këta e lanë atë në varfëri e në errësirë, ashtu si e pat lënë edhe Turqia.

Para çlirimit shumica e tokave ishin pronë e bejlerëve dhe e çifligarëve. Fshatarët ishin bujq të tyre. Ata punonin ditë e natë dhe gjysmën e prodhimeve ua merrnin pronarët, të cilët jetonin në pallate e me gjithë të mirat, kurse fshatarët në kasolle, ku ngryeshin e gdhieshin shumë herë edhe pa bukë.

Në qytete punëtorët punonin 12 deri 14 orë në ditë dhe paguheshin aq pak, sa që disa herë nuk siguronin as bukën thate të fëmijëve. Fëmijët e fshatarëve e të punëtorëve, që në moshë të shtete detyroheshin të lirin shkollën e të pajtoheshin shërbëtorë për të fituar bukën e gojës.

Zogu e qeveria e tij, si dhe kishat e xhamiat, jo vetëm që nuk ju jepnin asnjë përkrahje punëtorëve e fshatarëve, por përkundrazi i mundonin me shumë, ju merrnin taksa të rënda, i rrinin, i burgosnin dhe ndënjë që ngrinte krye e vrisnin ose e varnin.

Populli nuk i duronte këto të zëza. Gjatë sundimit të tyre, ai bëri shumë herë demonstrata e kryengritje.

Fjalori:

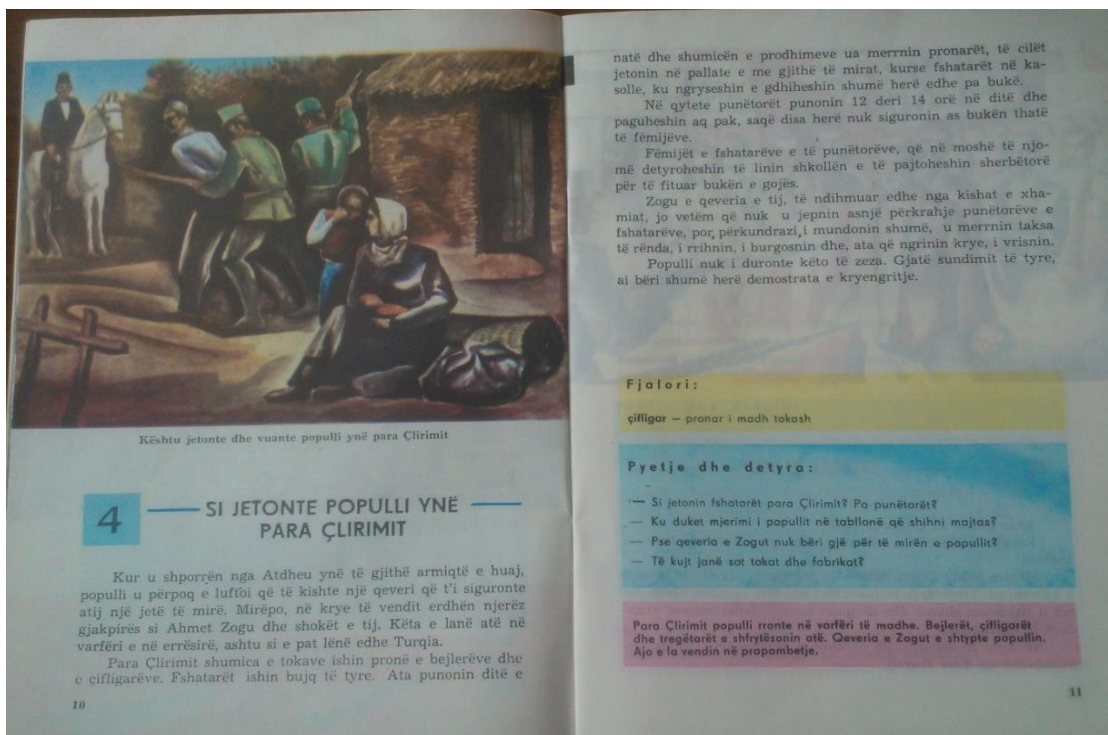
çifligar — pronar i madh tokash.

Pyetje dhe detyra:

Si jetonin fshatarët para çlirimit? Po punëtorët?
 Ku duket mjerimi i popullit në tablonë që shihni majtas?
 Pse qeveria e Zogut nuk bëri gjë për të mirën e popullit?
 Të kujt janë sot takat dhe fabrikat?

Para çlirimit populli rronte në varfëri të madhe. Bejlerët, çifligarët dhe tregëtarët e shfrytëzonin atë. Qeveria e Zogut e shtypte popullin. Ajo e la vendin në propambelje.

Layout 7. Minga, et. al., *Të Njohim Historinë e Popullit Tonë* (1972), 10-11.



4 — SI JETONTE POPULLI YNË PARA ÇLIRIMIT

Kur u shporrën nga Atdheu ynë të gjithë armiqtë e huaj, populli u përpoq e luftoi që të kishte një qeveri që t'i siguronte atij një jetë të mirë. Mirëpo, në krye të vendit erdhën njëzë gjakpirës si Ahmet Zogu dhe shokët e tij. Këta e lanë atë në varfëri e në errësirë, ashtu si e pat lënë edhe Turqia.

Para Çlirimit shumica e tokave ishin pronë e bejlerëve dhe e çifligarëve. Fshatarët ishin bujq të tyre. Ata punonin ditë e

natë dhe shumicën e prodhimeve ua merrnin pronarët, të cilët jetonin në pallate e me gjithë të mirat, kurse fshatarët në kasolle, ku ngryeshin e gdhieshin shumë herë edhe pa bukë.

Në qytete punëtorët punonin 12 deri 14 orë në ditë dhe paguheshin aq pak, sa që disa herë nuk siguronin as bukën thate të fëmijëve.

Fëmijët e fshatarëve e të punëtorëve, që në moshë të njomë detyroheshin të lirin shkollën e të pajtoheshin shërbëtorë për të fituar bukën e gojës.

Zogu e qeveria e tij, të ndihmuar edhe nga kishat e xhamiat, jo vetëm që nuk ju jepnin asnjë përkrahje punëtorëve e fshatarëve, por përkundrazi i mundonin me shumë, u merrnin taksa të rënda, i rrinin, i burgosnin dhe, ata që ngrinin krye, i vrisnin.

Populli nuk i duronte këto të zëza. Gjatë sundimit të tyre, ai bëri shumë herë demonstrata e kryengritje.

Fjalori:

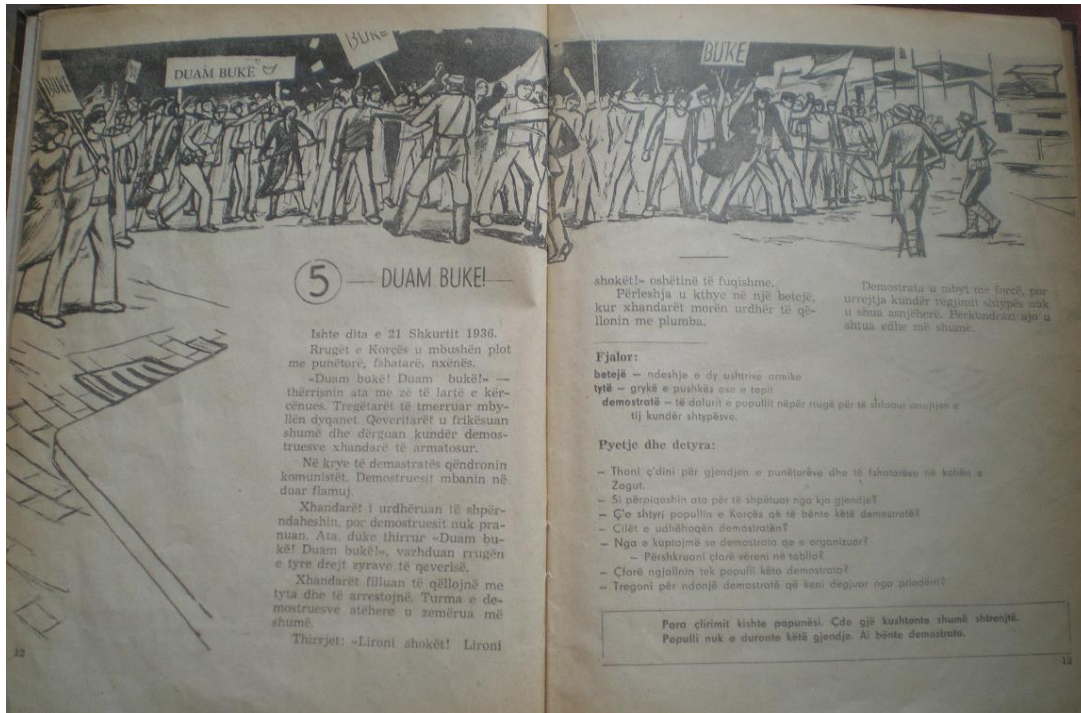
çifligar — pronar i madh tokash

Pyetje dhe detyra:

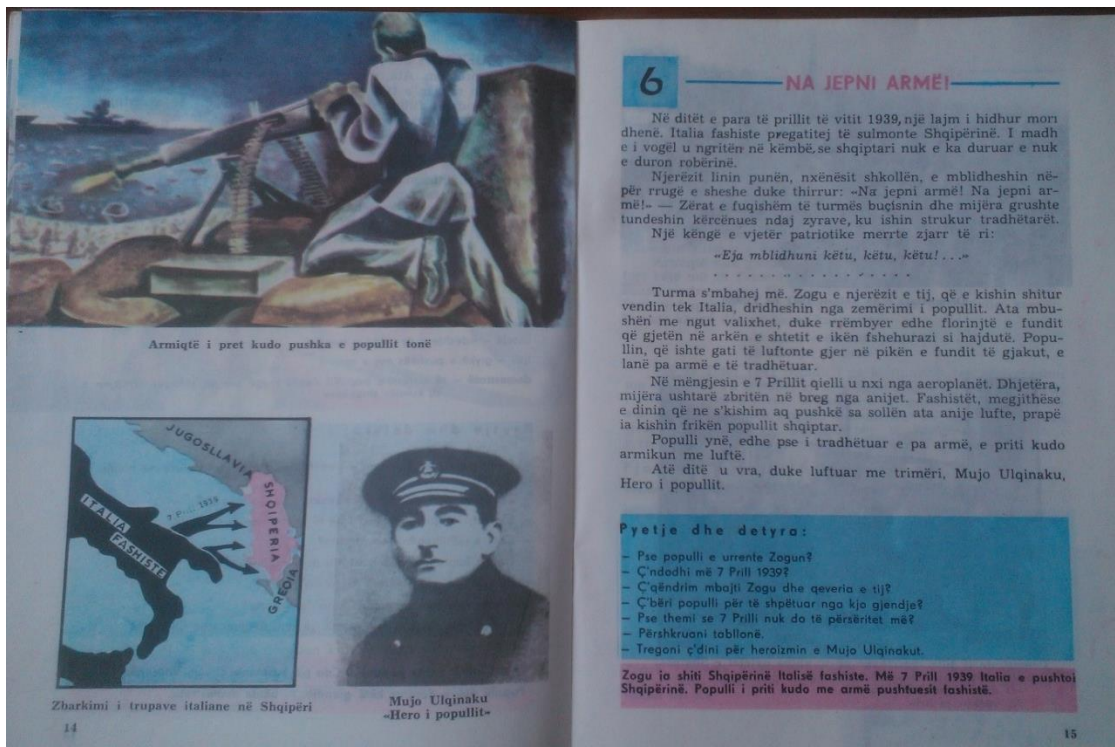
— Si jetonin fshatarët para Çlirimit? Po punëtorët?
 — Ku duket mjerimi i popullit në tablonë që shihni majtas?
 — Pse qeveria e Zogut nuk bëri gjë për të mirën e popullit?
 — Të kujt janë sot takat dhe fabrikat?

Para Çlirimit populli rronte në varfëri të madhe. Bejlerët, çifligarët dhe tregëtarët e shfrytëzonin atë. Qeveria e Zogut e shtypte popullin. Ajo e la vendin në propambelje.

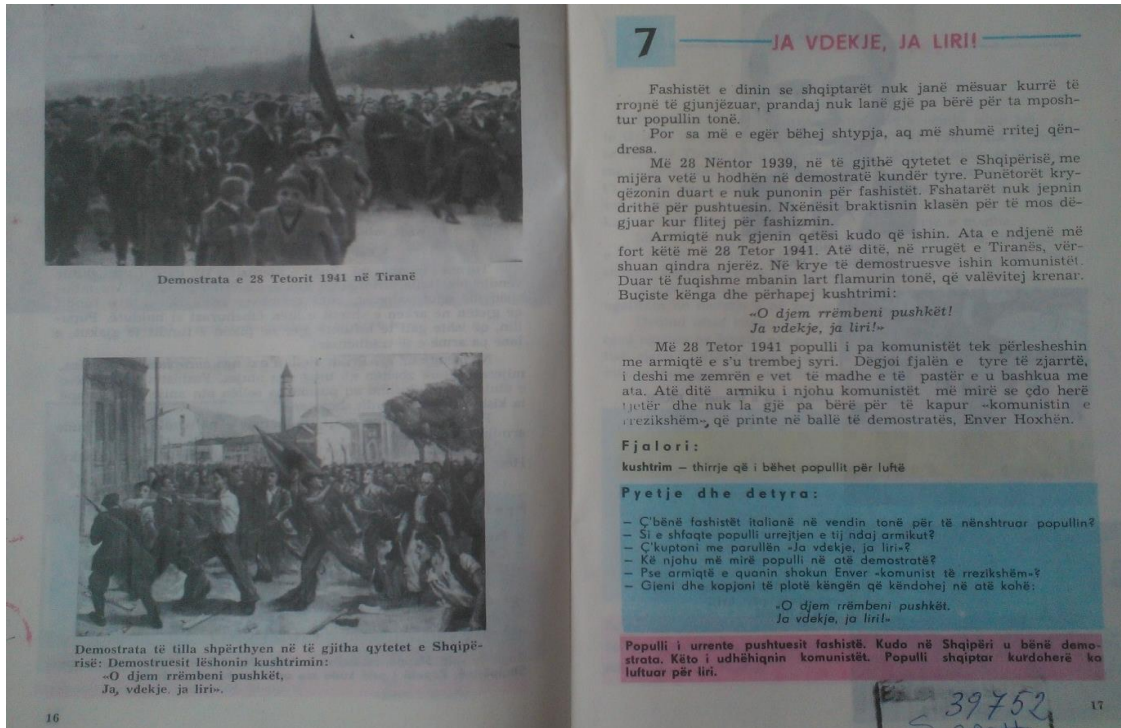
Layout 8. Minga, et. al., *Të Njohim Historinë e Popullit Tonë* (1975), 10-11.



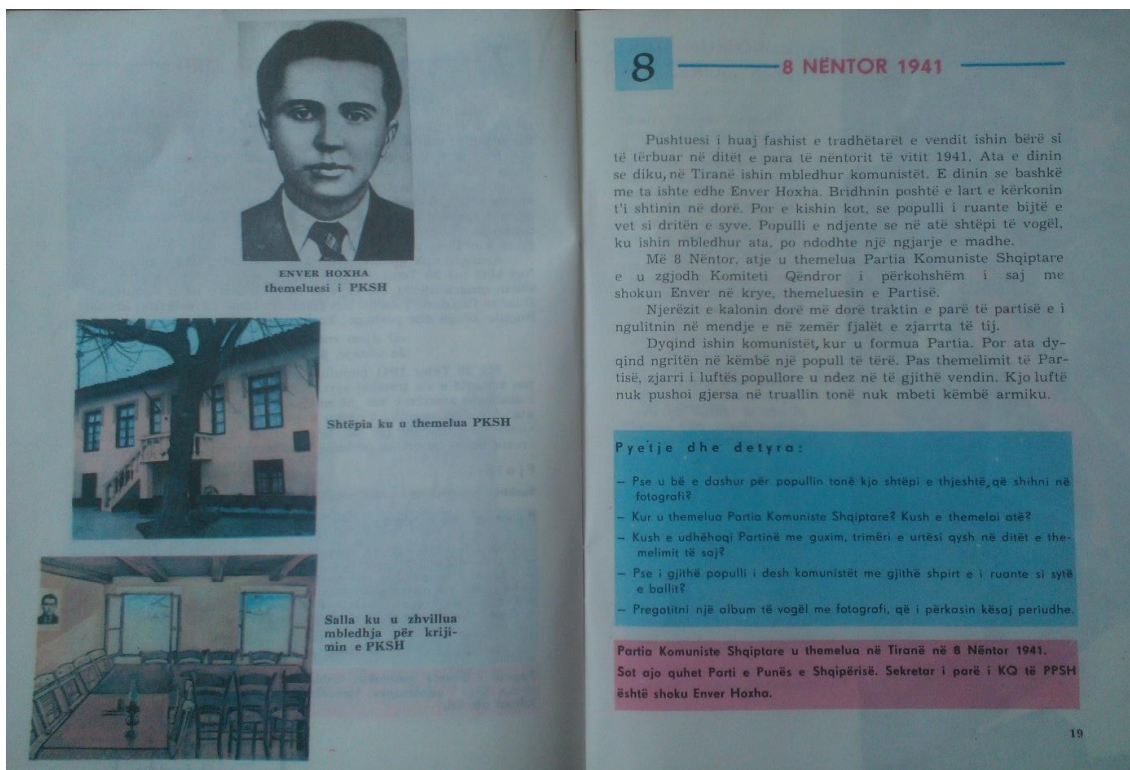
Layout 9. Minga, et. al., *Të Njohim Historinë e Popullit Tonë* (1972), 12-13.



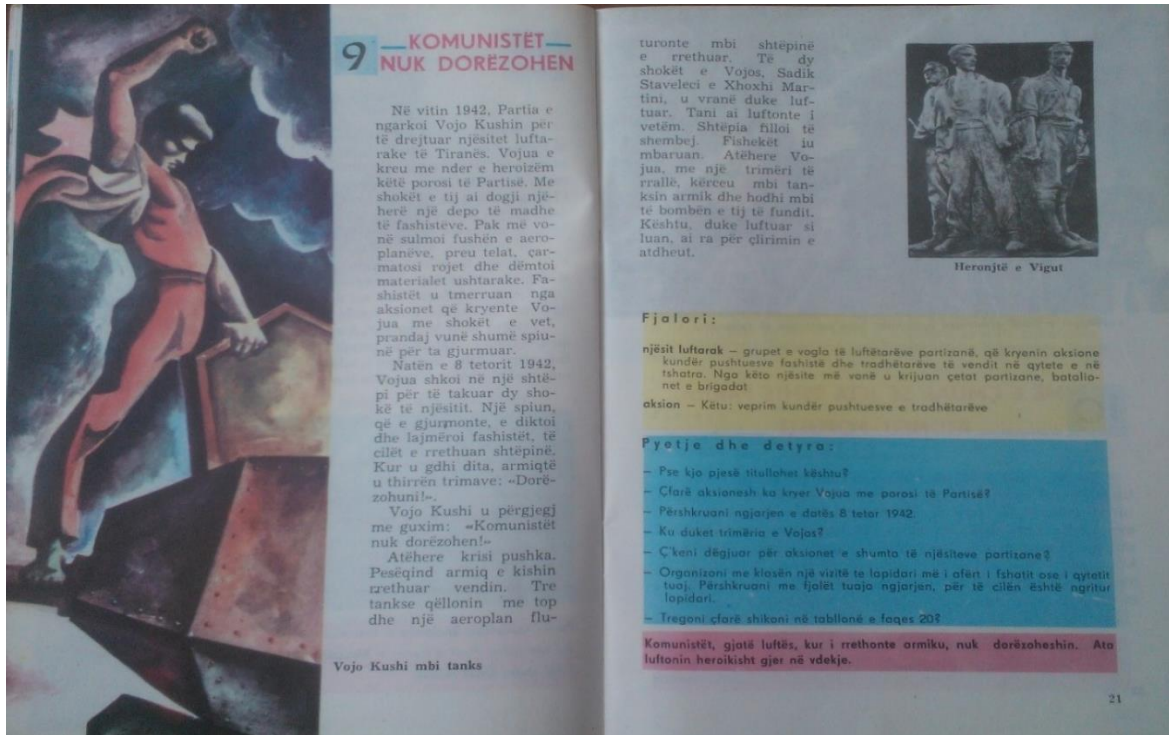
Layout 10. Minga, et. al., *Të Njohim Historinë e Popullit Tonë* (1976), 14-15.



Layout 11. Minga, et. al., *Të Njohim Historinë e Popullit Tonë* (1975), 16-17.



Layout 12. Minga, et. al., *Të Njohim Historinë e Popullit Tonë* (1976), 18-19.



Layout 13. Minga, et. al., *Të Njohim Historinë e Popullit Tonë* (1975), 20-21.



Layout 14. Minga, et. al., *Të Njohim Historinë e Popullit Tonë* (1972), 22-23.



Ngritja e frakteve, shkruarja nëpër mure e parullave luftarake -Vdekje fashizmit - Liri popullit!- etj. ishin nga aksionet më të rëndësishme që kryenin pionierët gjatë luftës.

11 PIONIERËT

Fëmijët tanë të zgjuar e ndjenin se për atdheun kishin ardhur ditë të vështira. I shihnin patrullat fashiste tek qarkullonin me fytyra të vrazhda rrugëve të qyteteve. Lodrat e tyre fëmimore ndërpriteshin shpesh nga krismat e pushkëve e nga vërshëllimat e bilbilëve. Ata e dinin se ilegalët që punonin në qytet duheshin fshehur shpejt. Kështu, disa u hapnin dyert e shtëpive të tyre, të tjerë gënjenin milicët e spiunët që i ndiqnin, duke u treguar rrugë të tjera.

E ç'nuk sajonin fëmijët atëhere! Vinin gozhdra nëpër rru-

gë për të shpuar rrotat e makinave ustarake. Hidhnin bishta cigaresh të ndezura në toqjet e barit të thatë, në gazemat, grinin flamurët italianë.

Fashistët, kur i kapnin, i rrihnin pa mëshirë, por ata nuk hapnin gojë. Lufta i kishte burrësuar para kohe. A nuk e kishin treguar këtë kaq herë kur ngjithin traktet nën hundën e armikut, kur shpërndanin komunikatat, kur përgjonin lëvizjet e rojeve fashiste?

Nën drejtimin e Partisë, të vegjëlit e Tiranës bënë një mbledhje në shkurtin e vitit 1942. Aty u vendos të luftohej të organizuar e të bashkuar për të ndihmuar edhe ata në çlirimin e atdheut. U krijua kështu organizata e parë luftarake e fëmijëve, që mori emrin «Debatik».

Shumë pionierë mbushën rreshtat partizane e disa nga ata ranë heroikisht në këtë luftë.

Fjalor:

Debatik - djem të bashkuar të ideve komuniste
patrullë - roje

Pyetje dhe detyra:

- Çfarë paraqet tabelloja në vitin në krahun 247?
- Çfarë aksionesh të tjera kanë kryer pionierët gjatë luftës partizane?
- Cilat ishin qëllimet e tyre?
- Kur filluan pionierët të punojnë në mënyrë të organizuar?
- Kush i drejtonte pionierët në luftë kundër armikut?
- Si i nderojmë ne ata që kanë dhënë jetën për lirinë e atdheut?
- Mësoni dhe tregoni njëherë heroizëm të pionierëve të krahut të vet!

Në luftë për çlirimin e atdheut morën pjesë edhe pionierët. Shumë prej tyre ranë dëshmorë në këtë luftë.

Layout 15. Minga, et. al., *Të Njohim Historinë e Popullit Tonë* (1976), 24-25.



Shoku Enver me partizanët gjatë operacionit të dimrit



Zona të çliuara deri më 10 Korrik 1943

Zona të çliuara deri më 10 Korrik 1943

12-SHQIPERIA NE PRAGUN E ÇLIRIMIT-

Në qershor të vitit 1944, gjermanët së bashku me ballistët e tradhëtarët e tjerë të vendit, u vërsulën me forca të shumta kundër zonave të çliuara në Shqipëri dhe jugut. Brigadat partizane, me lëvizje të shkathëta dhe të shpejta, i dëltin armikut herë në krah e herë në shpinë dhe e godisnin befasiat e me ashpërsi. Të tërbuar prej humbjeve, gjermanët digjnin e bënin shkumb fshatra të tëra, vrisnin fëmijë e pleq, shkretonin të mbjellat.

Fashistët gjermanë deshën të thyenin qëndresën e ushtrisë e të popullit tonë, por u kthyen të dërrmuar, të shpartalluar, të mundur e të mbuluar me turp.

Ushtria nacionalçlirimtare, që kishte në radhët e saj rreth 70.000 partizanë, e ndiqte armikun këmba-këmbës. Në shtator të vitit 1944 ishte çliruar përgjithmonë një pjesë e madhe e Shqipërisë, duke përfshirë edhe gjashtë qytete.

Në vendet e çliuara filloi menjëherë puna për rindërtimin. Njerëzit e këshillave nacionalçlirimtare i shihje kudo midis popullit: tek ngrihej një urë e shembur a një shtëpi e rrenuar, tek korrej ara e një familjeje dëshmorë a tek sajohe një dhomë si klasë shkolle. I gjeje tek ndaheshin partizanët në baza a tek përcilleshin djemtë e vajzat vullnetare për në brigadat partizane.

Lufta ende vazhdonte.

Fjalori:

brigadë - njësi e ushtrisë nacionalçlirimtare e përbërë prej dy a më shumë batalionesh.

Pyetje dhe detyra:

- Ç'përpjekje bëjnë armiqët dhe tradhëtorët për të shuar Luftën nacionalçlirimtare?
- Si u përgjigjeshin partizanët armiqeve?
- Ç'bënte populli në zonat e porsaçliuara?
- Çfarë vitesh te gjeje kryerjes së aksioneve?
- Kush i drejtonte këto?

Gjer në shtator të vitit 1944 një pjesë e madhe e Shqipërisë ishte çliruar nga Ushtria nacionalçlirimtare. Në zonat e çliuara filloi kudo puna për rindërtimin e vendit.

Layout 16. Minga, et. al., *Të Njohim Historinë e Popullit Tonë* (1973), 26-27.



Nga lufta për çlirimin e Tiranës



13 — LUFTA PËR ÇLIRIMIN E KRYEQYTETIT —

Partizanët e brigadave që u caktuan për çlirimin e kryeqytetit ishin krenarë për ndërin që u bëhën. Përgatitjet për ditën e sulmit filluan menjëherë. Shokët e shtabeve kishin hartuar planin sipas porosive të Komandantit të përgjithshëm shokut Enver Hoxha. Detyra ishte e vështirë.

—Tiranën do ta çlirojmë me çdo kusht! — u betuan partizanët. Besimi i plotë në fitore dukej në çdo vështrim, shfaqej në çdo bisedë. Ai ndjehej në çdo veprim deri në kujdesin e veçantë për pastrimin e armëve.

Më 29 tetor 1944 u dha sinjali i sulmit. Në të gjitha rrugët e Tiranës u ngritën barrikada. Luftohej për çdo rrugë, për çdo shtëpi, për çdo kat, për çdo pëllëmbë tokë. Armikun e godisnin ku s'e prishte. Tanket e autobлиндat gjermane vëriteshin nëpër rrugë. Autokolonën me mijëra gjermanë, që po u vinte nga Elbasani në ndihmë të rrethuarve, e dërmuan partizanët në Qafën e Krrabës. Egërsia e pushtuesëve gjermanë nuk martej dot me trimërinë dhe zgjuarsinë e partizanëve shqiptarë, që luftonin për truallin e popullin e tyre.

Të nëntëmbëdhjetën ditë të përleshjes, më 17 nëntor 1944, gjermanët e bunkerit të fundit dolën prej tij me duart për-pjetë.

Tirana u çlirua. Populli i pritri krahëhapur bijtë e vet. Ata që jetuan ato çaste nuk do ta harrojnë kurrë gëzimin e asaj dite.

Fjalori:

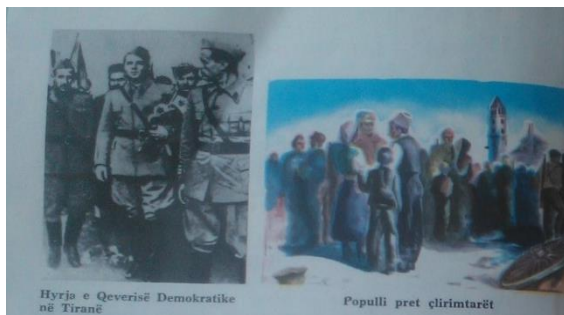
shtab — njerësi që drejtonin një batalion ose një brigadë partizane
barrikadë — pengesë që ngrihen në rrugët e qytetit për t'u mbrojtur dhe për të luftuar

Pyetje dhe detyra:

- Pse ishte e vështirë detyra për çlirimin e kryeqytetit?
- Përkrahuni si u zhvillua lufta?
- Si i pritri populli i Tiranës çlirimtarët?
- Pyesni dhe mësoni se cilat brigada morën pjesë në luftën për çlirimin e Tiranës.

Tirana, kryeqyteti i shtabuar tanë, u çlirua më 17 nëntor 1944. Batalja e Tiranës është një nga më të rëndësishmet e luftës së çlirimtarëve.

Layout 17. Minga, et. al., *Të Njohim Historinë e Popullit Tonë* (1973), 28-29.



Hyrja e Qeverisë Demokratike në Tiranë

Populli pret çlirimtarët

14 — POPULLI PRET ÇLIRIMTARËT —

Lufta kish marrë fund. Gjermanët ua kishin mbathur këmbëve.

Të vegjëlit dilnin nga shtëpitë pa pasur më frikë. Fytyrat u qeshnin. Përqafoheshin me njëri tjetrin si të mëdhenj e të-rrisnin: —Erdhën partizanët! Erdhën partizanët!—

Petriti, një djalë nja tetë vjeç, kur mori vesh ç'po ngjante, i tha sëmës: —Ika unë! Do të shkoj të pres babanë!...» Dhe u nis pa prituri përgjigje.

Te sheshi në mes të qytetit ishin mbledhur grupe njerëzish. Partizanët bashkë me popullin këndonin. Shumë nga ata përqafoheshin. Një grup tjetër hidhte valle dhe ata që ishin përreth përpiqnin duart.

Për një çast Petriti u tërhoq pas këngëve e valleve, po pastaj, kur ju kujtua i ati, iu drejtua një partizani:

- Shoku partizan, mos e ke parë babanë tim?
- Babanë tënd nuk e njoh, or djalë i mirë!
- Po si nuk e njeh? Ai është partizan! — i tha Petriti, që kujtonte se të gjithë partizanët duhej ta njihnin njëri-tjetrin.

Kishin kaluar nja dhjetë minuta, kur Petriti pa që larg një burrë të gjatë, me një kapotë të madhe ushtarake dhe me kapele.

—Ky s'është babai! — tha me vete. Por, megjithatë, zuri ta vështronte më me kujdes. Partizani po afrohej. Fytyra e tij nuk ishte e panjohur për Petritin. Njëherë ai ngurroi, por pastaj bërtiti: —baba!— dhe u lëshua në krahët e tij.

I ati, që e kishte njohur, hapi krahët dhe e përqafoi me mall të madh. E puthi dy tri herë dhe e shtrëngoi fort në krahëror.

— Po ti qenke rritur, Petrit, qenke bërë burrë! — i tha babai dhe e puthi përsëri.

Petriti e vështronte, por nuk fliste dot nga mallëngjimi.

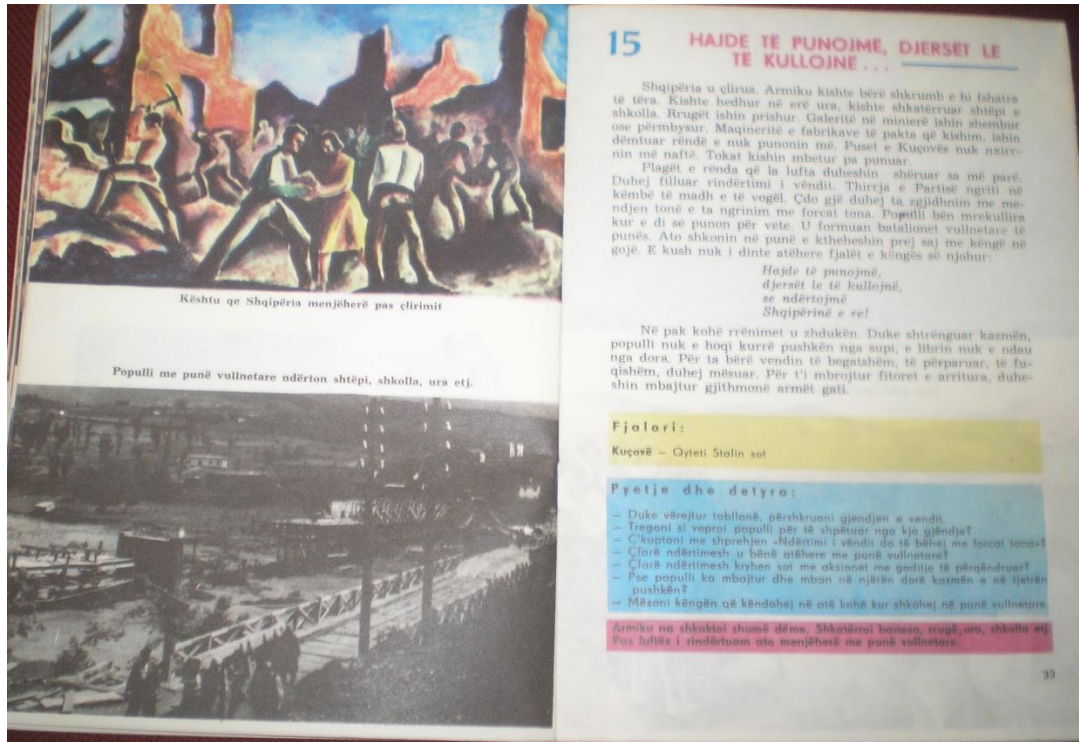


Pyetje dhe detyra:

- Duke vërejtur hartën majtas, lexoni me rradhë datat e çlirimit të qyteteve tona nga forcat partizane.
- Kur e fitoi populli ynë lirinë e vërtetë?
- Pse data 29 Nëntori është datë me rëndësi të madhe për popullin tonë?
- Cila është data e çlirimit të qytetit ose fshatit tuaj? Tregoni si e festoni atë.
- Pasuroni albumin e klasës me fotografi të tjera të Luftës Nacionalçlirimtare.

Shqipëria u çlirua plotësisht më 29 Nëntor 1944. Liria u fitua me gjok. 29 Nëntori është Dita e çlirimit.

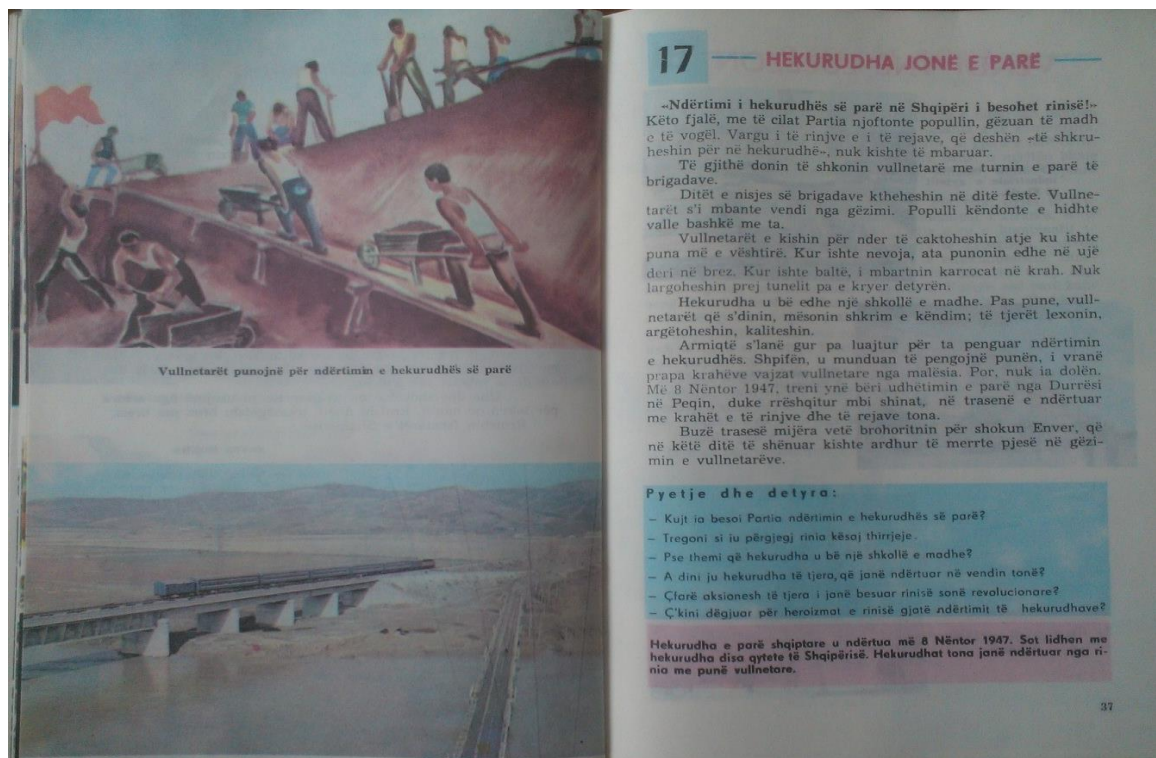
Layout 18. Minga, et. al., *Të Njohim Historinë e Popullit Tonë* (1974), 30-31.



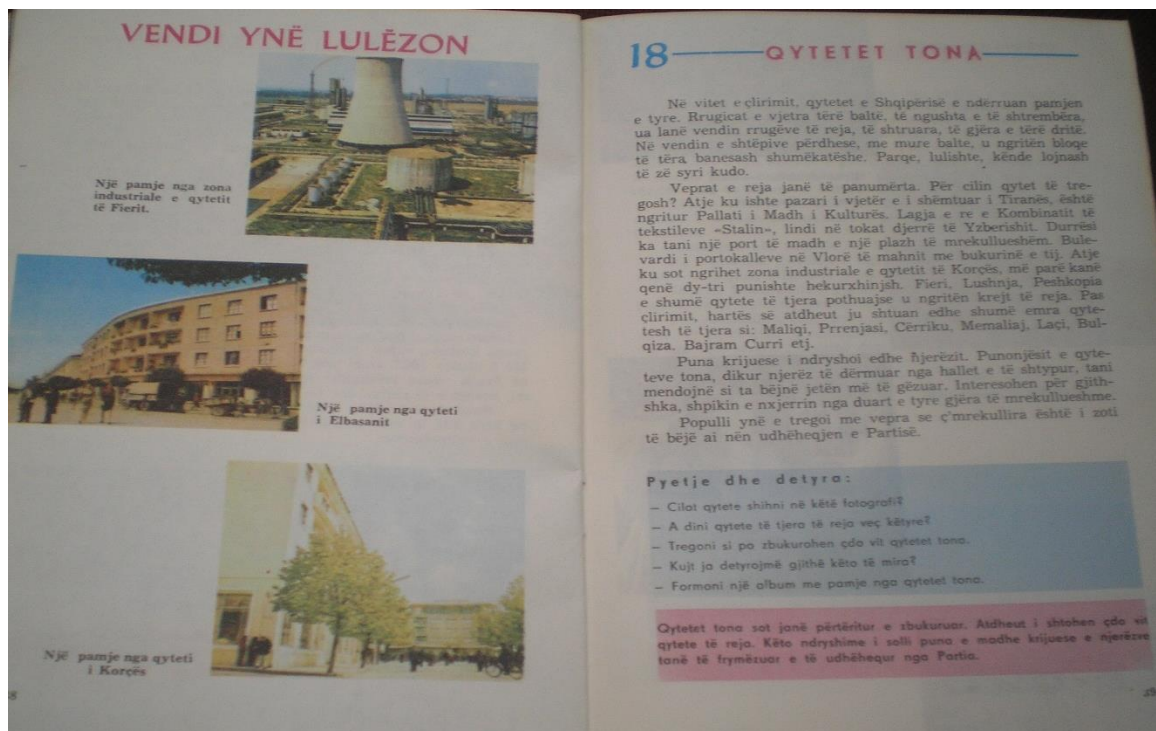
Layout 19. Minga, et. al., *Të Njohim Historinë e Popullit Tonë* (1974), 32-33.



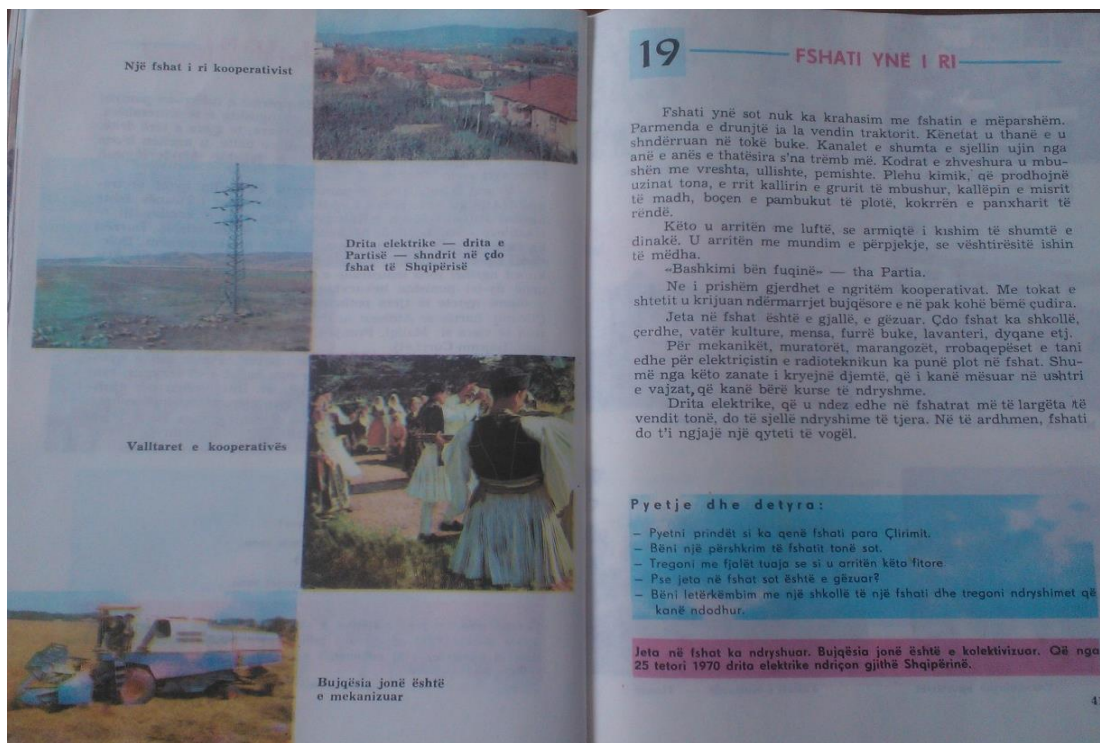
Layout 20. Minga, et. al., *Të Njohim Historinë e Popullit Tonë* (1976), 34-35.



Layout 21. Minga, et. al., *Të Njohim Historinë e Popullit Tonë* (1975), 36-37.



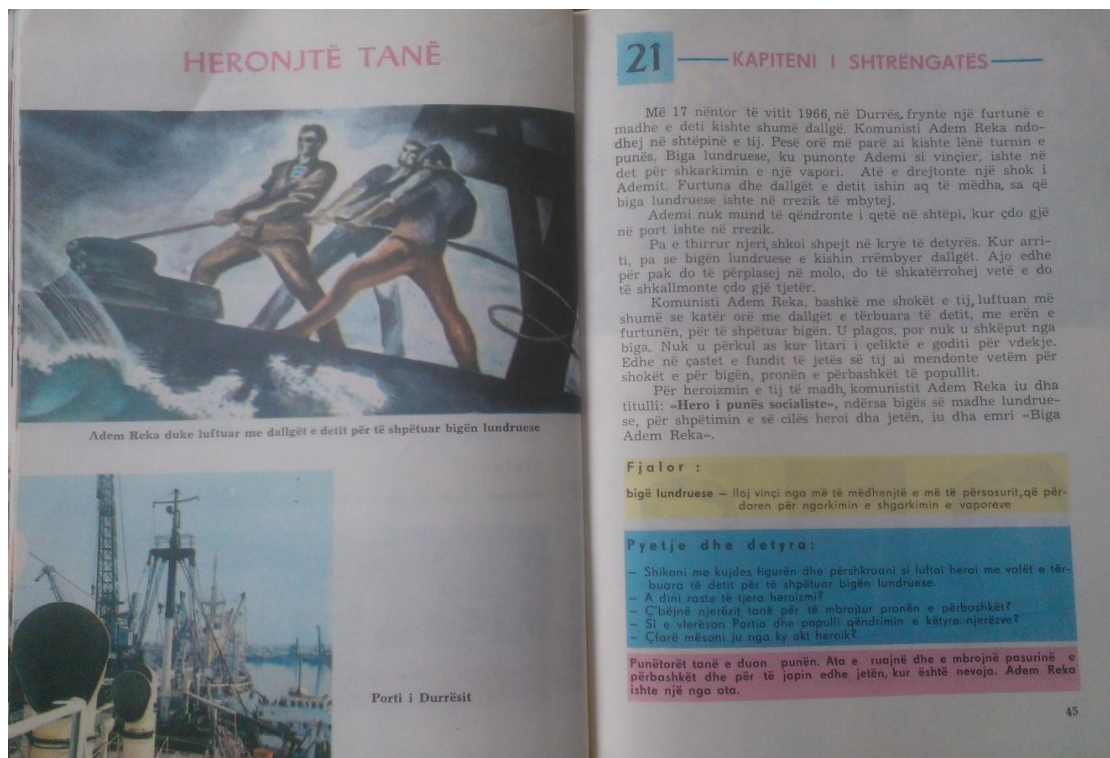
Layout 22. Minga, et. al., *Të Njohim Historinë e Popullit Tonë* (1977), 38-39.



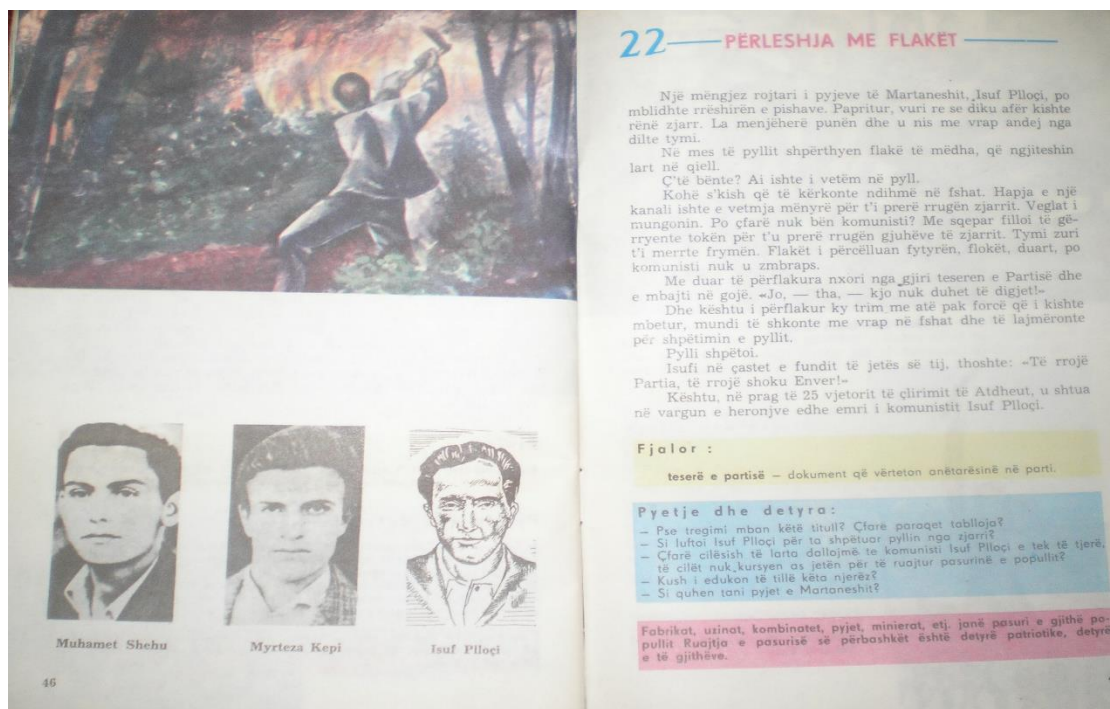
Layout 23. Minga, et. al., *Të Njohim Historinë e Popullit Tonë* (1976), 40-41.



Layout 24. Minga, et. al., *Të Njohim Historinë e Popullit Tonë* (1973), 42-43.



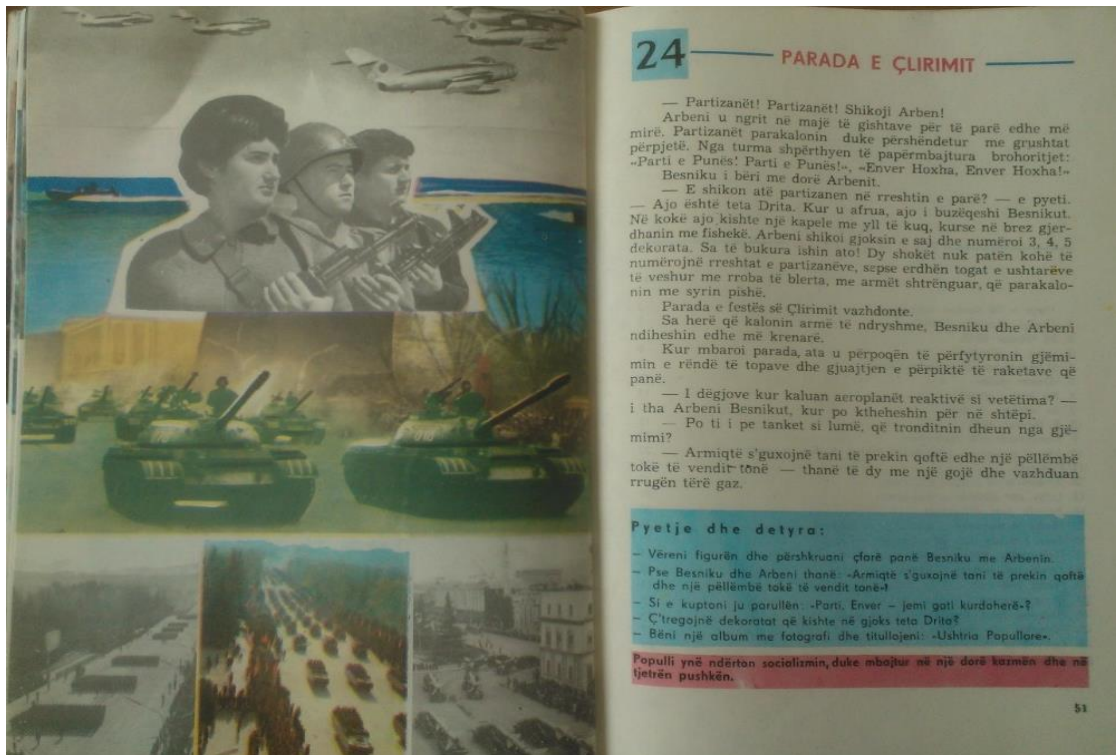
Layout 25. Minga, et. al., *Të Njohim Historinë e Popullit Tonë* (1974), 44-45.



Layout 26. Minga, et. al., *Të Njohim Historinë e Popullit Tonë* (1976), 46-47.



Layout 27. Minga, et. al., *Të Njohim Historinë e Popullit Tonë* (1972), 48-49.



Layout 28. Minga, et. al., *Të Njohim Historinë e Popullit Tonë* (1976), 50-51.

Images



Image 1: Guri Madhi, *Return of Scanderbeg with Victory*, 1967, Guri Madhi's family collection, oil on canvas, 230cm x 210 cm. Source:

<http://www.gurimadhi.com/portfolio-masonry-grid-lightbox/portfolio/> ,

accessed 14 January, 2016.



Lufta e Vlorës (Tablo nga H. Bani)

Image 2: Hilmi Bani, *The Battle of Vlora*, 1967. Source: Elsa Minga, Vedat Demiraj, Tefta Malile, *Histori e Shqipërisë për Klasën e 4-të të Shkollës 8-Vjeçare* (Tiranë: Shtëpia Botuese e Librit Shkollor, 1982), 63.



Dëbimi i bujkut nga kasollja (tablo e S. Kacelit)

Image 3: Sadik Kaceli, *The Expulsion of the Farmer from the Hut*, 1967.
Source: Dhimiter Grillo, *Historia e Shqipërise për Klasen e 8-të* (Tiranë: Shtëpia Botuese e Librit Shkollor, 1988), 147.



Image 4: “The Demonstration of Bread in Korça on the 21st of February 1936”. Source: Akademia e Shkencave e RPS të Shqipërisë Instituti i Historisë, *Historia e Shqipërisë. Vëllimi III (1912-1944)* (Tiranë: 1984), 401.



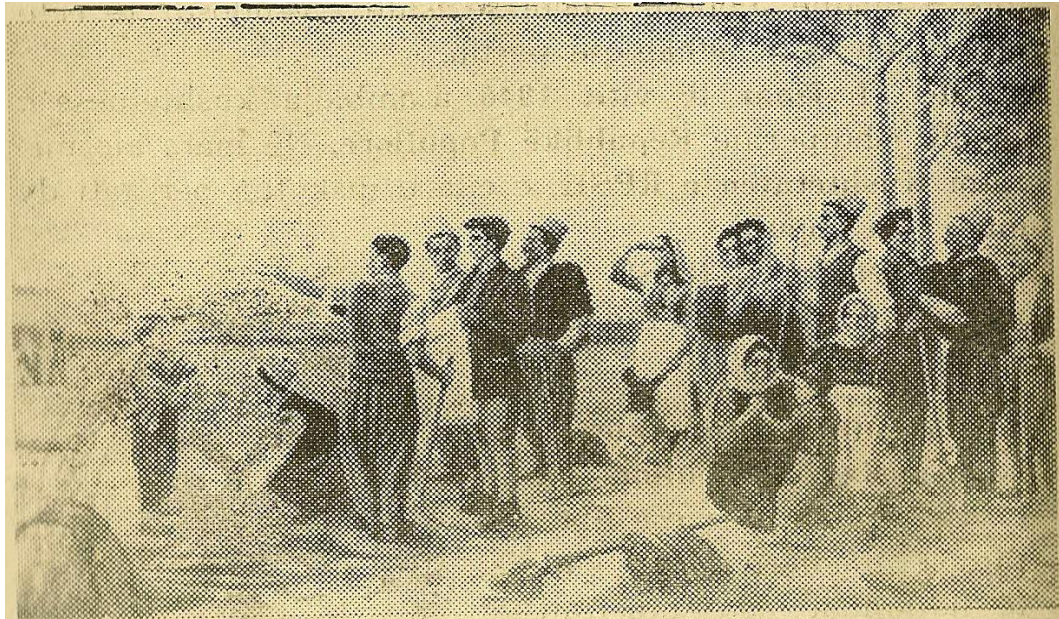
Image 5: “The house where the Communist Party of Albania was founded”. Source: <http://www.enver-hoxha.net/images/fotoalbumi/04-kriegszeit-1939-1944/20-2.jpg> , accessed 2 June, 2016.



Image 6: Sadik Shijaku, *Vojo Kushi*, National Gallery, 1969. Source: <http://www.galeriakombetare.gov.al/koleksioni/index.shtml> accessed 22 June, 2016.



Image 7: *Bukurosh Sejdini, The Liberation of Tirana, 1957*. Source: Ermir Hoxha, “Arti në Shqipëri 1945-1990,” PhD diss., University of Tirana, 2014), 81.



Fshatarët marrin tokën që e kishin ëndëruar për shekuj me radhë
(tablo e piktorit Abdulla Cangonji).

Image 8: Abdulla Cangonji, “*Peasants Receive the Land they Have Dreamed for Centuries*”. Source: Dhimitër Grillo, *Historia e Shqipërise për Klasen e 8-të* (Tiranë: Shtëpia Botuese e Librit Shkollor, 1970).



Image 9: Guri Madhi, *Land Reform in 1946, 1970-1972*, National Gallery of Fine Arts 1970-1972, oil on canvas, 450 cm x 300 cm (197-1972). Source: <http://www.gurimadhi.com/portfolio-masonry-grid-lightbox/portfolio/> accessed 8 August 2016.